



ANALYSING THE SUCCESS DRIVERS OF EMAS IN SELECTED MEMBER STATES

CASE STUDY ON ITALY



KEY LEARNINGS

- ✎ The national CB of Italy clearly distinguishes between temporal versus structural measures with long term benefits, the latter of which tend to encourage a long term registration with EMAS.
- ✎ The example of Italy shows that it is important to create the right mix of measures: funds will initially attract new organisations, prompting them to register, while structural measures offer continuous support to those already registered, encouraging them to stay with the scheme and keep improving their environmental performance.
- ✎ Policy-makers in Italy strongly support EMAS because it provides a guarantee for continuous legal compliance, creates transparency through its reporting requirements, and ensures a reduced risk of accidents. In such areas where EMAS registered organisations can demonstrate that they go beyond the activities of non-registered organisations, this provides clear justifications for giving them support in the form of regulatory and/or financial relief.
- ✎ Actors at national or sub-national level could develop many more measures if EMAS was considered in further Directives and Regulations.

BACKGROUND

In Italy, the top three sectors of activity since 2011 have consistently been waste, energy and public administration, with the food industry taking up the fourth spot. Casting the view back further to 2006, the top four spots have been filled by the same four sectors, with the food industry gradually experiencing a downward trend from 2006 to 2014.

The *positive trends for energy and waste* can largely be ascribed to the great number of financial and policy support measures at both national and local levels which concentrate on these sectors. From 2003 onwards a great deal of *measures with structural character have been introduced both at national and local level, as opposed to the previously largely short-term or one-off support measures*, such as direct funding support. The largest proportion of structural measures provides incentives to organisations falling under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED – previously the IPPC Directive). A selection of such measures is described below in more detail.

Developments in the public administration sector primarily result from the activities of one single region in Italy, named Trentino Alto Adige. Within it, the province of Trento provided strong financial support to local municipalities from 2007 to 2013. The municipalities which decided to join the scheme as a result accounted for the greatest share of registrations in this sector nation-wide. Currently, however, the number of EMAS registrations in the public administration sector is falling. Many administrative bodies are leaving the scheme due to limited financial resources after having reached the end of financial support, a trend that has been exacerbated by the financial crisis. In certain cases, these organisations have also named unfulfilled expectations in terms of recognition for their environmental dedication as a reason for leaving. Some municipalities had hoped that tourist flows may increase due to their EMAS registration, but were disappointed due to a lack of promotion about their efforts among the general public. In part, the loss of registrations in the public sector can also be attributed to a reorganisation of the smallest municipalities in Trento.

Across Italy, *some local governments have given funds to specific sectors* and have invested in improving their environmental awareness. This case is reflected for example in the region of Emilia Romagna, which has supported EMAS within the food industry. The resulting positive impact on that sector can be seen at a national scale. Further detail on this case is provided below.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this case study consists of snapshots of Italy's registration numbers for the years 2006, 2011 and 2014. These figures were divided by NACE code in order to provide a basis for analysing the trends across the different sectors of activity, and by region to examine the geographical distribution of EMAS registrations in Italy. Furthermore, information was gathered from the national Competent Body (CB) in the form of a questionnaire and a follow-up interview.

From a geographical perspective, the regions of Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany have consistently reached high EMAS registration numbers. These are also *the regions that reportedly have enacted the greatest numbers of laws with benefits for registered organisations.*

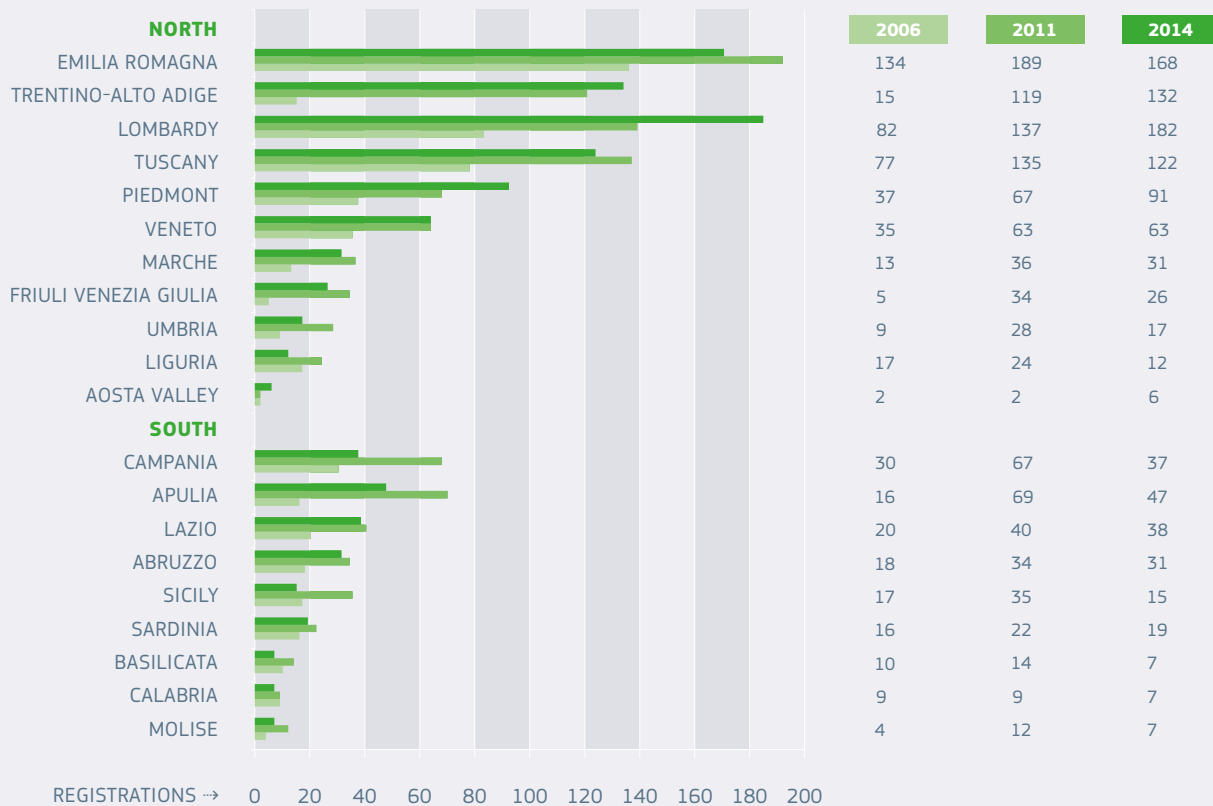
In general, the regions of the South have often opted for direct funding mechanisms (temporary benefits) to increase EMAS registrations. The national CB has pointed out that these types of support measures are often not effective at retaining EMAS registrations, with many organisations leaving the scheme once the benefits are no longer experienced.

The regions of the Centre and North have generally adopted a *more heterogeneous mix of measures, providing both direct financing (but for specific projects), and structural incentives that make a continued EMAS registration attractive* by enhancing the competitiveness of EMAS registered organisations.

The existing trends appear to reflect these observations: most Southern regions, including Sicily, Campania and Puglia experienced an increase in registration numbers between 2006 and 2011, followed by a decrease in the following years until 2014.

An additional factor that may be encouraging both the implementation of favourable measures and a resulting increase in registration numbers is the *existence of more active local environmental agencies (with greater resources) in the North than in the South.* For example, the environmental agency of Friuli Venezia Giulia is very active in supporting EMAS; they often organize seminars and conferences and also work in close cooperation with the EMAS Club of the region. (NB in Italy, local environmental agencies are responsible for carrying out inspections and are also often involved in the EMAS registration procedure).

ITALIAN EMAS REGISTRATIONS PER REGION FOR THE YEARS 2006, 2011 AND 2014



SOURCE: ITALIAN COMPETENT BODY

SPECIFIC POLICIES

The national CB of Italy clearly distinguishes between *temporal versus structural measures with long term benefits*, the latter of which tend to *encourage a long term registration* with EMAS. Moreover, the national CB perceives that the regions with the greatest numbers of registrations not only have the highest numbers of favourable measures in place, but have also succeeded in *creating the right mix of measures*: funds initially attract new organisations, prompting them to register, while those already registered experience continuous support in the form of structural measures that encourage them to stay with the scheme and keep improving their environmental performance.

Similarly, where robust support measures and notable benefits exist, registration numbers tend not to have been negatively affected by the economic crisis.

Organisations falling under the IED can benefit from a host of structural measures that policy-makers in Italy have implemented. These developments at national, regional and local levels were facilitated by the fact that *the IED explicitly mentions EMAS as a means for fulfilling its obligations*. At national level for example, regulatory agencies have lowered inspection costs and the frequency of inspections for EMAS registered organisations. Since the IED largely addresses organisations from the energy and waste sectors, these benefits have tended to focus on organisations from these sectors. In addition, in 2006 a financial benefit was introduced for organisations from the waste management sector, cutting their mandatory bank guarantee by 50 % if they are EMAS registered. Furthermore, these organisations enjoy a simplified procedure for renewing the authorisation for their plants. Over the years, such policies have contributed to *a robust increase in the waste management sector*, with the total number of registered organisations increasing from 73 in 2006 to 175 in 2011 and to 255 in 2014, with numbers continuing to rise.

Focussing on one of the most successful regions in terms of EMAS registration numbers, the *region of Emilia Romagna offers a comprehensive mix of policy and financial support*, largely to organisations falling under the IED. Since 2004, the region offers a reduced time schedule for EMAS registered organisations to obtain the required IED authorisation, and since 2008, a reduced fee. In addition, going beyond IED requirements, Emilia Romagna has introduced a series of reduced inspection costs for EMAS registered organisations, such as a reduced cost for landfill inspections and a reduced cost for inspections in plants at risk of major accidents (both from 2004). These measures have resonated well with organisations located in the region, and many of them have *not only decided to join EMAS, but also choose to stay with EMAS long term*. Already in 2006, Emilia Romagna topped the Italian table in terms of registration numbers, with the number rising from 134 in 2006 to 189 by 2011. There has been a slight drop since, with numbers falling to 168 by 2014, but most recently numbers are reportedly picking up once again. The region has also supported EMAS within the food industry, mainly by providing grants for the implementation costs and raising environmental awareness in this sector. This support has contributed to high registration numbers, particularly in the early years of EMAS.

It is important to note that many measures and concessions – such as those focused around the IED – also apply to organisations certified with ISO 14001, albeit at a lower rate. For example, an IED authorisation lasts 16 years for EMAS registered organisations and 12 years for ISO 14001 certified organisations. According to the Italian national CB, this constitutes a relatively small difference in terms of benefits between the two schemes and does not tend to encourage organisations to move from ISO 14001 to EMAS, hence resulting in a limitation for the European scheme.

In general, it also needs to be noted that *EMAS in Italy suffers to a certain extent from not being well-known by the general public*. As a result there is no *pressure from society* to implement the scheme and in turn, *a lack of recognition* when an organisation does decide to register with EMAS. Certain organisations reportedly have become disillusioned by this fact and have left the scheme as a result. In fact, in Italy measures tend not to have focused on EMAS promotion in the form of any nation-wide initiative. Both the national CB and the BRAVE study on EMAS support measures indicate that such activities would likely provide even greater benefits to EMAS in Italy.

“It is great to get some recognition for our efforts to protect the environment. With the help of EMAS we can guarantee that our operations – already respectful of the environment and environmental legislation – contribute to continuously improving the environmental performance of our waste treatment plants, as well as taking advantage of financial benefits acknowledged by our Region in the waste sector.”

HERAMBIENTE S.P.A.

LARGE EMAS REGISTERED WASTE TREATMENT COMPANY IN ITALY

In summary, the *greatest proportion of measures* to date has focussed on providing *incentives to the industrial sectors*. In 2016, a series of new measures were introduced at national level providing advantages to EMAS registered organisations in Green Public Procurement (GPP). One such measure provides a 30 % cut to the guarantee that a contracting organisation needs to deposit, if they are EMAS-registered. The national CB attributes great importance to this development, expecting a positive impact on registration numbers based on experiences to date. These measures are the first of a structural nature that address organisations beyond industrial sectors and are therefore expected to also have a positive impact on sectors not reached by long term benefits so far, such as the service sectors.

REASONS WHY POLICY-MAKERS TRUST AND SUPPORT EMAS

In Italy, the European scheme has received a great deal of support from the very beginning, not only at a political level, but also from other actors, such as chambers of commerce and universities. In many regions chambers of commerce have provided direct funds to specific sectors, which has helped to kick-start an up-take of EMAS. Later on, in particular from 2003 onwards, such *funds were replaced by more structural measures, a transition that was instrumental in ensuring long term registrations.* Universities have helped spread knowledge about the scheme and create pressure for greater environmental action.

Policy-makers in Italy strongly support EMAS because of its *strengths in providing a guarantee for continuous legal compliance, creating transparency through its reporting requirements and ensuring a reduced risk of accidents.* These environmental safeguards have motivated policy-makers at both regional and national level to grant special conditions to EMAS registered organisations, making use of the situations where registered organisations can guarantee that their activities go beyond those of other organisations in terms of environmental protection and legal compliance.

Decisions to implement such measures have been *greatly helped by research indicating where there is room to integrate EMAS into existing policy making,* notably the results emerging from the BRAVE project. As a result, there has been and still is a strong uptake of the scheme. The right mix of measures in general, and structural measures in particular has proven to be very successful in Italy. In areas where EMAS registered organisations can demonstrate that they go beyond the activities of non-registered organisations, this provides clear justifications for giving them support in the form of regulatory and/or financial relief. In Italy, this has created a win-win situation in the waste and energy sectors, and more generally for organisations affected by the IED. In future, further benefits are expected beyond these sectors in view of the new measures focussed around GPP. The measures created for both policy areas refer to European-level legislation, making a potential introduction in other EU Member States relatively straightforward. What is more, the high number of measures in Italy related to the IED indicates that *actors at national or sub-national level could develop many more measures if EMAS was considered in further Directives and Regulations.*

“We became EMAS registered in order to improve our environmental performance, also through the involvement of all employees in environmental protection activities, to strengthen the organization's image outside and to help manage our legal compliance. We would appreciate if the government recognized our commitment by further reducing the number of inspections and inspection costs for registered plants and by performing better information activities, aimed at increasing knowledge about the value of EMAS.”

EDIPOWER

LARGE EMAS REGISTERED ENERGY PRODUCER IN ITALY

GET IN TOUCH

Additional information is available on the EMAS website www.emas.eu or through the EMAS helpdesk at emashelpdesk@adelphi.de
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