Specialist building competencies for public administrations: the case of “evaluation units in the Calabria Region, Italy”

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1. Introduction

We would like to present our experiences of strengthening the Public Administration which has been realized in an area of significant development delay but committed to facing the challenges related to the implementation of an important Operational Programme of Regional Development. This case study concentrates on the logic for re-organization and understanding the selection methods adopted by the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit and the Operational Managing Structure which was applied in the Calabria Region with particular attention to the operational methods and the substantial technical assistance provided by the Committee in charge of selection. The Calabria region was the only Italian region in significant development delay in implementing its regional unit and this renders this case extremely interesting, because of the huge organizational autonomy allowed by the legislation of reference as well as the absence of operational models already rolled out. All this makes it an experimental case. In Calabria, the selection of the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit for the regional administration meant that the experimentation of an innovative development policy based on the strong opening towards the outside and the choice of strengthening an administrative structure which was acknowledged to be objectively weak, and integrating it with highly-qualified professionals in the perspective of the gradual transfer of know how and the gradual empowerment of the regional structure.

2. Cognitive Elements

2.1 The Role of the Institutions

**The European Commission**

Through the financial methods offered by Structural Funds, the EC promotes development, cohesion and core adjustment of the region in cases of development delay and fight against unemployment, while facilitating the professional integration of young people and accelerating agro-industrial system reforms.

Through pressing application methods, the EC imposes transparency and certainty of the procedures in order to achieve the strategic objectives established in the Operational Programme while supporting the capacity of the PA to correctly play its role.

**The Central Government**

- defines comprehensive Strategic Framework
- agrees on the criteria for sharing resources
- assures comprehensive monitoring
- ensures national resources to be integrated with European resources
- launches and implements programmes of support and technical assistance for capacity building

**The Regional Administrations**

Regional administrations define their Operational Programmes in compliance with the rules and methods established by the European Commission and the Central Government. They identify and adopt the most appropriate methods for implementing the programme in compliance with their own laws. They cooperate with local PAs and socio-economic partnerships for defining the OP priorities.
They adopt procedural rules and ad-hoc organizational models.

(In this sense, the useful elements to understand how this system is divided are described in Bagarani’s paper)

2.2 Specific Current Conditions
The successful experience of the Calabria region must set in a particular geographical framework and institutional context which coincides with the following:

- the beginning of the new 2000-2006 Community planning period
- a strong commitment of the government to optimize the available financial resources
- the activation of a wide collaboration campaign to share the objectives of the region’s development and the definition of the correction measures to adopt
- particular attention to integrated planning and specific actions of support to the institutional building necessary for implementation

3. The Calabria Region in 2000

Territory map available on REGIO GIS website (http://158.166.43.33/)

3.1 Economic Situation and Regional Differences

Calabria is the least developed region in Italy. For many years, it was at the last position in the hierarchy of the wealth produced by the Italian regions. In 1998, the product per head of the Calabrian population equalled 14.2 million liras in respect to the average 29.8 in the North-Centre and 16.4 in the South. The income of the Calabrian people was only 47.6% compared to the average of the North-Centre and 86% of that earned by the population living in the South. If 100 was considered as the average income per head of the European Union inhabitants in the former 15 EU member states, the income of the Ob. 1 Regions was 69 and the Calabria region was 59, namely 40% lower that the average Community income and 10% lower that the average income of the “poor” European regions. Long-term data highlights a substantial regression of the position of Calabria. Between 1980 and 1998, the gap in terms of income grew only 3 percentage points in comparison to the North-Centre of Italy as well as the other Italian regions, with a slight fall-off registered in the South. (see fig.1 and Tab.1).

If we consider the two main aspects of income – investment and consumption – it is evident that the decline of regional development can mostly be attributed to the low rate of capital accumulation, namely the modest quantity of produce and the scarcely increased investment, while consumption follows an evolution trend in line with the Italian average. Thus, with regard to the tendency towards consumption restriction, in particular in the nineties, Calabria was far from the average values of the North-Centre in terms of income and investment per head.

The apparent paradox of a “poor” economy from the point of view of internal production but “affluent” from the prospective of consumption, explains the government money transfers which have had the dual effect of filling the lack of income produced by sustaining the aggregated demand of regional consumption. At the same time, this can create a pathological situation of dependence from the regional economic system on the central political institutional trends.

As far as employment is concerned, the service sector has been the only one to have registered an occupational growth in the last three decades, although since the end of the eighties, the rates of growth have gradually diminished. On the contrary, agricultural and industrial employment has lost relevance within the regional occupational structure with particularly slender incidences in the manufacturing
industry. Despite the negative trends of the last two decades, agriculture is characterized by the redundant workforce employed. In the two years between 1997 and 1998, it represented about 22% of the total persons employed against 8% in the North-Centre, while it represented only 7% of the total produce. More worrying was the modest relevance and the decline related to employment in the industrial sector: in 1998, the latter employed only 18% of the workforce, namely 12 percentage points less than the North-Centre. The relevance of industrial employment was absolutely marginal. For ten years, this sector had attracted approximately 7-8% of regional occupation compared to an incidence of 24-25% in the North-Centre (see fig.3).

The critical occupational dynamic has also been confirmed by the regional trends within each single local labour system. Out of 72 local labour systems identified by Istat in Calabria, only 5 have registered a slight occupational growth between 1991 and 1996, while 36 were subject to a decrease between 13% and 26% (see tab.3). The agricultural sector was the most penalized since all the systems registered a negative variation in employment between 19%-22%. Only 12 local systems registered an occupational growth in the industrial sector and 21 in other activities.

A particularly critical aspect of the Calabrian economy was its substantial closure to international trade. In 1998, regional exports equalled 230 million euros, namely an imperceptible 0.1% of the national exports. The incidence of the export value on the GDP is nearly 1.4% against 35.4% in the North-Centre and 11.9% in the South. In the same year, the export value per head was nearly 110 euros in Calabria against 5 thousand euros in the North-centre and 1000 euros in the South.

3.2 The “breakdown variables”

The socio-economic aggregates showed the accentuated criticality of the Calabrian situation with reference to the “breakdown variables” identified. The economic and social lag in Calabria was frequent both for the endogenous breakdown variables (export capacity, economic autonomy, capital accumulation and participation in the labour market) and for the exogenous variables (see Tab.3, page 53).

3.3 Performance and absorption capacities in the previous Community planning period e 1994-1999

In general, the implementation of the Operational Programme 1994-1999 met the gaps ascribable to the various regions which regarded the entire process: from the stage of needs assessment to intervention planning, to the management stage and the monitoring and assessment stage of the state of advancement of projects.

With regard to the stage of needs assessment and intervention planning, we saw that some of the measures attracted scarce attention from both private and public final beneficiaries and often a scarce response for territorial needs.

The delays in the programme management activities concerned above all, the procedures of selection and implementation of projects, the organizational deficits of the regional structure and the operational difficulties met with some of the implementing bodies.

In particular, the time lengths necessary for the “tender” procedures – foreseen for the measures regarding public interventions on top of which there were the difficulties determined by the complex regulations regarding the realization of public works – determined delays in time and employment as well as in the times for payment.

In addition, the fragile local autonomies often showed inadequate project experiences. This led to the inability to peremptorily request, during a tender, the available executive and projects to be realized (limited to the availability of executive projects and some essential authorizations), and in the phase of implementation of the interventions, delay in the realization of procedures took place (executive
Finally among the numerous re-planning activities carried out over the course of the programme, we must also mention the scarce availability of means for efficiently carrying out the monitoring and control activities of the state of advancement of interventions.

3.4 Key data of the Operational Programme 2000-2006

Last in line in the previous planning cycle, under strain and with a maximum of expenditure not higher than 250 million, the Calabria region is now at the forefront for the period of an Operational Programme which requires an annual expenditure of 500 millions euros. And this is without taking into consideration the quality of the interventions for which the new scenario of reference and new Community standards impose stronger commitments in the near future and a capacity for actions superior to what has been formerly established.

With regard to the various aspects which emerged in previous planning and in the light of the above-mentioned considerations, for the intervention planning period 2000-2006, the Calabria region started an intense activity of collaboration with the local bodies in order to directly define the principle territorial needs and to collate an in-depth analysis of environmental, social and economic criticalities in the region.

With the 2000-2006 Programme which foresees a commitment amounting 4,036 million euros over a seven year plan, Calabria has decided to embark on its development. Starting from the Operational Programme, the region intends to build an autonomous socio-economic development model which is environmentally sustainable, taking care of its specific dissimilarities, while focussing on the enhancement and improvement of local, human, tangible and intangible resources.

The decade’s strategic objective is the gradual transition of the Calabria region from independence to autonomy, from passive integration to productive integration, from the indiscriminating use of the territory and its resources, to its protection and improvement. This implies above all a strict and targeted use of the public resources starting from 2000-2006 Structural funds. Rigour in avoiding waste, inefficiencies, delays but also socially useless works, parasitism and revenues, finalization in terms of strict convergence with income and occupational growth, social quality, full citizenship and equal opportunities and environmental quality.

The identification of the six priorities which correspond to the large areas of intervention which the ROP uses as reference for the definition of investment choices to be realized in the planning period of interest are:

I - Enhancement of natural and environmental resources (Natural Resources)
II - Enhancement of cultural and historical resources (Cultural Resources)
III – Enhancement of human resources (Human Resources)
IV – Improvement and enhancement of local development systems (Local Development Systems)
V – Improvement of the quality of cities, local institutions and community life (City)
VI - Strengthening of service networks and hubs (Service Networks and Hubs)

4. The Operational Managing Structure (OMS) and Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit (PIEVU)

In order to pursue the objectives of the new planning period, in the first place a radical change in the administrative culture of the region was needed and mostly an action strongly focussed on highly-qualified technical professionals who would be able to manage the single sectors of each intervention and choose the development patterns which are appropriate to pursuing such ambitious objectives. In order to improve time lengths, methods and the control on the POP implementation, the region
selected organizational tools which permitted them to overcome the difficulties which arose during the realization of the 94-99 ROP.

The Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit and the Operational Managing Structure responded to the need of the Calabria region with targeted and quick action for the technical strengthening of the administrations committed to development policies. Action which followed more innovative and rapid ways compared to what had been achieved through ordinary procedures for personnel recruitment, an action which enhanced the best resources already operating within the administrations and at the same time, converged the technical forces of excellence already active in civil society or who were being trained in universities and the best specialization schools for public office.

4.1 OMS – Operational Managing Structure

The establishment of an Operational Managing Structure (OMS), composed of 10 Sectoral Program Managers, 5 Territorial Project Managers and 6 Transversal Experts was instrumental as the hierarchy depends on the Department for Budget and Finance, Community Policies and Economic Development-Programming Division, Economic Development and EU Policies (responsible for the coordination and management of the entire Programme) and operates in close collaboration with the regional departments and the sub-regional entities responsible for the implementation of measures, actions or interventions.

The OMS activity is principally aimed to ensure efficient and effective punctuality and quality of investment during the whole planning and implementation cycle of the ROP Calabria 2000-2006, by providing the necessary coordination and technical assistance to the administrations responsible for implementing measures and in particular:

- Elaboration and definition of tenders and subsequent acts
- Selection of projects to submit for the Calabria region PIEVU examination
- Signing of contracts and agreements with the implementing bodies
- Procedural regulations regarding the start-up of financial projects through the analysis and elimination of eventual hindrances
- Controls related to the state of advancement of the projects (financial, procedural and physical)
- Payments to be made following requests and verification
- Eventual re-programming of interventions
- Final control of projects and budgeting of costs

4.2 PIEVU - The Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit

According to the tool of support for the ROP implementation, the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit of the Calabria region is a permanent structure operating in the Programming Division, Economic Development and EU Policies and its full autonomy ensures technical support in the planning, evaluation, implementation and assessment stages of plans, programmes, projects and intervention policies promoted and applied by the region or other entities.

The PIEVU exercises its own competencies in full autonomy, both under its own initiative and the request of the Programming Division, Economic Development and EU Policies, the Regional Departments or the competent Sub-regional Entities.

Moreover, the evaluation of programmes and projects co-financed with Community resources is an obligation foreseen by EC regulations. In particular, the new period of 2000-2006 Structural Funds, art. 40 of the EC regulation CE 1260/1999 of the Council, indicates the ultimate objective of the evaluation
process, namely “the evaluation of the efficacy of structural interventions”. From this article derives the need to carry out three types of evaluation: an ex-ante evaluation (or the relevance of the EU objectives), in itinere evaluation (about the observance of the Community Support Framework priorities) and ex-post evaluation (on the implementation of interventions).

As already mentioned, this need is also implied in the national legislation (Art. 1 of law 144/99) which underlined the need for central and regional administrations to create a Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit in support of the planning process and at the same time, leave full organizational autonomy to the administrations in decline from an operational point of view, regulatory provisions with regard to functions and specific characteristics, methods of establishment, composition and methods of selection.

Attention is also to be paid to the role of support and the regional coordination which the two structures must play: the role is very relevant with the rapid decentralization of functions being undertaken by delegating the implementation of the interventions to the competent sub-regional entities (municipalities, mountain communities, provinces, universities, other public facilities). The latter will be obliged to inform the department responsible for the programme coordination, on the progress of the interventions.

5 Bodies Involved in Cooperation and Sharing

As previously mentioned, procedures of selection and appointment of human resources in the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit and the Operational Managing Structure have been advanced through the concurrent contributions from various bodies. One of the key elements of the Calabria experience regards the process of cooperation triggered, not only between regional and central levels of the PA, but within the administrations as well.

5.1 The Region

The Calabria region is responsible for initiating the procedures of selection after the establishment of the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit and the Operational Managing Structure. The establishment of the unit took place through a Council Resolution, a flexible regulatory tool which preferred to undertake selection through a public procedure which was complex and strongly innovative.

Also the OMS which was established in accordance to the same methods, required the conduction of works in close cooperation with the regional departments and the sub-regional entities responsible for the implementation of measures, actions or interventions.

The choice to proceed (although with two resolutions issued in two different periods of time) together with the selection of the components for both structures, responded to the need to conduct them simultaneously as well as the search for a systematic agreement between PIEVU, OMS and the Measure Officers for whom careful management at the right moment was advisable in collaboration with the regional government.

5.2 Ministry of the Treasury, Budget and Economic Planning

As previously stated, the establishment of the two structures is the result of a convergence of the will of the region and of the central government, represented by the Ministry of the Treasury. Therefore, it was clear that PIEVU and OMS answer the demand for the change of regional administrations and the central government, but this did not take into account the effective joint contribution of the Treasury/UVAL and Formez through which the region was offered:

- Qualified human resources to support the activities of elaboration and organization of the
selection process

- Additional financial resources deriving from the RAP 100 programme

**RAP100** is a Department of Public Administration programme, financed by the Ministry of the Treasury and aimed at implementing projects and activities to support Public Administrations. Executive planning and operational coordination of the activities were assigned to Formez who seconded the central coordination structure with regional structures called Task Forces and dealt with the operational coordination of the activities to be realized in each regional context.

### 5.3 Formez – Task Force Calabria

Through resolution n° 249 and in the ambit of the protocol related to the “RAP 100” programme and signed on July 27th, 1999 the region assigned Formez with the task of creating a Technical Secretariat to support the works of the Selection Committee in all its phases. This contract was confirmed under the same conditions in July, following the resolutions of the newly-appointed regional government.

Also in this case, we can say that the choice of an autonomous organizational unit, external to the regional administration revealed to be one of the determining factors for fulfilling the needs to equip the region so as to enable it to start ROP management in the short term.

The agreement with the region was concluded in view of the establishment of a Committee Secretariat coming from the Service of Operational Programmes Management of the Calabria region.

The role of Formez was to deal with some of the Technical Committee tasks for the selection procedures and to conduct training and updating sessions for the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit in the delicate start-up phase, thus encouraging full integration between the new structure and the regional administrations.

With a simple classification, three areas of intervention can be identified for which Formez is highly competent: organizational, administrative-management, technical-consultancy.

At **organizational** level, Formez focuses on all the logistic fulfilments related to the preparation of the Selection Committee meetings (transport, accommodations, meals, meeting rooms, etc.), thus contributing to the creation of a highly-professional work climate, facilitating the participation of members and optimizing the time lengths for the execution of the work.

At **administrative – management** level, we cannot neglect the fact that all the obligations for operating the Selection Committee have been assigned to Formez, who dealt with the administrative aspects (preparation of contracts, settlement of payments, etc.) and the related financial cover in the ambit of the RAP 100 Programme resources.

Although these complex aspects of the technical assistance role played by Formez revealed to be extremely meaningful for the results achieved, without doubt the most significant added value produced by the Technical Secretariat for the process, is related to the phase of work preparation of the Committee both *in itinere* with the preparation of all necessary tools (information dossiers, database, publicity and translations of tenders, classifications, etc.) which are critical for any Selection Committee.

### 5.4 The Selection Committee

The body committed to actually conduct the selection processes with public procedures as provided by the Regional Council resolution was the independent Selection Committee.

Established with subsequent regional resolutions in the Summer 2000, the Committee officially commenced its activities on September 25th 2000, with the following objectives:

- to ensure the highest level of technical competency in choosing the candidates
- to ensure maximum transparency and independence in the process of selection
to promote this initiative in regional territories outside Calabria and in professional sectors which are not exclusively public so as to involve candidates from other geographical areas.

The activation of the committee intended to underline that the selection of PIEVU and OMS is an example of the effective degree of attraction that a regional area can exercise on qualified resources external to the public sector, in as much that works conducted in this way can radically innovate the structure of an administration and when the basis are laid, can offer jobs which are not only “well-paid” but also “challenging” and highly encouraging in terms of the opportunities for professional growth.

For this purpose, the Committee compound mirrored the intention to cooperate between central and local institutions:

- a representative of the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit of the Ministry of the Treasury, Budget. P.E. (UVAL);
- two external experts competent in Public Administration matters
- two experts external to the Public Administration with sectoral competencies in management and selection of human resources.

This was the result of a process which experienced two different Regional Councils in alternation. The Selection Committee was operational at its start-up. The first meeting of the Committee proceeded with the planning of a publicity campaign for the tender and the definition of the work schedule.

6 Profiles

The first important transition towards the implementation of the process of selection is the definition of the professional profiles of reference. In the Italian scenario, the profession of the “evaluator” is an extremely innovative profile, particularly with regard to the public sector. Subsequently, it was necessary to establish the borderlines and the clear magnitude in order to then identify in detail, the recruitment benchmarks to be included in the tender.

In the preliminary phase of application – with reference to the position of the PIEVU and the OMS – the elaboration of analytical tables of the professional profiles of interest, was one of the formal evaluation tools used by the Selection Committee together with the criteria defined in the tender by the Regional Council as well as the methods of attribution of the grades defined by the Committee after reaching the deadlines for receiving the applications.

In this sense, as already mentioned in the course of selection preparation, Formez and UVAL have carried out a consistent mapping and analytical description of the professional profiles both of the future members of the Operational Managing Structure and the Public Investment Evaluation and Verification Unit who followed different approaches.

6.1 Definition of PIEVU profiles

Concerning the definition of the specific features of future members of the Evaluation Unit, the drafting of the related analytical table required significant systematization work to be carried out on the data collected through interviews with some of the members of the Evaluation Unit from the Ministry of the Treasury and Budget and Economic Planning as well as regional functionaries. This aimed to identify the “evaluator” profile as well as the needs of the regional administration in terms of professional competencies.

A detailed profile was elaborated by including competencies and knowledge which covered all the fields of intervention as well an indication of the capacities necessary to carry out the activity of assistance and support so as to encourage the adoption of choices by the public investment management bodies throughout the regional territory.

This document was annexed to the tender on the regional website after publication for the purpose of
assisting and encouraging potential “ideal candidates” to participate in the selection, in line with the strategic objective to innovate the process of selection by “attracting” those resources who showed real interest in the position.

The document entitled “Orientamenti per gli aspiranti a componente del NVVIP della Regione Calabria” further explains the elements which are included in the official tender:

- a summarized description of the organizational unit of reference
- a professional profile
- the knowledge and competencies required
- admissibility qualifications
- preferential credits

The intention was to choose an expert in planning, evaluation and management who was able to understand the various stages of the planning period and the project period and to intervene successfully. Beside these features which were considered to be “fundamental”, there should be the complete availability of the applicant and strong motivation as well as predisposition for team work.

The required functions were explained as follows (a candidate was required to have competencies in some of the following):

- applied analysis at territorial and sectoral level aimed at verifying the consistency between general objectives and the proposals presented
- planning, formulation and evaluation of programme documents
- analysis of opportunities and investment feasibility
- monitoring of programmes and projects (eventual creation and management of an IT system for the physical, financial and procedural monitoring of interventions)
- ex ante, in itinere and ex post evaluation and verification of investment projects and programmes
- application of planning procedures and techniques, evaluation, monitoring and verification of the Structural Funds
- environmental economy and analysis applied at territorial and sectoral level
- elaboration of territorial statistical methods aimed at assessing the consistency of a future project or programme

The pre-requisite of the maximum age accepted was also new compared to the previous tenders involving most public administrations during selections of this type.

The reasons which led to this type of choices were two:

- the intention to choose resources who are able to welcome and implement the challenges launched by the Calabria region for this planning cycle
- the observation that the European Community planning logic related to the Structural Funds belong to “young” professionals rather than professionals who have been operating in the sector of public investment in Italy for many years

### 6.2 Definition of the OMS profiles

Most considerations made for the PIEVU tender are also valid for the preparation of the OMS, yet two significant differentiation factors are worthy of being analyzed in depth:

- a three-year work experience in compliance with the professional activities foreseen; for the positions of Project Manager and Territorial Manager, the pre-requisite must be “top management” experience
- the selection was no longer based on a single profile, but specified the characteristics needed in terms of roles and tasks, know-how and the competencies requested

This difference was imposed by the need for a strong “operational” connotation and ended up
complicating both the elaboration of the profile materials and the selection by the committee. This was also rendered more complex by the fact that candidates applied for more than one position (a maximum of three with reference to the Project Manager position, two with reference to the Transversal Expert position).

The profiles requested are summarized as follows:

➢ **Ten Program Managers**

- **Program Manager – Integrated water cycle.** The task was to provide specific consultancy and technical assistance to ROP Measure Officers aimed at the optimal management of water resources in a framework of environmental sustainability which could lead to the thorough application of the Galli law.

- **Program Manager – Soil defence and civil protection.** The task was the pursuit of the following objectives:
  - identification of water and geo-morphological risks and definition of interventions of prevision, prevention and mitigation of the reclamation risks
  - reclamation and improvement of the natural system through the re-organization and optimization of water and hydro-geological functions
  - implementation of advanced monitoring systems of alert, IT programmes and the diffusion of technological innovations
  - promotion of local monitoring systems
  - implementation of interventions of prevention in urban areas
  - creation of the conditions for developing entrepreneurship to support the sector
  - increase in social consensus on prevention and emergency

- **Program Manager – Environment and energy.** The task was the pursuit of the following objectives in compliance with the activities of Measure Officers:
  - to prevent the production of waste and re-use, recycle, retrieval and disposal of waste as established in the Community regulations included in the Waste management Plan and the Differentiated Waste Collection Plan elaborated by the Division of the Extraordinary Commissioner for Environmental Emergency in Calabria
  - to secure polluted sites at high environmental risk through reclamation, site retrieval, development of recycling technologies, retrieval of contaminated territories and pollution prevention
  - to support the ARPACAL start-up and operation (regional agency for pollution protection) through monitoring actions of the environmental system and support for pollution prevention
  - to optimize the use of the existing plan to generate, transfer and distribute electric energy, improve efficiency and reliability of the system, develop renewable energy sources, enlarge the natural gas distribution network and to boost participation of the private sector of investment and management of energy plants

- **Program Manager – Education, training and labour policies.** The following objectives must be fulfilled:
  - to concretely apply the Occupational Service Reform and guarantee SIL implementation, development and updating
  - to encourage integration and re-integration of young and adult professionals into the labour market
  - to adjust the vocational training system to the new tasks that labour policies have assumed in increased competiveness and employment, above all through the realization of a planning, management and evaluation system of Calabrian training policies
to prevent student dispersion through integrated policies with the NOP “School for Development”

- to realize a close relationship between the system of post-comprehensive school training opportunities and the business system
- to implement permanent training interventions for professional retraining through the pursuit of a diploma or qualification
- to constantly upgrade employees competencies and apply the contract clauses for the implementation of the re-modulation and flexibility policies for the labour market
- to upgrade the competencies of the Calabria PA staff
- to promote new business initiatives through a service integrated system for business planning
- to encourage the hidden labour market to emerge through information, training and regulatory tools
- to facilitate female integration into the labour market
- to prepare training plans to qualify and update the professional resources to be involved in the realization of intervention funded by specific ROP Calabria measures
- to qualify schools for the realization of Resource Centres

Program Manager – Research, innovation and the information society. The task was the pursuit of the following objectives:

- to implement the Regional Plan for innovation whose actions will be integrated with NOP “Research” so as to avoid overlapping
- to support and diffuse the information society in Calabria with particular reference to the Public Administration, public education and production system sectors

Program Manager – Industry, handicrafts, commerce and services. The task was to provide technical assistance and specific consultancy to ROP Measure Officers with the following objectives:

- to strengthen regional production through interventions aimed at the growth and competitiveness of the existing businesses, to support the establishment of new businesses, the re-qualification of services and financial markets and the modernization of the commercial sector
- to promote cooperation between businesses by supporting projects for integration and enhancement of the regional production dies and hubs, in order to increase productivity and promote integrated projects of interregional and trans-national production cooperation

Program Manager – Tourism and cultural heritage

- to enhance the archaeological heritage of Magna Grecia, regional architecture and natural public heritage
- to create public services to access and utilize the regional cultural heritage as well as to foster innovative cultural initiatives for its enhancement
- to develop business initiatives in the sector of cultural heritage
- to support the promotion and utilization of tourism at regional level through integrated interventions aimed at improving the image of the “Calabria product”, enhancing regional tourism packets in national and international commercialization networks and reduce travel costs for tourists
- to support the creation and enhancement of tourism networks and systems

Program Manager – Agriculture, rural development and fishing. The following objectives must be fulfilled:

- to intervene on the whole production die in a systemic way
- to intervene for the development and enhancement of rural territories
- to encourage development of the agricultural and agro-industrial system
- to protect and enhance natural and environmental resources by reducing the impact of human activity, the promotion of economic initiatives related to tourism, and improvement of local handicrafts

- Program Manager – *City and services for the individual and the community*. The task was to provide technical assistance and specific consultancy to ROP Measure Officers with following objectives:
  - to implement integrated programmes of urban development
  - to realize social territorial pacts to integrate poor and disadvantaged people into the local social community

- Program Manager – *Transport*. The following objectives must be fulfilled:
  - enhancement and re-qualification of transport networks and hubs at interregional-international level (actions realized in close connection with the National Operational Programme “transport”)
  - enhancement and re-qualification of transport networks and hubs at regional-local level

- **Five Territorial Program Managers**

- Province of Catanzaro
- Province of Cosenza
- Province of Crotone
- Province of Reggio Calabria
- Province of Vibo Valentia

They have the task to ensure an efficient relationship with the ROP managing authority and the local environment, thus encouraging observance of the territorial needs, measures, actions and interventions both in the planning and the implementation phases. The intervention is directed to solving eventual problems which could take place during the collaboration process with the parties involved. They provide specific consultancy and technical assistance for the elaboration and implementation of Territorial integrated Projects and other interventions at local level which are executed in a consistency and feasibility framework with regard to ROP objectives and resources.

- **Six Territorial Experts**

- *Work contracts, services and supplies*. This expert must ensure that work contracts, services and supplies are compliant with Community, national and regional regulations by providing policy advice and specific assistance on the preparation and management in the procedural and operational stages. The expert coordinates the activities together with the Program Manager. In particular, he/she contributes to building and simulating of the project cycles, planning the internal and external implementation stages in the region, evaluating the necessary times for the issue of authorizations for the all competent administrations, from the project idea to the certification of the end of works and suggesting operational methods in order to observe deadlines.

- *Community regulations*. The task is to guarantee that the management of ROP-financed measures and interventions are compliant with community regulations; to highlight and solve eventual inconsistencies between regional, national and Community regulations

- *Information systems*. The task is to guarantee planning, management and updating of an information system suitable for the monitoring, transparency and publicity needs of the ROP. He/she must coordinate the activities with the existing regional information system and the
national system of Public Investment Monitoring (PIM)

- **Information and communications.** The task is to guarantee diffusion and publicity throughout the regional, national and Community ROP territory, in particular its aims, mechanisms of implementation and participation and the results achieved. His/her activity is mainly carried out through the preparation and distribution of information, efficient planning and management of publicity campaigns and press/radio/television releases on the regional website. This activity must have consistent content on Territorial Marketing

- **Safety and rule of law.** He/she must ensure the realization of ROP content as a transversal element for the various measures. For this purpose, what has been indicated in paragraph 6.4.3 of the ROP, is a precise execution or supervision of the figure analyzed

- **Project finance.** He/she must promote the participation of the private sector in the financing and management of infrastructure and evaluate the opportunity to use public-private partnership techniques and be a point of reference for the relationships with regional departments and sub-regional entities and the Unit Project Finance of the Ministry of the Treasury and Finance.

7 **The Tender and the Communications Campaign**

7.1 **Publication of tenders and profiles – the press campaign and publicity**

The work of preparation of tenders and the definition of candidates profiles, ended at the end of September 2000 to allow for the elaboration of the Committee dossiers for defining the publicity channels, once the campaign for collecting applications started.

As previously mentioned, a fundamental aspect for all parties was to have great visibility on the process of selection, in as much as they considered that the achievement of this objective was subject to the effective possibility to recruit competent and motivated human resources.

The choice was to base the information campaign on three levels, thus pursuing different and complementary objectives for each of them with respect to the general aim:

- **Institutional communications** on B.U.R G.U. and G.U.C.E. and the regional website. This information level aims to provide a complete and detailed framework of the process in progress to be included in the area dedicated to PIEVU and OMS of the website which could be consulted during the entire period to attract candidates, documents of advice elaborated during the preparation phase for tenders for the purpose of focusing on the substantial aspects of the process, rather than formal. This can be achieved by adopting a “new” logic which consists of preparing efficient mechanisms to create a different “work offer” aimed at more mature and qualified professionals. For the latter, the successful factor for a “good selection” does not lie in assuming a super partes, authoritative and “self-referential” position, typical of the Public Administration (traditionally “used to choosing” in a closed circuit), rather in the capacity to create the optimal conditions to “be chosen” by those who really believe in giving “added value” to the administration, thus accepting the challenge of a direct comparison with other professional environments. Furthermore, to avoid proposing and forcing the adoption of a specific curriculum vitae model. We considered it opportune to give full freedom to candidates on this aspect

- **Press campaign** in all main regional and national newspapers with the aim of having the highest number of contacts possible outside the administration. The applicant was advised to consult the website for all detailed information. In these online areas, a synthetic publicity message was diffused so as to detect a high number of users to encourage and motivate “potential candidates” and openly invite them to accept the “challenge” launched by the region for the new 2000 – 2006
planning cycle. This was an unusual practice for the Public Administration who achieved certain results and confirmed the peculiar position of the Calabria region—the will to widen the horizon as much as possible, is testified by the publication of this same advertisement in the weekly English version of the weekly magazine “The Economist”.

- **Additional campaigns** to the already defined press campaign, were characterized by dedicated actions agreed upon by the Selection Committee and aimed at promoting tenders in universities, businesses and institutions of support to the private sector through capillary and systemic actions. On the occasion of the first meeting, the Committee took these various possibilities into consideration:

The campaign to attract candidates officially commenced at the beginning of October with the publication of the General Director Decrees n° 172 and 173 of September 22nd on the B.U.R. and concluded at the end of November.

### 7.2 Assistance to the Drafting and Publication of the Tender

On the basis of the specific needs of the Regional Council, the Ministry of the Treasury, Formez and the Planning Division of the Region, the tender was prepared for the selection the staff by taking into consideration two levels for evaluation: evaluation of the admissibility of the applications and the presence of all the competencies requested through an analysis of the *curricula* and verification of the attitudes and qualifications through subsequent interviews.

Furthermore, the website of the Calabria region had a specific link for publicizing the tender in a dual format for downloading, links to regulatory references, a press review and a link to the Formez website. The choice to support the publication of the tender took place through an intense publicity initiative which significantly affected the quality of the entire selection process and received great response allowing for the recruitment from a wide range of candidates both at qualitative and quantitative level.

On the expiry date of the tender, 1152 applications had been received of which 338 for the Evaluation Unit and 813 for the Operational Managing Structure. Out of the 21 available positions for a total of 2404 candidates (see table 8).

Nearly 60% of the applications came from the Calabria region (due to the in-depth knowledge of the Calabria territory), with 37% from the other Italian regions and 3% from foreign countries.¹

### 8 The Selection Process

**8.1 Collection and Classification of Data - Pre Selection**

In order to safeguard the transparency process and avoid external interferences, the receipt of candidate applications was organized by Formez who established a mailbox, while an ad-hoc database was set up for registering data to classify the applications from information drawn from the closed envelopes: personal details of the candidate, their geographical area and the position to which the applicant applied. (OMS, PIEVU).

In this way, the Selection Committee constantly had updated data on the progress of candidate applications and could precisely plan the work load and a schedule of the meetings.

In the subsequent analysis of the *curricula*, the database was finalized to allow for the registration of the grades assigned to each candidate in accordance with each evaluation criteria and intermediate classification, as well as the final outcome including the result of the interview.

¹ Data elaborated by the Task Force Calabria - Rap 100
The data base was elaborated in order to realize further statistical data which were instrumental to the requests expressed by the Selection Committee. In light of the complex management of the selection methods chosen (professional profiles different from the OMS, multiple applications, single interviews, etc…), it was fundamental to draft admissibility classifications and joint data in real time so as to define the position of each candidate.

For each candidate selected for the final interview, the Committee was provided with the candidate’s position in the classification and all the technical information necessary for a comprehensive assessment.

The operational evaluation methods defined by the Selection Committee saw a preventive screening phase on the curricula received of which the Technical Secretariat was in charge and from which candidate admissibility and a first evaluation about the length of professional experience of each candidate should emerge on the basis of the grades previously defined by the Selection Committee. This permitted the drastic reduction of both preliminary investigation time lengths and the financial obligations for the operations.

In general, the elaboration of an evaluation grid for candidate selection aimed at ensuring the highest level of technical competence, transparency and autonomy in the selection and was opened to those professionals coming from different regional environments as well as from the private sector.

The criteria for selection:
- length of professional experience
- quality of professional experience
- know-how on the main Community and national regulatory and planning tools of public investment policies
- university post-degree qualifications or a comparable diploma
- knowledge of the territorial socio-economic situations in the Calabria region
- capacity for using standard software for elaborating texts, data and online communications

8.2 The Final Selection

The statistical elaboration of data was very relevant for the final quality of the selection process, the database allowed them to reply to the information needs of the Committee in real time and to extract key data for the regional administration both for dissemination and organization purposes owing to the available list of highly-qualified professionals from whom they could obtain information, also in the future.

Between February and March 2001, the oral interview took place with the intention of assessing the coordination skills and attitude to group work in accordance to what was indicated in the “Orientamenti per gli aspiranti a componente del NVVIP della Regione Calabria” annexed to the tenders on the regional website.

In April 2001, the decrees on contract assignment concluding the selection process, were issued.

9 Conclusion

A key factor in the analysis of the Calabria region experience is the fact that in stating the obligation of establishing units within regional and central administrations, the Italian law chose to grant full administrative, organizational and instrumental autonomy. The administrations had only to elaborate a programme for the implementation of the activities.

In this regard, the Calabria region originally interpreted its autonomy in an original way when it assigned the selection procedures to an external Committee of bodies outside the regional
administration, while the administrative, operational and technical duties were granted to Formez. This was an extremely significant choice. In fact, the region intended to launch the process with full freedom of evolution, giving full powers to the Committee and thus avoiding subsequent interference and eventual second thoughts. Although the Regional Council changed after the election of April 2000, the driving force of this decision emerged when the new structure did not amend the mandate: this occurred because the regional environment became aware of the relevance and urgency of this transition in the implementation of the Regional Operational Programme.

A second point concerned the autonomy attributed to the Selection Committee which was supported by their own technical competencies was the choice of the components, decided through the appointment of the Regional Council where private sector bodies with experience and authoritativeness in the field were selected, thus re-confirming the intention of the region to create a strong and autonomous body. The imposition of the region was limited to the appointment the Director of the Planning Division, Economic development and Community Policies as administrative secretariat of the Committee with the guarantee of updating and monitoring all the activities in progress, in real time.

In coherence with this choice, lies in the need to pursue a high degree of transparency and quality of the professionals selected.

As far as the professionals are concerned, a negative judgment on the results achieved from past choices has given rise to the inevitable need to strengthen the regional administrations.

Yet, it is to be underlined that the process of selection of the Evaluation Unit was “outsourced” in order to pursue short-term and high quality professional performances. This decision was made possible by the positive conditions, such as the possibility to register a complaint through a body of trust who can play the role of “lubricant”. The group RAP100 Calabria of Formez already took part in the ROP drafting process in collaboration with the same bodies (a group from the Ministry of the Treasury to support the Calabria region and the regional administration) who could boast of understanding the regional context and above all sharing the objective of establishing a unit. This meant improving the implementation and assessment of the plans promoted by the administration. In other words, the political will to manage an activity with seriousness, would not be enough if it was not supported by the possibility to overcome the two traditionally most relevant hindrances: time and financial resources.

The year of work started in March 2000 which was a long time to finalize the nomination of PIEVU and OMS roles, above all in terms of loss of operability in the ROP realization. Without a technical secretary, a role to be played with a flexibility which is not usual in a regional administrations, the process could have been even longer and probably the same results could not have been achieved. Also with regard to financial resources, this led to the prestige of the people nominated to the Selection Committee, some of whom came from the private sector and therefore were not accustomed to the time delay for payment settlements of the public administration. Being able to timely use the resources that Formez utilized with RAP100, allowed for the optimization of red tape procedures and the overcoming of eventual resistance and surrender.

In conclusion, we can state that the strategy undertaken by the Regional Council to outsource the activity of the unit, had its logic in the will to accelerate and render the process more objective, thus relying on a body who could mediate between the parties and play the role of facilitator of the whole process. In this sense, the experience certainly gave value to the experimental implementation of the regulatory obligations, as it happened for other regional administrations. Yet, speaking about a model can seem to be misleading in a certain way, especially when the particular conditions existing in Calabria in terms of a strong convergence of targets and a habit for communal work, we can decide on the methods and above all, the tools to be used for technical assistance: the professional profiles to be recruited, the evaluation criteria, grades to be assigned, the evaluation methods of the curricula, the database and so on. Finally, where the regional administration choice cannot be applied, the methods created can always be transferred and at times, even improved.
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technico-amministrativa

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11 Biographical sketch

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Country       Italy
Fax           (396)84892357

12 Annexes

Figure 1 – The gap of the GDP per head

Calabria/Italy
Calabria/North-centre of Italy
Calabria/South of Italy

Source: elaboration of Istat and Svimez data
### Table 1 - The gap of GDP per head (Years 1980-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Calabria/Italy</th>
<th>Calabria/North-Centre of Italy</th>
<th>Calabria/South of Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>59.10</td>
<td>50.85</td>
<td>83.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>61.62</td>
<td>52.76</td>
<td>87.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>47.28</td>
<td>82.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>57.85</td>
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<td>84.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>56.74</td>
<td>47.92</td>
<td>83.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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Source: elaboration of Istat and Svimez data

### Figure 2 – Unemployment rate in Calabria – South of Italy (quarterly data 1993-1999)

Source: Istat, 2000
Figure 3 – Employment per sector (in %)

![Graph showing employment per sector over time]

Source: elaboration of Istat and Svimez data

Table 2 – Local work systems in Calabria: the variations in the employment rate between 1991-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local systems with occupational growth</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>Local systems with occupational decline</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>lower than 13%</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>between 13% and 26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems with a strong decline in employment (over 26%)</td>
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Source: elaboration of Istat data
Table 3 – Breakdown variables (Calabria, Ob. 1 regions, Italy)

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<tr>
<th>Breakdown variables</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1996</th>
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<tr>
<td>Export capacity</td>
<td>Esports/DGP</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.98</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>8.6</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Level of economic independence</td>
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<td>Calabria</td>
<td>33.73</td>
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<td>Ob. 1 regions</td>
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<td>Capacity to attract tourism consumptions</td>
<td>Tourist per inhabitant</td>
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<td>Capacity to attract foreign investment</td>
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Source: Istat, 2000
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Table 4  Due expenditure of the Calabria Operational Programme

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<th>DESTINAZIONE</th>
<th>SPELLO</th>
<th>AGRICOLE</th>
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*Fonte: Regione Calabria - Assessorato alla Programmazione e Bilancio - Dipartimento Bilancio

POP expenditure (imports in million liras)

Funding
- EFRD_POP_94_99
- ESF_POP_94_99
- AEFOG_OP

Agriculture
- Leader 2
- Total subsidy
- Crotone
- Total subsidy
- Gioia Tauro
- Total

Source: Calabria region – Regional Council for Planning and Budget – Department for Budget
Table 5 Financial Plan ROP Calabria 2000-20006 per Priority (thousands of euros)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Eligible Total Costs</th>
<th>Public expenditure</th>
<th>Community Contributions</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>122.290</td>
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Table 6 Financial Plan ROP Calabria 2000-20006 per year (thousands of euros)

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<th>Eligible Total Costs</th>
<th>Public Expenditure</th>
<th>Community Contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Total Public Resources</td>
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Table 7 – Data on Candidate Selection Tender for PIEVU and OMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PIEVU Candidates</strong></td>
<td>338</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Territorial PMs</strong></td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Water Cycle</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil and Civil Protection</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment, energy</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Policies</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>Industry</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cities</td>
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<td>Trasport</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sectoral PMs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulations</td>
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<td>Information systems</td>
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<td>Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety and rule of law</td>
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<td>Project finance</td>
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<td><strong>Transversal Experts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total candidates</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passed</td>
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<tr>
<td>irregular applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>age over the pre-fixed limit</td>
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<tr>
<td>degree grade under the limit</td>
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Source: Elaboration of the Task Force Calabria staff - Rap 100