

REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA - ITALY

Basic regional socio economic data:

Population: 4 millions (7% of Italian population)

Area: 22.123 km²

The administrative system is articulated over 9 provinces (Bologna, Ferrara, Forlì-Cesena, Modena, Reggio Emilia, Rimini, Parma, Piacenza, Ravenna), 341 municipalities, 18 mountain communities; the Regional Government is structured around 12 assessorship (political decision making role) and 10 General Directorates (co-ordination of different subjects)

Emilia-Romagna is located in the Centre-North of Italy, and its territory is mainly plain (48%); the mountain and hilly areas cover 25% and 27% of the regional territory. The regional capital of Emilia-Romagna is Bologna with an overall population of 915.225 (at province level); 6 of the other 8 provinces are located along the old Roman road Via Emilia, which is the axis along which the regional economy has mainly developed.

Emilia-Romagna annual GDP per capita (2001) is 25.637 € (the national average is 20.165 €), and the regional GDP (2003), 114.227 billion €, is 9% of the total national GDP.

In 2003 regional export achieved 31 billion euros, accounting for 11.5% of national exports. Over the past few years the export growth rate has achieved 49%, thus outperforming the national average (34.8%).

According to OECD Emilia-Romagna region, with 5.9% of the whole investment in research at a national level, covers 15% of the entire national scientific production. The knowledge and research system also includes the R&D employees working within enterprises.

Bologna is one of the most important rail and road junction in Italy for the traffic heading north and south, with key routes towards the North of Europe and other Mediterranean countries; the region has altogether 4 airports: 2 international airports (Rimini and Forlì) and one intercontinental airport located in Bologna; the eastern province of Ravenna hosts the major commercial port of the Adriatic Sea while the northern province of Piacenza is a major logistic junction, thanks to its favourable position.

Emilia-Romagna region is equipped with an effective regional digital broad band infrastructure and an optic fibre network. At present 76.2% of the population and 77.9% of enterprises have the opportunity to install DSL and optic fibre connections. The Regional Telematic Programme has envisaged the building of a new wide network covering the whole regional public administration: Lépidia is the largest Italian regional public administration optic fibre network.

Over the past few years, the number of employees has increased much more than the population itself. In 2003 the employment rate was 68.3% (the national rate is 56%) and unemployment rate dropped down to 3.1%.

The employment growth is mainly due to the increase of working women: women's employment rate was 43% in 2003, and one entrepreneur out of four is a woman (out of 709.000 entrepreneurs, more than 184.000 are women).

The Emilia-Romagna labour market is also characterised by the increasing number of immigrant workers: more than 263.000 foreigners live in the region (6.46% of residents), with roughly a 45% increase between 2002 and 2003; 165.000 of them have a regular work contract and 150.000 are fully employed by companies.

Industrial employees represent 35,9% of total employment whereas agricultural employees represent the 5,6%; others employees represent 58,5%.

Description of the framework of Structural Funds and programmes operating in the region

For the 2000-2006 programming period Regione Emilia-Romagna is supported by assistance of Structural Funds - Objective 2 and Objective 3.

Objective 2 Single Programming Document for 2000-2006 submitted by Regione Emilia-Romagna has been approved on 14th November 2001 by the European Commission.

Objective 3 Community Support Framework has been approved by the European Commission on 18th July 2000 and the Regional Operational Programmes have been approved on 21st September 2000.

The SPD 2000-2006 is divided into three main intervention priorities articulated in ten measures.

- Priority 1 (Support to firms) provides financing to SMEs, attributed through regional competitions. The economic sectors involved are those thought to be strategic for the competitive reinforcement of production systems included in Objective 2 (industry, tourism, social economics, new professions, innovative firms).
- Priority 2 (Negotiated programming for local development) provides support to actions and investments of public concern (infrastructures, environment, services) aimed to affect the structural “obstacles” to the development of the territory.
- Priority 3 (Technical assistance) provides support actions to the implementation of the programme.

The programme involves an overall cost of 240 million Euro for the whole programming period, out of which 48,52% is the FESR cofinancing and 48,84% are local regional and state funds; the programme is also cofinanced by local funds and, for some measures, by private funds. In 2003 Emilia-Romagna has been assigned by the EU a quota of the performance reserve – 5.333.357 Euro – therefore confirming the good management of the programme with the achievement of the evaluation criteria established by the EU.

The area of the region included in the Objective 2 programming for the period 2000-2006 comprises 130 town councils (38% of the overall number of town councils) and a population of 387.651 people (9,8% of the overall population).

Besides the reduction of the socio-economic device between the Objective 2 areas and the stronger areas of the region, one of the main objectives of the SPD is related to the consolidation of methodologies and rules for the integration among different policies at territorial level and the diffusion of negotiating programming procedures and co-ordination on inter - municipality and inter - provincial scale. In this perspective the specific objectives of the SPD are modulated to peculiar strengths and weaknesses of the different Objective 2 areas.

Role and duties of the partner in the SF management process, organisations supporting the region in the management process

Emilia-Romagna Region is the Managing Authority of the SPD and has therefore the responsibility of defining strategies, managing and monitoring procedures of the whole programme. Regione Emilia-Romagna is also the final beneficiary of Objective 2 funds.

The organisations supporting Emilia-Romagna Region in the SF management process are:
ERVET – Emilia Romagna Territorial Economic Enhancement

The Provinces and the local development agencies (especially as far as priority 2 is concerned), to which large part of the duties are delegated

Other relevant regional development programmes operating

Besides Objective 2, the regional development programmes operating in Emilia-Romagna are: Objective 3, Rural Development Plan and FIG Financial Instruments for Fisheries Guidance. The community programmes Interreg, Leader Plus, Equal and Urban are also implemented in Emilia Romagna through a large number of projects.

Objective 3 Regional Operational Programme is articulated over 6 priorities:

- Contribute to the employability of people looking for a job
- Support the integration into the labour market of the people at risk of social exclusion
- Underpin the development of education, vocational training and counselling to sustain lifelong training
- Underpin flexibility in the labour market, promote competitiveness and develop entrepreneurship
- Improving women's labour market participation, in particular by improving access to learning and removing barriers to employment and through the promotion of gender mainstreaming
- Technical assistance to implement the O.P.

The total value of ESF support to the CSF over the period 2000-2006 is 3.888 M€; the support for the Emilia-Romagna Region amounts to 556,6 M€.

The Rural Development Plan is articulated over 3 priorities:

- Support to the competitiveness of firms
- Environment
- Local integrated development

The total value of RDP is 852 M€, out of which 386 M€ are European cofinancing and 76 M€ regional funds.

In the implementation of Objective 3 ROP and RDP the integration with the priorities of the Objective 2 SPD has been addressed both at programming and financial level (as an example, 40% of the total RDP resources have been assigned to firms located in Objective 2 areas).