



VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW 2022

Autonomous Region of
SARDINIA





REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA



Edited by

Autonomous Region of Sardinia

Coordination: Regional Department of Environmental Defence

General Director: Gianluca Cocco

Coordination Group for the Regional Sustainable Development Strategy:

Filippo Arras, Emanuela Manca, Luisa Mulas

Technical support

Poliste srl SB Certified BCorp



Preface

The Regional Sustainable Development Strategy (RSDS) for a more sustainable Sardinia by 2030, that in Italian it is named “Sardegna2030”, has been designed, under the coordination of the Regional Department of Environmental Defence, following four main principles: participatory approach, design by objectives, integration between policies, and integration with adaptation to climate change. These pillars have oriented, and continue to do so, the jointly building process of a multi-level governance system of sustainable development, coherent and integrated in the dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic, social, and cultural.

The Sardegna2030 Strategy pivots around the creation of a strong governance IN and OUT the regional structure, looking at the territory as a whole and based on a multi-stakeholder participatory process that aims at strengthening the capacity building and empowerment of the regional workers as well as the civil society. The drafting process activities of the Strategy registered 3300 presences, engaging more than 1600 people coming from public administration, enterprises, third sector and civil society. During approximately 2 years, the involved parties have improved their awareness and skills about the 2030 Agenda commitments and the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), becoming able to implement them in their areas of expertise.

The NSDS and the agreements signed between the Autonomous Region of Sardinia and the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition were an impressive push for the launch of the Regional Strategy and for the supervision of its concrete and effective elaboration. Coordination mechanisms established between central and regional authorities have been crucial to the regional and local planning processes.

Sardegna2030 is meant to be a learning process, an ongoing integrated thinking system, and a significant framework able to shape the culture of relations. It has also applied the system of reference values, becoming an indispensable support in decision-making processes managed by the public decision-makers, the private sector, and the citizens. Moreover, the health emergency caused by Covid-19 forced all of us to a radical change of our working way. Accordingly, we reorganise the entire participatory process, involving local stakeholders through online events and webinars. For this reason, the working activities that supported the Interdepartmental working group and the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development were adapted to the new requirements, reinforcing smart and remote working skills. We promoted a new approach to sustainable development strategies during a major organisational and work change: so, change is possible if it is driven under a clear, transparent, and co-responsible process where sustainability is a common achievement, even during hard times.

The need for a strong policy integration and coherence is another key point raised by Sardegna2030, that it is reported in this document. We addressed this issue by integrating the Sardegna2030 process with the planning of the Implementation Programmes of the European Funds, thanks to the direct involvement of the regional structures in charge of programming the European Funds within the Interdepartmental Working Group set for Sardegna2030. This result was ensured thanks also to the use of the same terminology for the five European policy objectives.



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List of abbreviation and acronyms

CF	Cohesion Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ESIFs	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
FSC	Fund for Development and Cohesion
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italian National Institute of Statistics)
JTF	Just Transition Fund
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
RSDS	Regional Sustainable Development Strategy
ROPs	Regional Operational Programmes
SD	Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment



Introduction

The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a process in which Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) voluntarily initiate an assessment of their progress of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. This makes it possible for LRGs to share experiences, challenges, and lessons learnt and, at the same time, to open their door to new partnerships, filling the gap of implementation tools for their local view, ensuring the effectiveness of regional and local strategies.

This report focuses on the aspects that we consider crucial for the progressive assessment in the implementation of the SDGs and on the strategic objectives of the regional strategy for sustainable development.

In addition, this document wants to highlight the importance of the strategy elaboration process and its innovative value, rather than on its specific contents. Therefore, we have decided to emphasise the governance system underlying the Strategy, both in the drafting and in the implementation phases.

In Chapter 1 we present an overview of the Sardegna2030 Regional Sustainable Development Strategy, its structure, its objectives, and its targets.

In Chapter 2 we describe and analyse the governance system we have structured to engage and coordinate regional and local stakeholders. We also present the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development and its crucial role as a meeting and working point for Institutions, enterprises, and the third sector, highlighting their role for the territorialisation of the strategy.

In Chapter 3 we focus on the integration between Regional Sustainable Development Strategy and Regional Operational Programmes of European cohesion policy, and we show the first outcomes as the result of the activated integration path.

Finally, in Chapter 4 we outline what we consider to be the main achievements and the aspects we are focusing on for future actions.

1

Sardegna2030: an overall view

The Sardegna2030 Regional Strategy is the long-term vision for the Sardinia we want by 2030. An agenda of goals to be achieved and actions to be taken. It has been developed through a participatory process rooted in documents, plans and programmes, primary and secondary source data, and extensive information shared during the activities carried out in the framework of a governance that involves public and private stakeholders - as described in Chapter 2. Right now, the governance is working for the implementation of the Strategy with the same participatory, open, inclusive, and transparent approach.

Following the sustainable development method according to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs¹, the Strategic Regional Goals of the Sardegna2030 Strategy are based on environmental protection, well-being and social inclusion, and prosperity and economic equity. All these elements are interlinked and cannot be compartmentalised, they definitely share the transverse focus of the education and the governance culture.

The Regional Strategy, coordinated by the Regional Department of Environmental Defence has been approved on 6th October 2021 and it is available in our [institutional website](https://www.regione.sardegna.it/argomenti/strategiaregionalevilupposostenibile/).
<https://www.regione.sardegna.it/argomenti/strategiaregionalevilupposostenibile/>

Human well-being is intrinsically linked to the health of the natural ecosystems to which it belongs, just as Sardinia is a constituent element of the global environment. Moreover, the climate crisis and the growing awareness of the effects of climate change, calls us to the need of economic and social models in terms of sustainable development. The Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development Strategy represents an important opportunity to integrate aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the regional programming and planning. The Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (adopted by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia on 5th February 2019), was drawn up based on a specific study on future climate scenarios of Sardinia to 2050. Then, the Objectives of the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development have been developed within this specific regional framework.

Sardegna2030 should be seen with an open eye on our territory but also on the rest of the planet, where the cultural element and the collaboration between institutions and citizenship promote and support policies focused on integration and the wellbeing for all, *leaving no-one behind*.

The central role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda within the European Cohesion Policy for the period 2021–2027 has been the lighthouse of Sardegna2030 to the extent that the 5 EU policy objectives coincide with the 5 Strategic Themes of the Regional Strategy, with a specific declination:

1. A SMARTER SARDINIA with a strengthened administrative capacity, a greater competitiveness of the production system oriented towards innovation.
2. A GREENER SARDINIA, for the conservation, management, and enhancement of resources and land for an ecological and resilient transition and climate change.
3. A MORE CONNECTED SARDINIA, for an inclusive connectivity based on sustainable mobility and digital accessibility.
4. A MORE SOCIAL SARDINIA, for a widespread well-being based on health, training, skills and work, social inclusion, equality, and culture.

¹ See Miola A., Borchardt S., Neher F., Buscaglia D., "Interlinkages and policy coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals implementation: An operational method to identify trade-offs and co-benefits in a systemic way", EUR 29646 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, ISBN 978-92-79-99556-9, doi:10.2760/472928, JRC115163

5. A SARDINIA CLOSER TO CITIZEN, that invests in the governance for territorial development plans.

The Strategic Objectives of Sardegna2030 are inevitably multidimensional, synergic, and complementary. This means that each Strategic Theme, Strategic Objective, Line of Intervention, or Action should not be read individually or be considered self-supporting (see Fig.1). Therefore, Sardinian Sustainable Development Strategy can only find the right implementation in the intersection of the 5 Themes, in the governance, and in the continuation of the participatory process with its constant updating, sharing, dialogue openness, and creation of culture.

The Regional Sustainable Strategy Development Sardegna2030 consists of:

- 5 Strategic Themes
- 34 Strategic Objectives
- 104 Lines of Action
- 571 Actions
- 102 Indicators
- 41 Targets

The descriptive framework of each Strategic Theme is correlated by a matrix reporting the Indicators and the Targets for Sardegna2030. In fact, The Strategy is also supported by a monitoring system composed of a specific set of indicators that can support and drive the implementation of the Actions and the Policies. The achievement degree of Sardegna2030 is measured through a set of defined targets, the revision of the initial context analysis, and any re-evaluation and redirection of the strategic action lines.

The monitoring system consists of:

- A set of 102 indicators providing a detailed, complete, and comparable graphic representation with data from other Italian regions and with Italian national averages.
- A set of 41 targets representing the desired value in 2030: which is the goal to be achieved by Sardegna2030. The target value evaluation process was based on the comparison of different methodologies: especially on the evaluation of regional experts that worked in cooperation with the Interdepartmental Working Group, taking into account the identification of quantitative targets defined by regional, national or international plans and programmes.



Fig. 1 – The Regional Sustainable Development Strategy Sardegna2030: an overall view

Sardegna2030 is consistent with the Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda, “Partnership for Goals”, that reinforces the principle of promoting inclusive collaborations built on universally valid principles and values, a common vision and shared goals, considering that the regional development policies must be integrated, must dialogue and create synergies that enhance public actions to be truly effective (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - The integration between strategies and programs

The result of this work is displayed in the official document of the Strategy through a correlation matrix where each Strategic Objective is linked with the 2030 Agenda, with the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, and with all the opportunities available at regional level offered by European, national and regional plans, programmes and funds such as the ERDF and the ESF+ Programmes, the Regional Development Programme, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and many more (see Chapter 3).

2 The governance system and the co-design process

2.1 The governance system for Sardegna2030

The Autonomous Region of Sardinia has activated a governance system aimed at creating an effective team building system, through a multi-stakeholder, learning-by-doing, empowerment process.

The **Sardegna2030 governance** is organised into four different integrated levels:

- External-international level, which consists of the UN/EU commitment to the 2030 Agenda and other players, including the Regional Network for International Cooperation.
- External-national level, which belongs to the collaboration between the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the interregional governance for the development of climate change adaptation and ecological transition tools.
- Regional-local level, which involves the local institutional actors, the entrepreneurs, the third sector, and the civil society and plays a central role in operationalising the sustainable development vision, contributing to the SDGs achievement.
- Regional-internal level, which can be associated with the internal governance of the regional system (departments, bodies, regional agencies), which ensures the activation of all the levels of the public administration and the balance among them.

The governance system for the implementation of the Strategy Sardegna2030 is outlined in Fig. 3.

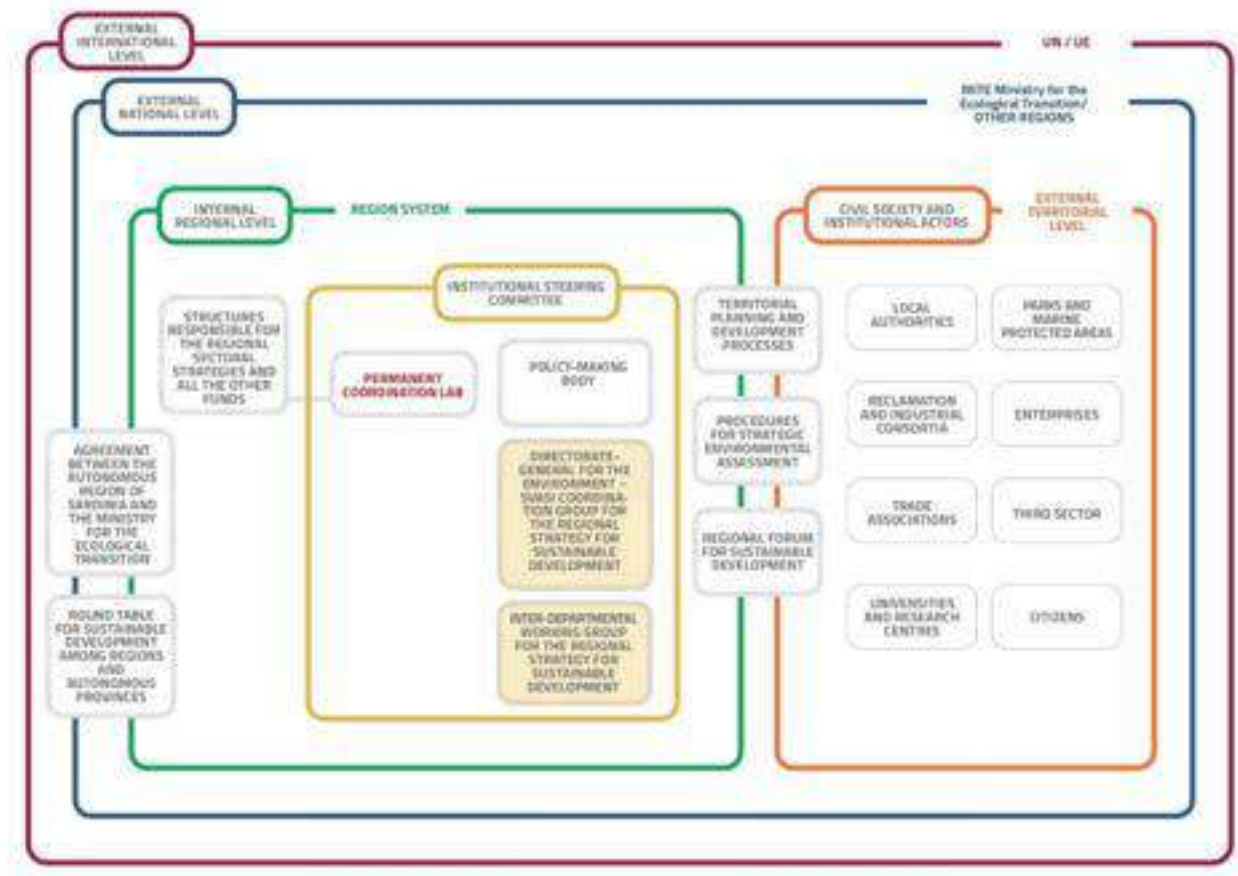


Fig. 3 - The governance system for the implementation of the Sardegna2030 Strategy

The regional governance is coordinated by the Directorate general for the Regional Department of Environmental Defence developed within the reference frame represented by the National sustainable development strategy and the ongoing collaborative relationships with the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the stimuli/prompts of the interregional table.

As we can see in Fig. 3, the regional governance is composed of the internal level, the local level, and the interconnecting venues formed by the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, the spatial planning and development processes, and the strategic environmental assessment procedures.

The **Regional Forum for Sustainable Development** is composed of local authorities, enterprises, associations, and the whole of civil society. The Forum is a permanent platform, created for the Strategy design process and now the implementation process is ongoing. It has experienced dozens of collective moments of thematic analysis and territorial insight, profiting from the rich participation and valuable input offered by the stakeholders. It is a permanent laboratory that has helped to understand the local reality through a choral/comprehensive process involving the entire administration and civil society in cross-sectoral working groups with a wide range of skills, approaches, and experiences.

The **process of spatial planning and development** is carried out basically through the ERDF. This process, for the period 2021-2027, has been closely interrelated with that of Sardegna2030, as we will describe more in the next chapter.

The **Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures** (SEA) procedure is undergoing a phase of evolution driven precisely by the evolution of the sustainability approach and the NSDS. At the regional level, some territories and local authorities are experimenting with procedures that allow the interconnections between environmental, social, and economic sustainability to be included in the strategic assessment.

The **Institutional Steering Committee** was established, at regional level, to ensure a direct engagement in the Strategy design and implementation process, between the Departments and Regional Agencies coordinated by the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection. Its main operational tool is the **Interdepartmental Working Group**, coordinated by a small working group of the Environment department (Coordination Group). The Interdepartmental Working Group is composed of more than 100 civil servants, delegated representatives of the Directorates-General of each regional department and of the various Bodies and Agencies of the regional system. It has generated a lifelong learning laboratory, a perfect place that has tested the collective thinking power, where traditional paradigms have been constantly questioned by problem analysis and the identification of potential solution, following integrated approach of the 2030 Agenda, converging in the Sardegna2030 Strategy.

The Interdepartmental Working Group has been working assiduously since the setting phase of the Sardegna2030 Strategy by the reconnaissance of regional policies and their ranking against the goals of the 2030 Agenda; the analysis of statistical data and positioning of the Region, identification of the main critical issues to be addressed; the in-depth analysis, in thematic groups, to define objectives and lines to be acted upon; the identification of the targets to be reached by 2030.

The work led to the first version of the Sardegna2030 Strategy (called Preliminary Document, adopted in 2020), submitted to the Forum for the integration and revision process.

Then, the Interdepartmental Working Group worked at the integration of the contributions of the Forum and the interconnections with European funds and target setting, leading to the final version of the strategy adopted in 2021.

Since then, the Group has been working on implementation. The group's meetings, which are still frequent, are aimed at incorporating the implementation of the actions of the strategy into day-to-day administration and overseeing its pursuit. We have held some monitoring meetings and we will soon hold training sessions on cross-cutting topics of common interest.

With the aim of overseeing the implementation of the strategy and giving continuity to the collaboration initiated during the drafting phase, we set up the Permanent Coordination Lab. It is a transversal organisational space for liaison, discussion and decision-making specifically dedicated to the integration between Sardegna2030 and the Programming of European-driven development funds.

The Lab is a body that operates in a flexible and lightweight manner, and it is composed by:

- The Sardegna2030 Coordination Group.
- The Managing Authorities of Regional Operational Programmes for the European Funds.
- The Environmental Authorities and the Rights and Equal Opportunities Authority.

What is new, beyond its composition, is how this system operates, based on sharing goals, searching for solutions through continuous dialogues. The dialogue is its main nourishment. The implementation of the strategy is an ongoing process based on the capability of integration among policies.

At the centre of the regional governance, within the bodies and procedures created, there are the dialogue, the care, and the attention of the collaboration process, especially between the Permanent Coordination Lab and the Interdepartmental Working Group.

2.2 Engaging local stakeholders: the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development

The Regional Forum for Sustainable Development is a meeting point for Institutions, enterprises, and third sector, that aims to define strategic priorities and concrete actions on different aspects on the economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions at regional scale, coherently with the 17 SDGs and the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The Forum is meant to be a space to inform, listen, share, and consult other participant to define the strategic vision and the regional objectives, to implement and monitor them, and to assure the dialogue and the exchange among all the social parties involved. The participatory process has been structured based on specific participatory methodologies and software for digital interaction and co-design. It has stimulated the contribution of the research world and the civil society, including associative, economic, environmental, cultural, and social realities, citizens, and the local institutions through the Territorial Tables.

The process was run under the banner of values such as participation and inclusion, responsibility, transparency, coherence, effectiveness, ethics and justice, and circularity.

The Charter of Values, shared among all participants, had the purpose of enhancing the culture of sustainability and spreading the dissemination of values, common basic principles, which could create the conditions to ideate, design and act while remembering different aspects such as the quality of life, the social inclusion, the economic growth, never forgetting the biosphere vulnerability and the protection need.

During the drafting period of the Sardegna2030 Strategy, it has been adopted an approach able to activate and promote the learning process and the empowerment among the local actors (public authorities and civil society), to co-build new content and values, and to stimulate the local actors to become active partners drafting and implementing the Strategy. From March to October 2021, during 14 laboratories, the Forum reached and engaged a broad number of stakeholders (more than 3300 registered visitors) with a high attendance rate. The Forum (14 laboratories/events organised from March to October 2021) was structured in the following way:



Fig. 4 - A Roadmap for the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development

All the events of the Forum were attended by the rapporteurs from the Managing Authorities of the ESIF (European structural and investment funds) funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD), the Directorate-General of the main Departments engaged, and also some Councillors. Every event was preceded by one or more pre-meetings with the rapporteurs to stimulate the capacity building of the working group and guarantee coordination, shared approach, and objectives. All the events/laboratories of the Forum were conducted with the support of professional facilitators.

The Forum sessions enabled the exchange of information and the collaboration among approximately 1600 people involved (belonging to institutions, enterprises, and third sector), who worked together using structured and shared platforms, on the Strategic Themes identified to achieve a more sustainable Sardinia by 2030. This method allowed us to listen and collect more than 20.000 formal and informal contributions that were indispensable to completing the design of the Regional Strategy.

The broad participation of all the interested actors in the Forum and in the analysis process generated a lot of contributions and punctual suggestions that have been integrated in the Strategy within the Strategic Objectives, Lines of Intervention, and Actions.

Thanks to the participation of the Managing Authorities of the ERDF and the ESF in the co-design of the Thematic Laboratories, the contributions were also useful for integrating the Strategic Document and the following Operational Programmes 2021-2027.

Since its approval, we have focused on the dissemination of the Sardegna2030 Strategy and on giving continuity to the spirit of collaboration that has been activated. In particular, the activities of the Forum are now continuing through workshops aimed at specific targets. This choice was guided by the desire to focus attention on a capillary adaptation of the lines of intervention to individual specificities. In addition, there are call-to-action initiatives addressed to young people and citizenship, as well as larger initiatives such as the Sardegna2030 Festival, as shown in Fig. 5 that you can find below.



Fig. 5 - A Roadmap for the implementation of the Strategy

3

Integration and policy coherence

3.1 From the 2030 Agenda to Sardegna2030 through the European Cohesion Policy

The Interdepartmental working group and the Forum has raised up a relevant point: the policy integration and coherence among all the tools and the Programmes available at all levels, from global to local.

We addressed this issue by integrating the Sardegna2030 process with the planning of the Implementation Programmes of the European Funds, thanks to the direct involvement of the Regional structures in charge of programming the European Funds within the Interdepartmental Working Group.

The territorial workshops on strategic issues, activated in the framework of the Forum, have been jointly implemented and have been instrumental in the drafting of both the Sardegna2030 strategy and the Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) financed by the ERDF.

As just mentioned and as reported in Chapter 2, the Sardegna2030 Interdepartmental Working Group includes the representatives of the Managing Authorities of the Regional Operational Programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Plus, Fund for Development and Cohesion, and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Moreover, civil society and local institutions are involved in spaces for discussion and information through Territorial Boards and the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development.

It must be emphasised that the European institutions has defined the Cohesion Policy for the period 2021–2027 highlighting the central role of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and their strategic relevance for the future of the EU itself, and for the definition of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

FOCUS - The European Cohesion Policy 2021–2027

The Cohesion Policy is the EU's main investment policy aimed at strengthening its economic, social, and territorial cohesion by providing benefits for all the regions and the cities in the EU.

The Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU ([Official Journal of the European Union 2012](#)) is the foundation of the European social, economic, and territorial Cohesion Policy and makes explicit that the EU intends to strengthen its economic, social, and territorial cohesion and to reduce disparities of development between the various regions. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to the regions suffering the most from severe and permanent natural or demographic difficulties.

The EU Cohesion Policy is one of the most transversal and cross-cutting policies, which contributes to most of the 17 SDGs, if not all. In addition, the key cross-cutting principles and objectives, such as sustainable development, elimination of inequalities, promotion of equality between men and women, integration of gender perspective, as well as combatting discrimination, are mainstreamed at all stages of implementation of the policy. Priority granted to the partnership principle makes sure that national and subnational actors are engaged and take ownership on delivering EU priorities through co-financed projects' ([EC 2019a](#)).

The Cohesion Policy 2021–2027 will focus its resources on five policy objectives :

- A Smarter Europe, through innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation, and support to small and medium-sized businesses.
- A Greener, carbon free Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables, and the fight against climate change.

- A more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks.
- A more Social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion, and equal access to healthcare.
- A Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

The EU has been fully committed towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as stated in the conclusions of the Council of the EU 'A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (Council of the European Union 2017) and in the European Commission's reflection paper 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030' (EC 2019a). The latter affirms the centrality of the Union in the definition of the 2030 Agenda and sets itself the goal of fully integrating the SDGs in the EU policy and strategic framework. Moreover, as stated in the EC Staff Working Document 'Delivering on the UN's SDGs—a comprehensive approach', under the leadership of President von der Leyen, the Commission has presented an ambitious policy programme to deliver on sustainability goals in the EU and beyond. The SDGs are an intrinsic part of the President's political programme and lie at the heart of the policymaking on internal and external action across all sectors.

The issue of integration between Sardegna2030 and the Operational Programmes financed by the ERDF and ESF, was the subject of a parallel study carried out by a team formed by the Regional Department of Environmental Defence, the Department of Planning, and the research institute FEEM. This joint research project specifically aimed at developing and implementing a model for assessing the sustainability of the Regional Operational Programmes. The project took inspiration from the model developed by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedure of the 2014–2020 ROPs, in line with the methodology introduced by the European Commission².

The methodology is intended to be a valuable tool to assist the decision-makers in identifying the most effective programming options regarding the 2030 Agenda SDGs. The authors investigated the interconnections between the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda and the 182 intervention fields of the CPR funds.

The environmental assessment model can be replicated and adapted to support the Regional Administration in the evaluation of the contribution of the Sardinia European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ROP to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. This methodology can surely provide important elements of evaluation for the implementation of the Regional Sustainable Development Strategy, and it represents a valid tool to assess the contribution of the ESIFs to the achievement of the new SDGs at the base of the 2021–2027 programming³.

In particular, the application of the model to the 2021-2027 ERDF ROPs overall shows a good level of reliability in terms of assessments and compliance with the needs investigated. The Fig. 6-7 below⁴ show that more than 80% of the actions, identified by the ERDF ROPs proposal, contribute directly or indirectly to the achievement at regional level of the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

² European Commission. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 215/2014 of 7 March 2014 Laying Down Rules for Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council Laying Down Common Provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and Laying Down General Provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with Regard to Methodologies for Climate Change Support, the Determination of Milestones and Targets in the Performance Framework and the Nomenclature of Categories of Intervention for the European Structural and Investment Funds; European Commission: Brussels, Belgium, 2014.

³ L. Cavalli; S. Sanna; M. Alibegovic; F. Arras; S. Boe; G. Cocco; E. Cruickshank; L. Farnia; E. Manca; L. Mulas; M. Onnis; S. Ortu; I. Romani; M. Testa - Localizing the 2030 Agenda at the Regional Level through the European Cohesion Policy: An Application to the Region of Sardinia - Environmental Sciences Proceedings, 2022, 15 (1), 51

⁴ Environmental report proposal of the ERDF Regional Program 2021 - 2027 in the Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure - Regional Programming Center RAS, May 2022

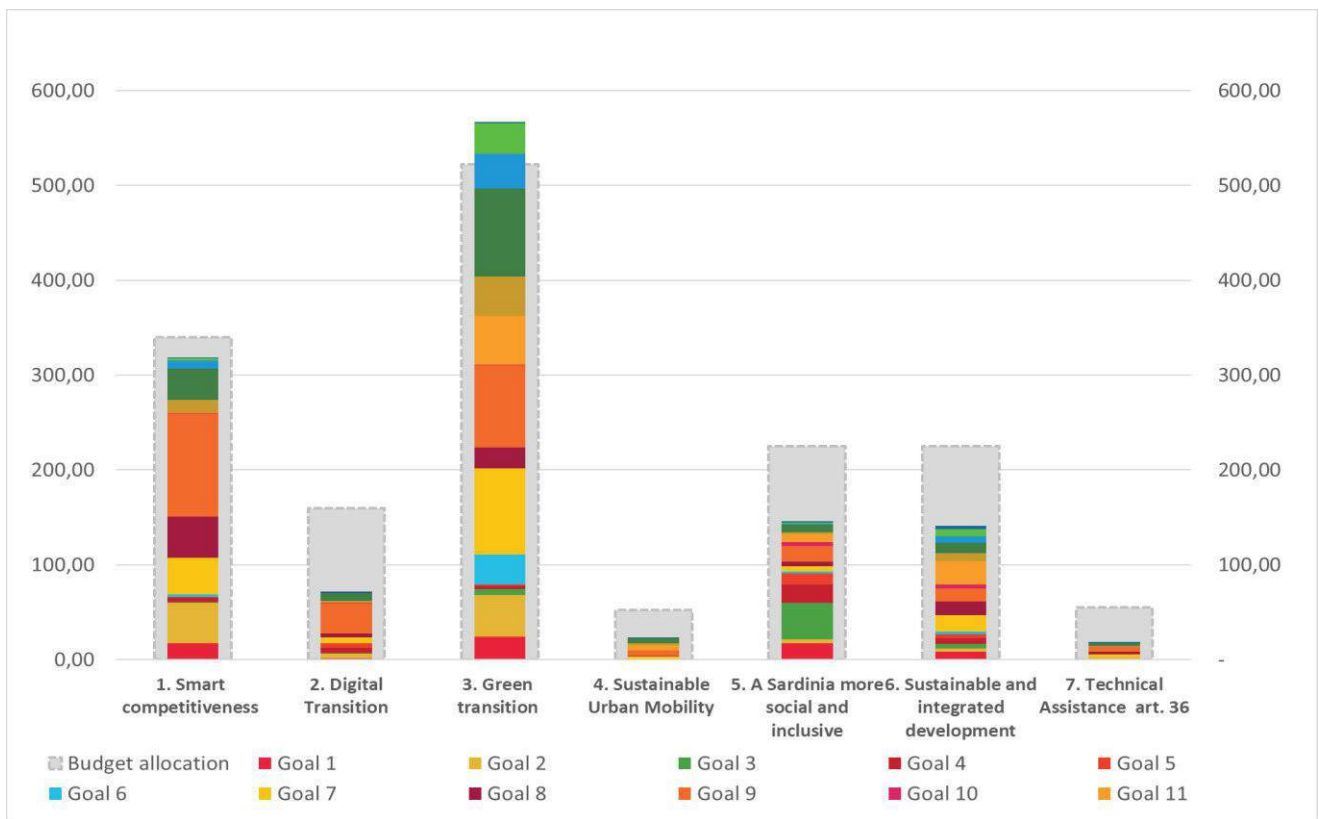


Fig. 6 – The EAFRD Sardinia 2021-2027 contribution to the SDGs (April 2022 proposal)

Moreover, it can be noted that priorities "1 - Smart competitiveness" and "3 - Green transition" are those that provide the greatest contribution to the SDGs, with Priority 2 able to intercept the sustainable development goals more than proportionally to the financial envelope. This result expresses the multi-objective nature of the green transition, able to contribute in an integrated and cumulative way to different SDGs such as Goal 9, Goal 13, and Goal 7.

The joint FEEM-Region research was developed notably with the objective of an exploration of the 2030 Agenda targets and its interconnections, and after an inquiry of the potential that the regional-level Cohesion Policy could have on the SDGs achievement. This work is bringing in significant results, especially when trying to understand to what extent the SDGs can be localised at the regional or sub-regional level and whether they can be achieved through the ERDF or the ESF: the Cohesion Policy funding does not allow to reach indistinctly and equally each 2030 Agenda target. This is a finding which validates the narrowness and incompleteness of any 'one-size-fits-all' type of solution for the achievement of the SDGs. Therefore, the conjunction and the cooperation of different financial sources, as well as the implementation of non-economic policies, such as regulations and partnerships, are essential for the realisation of the 2030 Agenda both at global and local levels.

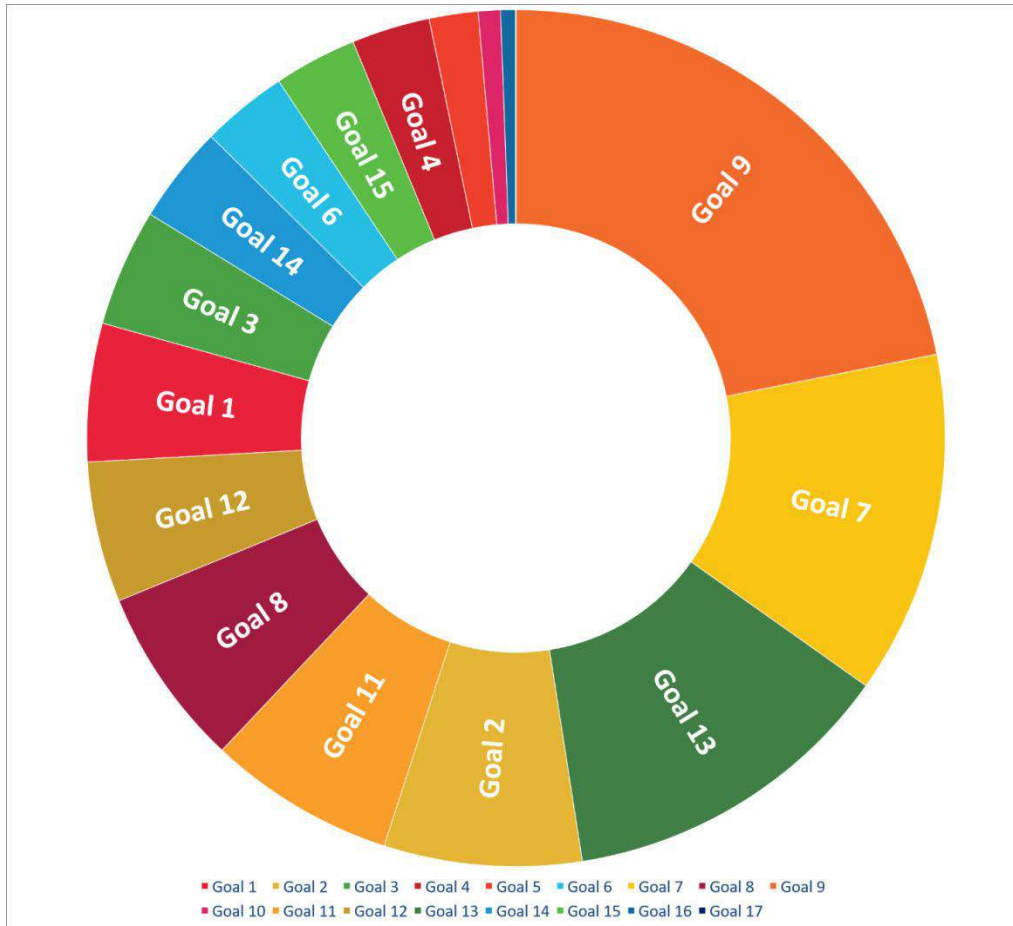


Fig. 7 – The EAFRD Sardinia 2021-2027 contribution to the SDGs (April 2022 proposal)

3.2 Sardegna2030 within the Regional Operational Programmes

We have seen that the Regional Operational Programmes (ROTs) play a key role in Sardinia for achieving the goals of 2030 Agenda. It is possible to observe as far as the Regional Strategy can be implemented through ROTs and, above all, whether the planning activity, for some phases carried out jointly, has been translated into effectively coherent operational documents.

The first step undertaken for the elaboration of the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development was to explore the consistency level between the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the regional policies of the last 5 years (for the period 2015-2020). As detailed in the focus below, we found a high level of coherence, but also of correlation with European funds.

FOCUS - COHERENCE BETWEEN THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND THE REGIONAL PLANNING ACTS AND PROJECTS 2015-2020

The path began surveying all the regional policies of the past 5 years, in order to assess to what extent they can serve as a coherent and functional tool for the achievement of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). What was shown by the survey is that several of the regional policies analysed belong to the EU Cohesion Policies. This finding certainly calls for an extensive analysis and identification of the interconnections between the Sustainable Development Strategy and the new 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy programming.

The in-depth study, carried out by the interdepartmental working group, aimed to integrate the 2030 Agenda and the National Sustainable Development Strategy into the everyday regional administration, guaranteeing the sustainable development especially in highly critical situations, identifying the emergency issues in the Region thanks to the expertise of the representatives in the working group, but also through the monitoring of the SDGs indicators yearly published by ISTAT.

The survey research showed that many aspects of 2030 Agenda and SNS were already included in the regional policies. Moreover, the survey allowed us to identify certain priority issues for the Regional Strategy.

In this background, it was a consequential choice on behalf of the Interdepartmental working group to pursue activities strictly connected with the 5 strategic objectives of European policy: so that our working groups have been named: a smarter Sardinia, a greener Sardinia, a more connected Sardinia, a more social Sardinia, a Sardinia closer to citizens. These 5 topics addressed in the working groups then became the main 5 strategic themes of our Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Such a thematic breakdown has enabled a common language and vocabulary being spoken between the Cohesion and the Sustainable Development policies within the working groups. The result was facilitating an effective and constructive approach towards the Strategy, as well as promoting mutual learning for an integrated and three-dimensional sustainability perspective across the entire regional administration.

Starting from these hypotheses, the elaboration of the Strategy, through the Forum and the participatory laboratories, was carried out with some joint workshops with the writing process of the new programming of European funds: the ERDF and the ESF+.

To show the first results obtained from the described connection path between the elaboration of the Strategy and cohesion policies, we represent below two coherence tables. The tables show that there is a strong external coherence between the objectives of the ERDF Program and the objectives of Sardegna2030, not only along the diagonal of maximum consistency, but also across all the other strategic themes and for all the priority axes of the Program.

Sardegna2030 strategic themes	Operational Programmes financed by the ERDF 2021-2027					
	Priority 1: Smart competitiveness	Priority 2: Digital Transition	Priority 3: Green transition	Priority 4: Sustainable Urban Mobility	Priority 5: A Sardinia more social and inclusive	Priority 6: Sustainable and integrated development
A smarter Sardinia	Full coherence	Full coherence	Potential coherence	Neutrality	Potential coherence	Neutrality
A greener Sardinia	Potential coherence	Neutrality	Full coherence	Potential coherence	Neutrality	Potential coherence
A more connected Sardinia	Potential coherence	Neutrality	Potential coherence	Full coherence	Potential coherence	Neutrality
A more social Sardinia	Potential coherence	Potential coherence	Neutrality	Neutrality	Full coherence	Full coherence
A Sardinia closer to citizen	Neutrality	Neutrality	Full coherence	Neutrality	Potential coherence	Full coherence

neutrality

potential conditional coherence

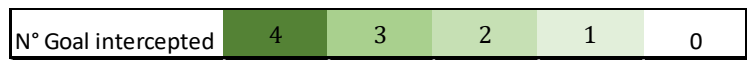
full coherence



TAB. 1 - Coherence with the ERDF 2021-2027 (source: elaboration RAS from the environmental report proposal of the ERDF Regional Program 2021-2027)

Furthermore, as regards the ESF+, coherence is present not only along the strategic theme "a more social Sardinia", but also along the other themes: "a more connected Sardinia", "a smarter Sardinia", "a Sardinia closer to citizens".

Sardegna2030 strategic themes	Operational Programmes financed by the ESF+ 2021-2027												
	OS I:	OS II:	OS III:	OS IIIbis:	OS IV:	OS V:	OS VI:	OS VII:	OS VIII:	OS VIIIa:	OS IX:	OS X:	OS XI:
	Improve access to employment	Modernising institutions and services of the job market	Promote a participation in the balanced job market	Promote the adaptation of workers, companies, and entrepreneurs to change	Improve the quality of the job market in education and training systems	Promote equal access e completion to an instruction e quality and inclusive training	promote Lifelong Learning	Encourage active inclusion	Promote integration socio-economic background of third-country nationals	Promote the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as Roms	Improve equal access e timely to quality services	Promote the integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion	Tackling material deprivation through food and material assistance
A smarter Sardinia													
A more connected Sardinia													
A more social Sardinia													
A Sardinia closer to citizen													



TAB.2 - Coherence with the ESF+ 2021-2027 (source: elaboration RAS from the steering document of the ESF+ 2021-2027)

4

From Strategy to action: the lesson learnt and the future perspectives

Usually, the implementation of an ambitious Strategy, such as Sardegna2030, is closely linked to the availability of adequate allocated financial resources. Currently, as previously described, at least in Europe the resources are available and consistent, coherently programmed (surely from a formal point of view) with the principles of Sardegna2030 and all the national and international strategic documents linked to it.

After more than 2 years of participatory process we believe, and we learnt, that the central point is something else.

Facts show us that the pivot point is the governance of the multitude of plans and stakeholders involved. The governance of the Strategy - and thus the ability to hold together the actions and needs of local authorities and stakeholders involved, the dialogue between different institutional and territorial levels, funding programs, and policy coherence - assume a crucial role.

It seems appropriate to emphasise that Sardegna2030 is simultaneously an agenda of things to do and a process of perspective change. Even if the Sardinia Strategy has been formally adopted, the cultural change on which it is based is still ongoing.

The implementation of the Strategy, in order to be coherent and effective, must nourish itself with the active cooperation that has been developed during the writing process. We therefore intend to give continuity and enhance the virtuous experience that led us to the approval of Sardegna2030.

We are currently continuing to work with the Interdepartmental working group and the Forum for Sustainable Development, as reported in Cap 2. In addition, we have created a Permanent Coordination Laboratory to strengthen the integration and the policy coherence. This working method is quite innovative and generally not adopted in the traditional regional administrative practice.

The way ahead is still long, but we are very satisfied with the path taken after the long walk we have done together, learning from each other. The empowerment generated has turned the sustainable development process of Sardinia into a working method for a lot of people, even before the Strategy was approved. From now on, in the implementation phase, we will have to be able to improve the achieved results and increase those aware, responsible, and participatory citizenship skills capable of supporting our enlarged community.