

*Multilevel Governance and Rural Development :
The role of the Italian provinces – Province of Parma*

CASE STUDY REPORT: PROVINCE OF PARMA

Draft

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The Focus Group with managers and officials of the Province of Parma included the Vice-President of the Province, along with the managers of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Service, Programming, Territorial Planning, Economic Development and Productive Activities Service, Tourism, Culture, Sport and Leisure, Europe Service, Professional Training and Active Employment Policies Service, Budget, Financial and Economic Programming Service.

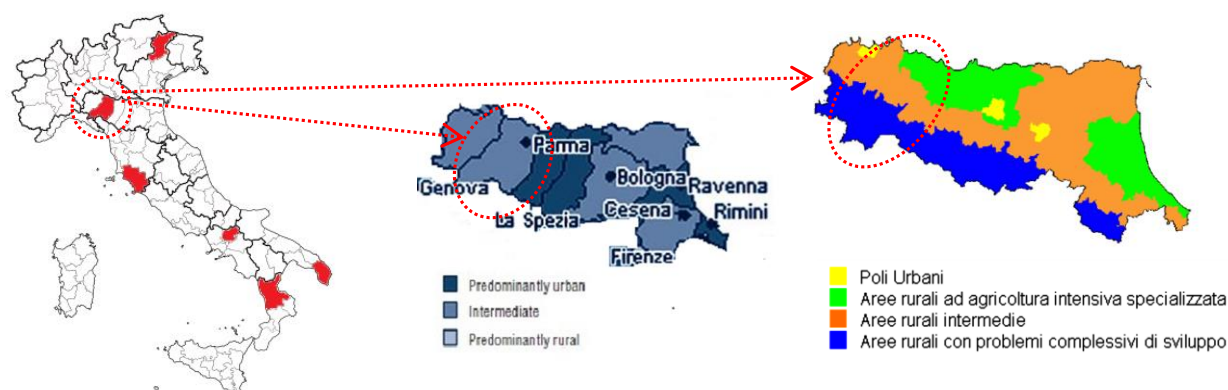
At the Focus Group with the local stakeholders participated representatives of the Agency for Local Development of the Provinces of Parma and Piacenza – Soprip, of the Industrial Union of Parma, as well as representatives of Coldiretti (the national Organization of farmers), of the Italian Confederation of Farmers and of the Union of the municipalities of East Parma.

At the Focus Group on the Industrial Tomato District took part representatives of the Province of Parma, of the University of Parma, of the processed canned food industries “Rodolfi Mansueto Spa” and “Mutti Spa”, of the Industrial Union of Parma, of the Inter-professional Organisation Industrial Tomato District, of the AINPO – the Inter-provincial Association of fruit and vegetables producers, of the CIO – Inter-regional Consortium of fruit and vegetables producers, of the AIIPA – Italian Association of Food and Drink Industries and of the ASIPO – Inter-provincial Association of fruit and vegetable producers.

1. SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE TERRITORY

The Province of Parma, classified by the OECD as intermediate rural area, according to the zoning criteria adopted by the EAFRD National Strategy Plan (NSP) for rural development, is characterised by a mountainous strip including rural areas affected by overall development problems, an hilly section with intermediate rural areas and a flat zone characterized by rural areas with specialized intensive agriculture.

Figure 1 – OECD (centre) and NSP (right) classification of the Benevento province's territory



Source: Our elaboration on OECD and NSP maps

It is made up of 47 municipalities, more than half of which mountainous. In 2011, its 3,449 square Km hosted a population of about 430,000 inhabitants, with a population density (124 inhabitants/square Km) which is much inferior than the regional and national one (respectively 193 and 197) and with an urban pattern located mainly in the lowland (61% of the residents).

The provincial territory suffers problems of low population density, particularly in the hilly and mountainous areas, mainly due to scarcity of services to the population and firms and to the progressive abandonment by young people, which leads to an aging index (176) that exceeds both the regional (171) and the national level (149) and a structural dependence index (57) which is in line with the regional level, but slightly higher than the national one (53).

Active people represent, nevertheless, 71% of the working age population. The employment rate in the age-group 15-64 (68%), in line with the regional one, exceeds to a greater extent the national one (57%), whereas the unemployment rate (4%) is slightly inferior than the regional one (5%) and is exactly half the national one (8%).

Employment is mainly concentrated in services (63%), thus aligning itself to the regional and national levels; conversely, levels in industry and agriculture are , respectively, slightly higher (34%, vs the regional 33% and the national 28%) and lower (3% vs. 4%).

Table 1 – Territorial and Socio-economic features

	Province of Parma	Emilia Romagna Region	Italy
Surface (km ² , as of 2011)	3,449	22,445,54	301,336,00
Number of municipalities (as of 2011/12/31)	47	348	8,092
Population (on 2011/10/09)	427,434	4,342,135	59,433,744
Population density (inhab/km ² , on 2011/10/09)	123.92	193.45	197.23
Elderliness index (on 2009/12/31)	176.13	171.18	148.75
Dependency index (on 2011/10/09)	56.85	57.12	53.49
Population 15-64 years (% as of 2011)*	272,518	2,763,599	38,722,733
Persons employed (as of 2011), of which in:	200,216	1,967,248	22,967,243
– agriculture (% 2011)	2.75	3.83	3.70
– industry (% 2011)	34.31	33.43	28.47
– other activities (% 2011)	62.94	62.75	67.83
Activity rate (Istat, as of 2011)	70.86	71.79	62.25
Employment rate (Istat, as of 2011)	68.15	67.92	56.94
Unemployment rate (Istat, as of 2011)	3.75	5.28	8.41

* Our elaborations

Elderliness index: Ratio of the population aged over 65 years to the population aged under 15 years (%),

Dependency index: Population aged 0-14 years plus the population aged 65 and over, as a percentage of the population aged 15-64,

Activity rate: Labour force as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64 years),

Employment rate: Persons in employment as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64 years)

Unemployment rate: Unemployed persons as a percentage of the active population(15-64 years)

Source: Atlas of Competitiveness of provinces and regions, Istituto Tagliacarne –Unioncamere.

At December 2011, registered firms amounted to 47,602 (14% in agriculture), on the increase in comparison to the previous year (47,506), and the economy of Parma was characterized by an entrepreneurial density in line with the regional and national levels (10 firms per 100 inhabitants).

The main specializations are represented by the manufacturing sector and the agro-food sector and, despite the decrease, between 2007 and 2010, in their number and in the persons employed in non-agricultural firms, the decrease has been smaller than the one observed in the other regional provinces¹.

The value added at December 2011 amounted to 12,583 million euro, 67% of which arising from services, 31% from the industrial sector and just 2% from agriculture, thus representing 10% of the regional value added and 0.90% of the national one (on the increase in comparison to the previous year when it was 0.88%).

In 2010, total agricultural output at basic prices was about 10% of the regional one and was mainly originated from the livestock sector (59%, a percentage exceeding by 20 points the regional share and by 27 points the national one) and from the herbaceous crops (25%). Furthermore, although the agricultural sector has a weak incidence on the total added value (2.11%), the gross saleable production registered at a provincial level in the years between the

¹ Istat – Emilia Romagna Region (2013).

economic crisis (2008-2012) showed a positive trend with an increase of 13% and a peak of 25% concerning only livestock production.

Table 2 – Structural features of the economy

	Province of Parma ^a		Emilia Romagna Region		Italy	
Registered enterprises, number (Infocamere, on 2011/12/31), of which in:	47,602		475,716		6,110,074	
– Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	6,806	14.3%	67,870	14.27%	837,624	13.71%
– Manufacturing	6,185	12.99%	54,931	11.55%	617,768	10.11%
– Constructions	8,740	18.36%	79,518	16.72%	906,496	14.84%
– Wholesale and retail trading	9,902	20.80%	103,336	21.72%	1,550,863	25.38%
– Accommodation and catering	2,789	5.86	32,622	6.86	392,337	6.42
Total added value, million Euros, as of 2010, of which in:	12,583		124,395		1,395,219	
– Agriculture	266	2.11%	2,824	2.27%	26,698	1.91%
– Industry	3,892	30.93%	37,214	29.92%	347,094	24.88%
– Services	8,425	66.95%	84,357	67.81%	1,021,426	73.21%
Total disposable income, million Euros (elab. Ist. Tagliacarne, as of 2010)	8,864		90,261		1,029,943	
Per-capita disposable income, Euros (elab. Ist. Tagliacarne, as of 2010)	20,157,07		20,533,22		17,028,53	
Total agricultural production at base prices, thousand Euros (2010), of which:	542,284		5,561,177		45,942,616	
– Herbaceous crops	135,247	24.94%	1,675,272	30.12%	14,687,486	31.97%
– Ligneous crops	5,375	0.99%	1,090,063	19.60%	10,439,470	22.72%
– Livestock products	320,594	59.12%	2,200,848	39.58%	14,889,559	32.41%
– Forestry products	3,344	0.62%	22,123	0.40%	476,690	1.04%
– Related services	77,725	14.33%	572,871	10.30%	5,449,412	11.86%

Source: Our elaboration on data from the Atlas of competitiveness of the provinces and regions, Istituto Tagliacarne – Unioncamere.

In the years between 2000 and 2011, in the Province of Parma, total added value at basic prices, calculated at current prices, has increased by 35% and, differently from what happened at the regional level (1%) and at the national level (-0.2%), it remained stable also during the years of the crisis and even registered an increase of 3%. Nevertheless, it has been industry as a whole and services to allow the increase of local economy, whereas the primary sector suffered a decline of 8% and, between 2000 and 2011, its contribution to total value added halved (from 4% to 1.95%), whereas there has been a decrease of little more than a point both at the regional level (from 3.57% to 2.33%) and at the national level (from 2.81% to 1.99%) during the same period.

Table 3 – Total added value at base prices by category (current prices, million Euros)

		Agriculture, forestry and fisheries (a)	(a/d)	Industry (b)	(b/d)	Services (c)	(c/d)	Total (d)
Province of Parma	2000	377	4.00%	3,117	33.05%	5,936	62.95%	9,430
	2008	270	2.19%	4,312	34.89%	7,777	62.93%	12,359
	2011	248	1.95%	4,395	34.59%	8,065	63.46%	12,709
	Δ 2008/2000	-28%		38%		31%		31%
	Δ 2011/2000	-34%		41%		36%		35%
	Δ 2011/2008	-8%		2%		4%		3%
Emilia Romagna Region	2000	3,397	3.57%	31,084	32.64%	60,755	63.79%	95,236
	2008	2,993	2.36%	40,920	32.27%	82,896	65.37%	126,809
	2011	2,976	2.33%	39,391	30.85%	85,334	66.82%	127,702
	Δ 2008/2000	-12%		32%		36%		33%
	Δ 2011/2000	-12%		27%		40%		34%
	Δ 2011/2008	-1%		-4%		3%		1%
Italy	2000	30,036	2.80%	297,109	27.74%	743,745	69.45%	1,070,891
	2008	28,851	2.04%	378,722	26.72%	1,009,927	71.25%	1,417,500
	2011	28,150	1.99%	351,495	24.84%	1,035,563	73.17%	1,415,207
	Δ 2008/2000	-4%		27%		36%		32%
	Δ 2011/2000	-6%		18%		39%		32%
	Δ 2011/2008	-2%		-7%		3%		-0.2%

Source: Istat.

In the period between 2000 and 2010, the decrease in the number of firms is remarkable, although in line with the regional and national figures (-30% for the farms with crops and -40% for the livestock farms, with a decreases of -70% for pig breeding farms), nonetheless, Parma ham and parmesan cheese is among the main provincial products there are.

The agri-food sector and the livestock sector play a very important role in the Province of Parma and they are also related to the main provincial crops, such as cereals, industrial tomato and, among the herbaceous crops, the fodder.

In particular, the agri-food chain represents the mainstay of the local economy, since the related mechanic industries (both for the processing and for the packaging) and trade shows (Cibus, the International Food Exhibition, and Cibus Tec, the International Exhibition of solutions and technologies for the food industry) are both related to it. Therefore, the provincial Administration tried to build a virtuous path of public policies, thus strengthening the sustainability and combining together biodiversity restoration, cultural and touristic revitalisation and promoting designations of origin and protected geographical indications, as in the case of the PDO product “Culatello di Zibello”, Parma ham and Parmesan cheese, the PGI “Salame Felino”, other local PGI such as the “Coppa di Parma” and “Fungo di Borgotaro”, as well as the wines with the registered designation of origin “Colli di Parma” and TGI products “Emilia” and “Fontana del Taro”.

Table 4a – Structural features of the primary sector

	Provincia di Parma			Regione Emilia Romagna			Italia		
	2000	2010	2010/2000	2000	2010	2010/2000	2000	2010	2010/2000
Number of holdings with cultivations, of which	10,526	7,083	-32.71%	105,887	72,997	-31.06%	2,393,892	1,616,046	-32.49%
Total agricultural area (hectars)	190,675	172,314	-9.63%	1,462,479	1,360,762	-6.96%	18,766,584	17,078,307	-9.00%
Utilised agricultural area (hectars)	134,106	125,703	-6.27%	1,129,280	1,064,214	-5.76%	13,181,859	12,856,048	-2.47%
Arable crops, of which	109,703	101,850	-7.16%	859,636	830,571	-3.38%	7,283,882	7,009,311	-3.77%
- Horticultural crops	5253,73	5,503	4.74%	43,920	50,305	14.54%	259,296	299,682	15.58%
- Multiannual forage crops	63,844	63,155	-1.08%	284,987	298,677	4.80%	1,530,845	1,917,850	25.28%
Permanent pasture and meadows	22,878	22,608	-1.18%	116,999	102,561	-12.34%	3,414,592	3,434,073	0.57%
Number of holdings with livestock, of which:	3,770	2,213	-41.30%	23,093	12,618	-45.36%	370,356	217,449	-41.29%
- pig holdings	321	101	-68.54%	4,438	1,179	-73.43%	156,818	26,197	-83.29%
- bovine holdings, of which	2,710	1,628	-39.93%	12,183	7,357	-39.61%	171,994	124,210	-27.78%
With dairy cows	2,222	1,251	-43.70%	7,688	4,272	-44.43%	79,893	50,337	-36.99%
Number of pigs	180,346	111,889	-37.96%	1,555,344	1,247,460	-19.80%	8,603,141	9,331,314	8.46%
Number of bovine animals, of which	157,212	150,122	-4.51%	627,964	557,231	-11.26%	6,049,252	5,592,700	-7.55%
Dairy cows	87,087	82,140	-5.68%	275,838	247,632	-10.23%	1,771,889	1,599,442	-9.73%

Source: Our elaboration on Istat data, Censuses of agriculture 2000 and 2010.

Table 4b – Gross saleable output at current prices in the Province of Parma (million €)

Type of production	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Δ 2008-2012
Herbaceous crops	1,236.0	1,128.1	1,341.5	1,386.50	1,290.20	+4.39%
Tree crops	997.1	876.2	992.5	877.1	1,035.50	+3.85%
Livestock productions	1,710.9	1,695.7	1,929.4	2,046.10	2,131.10	+24.56%
Total	3,944.0	3,700.0	4,263.4	4,309.70	4,456.70	+13.00%

Source: Emilia Romagna Region

In 2010, the Province of Parma has experienced a propensity to export (39.04) and an openness rate (63.16) much higher than regional (respectively, 34.07 and 55.53) and national rates (respectively, 23.89 and 48.49). Worthy of note is the increase in the export volumes (from 4.9 in 2010 to 5.3 in 2011), which exceeded both the regional values and the national values. The international incidence has increased mainly in relation to the agricultural and agri-food products and to the mechanical engineering sector, in particular for food processing plants, which is another important field of vocation of Parma. The greatest volumes in export are mainly addressed towards the European countries, above all Austria, Germany, UK and the Netherlands, but also commercial relationships with Poland, Russia, Japan and US are remarkable.

Table 5 – Market Openness (Million Euros, %)

	Province of Parma			Emilia Romagna Region			Italy		
	2010	2011	Δ	2010	2011	Δ	2010	2011	Δ
Import	3,035	4,032	+33%	26,688	29,925	+12%	343,220	400,184	+17%
Export	4,912	5,341	+9%	42,386	47,934	+13%	333,329	371,153	+11%
Propensity to export (2010)	39.04			34.07			23.89		
Openness rate (2010)	63.16			55.53			48.49		

Source: Atlas of competitiveness of the provinces and regions, Istituto Tagliacarne – Unioncamere

The infrastructural pattern of the Province of Parma, between 2001 and 2011, has shown a negative trend and, on the whole, for both the years considered (2001 and 2011) the index of structural endowment (93 and 96) is well below both the national basic value (100) and the regional value (111 and 115), which exceeds the Italian average. By analyzing deeply in detail, the overall datum is the result of two opposite trends, that is, the decrease of 4 points in the endowment of economic infrastructures (from 91.65 to 87.63), and the increase of 10 points in the endowment of social infrastructures (from 95.10 to 115.66).

Table 6 – Infrastructural Development Indexes (Italy=100)

	Province of Parma		Emilia Romagna Region	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Economic infrastructures*	91.65	87.63	114.28	119.91
Social infrastructures**	95.10	115.66	104.09	104.00
General index of infrastructures (economic and social)	92.69	96.04	111.22	115.14

*Economic infrastructures: road network, railway network, ports, airports, plants and energy-environmental networks, telephone and data transmission facilities and networks, banking networks and miscellaneous services.

**Social Infrastructures: cultural and leisure facilities, schools and health care centres.

Source: Atlas of competitiveness of the provinces and regions, Istituto Tagliacarne – Unioncamere.

2. FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE PROVINCE

2.1 Own functions and functions delegated by the Region

In Emilia Romagna, the delegation process to local autonomies started well before the so called Bassanini laws innovated the Italian administrative system, by introducing the principles of decentralization, subsidiarity and adequacy at a regional and sub-regional level. Nevertheless, it is with the regional laws of transposition of the Bassanini laws that the transfer of functions to the local authorities was strengthened and systematised.

The administrative decentralization has been regulated by both an omnibus law reforming the entire regional and local system (regional law n. 3/1999) and a series of laws dedicated to specific sectors, such as agriculture and food (reg. law n. 15/1997), tourism (reg. law n. 7/1998), transports (reg. law n. 30/1998), commerce, fairs and markets (transfer of functions to the Municipalities, reg. law n. 12/1999, and to the Provinces, reg. law n. 14/1999), sport and entertainment (reg. law n. 13/2000), energy (reg. law n. 26/2004), forests (reg. law n. 27/2004), labour market (reg. law n. 17/2005). But it is the law n. 3/1999 that implemented the decree n. 112/1998 and identified levels of territorial government, principles for the re-organization and

distribution of functions and sectoral disciplines, as well as inter-institutional links and social consultation.

In general terms, the law n. 3 focuses on the entity and on the type of needs of local communities, on the cooperation between institutions and local stakeholders, on the efficiency and effectiveness of the allocation of functions. Therefore, through the negotiated planning, between Region, sub-regional authorities and local stakeholders there are intervention programmes aimed at fostering local socio-economic development, which are carried out in specific territorial areas by coordinating and integrating initiatives and financial resources². Furthermore, in addition to the principles of subsidiarity and adequacy, it introduces the principles of “unitary re-composition” of the homogeneous functions in a specific institutional level, along with the principle of “differentiation” of functions and tasks according to the demographic, territorial and structural features of the authorities to which they are addressed (art. 10). In particular, the Provinces are granted a relevant pivoting role between Region and Municipalities and both “all functions of territorial and socio-economic programming” and “Large Area administrative functions which cannot be adequately performed by the single or associated Municipalities ” (art. 12).

At sectoral level, the law n. 3 reorganises the existing regional legislation in the macro-areas identified by the Bassanini laws: economic development and productive activities (agriculture, handicraft, industry, cooperation, point of single contact, fairs, commerce, fishing and mariculture, energy, tourism), territory, environment and infrastructures (territorial planning and city planning, residential public housing, safeguarding of nature and environment, protection of the environment from pollution and waste management, water resources, soil protection and mines, public works, road system, transports, civil protection), services to the person and to the community (health, social services, education and professional training, cultural goods and activities, sport and entertainment) and administrative police and regional safety policies.

Regarding the functions and the sectorial legislation and the role played by the Provinces of Emilia Romagna, some considerations on the reference scenario should be done.

In the agricultural sector, for instance, although during the 80s there have been operations carried out locally by the regional offices located on the territory, the real change has occurred with the regional law 15/1997, by which the Region handed over to the Provinces and to the Mountain Communities (in their area of responsibility) the management of its own delegated power (such as the operations and the grant of contributions for the agricultural firms). This delegation of power was then developed in 2001, when the Provinces replaced the Region in the territorial control for the agricultural sector, by managing the regional agricultural offices and their human and financial resources. The Province of Parma, in particular, was appointed for four agricultural offices (the two offices of the Mountain Communities “Apennine of Eastern Parma and “Valli del Taro e del Ceno”, along with the ones of Fidenza and Busseto), then reduced to three offices because of the closure of the last two and the settlement of a central agricultural office in the province. Furthermore, the role of the Province has been enhanced thanks to some regional laws which envisaged contributions to firms for technical assistance, nutritional education and the

² The Region has a specific law on this subject, the Regional Law 30/1996 “Rules on place-based special programmes”.

keeping of genealogical registers for the livestock, granted by the Province through delegation. These laws, although remaining still in force, have not been re-financed and therefore the activities have been gradually reduced or even completely stopped.

As for productive activities, albeit the Region tends to centralise relationships with firms, the role of promotion and coordination played by the Province of Parma was relevant: coordination, assistance and monitoring of one-stop shops for productive activities (SUAP) of both single and associated Municipalities, support for IT connections between public authorities and firm database sharing, management of calls to finance trade and handicraft.

In terms of tourism, the regional law n. 7/1998 conferred the management and the coordination of operators and territories to the Provinces through the annual Touristic Plan for local promotion (PTPL), which subsidizes basic touristic services and initiatives for local promotion and enhancement within the framework of the Local Touristic Systems (STL). In addition, the Province is in charge of the authorizations of travel agencies, of touristic professions (guides), of reception facilities, of the financing (Reg. law 40/2002), as well as of touristic statistics. In the specific, in the Province of Parma, the PTPL is carried out through projects selected through a call and financed with resources transferred by the Region (about 250 thousand euros, of which 80% for rural areas).

The functions concerning the territory, the environment and the infrastructures, as envisaged by the regional law n. 6/1995, have been “transferred” and not “delegated”, and they deal also with the territorial and spatial planning.

These functions are represented within the general instrument for territorial planning coordination, the Territorial Plan of Provincial Coordination (PTCP), which defines land-use rules. The PTCP identifies the main infrastructures (roads, logistic infrastructures, etc.), land use, landscape, environment and nature safeguard and protection, thus representing the urban instrument of reference for financial resources planning, for the definition of eligible operations in both urban areas (it depends on it the approval of the city planning of Municipalities) and rural areas (classified in accordance to their incidence in terms of production, environment, landscape). The city planning function has been enhanced in 2009 with the regional law which assigned to the Territorial Plan of Provincial Coordination further specificities, such as the competences on public housing, the environmental impact assessment of territorial plans of Municipalities, the definition of limits on soil consumption. Concerning land use, it should be pointed out that the Province has competence also in the mining activities, a function that has been delegated through the regional law 17/1991 and implemented by means of a sectorial plan which envisages the check, examination and evaluation of the territorial plans of Municipalities and, at last, the control on the territory with tasks of mining police. With the approval of the latest Regional Territorial Plan it has been established the principle according to which the Plan itself is made up by the provincial PTCP and by the regional sectorial plans. However, this decentralized system is now completely under discussion within the ongoing reforms concerning the functions of Provinces.

The delegation regarding services to the individuals and the community were introduced between the 80s and the 90s. In the 80s, the Emilia Romagna Region has transferred to the Provinces a large part of the funds for vocational training, by nominating them as intermediate bodies. At that

time, policies for human capital were characterized by the theoretical distinction between general programming (put in place by regional laws and multi-annual programmes) and territorial programming (put in place by the Provinces) and by the constant consultation with the local social and institutional stakeholders (institutions, associations of firms, trade unions, etc.) and they were aimed at adapting vocational training to the specific local productive needs. By the half of the 2000s, it has been systematised the delegation of functions related to orientation and support to vocational training, territorial programming of the active employment policies and of employment services, as well as of monitoring activities for the local labour market and analysis of particularly significant aspects and local phenomena, of the promotion and support to the job placement of disabled people.

Particularly, in terms of vocational training, resources arise from European public funds for which the Region is managing authority (the European Social Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, as we will deepen afterwards), from national funds, such as those made available by the Laws n. 263/1993 concerning training vouchers for firms or persons, n. 144/1999 for the fulfilment of the compulsory education and the integrated paths between education and vocational training, and n. 53/2000 for innovation of firm's organisational models in support of reconciling of family and professional life. In the Province of Parma, for instance, vocational training, employment policies and equal opportunities are all gathered under the same Department and the Employment Centres are supported by other structures providing to users an "all-inclusive service": a targeted vocational training, a programming based on analysis and statistics on the local economy released by the Observatory on the labour market, the Service for the job placement of disabled people (SILD) and the Service for the Equal Opportunities aimed at paying attention to gender difference and enhancing the conciliation between family and professional life.

As far as the labour market is concerned, the regional law 17/2005 allocated to the Provinces the functions relative to territorial programming of active employment policies and employment services, even disabled people and immigrants and functions of liaison and coordination (also through multi-annual programmes) of large-area operations and services. They exercise functions of market observatory and carry out monitoring activities on local labour market, along with analysis of specific aspects and phenomena, in order to link employment policies and social policies with actions for local development and to promote the integration of their own vocational guidance services with those of the educational system. Provinces are in charge of Employment Centres and provide information and vocational guidance services, implementation of skill profiles, pre-selection and job matching, support and promotion of job placement of immigrants, disabled people and vulnerable people, information to firms in relation to services provided by the Employment Centres. Furthermore, they are the competent authority for the communications from private employers, economic public bodies and public administrations, related to the establishment of subordinated and not subordinated labour relationships, the ceasing of permanent job relationships, change in the type of employment relationship, hiring by employment agencies, training and vocational guidance apprenticeships and any other type of work experience assimilated to the abovementioned ones.

The functions assigned to the Provinces by the Emilia Romagna Region are numerous and comprehensive. In order to facilitate the analysis, they have been gathered by macro-area and

type of activity (table 7), classified and matched to five main functions: planning, regulation, granting of financial support to operators, implementation of services, general activities of control, monitoring and evaluation.

Table 7–Functions transferred to the Provinces by Emilia Romagna Region

Macro-area	Matters	Planning/project-making	Regulatory powers	Granting of financial support to operators	Implementation of services	General monitoring, evaluation and control
Economic development and productive activities	Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fisheries, rural development, agri-tourism, food	X	X	X	X	X
	Craft	X	X	X		X
	Industry and aid to firms	X		X	X	
	Tourism	X	X	X	X	X
	Energy (renewable energy and energy saving)	X	X		X	X
	Mines and geothermal resources		X			X
Territory, environment and infrastructure	Urban planning	X				X
	Environmental assets	X	X		X	
	Protection and safeguard of nature and environment	X	X		X	X
	Water resources and soil protection		X		X	X
	Public works	X			X	
	Road network	X	X		X	X
	Transport	X	X		X	X
	Civil protection	X			X	
Services to the individuals and the communities	Social services, social inclusion and healthcare	X	X		X	X
	Vocational training	X		X	X	
	School education	X			X	
	Labour market	X		X	X	X
	Culture and cultural heritage	X		X	X	
	Performing arts*				X	
	Sport	X			X	
Administrative Police						X

*Responsibilities for performing arts were laid down by the regional law n. 27/2006 now repealed.

Source: Our elaborations.

The programming activities are widespread in all of the macro-areas and absorb most of the human resources of the Province, mainly those with greatest skills. Some exceptions have been observed only concerning natural resources (mining, geothermal and water resources, soil protection) for which wider optimal intervention areas are required, such as the Region or the River Basin Authorities.

Also the activity concerning the implementation of works/services is very widespread, and it is mainly focused on the macro-area “Territory, environment and infrastructures”, where it is present in all subjects, except for the city planning, in which it prevails the role of general and sectorial and the control on the compliance with limits and restraints put in place, mainly, by the PTCF.

The regulation activity (definition of specific rules, authorisation schemes, eligibility criteria, etc.), once again, is structured on various subjects pertaining to the first two macro-areas and it is

almost quite absent in the macro-area "Services to the individuals and to the communities", where even control, monitoring and evaluation activities are almost totally absent.

These last activities are actually focused on the first two macro-areas and mainly in the subjects related to economic development and productive activities, where it is concentrated the activity of financial granting to private and public operators which, nonetheless, seems to be completely absent in the macro-area "Territory, environment and infrastructures" and even more sporadic in that one related to the "Services at the individuals and the communities".

In the intent of the national legislator, the administrative decentralization should have occurred at "zero cost" for the delegated authority, that is it should have been accompanied by the transferring of the necessary resources, both financial and human. Actually, things went differently.

In the case of Emilia Romagna, except for agriculture and tourism, the delegation of functions was not followed by the transferring of human resources by the Region (and, sometimes, not even the financial resources, as it occurred for city planning, mining activities, soil conservation, commerce and productive activities). Therefore, the Provinces had to strengthen the sectors covered by delegation by involving internal staff and by proceeding with a re-organisation and rationalisation, since they couldn't hire new staff because of the restraints imposed by the Stability Pact.

In 2012, the structure of the Province of Parma counted little more than 400 units (compared to 600/700 units in 2001) and it was articulated in four main Areas, in Services (under Departments of reference) and Offices:

- Road system and Properties, dealing with roads, properties, infrastructures, mobility and transports, contracts and sub-contracts;
- Environment and Agriculture, dealing with environment, parks, security and civil protection, agriculture and natural resources;
- Territorial planning, Economic Development and Services to the community, dealing with territorial planning, economic development and productive activities, school, vocational training, active employment policies, tourism, culture, sport, leisure, European policies, social policies;
- Support services, to which are related the Service for Budget and Economic and financial planning and the Service for IT Systems, Education Agency, Protocol Office and Archive.

Areas, Sectors and Services are coordinated by the Steering Committee, which decides upon the organisation of the staff and the administrative and managerial fulfilments, such as the preparation of the budget, but the horizontal coordination and the integration of policies are managed by the Executive Board without being examined by the Steering Committee. Conversely, the strategic coordination is performed by the Area Executives while Service Executives have managerial autonomy in terms of staff and budget and of their own acts (deliberation, actions and decisions on the budget) do not need prior consultation.

The Province plays an important role in supporting the socio-economic and cultural development in Parma, also through a series of shareholdings in utility companies and in instrumental bodies

which carry out activities of promotion, re-qualification and growth in both traditional (agro-food, energy, education, transport, tourism, etc.) and innovative sectors (promotion of local products, telematics). It holds shares of about twenty companies, five of which equal or exceeding 50%, but, because of the recent institutional and economic difficulties, the Province has tried to dismiss some of these shareholdings in order to focus on companies dealing with internal and external connections (urban and extra-urban transports, airport, logistics, etc.).

All the companies, both those with public-private capital and those entirely public, have statutes of a private nature and act as private companies. The Province participates in their Management Board as a partner, even by influencing decisions and playing a remarkable role ascribable not only to its shareholdings, but also to its authoritative role of matching between public and private positions (as it happens in extra-urban transport). Furthermore, the Province could even hold the veto power when its shares exceed 50%, as in the case of Parma Turismi Srl, and of the Telematics Laboratory for the Territory (LTT) Ltd.

Worthy of note is, at last, the work carried out in the past by Soprip, the Local Development Agency of the Provinces of Parma and Piacenza, now closed. Soprip was established in 1981 in order to realise and manage infrastructures for firms and for industrial development. It has then become over time a local development agency and through conventions and appointments by the Province, it has handled the Territorial Pact of the Parma's Apennines, it has taken part in the programming process of the regional – Single Programming Document Objective 2, it has been a LAG and it has managed the Leader Axis of the RDP on behalf of the Provinces of Parma and Piacenza.

2.2 Functions performed within the co-financed projects

Besides the “ordinary” functions beforehand mentioned, the Region assigned to the Provinces (through administrative acts and not delegation) also the implementation of part of some European programmes (such as the Single Programming Document SPD Objective 2 2000-2006, the ROP ERDF, the ROP ESF, the RDP EAFRD, etc.), by entrusting them tasks of economic programming and consultation on the territory, as well as of selection of interventions within the instruments of the regional negotiated planning related to them in different ways.

Within the SPD Objective 2 2000-2006, while the Region handled the measures which due to their innovativeness or their scope were aimed at financing operations on the whole regional territory, the Provinces published or managed calls for private or public operations³ with scheme and eligibility criteria decided at regional level. Moreover, resources were previously defined within the SPD and, in particular, within the Provincial Local Development Programmes (PSL) in which have been identified and developed intervention strategies coherent and integrated with all the programming tools activated in the area, such as European, national, regional or local.

Conversely, in the ROP ERDF 2007-2013, the delegation to the Provinces has been sharply reduced. The first three Axis of OP (industrial research, innovation of firms, environment and

³ For private interventions, the Provinces have issued and managed calls where the beneficiaries are represented by the touristic firms, the local handicraft and commercial sectors; while for public interventions the Provinces received, selected and allocated investments mainly on tourism and quality of life.

energy) are directly managed by the Region, therefore the operations are implemented through instruments of negotiated planning and competitive calls, furthermore, the provinces play a role of “co-negotiator”. Only Axis IV (cultural and environmental heritage) is delegated to the Provinces, which develop (according to regional guidelines) a Program for enhancement and promotion of the territories (PVPT), aimed at identifying actions and implementation procedures, on the basis of which an agreement between Region and Province is signed. In the specific, the PVPT of the Province of Parma, realized by taking into account also the synergies with all of the other programming instruments, has identified three priority territories (the southern Po valley area, the touristic spa centre of Salsomaggiore, the Apennines) and a total investment of more than 6 million euros in public interventions on the historical-architectural heritage and financing to private operators for activities and services aimed at four territorial areas (Cuore verde appennino, Parco della salute, Sistema Corti di Pianura, Valli del Ceno e del Taro).

The Provinces have been involved, to a greater extent, within the Under-utilised areas Fund, although it didn't represent a main financing channel, in order to offset the minor territorial incidence of the ERDF compared to the previous programming period. While in the period 2000-2006 the Framework Programme Agreements were directly managed by the Region, in the period 2007-2013 the Region has directly managed energetic and environmental sustainability, infrastructures, bio-diversity of soil and coastal areas conservation, prevention and management of natural risks, thus assigning to the Provinces the territorial priorities dealing with the enhancement of rural areas and the promotion of competitiveness, quality and attractiveness of urban areas, handled through agreements with local authorities (the so-called “Agreements for the integration of territorial policies”) to which it is addressed about 40% of the overall resources (113 million euros out of a total of 286 million euros), of which 20 million euros (7% of the total) allocated to Parma.

Conversely, the programming period 2007-2013 of the European Social Fund (ESF) doesn't envisage remarkable changes in the role of the Province as Intermediate Body. The implementation of the competences on education, vocational training and labour market continues to be implemented according to the specific regional laws, which delegate to Provinces education, active employment policies and employment services, as well as their connection with local development actions and social policies through the integrated education-vocational training-employment system, and the provincial Coordination Conferences. Anyway, compared to the period 2000-2006, there is no longer the commitment to allocate a percentage of 5-10% of the funds of each call to the lagging areas (which in the area of Parma are mainly rural and mountainous); furthermore, the total eligible cost has been reduced by a third (little more than 800 million euros, compared to 1,246 million euros).

As for rural development, there is a continuity with the programming 2000-2006 and with the functions conferred by the regional laws for the agricultural sector. In the period 2007-2013, the Axis I, II and III have been quite completely delegated to the Provinces and to the Mountain Communities, except for some measures managed by the Region. Regional strategic choices are developed at local level through Integrated Rural Programs of the Provinces (PRIP), elaborated in agreement with the Mountain Communities. In the PRIP regional strategies are tailored at a local level, objectives and measures to be taken are identified, rural operations are integrated among them and with other community and regional operations and indications for the draft of the LAGs

Local Action Plans provided. Particularly for the Province of Parma, the PRIP is focused on the depopulation of territories, on the lack of aggregation of firms and of infrastructures, and, for the agricultural sector, it focuses on internal areas, generational change, training, aggregation around supply chains and concentrates expenditures mainly to the measures aimed at enhancing the biomasses from the forest industry and the animal welfare.

The Programmes from which the resources derive are, therefore, defined at regional or national level and have axis, strategies, objectives and expenditure restraints already defined, and, generally, the province doesn't act on the design phase. For what concerns the ERDF, the EAFRD and the Underutilised Area Fund, there are preliminary discussions between the Region and the Provinces, but Provinces are just informed and not consulted in relation to their contents. In addition, these programmes have specific indications on the spending, beneficiaries, measures and implementation procedures and the Province has just the possibility to suggest specific public interventions in line with these criteria. Conversely, the ESF allows greater autonomy: the framework within which the interventions should be realised, derives always by European and regional programming, but the description of activities is so general that it enables the Provinces to establish a local programming closely related to the specificities of the territories. Furthermore, each of the various sources of financing has a specific allocation and a sharp demarcation, nonetheless the choices made in the different programmes have been integrated at a regional level through the Single Programming Document (SPD), envisaged by the National strategic reference framework (NSRF), which is implemented through the "Agreements for territorial policies integration" signed by the Region and the Province, at the beginning of the programming period and periodically updated. Nonetheless, the Province tries to satisfy the needs of its own territory (or of the various provincial departments), also by using own funds for those interventions not envisaged by other funding with European or national restraints, and, therefore, otherwise not included.

It seems that this procedure optimizes, therefore, the financing of the projects on the various available sources, but it is not clear if there is an effective integration among projects or not.

3. RESOURCES

3.1 Budgetary Resources

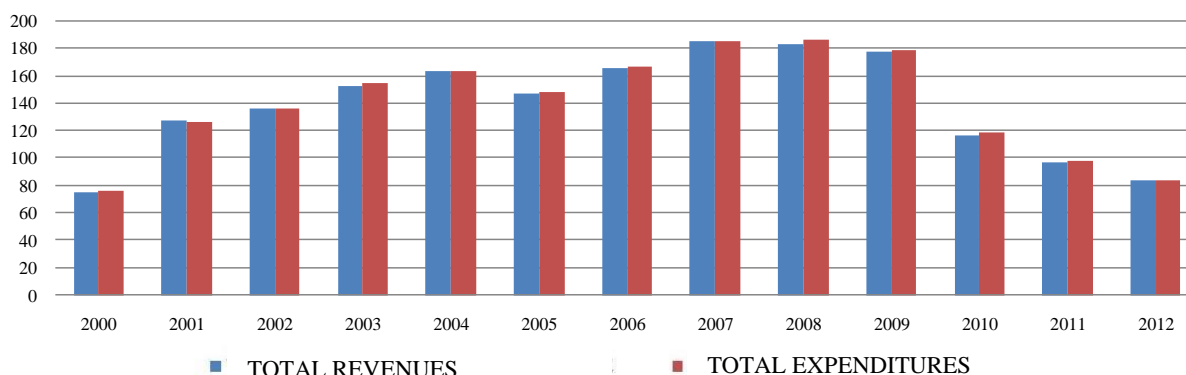
The implementation of the decentralization process and the exercise of own functions or of conferred ones has been accompanied with the transfer to the Provinces, by the State, Region and other authorities, of human and financial resources for their execution.

The budget is in line with the internal organizational structure and to each service it corresponds a budget-spending centre to which financial resources are allocated to cover the expenditures, with a certain flexibility among the various spending centres. However, while continuous expenditures are covered with transfers and annual contributions, expenditures for specific interventions envisaged by "ad hoc" laws are transferred exceptionally and they are bounded to their fulfilment.

In the Province of Parma, in the 2002-2012 period, the budget has reached an average of 140 million euros, with increases for the revenues in 2004 (mainly ascribable to an increase in the

capital transfers from the Region, increased from 6 million euro in 2000 to 53 million euros in 2004), and in the years 2007-2008 (mainly ascribable to credit collection, which increased between 2005 and 2006 from 120 thousand euros to more than 45 million euros, thus exceeding 57 million euros in 2007/2008).

Figure 2 – Trends in revenues (assessments) and budget expenditures (commitments), 2000-2012 (Million Euros)



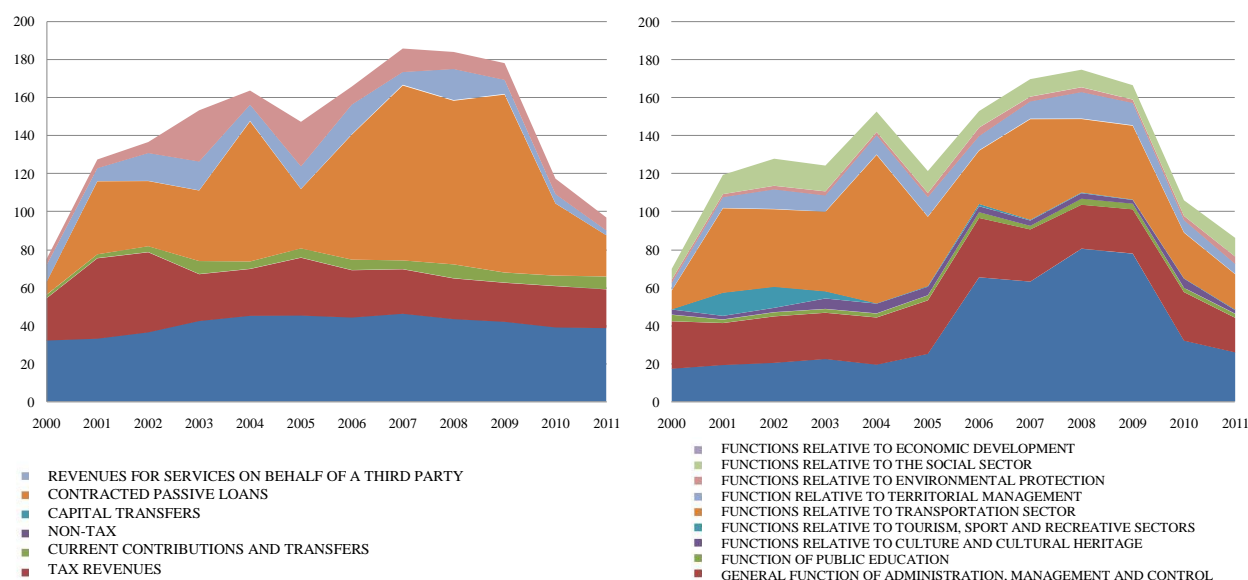
Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

In terms of expenditures, conversely, the greatest volumes, between 2001 and 2004, are referred to capital expenditures for the territorial management (from 3.9 million euros in 2000 to 30 million euros in 2001-2003, and 67 million euros in 2004) and, for the 2007-2009 period, the greatest expenditures come from the capital expenditures both for the functions of administration management and control (from 1.7 million euros in 2005, to 58-57 in 2008 and 2009).

By examining the trend of the current resources for each function in the 2000-2011 period, worthy of note are the expenditure for public education (an average of 19 million euros in the 2000-2011 period, and a peak of 23.4 million euros in 2005), and for the general functions of administration, management and control (with peaks of 23-22 million euros in 2005 and in 2008). The trend in the capital expenditures for the same period showed, instead, a first peak in 2004 for functions relative to territorial management (from 31 to 67 million euros), and a second peak in 2008-2009 for the general functions of administration, management and control (from 43 million euros to 58-57).

At the time when incomes have been reduced, in order to maintain expenditures level, and therefore the level of the services provided, despite the strict financial restraints imposed, the Province has cut expenditures (current and capital expenditures) for administration, management and control (from 80 million euros in 2008 to 26 in 2011), for territorial management (from 38.6 to 18.6) and for the environmental protection (from 11.9 to 5.5).

Figure 3 – Revenues (commitments) by title (left) and current and capital expenditures (assessments) by type of function (right) (Million Euros)



Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

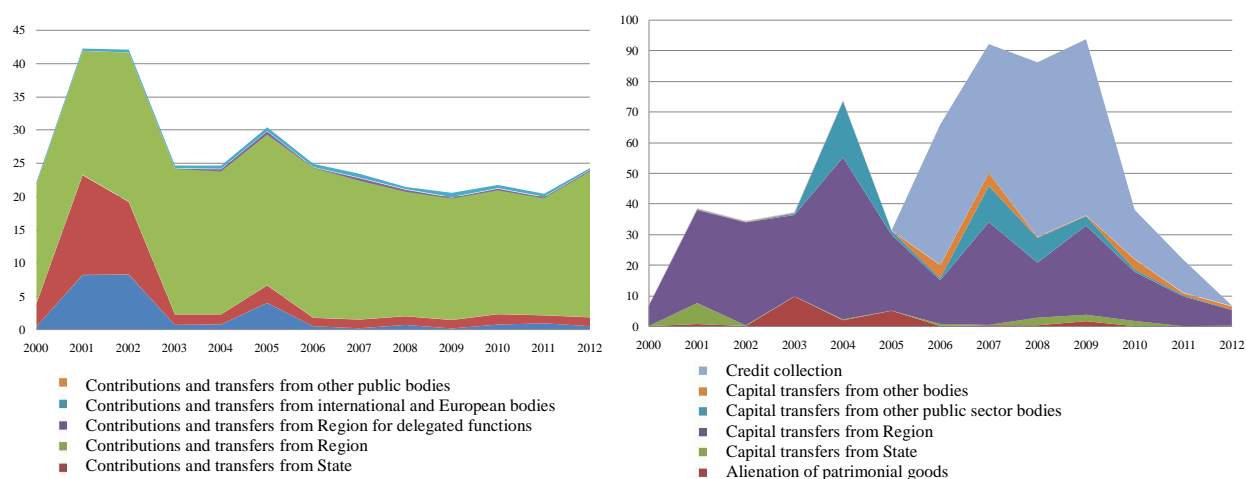
From 2000 onwards, as competences increased, there has been an rise not in contributions and transfers by the Region (which reached an average of 22-23 million euros, if considered jointly to the current transfers for delegated functions) but rather in transfer of capitals by the Region (from 6.5 million euros in 2000 to more than 30 in 2001 and 2002, 53 in 2004, thus reaching then an average of 22 million euros between 2005 and 2010, which then have collapsed to 9.7 in 2011).

From 2009 onwards, the financial situation became ever worse. The decrease in the overall revenues has been of 34%, between 2009 and 2010 (from 178 to 117 million euros), and then of 17%, between 2010 and 2011 (to 97). Furthermore, in the 2012 budget statement, it has been expected a further decrease, down to 95.7.

Tax revenues remain essentially unchanged (on an average of 40 million euros, between 2000 and 2011, with a peak in taxes, between 2004 and 2005), however, they have an incidence of just 7% on current revenues, and 90% on own revenues. Conversely, non-tax revenues have an upward trend (from 1.7 million euros in 2000, to 6.6 in 2011), which, instead, represent on average 57% of the current revenues but only 10% of own revenues. The greatest upward peaks are registered in 2003 and 2009, thanks to net profit from special or partner companies (respectively from 312 thousands to 3.3 million euros, and from 275 thousands to 1.4 million euros) and in 2004-2006 and during 2008 for other incomes (respectively from 2.1 to 3.3 million euros and from 2 to 4 million euros).

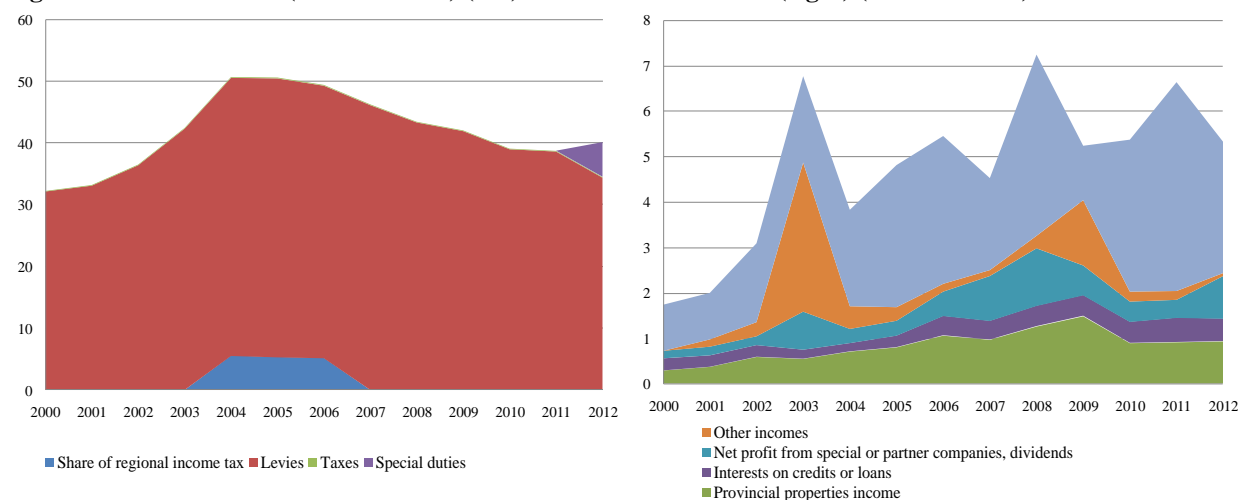
Therefore, between 2000 and 2010, the increase in revenues (+34%) is ascribable, to a greater extent, to the increase in extra-tax revenues (+184%), rather than in tax revenues (+26%).

Figure 4 – Revenues (commitments) from current contributions and transfers (left) and from alienations, capital transfers and credit collection (right) (Million euros)



Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Figure 5 – Tax revenues (commitments) (left) and non-tax revenues (right) (million Euros)



Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

In the period between 2000 and 2007, the budget revenues of the Province of Parma increased from 75 to 186 million euros, but then they drastically decreased up to 2011 (97 million euros), mainly due to the drop in capital revenues (from 94 million euros in 2009, to 22 million euros in 2011) rather than to the decrease in current revenues and of revenues coming from other public sector bodies (mainly from State and Region). Furthermore, the Stability Pact precludes debts and new mortgage loans, thus avoiding any chance to get access to resources to program and finance investments.

For the year 2012, revenues have remained stable thanks to the increase in the tax share of the car insurance (from 12.5% to 14%). It is possible, therefore, to finance current expenditures with own revenues (+6%) and tax revenues (+4%) and, at the same time, it has been reduced the

dependence on contributions and on regional and state transfers (-11% on the total current revenues), by rationalising current expenditures (-11% on the total general expenditures) and by giving support to the capital expenditures (+30%), with an increase of 51% of the capital expenditures on the current ones.

In general, therefore, there has been an increase in the expenditures for administration, management and control, and reduction of the expenditures aimed at fostering socio-economic development of the provincial territory.

Table 8 – Budget Indicators

	Average 2000-2006	Average 2007-2012	Δ%
Financial autonomy (<i>Own revenues/Current revenues</i>)	0.60	0.68	15%
Tax autonomy (<i>Tax revenues/Current revenues</i>)	0.54	0.60	11%
Financial dependence (<i>Revenues from contributions and transfers/Current revenues</i>)	0.40	0.32	-22%
Dependence on State (<i>Revenues from contributions and transfers from State/Current revenues</i>)	0.04	0.01	-83%
Share of current transfers from Region on total current revenues	0.36	0.30	-16%
Share of current expenditures on total expenditures	0.50	0.49	-3%
Share of capital expenditures on total expenditures	0.39	0.41	5%
Share of capital expenditures on current expenditures	0.82	1.00	22%
Share of expenditures for general function of administration, management and control on current expenditures (<i>Expenditures Title, I, function 1 / Current expenditures</i>)	0.26	0.23	-12%
Share of expenditures for functions relative to economic development on current expenditures (<i>Expenditures TitleI, function 9 / Current expenses</i>)	0.09	0.11	26%
Share of expenditures for general function of administration, management and control on total expenditures (<i>Expenditures Title I and Title II, function 1 / Total expenditures</i>)	0.19	0.32	65%
Share of expenditures for functions relative to economic development on total expenditures (<i>Expenditures Title I e Title II, function 9 / Total expenditures</i>)	0.08	0.07	-11%
Share of current expenditures covered by own-source revenues*(<i>Own-source revenues / Current expenditures</i>)	0.65	0.74	14%

* *Own-source revenues = tax revenues + non-tax revenues*

Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

In brief, what can be pointed out in the management of the provincial budget is a strategy of:

- Strengthening of the expenditures for administration and management, which increase over time (mainly capital expenditures);
- A remarkable increase in the ratio between capital expenditures and current expenditures, which, nonetheless, has a low incidence on the expenditures for the administration and management, and no impact on the expenditures for the functions relative to economic development, culture and cultural heritage;
- A greater ability in financing current expenditures with own revenues, mainly with the non-tax revenues (and, in particular, with the so-called revenues from other incomes, coming from fees from public bodies and private subjects, refund of the expenditures for the employees who work in other administrations, from public bodies others than the State but considered as public administration, including also the sponsorships, refunds by the State, etc.).

3.2 Additional Resources

The Province of Parma has played a remarkable role in the implementation of the European and national programs, and in the period 2000-2013 it has handled additional resources raised out of the ordinary budget, for a total amount of 367 million euros, that is 1/5 of the budget revenues/expenditures (1.73 billion euros). Their incidence is even more clear when comparing them with the main items of the budget (tab. 9): they actually represent, according to the period of reference, between 49% and 46% of the overall capital expenditures. If we then consider expenditures for local development (tourism, cultural heritage, environment, agriculture and other economic activities), the ratio exceeds the expenditures for the same expenditure items of the ordinary resources, and in 2000-2006 it was superior by two times and a half, and in 2007-2013 of three times and a half (respectively, 78 million euros and 47 million euros).

Substantially, without the financial resources of the European and national policies, the Province would have hardly been able to foster an action of local development through ordinary resources, mainly in recent years which have been characterized by sharp cuts to national and regional budgets. The use of external financial resources has of course entailed the triggering of a proper provincial planning, and therefore also a strong engagement of expertise and human resources.

By examining the resources handled through the ERDF, the ESF and the EAFRD, it emerges that, in the last two programming periods, they have represented 90% of the additional resources (and even 97% just in the period 2000-2006) and 19% of the overall total of the in 2000-2011 budgetary revenues. In addition, 47% of the overall public expenditures delegated to the Province of Parma comes from the EAFRD.

The EAFRD and the ERDF have experienced a different destiny between the two programming periods. And different are also the ways with which the resources have been allocated. The EAFRD increased from 85.4 million euros (114 million euros, if considering also the RDP measures directly managed by the Region) to 87.6 million euro which have been managed by the Province through the PRIP (almost half of which are EAFRD resources). Conversely, the ERDF has experienced a plunge from almost 17 to 3.5 million euros, but, since also the number of projects has drastically been reduced (from about 70 to 4), the average project size has been quadruplicated, for the benefit of the concentration of resources. Furthermore, while RDP funds are granted to beneficiaries exclusively through the Regional Payment Agency AGREA, the ERDF resources are, on the contrary, granted through the provincial budget, both in the case of public investments handled through a negotiated planning and in the case of calls addressed to firms for projects dealing with matters delegated to the Province concerning commerce, tourism and SMEs.

Among the complex projects implemented within the province of Parma, worthy of note are both the Territorial Pact of the Parma Apennines, financed by national funds, and the Place-based Special Programmes, financed by regional funds.

The Territorial Pact of the Parma Apennines, launched in March 1999 and continued up to 2007, had an endowment of about 8 million euros, for aids to firms, and of 3.5 million euros for public investments, besides the co-financing of the beneficiaries. While, at the beginning, it has fostered the integration and the territorial balance between the deprived areas in the mountains and on the hills and the developed foothill area (44 projects and investments amounting to about 50 million

euros), with the 3 million euros of residual resources the Pact has been then addressed to support investments of firms and to integrate operations concerning the environment and tourism, agriculture and nutrition, thus establishing two separated rankings, one for the manufacturing sector, the other for tourism and related services.

Table 9 – Financial resources managed directly by the Province of Parma

Programmes	Regional delegation (RD) or competitive bidding procedures (CBP)	Public financial resources 2000-2006 (thousand Euros) *	Public financial resources 2007-2013 (thousand Euros) **
1. Rural Development Programmes Measures	RD	85,400.00	87,600.00
2. European Social Fund O.P. Measures	RD	74,940.00	51,371.00
3. European Regional Development Fund O.P. Measures	RD	16,755.07	3,500.00
4. European Fisheries Fund Measures		8,926.35	2,012.40
5. General-purpose territorial pacts **		-	-
6. Agriculture territorial pacts **		1,590.00	-
7. Contract programme		-	-
8. Other local development integrated programmes (regional)			
Place- based special programme "Parco della salute" (Parma, Piacenza)	Negotiated planning	3,300.34	-
Place- based special programme "Po, fiume d'Europa" (Parma, Piacenza, Reggio Emilia)	Negotiated planning	1,530.75	-
Place- based special programme "Azioni a sostegno dell'insediamento dell'EFSA" (Parma, Fidenza, Salsomaggiore)	Negotiated planning	-	10,300.00
9. National Fund for Under-utilised Areas / National Fund for development and cohesion (FSC)			
10. INTERREG projects	Partly negotiated planning	-	21,100.00
11. LIFE projects	CBP	470.00	142.85
12. URBAN projects	CBP	-	570.00
13. Other programmes:			
LLP	CBP	-	-
European Integration Fund	CBP	42.60	266.15
Daphne III	CBP	-	332.00
European Refugee Fund	CBP	-	84.00
14. Other financing		-	200.00
TOTAL		192,955.11	177,478.40
% on total revenues/expenditures		19.9%	23.3%
% on total capital expenditures		49.0%	46.4%
% on total capital expenditures for local development***		248.0%	376.8%

*** Capital expenditure for functions relative to cultural heritage, tourism, environmental protection, social policies and economic development.

Source: Our elaborations on data provided by the Province of Parma and the Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Place-based Special Programmes (PdA), regulated by the Regional Law 30/1996, represent multi-institutional programming agreements of regional initiative, which grant to specific

territories the resources for infrastructures and aid to the SMEs and, then, once approved, the local authorities involved conclude public tender procedures aimed at selecting the implementing bodies of its operations. In the Province of Parma, three Special Programs of Area have been financed with such procedures, one for each of the three calls issued: the Programme “Parco della Salute” which has involved some municipalities of the Provinces of Parma and Piacenza, the inter-provincial Programme “Po fiume d’Europa” (Piacenza, Parma e Reggio Emilia) and the Programme “Azioni a sostegno dell’insediamento dell’Agenzia per la Sicurezza alimentare a Parma” which has focused on the strengthening of the congress tourism, related to the activities of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) involving the cities of Parma, Fidenza and Salsomaggiore. These institutional programming agreements have allowed to set up programmes tailored on priority territories rather than on sectors; furthermore they have been considered as the basis for European funds allocation in the 2007-2013 period, as it happened for the provincial Agreements on the integrated system of education, vocational training and guidance and of employment policies for the ESF, on the Territorial Enhancement and Promotion Programmes of the Axis 4 of the ERDF, and on the Pacts for integrated local development signed for the calls of the Axis 3 of the EAFRD.

The Region has also signed, an “Agreement for the integration of territorial policies” with each Province in order to implement, at a local level, the unitary regional policy, and coordinate the various financing sources available for the period 2007-2013 (EAFRD, ESF, ERDF, regional and national Underutilised Area Fund, own regional resources, resources of the local authorities, resources for the territorial cooperation, other resources), in line with the ten objectives of the Single Programming Document (SPD). The Agreement, defined in accordance with Municipalities, Mountain Communities and socio-economic stakeholders, was signed in May 2010 and has been drafted by taking into account all the programmes, also the on-going ones. It is mainly focused on innovation of productive systems (creation of an agro-food, agro-industrial, Technology Pole, life science and healthcare technologies), on urban regeneration (mainly in the cities of Parma and Fidenza), on environmental sustainability (enhancement of the National Park of the Apennines of Tuscany and Emilia, and environmental qualification in Val Taro and Ceno), and on promotion of cultural heritage (restoration and regeneration of villages, churches, buildings, castles and parks). In this way, the territory of Parma has been granted public resources for a total amount of more than 80 million euros (which include the resources of the EFRD, ESF, a share of the EAFRD and of the Underutilised Area Fund, more than half of which handled through a negotiated planning), thus triggering overall investments for about 110 million euros.

In addition, the Province participated in competitive European programmes, such as Interreg, South East Europe (SEE), Life, Longlife Learning Programme, Equal, etc., and obtained, as Lead partner or partner, further additional resources for its own reference territory. It should be noticed that the greatest number of competitive bidding procedures aimed at raising external resources, has been activated for social policies, where the ordinary resources available for the Province are very few. The skills for developing European project proposals are internal to the Province and the participation to bidding procedures occurs in collaboration with the “Ufficio Europa” and in partnership with other beneficiaries.

4. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PROVINCE AND THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 The Region

The Emilia Romagna Region is recognized as a model of administrative and political decentralization and of enhancement and empowerment of local communities. There is a well-established tradition of institutional consultation and political negotiation, and the role of institutional link is played by the Council of the Local Autonomies (CAL), established in 2009 in order to replace the Conference of Regions and Local Autonomies, through which local and regional authorities contribute to the regional decisions with proposals and opinions.

As it occurred in the rest of Italy, the institutional and territorial reorganisation is still ongoing, and while the Region and Municipalities and their associations remained unquestioned level of governments, intermediate and second degree bodies are still under discussion.

At the beginning, the Region thought of transferring intermediate functions completely to the Provinces, thus divesting the Mountain Communities, and approved a draft of reorganization and merging of the Provinces, so as to halve their number from eight to four. However, later on, a different agreement has been reached. TA regional law of 2012 identified optimal intervention areas within which to organize Unions of municipalities for the common management of some of the functions of municipalities (municipal police and civil protection, function related to the cultural and leisure activities, functions related to the social and health sector, to the economic development, to the school services, etc.), and it has been fostered the transformation of the Mountain Communities into Mountain Unions, which, besides representing single Municipalities for the implementation of their functions, will also have the same competences of the previous Mountain Communities (agriculture, afforestation, soil protection, seismic).

The culture of sharing roles and duties and of cooperating represent the basis of the relationships between the different institutional levels, nonetheless the institutional collaboration will remain satisfactory only if the Province continues in keeping – top-down from the Region and bottom-up from the Municipalities – its management role of the territorial programming table and co-management role on matters relevant for the territory, both in strategic and in operative terms.

4.2 The local stakeholders

The Province of Parma, as well as all the other Provinces in Emilia Romagna, acts closely with all the local bodies which compose the territory of competence.

The link with the Municipalities is represented by the territorial planning, as it has been showed by the great unity in the regeneration of the territory and in the stop at the agricultural soil consumption since 2004, long before the regional government engaged on it. Conversely, with Mountain Communities, since they have competences on the same subjects, the relationships are more complex but, nonetheless, equally aimed at full cooperation and coherence of objectives, as well as at avoiding the overlapping of tasks.

In agriculture and in the functions usually related to it, the division of tasks between the Province and Mountain Communities has been decided at an earlier stage and established both by

delegation laws and by the structure of the local development plan. However, it has not always been like this. The regional law of 1983 entrusted to them equal competences, although with separate institutional identities, thus triggering an overlapping: both of them handled the requests for financing and both allocated resources to their beneficiaries. On the contrary, with the regional law 15/1997 the leadership has been assigned to the Provinces, without damaging, nonetheless, the relationships with the Mountain Communities, which remained a junction point in the relationships with the citizens and in the representation of the needs of the territory. During the designing phase of the RDP for 2007-2013, for instance, the Province acted as governing body during the designing and management of the Provincial Territorial Plan, by sharing the path with all the local institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, thus acting as a connecting point between the needs of each one and ensuring the maintenance of the local identity. Mountain Communities, instead, have been recognized a sort of “derived delegation”, that is the conveying to the Province the requests and the needs of the territory under their competence. Therefore, the Province continued to act as governing body even later on, when provincial consultation Tables for matters related to the development in agriculture were settled.

At a local level, the Province is considered the only subject able in handling general problems, and in providing homogeneous guidelines for the various areas characterized by a unitary programmatic framework. Therefore, not even the greater functions carried out by the new Mountain Unions and the Unions of municipalities seem to invalidate its role of primary interlocutor of the territory.

5. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present case study shows that Parma seems to be a good example of proper management of the balance of powers both of higher-level authorities and of other local stakeholders. This is not only the consequence of a culture of collaboration and cooperation, but also of a political and institutional continuity, as well as of an ability in mediating and coordinating, which has allowed the shared designing of actions with effects on all the areas of the Province, in order to get territorial re-equilibrium.

The maintenance of such a result over time required a combination of skilled people and organizations and an institutional framework based on the division of roles and tasks which is generally accepted not only because it is agreed upon, but also because it is thought to be rational and efficient.

The general functional and organizational structure seems to be suitable to the functions entrusted and carried out by acting as junction between the Region and territory. Furthermore, the Province has succeeded in playing a role of synthesis of territorial needs and in transforming resources and opportunities in strategies and policies.

In addition, the Province managed to draw resources on the fund market, by activating or adhering to local and European partnerships and by participating in calls, thus raising resources for policies in fundamental sectors of the local economy.

A general assessment of the Province of Parma has highlighted that its territory faced the crisis better than other similar nearby territories. And the winning factor is allegedly represented by the

collective attitude of listening and consultation began in past decades and by the capability not only of synthetizing the requests of the territory, but also of standing for them at the most appropriate time and place.