

THE REGIONAL DIAGNOSIS – EMILIA ROMAGNA REGION

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Executive Summary

The Emilia-Romagna Region represents a consolidated example of a regional model for the design and implementation of integrated territorial strategies within the framework of the 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy. The model is embedded in a broader system of strategic planning and multi-level governance, characterised by a long-standing experience in coordinated territorial development and the integration of European and national funding instruments.

Within Policy Objective 5 (“A Europe closer to citizens”), the Region has activated two main types of territorial strategies: the Transformative Urban Agendas for Sustainable Development (ATUSS), targeting urban and intermediate systems, and the Territorial Strategies for Mountain and Inner Areas (STAMI), focusing on territories characterised by structural fragilities. These instruments reflect a differentiated approach to territorial development, aligned with both European regulatory requirements and regional strategic priorities.

The analysis of the regional model highlights a structured strategic framework, based on the Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 and the Pact for Labour and Climate, which provides a common reference for territorial strategies. Within this framework, territorial coalitions are required to define medium- to long-term visions and to identify development priorities consistent with regional and European objectives.

From a territorial perspective, the model adopts a place-based approach, based on the differentiation of territorial contexts and the identification of local needs and potentials. Territorial perimeters are formally defined through regional acts and cover a significant share of the regional territory and population, ensuring a broad scope of intervention across both urban and inner areas.

The governance system is structured across multiple levels, with a central coordinating role played by the Region and an active role of territorial coalitions in the design and implementation of strategies. The model is based on a combination of formal procedures and continuous interaction between regional and local actors, supported by technical and methodological tools.

Cross-sectoral integration is embedded in the design of the model through the use of multi-fund programming approaches and coordination instruments such as Integrated Territorial Investments. In particular, the integration between different policy domains is further developed in the case of STAMI strategies linked to the National Strategy for Inner Areas, where economic development interventions are combined with essential services.

The funding model is based on a core allocation of ERDF and ESF+ resources, complemented by national funds in specific cases. Implementation is carried out through coordinated but distinct instruments, allowing the combination of different funding sources within a common strategic framework. At the same time, the coexistence of multiple instruments contributes to a certain level of administrative complexity.

Monitoring systems are well developed with regard to individual operations, in line with Cohesion Policy requirements, but are less structured at the level of territorial strategies as integrated frameworks. Current developments include pilot initiatives aimed at strengthening monitoring tools, including data visualisation and participatory approaches.

The analysis also highlights a number of practices that contribute to the functioning of the model, including structured capacity-building mechanisms (such as the LaSTI laboratory), pilot initiatives in civic monitoring and citizen engagement, and the development of advanced monitoring tools based on data integration and visualisation.

At the same time, some aspects of the model appear as areas for further development, particularly with regard to the operational dimension of cross-sectoral integration, the organisation of multi-fund implementation processes, and the evolution of monitoring systems towards more integrated approaches.

Overall, the Emilia-Romagna model can be described as a structured and articulated system, combining strategic guidance, territorial differentiation, and coordinated implementation mechanisms. Its ongoing evolution, particularly in relation to integration, monitoring, and participation, provides relevant elements for mutual learning within the INTEGRA partnership and for the broader reflection on the future development of territorial strategies in Cohesion Policy.

1. Introduction

Emilia-Romagna represents one of the most dynamic and complex territorial systems in both the Italian and European context. It is characterised by a strong polycentric urban structure and a highly competitive and widespread economic fabric, albeit marked by significant territorial disparities between the plains, the urban centres along the Via Emilia, the coastal areas, and the Apennine regions.

Over time, the Region has developed a well-established tradition of multi-level governance and integrated strategic planning. This has enabled the design of policy frameworks capable of combining European and national funds with innovation, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability objectives.

The development of integrated territorial strategies in the 2021–2027 programming period is embedded within this broader framework and represents a key step in the implementation of the **Regional Pact for Labour and Climate**, the **Regional Strategic Document (RSD) 2021–2027**, and the priorities of the European Union under Cohesion Policy.

This chapter introduces the regional context, defines the objectives and scope of the diagnosis, and outlines the sources and stakeholders involved in the process, thereby laying the foundations for the subsequent in-depth analysis of the regional strategy-making model.

The operational translation of the regional vision is carried out through two main instruments:

ATUSS – Transformative Urban Agendas for Sustainable Development (ERDF 5.1)

- Target urban areas and intermediate territorial systems
- Integrate key policy domains such as digital transition, climate neutrality, urban regeneration, sustainable mobility, and territorial welfare
- Built on a dual structure:
 - a long-term transformative vision (horizon 2030)
 - a first set of projects financed through Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI)

STAMI – Territorial Strategies for Mountain and Inner Areas (ERDF 5.2)

- Focus on addressing depopulation, strengthening proximity services, improving essential infrastructure, and enhancing territorial capital
- Ensure multi-level integration with SNAI, EAFRD, NRRP, and FSC resources
- Require the development of territorial analyses, a strategic vision, governance arrangements, and project fiches

1.1 General regional context

1.2 Scope of the analysis

Lo scopo della presente diagnosi è analizzare il modello regionale di elaborazione e gestione delle The purpose of this diagnosis is to analyse the regional model for the design and management of integrated territorial strategies in Emilia-Romagna within the framework of the 2021–2027 programming period, with specific reference to the implementation of **Policy Objective 5** (“A Europe closer to citizens”).

Within this objective, the Region has activated two distinct instruments:

- **Transformative Urban Agendas for Sustainable Development (ATUSS)**, targeting urban and intermediate territorial systems, under ERDF Specific Objective 5.1;

- **Integrated Territorial Strategies for Mountain and Inner Areas (STAMI)**, addressing territories characterised by structural fragilities, under ERDF Specific Objective 5.2 and coordinated with the **National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI)**.

The existence of these two types of strategies reflects the territorial differentiation envisaged by the European regulatory framework and transposed at regional level, distinguishing between urban and intermediate systems on the one hand, and mountain and inner areas on the other. While both instruments fall within the same programming architecture (PO5), they refer to different territorial contexts and governance configurations.

This diagnosis does not assess the specific project content of individual territorial strategies. Instead, it focuses on analysing the regional **strategy-making model** as a whole, with particular attention to:

- institutional and procedural architecture;
- methodological tools and regional guidelines;
- participation and co-design processes;
- mechanisms for sectoral and multi-fund integration;
- criteria for the selection and financing of interventions;
- monitoring and evaluation systems;
- the extent to which strategies incorporate transformative and innovative dimensions.

The analysis follows the methodological structure proposed by the **INTEGRA project**, articulated into seven analytical modules (*Strategic Dimension, Territorial Focus, Governance, Cross-sectoral Integration, Funding & Finance, Monitoring, Transformative Capacity*), in order to ensure internal consistency and comparability with other partner regions.

The diagnosis also provides a knowledge base for the formulation of potential recommendations and contributes to the mutual learning activities envisaged by the project.

1.3 Sources and stakeholders consulted

The diagnosis is based on a wide range of documentary, regulatory, and programmatic sources, described in detail in the References section (Chapter 4). The main sources include:

- regional acts defining the eligible areas for territorial strategies (DGR 42/2022 and 512/2022);
- regional policy guidelines (DGR 1635/2021, DGR 2100/2022, DGR 2101/2022 and related decisions);
- the **Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027** and related programming documents (ERDF Programme, ESF+ Programme, Regional Agenda 2030);
- Partnership Agreement documents, strategic guidelines, and regulations of the 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy;
- documents and guidelines related to **SNAI** and coordination with national funds;
- technical and informational materials provided by the Region and **ART-ER**, including presentations, templates, tables, indicators, and operational fiches;
- ATUSS and STAMI territorial strategies and related ITIs.

The analytical process also benefited from exchanges with:

- representatives of the Managing Authorities of the ERDF and ESF+ Programmes;
- technical representatives of the territorial coalitions involved in the preparation of ATUSS and STAMI, as well as local technical assistance providers (particularly for STAMI);
- local stakeholders involved, or not involved, in co-design processes (municipalities, unions of municipalities, provinces, metropolitan city, socio-economic partners, and third-sector actors).

This combination of sources and stakeholders made it possible to reconstruct a comprehensive, up-to-date, and coherent picture of the regional model, providing robust evidence for the subsequent analytical sections.

2. Analysis of the Regional Model

2.1 Strategic Dimension

The Emilia-Romagna Region has defined a highly structured and coherent strategic model, with a strong focus on reducing territorial inequalities. This model is grounded in the regional mandate programme, the Pact for Labour and Climate, and the Regional Strategic Document (RSD) 2021–2027.

- Territorial coalitions, under the responsibility of local authorities (Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities), are explicitly required to develop long-term local strategic visions (with a 2030 horizon) and to identify the changes they aim to achieve within their territories (including expected results, particularly for STAMI);
- The model is aligned with European strategic frameworks through the RSD and the Programmes, as well as with the SNAI in the case of inner areas;
- Systematic forms of regional coordination are envisaged to ensure coherence between territorial strategies and regional sectoral policies;
- The process incorporates elements of innovation in policy-making, including co-design approaches, experimentation, multi-level governance, flagship projects, a place-based approach, and a dual focus on local development and service provision to citizens;
- The regional strategic vision is operationalised through two territorial instruments: ATUSS (urban areas) and STAMI (mountain and inner areas), supported by ITIs and ERDF/ESF+ resources and, for STAMI only, also by FSC and national SNAI resources.

The Emilia-Romagna Region requires territorial coalitions to develop a territorial development strategy in accordance with Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, within the framework of Policy Objective 5 “A Europe closer to citizens”. The definition of a medium- to long-term strategic vision therefore constitutes a formal requirement for accessing ERDF and ESF+ regional programme resources and is an integral part of the programming pathway defined by the Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 and the operational guidelines approved by the Regional Government.

The involvement of territorial coalitions in the construction of the strategic vision takes place through a structured process that combines regional guidance and territorial initiative. In an initial phase, the Region defines the reference framework by identifying eligible areas, clarifying general objectives consistent with the Pact for Labour and Climate, specifying the minimum content required for strategies, and providing methodological and operational guidance, including shared templates for drafting strategy documents.

In the case of the Territorial Strategies for Mountain and Inner Areas (STAMI), this process is preceded by a preliminary phase of territorial delimitation, carried out in coordination with local actors and formalised through specific regional decisions, which defines the geographical scope within which coalitions are required to operate.

On this basis, territorial coalitions, composed of Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities, develop their strategic proposals. In this phase, they carry out an analysis of development needs and territorial potentials, identify priority areas for intervention, and define a transformative vision with a 2030 horizon, consistent with regional objectives.

This vision is not developed in isolation but is embedded within a broader planning framework. For ATUSS, coalitions often refer to existing local planning and programming instruments (such as General Urban Plans (PUG), strategic plans, Single Programming Documents (DUP), or other policy documents) integrating their content into the new territorial strategy.

For STAMI, the reference framework also includes alignment with the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) and, for the four areas already involved in the 2014–2020 cycle, continuity with previously approved area-based strategies, which are required to be updated and further developed.

The strategic proposal developed at territorial level is subject to a technical review and dialogue with the regional coordination structure for integrated programming. In this phase, the Region verifies the coherence of the strategy with European regulatory requirements, the objectives of the ERDF and ESF+ Programmes, and regional policy guidelines, requesting clarifications or adjustments where necessary.

The process takes the form of a negotiated approach, whereby territorial authorities cooperate with the Managing Authority to define the scope of eligible interventions and ensure methodological and strategic alignment.

At the end of this process, the strategy is formally approved through a Regional Government Decision. The resulting strategic vision becomes the reference framework for the subsequent selection of operations and the implementation of interventions through the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument.

Territorial coalitions maintain an active role in the governance of implementation. However, the strategy is firmly embedded within a unitary regional framework, which defines criteria, resources, timelines, and monitoring arrangements.

In this sense, the development of the strategic vision follows a bottom-up logic, but within a structured and coordinated regional framework that ensures consistency with the overall objectives of the 2021–2027 programming period.

2. Are there specific tools at the regional level supporting the formulation of the strategic vision?

The Emilia-Romagna Region provides a structured set of strategic, methodological, and operational tools to support territorial coalitions in the formulation of their strategic vision. These tools aim to ensure coherence with regional and European programming frameworks, methodological consistency across territories, and adequate administrative capacity at the local level.

The main reference is the Regional Strategic Document (RSD) 2021–2027, which defines the overarching objectives of integrated programming, identifies territorial areas of intervention, and assigns a specific role to integrated territorial strategies within the implementation of Policy Objective 5. The RSD constitutes the strategic framework within which coalitions are required to position their development vision for 2030, ensuring consistency with the Pact for Labour and Climate and regional priorities.

This framework is complemented by operational guidelines adopted through DGR 1635/2021 and subsequently updated with DGR 2100/2022 (for STAMI) and DGR 2101/2022 (for ATUSS). These acts specify:

- minimum requirements and criteria for strategies;
- mandatory elements to be included;
- timelines for the process;
- the financial framework available for each area.

They also provide standardised templates for drafting strategies and project fiches, including specific sections on:

- eligible interventions;
- output and result indicators;
- compliance requirements (including the DNSH principle);
- modalities for integrating ERDF and ESF+ resources.

Furthermore, these acts define the procedures for the appraisal and evaluation of strategies and interventions, identify the competent bodies, and regulate cooperation mechanisms between the Region and territorial coalitions.

Alongside documentary tools, the Region has activated institutional support and coordination mechanisms. In particular, inter-institutional working groups and territorial conferences have been organised to share financial frameworks, specific objectives of the ERDF and ESF+ Programmes, and implementation modalities. The process has also been supported by regional technical groups responsible for the appraisal and accompaniment of strategies within the integrated programming coordination structure.

For STAMI, additional measures have been introduced to strengthen administrative capacity. A dedicated financial contribution has been allocated to each area to support the activation of local technical assistance structures, assisting coalitions in the preparation and early implementation phases of the strategies.

At the same time, the regional in-house agency ART-ER has provided operational support during the analytical and accompaniment phases, particularly in areas that initially lacked dedicated technical assistance. This support included territorial analysis, methodological guidance, and capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening local competencies in strategy development.

Overall, these regional tools do not replace the autonomy of territorial coalitions in defining their strategic vision. Rather, they guide and structure the process within a shared methodological framework, ensuring strategic coherence, consistency in minimum content, and adequate technical-administrative support during both the formulation and implementation phases.

3. To what extent does the regional vision align with overarching frameworks?

The regional vision underpinning integrated territorial strategies is embedded within a multi-level system of strategic and regulatory references, characterised by strong anchoring in regional priorities while maintaining coherence with European and national frameworks.

The Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 (RSD) takes as its primary reference the regional mandate programme and the Pact for Labour and Climate, which define transformation objectives related to ecological transition, social cohesion, quality of employment, innovation, and the reduction of territorial disparities. Territorial strategies (ATUSS and STAMI) are required to translate these objectives at the local level, contributing to their territorial anchoring.

Within this framework, alignment with major European and global strategies is ensured through the RSD and the Pact, which explicitly refer to objectives linked to the European Green Deal, climate neutrality, circular economy, energy efficiency, as well as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the regional Agenda 2030 strategy. These references provide an overarching coherence framework, while the operational design of territorial strategies remains primarily anchored in regional priorities.

With regard to the European regulatory framework, territorial strategies are designed and implemented in compliance with the Cohesion Policy Regulations 2021–2027, particularly Articles 28 and 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, which define integrated territorial development and establish the mandatory content of strategies. Alignment with these regulations is therefore not optional but constitutes a structural requirement, shaping the architecture, mandatory elements, and implementation modalities (through ITIs) of the strategies.

In the case of STAMI, alignment also extends to the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) for territories classified as inner areas at national level. In these cases, territorial strategies must align with national multi-level governance arrangements and, for areas already involved in the 2014–2020 cycle, ensure continuity with previously approved strategies.

Alignment with overarching frameworks goes beyond formal references. European and national objectives, as incorporated into the RSD and the ERDF and ESF+ Programmes, are reflected in the selection criteria for operations, approved by the Monitoring Committees, and in the coherence requirements imposed on territorial strategies.

In this way, alignment with EU and national frameworks is translated into operational conditions for eligibility and project evaluation, while preserving the centrality of regional strategic priorities in shaping the overall vision.

4. Are coordination mechanisms in place to avoid overlaps between different strategies?

The regional model provides for a multi-level governance system aimed at ensuring coherence between integrated territorial strategies and other policy and programming instruments. Coordination can be understood at three distinct but interrelated levels.

A first level concerns the relationship between territorial strategies and other regional policies, particularly within the framework of the 2021–2027 European funds. In this context, coordination is formally ensured through the integrated programming structure, which brings together ERDF and ESF+ and provides for the implementation of strategies through the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument. In the case of STAMI, coordination with EAFRD has also been explicitly envisaged, especially considering that rural development programming follows a different timeline and that, during the period under review, there was a time lag between the launch of STAMI and the activation of the new Common Agricultural Policy programming cycle. Complementarities are also envisaged with FSC, EMFAF, and other national resources.

As regards ordinary regional policies not directly linked to Cohesion Policy funds, coordination mainly takes place at the level of general strategic coherence, while operational integration across programmes may be less structured, although no systematic evidence of overlap has emerged.

A second level of coordination concerns the relationship between territorial strategies and local planning and programming instruments. Territorial coalitions have been encouraged to develop strategies by drawing on and reusing existing instruments such as General Urban Plans (PUG), strategic plans, Single Programming Documents (DUP), and other local policy documents. In particular, ATUSS frequently refer to such instruments as a basis for defining the 2030 vision, while STAMI are linked to area-based strategies already developed under the SNAI 2014–2020 cycle. This approach fosters alignment between new territorial strategies and existing local planning instruments, thereby reducing the risk of duplication across programming documents.

A third level concerns coordination between territorial strategies financed under the RSD and other strategies or programmes active in the same territories, such as the Metropolitan Cities Operational Programme 2014–2020 (PON METRO), the National Strategy for Inner Areas, Local Action Plans of Local Action Groups (LAGs), and some investment lines under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). In these cases, coordination is envisaged in terms of complementarity and coherence, although this may vary depending on territorial contexts.

For example, within the territory of the Metropolitan City of Bologna, interventions linked to ATUSS, STAMI, NRRP (including Integrated Urban Plans), and other funding lines coexist; the verification of operational complementarities is to a significant extent entrusted to territorial coalitions, with regional support during the appraisal phase. In the case of STAMI, an analysis of the level of integration and coherence with LAG Local Action Plans has also been carried out in order to foster synergies between instruments.

At the institutional level, the main coordination mechanisms include the 2021–2027 integrated programming coordination structure established by DGR 586/2021, the Technical Committee for integrated programming, which appraises and evaluates territorial strategies, territorial conferences for dialogue with local authorities, and a verification and evaluation unit operating according to common criteria for both ATUSS and STAMI.

The use of a shared methodological framework and a single appraisal pathway for territorial strategies contributes to ensuring an integrated reading and reducing the risk of overlaps within Cohesion Policy funds.

Overall, the regional system includes formal coordination tools and multi-level dialogue mechanisms aimed at avoiding duplication and promoting complementarity between strategies and policies.

5. Does the model foster innovative policy-making approaches?

The regional model of integrated territorial strategies is embedded in a framework which, at the programming level, seeks to promote innovative approaches to the design and implementation of territorial policies.

The Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 explicitly refers to the need for an integrated policy mix and a place-based approach, in which territorial strategies are conceived as multi-level governance tools capable of connecting different sectoral objectives and resources from multiple funds. In this sense, the systematic introduction of ATUSS and STAMI, implemented through the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument, represents a novelty compared with the 2014–2020 cycle, during which this instrument was not used in a structured way at regional scale.

At the same time, the model builds on a regional tradition of negotiated programming and institutional cooperation, already experimented with in previous cycles and partly updated in the current programming period.

From an institutional design perspective, territorial strategies are conceived as multi-fund and multi-objective instruments, capable of integrating ERDF and ESF+ resources and, in the case of STAMI, also connecting with EAFRD, FSC, SNAI, and other funding sources. This “keyboard of funds” is explicitly envisaged in the operational guidelines and programming documents as a qualifying feature of the integrated approach.

Regional guidelines also refer to the involvement of local communities, stakeholders, and institutional actors during both the preparation and implementation phases of the strategies, in line with Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. In particular, ATUSS allow for the identification of flagship projects in areas such as innovation, climate transition, and digital transformation, intended to act as catalysts for the long-term strategic vision.

Strategies are also formally open to updates and adjustments during implementation, thus taking the form of dynamic instruments rather than closed frameworks fixed at the moment of approval.

Alongside these programmatic features, there is also a specific experience of experimentation in the field of civic participation within Cohesion Policy. Emilia-Romagna has taken part in a pilot process promoted in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on citizen participation in Cohesion Policy, developing tools and guidelines (Citizen Participation Playbook) and launching a second phase aimed at consolidating participatory practices.

This experience represents an example of administrative and methodological innovation in the governance of European funds and is broadly consistent with the overall approach underpinning integrated territorial strategies.

At the same time, it should be noted that the actual operational translation of some of the innovative elements envisaged in the guidelines may vary depending on territorial contexts and on the implementation arrangements adopted by individual coalitions.

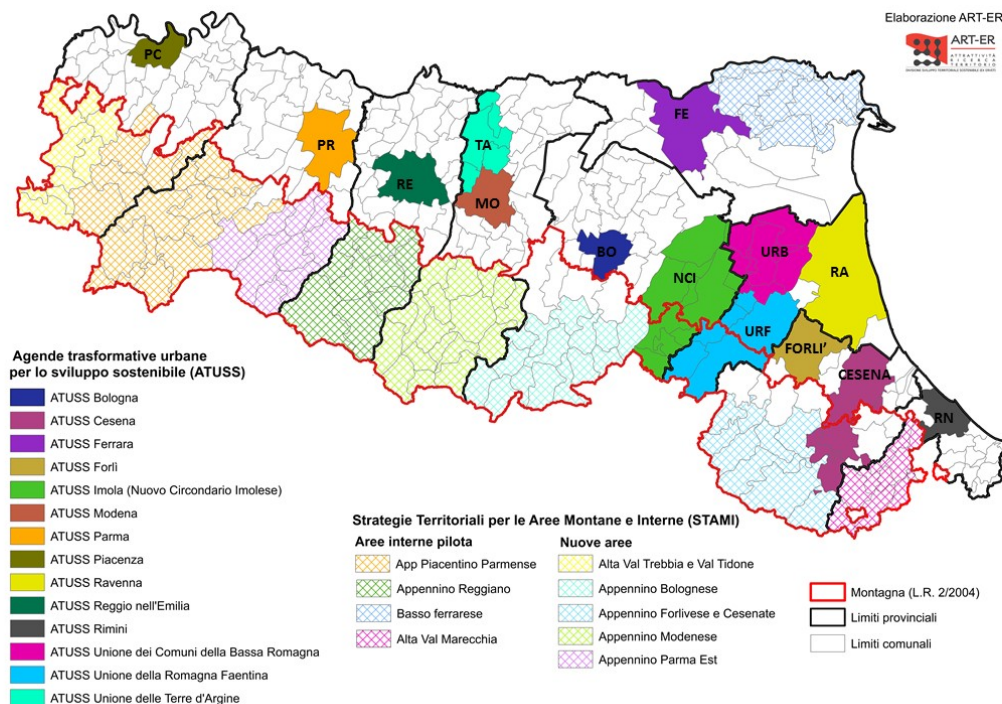
2.2 Territorial Focus

The Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 adopts a place-based approach consistent with Policy Objective 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, based on the differentiation of territorial contexts, the analysis of local needs and potentials, and the objective of reducing territorial disparities.

- The territorial perimeters of strategies are defined through formal regional acts, in line with EU Regulations and the Partnership Agreement. For STAMI, delimitation also takes into account the national mapping of inner areas 2021–2027, regional fragility criteria, and previous experiences under the 2014–2020 cycle;
- Perimeters are anchored to administrative boundaries (Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities) and are not modifiable once approved; flexibility mainly concerns strategic content and the possibility of updating strategies over time. In the case of STAMI, functional collaborations may emerge with territories and actors outside the formally defined area;
- Territorial strategies cover a significant share of the region, including all major cities and intermediate territorial systems (ATUSS), as well as a wide network of mountain and inner areas (STAMI), following a logic of territorial differentiation;
- The model promotes inter-municipal cooperation through territorial coalitions established on a supra-municipal basis, strengthening coordination among local authorities, including in contexts not fully aligned with pre-existing institutional arrangements.

1. How are the territorial perimeters of strategies defined?

The definition of territorial perimeters for integrated strategies is carried out through formal decisions of the Regional Government, which identify eligible areas within the framework of Policy Objective 5. The reference framework was initially established with DGR 1635/2021 and subsequently updated through additional acts (including DGR 42/2022, DGR 512/2022, and DGR 901/2022), which refined and consolidated the list of territorial areas involved.



In the case of ATUSS, territorial perimeters are defined by identifying eligible municipalities, including provincial capitals and certain intermediate territorial systems represented by Unions of Municipalities with

urban or peri-urban characteristics. The delimitation is therefore primarily based on a functional and administrative criterion, recognising the role of urban centres and structured territorial systems in driving transformation processes consistent with regional objectives. The areas are clearly identified in regional acts, referring to already established institutional entities such as individual municipalities or unions.

For STAMI, the definition of perimeters is preceded by a specific phase aimed at identifying eligible mountain and inner areas. This process is based on criteria shared at national level, in coherence with SNAI, and takes into account indicators of demographic, social, and economic fragility, as well as infrastructure availability and distance from major service centres. The perimeters are constructed in line with administrative boundaries and the classification of mountain municipalities, aggregating multiple municipalities into a single territorial area. For SNAI areas, delimitation has been carried out in coordination with the national level and based on the updated national mapping.

STAMI include the four pilot areas already active in the 2014–2020 cycle under SNAI, three new inner areas selected according to nationally shared criteria and formalised through specific regional acts, as well as two additional mountain areas identified by the Region in line with its territorial priorities. The definition of the perimeter thus represents a formal and preliminary step in the development of the strategy, establishing the geographical scope within which territorial coalitions operate.

Overall, territorial perimeters are defined through a regulated and formalised process, based on regional administrative acts and, in the case of inner areas, on criteria shared with the national level. This approach ensures consistency between geographical scope, eligibility criteria, and policy objectives.

2. Does the regional model apply concepts of functional areas or place-based criteria?

The regional model explicitly applies a place-based approach, which represents one of the core principles of the Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027. The adopted approach places territorial specificities, contextual differentiation, and the integrated analysis of local needs and potentials at the centre, with the aim of addressing territorial disparities, particularly in mountain, peripheral, and marginal urban areas, through territorially tailored strategies.

The Regional Strategic Document structures the interpretation of the regional territory through the identification of macro-territorial axes, including the Apennine axis, the Po Valley lowlands, the coastal axis, and the Via Emilia axis. This classification does not have administrative value but represents an analytical tool for interpreting socio-economic dynamics and differentiated development trajectories across the region. Within this framework, the development of integrated territorial strategies is based on a differentiated reading of local assets and structural conditions.

A further key element of the place-based approach is the development, at regional level, of a composite index of territorial fragility, which combines demographic, social, and economic indicators to classify municipalities according to their level of fragility. This tool has enabled the creation of a regional map of territorial vulnerability, used to guide territorial policy choices and, in particular, the identification of mountain and inner areas involved in STAMI.

In the case of STAMI, the place-based approach takes on a specific configuration. The Regional Strategic Document adopts an inclusive perspective aimed at covering the entire regional mountain area, moving beyond a fragmented or selective logic. The delimitation of areas results from the combination of regional criteria and national mapping of inner areas, integrating indicators of fragility, the classification of mountain municipalities, and nationally defined criteria. For the first time in regional programming, supra-municipal territorial aggregations have been systematically included within the strategy framework, strengthening the inter-municipal dimension of territorial policies.

For ATUSS, territorial delimitation is based on the identification of urban centres and intermediate territorial systems, configured as functional areas characterised by consolidated socio-economic and infrastructural relationships, although formally anchored to existing administrative boundaries.

However, the final configuration of perimeters reflects the need to ensure consistency with institutional boundaries and national eligibility criteria, which influence the size and internal composition of the areas, limiting the full application of a purely functional territorial approach.

3. What is the prevailing approach to urban–rural linkages?

The regional model does not provide for a single, explicit and uniform mechanism specifically dedicated to urban–rural linkages. However, territorial interdependencies emerge in different ways within ATUSS and STAMI.

In the case of ATUSS, the approach is primarily oriented towards urban systems and intermediate territories identified as functional areas. In particular, in the ATUSS built on Unions of Municipalities, the perimeter often includes territories combining urban and rural components, effectively configuring city–hinterland or wider functional areas. In these cases, strategies refer to shared services between central municipalities and surrounding areas, sustainable mobility interventions at supra-municipal scale, and cultural, environmental, or digital projects covering the entire functional area. However, this integration depends largely on the specific territorial configuration of each coalition and is not a uniform structural requirement across all ATUSS.

STAMI, by definition, concern mountain and inner areas with a predominantly rural character. The adopted approach tends to cover the entire regional mountain territory, including small and medium-sized centres that act as service hubs for surrounding municipalities where present. The main focus is on strengthening proximity services, ensuring territorial continuity between valley floors and more peripheral areas, and maintaining territorial presence.

In this context, linkages with urban centres are not always explicitly structured within the strategies but may emerge through specific projects or institutional arrangements.

Some examples of urban–rural integration can be observed at territorial level. In SNAI areas, particularly in the health sector, coordination with hospitals located in urban centres has been strengthened, accompanied by interventions in transport systems to improve emergency response. In the Bologna Apennine area, the strategy is linked to the Metropolitan City’s mountain policy framework, which includes initiatives supporting mountain areas and, in some cases, reallocations of resources between urban and mountain territories. Similarly, in the Reggio Emilia Apennine area, efforts have been made to strengthen linkages with the main urban centre, including through the valorisation of the UNESCO MAB area and collaboration with the university system.

Overall, the regional approach is not based on an explicit theoretical framework for urban–rural linkages but rather defines territorial areas that may, depending on context, include or activate connections between interdependent systems. The intensity and formalisation of such linkages vary significantly depending on territorial characteristics and the choices made by individual coalitions.

4. Are cross-border or interregional cooperation dimensions encouraged?

Interregional or cross-border cooperation does not represent a structural component of the regional model of integrated territorial strategies under Policy Objective 5. ATUSS and STAMI are conceived as territorial development instruments operating at regional and sub-regional scale, anchored to administrative perimeters defined through regional decisions and implemented through ERDF and ESF+ Programme resources.

The Regional Strategic Document refers in general terms to broader territorial axes, such as the Po River corridor, the Apennine ridge, and the coastal system, which may potentially constitute functional areas open

to interregional dynamics. However, these references do not translate into specific mechanisms or formal requirements for interregional cooperation within territorial strategies.

In the case of STAMI, the identification of inner areas is carried out in coordination with the national mapping under SNAI, within a multi-level framework involving the central government. Even in this case, however, cooperation mainly develops within the regional system and in relation to the national level, rather than through formalised cooperation with neighbouring regions.

References to wider territorial scales can nonetheless emerge at project level or in specific contexts, for example in relation to shared natural and cultural systems such as the Po Delta or the Po Grande UNESCO MAB area, trans-regional Apennine corridors, long-distance cultural routes such as the Via Francigena, or coastal development initiatives linked to sectoral instruments such as EMFAF. These elements may facilitate interregional cooperation in perspective, but they are not configured as systematic or mandatory components of ATUSS and STAMI.

Overall, the regional model does not include dedicated mechanisms for cross-border or interregional cooperation within Policy Objective 5. Any cooperation dimension emerges in an occasional or context-specific manner, depending on territorial characteristics or sectoral initiatives, rather than as an integral part of the institutional design of integrated territorial strategies.

5. How much flexibility does the model allow to adapt to diverse territorial contexts?

The degree of flexibility of the regional model can be understood as the result of a balance between multi-level regulatory constraints and the room for adaptation granted to territorial coalitions. European Regulations define a relatively open framework for integrated territorial development strategies, the Partnership Agreement introduces further conditions and priorities, and the Regional Strategic Document and operational guidelines specify territorial scope, minimum content, and eligibility criteria. Within this progressive top-down definition, territorial coalitions retain some capacity to adapt strategies to local contexts.

For ATUSS, flexibility does not significantly concern the definition of territorial perimeters, as eligible areas are largely predefined in regional acts and aligned with the Regional Strategic Document. Territories may decide whether to participate in the designated coalition, but they cannot autonomously redefine the perimeter. The main room for adaptation lies in the content of the strategies, as coalitions can select thematic priorities and interventions consistent with regional objectives and Programme priorities, adjusting the intensity and combination of actions to local needs. Strategies may also be updated and integrated over time, for example in response to new funding opportunities, while maintaining the original territorial perimeter and overall financial framework.

In the case of STAMI, flexibility takes a slightly different form. The identification of eligible areas was preceded by a delimitation process combining regional and national criteria, which included elements of dialogue with local territories. Although perimeters are formally defined through regional decisions, the process involved moments of consultation and negotiation. However, once established, the perimeters cannot be modified unilaterally by the coalitions.

The main flexibility concerns the internal articulation of the strategies, which must respond to the heterogeneity of mountain and inner areas, socio-demographic differences, and infrastructure gaps. The multi-fund structure and the possibility of integrating additional interventions over time provide a certain degree of adaptability during implementation, within the boundaries defined by regional objectives and selection criteria.

Overall, the regional model can be described as moderately flexible, operating within a structured system of constraints. Territorial perimeters are formally defined and relatively stable, while flexibility is mainly concentrated in the definition of strategic priorities, the selection of projects, and the possibility of updating strategies during implementation.

6. What is the coverage of the approved perimeters? (area, population, number of municipalities)

The territorial strategies approved under Policy Objective 5 cover a significant share of both the regional territory and population, through two distinct sets of perimeters, ATUSS and STAMI.

With regard to ATUSS, the model involves 14 cities and intermediate territorial systems, covering a total of 42 municipalities. The surface area concerned is approximately 4,950 square kilometres, corresponding to around 22 percent of the regional territory. The population involved amounts to 2,148,045 inhabitants, corresponding to approximately 48 percent of the total regional population. The territorial coverage of ATUSS varies depending on the configuration of each coalition, including both single municipalities and groupings of municipalities within unions or intermediate territorial systems.

STAMI concern 9 mountain and inner areas identified through the regional and national delimitation process. These areas include Appennino Reggiano, Basso Ferrarese, Appennino Piacentino-Parmense, Alta Valmarecchia, Appennino Parma Est, Appennino Forlivese-Cesenate, Appennino Modenese, Alta Val Trebbia–Val Tidone, and Appennino Bolognese.

Overall, STAMI involve 108 municipalities and cover a surface area of approximately 8,664 square kilometres, corresponding to about 38 percent of the regional territory. The population residing in STAMI areas is 379,264 inhabitants, corresponding to approximately 8.5 percent of the regional population.

Taken together, ATUSS and STAMI cover more than 60 percent of the regional territory and more than half of the population of Emilia-Romagna, although with a differentiated distribution between urban and mountain or inner areas. This territorial coverage reflects the regional choice to intervene both in major urban centres and intermediate systems, and in areas characterised by demographic and structural fragility, in line with the territorial differentiation approach of the Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027.

2.3 Governance

The regional governance model for territorial strategies is structured and largely centralised at regional level, with a multi-level articulation that differs between ATUSS and STAMI.

- The Region plays a central role throughout the policy cycle, defining strategic guidelines through the Regional Strategic Document, operational criteria, and territorial perimeters, and formally approving the strategies. Coordination is ensured through a dedicated structure for integrated programming and a technical system for appraisal and evaluation;
- Implementation is entrusted to territorial coalitions composed of municipalities and unions. In the case of ATUSS, these coalitions rely on existing institutional arrangements, while for STAMI they are based on ad hoc territorial configurations that do not necessarily coincide with established administrative structures;
- Vertical coordination varies depending on the type of strategy, for ATUSS it is mainly between regional and local levels, while for STAMI it may also involve the national level, particularly in areas financed through SNAI resources;
- The model is based on continuous interaction between the Region and territorial coalitions, which supports the adaptation of strategies. However, such adaptation is mainly driven by relational and negotiated mechanisms rather than by formal feedback systems based on monitoring;
- Stakeholder involvement is foreseen, particularly during the preparation phase, while citizen participation and its role in monitoring remain limited and mainly linked to pilot experiences.

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

1. Which institutions play the main role in designing, approving, and implementing strategies at the regional level?

Within the regional model, the main role in the design, approval, and implementation of territorial strategies is played by the Emilia-Romagna Region, through an internal governance system articulated across political and technical-administrative levels, with an additional multi-level dimension in the case of STAMI.

At the political level, the Regional Government exercises strategic direction and formal approval functions. It defines the overall framework through the Regional Strategic Document and operational guidelines, coordinates the different sectoral responsibilities involved in integrated programming, and formally approves ATUSS and STAMI strategies following technical appraisal.

At the technical-administrative level, the coordination of the 2021–2027 programming cycle is entrusted to the regional structure responsible for integrated programming, within the Directorate-General in charge of European policies. This structure coordinates the preparation of territorial strategies, manages relations with local coalitions, and ensures coherence between strategies and regional Programmes.

Within this framework, a Technical Committee for integrated programming operates, composed of representatives from the various regional departments involved in fund management. This Committee is responsible for the appraisal of territorial strategies, verifying their coherence with the Regional Strategic Document, Programme objectives, and European regulatory requirements. A dedicated technical group operates within this Committee to support the evaluation process prior to formal approval.

The assessment of individual operations proposed within the strategies is carried out by a dedicated technical group, in line with the selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committees. This group works in coordination with the Managing Authorities, ensuring the consistent application of criteria and the verification of project coherence.

Implementation takes place through the Integrated Territorial Investment instrument. The overall framework of ITIs is approved by the Regional Government, while the formal approval of individual ITIs and related implementing acts is carried out through administrative decisions, in accordance with Programme procedures.

In the case of STAMI, governance assumes a more articulated multi-level dimension. For inner areas supported by national resources, coordination extends to the national level, involving the relevant national bodies and governance structures. The Region designates a responsible authority for inner areas, which oversees both the design and implementation phases and acts as a link between regional, local, and national levels.

2. What multi-level coordination mechanisms exist between national, regional, and local levels of government?

Multi-level coordination within Policy Objective 5 is embedded in the broader governance framework of Cohesion Policy, as defined by European Regulations, the Partnership Agreement, and regional Programmes. However, the intensity and configuration of coordination across levels of government differ between ATUSS and STAMI.

In the case of ATUSS, vertical coordination is primarily structured through the relationship between the Region and territorial coalitions. The national level plays an indirect role through the regulatory framework and the Partnership Agreement, as well as through standard Programme monitoring mechanisms involving the European Commission. No specific coordination mechanisms are foreseen with the national level for the design or implementation of urban strategies. The process therefore mainly takes the form of a negotiated relationship between regional and local levels within the framework of ERDF and ESF+ Programmes.

In the case of STAMI, multi-level coordination is more articulated. For inner areas benefiting from national resources under SNAI, governance involves the national level alongside the Region and local coalitions. This coordination takes place through national bodies and governance arrangements, as well as through national guidelines related to essential services. In these cases, strategies must be coherent both with the regional framework and with national priorities, and the component financed through national resources is subject to specific approval or acknowledgement procedures at central level.

For STAMI not supported by additional national resources, coordination mainly takes place between the Region and territorial coalitions, similarly to ATUSS, while still referring to the national mapping of inner areas as a criterion for eligibility.

Coordination between the Region and territorial coalitions is ensured through a structured process of dialogue and negotiation. Following the approval of operational guidelines, meetings were organised at provincial level and collective sessions were held with territorial coalitions to share methodological approaches, financial frameworks, and procedural steps. Further meetings supported the finalisation of strategies and the definition of intervention plans. These interactions did not alter territorial perimeters, which had already been formally defined, but contributed to aligning priorities, timelines, and implementation arrangements.

3. Are there regional networks or platforms supporting exchange and coordination?

The regional model includes specific mechanisms for dialogue and support aimed at facilitating exchange between the Region and territorial coalitions within Policy Objective 5, although these do not take the form of permanent formalised networks.

In the case of ATUSS, a dedicated laboratory has been established as a structured space for exchange between the Region and representatives of urban coalitions. This mechanism has supported the different phases of strategy preparation and finalisation, promoting methodological alignment, the sharing of operational challenges, and the exchange of experiences among participating territories.

For STAMI, the Regional Strategic Document envisages the establishment of the Integrated Territorial Strategies Laboratory, known as LASTI. This is conceived as a platform for learning and support, aimed at strengthening capacity, facilitating technical coordination, and promoting the exchange of practices among mountain and inner areas. Its main function lies in supporting the implementation phase, with a focus on capacity building and continuous accompaniment.

In addition to these instruments specifically linked to territorial strategies, coordination and exchange may also take place within broader regional or sectoral forums. However, these are not specifically designed for Policy Objective 5 and play a complementary rather than central role in the governance of integrated territorial strategies.

4. What capacity-building tools or administrative support are provided at the regional level?

The regional model includes mechanisms aimed at strengthening the administrative capacity of territorial coalitions, primarily developed through a process of co-programming and technical support between the Region and local actors.

Capacity-building has been supported first through a structured process of interaction between the regional level and territorial coalitions, initiated with the adoption of operational guidelines and continued through collective meetings and technical discussions. These exchanges have clarified the methodological framework of Policy Objective 5, the construction of strategies, the integration of funds, and the functioning of Integrated Territorial Investments, contributing to strengthening the capacity of local administrations to operate within an integrated programming framework.

For STAMI, additional measures have been introduced. The Region has allocated financial resources to each area to support the activation of local technical assistance, assisting coalitions during both the preparation and initial implementation phases of strategies. At the same time, the regional coordination structure has provided continuous methodological support, assisting territories in developing analyses, defining strategic visions, and supporting implementation.

The LASTI platform also plays a role in this context, mainly as a tool for technical and methodological support, aimed at consolidating competencies and facilitating exchange between territories facing similar challenges. Its function is primarily oriented towards capacity building and support rather than the creation of a permanent structured network.

5. Which institutions or coalitions play the main role in implementing strategies at the territorial scale?

6. Do local coalitions rely on existing governance arrangements or establish new ad hoc structures?

The implementation of territorial strategies is carried out by local coalitions identified within the approved perimeters, with different configurations for ATUSS and STAMI.

In the case of ATUSS, implementation relies on existing institutional arrangements, such as municipalities and unions representing intermediate territorial systems. Strategies are therefore implemented through established administrative structures with existing technical and organisational capacity. No new legal entities or formal structures are created, but rather coordination takes place among already institutionalised actors within the defined perimeter.

In the case of STAMI, the situation differs. Municipalities are grouped within perimeters defined through regional acts and, where applicable, in coherence with national mapping. These perimeters do not generally correspond to existing unions or institutional arrangements and do not constitute entities with legal personality.

As a result, territorial coalitions operate on the basis of ad hoc configurations, often involving municipalities belonging to different unions or administrative systems, usually within the same provincial boundaries. A lead

municipality is typically designated to coordinate administrative activities and manage relations with the Region.

This configuration requires the establishment of coordination mechanisms among entities that may not have previously cooperated within the same territorial framework. In some cases, this has required the development of new organisational arrangements or the adaptation of existing ones.

Overall, the regional model combines the use of existing governance structures with the creation of functional territorial groupings. ATUSS rely mainly on established institutional frameworks, while STAMI require the construction of new coordination arrangements at territorial level. The operational responsibility for individual actions remains with the beneficiaries identified in funded projects, while strategic coordination and oversight are carried out by the territorial coalitions.

7. Is stakeholder and citizen participation foreseen? At which stages?

The regional model implicitly distinguishes between stakeholder involvement, which is required under the European regulatory framework, and direct citizen participation, which is not a mandatory component of territorial strategies.

Stakeholder involvement is formally required by Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and is reflected in regional operational guidelines. Territorial strategies are expected to describe how institutional, economic, and social partners are involved in both the preparation and implementation phases. In practice, stakeholder engagement is mainly concentrated in the strategy design phase, through consultations with local authorities, business associations, third-sector organisations, and other territorial actors.

Analysis of the strategy documents shows that, in many cases, strategies build on existing participatory processes or consultation platforms already active at local level, rather than establishing entirely new participatory mechanisms.

As regards co-design of interventions, this is not systematically structured within the regional model. In some territorial contexts, thematic working groups or consultation processes have been activated to define priorities and projects, but these practices are heterogeneous and not uniformly implemented across ATUSS and STAMI.

Direct citizen participation is not explicitly required within territorial strategies. However, in some cases, projects have been funded, particularly under ESF+, aimed at supporting territorial animation, community engagement, and civic participation. In addition, the Region has taken part in a pilot initiative promoted by the European Commission in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, aimed at strengthening citizen participation in Cohesion Policy.

With regard to monitoring, no structured system of civic monitoring is currently foreseen within Policy Objective 5. However, some pilot experiences are emerging at territorial level, exploring forms of citizen involvement in the implementation and evaluation phases of interventions. These initiatives are not yet standardised and remain limited in scope.

Overall, stakeholder involvement is clearly envisaged and mainly concentrated in the strategy preparation phase, while citizen participation remains limited, uneven across territories, and largely dependent on specific projects or experimental initiatives rather than on a structured regional framework.

2.4 Cross-Sectoral Integration

The regional model promotes cross-sectoral integration mainly through programming tools and implementation mechanisms that enable the combination of funds and objectives, rather than through an explicit and fully structured policy mix design.

- Integration is structurally embedded in the programming framework, through the use of Policy Objective 5 as the main axis and the possibility to activate additional specific objectives of ERDF and ESF+, as well as, in the case of STAMI, national resources;
- The Region has also promoted a functional form of integration, requiring strategies to explicitly demonstrate the contribution of projects to overall objectives. In this respect, the “keyboard of funds” has played a key role, allowing the joint representation of interventions financed from different sources;
- Implementation instruments, including ITIs for ERDF and ESF+ and Programme Agreements for inner areas, allow for coordinated management of resources, but do not in themselves define a structured policy mix;
- The SNAI model represents the most advanced case of integration, combining local development interventions with essential services such as education, healthcare, and mobility;
- Integration is therefore ensured at a formal and procedural level, while effective functional integration across sectors largely depends on the capacity of territorial coalitions and is not supported by specific incentive or monitoring mechanisms.

1. How is the integrated approach promoted at the regional level (e.g., through strategic documents, guidance, selection criteria)?

The integrated approach is promoted at regional level not only as a formal requirement stemming from Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, but as a substantive principle guiding the design and implementation of territorial strategies.

Within the European framework, integration implies the combination of operations financed under different specific objectives or programmes. The Region has interpreted this principle at two levels, an internal level within cohesion policy programming and a broader functional and territorial level.

At the internal level, integration has been built through the use of Policy Objective 5 of the ERDF Programme as the main funding axis for territorial strategies, complemented by resources from other specific objectives of ERDF and ESF+. In the case of STAMI, additional national resources are also involved. Regional guidelines explicitly allow strategies to combine interventions across different specific objectives, with dedicated financial allocations reserved in advance and implemented through ITIs. In this way, integration is embedded in the financial architecture of the strategies.

At the functional level, integration is promoted by requiring each strategy to clearly demonstrate how individual projects contribute to shared objectives and expected results. The “keyboard of funds” has played a central role in this regard, requiring territorial coalitions to map, for each policy objective or expected outcome, which projects are financed through dedicated resources, which are supported by other funding sources, and which additional actions are planned. This approach aims to highlight coherence across interventions and to overcome a purely sectoral or fragmented perspective.

In the case of STAMI, the integrated approach is further strengthened through alignment with the SNAI model, which combines economic development with the provision of essential services. National resources are mainly directed towards services such as education, healthcare, and mobility, while ERDF resources support infrastructure and local development interventions, fostering integration between economic and social dimensions.

Implementation tools also contribute to promoting integration. The ITI allows coordinated management of ERDF and ESF+ resources within a single strategic framework. For inner areas supported by national resources, Programme Agreements provide an additional coordination mechanism across funding sources.

Finally, monitoring arrangements also support integration. For inner areas, Programme Agreements are subject to annual monitoring at national level, while at regional level, periodic reports are produced in collaboration with territorial coalitions. Within national monitoring systems, projects belonging to territorial strategies are identified through specific flags, allowing an aggregated reading of strategy implementation. Similarly, ITI lead partners are required to submit periodic reports including financial, procedural, and qualitative information.

2. Are practices of sectoral integration embedded from the design phase (e.g., in calls, funding schemes)?

Sectoral integration is embedded in the regional model from the design phase of territorial strategies, through programming choices, methodological tools, and implementation arrangements.

At the programming level, the Region has reserved specific resources within Policy Objective 5 of the ERDF Programme for the implementation of territorial strategies, while also allowing the activation of additional specific objectives of ERDF and ESF+. In the case of STAMI, national resources contribute to the same strategies. This configuration enables, from the outset, the combination of interventions across different thematic areas and funding programmes.

At the methodological level, regional guidelines require territorial coalitions to explicitly describe the integrated approach, demonstrating how individual interventions contribute to the overall objectives of the strategy. In this context, the “keyboard of funds” has played a key role, requiring the joint representation of projects financed through dedicated resources and those supported by other funding sources, in order to highlight their combined contribution to expected results.

At the implementation level, the ITI provides the main mechanism for coordinating ERDF and ESF+ resources within a single strategic framework. For inner areas supported by national resources, Programme Agreements perform a similar coordinating function across funding sources.

3. Are policy mixes or operational instruments used to ensure synergies across sectors?

The regional model does not provide for a fully structured policy mix or a portfolio-based approach across sectors. However, it relies on operational instruments that enable and facilitate the combination of interventions across different thematic areas.

The ITI is the main implementation instrument used to programme and manage ERDF and ESF+ resources in a coordinated manner within territorial strategies. While the ITI does not define the policy mix itself, it allows different types of interventions, financed under different specific objectives, to be implemented within a single administrative framework. It therefore acts as a technical enabler of integration rather than as a policy design tool.

In the case of STAMI supported by national resources, sectoral integration takes on a more explicit form. The SNAI model provides for a structured combination of local development interventions and investments in essential services such as education, healthcare, and mobility. In this context, Programme Agreements act as the implementation tool that coordinates different funding sources and operationalises the integration between development policies and service provision.

Outside the SNAI framework, synergies across sectors mainly emerge from the design of individual territorial strategies, which combine infrastructure, environmental, social, and economic interventions within a single strategic vision. However, these combinations largely depend on the choices made by territorial coalitions and are not driven by a predefined regional model of sectoral policy mix.

4. Is integration systematically monitored and evaluated during the implementation stage?

The monitoring of territorial strategies is structured within the framework of ERDF and ESF+ Programmes and, for inner areas supported by national resources, through the mechanisms provided by the SNAI governance system. However, monitoring mainly focuses on the procedural and financial progress of individual operations and on the achievement of programme indicators, rather than on the quality or degree of integration across interventions.

Programme indicators make it possible to identify operations included within territorial strategies, but they do not directly measure the level of functional integration between sectors or funding sources. In many cases, these indicators reflect the population covered by interventions rather than the integrated nature of the actions implemented.

For STAMI supported by national resources, Programme Agreements are subject to annual monitoring covering all funded interventions. Even in this case, however, monitoring focuses on the progress of individual projects and compliance with financial and temporal commitments, rather than on the systematic assessment of synergies across sectors.

Previous evaluations of the 2014–2020 programming cycle have already highlighted the difficulty of distinguishing between a simple aggregation of sectoral interventions and a truly integrated territorial approach. In the current programming period, no specific indicators have been introduced to measure the quality of integration.

At the same time, reflections are ongoing at regional level on the need to develop more appropriate monitoring tools for territorial strategies, for example through a more integrated reading of the “keyboard of funds” or through the definition of indicators referring to the strategy as a whole rather than to individual operations.

5. How has the multi-sectoral approach been effectively translated into approved territorial strategies?

The operational translation of the multi-sectoral approach in approved territorial strategies can be analysed at different levels, distinguishing between formal integration across sectors and actual functional integration achieved at territorial level.

A first level concerns formal integration across thematic areas, made possible through the combination of interventions financed under different specific objectives and, in the case of STAMI, also through national resources. Many strategies include interventions related to urban regeneration, sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, green infrastructure, education, and social inclusion within a single strategic framework.

A second level concerns functional thematic integration, namely the establishment of links between interventions belonging to different sectors but oriented towards a common objective. In some cases, this includes combinations of infrastructure investments with social activation or training measures, integration between physical regeneration and social inclusion policies, and connections between local economic development and the strengthening of essential services in inner areas.

A third level relates to territorial integration, which may take different forms, including coordination of projects across multiple municipalities within the same area, spatial concentration of interventions in specific urban zones, and functional linkages between urban centres and surrounding territories.

A fourth level concerns the temporal dimension, where strategies build on previous interventions or are connected to future investments, including those financed through other programmes such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, thereby increasing the overall impact of public investment.

In the case of STAMI supported by national resources, the integration between local development and essential services represents the most structured example of a multi-sectoral approach, as it is formally embedded in the SNAI model and implemented through coordinated funding mechanisms.

Overall, while the model ensures formal conditions for integration, the extent to which this translates into effective functional integration depends significantly on the capacity of territorial coalitions and the coherence of project design at local level.

2.5 Funding and Finance

The funding model for territorial strategies in Emilia-Romagna is based on a structured core of Cohesion Policy resources, primarily ERDF and ESF+, complemented, in the case of STAMI, by national funds, while other sources operate in a more complementary and less structured way.

- Implementation is carried out through distinct but coordinated instruments, ITIs for ERDF and ESF+ resources and, for inner areas, Programme Agreements, which enable a unified strategic framework while maintaining separate financial channels;
- The Region clearly defines budgets for each area, co-financing rates, and eligibility criteria, ensuring a predictable framework for territorial coalitions;
- Strategies are characterised by a high share of public funding, approximately 80 percent for ATUSS and 90 percent for STAMI, with limited local co-financing, which is particularly relevant for supporting participation from more fragile territories;
- The model does not rely on innovative financial instruments and is primarily based on grants, in line with the public and non-revenue-generating nature of most interventions;
- Resources under Policy Objective 5 represent a stable financial core that acts as a leverage mechanism, supporting the activation of additional interventions and complementarities with other funding sources.

1. Which funding sources sustain the strategies (ERDF, CF, ESF+, JTF, EAFRD, national, regional, local)?

Territorial strategies in Emilia-Romagna are supported by a diversified set of funding sources, with a clearly defined core component and additional complementary resources.

The core funding is provided by the regional Cohesion Policy Programmes, in particular ERDF and ESF+. ERDF represents the main funding source for both types of strategies, through Policy Objective 5, while ESF+ contributes in a complementary way, particularly through interventions related to education, training, and social inclusion.

For STAMI, the financial framework is further strengthened by national resources. These include funding under the National Strategy for Inner Areas, mainly directed towards essential services such as education, healthcare, and mobility, and resources from the national development fund, which contribute to complementing the interventions included in the strategies.

Local co-financing is also required from implementing bodies, generally around 20 percent for ATUSS and 10 percent for STAMI, while projects financed through national inner areas resources do not require local co-financing. This structure reduces the financial burden on local authorities, particularly in more fragile areas.

In addition to these main sources, the model encourages the mobilisation of complementary resources from other programmes and instruments, such as rural development funds, maritime and fisheries funds, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, and sectoral regional programmes. However, these sources are not structurally integrated into territorial strategies and their use depends on opportunities and initiatives at local level.

2. Are mechanisms in place to combine different funds?

The regional model provides mechanisms that allow the combination of different funding sources within territorial strategies, although this integration mainly takes place through coordination between separate instruments rather than through direct blending of funds.

The ITI is the main instrument through which strategies are implemented within ERDF and ESF+ Programmes. It allows for coordinated programming of interventions under different specific objectives within a single

territorial strategy. However, each individual operation is financed by a single fund and follows the rules of the respective Programme.

In the case of STAMI, the combination of funds is further articulated through the coexistence of different instruments. ERDF and ESF+ resources are implemented through ITIs, while national resources are managed through Programme Agreements and other procedures. This results in a configuration where multiple instruments operate within the same strategy, each with its own rules and management systems.

Integration therefore occurs mainly at the strategic level, through the coordination of interventions funded by different sources within a single framework, rather than at the level of individual projects.

This approach allows the combination of infrastructure investments with service-oriented interventions, but also presents limitations, including the predominance of investment expenditure, the absence of blending mechanisms, and the fact that interventions are almost exclusively public and managed by local authorities.

3. Does the model reduce administrative burdens or simplify procedures for beneficiaries?

The regional model does not significantly reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries, as complexity largely derives from the coexistence of multiple funding sources and their respective regulatory frameworks.

Territorial strategies combine resources from different funds, each characterised by specific rules, information systems, timelines, and management authorities. This requires beneficiaries to operate within a complex environment where procedures are not fully harmonised. Differences in the timing of programme implementation have also contributed to increasing complexity.

This complexity is not solely attributable to the regional level but largely reflects the European and national regulatory framework governing the different funds. At the same time, the management of resources through different administrative structures at regional level limits the scope for simplification.

However, the Region has introduced several tools to facilitate access and management, particularly within Cohesion Policy funds. These include standardised templates for project design, common models for ITIs, and operational guidelines for implementation, reporting, and compliance. In addition, continuous technical support is provided by the regional administration and, for STAMI, by technical assistance structures.

These tools help improve accessibility, especially for territories with lower administrative capacity, but do not eliminate the underlying complexity associated with multi-fund management. The main added value of the model lies not in simplification, but in the ability to mobilise diversified resources and support complementary interventions.

4. Are innovative financial instruments used?

Within territorial strategies, no innovative financial instruments are used, such as revolving funds, loans, guarantees, or public private partnerships.

The funding model is entirely based on grants, disbursed on the basis of eligible expenditure. Interventions follow a cost-based approach, with only limited use of simplified cost options.

This approach is consistent with the nature of the interventions financed, which mainly concern public infrastructure, collective services, and activities that do not generate direct financial returns. In such contexts, the use of financial instruments is less appropriate, also considering the budgetary constraints of public authorities.

Local co-financing represents the only element introducing a form of financial participation, contributing to the accountability of implementing bodies while remaining at relatively low levels.

Financial instruments are used in other parts of the regional ERDF Programme, but they are not applied within territorial strategies.

5. Are the resources considered adequate to match the strategic ambitions?

Territorial strategies are supported by predefined financial allocations for each area, which constitute a stable funding base but do not fully cover the overall investment needs identified in the strategies.

For ATUSS, ERDF resources under Policy Objective 5 generally range between approximately 3 and 8.5 million euros per area, complemented by ESF+ contributions for specific types of interventions. For STAMI, ERDF resources typically range between approximately 4 and 5.2 million euros per area, with additional contributions from national sources.

These allocations represent an increase compared to the previous programming period and are clearly defined and predictable at regional level. However, their scale is constrained by factors such as thematic concentration requirements under European Regulations and the overall availability of Programme resources.

Within the regional model, resources allocated under Policy Objective 5 are not intended to fully meet strategic ambitions but rather to act as a core funding base supporting medium-term territorial development strategies.

In particular for ATUSS, these resources represent only a portion of total public investment activated in the territories, especially in the presence of additional funding sources such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The value of territorial strategies therefore lies also in their capacity to mobilise complementary resources and integrate interventions funded through different programmes. Strategies are conceived as open frameworks that can be updated and expanded over time in response to emerging opportunities.

2.6 Monitoring

The monitoring of territorial strategies in Emilia-Romagna is based on a system articulated across different levels and funding sources, but not yet fully integrated at the level of the strategy as a whole.

- The main monitoring system is that of individual operations financed through Programmes and other sources, which tracks financial, procedural, and physical progress according to Cohesion Policy standards;
- For ATUSS, monitoring is carried out on a regular basis through reports submitted by territorial coalitions, providing an aggregated overview of implementation progress and qualitative updates;
- For STAMI, monitoring is differentiated by funding source, with separate mechanisms for Cohesion Policy funds, national resources, and other instruments;
- Indicators used are derived from Programme frameworks and are selected according to specific objectives and types of intervention, but they mainly measure individual operations rather than the integrated dimension of strategies;
- The Region aims to develop a more integrated and georeferenced monitoring system, and some pilot initiatives are ongoing, although they do not yet constitute a consolidated framework.

1. Are there common monitoring systems at the regional level for territorial strategies?

Monitoring of territorial strategies is embedded within the general monitoring system of Cohesion Policy Programmes and does not currently take the form of a unified system specifically dedicated to territorial strategies.

At regional level, monitoring is primarily based on Programme information systems, which track the progress of individual operations in financial, procedural, and physical terms. Projects included in ATUSS and STAMI contribute to Programme indicators and are monitored according to standard Cohesion Policy rules. This system allows tracking of funded operations, but it is not designed to provide a comprehensive view of the strategy as an integrated set of interventions.

In addition to this level, monitoring is also carried out through implementation instruments. For ATUSS and for the Cohesion Policy components of STAMI, territorial coalitions submit periodic reports describing implementation progress, challenges, and qualitative developments. These reports provide useful information but mainly focus on individual projects and depend on the quality and consistency of data provided by local actors.

For STAMI, monitoring is further differentiated according to funding sources. Interventions supported by national resources are subject to specific monitoring arrangements, while other funding streams follow their own procedures. This results in a system characterised by multiple layers and instruments, rather than a unified monitoring framework.

The Region has expressed the intention to develop an integrated and georeferenced monitoring system capable of providing a comprehensive view of territorial strategies. In this direction, some pilot experiences have been launched, including the development of monitoring dashboards for specific strategies. These initiatives indicate a growing focus on more advanced monitoring approaches, but they are not yet fully operational or standardised.

Indicators used within territorial strategies are those defined at Programme level, selected according to specific objectives and intervention types. While they ensure compliance with the regulatory framework, they are not fully suited to capturing the integrated and strategic dimension of territorial strategies.

2. Are integrated monitoring systems developed at the territorial level by local coalitions?

At present, integrated monitoring systems for territorial strategies are not systematically developed at the level of territorial coalitions.

Coalitions are required to submit periodic progress reports, which include information on the implementation status of operations, financial and procedural progress, and some qualitative elements. These reporting activities fulfil obligations towards the regional level but do not constitute structured local monitoring systems capable of providing an integrated view of strategies.

In some cases, individual territories have developed communication or transparency tools, such as dedicated web pages or platforms presenting funded projects and their progress. These initiatives contribute to public information and visibility, but they do not represent fully developed monitoring systems and do not ensure a systemic analysis of the relationships between interventions.

More advanced experiences of integrated monitoring at local level are limited and not widely replicated. In a few cases, more structured approaches have been tested, but no consolidated or standard model has emerged across different territories.

Overall, monitoring at territorial level remains focused on data transmission to the regional level rather than on the development of integrated analytical tools supporting strategy management.

3. Are data collection and analysis capacities adequate?

Data collection and analysis capacities supporting territorial strategies are generally limited and strongly dependent on available tools and on the time and resources that local administrations can dedicate to these activities.

The current system is mainly based on Programme monitoring mechanisms and reporting obligations associated with implementation instruments. In the absence of an integrated monitoring system for territorial strategies, data collection and analysis are largely focused on individual operations, without enabling a comprehensive understanding of the strategy as a whole.

The Region provides support through its coordination structure and, for STAMI, through additional technical assistance. These forms of support contribute to strengthening local capacities, particularly during the design and early implementation phases. However, they do not constitute a fully structured system for data analysis at territorial level.

Some pilot initiatives are ongoing, including the development of monitoring dashboards, aimed at providing a more integrated representation of strategies. These tools are still under development and have not yet reached a level of maturity that would allow their systematic use.

The need to strengthen monitoring capacities and to develop indicators better suited to the scale of territorial strategies is increasingly recognised at regional level and within interregional exchange activities. In particular, there is a need to move beyond an approach focused on individual operations and to develop tools capable of assessing strategies as integrated systems.

4. Are monitoring results fed back into the system to enable adaptation and improvement?

The regional model allows a certain degree of flexibility in the implementation of territorial strategies, but it is not based on a structured feedback system derived from formal monitoring results.

Strategies are conceived as open frameworks that can be updated over time, for example through the revision or replacement of interventions or the inclusion of new projects. However, these adjustments are mainly driven by ongoing dialogue between the Region and territorial coalitions rather than by systematic analysis of monitoring data.

The main mechanism for learning and adaptation is therefore institutional interaction, which takes place through direct exchanges, technical meetings, and coordination forums. These interactions allow for the discussion of implementation progress, emerging challenges, and possible solutions, supporting gradual adjustments to strategies.

Formal monitoring provides information on the progress of operations, but it does not represent the primary driver of policy learning. The absence of an integrated monitoring system limits the capacity to use data in a systematic way to inform decision-making processes.

5. Are territorial strategies subject to evaluation? If yes, how?

Territorial strategies are included within the evaluation framework of regional Programmes, although specific evaluation activities for the 2021–2027 period are still in the early stages.

Evaluation plans foresee thematic evaluations linked to different specific objectives, including those related to Policy Objective 5. Within this framework, analyses will be carried out on both ATUSS and STAMI, allowing the assessment of the effects of funded interventions.

In addition to thematic evaluations, a comprehensive evaluation of territorial strategies is planned, aimed at analysing their overall design, implementation, and results. This evaluation is expected to be launched during the current programming period and will be carried out within the regional evaluation system.

At present, territorial strategies are therefore included in the overall evaluation framework, but a fully developed and consolidated evaluation process specifically focused on them is not yet in place.

6. Are stakeholders and citizens involved in monitoring and evaluation?

The regional model does not include structured and systematic mechanisms for the involvement of stakeholders and citizens in monitoring and evaluation activities.

Stakeholder involvement is generally foreseen within the governance of territorial strategies, in line with the European regulatory framework, but it mainly concerns the preparation and implementation phases. In the monitoring phase, involvement may occur informally through ongoing interaction between the Region and territorial coalitions or within local coordination settings, without constituting a structured process.

Citizen participation in monitoring and evaluation is not a formal requirement of the model. However, some pilot experiences have been developed at territorial level, exploring forms of civic monitoring and community engagement. These initiatives are often linked to specific projects and represent experimental practices rather than standard components of the system.

Some experiences involve collaboration with civil society organisations to promote citizen engagement in the analysis and evaluation of funded interventions. These practices are innovative and relevant but remain limited in scope and are not yet integrated into a systematic regional framework.

Overall, the involvement of stakeholders and citizens in monitoring and evaluation remains limited and largely dependent on local initiatives, rather than being embedded in a structured and uniform approach at regional level.

3. Conclusions

This chapter synthesises the main elements emerging from the analysis of the regional model of strategy-making in Emilia-Romagna and translates them into a set of considerations relevant for both the regional context and the INTEGRA partnership.

The section provides an overall reading of the model, highlighting its main characteristics, areas of consolidation, and aspects that may require further development, in line with the objectives of policy learning and mutual exchange.

3.1 Implications for INTEGRA Future Activities

The experience of Emilia-Romagna in the programming of territorial strategies for the 2021–2027 period provides a structured and articulated case within the INTEGRA partnership.

As illustrated in Section 2.1 (Strategic Dimension), the model is based on a clearly defined strategic framework, ensuring alignment between regional priorities and European policy objectives. At the same time, Section 2.2 (Territorial Focus) highlights the adoption of a place-based approach, supported by a differentiated territorial configuration and wide coverage across the region.

The governance arrangements described in Section 2.3 show a structured multi-level system, combining regional coordination with territorial implementation, while Section 2.4 illustrates how cross-sectoral integration is embedded in the design of the model through multi-fund programming and coordination tools.

At the same time, Sections 2.5 and 2.6 point to some elements that remain under development, particularly in relation to the organisation of multi-fund implementation and the evolution of monitoring systems at the level of territorial strategies.

In this perspective, the regional experience can be considered both as a reference for existing practices and as a basis for further reflection within the INTEGRA project.

Good Practices and Policy Improvement Priorities

The regional model is characterised by a set of practices observed across different phases of the strategy-making and implementation process and that may be of interest from a comparative perspective.

A first element concerns the presence of a structured governance and programming framework, supported by methodological tools, standardised procedures, and capacity-building mechanisms. Within this framework, specific initiatives have been developed to support both implementation and policy learning.

In particular, the Laboratory for Integrated Territorial Strategies (LaSTI) represents a structured capacity-building action supporting the implementation of STAMI strategies. Funded under the ERDF Regional Programme and implemented by the regional in-house agency ART-ER, LaSTI provides a combination of technical assistance, training activities, co-design workshops, and thematic support. Its functions include capacity building, technical accompaniment, monitoring support, and communication activities, contributing to strengthening administrative and strategic capacities at the territorial level.

Capacity building: LaSTI

- LaSTI (Laboratory for Integrated Territorial Strategy) is a **capacity building action funded by the ERDF Regional Programme** to support the implementation of strategie in inner and mountain areas (9 STAMI)
- Budget: EUR 1.5 mln in 3 years, implemented by ART-ER (regional in-house agency)



- project monitoring
- ongoing evaluation
- dissemination and promotion of results
- information materials, web and social media

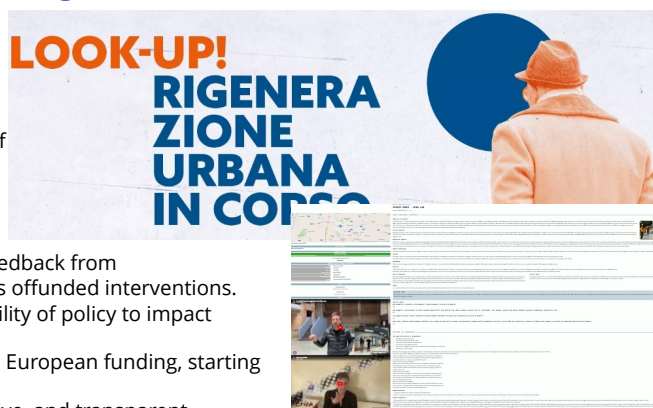


- technical and thematic training
- co-design workshops
- strategic planning school
- Support
- Animation and networking
- Technical help desk

A second practice relates to the development of pilot initiatives in the field of civic monitoring and citizen participation. The Region has launched a pilot action in selected ATUSS areas (Ferrara and Rimini), in collaboration with an external partner, aimed at integrating administrative monitoring with feedback from citizens and beneficiaries. The initiative combines training activities, participatory monitoring processes, and the production of monitoring reports, with the objective of improving the understanding of the effects of funded interventions and strengthening the communication of public value generated through cohesion policy. The experience is currently under implementation and may be extended to other territorial strategies.

Citizen participation: civic monitoring

- Regional pilot action to experiment **civic monitoring** as a way to actively involve and engage (young) citizens in the implementation of investments funded within territorial integrated strategie (pilot with ATUSS Ferrara and Rimini)
- Objectives:**
 - Integrate administrative monitoring with feedback from beneficiaries/recipients on the effectiveness of funded interventions.
 - Improve the quality of spending and the ability of policy to impact people's lives.
 - Communicate the public value created with European funding, starting from the perspective of real users/users.
 - Contribute to the vision of open, collaborative, and transparent administrations and improve future programming.
- Ongoing pilot action with ATUSS Ferrara and Rimini** (kick-off event, training for participating citizens, ongoing monitoring, publication of Monitoring Reports, final workshop to present the results)
- Potential for learning or transfer:** the process is guided by a tested methodology developed by specialized provider (**Monithon**) active in Italy within the [Opencoesione](#) process. The Region plans to replicate the experience with other interested territorial strategies (ATUSS and STAMI)



A third relevant element concerns the experimentation of advanced monitoring tools based on data visualisation and analysis. A pilot monitoring dashboard has been developed to support the interpretation of cohesion policy investments at regional level. The tool is based on data integration and semantic analysis and

is designed to complement traditional monitoring systems by enabling the analysis of cross-cutting themes and territorial dynamics. It includes functionalities such as territorial dashboards, project-level information, and data stories, aimed at making information more accessible and interpretable also for non-specialist users. The tool is currently in a testing phase and represents an initial step towards more integrated monitoring approaches.

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Monitoring: pilot advanced data/story visualisation tool

- ❑ Brand **new innovative monitoring dashboard** of the cohesion policy investments in Emilia-Romagna
- ❑ Based on AI and semantic analysis to go beyond traditional monitoring systems:
 - ✓ Analysis of cross-cutting themes and trajectories not bound to Programmes structure, towards a systemic vision of policy monitoring
 - ✓ Automatic generation of interpretative texts, especially for non-expert users
 - ✓ Generation of graphs and texts to represent information that is usually hidden.
- ❑ Multiple possibilities (homepage general overview, objectives visualization, territorial dashboard, project fiches, beneficiary fiches, data stories, repository)
- ❑ **Data stories to illustrate the territorial strategies** (tested on STAMI)
- ❑ Developed with a specialized provider ([Siris Academic](#))
- ❑ Currently in the pilot stage (functioning examples of different features and visualizations based a sample of real data)



Alongside these specific initiatives, the model includes broader practices related to multi-level governance, multi-fund coordination, and the use of shared methodological tools, which together contribute to structuring the overall strategy-making process.

The analysis also points to a number of aspects that may require further development. These relate in particular to the articulation of coordination mechanisms between territorial strategies and sectoral policies, the operational dimension of cross-sectoral integration, and the organisation of multi-fund implementation processes.

Additional elements concern the development of monitoring systems capable of providing a more integrated view of territorial strategies, as well as the availability and comparability of data across territories. The structuring of stakeholder involvement and the communication of strategy results also emerge as areas where further consolidation may be envisaged.

3.2 Lessons Learned and Preliminary Recommendations for Policy Improvement

The analysis of the regional model highlights a set of recurring features that characterise its functioning, as well as a number of elements that may be considered for further development within the INTEGRA framework.

The model is based on a defined strategic framework, within which territorial strategies are embedded and aligned with regional, national, and European priorities. This framework is supported by a structured governance system and by the use of integrated programming instruments, which enable the coordination of different funding sources within a common strategic approach. At the same time, the implementation of the model involves multiple actors and procedures, resulting in a configuration that combines structured guidance with elements of negotiation and adaptation at territorial level.

Within this context, some aspects emerge as particularly relevant for future reflection. These include the relationship between territorial strategies and sectoral policies, the operational dimension of cross-sectoral integration, and the evolution of monitoring systems towards approaches that are more oriented to the strategy as a whole. The organisation of multi-fund implementation and the associated administrative arrangements also represent an important dimension of the model.

In this perspective, the following considerations outline possible directions for further development. These do not represent prescriptive recommendations, but rather elements for reflection that may inform future activities.

Particular attention may be given to the further development of the strategic role of territorial strategies within the broader programming framework, including their alignment with evolving European policy priorities. At the same time, the strengthening of cross-sectoral linkages may contribute to a more articulated connection between different types of interventions within the same strategy.

The organisation of implementation mechanisms may also be further explored, with a view to improving coordination between funding instruments and supporting more consistent operational practices. In parallel, the development of monitoring systems that complement existing approaches with a strategy-level perspective may support a more comprehensive understanding of territorial dynamics.

Finally, the continuation of capacity-building initiatives and the structuring of participation and communication mechanisms may contribute to strengthening the overall functioning of the model, particularly in relation to its territorial dimension.

4. References

The following is the complete list of documents, regulatory acts, strategies, and sources used for the preparation of the Emilia-Romagna regional diagnosis.

Main regional documents

- Pact for Labour and Climate – Emilia-Romagna Regional Government Decision (DGR) No. 1899/2020
- Regional Strategic Document 2021–2027 (RSD) – DGR No. 586/2021; approved by Legislative Assembly Resolution No. 44/2021
- DGR 1635/2021 – Definition of OP5 territorial areas and operational guidelines for ATUSS/STAMI
- DGR 42/2022, 512/2022, 901/2022 – Updates of OP5 eligible areas (urban areas, territorial systems, inner areas)
- DGR 2100/2022 – Operational guidelines and process for the finalisation of STAMI; approval of project fiche templates
- DGR 2101/2022 – Operational guidelines and process for the finalisation of ATUSS; approval of project fiche templates
- ERDF Regional Programme 2021–2027 – approved by Decision C(2022)5379
- ESF+ Regional Programme 2021–2027 – approved by Decision C(2022)5300

European sources

- Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 – Common Provisions Regulation for shared management funds
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 – ERDF and Cohesion Fund
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 – ESF+
- Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 – EAFRD
- European Green Deal, European Commission Communication, 2019
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- SNAI Guidelines, Agency for Territorial Cohesion

National and complementary documents

- National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), 2021
- National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) – Guidelines and selection criteria for areas 2021–2027
- CIPESS Resolution No. 41/2022 – Governance and allocation of SNAI resources