

<p align="center"><b>COUNTRY</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Italy</b></p>
<p><b>How many OPs are there in your Member State?</b></p> <p><b>Do they have very different provisions in terms of partnership?</b></p>	<p>In Italy, the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) is divided into 66 Operational Programmes, 42 of which are financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and 24 by the European Social Fund (ESF). The latter are divided into 21 Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) and 3 National Operational Programmes (NOPs). Of the latter, two refer to the ‘Convergence’ Objective and operate in the southern regions of Italy: Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily. The third operates in the central-northern regions and in Abruzzi, Molise and Sardinia and refers to the ‘Competitiveness’ Objective.</p> <p>Economic-social partnerships and local authority representatives were involved in all stages of drafting the NSRF.</p> <p>This sheet summarises the recommendations of the 21 ESF Regional Operational Programmes for the implementation of partnerships.</p>
<p><b>Does partnership have a geographical focus in your Member State's OP(s)?</b></p> <p><b>If so, national, regional, sub-regional e.g. county, district, group of municipalities, municipality, etc.?</b></p>	<p>The NSRF guidelines are followed in applying the partnership approach to the ROPs.</p> <p>All the ROPs envisage the involvement of partnerships at the regional, provincial and local levels.</p>
<p><b>Is partnership linked to specific thematic issues / objectives (incl. possible targeting of specific groups / links with policy) in the OP(s)?</b></p>	<p>Many ROPs, especially those in regions where in 2000-2006 the involvement of partnerships proved to be more structured and more firmly established, highlight the importance of partnership initiatives in implementing labour market, employment, HR training, education, immigration, welfare, equal opportunity, environmental and development policies.</p> <p>Existing partnerships have diversified according to the thematic area in which they operate. Moreover, the specific features of the objectives to be achieved determine how they are made up, in terms of partner representation with respect to the theme and geographical area concerned.</p> <p>For example, the Regional Tripartite Committees, operating in many regions, are coordination bodies in which the training system and employment policies for which the regional government is competent are proposed, assessed and evaluated. The Regional Tripartite Committees are made up of representatives of the social partners and employers’ associations.</p>
<p><b>Please specify further what is</b></p>	<p>In most ROPs the organisation of the partnership specifically envisages:</p>

<p><b>understood as “partnership” in the OP(s) in your Member State?</b> (See Note 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The participation of the highest possible number of actors, to reinforce the inclusion and mediation processes with respect to an increasingly heterogeneous and constantly changing social fabric;</li> <li>- The drawing-up of a Memorandum of Understanding between all the organisations and political representatives of the administrations involved in order to define a coordination framework and working method at both the policy and technical levels;</li> <li>- The drafting of a code of conduct which, on a voluntary basis, can support improved participation by the parties concerned.</li> </ul> <p>Some ROPs provide a detailed illustration of the partnership structures they intend to formalise in the 2007-2013 period.</p>
<p><b>What requirements are there for partnerships to become formally established in your OP's?</b> (e.g. they need to: write a declaration with intent to work together, prepare a more detailed partnership agreement detailing tasks/roles, launch a call for tenders to acquire partners through contracts or join up in a separate legal entity)</p>	<p>The ROPs do not prescribe how partnerships should be created; they provide guidelines designed to optimize their operations by means of a memorandum of understanding and a partner code of conduct.</p> <p>In those regions where the partnership approach is more advanced the partnerships involved in the programming process follow regional regulations which define their composition, fields of intervention and operational modalities.</p>
<p><b>What specific questions regarding partnership are asked in (previous/current) ESF application forms?</b></p>	<p>A review of the 2000-2006 ESF call for proposals shows that project proposals can be submitted either by individual organizations or by legally constituted grouping of organisations. The most recurrent types of associations include the so-called “Temporary Association of Enterprises” and Consortia.</p>
<p><b>Types of organisations typically involved in partnership (eg. social partners, NGOs, companies, academia, etc.) in the OP(s)</b></p>	<p>The bodies and organisations making up the socio-economic partnerships envisaged by the ROPs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most representative employers’ organisations,</li> <li>• Credit organisations,</li> <li>• Workers’ organisations,</li> <li>• Organisations representing the third sector, the voluntary sector and non-profit bodies,</li> <li>• Environmental organisations,</li> <li>• Organisations promoting equal opportunities,</li> <li>• Organisations working to prevent discrimination against the disabled.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, actors identified by the regional and local institutions, representing specific interests present in the geographical area concerned, can also be invited to take part. Participation may also be extended to other collective or semi-institutional actors with specialised fields of interest, such as development</p>

	<p>agencies, universities and research centres, banking foundations, chambers of commerce and other local bodies.</p>
<p><b>If partnerships are embedded within existing national, regional or local structures, how are these different levels linked to each other and how does this facilitate mainstreaming in the OP(s)?</b>  (See Note 2)</p>	<p>Each region is organised autonomously to define and organise the partnership structures. Indeed, there are significant differences between regions both in the way they apply the partnership approach and the ways the partnerships operate. In some regions, partnerships are only set up in a ‘Structural Funds’ context, while in others they also operate through programming laws.</p> <p>In the ROPs of those regions which more closely followed the partnership approach during the previous programming period, official consultation and partnership bodies of a thematic and/or sectoral nature have been established. These bodies play a role in defining and coordinating regional policies and in implementing the priorities of the Operational Programmes. They represent stakeholders as well as regional and local authorities.</p>
<p><b>How do the choices of the OPs in terms of partnership address the EC regulation?</b>  (See Note 3)</p>	<p>All the ROPs have implemented the guidelines set out in the EC regulations on partnerships and most of them have based their partnership approach locally on the NSRF guidelines governing the principles and operational model applicable to relationships between partners.</p>
<p><b>Are there major differences with how partnership was organised in the past OP(s)? Why was the choice made to change? Did EQUAL have influence on this choice and, if yes, how?</b></p>	<p>It is difficult at this stage to identify differences in the way partnerships are organised with respect to the previous programming period. However, it is an established fact that experiments in Development Partnerships under the Equal Community Initiative have made it possible to assess the importance of action by partners in resolving social inclusion issues and to help transfer the innovative nature and effectiveness of the partnership model to Structural Funds.</p> <p>Participants in the Equal partnerships consist of a series of bodies, with various forms of legal status and institutional mandate, who are required to agree on shared objectives, roles and responsibilities in defining and implementing strategies for action at the local level.</p> <p>This operational mobility is fully implemented in the principle of empowerment, which envisages the active involvement of all stakeholders, including final beneficiaries, right from the design stage, with the aim of promoting the socialisation of the initiative at all levels of the partnership.</p> <p>The partnership principle has governed not just the design dimension, but also the operation of the Programme. Indeed, Equal has made it possible to experiment a new multi-level model of governance based on the subsidiarity principle, through the joint implementation of the Programme by the Ministry</p>

	<p>of Labour and Social Security as well as the Regional Authorities and Autonomous Provincial Authorities.</p>
<p><b>What are the strong points of the way the OP(s) organise(s) partnership?</b></p>	<p>The strengths of the partnership highlighted in the ROPs are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An awareness of needs;</li> <li>2. The appropriate definition of priorities and implementation procedures;</li> </ol> <p>Effective communication between stakeholders, which fosters cooperation and the integration of social, training and employment policies.</p>
<p><b>What are the drawbacks of the way the OP(s) organise(s) partnership?</b></p>	<p>The weaknesses that have emerged are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The risk that the implementation of the partnership is only a formal procedure rather than an effective contribution to achieving the set goals;</li> <li>2. The partners in some cases are not sufficiently representative and sometimes have inadequate technical abilities;</li> <li>3. The need for confidentiality;</li> <li>4. Possible conflicts of interest;</li> <li>5. Organisational difficulties and the economic sustainability of the partnership.</li> </ol>
<p><b>What measures, if any, are being taken to build on the strong points and reduce the drawbacks in the OP(s)?</b></p>	<p>The NSRF and ROPs provide examples of various measures that can be implemented to increase partner participation and reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness of the collaboration at the various levels.</p> <p>Of the instruments identified to promote empowerment and reduce weaknesses while at the same time reinforcing the strengths of the partnership, the following in particular are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing partnership fora;</li> <li>• Creating monitoring committees;</li> <li>• Setting up thematic, sectoral and local committees for discussion and dialogue;</li> <li>• Adopting a partnership agenda;</li> <li>• Organising focus groups on the opportunities and arrangements for initiating specific actions;</li> <li>• Using questionnaires to collect information;</li> <li>• Holding hearings and consultations with privileged experts.</li> <li>• To prevent any conflict of interest and enable all the partners to play a more fruitful and effective role for the purpose of drawing up and implementing regional policies, the ROPs act to foster rapid, transparent, full and accessible information for and between all members of the partnership, including the use of simplified document abstracts, user-friendly web pages,</li> </ul>

	dedicated web sites and mailing lists.
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## **Notes**

### **Note 1**

- o function of partnership within the OP: ranging from implementation of activities on the ground (e.g. through projects) to high level strategic decision making (e.g. in monitoring committee etc.)
- o stability of partnership: ranging from supporting ad hoc, task oriented partnerships to permanent, institutionalised partnerships
- o importance of ESF funding for partnership: highly dependent to small influence
- o mainly cross-sector partnerships or within a sector
- o mainly cross-(sub)regional partnerships or within a (sub)region
- o highly formalised (e.g. legally binding agreements) to informal
- o etc.....

### **Note 2**

Mainstreaming refers here to vertical mainstreaming where lessons learnt and good practice need to be taken up by higher levels of the organisational or political system.

### **Note 3**

Art. 3: promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners and non-governmental organisations, at the transnational, national, regional and local levels in order to mobilise for reforms in the field of employment and labour market inclusiveness.

Art. 5:

1. The ESF shall promote good governance and partnership. Its support shall be designed and implemented at the appropriate territorial level taking into account the national, regional and local level according to the institutional arrangements specific to each Member State.
2. The Member States shall ensure the involvement of the social partners and adequate consultation and participation of other stakeholders, at the appropriate territorial level, in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of ESF support.
3. The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions funded under Article 3. Under the Convergence objective, an appropriate amount of ESF resources shall be allocated to capacity-building, which shall include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular as regards adaptability of workers and enterprises referred to in Article 3(1)(a).
4. The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation and access by nongovernmental organisations to the funded activities, notably in the domains of social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities.