

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES: EVIDENCES FROM PUBLIC - PRIVATE COLLABORATION IN NORTHERN ITALY

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent times, Policy makers and Public Administrations have tried to implement a sustainable approach, founded not on fragmented and isolated actions, but on structured activities, involving the major stakeholders (public and private), for achieving effective results. On the other side, companies in managing environmental aspects have to face behaviours influenced by many external factors, related to (i) reference market, (ii) evolving laws, (iii) relationship with local subjects, that affect in a significant manner their competitiveness. In this perspective, the interactions between public system and companies represent a relevant feature for the spreading of environmental - friendly performances and their continual improving, beside the “command and control” approach. An effective promotion of environmental strategies among the enterprises has positive impacts not only on the increasing of environment quality (that is the reduction of pollution pressures and the control of territorial vulnerability), but also on the introduction of eco-efficiency, through the optimization of natural resources use and the decreasing of industrial risks.

But the environmental strategic planning is a multifaceted process where the Public Authorities have to manage a delicate trade-off between eco-system protection and defence of enterprises’ competitiveness.

According to this context, this paper aims to describe operative guidelines that could help Public Authorities in the definitions and support of effective environmental strategies for enterprises. This has to be a two-way process, in order to start a collaboration between public and private sectors, that place jointly efforts for the sustainable development of the territory. An application of the guidelines (that will be analysed in the paper) has been carried out in Lombardy Region, in the northern part of Italy.

2. STATE OF THE ART

The growing complexity of the theme of sustainable development has to be linked to the emergent structure of territorial policies that aims to increase the value of actions, rising the peculiarities of the territory and ensuring the global coherence of all the undertaken activities (ISAE et al., 2004).

According to Agenda 21 Chapter 28 (United Nations Conference, 1992), the contribution of Local Authorities is significant for setting and managing a process of interaction and dynamic development between all the stakeholders within the territory, due to a larger overview and to their better relationship and with critical features and involved communities.

The increasing diversification of themes and relationships related to environment and sustainability allows an exhaustive approach for the local development processes, but, on the other hand, it increases the complexity in facing different themes and in identifying administrative borders. The existing interdependences between the decisions of single subjects let the optimal areas go beyond to the narrow borders traditionally consolidated, overcoming the existing decisional schemes (Wise, 2001).

The sustainability strategies are concerned with different policies of a Public Administration (PA), relating to planning, design and management (Cecatiello, 2004).

The tools' purpose has to go beyond the protection concepts, overstepping the mechanisms of "command and control", apart from the emergency-faced approach, for a more effective and enlightened strategy. This means improve policies for sustainable development, in the respect of obligation, but supporting pro-active behaviour from all the stakeholders. A positive effect of this approach is the spreading knowledge related to environmental aspects and the sharing of the responsibilities.

The "sustainability" has enriched the territorial instruments, adding advanced methods for: (i) analysis and (ii) trends assessment. The sustainability tools are therefore specified for both the phase of preventive investigation and the management of the evaluation processes: environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental evaluation, environmental cost-benefits analysis, environmental management systems, environmental accounting, Local Agenda 21 action plans, sustainability performance indicators, environmental and social reporting.

The approach of a sustainable development policy has to be connected to different features:

- participation and information: it has to be a "bottom-up" process, involving the citizens, within a democratic approach, for recognizing priorities and defining strategies (European Commission, 2001). The capability of all the stakeholders (from NGOs to enterprises) to create empowerment and cooperation in the decisional process, through mechanism of consultation and feedback, is a relevant factor for a sustainability practice that could influence different directions and successful factors.
- responsiveness and transparency: a sustainable development process, for its definition, has to rely on the autonomous capacity of different subjects to introduce and realize several

solutions and initiatives. The growth of prizing (or, on the other hand, penalizing) mechanism is a key factor for the spread of awareness of all the stakeholders (Goodwin, 2001). The transparency in the information (both internally and externally) related to actions of all the subjects (Public Administration or enterprise) increases the responsiveness and could create a positive loop for strengthening the level of credibility and the pressure on not-environmental-friendly behaviours.

On the other hand, many companies are called to contribute actively to a sustainable development of the societies they operate in. The core challenge in this context is to integrate and reconcile economic with environmental and social concerns and issues (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002; Figge and Hahn, 2004; Hahn and Scheermesser 2004).

Organisations are faced with a variety of pressures that have led managers to consider the environmental dimension as one of the most important parameters for their business decisions (Azzone, Bertelè, 1994; Clark et al., 1994; Welford, 1995). Indeed, (i) the growing interest of the legislator, of local/financial communities and of the market (“green” consumers) for the eco-system, as well as (ii) the require to reduce the cost of the usage of natural resources have forced managers to consider improving companies’ environmental performance.

The growing importance of the environmental dimension has significant implications on the overall competitive system, thus making even more complex the process of strategy formation as in the contribute of Azzone et al. (1997); in this study among several impacts (on the organisation, supply-demand chains, ...) the authors highlight as two relevant engines of changing are:

- dissimilarities of **environmental pressure within different industries** and in different countries where the company sells its products. These dissimilarities could induce managers to modify their decision making processes: in particular, they could partially change their businesses or the location of their plants precisely in function of different environmental pressures within different market segments and/or distinct geographical regions.
- the important **role played by regulators** in the programmes and initiatives carried out by firms and, hence, in their “green” competitiveness distinguishes the management of the environmental variable from the other competitive challenges faced by managers over the last few years.

Although the main practice, by Public Administration, for managing the environmental issues was traditionally based on “command and control” regulation. Recently this approach has been increasingly criticized for not answering to the complex environmental problems (among the others Dovers, 1995). From these criticisms a wide number of alternative instruments has been introduced, such as self-regulation, voluntarism, education and information, and economic instruments.

The voluntary “measures” that companies can adopt in order to achieve the goals of their initiative consist of actions such as (Annandale et al., 2004):

- the development of company environmental policies,
- environmental management systems (EMSs),
- corporate environmental reporting (CER),
- product certification and life cycle analysis,
- extended producer responsibility, and
- environmental accounting.

Collaborative approaches are central in the dominant theoretical paradigms shaping environmental transformation and sustainability debates, i.e. ecological modernization, social–political governance and socio-technical change theories (Hartman et al., 2002). Cross-sectoral collaboration in “partnerships as power sharing” is also seen as key in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Among the others, Murphy and Bendell (1997) and Von Malmberg (2003) have argued that sustainable development requires joint movement and collaborative action of several actors from different sectors and social spheres to be realized. These partnerships between public and private sectors could balance and improve economic and social concerns simultaneously, achieving economic growth, environmental health and social equity; a constructive partnership between public and private strengthens the economic structure of the whole territory (Citterio and Lenzi, 2005).

3. THE METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to develop an approach and a framework able to support the decision maker, providing specific guidelines for analysing the features of the public and industrial subjects operating in definite area in order to develop an appropriate and effective set of actions to promote the diffusion of environmental-friendly strategies for enterprises. These should born from a collaboration between public and private sectors, that places jointly efforts for the sustainable development of the territory. So the actions to promote the adoption of environmental strategies have to be shared between local Public Authorities and enterprises belonging to the same territory. Moreover the guidelines consider these constraints:

- focus on the industrial and manufacturing activities, excluding explicitly all the other human activities as, for example, agriculture, commerce, automotive traffic and residential area related factors.
- it has been supposed that the decision maker has to find the results in a limited time and budget.

To respond effectively to these detailed requests, specific guidelines have been developed following a case study analysis approach. As far as this intention is concerned, the research objective needs to deepen the most relevant managerial and organisational problems faced by

companies and Public Administrations; in order to achieve it, the study needs to be supported by a detailed case study, where managerial and organisational issues can be discussed and analysed in depth. So, to develop and to test the guidelines, up to the definition of the actions to promote environmental strategies, these have been applied in a specific case study (Eisenhardt, 1989): the analysed area is in the province of Bergamo in Lombardy region (north - west of Italy). The case study allows also to evaluate in depth the critical aspect of the guidelines, emerging during its empirical application. The results and information emerged from the interviews were compared, whenever possible, with all documents, projects or public information available. Development of the findings and sharpening of the rough framework of guidelines was done through the empirical application. The final version is presented in the following paragraph.

4. THE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines will bring the policy maker (National or Regional level) to collect all necessary information and data to stimulate a collaborative process between public and private subjects in order to promote and sustain the adoption of environmental strategies by the firms in a specific and limited area. For what concerns the dimension of the area, it is generally the area of reference (or a subset), but in order to be effective:

- it has to be homogeneous from an industrial features;
- it has to be adequately large (i.e. more than one Municipality); in the meantime very large dimensions of the area could implicate complexity.

1. Environmental picture of the area – an environmental analysis about air, freshwater, soil quality and waste production allows to understand the level of environmental load associated with the specific territory. This information permits a better comprehension of the area giving a static picture of the level of environmental quality. This can be considered as a preliminary study whose results support the deepen knowledge of the area but don't affect the final results.

2. Industrial picture of the area – the deep knowledge of the industries of the area is an essential step. This phase of the analysis has two objectives:

- (i) the evaluation of the perception of the local enterprises about the opportunity deriving from the introduction of environmental-friendly strategies;
- (ii) the analysis of the features of the local enterprises and their economic context highlighting the interactions with the Public Administrations.

According to the aims and constraints of the analysis the considered economic sectors are:

- manufacturing,
- mining industry,
- production and distribution of gas, water and electrical energy,
- construction firms.

Considering the international classification of economic activities ISIC, or the European NACE or the Italian Ateco 2002 it is possible to divide industries in more detailed economic activities. For each activity the specialization index (IS) - referred to regional (or national) average - is calculated. This IS_{ij} is the weight, for the area "i" of the industrial activity "j" compared to the regional (or national) average in the same activity; in both cases it is calculated comparing the number of people employed in such activity. IS_{ij} is calculated as follows:

$$IS_{ij} = \frac{\frac{ADD_{ij}}{\sum_i ADD_i}}{\frac{\sum_i \sum_j ADD_{ij}}{\sum_i \sum_j ADD_{ij}}}$$

where ADD_{ij} is the number of employees in the area "i" in the economic activity "j".

The industrial specialisation of the area is considered as all the economic activities where the IS index is higher than 1.

3. **Public documents analysis** – this initial analysis on all the available documents about the collaboration (on environmental aspects) between public and private organisations gives the basis to understand if and how public authorities and the private firms has begun (or they have still in progress) a collaboration on the environmental issues.
4. **Development of a questionnaire (private sector)** – to investigate the requirements and constraints – from an environmental point of view – of the firms of the area an empirical analysis is required. For this reason a specific questionnaire is prepared. It contains open, semi-open and closed questions on these four issues:
 - section A – the firm features and the business system: (i) general features of the firm - as economic data, number of employees, number of seats and locations etc. – (ii) identification of the products portfolio product and markets, market share, industrial processes. These information allow to understand and to contextualise the next section about the environmental behaviours and actions.
 - section B – the role of the environment in the business: in this second part the questionnaire investigates the role played into the business context by the environment analysing (i) the environmental programs (in progress or completed); (ii) the level of emissions (air, water, soil and waste); (iii) consumption of natural resources. The aim of this section is the comprehension of the dynamics of potential advantage or critical points on the way of developing environmental-friendly strategies.
 - section C – interaction and relationship with stakeholders (benefits and critical aspects): this section is dedicated to the stakeholders identification (from an environmental point of view) and, in details, for what concerns the Public Administration it investigates on: (i) number and frequency of each authorisation ,(ii) the activities carried out by the bodies of

control inside the firm and (iii) analysis of infrastructures and their adequacy to the firm's needs. Moreover some questions are dedicated to the relationship with local authorities and form of communication to them.

- section D – proposal of improvement: in this section the attention is focused on the Public Administration and the aim is to collect ideas and proposal of improvement – from the environmental point of view – of the interaction with the Authorities related to potential advantage or critical points of the previous sections.

5. Sample selection and empirical analysis on the private firms – to collect required information a sample of the firms of the area has to be defined; these are the criteria to select the firms to be interviewed:

- these have, at least, one seat on the analysed territory;
- the enterprises belong to the industrial sectors representative of the most diffused industries of the area (see point 2 of the guidelines);
- the enterprises have dimensions (in term of number of employees and turnover) different among them, from small craft firms to big multinational companies.

According to these characteristics of the sample it appears clear that it cannot be considered as statistically representative of the enterprises of the territory but it allows to deepen all the necessary characteristics and information. Furthermore, the guidelines have been designed with the intention to exclude any extensive analysis because this request financial resources (and time) often not available.

6. Development of a questionnaire (public sector) – as in the point 3, a questionnaire specifically designed for the public sector is realised. It contains open, semi-open and closed questions about the following four sections (these contain approximately the same issues investigated into the firms):

- section A: general information of the Public Administration – in terms of: number of employees, number of enterprises on the territory, number of critical enterprises on the territory (from the environmental point of view), number of enterprises with the environmental certification ISO 14001 or EMAS
- section B: the role of the environment – that is the list of environmental services to the citizens or to the enterprises
- section C: interaction and relationship with the enterprises – this section explores the specific environmental procedures and regulation of each Public Administration
- section D: proposal of improvement – this section investigates locally based environmental initiatives dedicated to the enterprises and potential development of environmental programs in which the local enterprises will be involved.

This information allows to understand if and how there is an environmental attitude into the Public Administration and/or the concrete chance to act overtaking the traditional command and control approach.

- 7. Empirical analysis on the Public Administrations and sample selection** – to gather required information the Public Administration, those which have authority on the analysed territory, even if not from the environmental point of view (Municipalities, Province, Environmental agency, Health agency, etc.) are interviewed. Generally the amount of Public Authorities, in a given territory, is reasonable. So, in relation to the dimension of the analysed territory every Public Administrations could be involved into the interviews or, in case of an huge territory, a sample of the Public Authorities in which all typologies of public authorities are represented. The person(s) interviewed has both political and technical competencies.
- 8. Synthesis of the results** – studying all the results from the empirical analysis (both on private firms and Public Administrations), important suggestions for the following steps of the process will emerge. In particular, some themes that will be discussed in the focus groups could be identified through a cross-analysis of the answers
- 9. Enterprise-representative focus group** – to avoid any firm-specific concern, to implement and discuss the results of the point 4 of the analysis a focus group involving the representatives of the industrial associations (of the territory and/or of the economic activity). During these focus group the most diffused suggestion of collaboration and promotion for the environmental strategies. Local Associations represent the industries located in the various Italian provinces. They guarantee relationships with the local authorities and the other economic and social players in the area and they provide services to local enterprises, responding to their needs. The number of meeting is related to the number of issue in discussion. Before the meeting the organisers will send to all participants a small report summarising the state of the art and best practices related to the specific subject. After the meeting, a document containing the main topics and actions emerged from the discussion has to be sent to all the participants in order to validate the information.
- 10. Public Administration focus group** – as for the firms, a focus group is required to discuss what emerged from the empirical analysis. In this case all Public Administrations of the area are invited; as in the firm's focus group the number of meeting is related to the number of issues in discussion. Moreover, also in this case before the meeting the organisers will send to all participants a small report summarising the state of the art and best practices related to the specific subject and a final document presenting the main actions emerged in order to be validated.
- 11. Public – private final meeting and share of the results** – the last step to obtain the results of the analysis is a meeting of the representative of the firms and of the public administration debating the results of the two different and separate focus groups. The final objective of this

meeting is the definition of public specific actions in order to push the firms of the territory towards a major eco-compatibility of products and processes.

4. AN EMPIRICAL APPLICATION: BERGAMO-WEST AREA

The chance to apply and test the guidelines comes from the Regional Government of Lombardy which shows the necessity to activate a collaboration between public and private actors in the area situated in the province of Bergamo, characterised by (i) an high environmental load, (ii) huge possibility of further industrial development. The area is composed by 26 Municipalities¹. These are the evidences emerged from the application of the guidelines to this specific area.

1. Environmental picture of the area – data about air, water, soil quality and waste production are fully available and have been collected, according to the methodology and information presented in the work of Citterio *et al.* (2005). The same methodology presents an indicator which summarise the state of the ecosystem in the selected area. As in figure 1 it is possible to understand why this area is considered as highly interesting for the development of environmental strategies.

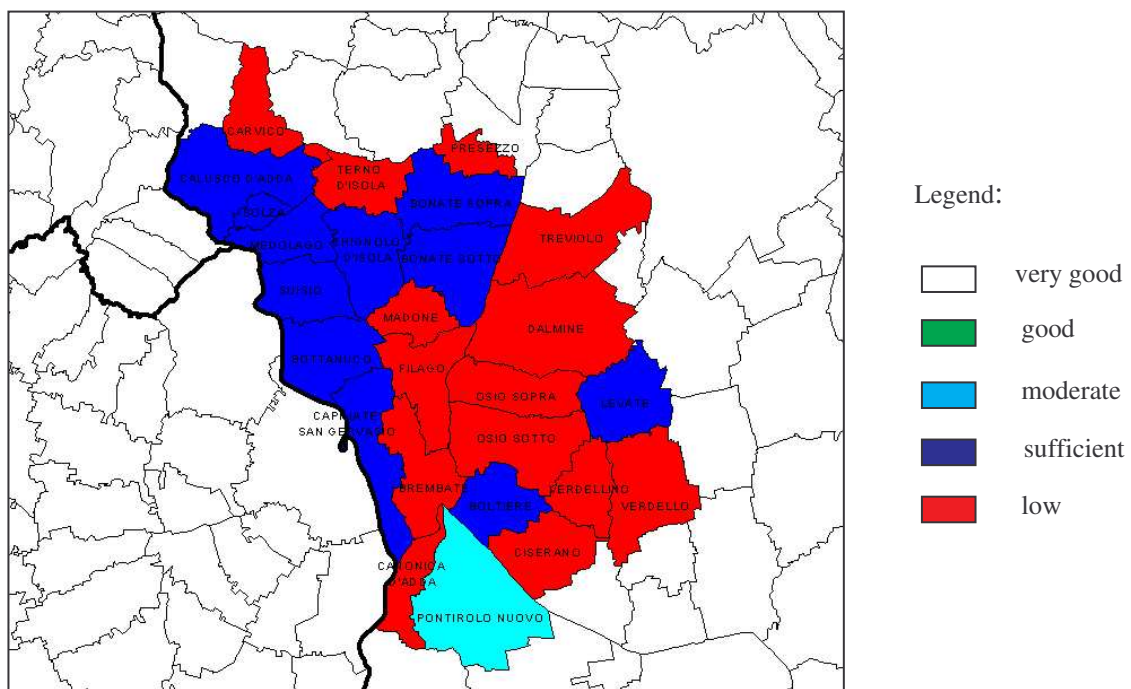


Figure 1 – The state of the eco-system in the selected area (source Citterio *et. al.*, 2005)

2. Industrial picture of the area – the IS index has been calculated for each Municipality belonging to the area. The data arise from the national institute of statistic (ISTAT) 1996 census. These are the most diffused industries of this area²:

¹ Boltiere, Bonate Sopra, Bonate Sotto, Bortanuco, Brembate, Calusco d'Adda, Canonica d'Adda, Capriate San Gervasio, Carvico, Chignolo d'Isola, Ciserano, Dalmine, Filago, Levate, Madone, Medolago, Osio Sopra, Osio Sotto, Pontirolo Nuovo, Presezzo, Solza, Suisio, Terno d'Isola, Treviolo, Verdellino, Verdello

² Ateco 2002 code (it is the Italian version of NACE code)

- 23 - Manufacture of mechanical components
- 24 - Manufacture of fabricated metal products
- 25 - Mechanical processing
- 28 - Manufacture of plastic products
- 39 - Manufacture of clothes
- 15 - Construction
- 16 - Building materials

These economic activities represent the area industrial inclination.

3. Public documents analysis – According to the guidelines, a research over all the collaborative documents between local Public Administrations and the firms has been carried out. Specifically, among the others, the most relevant contributes are:

- Local Agenda 21
- Strategic Agenda
- Territorial coordination plan at Provincial level

4. Development of a questionnaire (private sector) – a firms specific document has been developed (as in paragraph 4) consistently to the area-related factors: environmental and industrial features and what emerged from the literature analysis on the private-public collaborations. It has been composed by 8 pages.

5. Sample selection and empirical analysis on private firms – 21 enterprises has been interviewed³. Among several results available from the interviews, these are the most significant.

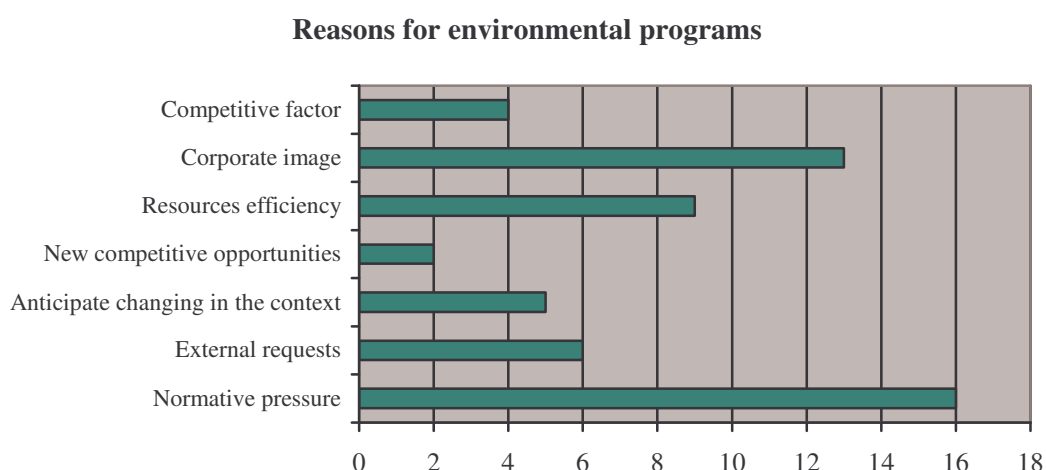


Figure 2 – results of the interviews – reasons for environmental programs and initiatives (2004)

³ Alessio, Alucolor Ox, AR7 falegnami, Artelux, Bayer, CIMI Impianti, Dalmine Resine, FLAG, Flamma, Manifattura del Seveso, MI-ME Minuterie metalliche, Nordcontentori, PEMCO Emails, Radici Novachips, Robur, SIAC-CAB, Silitarghe, Taiocchi Officine, Telsa, Tibi Plast, Trocellen Italia,

Factors supporting environmental strategies

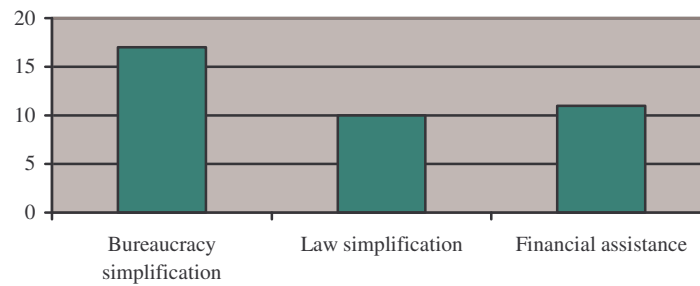


Figure 3 – results of the interviews – reasons for the developing of environmental strategies in the long term (2004)

Factors to improve the environmental management

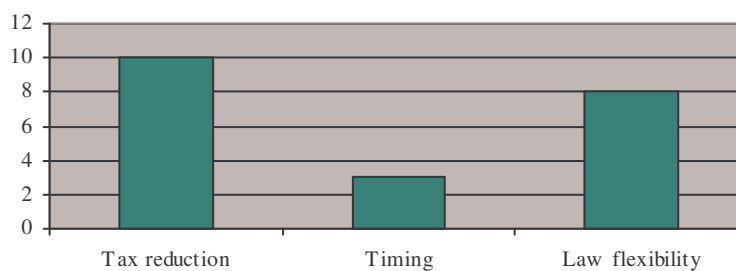


Figure 4 – results of the interviews – factors to improve the environmental management in the short term (2004)

6. **Development of a questionnaire (public sector)** – consistently with the guidelines a public sector questionnaire has been developed.
7. **Empirical analysis on the Public Administration** – the questionnaire has been sent to the 26 Municipalities, the government of the Province of Bergamo, the Health Agency (ASL) the Regional Environmental Agency (ARPA). 17 Municipalities⁴ and the Province accepted to be interviewed. Focusing our attention especially on proposal to promote locally the environmental strategies the results has been weak: all possible economical support (also in term of tax reduction) has been considered as not sustainable for the economics of the Public Administration. One side of possible collaboration, from the Public point of view, could be the environmental education and instruction both for citizens and enterprises, available in some Public Administrations.
8. **Synthesis of the results** – in the area the relationship between public and private sector has to be considered as articulated and complex. In particular it shows a double side relationship: from one side it is nowadays still related to administrative activities according to a “command and control” approach; on the other side on the area there are several high-level strategic initiatives which aim to plan an environmental sustainable development (Strategic Agenda and Local Agenda 21). What it seems lacking is an intermediate level between this far points to turn

⁴ Boltiere, Bonate Sopra, Bonate Sotto, Bottanuco, Canonica d’Adda, Carvico, Ciserano, Dalmine, Filago, Madone, Medolago, Osio Sopra, Pontirolo Nuovo, Solza, Suisio, Treviolo, Verdello

the strategy into concrete actions, through collaboration to overcome the traditional command and control approach. Thus emerged from the interviews to the firms. Moreover when isolate initiatives has been carried out (both from public or private side) the level of external communication has been very low. For example only 6% of the Public Administrations interviewed seems to know if there are certificated enterprises, but on the other side these firms have to adopt and maintain procedures to communicate to all stakeholders, PA included. On the other side, the collaborative initiatives, emerged by the interview to the Province of Bergamo are absolutely unknown by the firms in the sample. The PA has seen only as a “controller” by the firms more than a subject which can help and support the enterprises on the way of sustainable development. Relating to the topic of communication, the enterprises which have a product range including *green* products ask for incentives to improve the visibility. Summarising the emerged answers, five topics seem to meet the requests of both public and private subjects, these are the selected topics resulting as interesting for the stakeholders of the pilot area:

- Administrative simplification
- Environmental accounting
- Environmental awards
- Environmental training (both in the firms and PA)
- Local tax reduction

and can be considered as 5 actions able to promote and sustain the adoption of environmental strategies. These will discuss separately by the firms and PA.

9. Enterprise-representative focus group

Starting from these results and collected data, six focus group meetings has been organised with the firms representative and stakeholders coordinated by Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture which played an active role. During the first one the aim and scope of the focus group and the results of the study have been presented. In the following meetings proposed actions have been discussed. This briefly what emerged about the five proposals:

- Administrative simplification: according to the firms’ representative, who considered it as a key point, the only concrete way to obtain this result is that the Regional Government support and implement the SUAP – Sportello Unico per le Attività Produttive (i.e. a unique office of reference for the enterprises to communicate to all the Public Administration and authorities), which simplify the administrative procedures for the firms.
- Environmental accounting: considered as very interesting but absolutely unknown, especially in the SMEs. The proposal is the organisation of two events: (i) a conference on the topic to present it to the entrepreneurs and (ii) a training course specifically dedicated.
- Environmental awards: much appreciated by the firms’ representatives who hypothize how to manage this awards, also at local level.

- Environmental training (both in the firms and PA): the result of this meeting is that on the firm side this is considered as not important because there are many initiatives on this topic, organised by several Associations, while it is considered much important in the PA, but, at this time, incomplete.
- Local tax reduction: considered as a good tool to support environmental strategies, in particular for what concern the waste management and energy saving in construction.

10. Public Administration focus group

In the meantime, six focus group meetings has been organised with the PA representatives: to present the results of the previous study on the PA and firms and to discuss proposed actions. During these meetings the results of the firms' representative meetings are not known. This, briefly, what emerged about the five proposal:

- Administrative simplification: complete agreement that the implementation of SUAP – Sportello Unico per le Attività Produttive (i.e. a unique public office of reference for the enterprises) will be the only practical solution to respond effectively to firms' requests. All Municipalities will participate to this project.
- Environmental accounting: considered as a potentially interesting topic, the PAs request a supplement of information to express on this issue.
- Environmental awards: highly feasible, but not added with financial reward.
- Environmental training (both in the firms and PA): recognised by the participants as an area in which the PAs are already well-organised.
- Local tax reduction: this way is judged as not realisable due to the financial difficulties faced by the Public Administrations.

11. Public – private final meeting and share of the results

A final meeting to present the results of the parallel focus groups has been carried out. In that seat the five topics has been jointly discussed and deepened by the participants. In detail, while the Environmental accounting and training has been considered as separated (because of different requirements and applications in public and private sector), great attention has been paid to the (i) environmental awards (ii) administrative simplification and (iii) local taxes reduction. These were the final proposals:

- Administrative simplification: complete agreement on the importance of the SUAP, which will be realised as soon as possible.
- Environmental awards: these will be implemented, but without financial reward (only with a large communicative implication).
- Local tax reduction: not realisable due to the financial difficulties faced by the Public Administration.

Moreover, it emerged that this is a very dynamic area, from the environmental projects point of view, so a more effective communication is fundamental to gain a large participation of the ongoing or forthcoming initiatives.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The experience of this application shows the validity of the guidelines in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, for example the Industrial Associations (and PA) during the focus groups confirm what emerged from the empirical study on the firms and PAs respectively. Some final remarks on the study and on the development and data gathering during this collaborative process.

The Industrial associations played a very collaborative role, more in the second part of the project (the focus group) than in the first one, when it has been asked them to support the study showing firms available to be interviewed.

The enterprise's focus group has been more effective due to the positive role played by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture which promote and coordinate the participation to the activity of the study. Less effective has been the PA focus group which have seen a low contribution and commitment where a coordinator in the territory was lacking.

Another reason to explain this more productivity of the firms' focus group resides on the competences of the people involved, experts in the Industrial associations, representatives recently elected or with a different cultural background in the case of PA.

6. NOTE AND REFERENCES

This paper is the result of the joint work of the authors. However Annalisa Citterio wrote section 2 and 5; Giuliano Noci section 1; Emanuele Pizzurno sections 3 and 4.

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