

THEMATIC ANALYSIS:

THE GOVERNANCE MODEL OF S3 OF THE REGION FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

V.1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first thematic evaluation analysis produced by ISRI - Institute of Studies on Industrial Relations, as part of the "evaluation service of the Regional Strategy for research and innovation for smart specialization - S3 of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, for the period of 2014-2020 programming ", is focused on the S3 governance system and, particularly, on the path followed to define the regional Strategy for Smart Specialization (S3).

The regional S3 is based on a complex system of governance, whose main bodies (see the following table) are made up of the Steering Committee, the Strategic Committee, the Technical Secretariat and the General Stakeholder Assembly, which are supported, on the one hand by the Regional Executive, to which policy decisions are due, and, on the other hand, the Region directed Working Tables, which have the task of actively involving the stakeholder of the identified five areas of specialization.

<i>Body</i>	<i>Main functions</i>
Regional Executive	Political guidance and overall responsibility
S3 Coordination Services	General coordination of activities
Steering Committee	Direction and implementation of the Strategy
Technical Secretariat	Technical and operational support to the Steering Committee and to the Strategic Committee
Region directed Working Tables	Support for the review and implementation of the Strategy
General Stakeholder Assembly	S3 implementation monitoring and the proposal for new themes
Strategic Committee	Connection between the Regional Administration and the main stakeholders

The analysis mainly focused on answering the evaluation questions indicated below:

- How was the process conducted and with which (if any) critical issues?
- What was the actual participation of the stakeholders?
- What is the opinion of the stakeholders about the activities they attended and on their own contribution?
- What is the judgment on the final results of the decision-making process?
- What is the opinion of the participants on the results achieved, also in relation to their own commitment?

The methodology for answering these questions was divided into a preliminary phase of desk analysis of all the main existing documents, and a subsequent phase of field analysis, through three online questionnaires submitted to the main categories of subjects involved or even invited to participate to the process of defining the regional S3.

More specifically, the desk analysis involved all the main documents produced in the decision-making processes of the S3 in Friuli Venezia Giulia, with reference both to the first phase (November 2014-March 2015), which issued the first document concerning the " regional strategy for smart specialization", and to the second phase (2016-2017) which led to the review of the technological trajectories of the five areas of specialization identified.

The main purposes of the preliminary analysis of existing documents are:

- identifying the most relevant features of the S3 governance model chosen by the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia;
- outlining how the path of the regional S3 has actually developed;
- collecting some early indications about the participation of the different categories of stakeholders in the meetings and discussions organized in the region during the various stages of the process;;
- verifying the actual availability of the main documents produced;
- gathering information to match the theoretical model with factual reality;
- better identifying the targets of the following field analysis;
- preparing the questionnaires for the different categories of subjects to be interviewed.

With regard to field activity, the first survey (Q1) was addressed to promoters and leaders of governance processes, including the coordinators of the regional S3, the representatives of the Technical Secretariat and the Steering Committee, the cluster coordinators and the work table facilitators. Overall, 31 people answered to this first online survey.

Q1 - Questionnaire for process managers

- addressed to promoters and leaders who have played an active role in the governance processes;
- aimed at understanding the effort devoted and the satisfaction with how the process was took place and for the results it produced;
- 31 respondents

The second and third surveys (Q2) were carried out among the stakeholders who have been invited to participate in the process of defining and developing the S3 strategy. They were asked to express their personal opinions and to represent the interests of the structures they belong to (individual companies, research institutes, universities, training bodies, business associations, technology transfer centers, etc.).

The two surveys have been carried out in parallel, proposing an online questionnaire to a list of subjects that appeared either in the signature sheets of the events or in the invitation mailing lists A total of 340 subjects participated in these two surveys. Among these, 181 actually took part in the S3 planning process while 159 did not take part, although they had been invited.

Q2 - Questionnaire for stakeholder

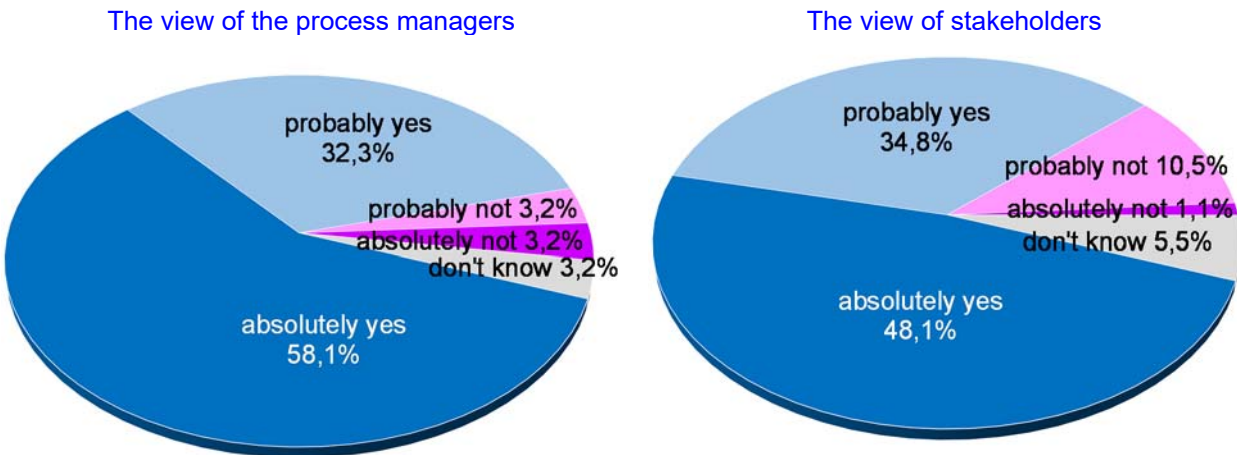
- addressed to those invited to participate in the governance process (whether they participated or not)
- aimed at understanding the degree of satisfaction with the process and at recording opinions on the regional strategy;
- 340 respondents.

The results indicate above all that the process of definition and subsequent revision of the regional S3 recorded a wide and varied participation at every stage by the main categories of stakeholders.

Beyond the quantitative data on participation, which in any case is already significant, the survey also revealed that those who participated in the various stages of the process, appear overall satisfied, given that:

- ❑ more than 50% consider their own role in the process positive and active;
- ❑ more than 75% consider the participation of regional stakeholders to be good or sufficient;
- ❑ more than 35% consider the contribution of the stakeholders to the definition of the regional S3 to be very significant;
- ❑ approximately 80% believe that S3 is capable of enhancing the strengths and potentials of the regional innovative system, even if many of these show some uncertainty in this regard;
- ❑ the majority of respondents, however, have no doubt that the results achieved have rewarded their efforts; i.e that it was really worth it (see chart below).

Fig. 1. Have the results rewarded the effort?



Alongside these results, which must be judged very positively, some partial critical issues have emerged:

- ❑ according to around half of the stakeholders, the choices made in the definition of S3 seem to reflect some positions better than others;
- ❑ in addition, different people have claimed that the involvement of some actors, especially in civil society, has been missed, also because of the difficulties in identifying the representatives of certain categories of interests.

Finally, as regards the governance system of the Friuli Venezia Giulia S3, the evaluator's analyses highlighted some partial problems that should be corrected to guarantee a more fluid process.

These critical issues are mainly related to:

- ❑ the lack of effective unitary coordination within the Regional Administration, also due to the sharing of the coordination role in three different services, without a single manager - which would be desirable - and without a clear division of tasks within them;

- ❑ the actual role of the Steering Committee, which has so far not been able to offer a real contribution to the definition and implementation of the regional S3;
- ❑ the overwhelming workload of the Technical Secretariat, which undoubtedly bears the greatest burdens of the activities connected to the S3, without having either a specific staff or qualified external resources available, to fulfill all the complex tasks assigned.