



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

CASE STUDY REPORT: PROVINCE OF LECCE

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The Focus Group with the Province of Lecce included representatives of the European policies, Local development and Relationships with University Service, Tourism, Territorial marketing and Rural development Service, Environment and Hunting Service, Labour and vocational training policies Service, Cultural policies and Museum system Service, Territorial planning Service, Financial resources Service.

The Focus Group with the local stakeholders included the representatives of the Local Action Groups Isola Salento, Terra d'Otranto and Serre Salentine, of the Coastal Action Group Adriatico Salentino, the Organisation of Farmers – Coldiretti, the Confederation of Farmers (Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori – CIA), the Italian General Confederation of Craft Businesses - Confartigianato, the Confederation of cooperatives (Confcooperative), the Terre d'Otranto PDO Extra Virgin Olive Oil Protection Consortium, the Association of olive tree growers and olive oil producers of Lecce (APOL), the Association of Doctors of Agronomy and Doctors of Forestry of the Province of Lecce (ADAF Lecce), of the Lecce - Brindisi Interprovincial Association of agro technicians, of the Banca Popolare Pugliese.

The Focus Group on Territorial Pacts included the representatives of the Province of Lecce: European policies, Local development and Relationships with University Service, Tourism, Territorial marketing and Rural development Service and Labour and vocational training policies Service.

1. SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE TERRITORY

The Province of Lecce is entirely flat and is classified by OECD as predominantly urban and by the National Strategy Plan (NSP) as intermediate rural area (except the city of Lecce).

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



Source: Our elaboration on OECD and NSP maps

Lecce is the third Province in Apulia Region as for land size (2,759 km² vs. 6,971 of Foggia and 3,825 of Bari). However, since it has 38% of all the regional municipalities (97 out of 258) and one fifth of population (802 thousand out of 4 million), its population density (290.65 inhabitants per km²) is second after the Province of Bari (326.06) and much higher than the regional (209.35) and national (197.23) one.

19% of the regional population of working age (almost 2.7 millions) is resident in the Province of Lecce (about 524 thousand), but social and economic gaps emerge. The structural dependency index (53.17) shows a burden of non-working population (0-14 years and over 65) over working population (15-64 years) exceeding by three points the regional one, though in line with the national one. Moreover, there is a large number of elderly people in comparison with people aged 0-14 years (the aging index is 153.82 points, 20 and 5 points higher than, respectively, regional and national one).

Total unemployment rate (15.62) though just slightly worse than the regional rate (13.12) is twice the national level (8.41), whereas total employment rate (44.35) is more or less in line with regional rate but almost 13 points lower than the national one (56.94).

Similarly as it occurs at national and regional level, employment is mostly concentrated in activities other than agriculture and industry, which instead play a marginal role.

The employment structure reflects the change that took place within the provincial economic pattern, especially due to the crisis in manufacture, mostly in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear sectors (TCF). In 2011, the service sector provided 73.35% of the employment at provincial level, exceeding regional (66.80%) and national (67.83%) levels; provincial agriculture takes on less workers (5.32%) than regional one (8.73%), but much more than national one (3.70%); industry, instead, shows a slightly lower rate (21.32%) than regional (24.47%) and national (28.47%) ones.

Table 1 – Territorial and Socio-economic features

	Province of Lecce	Apulia Region	Italy
Surface (km ² , as of 2011)	2,759.40	19,357.90	301,336.00
Number of municipalities (as of 2011/12/31)	97	258	8,092
Population (on 2011/10/09)	802,018	4,052,566	59,433,744
Population density (inhab/km ² , on 2011/10/09)	290.65	209.35	197.23
Elderliness index (on 2009/12/31)	153.82	130.09	148.75
Dependency index (on 2011/10/09)	53.17	50.80	53.49
Population 15-64 years (% as of 2011)*	65.29	66.31	65.15
Persons employed (as of 2011), of which in:	240,322	1,234,745	22,967,243
– agriculture (% 2011)	5.32	8.73	3.70
– industry (% 2011)	21.32	24.47	28.47
– other activities (% 2011)	73.35	66.80	67.83
Activity rate (Istat, as of 2011)	52.66	51.61	62.25
Employment rate (Istat, as of 2011)	44.35	44.76	56.94
Unemployment rate (Istat, as of 2011)	15.62	13.12	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.

In 2011, moreover, 19% of the regional firms registered to the Chamber of Commerce was located within the territory of the Province of Lecce and they accounted for 20% of the regional value added (and for 0.9% of the national one).

10% of provincial firms is in the manufacturing sector, whereas 15% of them deals with constructions, and they produce altogether 23% of the provincial industrial value added. 14% of the firms in the province is committed to agriculture, forestry and fishery, to which, anyway, pertains only 1.63% of provincial value added. A prominent role is, instead, played by services, whose share of value added (75.67%) exceeds either regional (74%) and national (73%) ones.

Total provincial agricultural production at base prices amounts to 380 million euros (half of which concerning ligneous crops and 35% concerning herbaceous crops) and represents 20% of the regional one.

Total disposable income in 2010 accounts for 19% of the regional one, while per-capita disposable income (12 thousand euros), although in line with the regional one, is one third inferior than national one (17 thousand euros).

Table 2 – Structural features of the economy

	Province of Lecce		Apulia Region		Italy	
Registered enterprises, number (Infocamere, on 2011/12/31), of which in:	73,014		385,856		6,110,074	
– Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	10,294	14.10%	86,064	22.30%	837,624	13.71%
– Manufacturing	7,326	10.03%	32,882	8.52%	617,768	10.11%
– Constructions	10,619	14.54%	47,385	12.28%	906,496	14.84%
– Wholesale and retail trading	22,417	30.70%	109,833	28.46%	1,550,863	25.38%
– Accommodation and catering	4,733	6.48%	20,573	5.33%	392,337	6.42%
Total added value, million Euros, as of 2010, of which in:	12,194		61,918		1,395,219	
– Agriculture	199	1.63%	2,215	3.58%	26,698	1.91%
– Industry	2,768	22.70%	13,974	22.57%	347,094	24.88%
– Services	9,227	75.67%	45,730	73.85%	1,021,426	73.21%
Total disposable income, million Euros (elab, Ist, Tagliacarne, as of 2010)	9,986		51,649		1,029,943	
Per-capita disposable income, Euros (elab, Ist, Tagliacarne, as of 2010)	12,259.21		12,635.30		17,028.53	
Total agricultural production at base prices, thousand Euros (2010), of which:	380,704		3,411,623		45,942,616	
– Herbaceous crops	132,219	34.73%	1,274,255	37.35%	14,687,486	31.97%
– Ligneous crops	172,710	45.37%	1,296,620	38.01%	10,439,470	22.72%
– Livestock products	32,201	8.46%	308,586	9.05%	14,889,559	32.41%
– Forestry products	4	0.00%	7,853	0.23%	476,690	1.04%
– Related services	43,571	11.44%	524,310	15.37%	5,449,412	11.86%

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

Between 2000 and 2011, provincial total value added increased more than 25% due to the development of the overall industrial sector (+12%) and, above all, of services (+34%), which counterbalanced the collapse of the value added of agriculture, forestry and fishery (-32%),

In the period 2000-2008, value added of industry and services boosted over respectively by 23% and 31% but, in the years between 2008-2011, while services remained almost steady (+2%), industry experienced decline (-9%). The share of agriculture on provincial value added, instead, decreased throughout the period of time analysed: -32% between either 2000 and 2008 and 2008 and 2011. And this influenced also the composition of the value added: whereas value added of services and industry remained almost steady (respectively, 73-75% and 22-24%), value added of agriculture, forestry and fishery decreased by half (from 4% to 2%).

In general, value added of the province of Lecce grows almost as regional one, but less than national one (between 2000 and 2011, respectively, +26%, +24% and +32%). However, the trend of the different sectors is different: the share of agricultural value added on total value added drops by one third (-32%), while decreases by 19% at regional level and only by 6% at national level. On the other end, the share of industrial value added increases at a rate almost twice as the regional one but much less than the national one (respectively, +12%, +10%, +18%). Finally, the share of services increases (+34%) almost as the regional (+32%) and national (+39%) ones.).

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 Lecce	2000	344	3.78%	2,316	25.48%	6,428	70.73%	9,088
	2008	233	2.02%	2,841	24.66%	8,446	73.31%	11,520
	2011	235	2.05%	2,589	22.60%	8,630	75.35%	11,454
	Δ 2008/2000	-32%		23%		31%		27%
	Δ 2011/2000	-32%		12%		34%		26%
	Δ 2011/2008	1%		-9%		2%		-0.6%
Apulia Region	2000	2,852	5.63%	12,287	24.27%	35,494	70.10%	50,633
	2008	2,463	3.93%	15,413	24.57%	44,866	71.51%	62,742
	2011	2,322	3.71%	13,497	21.54%	46,840	74.75%	62,659
	Δ 2008/2000	-14%		25%		26%		24%
	Δ 2011/2000	-19%		10%		32%		24%
	Δ 2011/2008	-6%		-12%		4%		-0.1%
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.

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of holdings with cultivations undergoes a slight decrease (-5%), but considerably less in comparison with what occurred at regional (-19%) and national level (-32%), while the number of holdings with livestock increased more (doubled from 827 to 1,560 against the regional increase by +38%) and in countertrend with respect to Italy (-41%). The same happened to total agricultural area (respectively, +7%, +1.4% and -9%) and to utilized agricultural area (+6%, +3%, -2.5%). The increase concerns especially ligneous crops (particularly, olive trees +16%) and, notwithstanding the decrease of arable crops (due mostly to the plunge of tobacco cultivations), there is a rise in common wheat and spelt (+46%) and fodder crops (+64%). However, while bovine livestock and the number of bovine animals shrink (respectively, -19% and -12%), the ovine increase (+13% for livestock and even +57% for the number of animals).

Table 4 – Structural features of the primary sector

	Province of Lecce			Apulia Region			Italy		
	2000	2010	Δ2010/00	2000	2010	Δ2010/00	2000	2010	Δ2010/00
Number of holdings with cultivations, of which:	74,772.00	71,003.00	-5.04%	336,667.00	271,558.00	-19.34%	2,393,892.00	1,616,046.00	-32.49%
- Total agricultural area (hectars)	162,406.53	173,774.22	7.00%	1,369,250.91	1,388,844.95	1.43%	18,766,584.00	17,078,307.00	-9.00%
- Utilised agricultural area (hectars)	151,731.94	161,130.94	6.19%	1,247,577.33	1,285,289.90	3.02%	13,181,859.00	12,856,048.00	-2.47%
– Ligneous crops, of which:	96,104.09	107,223.94	11.57%	505,034.58	526,893.79	4.33%	2,444,082.00	2,380,769.00	-2.59%
- Grapes	10,346.41	8,462.25	-18.21%	111,290.21	107,489.89	-3.41%	717,334.00	664,296.00	-7.39%
- Olives	83,82.16	97,329.38	16.11%	338,039.15	373,284.95	10.43%	1,066,396.00	1,123,330.00	5.34%
– Arable crops, of which	51,522.60	50,243.47	-2.48%	650,205.62	651,404.81	0.18%	7,283,882.00	7,009,311.00	-3.77%
- Common wheat and spelt	764.48	1,119.30	46.41%	17,209.04	15,337.69	-10.87%	535,687.32	542,873.80	1.34%
- Durum wheat	22,246.55	18,129.51	-18.51%	409,991.97	342,500.58	-16.46%	1,699,480.00	1,419,106.00	-16.50%
- Industrial crops	8,333.61	182.34	-97.81%	19,418.57	6,550.90	-66.26%	510,991.81	342,794.17	-32.92%
- Horticultural crops	4,537.57	5,040.36	11.08%	43,955.95	58,264.65	32.55%	259,295.54	299,681.67	15.58%
- Multiannual forage crops	1,967.40	3,217.43	63.54%	53,854.15	71,045.93	31.92%	1,530,845.00	1,917,850.00	25.28%
– Permanent pasture and meadows	3,250.54	2,121.65	-34.73%	90,066.28	103,051.60	14.42%	3,414,592.00	3,434,073.00	0.57%
Number of holdings with livestock, of which:	827.00	1,560.00	88.63%	6,547.00	9,012.00	37.65%	370,356.00	217,449.00	-41.29%
– bovine holdings	536.00	433.00	-19.22%	4,386.00	3,633.00	-17.17%	171,994.00	124,210.00	-27.78%
– ovine holdings	197.00	223.00	13.20%	2,309.00	2,065.00	-10.57%	89,151.00	51,096.00	-42.69%
Number of bovine animals	8,084.00	7,075.00	-12.48%	152,723.00	158,757.00	3.95%	6,049,252.00	5,592,700.00	-7.55%
Number of ovine animals	24,611.00	38,537.00	56.58%	217,515.00	272,408.00	25.24%	6,789,825.00	6,782,179.00	-0.11%

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

As far as foreign markets are concerned, whereas in 2010 the volume of imported goods exceeded that of exported goods and the propensity to export (2.89%) and openness rate (6.28%) were much lower than the regional (respectively, 11.17% and 27.25%) and national ones (23.89% e 48.49%), in 2011 the provincial balance of trade improves noticeably and shows a surplus due to a major increase in export (+32%) and to the simultaneous decrease in import (-12%).

Table 5 – Market Openness(Million Euros, %)

	Province of Lecce			Apulia Region			Italy		
	2010	2011	<i>Δ</i>	2010	2011	<i>Δ</i>	2010	2011	<i>Δ</i>
<i>Import</i>	413	362	-12%	9,953	11,902	+20%	343,220	400,184	17%
<i>Export</i>	352	465	+32%	6,918	8,159	+18%	333,329	371,153	11%
<i>Propensity to export (2010)</i>	2.89			11.17			23.89		
<i>Openness rate (2010)</i>	6.28			27.25			48.49		

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

The infrastructure indexes calculated by Istituto Tagliacarne point out that, between 2001 and 2011, the general index of infrastructures of the province grows by 6% (passing from 75.71 to 80.16) and gets closer to the national base value (Italy=100). However, analysing the single components of this increase, it comes to light that the upgrade concerns social more than economic infrastructures (respectively, +12% and +3%).

Table 6 – Infrastructural Development Indexes (Italy=100)

	Province of Lecce		Apulia Region	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Economic infrastructures*	71.35	73.22	86.78	91.80
Social infrastructures**	85.87	96.35	84.33	87.55
General index of infrastructures (economic and social)	75.71	80.16	86.05	90.53

*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 2000, the regional legislator has reorganised the administrative functions and tasks between Region and local authorities, through both a general law (the law n. 22, subsequently abrogated and replaced by the law n. 36/2008), and a series of sectorial laws which have regulated the allocation of competences in the following fields: agriculture (n.16), environmental protection (n. 17), woodland and forests, civil protection and fight against forest fires (n.18), energy and energetic saving, mines and geothermal resources (n.19), public works, road system and transports (n. 20), human and animal health (n. 21), urban planning, territorial planning and public housing (n. 23), handicraft, industry, fairs, markets and commerce, tourism, sport, culture promotion, cultural heritage, school education, right to education and professional training (n. 24).

The general legislation envisaged the allocation of administrative functions to the Provinces in case these functions, “because of their territorial size, and organisational skills, couldn’t be properly carried out by the municipalities”, along with other functions identified by specific sectorial legislation. The functions of territorial and socio-economic programming are still retained by the Region, to which Provinces only deliver contributions, thus not accomplishing an adequate decentralization of tasks downwards.

The functions conferred by Apulia Region to the Provinces are numerous and comprehensive. In order to facilitate the analysis, these functions have been gathered by macro-areas and by type of activity, classified and matched with five main functions: Planning/project-making, Regulatory powers, Granting of financial support to operators, Implementation of services, General monitoring, evaluation and control.

In Apulia, the Provinces have focused their activity of programming and planning on matters related to the macro-area “Economic development and productive activities” (agriculture, handicraft, aid to firms and tourism), whereas there is a lack of such activities in the other macro-areas where they are referred to city planning, road system, school education, professional training, and active labour policies.

Table 7– Functions transferred to the Provinces by the Apulia 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	
	Industry and aid to firms	X	X		X	
	Tourism	X	X	X	X	
	Energy (renewable energy and energy saving)		X			
	Mines and geothermal resources		X			
Territory, environment and infrastructure	Urban planning	X	X			
	Environmental assets		X		X	
	Protection and safeguard of nature and environment		X	X	X	X
	Water resources and soil protection		X		X	
	Public works		X		X	X
	Road network	X	X		X	X
	Transports		X			X
	Civil protection				X	X
Services to the individuals and the communities	Social services, social inclusion and healthcare		X	X		
	Vocational training	X	X		X	X
	School education	X			X	X
	Labour market	X		X	X	X
	Culture and cultural heritage		X	X	X	
	Performing arts			X		
	Sport			X		
Administrative Police					X	X

Source: Our elaborations.

In order to carry out all of the above-mentioned functions, the Province of Lecce established an The activity of Regulation (definition of specific rules, authorization schemes, eligibility criteria) is much more frequent, since it covers many subjects present in the different macro-areas, mainly in the fields concerning economic development, productive activities and territory, environment and infrastructures.

Similarly frequent and widespread is the activity of implementation of works/services, since it covers all the macro-areas and it deals with productive activities, environment and natural resources, public works, road system, transports, school education and professional training, labour policies, culture.

The activities of control and monitoring concern, in particular, the macro-areas “Territory, environment and infrastructures” (environment, natural disasters, public works, road system and transports), and “Services to the person and to the community” (school education and professional training, employment policies).

Very little is, then, the activity of financial supply to the public and private operators, which is mainly concentrated in the macro-area “Services to the individuals and the community” (social services, labour market, sport and entertainment).

internal structure resulting from a re-organizational process started in 2005. The present structure dates back to 2012, when it has been reviewed and adapted to the competences envisaged by the Reform of December 2011, thus reducing expenditures without reducing services provided on the territory.

This reorganization has been determined by financial choices that have entailed the reduction of the number of Sectors and their reallocation as Services of some other Sectors (as it happened in the case of the “Local Development”) and also led to the decrease and redistribution of the managerial tasks (decreased in fifteen years from 26 to 19), as well as to a widespread re-modulation and reduction of the staff’s costs.

At present, the Province of Lecce is made up of four Sectors articulated in Services in their turn divided into offices: Public works and mobility; Environment, Territorial Development, Strategic Programming; Human and financial resources; Cultural, social and labour policies.

The functioning of the structure is regulated by the System of offices and services, whereas the coordination is attained through two Committees: the Strategic Committee, called by the General Director every two weeks, and the Operative Committee, made up by the General Director and by the managerial staff of the Sectors, which joins up the functions of the various Sectors.

2.2 Functions performed within the co-financed projects

Although living on derivative finance and lacking a proper instrument of economic programming formally recognized and exploitable to combine financial resources arising from different sources, the Province of Lecce managed to obtain a strategic role thanks to brokerage and to coordination of additional resources.

The concurrence of the increase of functions and the decrease of subsidies and transfers, in addition to the crisis, led not only to a rationalization of expenditures, but also to a further boost to find additional financial resources through competitive procedures, both at local level and to regional, national and European level. That is why the Province, through the Office for European Policies, committed itself in finding extra-budget resources, thus realising local development projects, study and analysis activities, information and awareness-raising actions.

Most of the functions in the field of the active employment policies and training have been carried out through the resources of the European social Fund (ESF) Regional Operational Program 2007-2013, that the local Provinces managed as intermediate body for activities of training and professional orientation organized in annual plans which are structured as the O.P. and divided into four lines of intervention (Adaptability, Employment, Human Capital, Technical Assistance).

In the Province of Lecce, in particular, the annual training plans are arranged and carried out with the support of the Territorial Network of the Employment Centres, and of the Observatory of the Labour Market of the Province. Their operative actions and proposals arise from the analysis of the local employment situation and from the study of the training needs, by focusing the attention on the two-hundred thousand people enrolled in the local employment registers. In addition, training initiatives aimed at improving the inclusion in the labour market have been realised, by acting both on equal opportunities (through a project financed by the Community Initiative Equal) and on experts in education and professional training, as well as on students (through different projects financed with lifelong learning community programmes occurred over time).

Concerning the 2007-2013 programming of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the activities of the Province of Lecce have mainly focused on the road system, and only partially on initiatives regarding the securing and the reduction of risks of flooding and on initiatives concerning culture, environment and tourism. Furthermore, works for road system and schools for a total value of 40 million euros have been financed to the Province of Lecce through financial resources allocated by the Italian Interministerial Committee for Economic Programming (CIPE) drawn from the Fund for development and cohesion 2007-2013 (the previous Fund for under-utilised Areas – FAS).

In terms of cultural heritage, the Province of Lecce has promoted and coordinated the cooperation among the provincial libraries and, in order to carry out these activities, it has benefited of a subsidy of the Regional OP ERDF 2007-2013, and of a specific Framework Programme Agreement (APQ) signed with the Apulia Region so as to strengthening and implementing the services of the provincial library “N. Bernardini”. In addition, it has realized the network of the libraries of the Province of Lecce (3.7 billion euros) and an initiative of safeguarding, restoring and recovery of the former Convitto Palmieri by which a multi-functional room and an expositive area have been realised (1.4 billion euros). Furthermore, the Province benefited of ERDF resources (1.5 billion euros) to finance the marketing programme “Salento d’Amare”, a collective brand of geographical indication owned by the Province, and used for promoting the territory in order to diversify and integrate the touristic services and to make tourist flows less dependent on holiday seasons.

Functions in the field of integration and equal opportunities, of protection of natural, environmental and cultural heritage, as well as of touristic promotion, have all been financed also through resources coming from European Programmes, such as lifelong learning programmes, cross-border cooperation programmes, interregional and territorial cooperation (TACIS, Interreg Italy-Albania, and Greece-Italy, IPA, others), both during the present and the past programming period. Through them different projects have been realised, mainly concerning security and prevention activities, support and inclusion of immigrants, tourism, sustainable rural

development, protection and preservation of environmental and cultural heritage, as well as cooperation in research, development and transfer of technologies.

At last, in order to foster the development of international relationships towards the Balkans and the Mediterranean, the Province of Lecce has performed, with additional resources, also a set of activities aimed at supporting the initiatives of commercial penetration, and of internationalization of local firms.

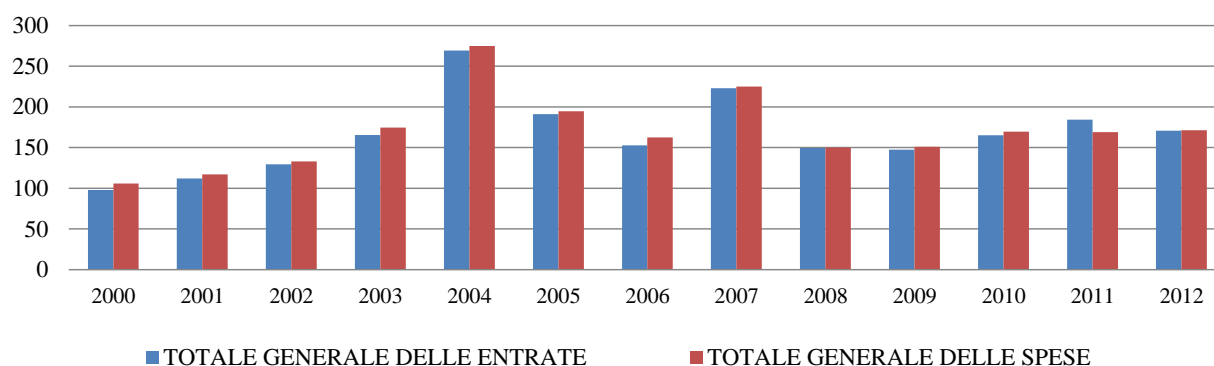
3. RESOURCES

3.1 Budgetary Resources

Considering the period 2000-2012, the budget of the Province of Lecce amounts to an average of 167 million euros, of which more than one third financed by own revenues and one fourth financed by contributions and transfers from the State (44%) and the Region (52%, of which 24% for delegated functions and 29% from other current regional transfers).

Particularly, as far as revenues are concerned there are upward peaks in capital revenues in 2004 (both credit collection and contracted passive loans boost from zero to 72 million euros) and, to a lesser extent, in 2007 (when regional capital transfers exceeded 66 million euros, versus an average of 1.4 million euros in the preceding seven years).

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



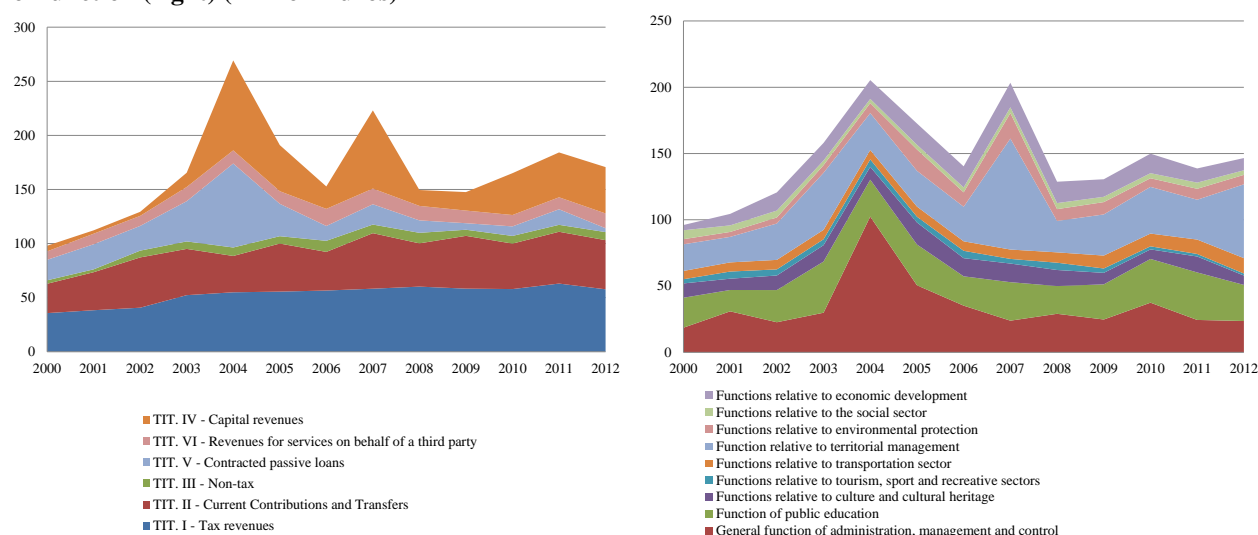
Source: Our elaborations on data by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

The peak in expenditures in 2004 derives from capital components too, mainly expenditures for general function of administration, management and control (from 13.3 million euros in 2000 to 77.6 million euros) and for loan repayment (from 2.8 million euros to 57.5 million euros). In 2007, instead, the increase comes from both current account expenditures (especially for functions relative to environmental protection, that rise from 3.7 million euros in 2000 to 18.7 in 2007) and capital account expenditures (mainly due to a sharp increase of capital expenditures for environmental protection, that in 2007 reach the amount of 72 million euros versus an average of 16.9 in the preceding seven years).

Taking into account the trend of overall current and capital expenditures for each function performed between the years 2000 and 2012, it stems out that a great amount of resources is channeled to functions of administration, management and control (with a peak of 102 million euros in 2004) and relative to territorial management (with a peak of 83 million euros in 2007). These functions, in fact, absorb almost 50% of current and capital expenditure (an average of 70 million euros out of 146) and little more than 40% of general total of expenditures (169.7 million euros).

In order to maintain expenditure levels, and consequently services provided, notwithstanding the strict budgetary constraints imposed, the Province kept current expenditure on a constant average of 90-100 million euros and axed capital expenditure related to all functions but territorial management, that remains on an average of 16-18 million euros not considering the peaks of 2007 (72 million euros) and 2012 (49 million euros).

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

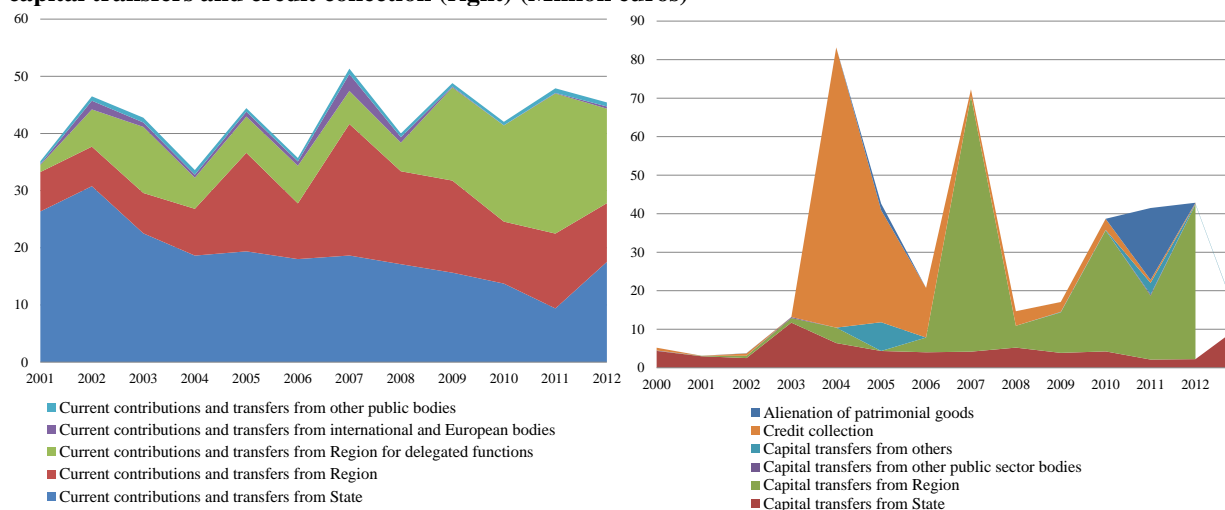
As responsibilities (and resources for their fulfillment) widened, current contributions and transfers increased by 19% between the programming periods 2000-2006 and 2007-2012 (from an average of 37 million euros to an average of 44 million euros) mainly due to total regional resources, that grew from 4 to 18.8 million euros between 2000 and 2011. In particular, regional resources allocated between 2000 and 2012 amount to an average of 11 million euros, which accounts for 11% of average current revenues for the same period of time (104 million euros). And average revenues from current contributions and transfers account for 38% of current revenues. However, it is significant that average tax revenues represent 51% of average current revenues (53 million euros out of 104) and so much as 88% of average own revenues (60 million euros).

Great expenditures (and revenues) were recorded in 2007, exceeding the threshold of 220 million euros. From then onwards, the financial situation progressively worsened and the drop in total revenues registered an average of -39% in the period 2008-2011, reaching the average of 161 million euros.

Current State contributions and transfers, after the rise from 16 to 30 million euros between 2000 and 2002, continually decreased and in 2012 reached the amount of 6.8 million euros. On the other hand, the trend of current regional contributions and transfers, both ordinary and for delegated functions, fluctuated reaching upward peaks for ordinary funds in 2005 (from 7.2 million euros in 2000 to 17.3) and in 2007 (23 million euros) and for delegated functions in 2003 (from 3.6 to 11.6 million euros) and then, counterbalancing the continuous decrease of ordinary regional resources, in 2009-2010 (more than 16 million euros) and in 2011 (24.5 million euros).

Regional transfers in capital account underwent similar fluctuations, with relevant upward peaks in 2007 (66.3 million euros), in 2010 (31 million euros) and in 2012 (46 million euros). State transfers in capital account, instead, remain between 2 and 4 million euros, except an upward peak of 11.7 million in 2003. Moreover, it is relevant to notice the 29 million euros from contracted passive loans in 2005 and the 15 million euros from alienation of provincial patrimonial goods in 2011.

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

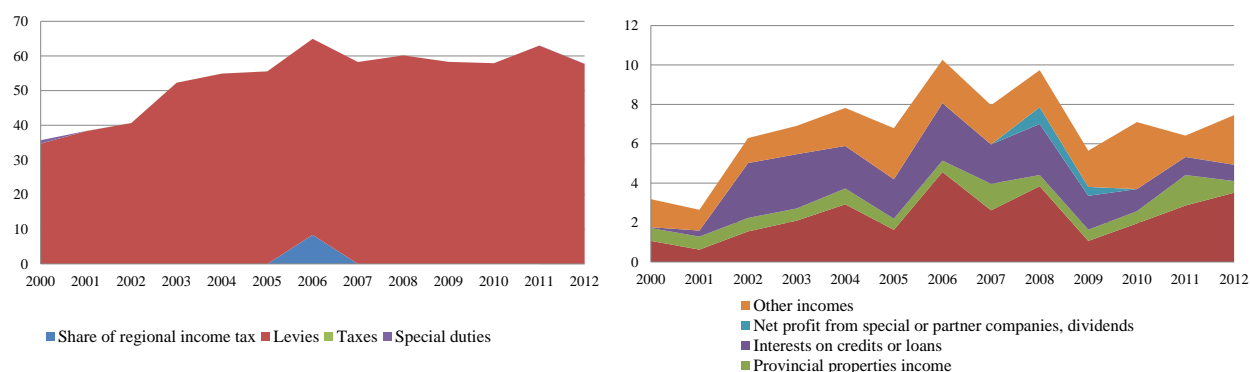
Tax revenues in the period 2000-2012 are on an average of around 53 million euros, but, considering the amounts of 2000 and 2011, it is possible to point out an increase of 84% (from 35.7 to 65.5 million euros) entirely due to levies (from 34.9 to 65.5). Non tax revenues, instead, are on an average of 7 million euros, but between 2000 and 2012 triple (passing from 3.2 to 9.7 million euros) mostly for the rise in public services income (from 1 to 3.6 million euros) and other incomes (from 1.4 to 4.5 million euros).

In the period 2000-2012, total own revenues double (from 38.9 to 75.2 million euros) due more to non-tax revenues (+205%) than to tax revenues (+84%). And consequently, since even

revenues from current contributions and transfers rise, there is a boost in current revenues from 66 million euros in 2010 to 110 million euros in 2011 (+66% and an average of 101 million euros over thirteen years).

The reduction in transfers has been therefore in part passed on to citizens by means of an increase in provincial levies and taxes, an increase in provincial public services income and the reprogramming or reduction of non-core public services (such as support to opera season, sponsorship to sports clubs and to cultural and food and wine events) and in part tackled with a massive alienation of provincial real estate (such as the State Archives, the premises of Lecce's Regional Administrative Court, the Fire Station, the Pio Castle in Casarano, Villa Anna in Santa Cesarea Terme, etc.). Moreover, there was a considerable reduction of fixed costs through a review and rationalization of current expenses, including service and supplies contracts, staff expenditure (even by means of early retirement), and the decision not to take loans in order to stabilize repayments. And, most of all, budget deficit was reduced also by restoring loss-making partner companies and disposing of insolvent ones.

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



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

Therefore, if we consider budget indexes calculated on average values of the periods 2003-2005 and 2007-2010 (Table 8), there is evidence of a stationary tax autonomy (the ratio between tax revenues and current revenues remains at 53%) and of a reduction of the capacity to finance on its own current expenditure (financial autonomy decreases by -3% and the share of current expenditure covered by own-source revenues by -2%). But, while the dependence from contributions and transfers rises (financial dependence is +5%), dependence from current State contributions and transfers decreases by one fourth (dependence on State is -25%) and there is a significant increase of regional current transfers on total current revenues (+39%) as well as of current expenditure share on total expenditures (+33%).

However, through budget indicators examined it emerges a considerable decrease of the share of expenditures in capital account both on total expenditures (-33%) and, above all, on current expenditures (-48%). In particular, the share of current expenditures for functions relative to economic development on total current expenditures decreases by -7% and that of functions of administration, management and control by -4%. If we consider, instead, the ratio between the same expenditures both in current account (Title I) and in capital account (Title II) and total

general expenditures, it can be seen that, whereas general expenditures for administration, management and control drop (-37%), expenditures for function related to economic development rise by 29%.

In short, the management strategy of the Province is, therefore, based on:

- rationalization of administrative and management expenditures, which decrease over time;
- strong reduction in the ratio between expenditures in capital account and current expenditures, mostly related to economic development and to administration and management;
- constant capacity to finance current expenditure with own revenues, given the same tax autonomy.

Table 8 – Budget Indicators

	Average 2000-2006	Average 2007-2012	Δ%
Financial autonomy (<i>Own revenues/Current revenues</i>)	0,59	0,59	-
Tax autonomy(<i>Tax revenues/Current revenues</i>)	0,52	0,53	1%
Financial dependence(<i>Revenues from contributions and transfers/Current revenues</i>)	0,41	0,41	-
Dependence on State(<i>Revenues from contributions and transfers from State/Current revenues</i>)	0,24	0,14	-43%
Share of current transfers from Region on total current revenues	0,16	0,26	61%
Share of current expenditures on total expenditures	0,54	0,61	14%
Share of capital expenditures on total expenditures	0,34	0,25	-25%
Share of capital expenditures on current expenditures	0,67	0,44	-35%
Share of expenditures for general function of administration, management and control on current expenditures(<i>Expenditures Title I, function 1 / Current expenditures</i>)	0,24	0,23	-2%
Share of expenditures for functions relative to economic development on current expenditures (<i>Expenditures Title I, function 9 / Current expenditures</i>)	0,13	0,12	-6%
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>)	0,23	0,16	-31%
Share of expenditures for functions relative to economic development on total expenditures(<i>Expenditures Title I e Title II, function 9 / Total expenditures</i>)	0,07	0,08	7%
Share of current expenditures covered by own-source revenues*(<i>Own-source revenues / Current expenditures</i>)	0,64	0,64	-

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

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

3.2 Additional Resources

Budgetary resources are mainly used to cover the ordinary expenditures for the management of the structure, as well as the initiatives in which the Province takes part each year, whereas almost all of the other initiatives realized (mainly in the sector of employment, environment, tourism and local development) are financed by resources intercepted out of the ordinary channels, both local, regional and national.

The Province of Lecce has always played the role of large area institution performing linking functions between local authorities and the Apulia Region and has gained over time a remarkable experience in the planning thus allowing to attract additional resources raised through both regional delegation (in the implementation of complex initiatives contained in multi-annual

multi-sectorial development plans) and participation in competitive procedures at regional, national and European level.

The management of the activities for vocational training, as well as of the Employment Centres , has been assigned to the Province of Lecce as intermediate body, receiving from 2009 onwards an amount of more than 57 million euros, and every annual training Plan has received on average about 12 million euros in order to undertake initiatives aimed at supporting and qualifying/re-qualifying the unemployed and vulnerable people, at facilitating the job-matching , as well as to finance innovative ideas for the local socio-economic development. More than 14 million euros have been added to these resources by taking part in the ESF calls for tender, with which the Apulia Region has made effective its delegation in the field of training and employment, by financing the strengthening of Employment Centres through the purchasing of goods and services (5.5 billion euros) and the acquisition of new professional skills (more than 9 billion euros). Whereas, in the field of instruction, the Italian Interministerial Committee for Economic Programming (CIPE) has allocated resources for 380 thousand euros for the maintenance of school buildings.

The Province has also participated in the calls for tender of the ROP ERDF Apulia 2007-2013, thus acquiring 71 million euros. Most of these resources (58 billion euros, 82%) has been addressed to the public works indicated in the annual list (completion, enlargement, adjustment, extraordinary maintenance, securing, water control works), whereas the remaining share has been allocated to initiatives in the field of cultural heritage and tourism (of which 4.7 billion euros for the improvement of the provincial library's system, 1.9 for the recovery of former monasteries, and 1.5 for the plan of marketing and promotion "Salento d'Amare"), and for environmental safety and risk prevention works. The CIPE has allocated huge resources for initiatives on the road system (40 billion euros for the period 2007-2013) in order to complete the road works envisaged by the list of the Public Works. Moreover, a further 1 million euro has been acquired through ERDF resources on the Interregional Operational Programmes (IOP) 2007-2013 for the Convergence Regions, of which 381 thousand euros for the measures of public buildings energetic efficiency (on the IOP "Renewable energies and energetic saving" managed by the Ministry for Economic Development) and 778 thousand euros for the restoration of the bell tower of the cathedral of Lecce (on the IOP "Cultural and natural attractors and tourism", managed by the Ministry for Cultural heritage and activities and tourism).

Remarkable for the development of the local economic system have been the 100 billion euros of national resources managed by the Province of Lecce for two operations of negotiated planning: the 1st generation general-purpose manufacturing Territorial Pact in 1997 (47.5 billion euros of public subsidy, of which 8 added after a re-modulation), and the agriculture and rural tourism Territorial Pact in 2001 (more than 50 billion euros of public subsidy). The first Pact acts on the six productive regional systems of the textile, clothing and shoe industry in crisis (Casarano-Gallipoli, Tricase, Nardò, Maglie-Poggiardo, Galatina, Lecce) and realizes a set of integrated operations, made up of about 90 entrepreneurial projects (also relating to the agro-food sector and to services), and 4 infrastructural operations in support of the productive system (roads and equipment for conurbations and for industrial areas). The second Pact, conversely, acts on the sectors dealing with agriculture, livestock farming and tourism, and it is made up of 114 entrepreneurial projects and no infrastructural operation.

The Province of Lecce has also showed a strong participation in competitive procedures concerning all of the programs gradually available, and it has managed in attracting precious resources for the local development.

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

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	-	57,498.95
2. European Social Fund O.P. Measures	CBP	-	14,580.52
3. European Regional Development Fund O.P. Measures	CBP	832.00	71,063.24
<i>Interregional Operational Programme Energy ERDF</i>	CBP	-	381.07
<i>Interregional Operational Programme Cultural Attractors ERDF</i>	CBP	-	778.08
4. European Fisheries Fund Measures	CBP	-	-
5. General-purpose Territorial Pacts **	CBP	47,475.73	-
6. Agricultural Territorial Pacts **	CBP	50,177.01	-
7. Contract programme		-	-
8. Other local development integrated programmes (regional)		-	-
9. National Fund for Underutilized Areas (FAS) / National Fund for development and cohesion (FSC)		-	40,380.00
10. INTERREG projects	CBP	145.00	2,369.57
11. LIFE projects		-	-
12. URBAN projects		-	-
13. Other programmes:		-	-
<i>EQUAL</i>	CBP	95.00	-
<i>LLP</i>	CBP	-	406.10
<i>ENPI</i>	CBP	-	409.23
<i>Law n. 49/87 (Development cooperation) Project "EBLA" -</i>	CBP	-	196.84
<i>Programme ELISA (Department for Regional Affairs) Project INFOCITY -</i>	CBP	-	205.00
<i>Exemplary Projects in Southern Regions - Project "JOEL" (Job, Excellence e Link)</i>	CBP	-	5.71
TOTAL		98,724.74	188,274.31
<i>% on total revenues/expenditures</i>		<i>9%</i>	<i>21.7%</i>
<i>% on total capital expenditures</i>		<i>24%</i>	<i>84%</i>
<i>% on total capital expenditures for local development***</i>		<i>195%</i>	<i>821%</i>

* Resources for the 2007-2013 programming period concern the years 2007-2012

** Although Territorial Pacts continue during the period 2007-2013, their resources are entirely included in the box of the period 2000-2006.

*** 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 Lecce and the Ministry of Internal Affairs

By excluding the funds allocated on the ROPs, FAS/FSC and on the Pacts, the total amount of additional resources acquired by the Province of Lecce has exceeded 3.8 million euros. The most

used programmes have been the Interreg (2.5 million euros, 66% of the resources), through which have been realized cooperation projects mainly focused on tourism and promotion of territories, on support to small and medium-sized firms, but also on socio-sanitary operations and cultural and artistic resources. Worthy of note is, then, the use of lifelong learning programmes , along with the exchange of students and know-how, such as the Programme Leonardo Da Vinci (406 thousand euros) which has allowed to realize other little cross-border projects aimed at secondary education, professional training and promotion of the peculiarities of the territory.

Considering all the financial resources acquired through delegation or competitive procedures, from 2000 onwards, the Province of Lecce has managed to attract on the territory 287 million euros, 66% of which in the 2007-2013 period. These amounts and proportions should be considered, nonetheless, with some doubts, since a more in-depth analysis of the two programming periods has highlighted that other numerous projects have been activated on different programmes, but the Province has not been able to provide information on their financial size and it has not even been possible to trace data on the financial resources concerning the ERDF and ESF funds for the 2000-2006 period.

In any case, considering the present need of rationalizing budgetary resources and, at the same time, the need of supporting both current expenditures and investments, it is very interesting to point out that the funds obtained out of the ordinary budget, despite being incomplete and representing only 14% of the general total of budgetary revenues/expenditures for the entire period 2000-2013, they represent, nonetheless, 46% of the capital expenditures for the same period, and even 390% of the capital expenditures for functions relative to local development (cultural heritage, tourism, environmental protection, social policies and economic development).

Even in the knowledge that it is not possible to make exact distinctions and comparisons, between the two periods, if we suppose that the resources registered from 2007 onwards are much more exhaustive, it is noticeable that their incidence is equal to 84% if compared to budgetary capital expenditures for the same period, and it represents even 821% if compared to those specifically related to functions of local development. It is, therefore, clear how the Province of Lecce has succeeded in playing a very relevant role, so as to stimulate the local planning and involve and coordinate the local stakeholders in different initiatives.

4. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PROVINCE AND THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 The Region

The relationships between the Apulia Region and the Provinces have changed over time, as it has happened for the various field of competence.

In agriculture, for instance, the regional law n. 16/2000 has not been put into effect and the numerous expected administrative functions have never been transferred to the Provinces, since many of them have been assigned to the assistance centers of the associations of category.

Nonetheless, despite the resistance of the Region in delegating, the Province has managed to acquire a relevant role on the territory through the management of the agricultural Territorial Pact

and to obtain spaces of intervention within specific agriculture negotiating tables. However, without delegation, the Province can only perform an administrative management of payment procedures on the territory, in the first case, and handle operations dictated by emergencies, in the second case.

Conversely, in the case of territorial planning instruments of the programming period 2000-2006 (the Territorial Integrated Projects and the Sectorial Integrated Projects), the Region has opted for the aggregation of the Municipalities according to criteria of economic interdependence, more than administrative criteria, and for the establishment of new intermediate bodies for management and coordination. Nonetheless, the Province of Lecce had suitable structures and functions and it had already elaborated a provincial programming complement envisaging proposals for each single measure of the ROP, by consulting, beforehand, all the municipalities of reference and by bringing together their needs and requests, but the Region did not consider all of this in its following activities, despite the expectations of the local stakeholders. A similar situation occurred again in the 2007-2013 period, when the experience of the PIT (Territorial Integrated Projects) and of the PIS (sectorial integrated programs) was converted in the aggregation of the regional territory in Large Areas (subsequently stalled), from which the Provinces were totally excluded.

The link function performed by the Province has been ignored and underestimated and the building up of new structures has entailed high costs and long delays in the structuring, as well as a hasty allocation of resources and an inadequate attention to the quality and the usefulness of the related projects.

Differently, instead, the single initiatives of local development and cooperation are characterized by direct, frequent and efficient relationships with the offices of the Region.. In these fields, however, the problem seems to originate from both long-lasting perspectives (particularly today, considering the institutional uncertainty) and political decisions related to the degree of decentralization of expenditures at a territorial level. It is likely that a greater concentration of investments and operations at a provincial level could have fostered a stronger governance of territorial development, instead of requiring the task of patching single actions up.

4.2 The local stakeholders

The local stakeholders have always recognized to the Province of Lecce its role of supra-municipal coordination and, since 1993 it has been established a provincial Operative Unit for Development (UOS – Unità Operativa per lo Sviluppo) made up by all the main institutional stakeholders, both economic and social (Chamber of Commerce, University, Consortium for industrial development and technical services to firms – SISRI), headed and coordinated by the Province which held the powers of direction and programming conferred by the law 142/90.

The role of coordination has been performed also through collaborations with other regional Provinces, through the participation in thematic tables, initially called in order to cope with the problem of the employment crisis of the sectors related to the Italian car company FIAT located in Lecce and, then, bypassing the emergencies, their transformation in territorial tables aimed at putting together and synthesising the different operations for the local development.

Furthermore, the Province of Lecce is particularly active in systemising all the financing opportunities, in relating to local and external stakeholders and in scouting resources to channel in the area, but since this role of mediation and coordination is actually not officially recognized, it is sometimes difficult to avoid overlapping, thus requiring a great effort to bring local actions together in one unitary development framework.

In the case of territorial planning, the role of coordination is, instead, formalized and, over time, the Province has managed to increase its capacity in supporting the territory and in paying attention to the peculiarities, to the problems and to the themes related to the different local situations. It has therefore acted as a territorial co-planner and in the Territorial Plan for Provincial Coordination (PTCP) it has made choices related to land use and landscape, agreed upon beforehand with the Municipalities and transferred in the municipal urban plans without conflicts. Similar remarks can be made also for the provincial Implementation Plan for environment protection, which has been adopted in 2004 in line with the regional Plan based on the territorial needs concerning waste, controls on discharges and emissions into soil, air and water, road safety.

The Province has carried out a remarkable role of coordination also concerning regional parks, the marine protected area and of various sites of Community importance located within its territory. In the period between 2002 and 2008, the Province has actively participated in the technical surveys for their birth, it has coordinated and financed, in compliance with the regional Program for the environmental protection, projects of promotion, signposting and use of parks, as well as activities of prevention and fire-fighting. Towards the end of 2010, the Apulia Region, in accordance with the Italian Federation of Parks (Federparchi), has identified the six regional parks located in the Salento area to be candidated for the certification of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST), under the coordination of the Province of Lecce. These activities led to the establishment of the “Sistema dei Parchi del Salento” (System of the Parks of Salento) and to the achievement of the prestigious certification released by the Europarc Federation.

The Province has not only fostered the integration of the various specificities of the parks involved in the process of certification, but it has also strengthened the other protected areas and sites of community interest by elaborating, with the support of the University of the Salento, a complex management plan (containing also about fifteen guidelines) also for the sites located outside the parks. In 2012, it has also presented, as lead partner, a project proposal on Interreg IV Greece-Italy aimed at financing sustainable mobility in the parks and in the protected areas of Salento and Greece (Project EPA – Environmental Parks). All of this could hardly have been realized without the incentive, the support and the coordination of the provincial authority.

Other challenges, similarly demanding, have been met and accepted by the Province in the field of enhancement and promotion of food productions, tourism and handicraft: it has become partner of the High-quality Agro-food District Jonico-Salentino and it has activated positive synergies among firms, training entities and research centres, it has stipulated memorandum of understanding and carried out joint initiatives with the Chamber of Commerce aimed at animating networks of firms, it has collaborated with the Italian general confederation of craft businesses (Confartigianato) in order to organize and foster the national annual Fair of artistic handicraft and food crafts (CibiArti Expo) which takes place in Lecce. The Province has also frequent and fruitful contacts with Coldiretti (the national Organisation of farmers),

Confagricoltura (Italian General Confederation of agriculture businesses) and with the Confederazione Italiana agricoltori – CIA – (Italian Confederation of farmers), but, due to its limited functions, only on specific needs (as it occurred for the watermelons over-production crisis, or for the exploitation of immigrants in watermelons and tomatoes picking, or for various phytosanitary issues).

Everybody considers, therefore, the Province as an Authority near to the territory and responsive to its needs. It has been always available at establishing debate and listening tables, but, since it has few institutional tools, it has only managed to act on specific needs and emergencies, without making its support stable over time. Nonetheless, it has managed to provide a constant support and to have influence on local actors without triggering divisions among the different levels of institutional representation, but, on the contrary, fostering the links, as it happened for instance in the case of the before mentioned protected areas and of the tourism (an example is provided by the “Notte della Taranta”, an initiative launched in the municipality of Melpignano, supported also by the Province which has immediately understood its media power, and which has now become an event of worldwide fame).

As far as the six LAGs of the Salento area are concerned, the Province didn't manage to establish profitable relationships, since they have a direct link with the Region, furthermore, even LAGs didn't interact between them. Instead, the fishing sector experienced a different path and two Coastal Action Groups (Jonico Salentino and Adriatico Salentino) were created thanks to a strong initial support provided by the Province..

4.3 The project partnerships

Worthy of note is the remarkable ability of the Province of Lecce in interacting with external stakeholders, far beyond the settlement of specific project partnerships, as we have already discussed. It has managed to establish networks which involve both the neighboring Provinces and the other coastal provinces, up to the administrations of many other countries which are more or less nearby.

It is worth mentioning the Association of the Adriatic and of the Ionian Provinces (Associazione Arco Adriatico Ionico – ARCADIO) which was established in 2003 with a Memorandum of Understanding under the initial impulse of the Provinces of Lecce and Teramo and it is made up of 13 Provinces from Pesaro-Urbino to Lecce¹. The decision to establish an association has been the consequence of a specific political choice, aimed at creating a network among the Adriatic Provinces which could define and plan common activities on unifying elements and use in the best way the European and national funding, by presenting both rural development projects (mainly on the common products, such as wine and oil) and projects on European programmes of cross-border cooperation and of pre-adhesion and on national programs for infrastructures (railway network, road network, such as the SS 16 which connects Otranto and Udine) and tourism.

Despite various vicissitudes have slowed down and weakened the collaboration and the positive ideas, the experience of ARCADIO has left good results also at a regional level, by leading at the

¹ ARCADIO is composed by the following Provinces: Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Teramo, Pescara, Chieti, Campobasso, Foggia, Bari, Brindisi, Lecce, Taranto.

signing of an agreement in 2005 and at the establishment of an operative technical Group among the Provinces of Bari, Brindisi and Lecce in order to cooperate in regional and national programmes, in community initiatives and in other financing instruments ascribable to interregional and trans-national cooperation policies.

Also the Network of the European Straits, to which the Province of Lecce has adhered in 2010, aims at common programming and specific acknowledgement within European policies. At this Network do participate the local administrations overlooking the Strait of Dover, the Strait of Messina, the Kvarken, the Strait of Sicily, the Gulf of Finland, the Strait of Otranto, the Fehmarn Belt (Germany) and the Strait of Bonifacio and was built up through the Project “NOSTRA” (Network of STRAits) financed, on the Programme Interreg IV.

At last, the Province of Lecce participates also in the Association for local and European trans-regional cooperation named “TECLA”, which provides, since 1993, services of information, animation and technical assistance on European financing opportunities and of which the Provinces and the Italian Municipalities are partners (in the past also the Regions). It also adheres to the Chamber of Commerce Italo Orientale (Italy and eastern countries), so as to let the small and medium-sized firms benefit from the professional counseling on internationalisation towards the Balkans and the Far East.

5. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Salento area includes 96 Municipalities characterized by an highly populated territory which needs an intermediate institution as the Province to plan, spur, harmonize and coordinate local actors and needs.

Financial difficulties that the whole country is experiencing has led to streamlining the structure of the Province and to downsizing staff and top positions, thus redistributing tasks according to greater adherence possible to Province’s own functions.

However, this penalized local development, which disappeared from exclusive functions of the Province, while the Sector dedicated to it was cancelled and remaining as mere Service of the Sector Environment, Territorial development and Strategic planning (topics that, actually, include local development).

And yet, it is within the activities related to local development that the Province has accrued relevant experience in negotiating with the territory and external actors, has designed and implemented various projects and programmes within territorial partnerships and has attracted significant additional resources.

Not always the Province of Lecce had the opportunity to play an institutionalised coordination role. However, it was always able to gain acceptance and authority to tailor it on itself (as happened with agriculture or environmental impact evaluation of sites of Community importance), acting as the core of arrangements, contacts, projects and as pole of attraction for comprehensive partnerships and as manager of additional resources. The Province was able to cover the whole territory without prevarication and still now, notwithstanding the shortage of financial resources, it continues to perform its duties.

Limited powers and competencies not always allowed to satisfy local expectations, but, although often used as “paper pusher”, the Province of Lecce tried to be near its territory, to catch its characteristics and needs and to give somehow answers. And a farer institution not necessarily could do the same and with equal quick understanding.

The weak point is undoubtedly the heaviness of bureaucracy, however to program, plan and control expenditure is a tough job. The Province proved to have a long-term vision and to be able to widen contacts and partnerships, find resources and solutions, look for scope for intervention and collective actions promotion.

Salento made real progress thanks to the spur given by the Province to the integration of various initiatives (territorial pacts, brand “Salento d’Amare”, etc.) within a shared development strategy, putting general interests of the territory behind roles and belonging. And it seems that the Province of Lecce managed to bring all of that out in the most effective way.