**Sustainable Development and Territorial Differences: a Focus on Italian Regions**

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**Abstract**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the Sustainable Development Summit in New York (2015), can be considered the synthesis of a debate (started ideally with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992) which sets as a priority for the International Community sustainable development. The Agenda is in fact a document born of the political consensus of the Member States of the United Nations, which commit themselves collectively to achieve by the year 2030 a series of sustainable development goals in the social, economic and environmental fields. In contrast to conventional development agendas focusing on a restricted set of dimensions, the SDGs provide a holistic and multidimensional view on development. The achievement of the SDGs has therefore made necessary to develop a system of indicators, to evaluate and compare the state of achievement of the over 100 targets in which the 17 SDGs are organized.

Governments set their own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government decides how the global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. Regarding to the Italian situation, within one year of the adoption of the National Strategy, Italian Regions shall design their strategies defining their support to the National Strategy.

In this paper, we would like to analyze the situation of the Italian Regions in terms of achievieng SDGs in order to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. The aim is to profile the various Regions with respect to each goal, so as to get a picture of the level of achievement of SDGS, taking into account the differences among the various geographical areas of Italian territory. In this way, we try to highlight the existence of groups of regions with similar characteristics and, at the same time, to identify unusual/fuzzy regions and take into account their specificities.

The research methodology is to use synthesis techniques for creating a composite indicator for each goal. After dividing all the 17 SDGs between three dimensions - environmental, economic and social – defined according to the theoretical framework, we use techniques of clustering in order to detect the presence of possible clusters among the units considered. In particular, to facilitate the identification of possible regions with anomalous characteristics, a fuzzy clustering technique is used.

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