Territorial Impact Assessment for evaluation of Territorial Cohesion Policies: the STeMA-TIA 3.0 and social housing in Italy

DOI reference: 10.1080/13673882.2021.00001082

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Researching Territorial Impact Assessment for Cohesion Policies

The impact analysis and the identification of the most effective policy recommendations in order to set or refocus investments in Regional (ROP) or National Operating Programmes (NOP) is one of the most important challenges in the EU cohesion policy, but no agreed standard methodology has been identified so far.

In this scope, the Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) methodological approach is argued to be one of the most important in accompanying the policymaker in related decision-making processes. The strength of this approach lays in the importance of place evidence through the capacity of reading geographic complexity of territories, starting from the basis of their specific different features. Moreover, it is shared the opinion that a 'good' TIA needs a powerful data support (analytic and cartographic) and qualitative-quantitative models to associate judgments, in response to the questions to which evaluation is required, including the development and comparison of policy options supporting policymaking (Prezioso 2018, 2019).

After three years of research activities (2017-2020), involving more than sixty researchers, national and regional policy/decision-makers, stakeholders, and practitioners, the new STeMA-TIA 3.0 methodology devoted to territorial cohesion in Italy has been finalized, linking European Structural and Investment instruments more closely to those based on the Territorial and Urban Agendas.

The full title of the research is "*Territorial Impact Assessment of the territorial cohesion of the Italian regions. Place-based evidence model for the evaluation of the policies of the development of the green economy in internal areas and in metropolitan peripheries*", and it has been the largest study carried out by the Italian geographers on Territorial Impact Assessment of Territorial Cohesion in Italy. It was carried out between 2017 and 2020 thanks to the funding by the Programme PRIN2015, Italian National Research Project of the Ministry of University and Research, under the lead of Professor Maria Prezioso of the University of Rome "Tor Vergata", as Principal Investigator

The STeMA-TIA 3.0 methodological approach goes beyond the traditional discussion, integrating the adaptation of the Cohesion Policy to the Enlarged Europe, and to Sustainable Development Indicators to monitor the implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. This approach aims at providing support to some policy questions (Prezioso, 2019):

1. If the initial level of territorial cohesion influences the national and regional capacity building in designing appropriate Operative Programs making closer European Strategies to local policy needs;
2. If territorial cohesion is increased by the national and regional capacity in reaching local needs considering geographical specificities;
3. If taking inspiration from Italian regions' territorial cohesion as a case study, it is possible to advance a feasible option to reconsider the spending in regional smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in order to propose a new Europeanised method to make competitiveness in the chosen region.

The STeMA-TIA 3.0 model is based on 73 representative indicators referring to new 7 Systemic Regional Functional Typologies that territorialise spatial data to the geographical diversity of the country. Indicators are organised in 4 complex matrices that, thanks to a pairwise test, find the synthetic value of the Determinants built on EU2020 Strategy pillars (i.e. Sustainable, Inclusive and Smart Growth, with the addition of Resources and Funds) (see Maps 1, 2, 3 and 4). The model can be used both in ex-ante and ex-post monitoring and evaluation phases and covers regional (NUTS 2) and sub-regional level (NUTS 3).

Moreover, the STeMA-TIA 3.0 has been developed and tested in the Italian case in order to provide concrete and operational response to how the geography of regions and sub-regions (NUTS 2 and 3) can still achieve or could have achieved a territorial cohesive Strategy responding to Europe 2020 targets. It also includes the functional typologies by a territorial systemic perspective required by the European Commission – DG Regio, the Committee of Regions and Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT), the EU Parliament.

The application of STeMA-TIA to the Italian case study demonstrated that the monitoring and evaluation of Regional and National Operating Programmes based on spatial and synthetic indicators used in the Programming period 2014-2020 is not yet adequate, and further advances should be considered in for the future 2021-2027 period, and eventually for the Territorial Plans of the Just Transition Fund. Furthermore, STeMA analysis at Regional and sub-Regional level highlighted how territorial disparities are affecting Territorial Cohesion, and helped in prediction about the future impact of ROP and NOP actions on specific territory's cohesion, with particular attention to Inner Peripheries, already

addressed by a specific National Strategy.

STeMA model and Social Housing

During the initial analysis and tests of the STeMA Model (Prezioso 2018a, 2019, 2020), with regards to the methodology implementation, Social Housing and Social Affordable Housing policy sectors have been included in the assessment process. They are part of the Italian NOP 2020 named "Governance". In 2018 these specific housing issues related to welfare were innovated in depth by the Urban Agenda contents and Quito Habitat III 2016, but few projects were financed because the national/regional system was not very flexible in the face of rapid urbanisation (Acreman et al. 2016). In Italy, few real case studies under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) typology of financing have been actually realised, and these are only from the URBACT III experience. In the cities of Turin, Bologna, Milan, Ravenna, Pesaro, Florence, Rome, Naples, Lecce, the new social housing is also an instrument to make the regional spending for families more efficient, whilst in the Northern regions (Bolzano, Trento, Aosta) this policy objectified the need to produce a positive impact on climate change mitigation as well.

Since the housing market in Italy is substantially dependent on choices of family culture and, therefore very localistic, in many cases housing finance was managed by the so-called "cooperatives for social purposes" (with an expected return of about 3% + inflation rate), directly responsible for the sale at affordable prices, the rent for the purchase, the rental at agreed prices (about 50% of the total realized and 54% of the funds invested).

Over the decade 2001-2011, the housing stock increased, but only 77% of houses have been permanently occupied according to national official statistics data. As a result of the demographic recovery linked to migration flows, a new type of population has started to express the social housing demand, to which the private construction sector can only respond through State incentives. The creation of a "housing community" acting in the social housing innovation, i.e., is linked to life quality, and involves new management methods and tools; hence some regional initiatives (e.g. Lombardy's "Social Labs") aim to ensure adequate housing conditions both through real efficiency criteria and better social and interpersonal relationships within integrated processes to systemise real estate, management and social components for overall sustainable conditions. Public consultation

became mandatory for major interventions – i.e. public debate, introduced by regional laws such as in Tuscany. Similar instruments are adopted by local authorities to settle conflicts as to NIMBY factor locating systems and verification of spatial transformations sustainability.

Moreover, in January 2015 a very significant programme was activated for the recovery of residential property confiscated from organised crime, to be provided to the municipalities concerned (ownership).

The Government has also proposed initiatives addressed to families and structural measures to enhance the residential housing supply – e.g. the 2009 National Housing Plan (*Piano nazionale di edilizia abitativa*), designed as an integrated set aimed at the whole range of subjects addressed by direct public interventions within national housing policy. Furthermore, in 2014 a programme was introduced for recovery and rationalisation of public housing residential property and dwellings (*Programma di recupero e razionalizzazione degli immobili e degli alloggi di edilizia residenziale pubblica di proprietà dei comuni e degli Istituti per le case popolari*) owned by municipalities and public housing authorities, for restoration and extraordinary maintenance of unused accommodations (approximately 15,000 units nationwide). The Fund covers overall 950,000 public housing units.

In conclusion, the lack of a National Housing Plan and data (statistical or big data as in France) and still not a fully revisited governmental policy, led the research team to decide to not include these elements in the STeMA-TIA evaluation at full Italian level within the PRIN Research Project, although Prezioso (2018b) applied STeMA-TIA 3.0 to the social housing analysis in Italian cities developed under the House of Deputies in 2017. Italy has experimented, at the local level, co-housing solutions, and multigenerational condos, which have shown multiple advantages in terms of exchange of services and aggregation of purchase demand. Furthermore, the new experimental forms of "social housing" promote active aging and social inclusion of the elderly, although poor housing conditions in the absence of adequate PPP investments (including on public transport, low-cost housing, and upgrading suburban areas), have made these interventions ineffective and isolated.

Strengthening and improving access to housing finance by STeMA-TIA

The issues regarding investments (especially in the social affordable housing sector) become even more complex and multifaceted. This is due to the fact the proposed options are experimental, innovative or sustainable, yet doubts may arise as to the real use and implementation of the results that the project should yield in terms of employment, inclusion, production, technology, and environment. Experiences from ESPON 2013 and 2020 and URBACT II have demonstrated that good practice such as urban regeneration involving affordable housing and social inclusion may not be matched by government support. At the moment, the Italian context seems to be dynamic. Not only traditional stakeholders in the private sector, but also many non-profit companies have invested in the housing sector. A 'Registered Provider' is needed to operate side by side with the "housing associations" (which are slightly different from the present Italian residents' committees).

The relationship between sustainable territorial planning and housing programming based on the policymakers' awareness of scenarios can increase levels of welfare. This can help them face common macro issues such as climate change in order to support endogenous regional policies that can boost investments and global policies that can attract private interventions.

This new awareness calls for a change that may lead to taking on those challenges that the new approaches to general and sector investment planning may pose. At the urban housing intervention level, scientists can agree on emerging planning and design models. They look to the peculiarity of the development process as the main criterion to:

- Adopt both qualitative and quantitative methods (rather than quantitative only), e.g. while designing new infrastructures for sustainable transportation;
- Use open data to increase the stakeholders and investors' involvement;
- Take into account the complexity of urbanization and post-metropolisation processes, as well as their effects in terms of land consumption, etc.;
- Within the planning process, adopt predictive instruments such as TIA in order to bridge the knowledge gap on the basis of place evidence, geo-referential and statistical data;
- Coordinate programming, planning and design actions with the relevant EU funding program, which may also imply reconsidering sector political choices and the Committee of Region's regional agendas.

- By means of specific educational processes, increase the administrative ability to conceive new policies that have to be adapted to the peculiarities of each territory. This should be done by also taking into account the impact that such policies may have on the current institutional model to change its behaviour.
- Working in polycentric terms to boost investments is an effective way to overcome the challenges set by the Europe 2020 strategy. It means that new long-term and coherent scenarios will have to be designed to establish which targets can be achieved in the short term. However, at the moment policymaking does not seem to offer many choices. Options seem limited to:

1. Involving the stakeholders and citizens in the decision-making process;
2. Drawing on place-based evidence to set medium-term targets for a long-term scenario, thus involving in this vision both regions and cities (especially small and medium-sized cities that could help to increase the GDP and reach the European average, as well as improve the potential of the territorial capital).

Main Results of the STeMA-TIA 3.0 model

Next to the main results – the update of the STeMA-TIA 3.0 model and the resulting application to Territorial Cohesion situation of Italian territories – the research project accounts several literature reflections on key fields interconnected to cohesion policy: Competitiveness in sustainability, Territorial Capital, Green economy, Metropolitan and capital city

The main results of the research can be read in the following publications:

- Prezioso, M. (eds.) (2018) *Quale* territorial impact assessment *della coesione territoriale nelle regioni italiane. La concettualizzazione del problema* [*Which* territorial impact assessment *of the territorial cohesion in the Italian Regions. The conceptualisation of the problem*]. Bologna: Patron. ISBN 9788855534406. https://art.torvergata.it/retrieve/handle/2108/212629/417177/TIA%20cap%20Prezioso.pdf / https://patroneditore.com/volumi/1901/come_acquistare.html

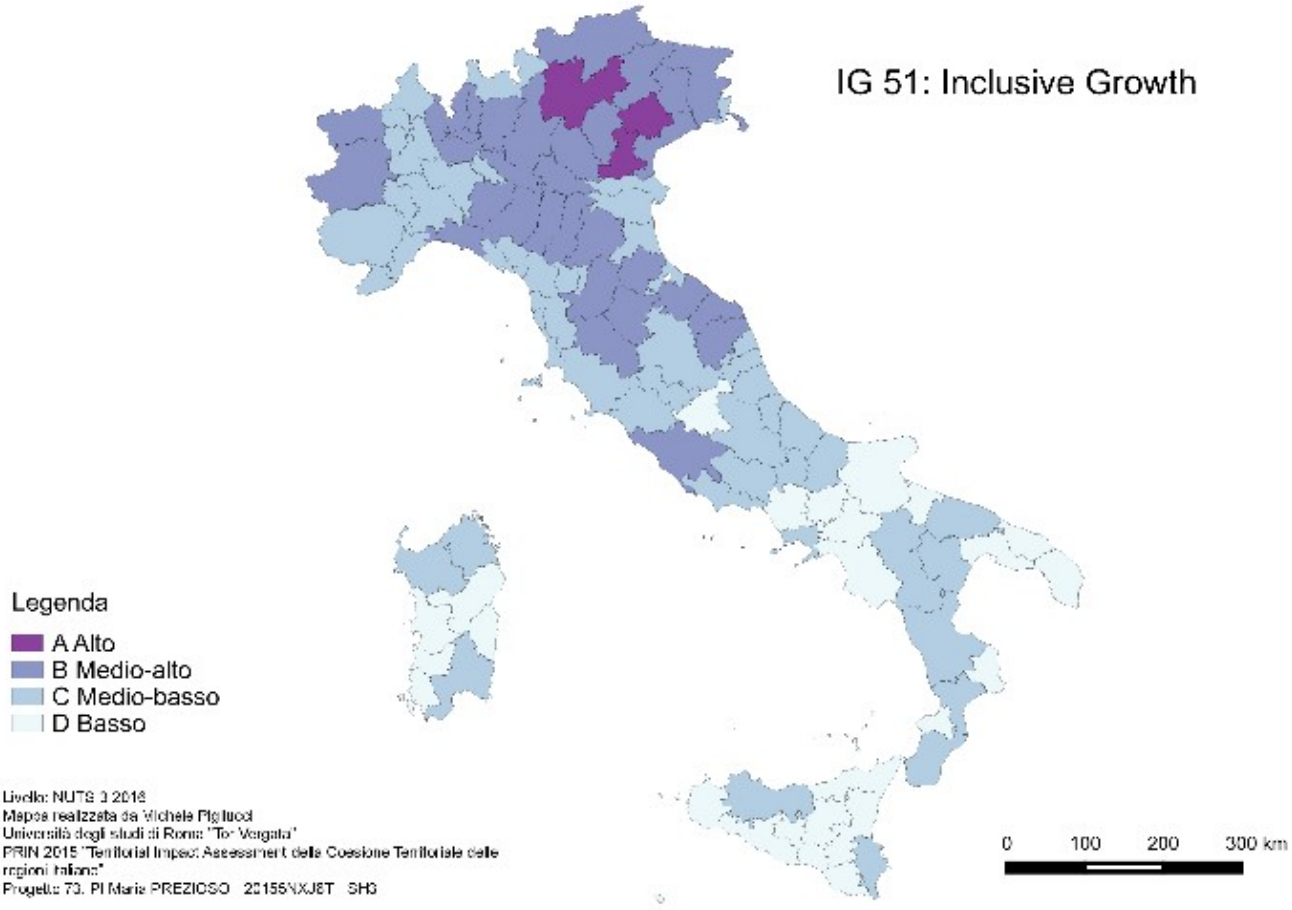
- Prezioso, M., Dini, F. (eds.) (2019) 'Territorial Impact Assessment of Territorial Cohesion in Italy. Foreword', *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, 14(2(2)), pp. 3-6. The full Special ISSUE – TEXT IN ENGLISH – OPEN SOURCE
- Prezioso, M. (eds.) (2020) *Territorial Impact Assessment of national and regional territorial cohesion in Italy. Place evidence and policy orientations towards European Green Deal*, Bologna: Patron. ISBN 9788855534860.
- PREZIOSO M. (2020). *STeMA: a Sustainable Territorial economic/environmental Management Approach*, In Eduardo Madeiros (ed.), Springer, pp. 62-85.

The STeMA Application took a detailed picture of the situation of Territorial Cohesion of Italian regions at t_0 time, and the forecast of the application of ROP and NOP measures, highlighting both the strength and the weakness points.

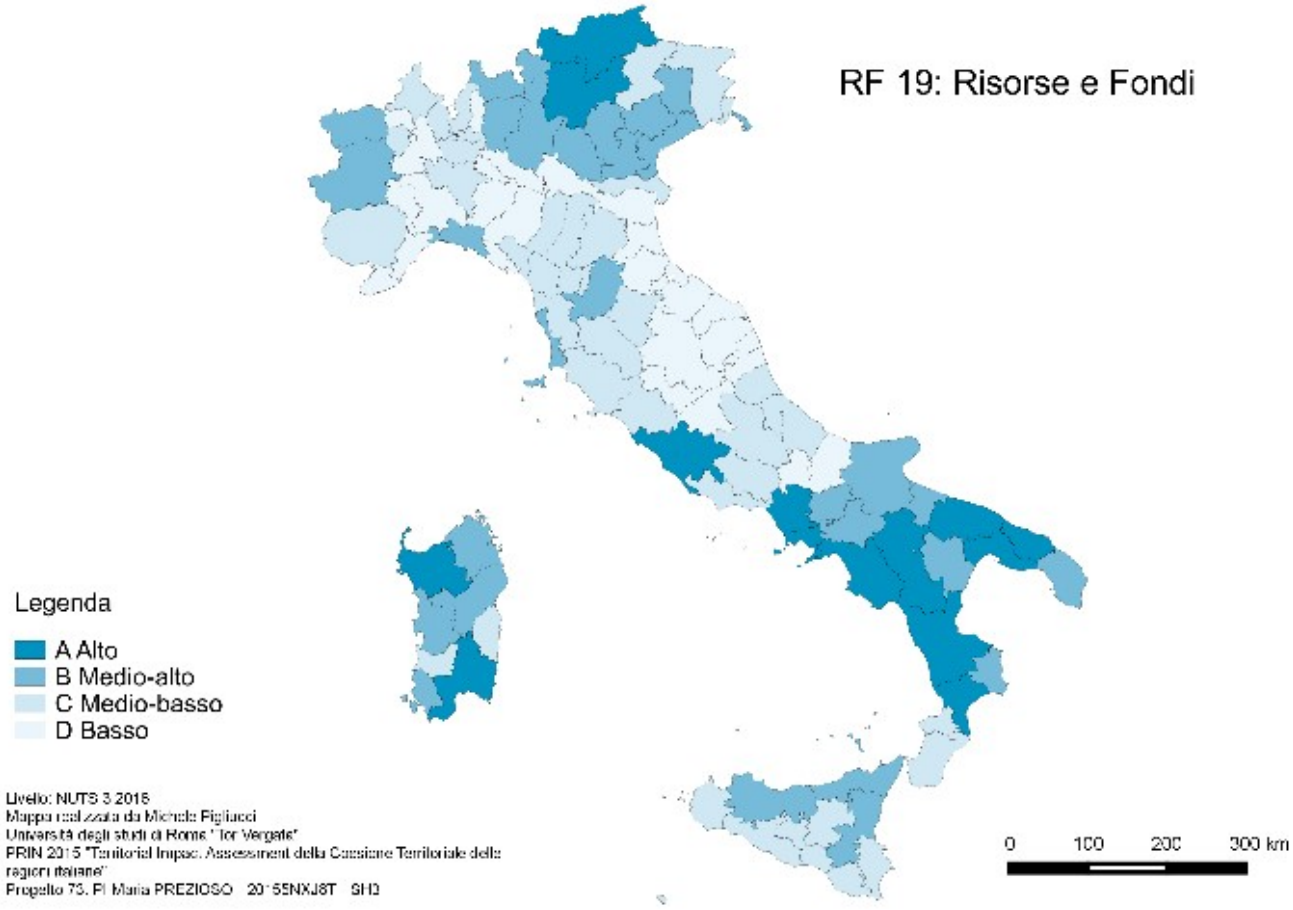
Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has changed the whole situation at national and local level. A further interest of the results of this research project leads to an even more important point, presenting the picture of the situation of Italian regions in the moment before the outbreak of the global pandemic crisis, representing an essential benchmark for any future Cohesion Policy plan towards the use of recovery funds in the framework of the European Green Deal and the Next Generation Europe.

Figures (Maps): STeMA-TIA results at NUTS 3 for each Determinants: Inclusive Growth, Resources and Funds, Smart Growth and Sustainable Growth.

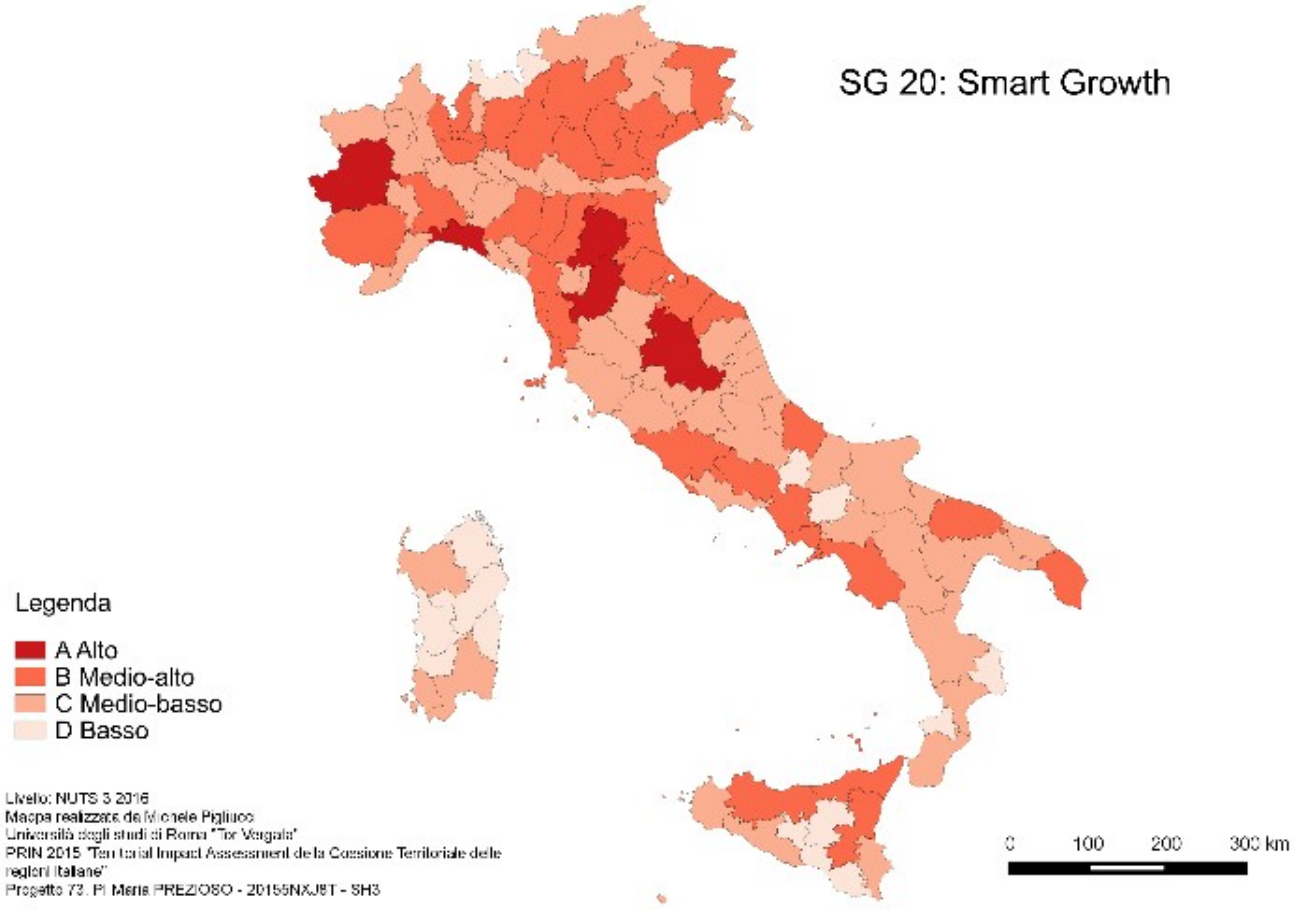
Map: Inclusive Growth



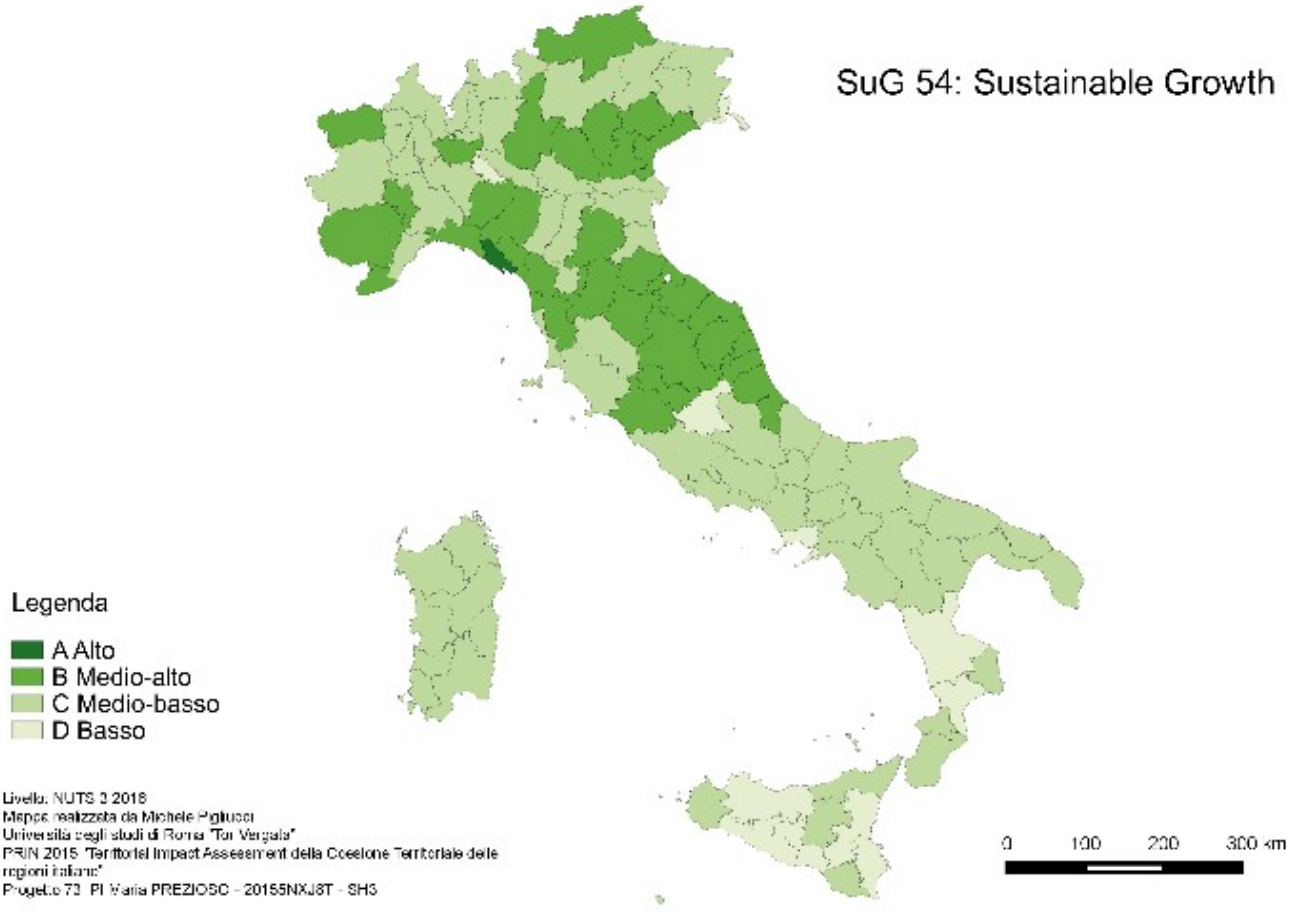
Map: Resources and Funds



Map: Smart Growth



Map: Sustainable Growth



Source: Prezioso, 2020

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