

LA SCHEDA "ITALIA" DEL NETWORK EUROPEO ESDN PER LO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE

Basic information

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[http://www.sd-network.eu/?k=country profiles&s=single country profile&country=Italy](http://www.sd-network.eu/?k=country%20profiles&s=single%20country%20profile&country=Italy)

Year of approval of the SD strategy and updates

The Italian Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS) was developed by the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, in accordance with the 6th Environmental Action Plan and the guidelines of Barcelona 2002 European Council.

The NSDS was approved by the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) on 2nd August 2002 (CIPE Deliberation n. 57 of 2nd August 2002 (available in Italian only).

CIPE is the main body responsible for coordination and horizontal integration of national policies. The approval of the CIPE ensured the commitment of the Government as a whole, conferring a strong value to the document itself. The Inter-Ministerial nature of the CIPE had the purpose to allow that every social-economic development could be framed in the sustainability context as identified by the NSDS, causing a double effect: on one hand, the integration of the environmental concerns in the decision-making processes; on the other hand, the increasing coordination among the three pillars of development.

The decision to start a revision process of the NSDS to bring it in line with the EU SDS was included in the Economic and Financial Analysis and Planning Document (DPEF) of the national Government in 2007. The revision process started in September 2007 but was stopped in 2008.

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| Type of SD strategy | NSSD covers environmental dimension of SD only. |
| Lead ministry/institution in the SD strategy process | Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea |
| Link to the SD strategy document | 'Strategia d'azione ambientale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile' (2002) (in Italian) |
| Further information about the SD strategy process | <p>The NSSD focuses mainly on environmental matters. The driving element for sustainability and for the definition of targets is essentially the achievement of a decoupling between economic growth and pressure on the use of natural resources and on the environment, especially in agriculture, power and transport sectors. Specific indicators for use of material, soil, energy, water, resources, and waste production per units of economic wealth are foreseen as a measure of outcomes achieved. The NSSD contains four broad priority themes, the same as stated in the EU 6th Environmental Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate Change and stratospheric ozone 2. Protection and sustainable use of nature and biodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • natural resources - biotechnologies • soil, subsoil and desertification • marine and coastal habitats 3. Quality of the environment and quality of life in urban areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban environment • air quality • indoor air quality and radon • noise • electromagnetic pollution • genetically modified organisms • food security • reclamation of contaminated sites • environmental crime 4. Exploitation of resources and waste production: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of natural resources • water resources • production and consumption cycles • waste |

Mechanisms of Vertical Integration

National — sub-national linkages

From a general point of view, the integration of different political levels in Italy is ensured by the 'State-Regions Permanent Conference', established in 1983, which is composed by representatives of national and sub-national political bodies. The State-Regions Permanent Conference is currently receiving increasing importance after the implementation of the devolution process and the 2005 reform of the National Constitution Act that gives new competences to local and decentralised authorities.

A 'Sustainable Development Board' (including representatives of the national and sub-national levels) had been set up to prepare the decisions to be adopted by the State-Regions Permanent Conference. The Board had also the task of defining guidelines for SD strategies at the regional level. Furthermore, it represented the main link with the CIPE by ensuring the participation of regional representatives in the NSDS process. The main goal reached during the first years of implementation of the NSDS was a better integration of the environmental requirements into the economic development process.

Some regions have adopted during the last few years regional SD strategies aimed at building an overarching framework for their policies and be coherent with European and national level. Although the NSDS is not binding at the regional level, the implementation of LA 21 processes throughout the country has ensured an important contribution of local planning to be consistent with higher-level SD strategies (please see below).

EU linkages

The renewed EU Strategy for Sustainable Development (EU SDS) that was adopted in June 2006 foresees that Member States bi-annually report about how they address the priorities of the EU SDS. Italy has published its first national report on implementing the EU SDS in June 2007.

Mechanisms of Horizontal Integration

In 2002, along with the provision of Deliberation n. 57, a Technical Board to support the CIPE was set up, and was formed by representatives of the Ministry of Economy, the Regions and other Ministry representatives with competencies for SD policies. Representatives of national bodies providing information (e.g. National Environmental Protection Agency, National Institute for Energy, Environment and New Technologies) also participated in the Technical Board (please see below).

From a broader point of view, the search for horizontal integration and coherence through integrated environmental policies was one of the most explicit aims of the NSDS. Within this framework, in these latest years, consistently with the EU's

Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, actions for environment and sustainability through scientific research have been enhanced, in order to promote lifestyles and technological innovations for sustainable development.

Besides that, within the Framework Agreement of the State-Region Conference, the National INFEA Programme for co-financing regional education, information, and training programmes in the field of environment and sustainable development was set up. The National INFEA Programme has given rise to the signing of 19 Policy Agreements with as many Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

The INFEA regional network has been broadened by these agreements and regional co-ordination bodies have been established; projects on environment education and information have been put forward. Three interregional research and training projects have been carried out within the Programme.

Evaluation and Review

The Technical Board on SD of the CIPE, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, had the task to prepare annual assessment reports on the implementation of the NSDS, based on ten priority indicators. The reports were published in April of each year.

In the course of the preparation of its national implementation report of the EU SDS, at the end of 2007, Italy started to revise aspects and topics concerning the national level. This process, which stopped in 2008, could now start over again, leading to the compliance of the national SD priorities to those of the EU level, especially in the sectors considered to be of particular importance, such as 'climate change and clean energy' and 'sustainable transport'.

The National Focal Point for the implementation of the EU SDS has been appointed within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Inter-Ministerial Committee for Community Affairs (CIACE), that has also the mandate of coordination of the reporting to the EU2020 Strategy. It was established by law 11/2005 enacting the *'General provisions governing Italy's participation in the European Union's legislative process and the procedures for complying with Community obligations'*.

The CIACE represents a remarkable accomplishment, carried out on the basis of the experience of other Member States. Linked to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the CIACE can be seen as a sort of Cabinet of European Affairs, whose aim is to enabling an in-depth analysis of issues related to Italy's participation in the European Union. The Committee, which is quite reduced in number and thus easy to convene, coordinates the Ministries concerned according to the items on the agenda. Regions, Autonomous Provinces and local Authorities can take part in CIACE activities and a permanent technical committee linked to the Department together with the Secretariat, supports the CIACE for meetings' preparation.

Along with the provisions of the NSDS, the EU SDS and the EU2020 Strategy, Italy has given great relevance to the implementation of some specific topics related to sustainable development, and namely the consumption and production patterns (SCP). To this end, a national action plan on SCP is currently under preparation (foreseen by early 2012) and will be focused on four main priority areas:

- implementation of the National Action Plan for Green Public Procurement;
- improvement of environmental quality of products of SMEs;

- involvement of big retailers following the Integrated Policy Product (IPP) approach;
- sustainable tourism.

The main commitment on sustainable development policy in Italy for future years is to ensure that sector policies are consistent and coherent and not undermined by other policies. Improving policy coherence and integration for the pursuit of the goal of sustainable development requires specific attention to governance practices, drawing attention to the main obstacles to be overcome at domestic level in order to address the institutional challenges raised by the pursuit of shared objectives.

Achieving greater policy coherence demands sustained efforts to improve the integration of sector policies, to ensure policy integration across levels of government, and to ensure consistency in the choices made by the various Institutions.

Should the NSDS be renewed, a strong commitment for sustainable development might derive by the definition of an entire new framework for plans and programmes at national and sub national level, also in line with the priorities set by the renewed EU SDS.

Indicators and Monitoring

The Italian NSDS in general terms provides a set of 150 indicators directly linked to the priorities and key issues outlined in the Strategy itself. Additionally, the key environmental indicators set by Barcelona's European Council in 2002 are included in the document. The National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) and the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) currently work on a data base of indicators in historic series for the purpose of analysing the phenomena considered important for sustainable development.

Besides that, the 'Environmental data Yearbook' issued yearly by the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) is the national information reference in the Country on environment and sustainable development.

The 'Environmental data Yearbook' includes many works: an unabridged version (containing all information forms filled out during the year, organised by production sectors, environmental conditions and responses), '*Key Topics*' (including a piece of information relevant to the priority environmental issues, subject matters of prevention and recovery intervention), '*vademecum*' (a pocket handbook, including a short synthesis of 'Key Topics' evaluation), '*Multimedia version and the Yearbook Database*' (an instrument designed for consultation of the indicator fact sheets and the production of reports). This tool, which has been implemented to streamline and improve the processing of the data and metadata, allows users to search the available indicators and to access, if needed, other information not contained in the final version of the Yearbook or contained in past editions. <http://www.isprambiente.gov.it/site/en-GB/Databases/>

Participation

In 2002 the drafting of the Strategy has seen the adoption of a thoroughly new approach, allowing for a better sharing of the draft document among the main actors involved in the implementation and to ensure a highly integrated vision of priorities. Both central and regional administrations, local authorities, non-

governmental environmental and consumers associations, industry and business organizations and trade unions representatives reviewed the draft document. The consultation round was carried out during 14 meetings, involving more than 140 authorities and organizations.

In 2007, within the process of elaboration of the first National Report to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, a strong co-ordination mechanism among central Administrations and Regions was set up, chaired by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Inter-Ministerial Committee for Community Affairs (CIACE) in collaboration with the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea.

In both cases previously mentioned, a relevant consultation process on sustainable development took place, contributing to develop processes of participation that allowed for the voluntary involvement of citizens, local administrators and the business sectors, and encouraging participation in managing environment and following sustainable development principles in line with the Aarhus Convention.

Although major barriers to policy integration are strongly rooted in the differing stakeholder perceptions of the issues involved, and conflicting interests are often at stake in discussion, an effective policy for the involvement of citizens, especially at local level, has given the opportunity to overcome these difficulties. Choices made by Local Authorities adopting a concrete way towards sustainable development has given good results, in particular when agreements on a common interest were identified or when the unsustainable nature of specific activities was discovered. Local Governments have shown an important role to play in addressing the major conflicts of interest among stakeholders, in particular by involving them in constructive discussions on these issues.

»For a detailed documentation of all advisory and participatory councils (for SD and/or the environment) in this country, please go to the EEAC website at http://www.eeac-net.org/bodies/italy/it_frame.htm and click on one of the listed institutions.

Sub-national activities

According with the 2005 Reform of Italian Constitution, some competences in the environment field have been transferred from national to regional and local levels. The national level is competent for the definition of environmental quality objectives and the general criteria for sector environmental policies. Regions are responsible for strategic planning and provinces and municipalities for control and implementation of plans and programs.

Some Regions have adopted during the last few years Regional Strategies aiming at building an overarching framework for their policies and be coherent with European and national level.

At a lower level, in the view of principle of subsidiarity, municipalities are recognised as the direct target of EU policies for urban sustainability and the importance of programmes for urban sustainability has been raised during the last few years.

The role of local governments has been enhanced and promoted also through the provisions of the NSDS, by empowering local authorities to play a more effective role in local sustainable development and providing support for programs and partnerships to deliver more effective sustainable development outcomes.

The policies towards sustainable development and governance principles at local level have eased a participative approaches and integrated tools to provide intersectorial solutions: in this regard, the involvement of stakeholders (local authorities, companies, NGOs, schools, Trade unions, local groups and citizens) in decision making processes has offered the opportunity to develop new methodologies and integrated approaches to such issues, so as to find appropriate and shared solutions in the transition to sustainability.

Within this context Local Agenda 21, as a process and a governance tool for sustainability, has provided different opportunities for defining participated Action Plans for local sustainable development, and a tool for introducing innovative modernization in local government processes.

The most important initiatives carried out at national level have been the two notices for co-financing sustainable development programs and for implementing LA 21 process. A total of € 25 Mio was made available for local administrations. Resources have been allocated, among others, to interventions for sustainable production and consumption (promotion of environmental management audit schemes for SMEs, co-funding of LA 21 initiatives, sustainable use of water resources).

These two Ministry's notices have proven to be a relevant success: the main element for these initiatives' success is due to the very large amount of protected areas, local and management bodies, which have applied either for the first notice and for the second one. Furthermore, the Ministry's notices contributed in spreading numerous similar initiatives, directly promoted and financed by Regions.

These initiatives have mainly focused on environmental aspects of sustainability, but in many case they also encompassed other important issues, such as social equity, quality of life and quality of the local economic development (for example in the municipality of Venice management territory plans have been singled out within a participatory process), proving the comprehensiveness of the tool. In practice they have allowed for the definition and the monitoring of problems related to sustainability, producing action plans in which temporal objectives and instruments for the evaluation of the level of their success (i.e. indicators of sustainable development) have been identified.