



Regione Lombardia



Strategy document for research and innovation

Executive summary

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in collaborazione con



Éupolislombardia
Istituto superiore per la ricerca,
la statistica e la formazione

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Foreword

Aims of the document

This document – presented by the President in coordination with the Undersecretary for University and Research of the Regional Executive at the sitting of 04 August 2011 (ref. DGR no. IX/ 2195) – has the purpose of updating the 2003 strategy document and providing the frame of reference for regional policies for research and innovation. The document outlines the map of guidelines and actions that Lombardy Region will be fielding in the short and medium-to-long term. A framework of lines of strategy and new initiatives so that the players on the ground can orient themselves and contribute directly to their development. This document also aims to represent the point of reference for all the sectoral regional policies that have direct spin-offs on the Lombard system of Research and Innovation.

It is widely recognised that innovation is at the base of the development of the advanced economies. In territorial areas where the competitive advantage cannot be achieved by privileged access to raw materials or through low labour costs, innovation is one of the few elements that make the difference and create growth and productivity in the system of enterprises and institutions. Innovation is also the basis for creating prosperity, solving the open issues in society. Finally it is the keystone for creating an attractive environment where people can express their creativity and fulfil themselves. Thus for the territory of Lombardy – and particularly for the Regional Administration – innovation represents a central element around which to build its outlook and policies.

Innovation is the result of a manifold series of factors; at the base are obviously investments, especially in research. However, while injecting funds into research forms an important element of the process, it does not in itself guarantee the creation of innovation. There are other important, numerous factors, linked to the way such investments are used, the strategic choices, the environmental conditions, the legislation that enables us to protect and capture the value created and so on. Neither, when speaking of innovation, should we understand it to mean exclusively that of a technological nature. Alongside it, and supplementing it, is innovation in the approach to the market, in business models, design, technological processes and organisation. Research and innovation also permeate the entire spectrum of the activities in a territory, from those in industry to those of investment in human capital, from the behaviour and consumption by the inhabitants to the infrastructures, from services to organisation.

The policies for research and innovation are therefore extremely complex and difficult to demarcate. They arise from the combined action of numerous players: citizens, businesses, financial institutions, research and university bodies and public administration. The multiplicity of the players is evident also just considering the public administration: the same area sees the application of policies on a European, national, regional, provincial and municipal level; and within the same administration, policies for research and innovation are the result of the joint effect of various actions, from policies for health to those for agriculture and industry, from those for the family to those for energy and communications.

Such complexity implies that the policy for research and innovation does not develop in a vacuum but interacts with the activities of a considerable number of players. In this context, the most important element is determining the frame of reference in which the action of the policy-maker can develop in harmony with the other protagonists.

The strategy document for research and innovation thus provides the guiding framework for the regional policies, where the complexity of the problem is translated into a reference model and where all the players involved can move with coordinated action.

The importance of the document at this time

Drawing up a strategy for policy guidance is always fundamental. However, this is even more true when it comes to policies for research and innovation, as we have already said, and all the more so at this historical moment. Lombardy Region has always promoted research and innovation, in many cases with frontier policies in terms of aims and methods, often forming a reference case not only for Italy but for Europe too. In December 2003 the Regional Executive took into consideration the previous Strategy Document for Research and Innovation (DGR VII/15738 of 18 December 2003), which set out the strategic model which was to guide regional initiatives in the following years, selecting the areas on which to focus action.

Past policies, while still effective to a large degree, must nevertheless be brought up to date, reviewed and strengthened, in the light of a number of factors. First of all, therefore, learning from the past. Learning from past experience is important for improving and enhancing the effectiveness of policies in the light of the results achieved, whether positive or negative. Secondly, the context has changed. The innovation processes, the economy, the resources, the local and external socio-economic and institutional framework have changed profoundly (from the increasing competition between territories to the resulting problem of attractiveness for privileged resources, from the rise in average age of the population to phenomena of migration of populations from the underdeveloped countries, from systems of nutrition to climatic changes...), both in the light of the recent recession and because of the development in technologies and methods and because of changes (positive and negative) in the availability of resources.

On the basis of the strategy and objectives outlined in Europe 2020 and in view of the drawing up of the future framework programme for Research and Innovation, in spring this year the European Commission initiated a debate on the Green Paper, "Turning challenges into opportunities: towards a strategic joint framework for the funding of research and innovation in the European Union". The objective, shared by Lombardy Region, is the sustainable growth of the European system through the creation of a consistent series of support instruments along the entire length of the "innovation chain", from the basic research to the placing of innovative products and services on the market.

On a national level the CIPE (Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Programming) – on the proposal of the MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research) – in the sitting of 23 March 2011, approved the new National Research Programme 2011-2013, which sets out the objectives, the actions and the "flagship projects" aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of national research.

Lombardy Region, with the new Strategy Document for Research and Innovation, in line with directives at a European and national level, has laid the foundations for coordinating and guiding the progress of the activities and thus contributing to achieving the aims of the new strategy framework.

It is therefore necessary, now as never before, to draw up a new strategy framework, to operate in continuity with the policies of the past, but also to thoroughly rethink the latter in the light of the new European and national frame of reference.

The structure of the document

1 The Model of Intervention

Introduces the design guiding the formulation of the policy: what variables are at stake and their relationships

2 Summary of the Document

Schematically summarises the contents of the document

3 The Context

Provides an analysis of the evolution of the internal and external context of the Region

4 The Main Inspirers

Defines the basic principles inspiring regional policy for Research and Innovation

5 The Aims

Introduces the objectives guiding the policies for Research and Innovation and the expected spinoffs

6 The Framework of Instrument Types

Illustrates the actions in summary form, providing the aggregate map of the actions

7 The New Instruments

Examines in greater depth the new tools that the Administration intends to bring into action to promote Research and Innovation

8 Sectoral Policies for Research and Innovation: actions and resources envisaged in 2011

Highlights the main sectoral policies for R&I activated by Lombardy Region, the Regional University and Research Structure, the General Directorates and the Regional Agencies involved.

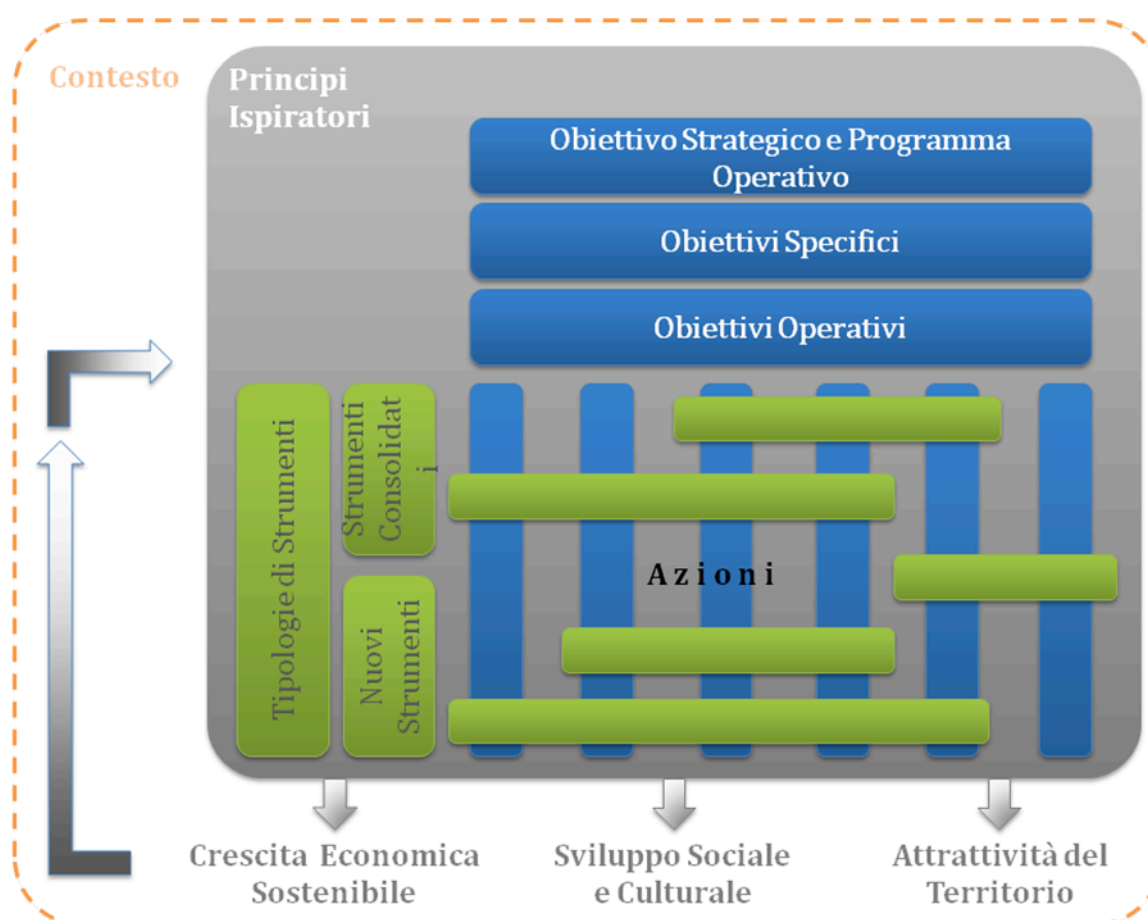
Editors

This document is the result of various contributions and exchanges of ideas with numerous players operating in Lombardy, nationally and internationally. Some people have been involved systematically: Roberto Albonetti, Paolo Annunziato, Francesco Baroni, Pietro Bazzoni, Marco Carabelli, Anna Gervasoni, Manuel Gigot, Giorgio Lampugnani, Maria Velia Leone, Danilo Maiocchi, Marco Nicolai, Anna Puccio.

The text has been edited in particular by a team coordinated by Armando De Crinito, Umberto Benezoli, Adriano De Maio, Alfonso Gambardella, Nicola Signorelli and Roberto Verganti, and has seen contributions, in addition to those of the coordinators, by Stefano Maggi, Katia Orteca, Nicola Sabatini, Alessandro Sala and Raffaella Ratti, who have worked in close collaboration with the Regional Structure for Universities and Research, with the General Directorates and the Agencies of the Regional System involved.

1. The Model of Intervention

Lombardy Region's Research and Innovation Policy is structured according to the model of intervention below:



The strategy is developed in the light of the evolution characteristics of the context and is founded on nine basic inspiring principles. The principles guide the setting of the aims at different levels of detail:

- strategic aim: puts the research and innovation policy in relation with the overall policies for the territory of Lombardy Region,
- specific aims: these define the main purposes qualifying the Region's research and innovation policy,
- operative aims: these break down the specific aims into more targeted objectives.

Each operative aim will correspond with the activities that the Region will be setting in motion in order to implement this strategic framework. There is a considerable variety of activities in the light of the specific problems to be dealt with. However, they can be correlated with a few common, recurring types of tool on which to develop skills, experience and application procedures. Some of these instruments have already been

widely adopted in past policies, while others show innovative characteristics, with a pioneering role by the Region. Each instrument has an impact on one or more aims. The strategy aims to create significant spinoffs on the territory in terms of sustainable economic growth, social and cultural development and attractiveness of the region. The results then serve, in turn, to re-define the framework and therefore the objectives and actions, in a cyclic process.

2. Summary of the Document

Foreword

This document is inspired by what is today a widespread principle, whereby research and innovation are at the basis of economic and social development. In particular, there is a close link between research and innovation, the economic capacity of enterprises and the maintenance of employment levels, as well as improvement in the quality of life.

These processes are particularly important for the advanced economies, which have to face competitors located in emerging countries with low labour costs and less strict legislation in terms of the social quality of production processes.

Not by chance, starting from these premises, among the priorities of the “Europe 2020” strategy is that of increasing the resources dedicated to research and innovation.

To this we can add that the regions play a fundamental role in this scenario. There are in fact differences between regions of Europe in the activities, opportunities and levels of development. This requires specific policies and actions. Similar policies in different regions can produce different results; it is therefore necessary to select the most appropriate and effective actions for the individual territorial areas.

In addition the regional level, especially in Europe, is one of the most suitable for dealing with an area that is sufficiently wide, but at the same time with a relatively homogeneous territory and series of situations.

The strategy framework

A strategy document for research and innovation in Lombardy must start from these premises and in particular from the characteristics, the level of development, the economic situation, the history and the policies of the region. At the same time, these elements must be combined and interpenetrated with the emerging trends. The strategy is to establish the best connection possible between the current situation, with its growth processes, and the opportunities opening up outside the region. The present growth processes need to be underpinned and reinforced, at the same time encouraging transformations linked to a number of new opportunities that connect better with the features of the situation in Lombardy.

Starting from this viewpoint, the strategic architecture of this document hinges on six essential elements:

- Governance of the regional research system

Competitiveness between areas is becoming the key problem for those who govern a community, at any level. The documents issued by the European Union are a clear example of this. Analogies with other kinds of organisation are equally evident: for a territory to lose competitiveness means losing the resources that enable its development.

One of the main factors determining competitiveness is the capacity for innovation and this applies to all sectors, from tourism to high-technology production. Innovation also means preserving the existing resources which, if not handled carefully, can deteriorate, at a greater or lesser rate (for example, the natural environment and the cultural heritage).

Innovation is not always connected with research, but it is nevertheless easy to observe that if there is no investment in research, the principal source for innovation will wither

away, with a resulting “dependence on other areas” which are able to control this source (the analogy with the availability of energy sources is evident and, in the case of research, the effect is even more accentuated).

For some decades we have been observing an increase in the degree of complexity of research and innovation, not only technologically and scientifically but also with the simultaneous involvement of numerous interdependent economic, social and cultural factors.

The role taken on by public administration is becoming increasingly critical and significant, although in different ways: as regards non-focused (so-called “curiosity-driven”) research and focused but high-risk research with long-term perspectives, the public administration plays the primary role, both in the provision of the resources needed and in the overall organisation of the research (typically for example in the involvement of private interests).

The public administration also backs “profit-oriented” research and innovation (where the main player is private) as it can create and sustain, or on the contrary neglect, the conditions enabling the innovation process, typically by providing the network of physical and intangible infrastructures (school, health, justice, administrative procedures etc.).

From all this two immediate conclusions emerge for a Region like Lombardy, which sets itself the aim of increasingly raising its level of competitiveness:

1. The complex of actions which directly or indirectly sustain research and innovation needs to be *governed effectively*. Setting out a strategy, developing it, managing it, controlling it, is fundamental.
2. Precisely because of the ever-increasing complexity and interdependence of the various actions and interventions, the government of research and innovation must be *managed round a table at the highest regional level*, with the involvement of the specific players: in fact simple sectoral policies, as well as often being ineffective, can even turn out to be in conflict with each other.

There is a strong awareness that neither of these policies is easy to put into practice, as they go against the current manner of operating and the dominant outlook in public administration. It is therefore unthinkable that they will be satisfactorily implemented in the short term. We believe, however, that with all the possible precautions and not in the short term, we must move in these directions. We therefore need to perfect a strategy with this purpose, as the preliminary condition for achieving satisfactory results.

- Balancing between continuity and innovation

On the one hand, it is necessary to continue and carry through the present policies and aims. These act on the existing systems, processes and situations, often through consolidated tools. On the other hand new aims, policies and instruments must be introduced to create new opportunities for growth. This will favour above all new entities, sectors and technologies. Many of these new opportunities should be taken up starting from the chances and trends that can be seen outside the region. In particular we need to study those processes which, in addition to showing potential for success, are appropriate in relation to the situation on the ground. A correct balance between continuity and innovation is of central importance. An excess of continuity could mean not taking up important opportunities or taking up only those opportunities for development that can be found along the well-trodden paths. With an excess of innovation, on the other hand, there is the risk of taking the region towards excessively adventurist solutions, increasing the overall risk of the system and not utilising or strengthening the existing skills and opportunities.

- Focusing on the failures of the market

The spirit of this document is not so much to have public intervention guide the direction of the economy, but rather that it should serve to create conditions which would not come into being by themselves. In particular, this means avoiding over-regulation and focusing efforts where single players alone are unable to intervene. In this scenario, the document sees two areas of intervention. The first is when there are fixed infrastructural or other types of cost, which the individual private players are unable to bear without a general coordination aligning their actions and behaviour. The second is a veritable coordination that often requires the contribution of a higher entity to organize the parts, guaranteeing the creation of a number of focal points to which the players may refer, without which they would go in unaligned directions, and ensuring the same cohesion and focalization of efforts in one direction.

These interventions should of course be inspired by the principle that, once these conditions and the relating coordination are defined, the development of the initiatives must be sustained by the economic returns of those undertaking them. To give some concrete examples, interventions of public government such as the Platforms, that we shall discuss later, must be limited to the stage of creation of the infrastructure (and not even necessarily to the creation of the infrastructure itself), as well as to the coordination between different entities in the startup phase of the venture. The enterprises and the people involved will have to sustain themselves on the basis of the economic and business opportunities that they will be able to create thanks to the presence of the infrastructure.

In this sense it is intended to devise businesses aggregations and productive and technological districts; those aggregations will be sustained and facilitated that have a direct impact on the reference market and are able to sustain themselves from an organizational and economic-financial point of view. In this sense the attempt will be made to consider and integrate the many types of aggregation, considering them as *points of application* where demand will play a fundamental role in attracting new applications and innovations.

- Pervasiveness of process and attention to demand

The most recent development processes seem to draw on two aspects, which take on a more pre-eminent role than in the past and which should therefore be utilised. Firstly, we observe an increasing pervasiveness of the economic processes in relation to the industrial sectors. In general, we are used to defining the activities of businesses according to the products they generate and we classify them into sectors identified by these products. This however leads us to lose sight of common features between enterprises producing different goods. As a result, the policies aimed at the sectors do not take up opportunities for osmosis and spill-over between businesses differing as to what they sell. An example is technology. Today there are pervasive technologies (nanotechnologies, microelectronics, industrial biotechnologies etc.) with spin-offs on many enterprises and sectors. In the same way, some skills, such as organisational or managerial ones, which explain a large part of the success of some businesses today, are meta-sectoral. This means we should move away, at least partially, from merely sectoral policies to promoting policies, interventions and tools that cross the boundaries of the individual sectors of production and are oriented to the needs and the innovative solutions available (or to be produced).

Secondly, while technology offers new opportunities in technique and application, economic development arises when these opportunities connect with a need or a demand in the market. It is therefore necessary that there should be consumers or users willing to pay for that technology or invest in it. Not all the potentials opened up by technology meet

this condition. Therefore understanding the manifold dimensions of the need becomes essential for understanding which technologies will be successful on the market. On the policy level, it is necessary to think of research and innovation also starting from need. Thus we have to identify the needs, the opportunities, the challenges and the areas where there are opportunities for new applications and promote the technologies and innovations suitable for dealing with these problems.

- Long-term research

In continuity with the past legislature, within the strategic fields of application, Lombardy Region will be activating a process (foresight study, selection, feasibility) aimed at defining the important theme of frontier research to be supported in the medium-to-long term (cfr. "Curiosity-Driven"). In this sense, Lombardy Region has promoted the *European Centre for Nanomedicine*, following an international foresight exercise, a selection of the specific strategic themes to be developed and a feasibility study on the Lombard territory (scientific skills present and technical-economic feasibility study of the project). As a result of this process, Lombardy Region has facilitated the creation of a skills centre of an international level on a frontier topic for future world development in the field of medicine. The same process may be activated in the strategic sectors selected as priority for Lombardy under DGR IX/1718/2011 (cfr. Energy, etc.).

- Defining new projects and tools

In addition to the actions in continuity with the past, it is useful to formulate some concrete projects and tools used, both having the purpose of launching new opportunities for growth in Lombardy Region:

- Agreement with the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR)

In 2010 Lombardy Region entered into a three-year agreement with the MIUR, for a value of 120 million euro, to promote Research in strategic sectors: Agro-food, Aerospace, Sustainable Building, Automotive and Energy, renewable and similar sources, Biotechnologies, ICT and New Materials

- New Programme Agreement for Competitiveness

Signed in 2010 between Lombardy Region and the Lombard system of Chambers of Commerce, this develops along three axes: Axis 1 – competitiveness of companies; Axis 2 – Attractiveness and competitiveness of the territories; Axis 3 – System projects in support of Micro-, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Craft Industries

- New Investment Fund for entrepreneurship: NEXT II Fund

This is a Venture Capital fund whose objective is investment in risk capital in the most innovative companies coming into being in Lombardy. The fund will invest in the strategic, priority sectors of Lombardy Region as under the above mentioned agreement with the MIUR and will be able to play a significant role also in attracting new investments

- Platforms for Innovation

At present a series of innovative tools is being studied, focusing on the demand for innovation and on the spread and pervasiveness of ICT technologies, called *Platforms for Innovation*. The purpose of these platforms is to:

- facilitate the encounter between demand for innovation and supply of knowhow – *Open Innovation Platforms*

- finance research through new tools and processes to increase its effectiveness – *Crowd Funding Platforms*
- promote a new diffuse entrepreneurship – *Platforms for Entrepreneurship*
- *New forms of funding for research and Innovation: Public Procurement and Repayable Advance Loan*

Public Procurement sets the objective of utilising the spending capacity of the Public Administration for the purposes of funding R&I.

Through the Repayable Advance Loan, those who carry out research activity are made responsible for ensuring that the investments in R&I produce new applications on the market and feed the resources to be re-invested.

The principles

In the light of the preceding discussion, Lombardy Region's policies for research and innovation are based on the following Principles, which set out some of the features in the six essential points above in greater detail:



Two principles in particular form a new element compared with the policies implemented in the past:

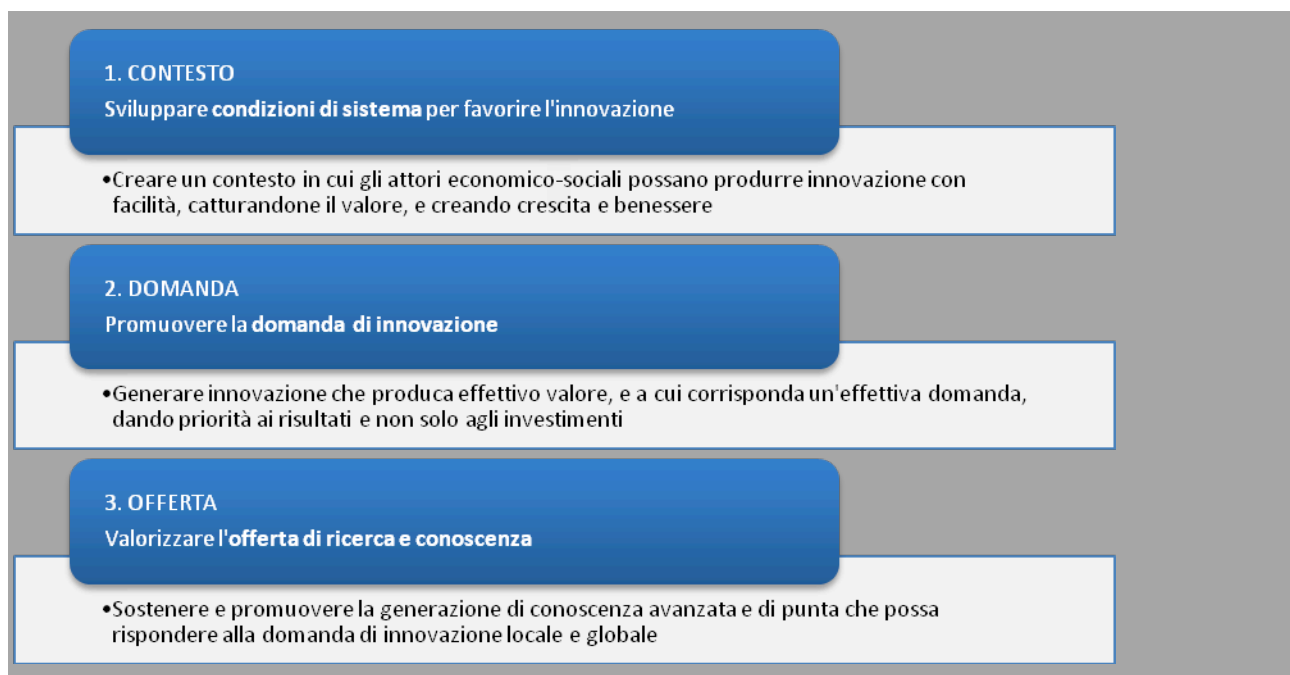
- Opening internationally and attractiveness. Lombardy Region supports the attractiveness of its territory, on the one hand by opening up and promoting the inclusion of its enterprises in the flows of knowhow and the international markets

and, on the other hand, by creating the most suitable conditions for attracting businesses, researchers and investments with a high knowhow content.

- High-intensity knowhow services as pillars of the region. Lombardy Region's strategy considers high knowhow intensity and creative services, including high-level training and research, as a primary element at the service not only of the local manufacturing businesses, but also of those from abroad, to be strengthened in order to produce growth through the export of their capacities. For example, as pointed out in the preceding paragraph, these services are also the pivot of some of the Platforms that are proposed, as well as an instrument for linking these services to opportunities for growth in productivity and efficiency, not only of new businesses but also of existing sectors and enterprises (e.g. communities of users).

The aims

Lombardy Region's research and innovation policies are placed in the context of the Regional Development Plan. In particular the operative programme "Research and Innovation as a factor of Growth" is structured according to three specific aims:



The Regional development Plan is made up of 20 operative programmes interconnected and subdivided into 3 strategic areas (economic area, social area and territorial area). Within the economic area the operative programme three – Research and Innovation as factors for development – is situated.

The following table sets out in summary form the positioning of operative programme 3 in relation to the strategic aim and the relating specific aims characterising it. As the document proceeds, all the 20 operating programmes will be analysed, referring to the three strategic areas, to identify the actions within them that have a significant impact on the Lombard research and innovation system.



The types of tool

The table below introduces and illustrates in summary form the main types of instrument. The first 7 instruments are in continuity with policies already initiated, but are innovative and strengthened in the light of past experience. The last five instruments represent the most significant novelties or renewals.

Among these, in addition to the platforms that have been discussed earlier, the importance should be emphasised of promoting new models of public procurement, with the objective of support based on the verification of subsequent results rather than on prior assessments, according to the spirit of support to the results and not exclusively to the inputs, that characterises this document (in the region's approach of developing an increasing number of zero budget policies).

Progetti Strategici Regionali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Azioni focalizzate su aree in cui occorrono risorse ingenti, focalizzate e un'azione pianificata e coordinata tra i diversi attori della ricerca, dell'industria, della finanza e della pubblica amministrazione. Includono le iniziative relative agli Ambiti Applicativi (A3T), i metadistretti, i distretti tecnologici
Progetti a Bando	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strumenti classici di supporto agli investimenti in ricerca e innovazione nelle imprese e nei centri di ricerca
Programmi Quadro - Accordi di Collaborazione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politiche di ricerca e innovazione sviluppati in stretto accordo con altri attori e istituzioni (accordi quadro con le università, le camere di commercio, il governo nazionale, altre regioni nazionali e internazionali)
Strumenti di Finanza per l'Innovazione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iniziative volte a sostenere la domanda di risorse finanziarie per l'innovazione (Fondi di Venture Capital, e.g. Next, iniziative in collaborazione con il sistema bancario, fondi di investimento focalizzati su particolari settori industriali, sostegno alle holding finanziarie industriali, ...)
Voucher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finanziamenti a fondo perduto di valore contenuto volti a sostenere la domanda di innovazione da parte delle imprese e delle risorse umane. Di facile accesso e rapido utilizzo e quindi particolarmente indicati per sostenere le relazioni tra gli attori e stimolare esplorazioni in aree innovative non ancora ben codificate. Richiedono spesso un co-finanziamento da parte del beneficiario
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Azioni volte a potenziare le relazioni tra gli attori del sistema della ricerca e l'innovazione, localmente e internazionalmente (promozione di iniziative locali di networking, eventi di matching, missioni internazionali, progetti interregionali)
Sistema di Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articolazione dei processi di governance che permettano un continuo allineamento con gli attori locali e inter-regionali, e un allineamento interno all'amministrazione regionale. Strumenti di governance della ricerca e dell'innovazione (Foresight, valutazione, Questio, studi, ecc....)
Piattaforme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastrutture e sistemi tecnologici che permettano la nascita attorno a sé di nuovi business e favoriscano la crescita economica
Public Procurement dell'Innovazione e Open Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisto di beni e servizi da parte dell'Amministrazione Regionale che favorisca la domanda di innovazione. La Regione, nell'approvvigionarsi in selezionati settori, promuove acquisti alla frontiera dell'innovazione, premiando così, ex-post, gli sviluppi vincenti e con un mercato globale promettente. Tali acquisti possono anche avvenire con challenge aperti alle comunità di innovatori
Nuovi Strumenti di Finanza per l'Innovazione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progettare strumenti <i>zero budget policy</i> o strumenti in grado di condividere gli investimenti ed il rischio collegato (no fondo perduto bensì strumenti di cofinanziamento). In tal senso l'<i>Anticipo Rimborsabile</i> rappresenta uno strumento innovativo (regione ottiene royalties sui prodotti innovativi finanziati; ciò alimenta un fondo da reinvestire in ricerca)
Accordo per la Ricerca col MIUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accordo per la promozione della Ricerca negli ambiti applicativi strategici dell'Agroalimentare, Aerospazio, Edilizia Sostenibile, Automotive e Energia, Fonti rinnovabili e assimilate e implementazione dei distretti tecnologici negli ambiti delle Biotecnologie, ICT e Nuovi materiali
Nuovo Accordo di Programma per la Competitività col Sistema Camerale 2010-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accordo col Sistema Camerale finalizzato al sostegno della competitività delle imprese, del loro grado di internazionalizzazione e aggregazione. E' inoltre teso a favorire l'accesso al credito delle imprese, soprattutto di micro e piccola dimensione e artigianali. A livello territoriale, si pone l'obiettivo di rendere più attrattivo e competitivo il territorio lombardo, anche grazie ad obiettivi di semplificazione.
Fondo NEXT II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fondo di investimento per le nuove imprese high-tech