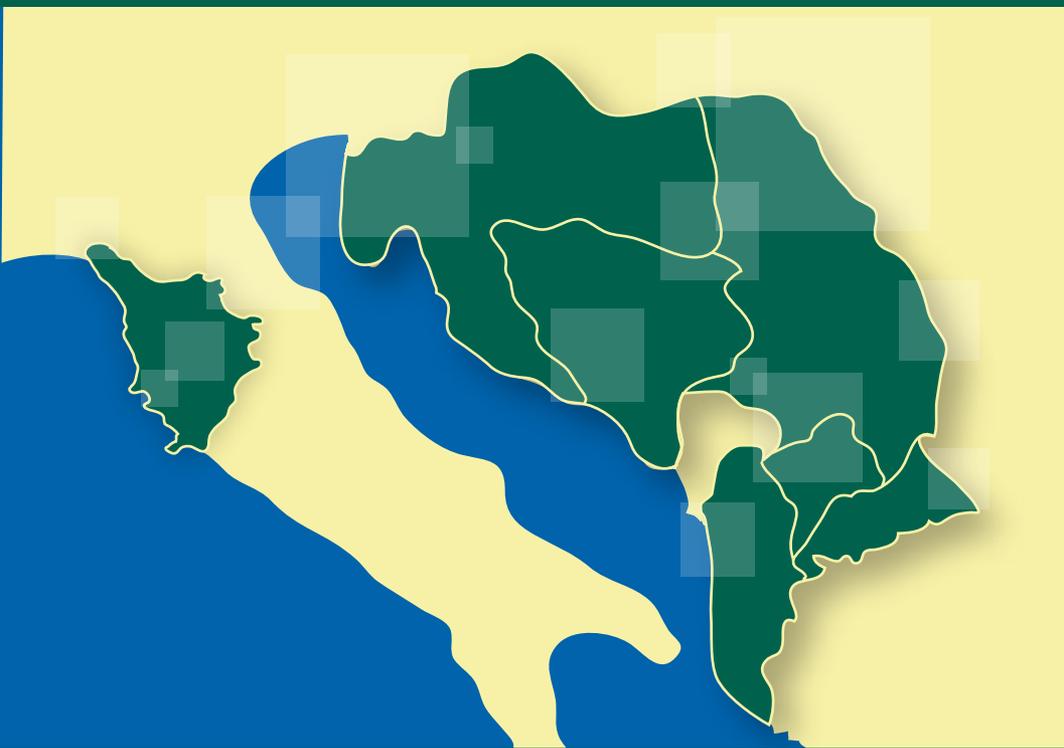


Edited by Ucodep and Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

The Seenet Network and the Programme

Local Governments as Engines of Development

Appraisal of an Experience



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Preliminary Remarks

Challenges achieved

We have completed an important initial part of our course of action and can claim that the challenges that Seenet encountered have been central within the framework of the relationships established between Europe and the Balkans. On the other hand, the elements of innovation that the Programme and the Network introduced have demonstrated to be winning.

The contribution to peace and reconciliation that decentralised co-operation can offer is important. The South-Eastern European partner to confirm it, because the Project Initiative have represented a small but significant opportunity of dialogue within the communities in which they have been implemented, while the Network became an opportunity to re-establish relationships between states and territories where the conflict had created considerable barriers.

Seenet has also represented an attempt to think to decentralised co-operation in a logic of programme rather than of small single projects. An initiative built through synergies that began with the integration of the plans initiated by the Region of Tuscany, the NGOs, other international subjects, and further through the management of the participants, in which the Tuscan partnership has continued to widen, with contributions of more than thirty among local governments, economic organizations and public utilities of our territory. It is also thanks to the outputs of this Programme that we may debate about a real Tuscan system of co-operation, according to a type of action that has partially influenced the innovations introduced in the new regional plan of co-operation for the period 2007-2010.

This is a Tuscan system where the NGOs acted according to an innovative logic of facilitation of the relationships among territories, and a logic of network where it has been demonstrated the significance to invest in the NGO structures that have guaranteed method and continuity of the relationships among all the partner.

For Tuscany a programme of co-operation as it has been Seenet represents an extraordinary opportunity to the local institutions, and its actors to internationalize, opening to external contexts and realities. It represents a reality to the local institutions for which the comparison with the diversity of the decentralization systems can represent a stimulus to strengthen its own international dimension. While to the actors of the economic system the Programme enabled to potentially start up relationships that may develop in a logic of mutual advantage. Moreover, it also provides an opportunity for Tuscany to offer the best of its experiences in local development aimed at a constructive comparison in a dialogue with other local authorities and other communities, rather than of a mere dogmatic export of governance models. In a globalised world, the sharing of certain visions and principles represent an important political element/fact.

It is time for a new phase for the enlargement Network partner, a phase where the local authorities agencies can play a combined approach in the accession process to the European Union, of a peace fed by relationship with the citizenry imprinted on principles of fairness, justice and transparency. A phase in when the Tuscan experience with the South-Eastern Europe shall be valorised thanks to the richness of experiences of many other Italian and European regional territories, so to allow that decentralised co-operation can further grow, thus increasing in significance and impact.

Claudio Martini

President Region of Tuscany

The Italian Decentralised Co-operation in the Future of the Balkans

In the framework of the political and economic integration of the European Union, the “black hole” of the area of the South-Eastern Europe would be unacceptable. In the whole, the Balkans shall enter in Europe if indeed they aim to achieve peace, development, and legality of a crucial region for the future of the entire continent.

“Seenet” is a Programme of co-operation with the Balkans that in three years has favoured the growth of a network among 30 Tuscan actors (local authorities, public utility companies, private bodies) and 21 local authorities of five countries of the South Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia) with a four million Euro fund and 27 projects implemented. An important experience, tangible sign of such a co-operation, especially of the decentralised one, whereas it assumes that character of continuity and of work based on processes, it represents a fundamental instrument for that recovery of public space and democracy as the necessary condition to prevent conflicts, as a the solution of problems of direct impact on the life of the citizens.

That is not the only important element. Seenet, and particularly the favourable evolution of this initiative, shows that the future of international co-operation and of the added value that the governmental and regional co-operation must provide, goes beyond the mere financial resources available to projecting.

The crucial element is that of establishing networks, thus creating connections with the Italian system of a Country as a whole involving the local authorities, its public utilities, the cultural centres, the health centres and the universities in order to establish a net of relationships able to supporting itself independently. Coherent with this vision, comes along the role of the Regions, as political actors in a position to mobilise and involve the territory in an effective way.

In the past years, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported and financed, through the Law 49/87 and the special Law 84/01 on the Balkans, numerous initiatives of decentralised co-operation where the Regions play a protagonist role. To consider on the results of these experiences is a must, that help us identify strategies and pathways to analyse the positive elements emerged, thus reducing the risks of fragmentation of the interventions. Due to this reason, the present volume offers an important contribution to the overall analysis.

Famiano Crucianelli

Vice Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Europe, Common House of the Balkans

When we first met in 2000 in Florence the atmosphere in the South-Eastern Europe we could still resembled breath the smell of war, of blood, of hatred. Today the atmosphere is different, also thanks to the several projects being implemented by Seenet that have helped to smooth the path to a foretold admission of the Balkans in the European Union.

What we can do to foster a united Europe? This the question that my colleague Claudio Martini and myself have been asking ourselves in a period when the Balkans had just come out from the war. This reason brings me to deeply thank the Region of Tuscany on its the great sensibility towards the area of the South-Eastern Europe, as a model and incentive that it has offered to all of us on our role and on our duty to make reforms.

Seenet has represented a challenge to us: to succeed in networking the various realities confronting our visions

in a political forum, than cannot replace State politics, but can support the Balkans that wish to enter in Europe to firstly catch for peaceful environment, and secondly the integration to the European Union. The development of projects, of concrete initiatives has given an extraordinary opportunity of a shared work with the purpose to join together the 21 territories that through the Programme have established new relationships or resumed those interrupted, rather than only within the single local territories composed of their various social and religious characteristics.

The Seenet phase that has just been concluded has implemented all the expected results. It is rare to see that such a large intervention gives good results in the whole area. This is the reason why the Region of Istria, together with the other South-Eastern Europe Countries, would like to give continuity to the network established, and thus to their political and technical co-operation.

The second phase of the Programme will bring new challenges. The process of admission to the European Union will become still more concrete. The process of decentralization shall represent the tool to narrow Europe to its citizens and the ability of local authorities to be effective and efficient in the widening of their own roles, in the use of the new European resources will be the true challenge to in the follow up of the reconciliation process.

Ivan Jakovic

President Region of Istria

NGOs and the System of Decentralised Co-operation

Within the panorama of the Italian NGOs, Ucodep and Cospè have always made of their relationship with the territory a characterizing feature. Within the several projects of co-operation we attempt to stimulate the relationship and the participation of the local authorities, of the economic actors and the civil society of a specific territory.

Thanks to Seenet we have tried, for the first time, to allow that decentralised cooperation makes a qualitative leap in terms of significance and impact. From the point of view of Ucodep, of whom I am the Director of its international cooperation department, the role of the NGO as facilitator of territorial partnerships that consider a network constituted by several institutional actors this has been an important challenge as much unusual for the not governmental world.

The "Operative Secretariat" that we have been asked to set up has never been interpreted in a reductive way as, perhaps, the term may envisage. Indeed, the following pages demonstrate as our structure has carried out much composite and complex functions.

This experience makes us stronger in analysing the potential role that the not governmental world can play to facilitate the decentralised co-operation in a logic of system. There will be the opportunity to compare our visions with those of our colleagues. In the meantime, we shall commence with the successful elements that we have achieved with the Programme Seenet.

We started back in September 2003, together with the South-Eastern European partner at the seminar in Florence when all of them asked vividly for "concrete" initiatives and resources that offered solutions to the conflict damages that more turned out to be obvious to the eyes of all.

We ended up in Florence, approximately three years later, in a situation where the same partner recognised and appreciated the importance of the concrete outputs achieved, especially due to the small but significant projects implemented in their territories, but above all for the great amount and potentiality of relations activated so far. In their perspective these relations could only be beneficial of its further practicability.

A second element of success regards the results accomplished. In the following pages of this document we identify the elements of institutional sustainability of the priority initiatives activated with the South-Eastern European partner. For many of them it has been a matter of making steps forward that have implied important formal acts and investments of the same local partner institutions. An important indicator that also with relatively limited investments the sector of decentralised co-operation can turn out to be of great effectiveness if accompanied by a suitable method, thus avoiding or minimising the risk of micro-projecting as an end in itself, or of a simple exchange of experiences among the public civil servants.

Moreover, we have attempted to share within the regional panels of consultation the working methods experimented with the network partner, in a transparent and joint way, hopefully with a certain degree of success.

Among the positive Project results I include the choice of the methodology applied, strongly looked for and requested by the Region of Tuscany, that in this volume provides its contribution to the debate on decentralised co-operation.

Finally, some sincere thanks. As Director of this Programme I have often been granted honours for the work carried out, but, whose merit can be attributed to me only in a small part. Thanks to all the various persons at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Region of Tuscany that have worked with great spirit of co-operation to the good outcome of this initiative, always trying to overcome those administrative difficulties that some elements of innovation of the Programme unavoidably carried with itself. A sincere thanks to all the partner, at the political and the technical levels alike that have co-operated in an extremely important way to make a good job in their respective territories, and in respect to the whole network.

At last, special thanks to all the international and local staff of the Programme. I cannot quote each of everyone individually, as they would be too many.

Finally, I admit that there have been a few difficult moments. Those of you that worked in Seenet perfectly know to what I refer to, and I prefer to leave everyone the freedom to remember the favourite moments.

To me this has been an important experience.

Roberto Barbieri

*Director, Department of International Co-operation
Ucodep*

1 The Network and the Programme: Origin, Outline and Outputs

1.1 The Origins of the Network

With the conclusion of the conflict in the area of the Western Balkans, the European Union, in agreement with many other international actors, promoted the subscription of the Pact of Stability undersigned in Colonia in June 1999. The challenge to integrate the Countries of the former Yugoslavia in the European Union constituted the main scenario for the stabilization and the development of the area in the medium-long term.

The establishment of systems of *governance* in these territories, through the strengthening of the local democracies and the administrative decentralization process represented a challenge in the challenge: a long-lasting peace would have been possible also thanks to the ability of the local authorities to open up a dialogue with their citizens, to promote forms of representation, to play a leadership role in the economic and social development of their territories, in a logic of subsidiarity. Therefore, within this framework, the trans-border co-operation, the regional partnerships and the exchanges of know-how among countries and regions of Europe assumed a fundamental importance for the entire process of democratization and stabilization of the South-Eastern Europe.

During the conflict in the Balkans, in the middle of the '90s, several local authorities of Tuscany and actors of the same civil society initiated a series of relationships based on meaningful and spontaneous mobilisation in the region. With time, such relations passed from a logic of exclusive humanitarian support and first emergency, to support development processes more properly. In considering such natural evolution in the relationships that involved the local authorities of its territory with those of the South-Eastern Europe, the Region of Tuscany accepted the challenge to engage in an important political action: to support the process of reconstruction of the dialogue in the South-Eastern Europe, starting up from the role of the Public Administration.

On the base of these relationships, the Region of Tuscany and the Region of Istria, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the support of the NGOs Ucodep of Arezzo and Cospè of Florence have promoted the establishment of a network of local governments finalized to the improvement of the managerial competences in two field-key of the government of the territory: the local economic development, and the management of the public utility services.

Such a process has been supported by organising two seminar sessions held in Florence (27th-28th March 2000) and in Brioni (16th-17th November 2000), that saw the participation of several representatives of the local governments of the South-Eastern European countries.

The recommendations emerged during the two meetings resulted in advancing a joint proposal of the Region of Tuscany and the network partner, in co-operation with Ucodep and Cospè for a three-

years Programme entitled *Seenet*¹ – Local Governments as Engines of the Development – part of a request of co-financing to the same Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1.2 Purposes and Partnership

The Programme *Seenet* – Local Governments as Engines of the Development – has began in June 2003 and it has been concluded in August 2006: in the three years of implementation it has received a financing slightly higher than 4 million Euro, for the attainment of main following objectives:

- to strengthen the managerial competences of the 21 local authorities of the South-Eastern European countries in the sectors of local economic development and of the public utility services, so that they consolidate their governance role in respect to each territory;
- to create stable dynamics of relationships among the partner of Tuscany and of the South-Eastern European countries through the support to the network.

The initiative has involved 21 local governments of the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo), and 13 local governments of the Region of Tuscany.

Partner SEE

- *Albania* – Municipality of Shkadar.
- *Bosnia Herzegovina* – Canton Sarajevo and of Herzegovina-Neretva; Municipalities of Livno, Trebinje, Nevesinje, Sanski Most, Prijedor e Tuzla; Cities of Mostar and Sarajevo.
- *Croatia* – Region of Istria; Municipalities of Pazin, Rovinj, Varaždin and Brtonigla.
- *Kosovo* – Municipality of Peć/Peja.
- *Macedonia* – City of Skopje.
- *Serbia* – City of Kragujevac e Niš; Municipality of Vozdovac (City of Belgrade).

Tuscan Partner

- Region of Tuscany; Municipalities of Firenze, Arezzo, Carrara, Montale, Pontedera, Quarrata, Pistoia, Prato; Mountain Community of Mugello, Empolese Valdelsa District; Provinces of Livorno, Arezzo and Pisa.

In order to offer a level of qualitatively actions the Programme involved IRPET (the Regional Institute for the Economic Programming of Tuscany) and CISPEL Confservizi Tuscany as technical subjects. To this initial nucleus of Tuscan local authorities and technical partner, others followed in the

¹ Acronym of South Eastern Europe NETwork.

implementation phase of the activities, as part of an important attempt to strengthen what more and more it has become the *Tuscan system* of co-operation.

The Programme developed according to an innovative use in the integration of the financial tools, that favoured the synergy between the regional institution and the NGOs. In this respect, in fact, two have been the integrated project initiatives submitted at the attention of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: one originating from the Region of Tuscany, through a memorandum of understanding undersigned between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Region, and one promoted by the NGOs Ucodep and Cospe, through a promoted consortium plan².

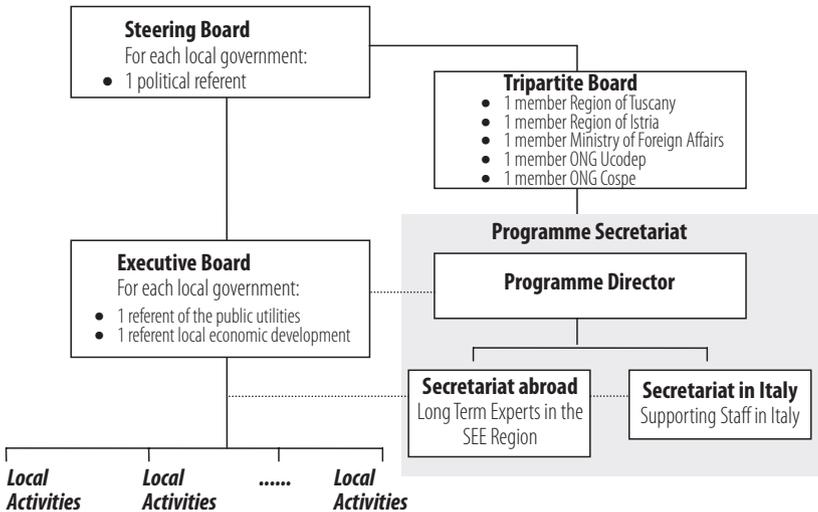
1.3 Organisational Structure

The Programme has been managed in all of its phases, through a continuous mechanism and constant involvement of the various network actors, both at political as well as technical levels. Purposely, Seenet has previewed the following organizational structures, as synthesised in Outline 1:

- The **Steering Board**, composed by a political representative for everyone of the local authorities partner to the Project. The Steering Board played a leadership and a supervision role of the Programme activities, meeting in plenary sessions with four encounters previewed during the three years of action;
- The **Tripartite Board**, composed by a representative for everyone of the following actors: a) DGCS Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE); b) Region of Tuscany; c) Region of Istria; d) the NGOs Ucodep and Cospe. The Tripartite Board has ensured the methodological leadership of the Programme and supervised, on behalf of the Steering Committee, the operative management of the same, guaranteeing regular meetings of approximately every six months;
- The **Executive Board**, composed by the technical representatives of the been local authorities involved in the Programme, and in charge of the technical coordination of the activities;
- The **Secretariat**, composed by the NGOs Ucodep and Cospe, responsible of implementing the activities in the South Eastern Europe and Italy. This operative management consisted in the headquarters been centred in Italy at the office of the NGO Ucodep (Italian Secretariat), and abroad through 5 offices (so called Foreign Secretariat: being Pula for Croatia, Sarajevo for Bosnia, Mostar for Herzegovina, Belgrade for Serbia and Skopje for Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania).

²The Project "Local Governments as Engines of Development – Rebuild the Bridges of the Dialogue in the South-East Europe" of the Region of Tuscany, approved by the Steering Committee of the DGCS-MAE (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) the same 1st of October 2002 with a decree n. 150; and the Project "Local Governments as Engines of Development – Rebuild the Bridges of the Dialogue in the South-East Europe" promoted by the NGO (n. 7496/CRZ)", approved by the Steering Committee of the DGCS-MAE (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on 1st October 2002 with a regulation/decreet n. 151.

Outline 1 – Organisational Structure of the Programme



To set up such of an articulated system for the management and supervision of the activities has been a precise volunteer decision of its promoters, in agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The need to guarantee the participation, and the sense of ownership to the Programme aims of the various technical and political actors of Tuscany and of South-Eastern Europe has represented the main element of this *modus operandi*. The political choice to offer the Operative Secretariat to the Tuscan civil society actors, namely the NGOs, has represented a completely innovative option in the Italian panorama. This will has been supported by a relevant experience matured by Ucodep and Cospe at the international level in project management and animation of decentralised co-operation, as well as thanks to the strong ties they had with the Tuscan territory. The role played by these associations in the Programme, in fact, has not been only that one of a mere execution of the activities, but of co-decision in the strategic course of the Programme, thus guaranteeing a constant and continuous interlink between Tuscany and the Balkans, but also among the political and the technical levels.

1.4 Strategy and Outputs

1.4.1 An Overall Overview

In establishing the relationships within the network, the elements of identification of the interests and the roles played by every partner have been fundamental. In so far as the strategy has previewed the progressive involvement of same partner in a logical gradual build-up of the network identity.

To such a purpose the Programme identified three main phases summarised in the following Outline 2: 1) knowledge and sharing; 2) partnership work; 3) the capitalization of the experience. Whilst the first two phases have been successive one to the other, the third has been carried out during the whole Programme implementation, through cross-sectional aspects such as, for example, internal communication and the on-going appraisal.

1.4.2 Phase I – Knowledge and Sharing

This phase focused on the activities of analysis of the context and the exchange of experiences, thus allowing a gradual and smooth but deepened acquaintance among the network partner of their respective areas, but also representing a fundamental opportunity of direct encounter between public administrators and civil servants. The activities been implemented in this phase have been the following:

- **Study of the administrative systems of the local government partner.** How are the competences distributed in the various countries in the Programme topics? Which is the role of the central governments, and of the various levels of the local administration? In non-homogeneous processes of decentralization in the cases of development processes and distribution levels of the local administration, the answer to these questions has represented a fundamental opportunity of dialogue among the local authorities in various countries. In this respect, in partnership with the South-Eastern European members we drafted documents of analysis at Country and at the local authority levels alike. Given to the inner diversity and complexities of the sectors of analysis chosen by the Programme it was agreed to draft such documents for everyone of the 21 partner in the field of the local economic development, as well as on public utility services;
- **Regional Analyses of the Best/Good Practices.** A process decentralization of just starting up means that also the public administrators of these local authorities face new roles and functions to play. Therefore, which models to consider? How to learn and, before still, to know what others are doing in similar circumstances? These are real and concrete problems in the absence of legal frameworks or past experiences. That is why, in the two sectors of action of this initiative we analysed a total of 22 experiences that can be considered “good practices” in the territories where the Programme has been implemented. The surveying has been carried out having defined in advance some criteria of reference for the identification of the regional Best/Good Practices. *Among them 9 refer to the sector of the public utilities³,*

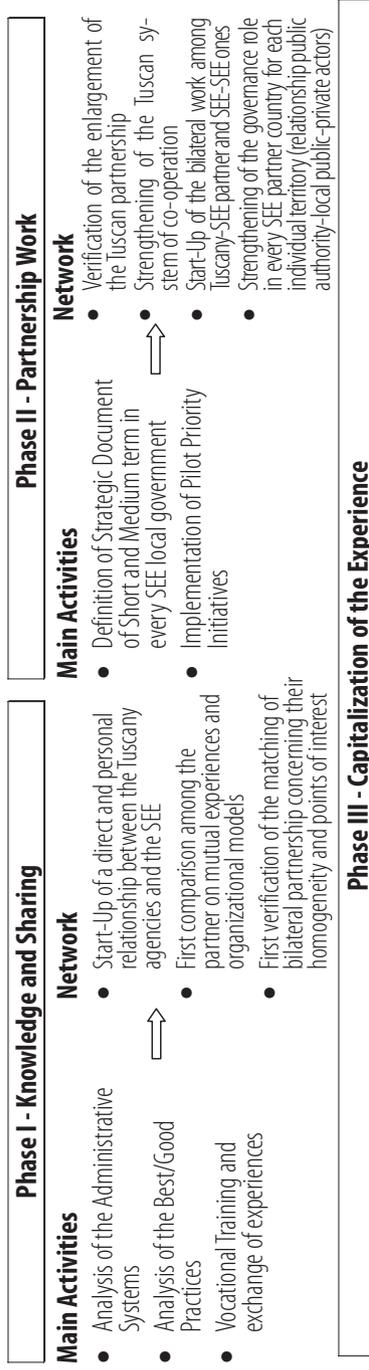
³The 9 “good practices” of the public utilities examined are distributed among the following sub-sectors: 3 on waste, 2 on the water sector, 2 regarding the quality of the public utilities, 2 on the protection of the environment.

while 13 to that one of the local economic development⁴. Such good practices have been shared, providing food for thinking to the partner.

- **Implementation of training sessions and exchanges of experiences among the partner.** The public administrations called to respond to new challenges and functions demand competent, able staff to carry out a role-guide in the government of their territories. In such context, the vocational specialised training and, more than this, the exchange of experiences has played an important function in the Programme. Within the first months of activity we identified the main training requirements of the partner in the field of the local economic development, and the public utility services. Following their needs' assessment, the vocational training session promoted an interactive character, limiting a great deal the approach though frontal lessons. Within the sector of local economic development 55 days of vocational training have been carried out in the fields of programming, planning and management of the local economic development, on territorial marketing and attraction of foreign investments, on tourist development, on rural development, as well as on the policies and services to the small and medium enterprises. The training cycle prepared on local public utility services was set up on specific content and technical arguments. Within this sector field there have been carried out 72 days of vocational training, where both the technical civil servants and the public utility managers of the local South-East European governments have participated. The vocational training process have represented, both in the field of the public utility services and the local economic development, an opportunity to establish important contacts among the actors of each individual territory in South-East Europe. Opportunities that have often acted as leverage for the future Programme development.

⁴The 13 "good practices" of the local economic development make reference, instead, to the following sub-sectors: 9 attaining to the services to the medium small enterprises (SMEs) and the planning of the local economic development, 1 to the establishment of a incubator for the development of SMEs, 1 concerning the equal opportunity of access, 1 to the process of social inclusion, 1 to the development of tourism.

Outline 2 – The Programme Strategy



1.4.3 Phase II – The Partnership Work

The progressive tutoring among the partner within the territories of the South-East Europe has concurred, through the implementation of two elements: the drafting of a document of medium-short term planning, and the consequent implementation of the Pilot Priority Initiatives, with a fund of 80.000 Euro provided in each of the 21 Balkan partner. The activities implemented in this phase have been the following:

- **Drafting of a Document of Short-Medium Term Planning.** In 2005, in close co-operation with every local authority agency of the South-East Europe, the Programme has defined a series of modules of technical assistance finalized to drafting short-medium term planning for the improvement of the managerial capacities of the public utility services, and the local economic development. These type of modules intended to strengthen the internal awareness of the potential choices of development available at every local authority, thus facilitating the encounter with the Tuscan or of the same South-East European partner who faced similar problems. Moreover, this work has concurred to frame the pilot project initiatives in a strategic, defined design shared by the local authority, and that is coherent with its own political vision.
- **Implementation of the Pilot Priority Initiatives in each of the local partner.** The implementation of the pilot priority initiatives in everyone of the South-East Europe territories has been carried out in the third and last year of the overall implementation and conclusion of the Programme strategy. Thanks to the fund of 80.000 Euro available to each local authority, they have planned and implemented their own pilot initiative on the territory, with the participation of several private and public stakeholders, and supported along the way by their respective Tuscan or South-East European partner⁵. These Initiatives are the result of a previous elaboration been born during the training seminar cycles, that have continued through the technical assistance. These Initiatives have been supported by specific criteria of selection, drafted by the same Steering Board of the Programme, on the proposal of the Tripartite Board, that have been subsequently subordinated to verification, to safeguard their added value and verify their transferability effect⁶. Such initiatives have taken the characteristics of specific sub-topics identified independently by the partner:

Local Economic Development

1. Development of Small and Medium Enterprises;
2. Rural Development and Valorisation of Typical Products;
3. Local Valorisation of the tourist and cultural heritage;

⁵ The Pilot Projects implemented are 27, considering that some of the local partner decided to use the funds available for these type of activities by sharing the resources between two initiatives.

⁶ In order to be eligible to funding, the Priority Initiatives that the South-East European partner proposed should have been: a) identified within the assessment process as emerged at the technical training seminars and during the exchange of experiences, and further included in the documents of short-medium term planning; b) provide elements of decentralised co-operation and institution building, foreseeing the active involvement of the Tuscan local governments, of their stakeholders, or of other Italian local governments or of the same area of the South-Eastern Europe; c) provide elements of innovation of the service offered, compared to the development context of South-Eastern Europe, or of the same territory of reference.

Local Public Utilities (water and waste)

4. Planning and construction of innovative public utilities plants;
5. Introduction of innovative elements of business management.

The following Table 1 underlines the entire range of the Priority Initiatives implemented so far, categorised by sector. For each partner country we highlight the results obtained, as well as the main elements of institutional sustainability evidenced within some months since the conclusion of the Project. In general terms, we can assert that the consultation policies activated in every local territory and the formalization of the rules for the approval of the priority initiatives have allowed that the challenge of added value and the innovation of the projects in each of the local governments has been achieved. The Priority Initiatives have therefore been an opportunity of:

- **Policies of consultation and operative concrete partnership among public and private actors.** In almost the totality of the cases, the partnership developed within each individual South-Eastern European territory has been particularly meaningful. The local governments have worked in coordination with their respective professional associations, public institutions and bodies, associations of the civil society in the planning and implementation of their projects. In some cases, the same projects are the initiative of an internal requirement expressed by the same citizens. This has been the case of the project envisaging the monitoring of the air quality in the Municipality of Varaždin in Croatia, born on the initiative of a citizens association; as well as the case of the project to connect an entire new suburb in Peć/Peja, in Kosovo, to the municipal sewage network, where the local community has contributed with its own financial resources to its drafting and implementation.
- **Long term commitment of the local governments involved.** The local authorities have followed up internally the economic and institutional sustainability of the initiatives. In all the cases, the municipal councils or executive committees have approved the studies and the executive planning, as well as the availability to sustain the maintenance costs of the newly activated services as per municipal budget forecast for the future years. Among all the cases we can extract the one of the Regional Agency for the Economic Development of Sumadija and Pomoravlje, in Serbia, that has agreed to set up a guarantee fund of 800.000 Euro of investment to facilitate the access to credit to new smalls businessmen.
- **Start-up of negotiation opportunities among the local governments, the central governments and the international institutions.** Finally, in some cases, the priority initiative of the Programme has constituted a useful pre-condition for the local government to negotiate the commitment to invest for the realization of important infrastructural works with their respective central level of government or with international institutions. This has been the case of the Municipality of Shkadar in Albania or of the Municipality of Trebinje in Bosnia Herzegovina that, through the executive planning of their respective rubbish dumps have obtained, respectively, that their plan could be added in the overall national strategic plan of the central government, as well the financing of its infrastructural works guaranteed by the European Union.

Table 1 – Summary of outputs of the Priority Initiatives – Effectiveness and sustainability

Priority Initiative	Main results / outputs achieved	Partner	Elements of Institutional Sustainability
Development of SMEs			
Municipality of Kragujevac <i>Promotion of Entrepreneur Associations in Kragujevac and setting up of a Guarantee Fund in the Regions of Šumadija and Pomoravlje</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational and management model of reference to set up a regional Guarantee Fund identified and formalised in a project proposal. Entrepreneur Associations active in Kragujevac strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality of Arezzo Confartigianato di Arezzo (Handicraft Association) Tuscan ArtigianCredito (Credit Fund of the Handicraft Sector) City of Kragujevac Entrepreneur Associations “Sloga” and “Šumadija” Regional Agency for the Economic Development of Šumadija and Pomoravlje NGO “Tango” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town council resolution on the budget allocation to the start-up of a Guarantee Fund Formalised commitment of the local governments for 800.000 Euro to set up a guarantee fund
Municipality of Voždovac <i>Support to the local economic development of the Municipality of Voždovac</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs Centre set-up, promoted and renowned in Belgrade Non-financial services to SMEs of the Municipality of defined, active and functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality of Voždovac Belgrade Regional Centre for SMEs Municipality of Montevarchi Valdamo Sviluppo (Agency of Development for the Area of Valdarno). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership formalised Management and personnel costs of the service covered by the local institutions Similar experience of Voždovac transferred to other two municipalities of the City of Belgrade
City of Niš <i>Establishment of a Centre in Support to the Development of SMEs in the Municipality of Niš</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informative and Coordination Centre for the Entrepreneurship Development (IKC) set up; Data bank for the commercialisation of the technical equipment employed, set up as provided by the Tuscan enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District of Empolese Valdelsa Development Agency of the District of Empolese Valdelsa City of Niš National Employment Office - Niš branch Regional Chamber of Commerce of Niš 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership formalised Management and personnel costs of the service covered by the local institutions Effective start-up of the service on-going
Municipality of Tuzla <i>Strengthening of the development capacity of SMEs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business-info Centre established and functioning Data on the local SMEs collected and analysed (software and data-base) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Agency RDA-NERDA Business Incubator Independent Entrepreneurial Association of Tuzla Canton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership formalised
Municipality of Prijedor <i>Establishment of a Business Incubator in Prijedor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Incubator established and functioning Business enterprises to be incubated selected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association of Local Economic Development PREDA Municipality of Prato Macrolotto Prato (Industrialised District of Prato) Toscana Promozione – Tuscan Agency of Tourist Promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership formalised Management and personnel costs of the service covered by the Municipality
Municipality of Sanski Most <i>Service Centre for SMEs and the Rural sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Centre set-up and staff trained SMEs Data Base established and functioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Associations of Entrepreneurs, Rural Workers and Handcrafters Province of Pisa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership formalised Management and personnel costs of the service covered by the Municipality

Priority Initiative	Main results / outputs achieved	Partner	Elements of Institutional Sustainability
Rural Development Canton Sarajevo <i>Development Study of the rural areas of Canton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Methodology "LEADER" for the participated planning applied in the Study of Rural Development of the Canton • Strategic lines of rural development of the Canton identified within the Priority Initiative integrated in the <i>Regional Planning Structure 2003-2023</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Development Institute of Canton Sarajevo • Faculty of Agriculture – University of Sarajevo • Urban Institute of the Republic of Slovenia • AZRI – Region of Istria • Ministry of Agriculture of Region of Tuscany • GAL ETRURIA srl (Local Action Group ETRURIA Ltd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan approved by the Canton Council of Ministers
Region of Istria <i>"Rural Hotel Village" Plan of Tourist Valorisation of the village of Završje</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and Urban Study elaborated • Detailed Urban Feasibility Study completed • Study on the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage in the area object of the Project – completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region of Istria • AZRRI L.t.d. & Municipality of Pazin • Municipality of Grisignana • Municipality of Civitella in Val di Chiana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valorisation Strategy approved by the Regional Council of Ministers • Contacts started-up for project financing
Municipality of Trebinje <i>Support to the Development of apianar production in Trebinje</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical competences of the apianar producers improved • Setting-up of a marketing office for the honey production • Development and Promotion Strategy in the sector defined and shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency of SMEs Promotion – Trebinje • NGO CRH • Co-operative Žalfija • Municipality of Trebinje; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-Private Partnership formalised • Office for the Promotion of the Sector managed by the same co-operative • Ongoing promotion of the traditional products
Tourist and Cultural Development			
City of Sarajevo <i>Infrastructural problem solving and the tourist valorisation of the At Međan square</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructures of the sewage network of Piazza At Međan completed • The recreational and social tourist activities carried out in the Public Square as integral part of the most renowned and precious Old City upgraded to become an additional tourist resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist Study Centre of Firenze • Tourist Ministry of Region of Tuscany • Tourist Association of Canton Sarajevo • Association of the Sarajevo Film Festival • Municipality of Stari Grad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up of a consultancy among public and private partner

Priority Initiative	Main results / outputs achieved	Partner	Elements of Institutional Sustainability
<p>City of Mostar Support to the establishment of a Museum on the Old Bridge in Mostar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archaeological material "Stari Most" recovered and restored New museum of the archaeological collection of Mostar set up in the Tower of the Old Bridge of Mostar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Firenze Tourist Study Centre of Firenze City of Mostar Museum of Herzegovina in Mostar Agency Stari Grad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial coverage of the service staff by the local institutions City Promotion of the Museum Activities ongoing
<p>City of Skopje Promotion and Tourist Marketing in the City of Skopje</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability of Tourist promotion of the City improved tourist promotional material (posters, maps, guides and brochures) of the City for the foreign and national markets drafted and publicised Educational with tour operators and international journalists organised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Ministry/Department of Tourism of the Region of Iusucany Tourist Study Centre of Firenze City of Skopje 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Informative Offices active on the territory Promotional Material permanently used by the City
<p>Canton Herzegovina-Neretva Development of the Tourist Offer of the Natural Park of Hutovo Blato</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data bank on the flora and the fauna completed Guide of the Natural Park of Hutovo Blato published Infrastructure for the tourist fruition of the Park completed Tourist Agency in charge of the activities of incoming and promotion of the Park established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Park of Migliarino Saint Rossore Massaciucoli Board Region of Toscana Ministry of Environment Canton Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Ministry for Trade and Environment Public Board "Natural Park Hutovo Blato" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial coverage of the service staff by the local institutions Canton support to the tourist promotion of the Park
<p>Municipality of Pazin Intervention of land restoration in Lakota (Pazin), and its reorganization urban planning for public use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Pre-Feasibility Study of Lakota drafted Urban and Strategic Plan of Lakota for the delivering of building permissions defined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CISPEL Toscana Coniservizi City of Pazin – Department of Public Works Usluga L.t.d. Pazin Croatian Waters – Hvrastke Vođe Kamen L.t.d. Pazin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan approved by the Municipal Council
<p>Municipality of Brtonigla Restoration of the Bay of Karigador – Environmental Feasibility Study and elaboration of a Project Proposal for the Urban-Environmental strategy of the Municipality of Brtonigla</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of the current situation of the shoreline of the Municipality of Brtonigla (of economic, property, environmental analysis) completed Study of Environmental Impact for the Bay of Karigador defined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality of Prato University of Firenze Municipality of Brtonigla 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study approved as constituent part of the municipal urban plan

Priority Initiative	Main results / outputs achieved	Partner	Elements of Institutional Sustainability
Municipality of Shkadar <i>Renovation and Tourist Promotion of Part of the Historical City Centre of Shkadar and SMEs Promotion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovation of the paving of a section of the historical area of Shkadar completed (around 2000 m²) Tourist guide of the City of Shkadar published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Shkadar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public utility company has comprised the improvement actions foreseen by the Project within its budget lines
Municipality of Sanski Most <i>Regulatory/Urban Plan of the Thermal SPA of Sanski Most Municipality - Sanska Iliza</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Regulatory Plan drafted and shared with the civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Institute of BiH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Regulatory Plan approved by the Municipal Council following public consultation with the civil society
Effectiveness and Efficiency of Public Utilities			
Municipality of Shkadar <i>Pre-feasibility Study and Planning of a new Regional Dump Site in Shkadar</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility Study and executive plan of the urban solid waste dump in the Regions of Shkadar and Lezha (around 200,000 customers) completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Province of Pisa Acque e Ingegneria Srl Pisa (Water Engineering Ltd Pisa) Publiambiente Spa Geoser Istituzione Centro Nord Sud (Institute North-South Centre) City of Shkadar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-municipal panel of consultation aimed at setting up the regional dump site formalised Final municipal and regional approval of the executive plan Definitive authorisation of the Ministry of Environment obtained
Municipality of Livno <i>Support of the management activity on water resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the sewage system in the Municipality of Livno Purchase of equipment and training of staff who can now use computers to manage and plan water facilities completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acque e Ingegneria Srl Pisa (Water Engineering Ltd Pisa) CISPTEL Confeservizi Toscana Public Utility Company Komunalno Livno 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start up of the active technical control implementation in the public utility company
Municipality of Nevesinje <i>Support of the management activity on water resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the sewage system in the Municipality of Nevesinje; Training as regards the use of software to detect leakage in the water system and the use of accounting software. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acque e Ingegneria Srl Pisa (Water Engineering Ltd Pisa) CISPTEL Confeservizi Toscana Public Utility Company Komunalno of Nevesinje 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control techniques to detect leakage in the water system applied by the public utility company
Municipality of Rovinj <i>Plan of Environmental Impact for the disposal of the Waste Water Plant in the area of Kuvi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection and verification of the environmental analysis data Studies on the environmental impact of the water collector, of the water purification plant, and of the release of wastewaters of the city completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CISPTEL Toscana Confeservizi Acque e Ingegneria Srl Pisa (Water Engineering Ltd Pisa) City of Rovinj Croatian Waters – Hrvatske Vode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructural Plant included in the Adriatic Project thanks to the support of the National Board of Water Resources

Priority Initiative	Main results / outputs achieved	Partner	Elements of Institutional Sustainability
Municipality of Peć/Peja <i>Extension of the sewage system, introduction of the GIS system and environmental protection in Peć/Peja</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City's main sewage system completed GIS for the Regional Water Public Utility "Hidrodrini" programmed, installed and started-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incipit Consulting Leonardo Engineering University of Firenze City of Peć/Peja 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The co-financing cost scheme for the construction of the plant has involved the participation of the civil society The public utility company has comprised the improvement actions foreseen by the Project within its budget lines
City of Varaždin <i>The Monitoring System of Air Quality in the urban perimeter of the City of Varaždin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stations for monitoring the environmental pollution placed on the territory Study of the Air Quality in the City of Varaždin defined on the base of the monitoring system set up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CISPEL Toscana Coniservizi City of Varaždin - Department of Environmental Protection Association "Franjo Košćec" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring actions permanently set-up by the public utility company
City of Niš <i>Improving of the Communication Policies of the City of Niš, through the opening of a Customer Relationship Management Office</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help Desk network established free of charge telephone number in order to manage inbound communications between citizens and public service companies set up Standard procedures of communication via Internet between Citizens and Companies developed and functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Niš Public Utilities NAISJUS (water) and MEDIANA (waste) City of Varaždin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Council and Public Utility Companies' resolutions approved to combine the service in one Staff of the public utility companies available to manage the service Combined service supplied
Municipality of Trebinje <i>Planning of the regional dump site and the experimental organisation of differentiated collection of waste</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary documentation for the recovery of the existing dump site drafted Study of Feasibility for the regional rubbish dump drafted Population sensitized and motivated in the decision-making process on the subject of waste disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality of Arezzo AISA Municipality of Empoli Pubiambiente Spa Municipality of Trebinje NGO CRH of Trebinje Civil Engineering Institute of the University of Sarajevo Civil Engineering Institute of Trebinje 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery plan to secure the dump site approved by the Municipal Council following a public consultation process with the civil society Project proposal handed over to the EU Delegation in Bosnia Herzegovina to be financed The EU Delegation in Bosnia Herzegovina has opened the tender for the rehabilitation works
Municipality of Prijedor <i>Prijedor's Citizens Awareness on Differentiated Waste Collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of awareness policies targeting the citizens on the differentiated waste collection through radio, tv, press and schools activities Structures and collection points for the differentiated collection located in the territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGO ED Kozara Public Utility Company ODKP Komunalne Usluge Prijedor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and operative units on differentiated waste collection set up by the Public Utilitiā Company
City of Skopje <i>Strategy for Organized Differentiated Waste Collection and Recycling in Skopje</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plan of short and medium term on differentiated solid urban waste collection and recycling in the City of Skopje drafted and shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CISPEL Toscana Coniservizi University of Firenze City of Skopje 	

1.4.4 Phase III – Capitalization of the experience

This is a phase that has been carried out in parallel with another, but that, in the conclusive period of the Programme, it has obviously developed its own character: the progressive acquisition and sharing of data and information through the web site, the on-going and conclusive evaluation of the Scuola Superiore S. Anna of Pisa of Advanced Studies with the scope to trace the methodological lessons learnt on decentralised co-operation, the work of construction of a network perspective at medium term or the analysis and the development of all the relationships activated as a result of the same networking. The activities implemented in this phase have been the following:

- **The Web Site at the disposal of the Network Communication.** As of the first year of activity, the Programme has been equipped of a web site (www.seenet.org), where the whole information on the initiative and the promoted actions have been collected. The web site, accessible in Italian, Serb-Croatian, Albanian and English, has represented an important tool of knowledge of the various realities involved in the Programme, as well as and above all a tool to facilitate the circulation and the sharing of the information among all the partner involved. In this respect, the Programme has set up an Intranet ad hoc space (www.seenet.org/intranet) devoted to the network members where to archive all produced documents, in the various languages, for the three years of activity.
- **The on-going and conclusive appraisal: towards a structured and transferable methodology.** Taking advantage of the external collaboration of the Scuola Superiore S. Anna of Pisa of Advanced Studies, and of its evaluation group, when the Programme started-up we set up a monitoring and evaluation system of the partnership itself. This system allowed us to analyse and understand the course of the Programme implementation, as well as to bring the necessary changes to the attainment of the outputs and the objectives, but also to the full satisfaction of the requirements of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the initiative. The methodology of work and the strategy employed have been therefore laid down in a final report of the initiative, edited by the Programme Secretariat in partnership with the Region of Tuscany, and the Scuola Superiore S. Anna of Pisa of Advanced Studies.

1.5 An External Active and Open Network

What have the relationships set-up through the network produced ? Which are the supportive elements of a real and effective strengthening of the relationships among the various partner? Undoubtedly, the answers to such questions enter in the merit of the effective added value of the network activity.

There have been numerous linkages and collaborations set up through the Programme Seenet in the three years of activity, with other initiatives of cooperation on the South-Eastern European

territory, with a particular emphasis to those that involved the project partner and/or their thematic areas of reference. This methodology of work, based on a continuous comparison with other local and international actors has concurred, on the one side to animate the partnership on the new employment opportunities and, on the other side to begin a process that makes, independent and sustainable the tie among the two territories in the medium term. There are five main categories that resume the opportunities offered by the network:

- 1. Stable partnerships with other similar programmes.** Within this category we have listed all those initiatives of collaborations of the Programme that carry projects financed by the same Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other international donors;
- 2. New side projects/initiatives set-up.** These are type of projects that have involved the network partner and that are in a phase of development;
- 3. New bilateral initiatives planned and started-up.** They are initiatives that have seen planning and start up by at least two Programme partner, and that have been or are currently being implemented;
- 4. Medium Term Perspectives / Protocols of Partnership.** They include those partnerships formalized by the partner, or rather projects that are born within a consulted course of planning;
- 5. New areas and perspectives of partnership consolidation identified.** They include those formalised requests of partnership or that been however set-up through the active involvement of the network partner.

In the following box we indicate a short synthesis of the Programme experiences matured through other similar interventions in the area.

Box 1 – Partnership initiated by the Programme

Solid Partnership with other similar programmes

- The participation to the Integrated Operating Programme of the Region of Tuscany based on Law 84/01, drafted in partnership with ARSIA (Regional Agency for the Development and the Innovation in Agriculture), for the technical assistance initiative in drafting the plan of rural development of the Region of Istria (Croatia).
- The synergy with the project financed by the Law 84/01 entitled “the Italian Municipalities for the Balkan Municipalities”, promoted by ANCI (Italian Association of Municipalities), within of which it has been realized a project plan the reorganization of the local rubbish dump of Obodina, Trebinje;
- The coordination with the initiative of “balcanicooperazione.it” promoted by the Autonomous Province of Trento and the Balkans Observatory, and co-financed by the **Law 84/01**.

- The backing to the project “Support for the improvement of the management of the solid waste in BiH”, implemented by the German Consulting C&E, completed in November 2005, and financed within the CARDS Programme.
- The involvement of the Serbian partner to the training courses on “Tools of internationalization and access to the financings for the Serbian SMEs” promoted organised by the programme of INTESA Formazione within the funding line of UNIDO ITPO titled “Institutional Support and Capacity-Building Measures to Enhance the Role of the Serbian Agency for the Development of SME & Entrepreneurship”.
- The participation of the technical actors of Serbia to the events organized by the Agency of Toscana Promozione in Belgrade in June 2006, within the project “Internationalization of three Tuscan production lines of Tuscany and of their relevant districts in Serbia”, financed by the Law 84/01.

New side projects/initiatives set-up

- Participation of the Region of Tuscany to the Second Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the South-East European Countries entitled “the Cultural Assets: a Bridge towards a Shared Future” held in Venice on 25-26 November 2005, and organized by the **Unesco** Roste.
- Planning of a three years action, in partnership with CEFA of Bologna, to be proposed to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to promote of the local typical products of the area of Herzegovina, that focused on wine and cheese products.
- Planning of an action of decentralised co-operation aimed at valorising of the typical products in Herzegovina responding to a call of proposals of the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia in April 2006, with an enlarged partnership of Tuscany, Friuli, Istria and Bosnia actors.
- A Project of international co-operation promoted by the Municipality of Prato on the financing line of MED PACT, that has involved the network partner of Brtonigla and Skopje and other cities of the Mediterranean.
- A Project of co-operation promoted through the call of proposals expired in March 2006 within the programme INTERREG III 2 Trans-border Adriatic. The Secretariat has facilitated the identification of the project and the involvement of the partner of the area of Herzegovina, in a proposal that sees involved the local governments, agencies of development and NGOs of the territory of the Region of Puglia.

New bilateral initiatives planned and started-up

- The initiative promoted on the Programme INTERACT where Istria and the Regional Agency for the Economic Development of Sarajevo (Sarajevska regionalna razvojna agencija - SERDA) joined and that began in 2005.

- The participation of some delegations of Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Albania to the Fair of Terra Madre - World Meeting of Food Communities and to the Hall of Taste, promoted by Slow Food in October 2004.
- The project proposal financed by USAID to implement a visit study on the wine production system and commercialization that saw the participation of 8 wine producers of the area of Herzegovina. The exchange of experiences has taken place in July 2005.
- The initiative supported by the Municipality of Prato to have 10 handicraft producers of Bosnia Herzegovina to the open fair entitled International Market of Prato, held in September 2005.
- The action, financed by the Region of Tuscany, to valorise the typical productions of the area of Herzegovina sees the involvement of the Province of Arezzo, the Municipality of Prato, and the Mountain District of Mugello. A one year plan has begun in December 2005.
- The involvement of the cheese producers of Nevesinje to the Exhibition of Vinitaly in Verona, held in April 2006.
- The presentation and implementation of a project proposal on the Exchange Programme financed by the European Union in the city of Nis, with the support of the Empolese Valdelsa's District, for an initiative on the development of the Centre of Information and Planning.
- Presentation and implementation of an initiative of decentralised cooperation financed by the Region of Tuscany for the support to the reform process of the system of management of the mental health in Serbia, specifically through the implementation of pilot actions in Niš. Technical and institutional Partner of Tuscany, and in particular of the Empolese Valdelsa District, the Province of Arezzo, Florence and Livorno and the Italian Caritas have been the other Italian actors involved.

Perspectives / Protocols of Medium Term Partnership

- In May 2005, the Province of Pisa undersigned a partnership agreement with the Municipality of Tuzla, in Bosnia Herzegovina, aimed at developing further bilateral projects of co-operation.
- In 2006, the Agency of the Regional Park of Migliarino Saint Rossore Massaciuccoli undersigned a Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency of the Park Hutovo Blato (Bosnia Herzegovina) in order to develop a co-operation between the two protected areas in the next few years.
- Since January 2006, the Region of Tuscany, in collaboration with the Programme Secretariat, has actively worked within the Framework Agreement for the "Programme in support to

the Regional co-operation” together with the Balkan countries to define actions in support to the local economic development.

- Since March 2006, within the Panel of Consultation of the Region of Tuscany for the co-operation on the development of the South-East European area, we have activated a feasibility project to identify three proposals that will see the involvement of various actors of the Tuscany territory. The topics where to focus the proposals are: rural development, small and medium enterprises and tourism.

New areas and perspectives of partnership consolidation identified

- The entire Region of Šumadija and Pomoravlje has co-operated actively together with the Municipality of Kragujevac to implement a priority initiative aimed at promoting of the entrepreneurial associations in Kragujevac, and at the establishment of a guarantee fund. Moreover, the Municipality of Kursumlija in Serbia, has recently co-operated with the Municipality of Pontedera through a stable territorial co-operation on cultural issues. In this respect, there are opportunities for the future, to consolidate the partnership with the entire Serbian territory.
- The Zenica-Doboj Canton (Bosnia Herzegovina), that has an on-going partnership with the Region of Piemonte, since the beginning of the Programme has shown a great interest to join the Seenet Network, thus sharing its objectives and the proposed methodologies of work.

Additionally, in the three years of the Programme activity we favoured the exchanges of experiences and technical assistance among the South-East European partner. This exchange has, for example, allowed AZRRI – the agency of the Region of Istria responsible for agricultural development – to collaborate with the Canton Sarajevo in the rural plan of development, as well as with their Herzegovinian counterparts in the processes to promote and valorisate the local typical productions; to the City of Varaždin to share their customer care management plan with the City of Niš; and finally to define a project proposal to improve the planning competences in the field promotion of the territorial resources, among the municipalities of Shkadar, Tuzla, Sanski Most, Prijedor, Voždovac, Kragujevac, and again Niš, with the purpose to attract foreign investments and visitors.

Ultimately, a separate issue deserves to be analysed regarding the involvement of the Tuscan partnership. In this framework, the Programme has undoubtedly offered an opportunity for many local authorities to create a “system” of recognised practices and methodologies of co-operation within their respective territories, on top of favouring the strengthening of the relationships among the South-East European local authorities with their respective actors. Further to this, a significant

number of new partner have been actively involved, also at regional level, during the development of the Programme. Some synthetic data are indicated Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Contribution activated by the Tuscan actors of the System of Co-operation

Partner	Numbers	Of whom directly involved in the TA and training seminar cycles	Of whom directly involved in the Priority Initiatives
Initial local government Partner	13	10	7
New local governments involved	3 ⁷	3	3
New public-private bodies / institutions involved through the local government partner	10 ⁸	10	10
New regional bodies / institutions involved in the Programme	8 ⁹	6	6

As cleared back in § (paragraph) 1.2, the Tuscan partnership of SEENET has set off with 13 local governments involved, but along the way:

- it has started-up the participation of: a) 10 institutions of each respective territories; b) another 3 local governments; c) 8 organizations of a regional character and 3 additional departments of the Region of Tuscany;
- it evolved from being a project partnership to a programme partnership, working on the dimension of continuity of the relationships and adding to it the developments of the Seenet partnership within the regular work of its Regional Panels on Geographic Coordination.

In the following paragraph we provide the framework of the bodies and the institutions involved at regional level, as well as of the actors of the territory connected to the local governments involved in the three years of the Programme activity.

⁷ They are the Municipalities of Empoli, Montevarchi and Civitella in Val di Chiana

⁸ They are of Acque e Ingegneria S.r.l. (Province of Pisa); Confartigianato di Arezzo and Chamber of Commerce of Arezzo (Municipality of Arezzo); University of Firenze (Municipality of Prato); GAL Etruria (Provinces of Pisa and Livorno); Macrolotto Prato (Municipality of Prato); Agenzia Empolese Valdelsa (Empolese Valdelsa District); Valdarno Sviluppo (Municipality of Montevarchi); Publiservizi (Municipality of Empoli); AISA (Municipality of Arezzo)

⁹ That is the: Regional Agency of Development and the Agricultural Innovation (ARSIA) – Tourist Study Centre of Firenze – Slow Food Foundation of Biodiversity – Department of Tourist Incentives / Promotion (Region of Tuscany) – Department of Rural Development (Region Tuscany) – Regional Park of Migliarino Saint Rossore Massaciuccoli – Artigiancredito Toscano – Agency of the Economic Promotion in Tuscany (APET).

Box 2 – The Tuscan partner and their role in the Programme

Region of Tuscany. the Department of International Activities has the responsibility of the Programme and directs its Executive Committee on behalf of the Region of Tuscany. It has provided the Programme coordination and facilitated the involvement of all the institutions of a regional character. Its Department of Incentives and Investments for Tourism has carried out the coordination of all the activities of technical assistance to the implementation of the priority initiatives on local economic development that focused on tourism. Its Department on Communitarian Programmes on Rural Development, has coordinated the technical assistance for the rural planning of Canton Sarajevo. Its Department of Handicraft and Policies to the Support to Business Enterprises has facilitated the involvement of Artigiancredito Toscano within the technical assistance on the setting-up of a guarantee fund in Kragujevac.

Ucodep. It has managed and supervised the Operative Secretariat of the Programme, coordinating all its activities, both in Italy and in South-Eastern Europe.

Cospe. Within the Operative Secretariat of the Programme, it looked after the coordination of the activities of the Focal Points of Mostar and Skopje, and the activities related to the web site.

CISPEL Toscana Confservizi. It played the role of being the Programme technical partner, talking care after the training activities and exchange of experiences, besides those of technical assistance to the planning and implementation of the priority initiatives on local public utilities in the Cities of Niš (Serbia), Varaždin (Croatia), Skopje (Macedonia), the Municipalities of Prijedor, Livno, Nevesinje and Trebinje (Bosnia Herzegovina), Rovinj and Pazin (Croatia), Shkadar (Albania). In its role it has facilitated the involvement of **Acque e Ingegnerie S.r.l.**, **Aisa S.p.A.** and **Publiambiente S.p.A.**

The Institute of the Economic Planning of Region Tuscany (IRPET). It played the role of being the technical partner, together with Local Global Srl, and Matraia Srl, talking care of the cycle training and exchange of experiences phases on local economic development.

Scuola Superiore S. Anna di Pisa – The School of Advanced Studies Sant’Anna of Pisa. It was responsible of the on-going and conclusive appraisal of the Programme that will be included in the Final Programme Publication.

The Regional Agency of Development and the Agricultural Innovation (ARSIA). ARSIA has participated in the training cycle and exchange of experience in Istria with its own experts. Moreover, it has offered its own technical competences during the visit in Tuscany of the Canton Sarajevo aimed to share the role, the methodologies and the activities that the Agency carries out on its territory.

Artigiancredito Toscano (ACT). It has carried out the technical assistance to the priority initiative of Kragujevac (Serbia) for the drafting of a Pre-feasibility Study on the institution of a guarantee fund, and the elaboration of a project proposal in the Region of Šumadija and Pomoravlje that involved the General Department on Economic Development of the Region of Tuscany.

Tourist Study Centre of Firenze – CST. It has been involved in the second phase of the Programme, thanks to its multiple competences on tourism, with a specific reference to the ad hoc planning in Varaždin and Pazin (Croatia), the promotion of tourist environmental and cultural products, and the tourist process of incoming in the Cities of Skopje (Macedonia), Peć-Peja (Kosovo), Sarajevo and Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina). During the implementation of the priority initiatives, beyond the field missions being carried out, the CST organized workshops with tour operators interested to invest in Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina, besides identifying a joint strategy of tourist promotion for Sarajevo and Mostar.

Institution of the Regional Park of Migliarino Saint Rossore Massaciuccoli. It has contributed in an active way to improving the offer and the tourist use of the Park of Hutovo Blato (Bosnia Herzegovina), succeeding to undersign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bosnian partner, thus involving and sensitizing the numerous technical actors and environmentalists of the Tuscan territory.

Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity. It has been involved as member of the Tuscan system of co-operation to the various meetings of the Programme Executive Committee, activating the presidium on the valorisation of the Istrian ox in Croatia.

Toscana Promozione. It has been involved in the training activities and the exchange of experience in Belgrade. Jointly with the Municipality of Prato it hosted the assessment visit in Tuscany of the Municipality of Prijedor on city marketing in the paper industry.

The Local Governments and their actors in the territory

Municipality of Arezzo. It has actively participated to all phases of the Programme, in the sector of local economic development - through the involvement of Confartigianato Arezzo, of the Chamber of Commerce of Arezzo and of the Business Centre and Conferences of Arezzo – as well as in the sector of public utilities - through the participation of the local company of waste management, Aisa S.P.A. It has worked with the City of Kragujevac (Serbia), in co-operation with Artigiancredito Toscano in the technical assistance and implementation of the priority initiatives, with the purpose to create a guarantee fund. Moreover, it established a partnership between the Municipalities of Trebinje (Bosnia Herzegovina) and Empoli, to implement the executive plan of the emergency rubbish dump.

Municipality of Civitella in Val di Chiana. It started up its partnership with the Region of Istria and the Municipality of Grisignana (Croatia), bringing in it its own experience of valorisation of an historical village of medieval origins.

Municipality of Empoli. It has been involved with its own public utility company, Publiambiente S.p.a., and the Municipality of Arezzo, in the phase of technical assistance and the implementation of the executive of the emergency rubbish dump of Trebinje (Bosnia Herzegovina).

Municipality of Firenze. With the Involvement of its Councillorship on Culture, it has become the partner of the City of Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina) in the restructuring and the setting-up of the Museum of the Bridge of Mostar.

Municipality of Montevarchi. It has accompanied the Municipality of Vozdovac (Serbia) in the opening of the Centre on the Support of Small and Medium Local Enterprises. In order to better carry out this task, it has involved the Agency of Development of Valdarno, that has participated to various missions in Vozdovac and hosted the Serbian representatives during their visit-study in Tuscany.

Municipality of Pontedera. It has been involved in the training seminars and the exchange of experiences of the local government services on local economic development in Serbia. Thanks to the Seenet Secretariat, it has provided new impulse to the partnership with the Municipality of Kursumlija on the restructuring of the local library.

Municipality of Prato. It has been involved directly since the beginning in the phase of the exchanges of experiences with the Macrolotto of Prato in the introduction of its partnership among local authority and economic actors aiming at improving the growth of SMEs. Additionally, with the University of Firenze has been involved in the environmental and urban planning. The same Municipality has also engaged in exchanging its experience as a local authority in the development of the typical productions. The Municipality has deployed its expertise in these three sectors by performing the entire cycle of the technical assistance for planning and implementing of the same Priority Initiatives in Prijedor (Bosnia Herzegovina) fostering a SMEs Incubator), in Brtonigla (Croatia) fostering the valorisation of the archaeological sites and the Feasibility Study of the Bay of Karigador; as well as with the Municipalities of Herzegovina (Bosnia Herzegovina), in partnership with the Province of Arezzo, the Mountain Community of Mugello and Ucodep aiming at valorising of their respective typical products.

Municipalities of Quarrata and Montale. They has been involved since the initial phase of the exchange of experiences, introducing their model of Business One Stop Shop.

Province of Arezzo. It has contributed to the training phase, and during the exchange of experiences by introducing the role of the local authorities in the rural development of a given territory. Moreover, in partnership with the Municipality of Prato, the Mountain Community of Mugello and Ucodep it has accompanied the partner of the area of Herzegovina to identify their own typical products, and developed a wider plan to valorise the typical products in Herzegovina.

Province of Pisa. It has been involved since the initial training phase and the exchange of experiences in the sector of local economic development, supporting the Programme also in the field of public utility companies. It has supported the Municipalities of Tuzla and Sanski Most (Bosnia Herzegovina), in the planning and implementation activities of their respective priority initiatives oriented to strengthening their services to the small and medium enterprises. Moreover, it has strengthened the partnership with the Municipality of Shkadar (Albania) by involving the Institution Centre North-South, the Waters Engineering L.T.d and Publiambiente S.p.a. in the implementation of the Feasibility Study set up a regional rubbish dump.

Province of Livorno. During the training phase they have shared with the Programme Secretariat the documents on territorial marketing, and the re-organization of the industrial areas, with a specific reference to their experience in the harbour sector. Besides, it has facilitated the involvement of the GAL Etruria (Local Action Group Etruria) in providing the technical assistance to the Canton Sarajevo.

Empolese Valdelsa District. Thank to Seenet, the Empolese Valdelsa District has continued to develop its historical partnership with the City of Niš, in Serbia. By involving the Development Agency of Empolese Valdelsa, it has participated to the seminars of exchange of experiences, and of technical assistance to define a strategic plan of communication policies in support the local economic actors, as well as by enlarging the services of the local Centre of Business Services.

Mountain Community of Mugello. It has participated in the training cycle and development of the exchange of experiences in Bosnia Herzegovina on the promotion of rural development. Together with the Municipality of Prato, the Province of Arezzo and Ucodep it has promoted a plan to valorise the typical products in Herzegovina.

Local Action Group Etruria. In partnership with the Department of the Region of Tuscany for the European Union Programmes on Rural Development, it has coordinated the provision of technical assistance for the introduction of participative methodologies in rural planning in the territory of the Canton Sarajevo (Bosnia Herzegovina).

2 Lessons Learnt

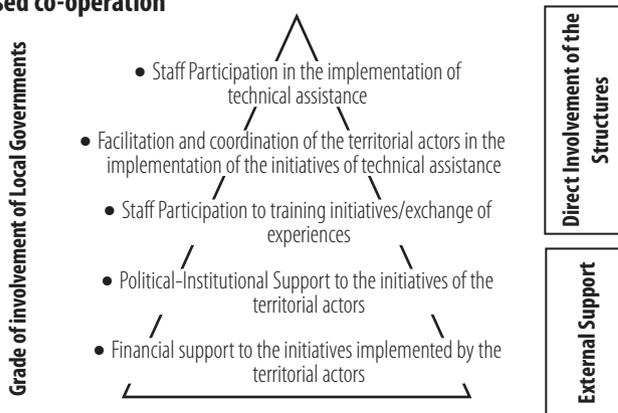
2.1 The Seenet model for decentralised co-operation

2.1.1 The Local Governments Modes of Commitment

The literature on decentralised co-operation focuses on its several distinguished elements. The perspectives of the analyses of this concept are more than one, but there are no univocal approaches within the international community on them. When the nature of the actors involved, being the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE), the European Union and the various agencies of the United Nations supply differing definitions based on the various weight given to the public-private relationship, also the analysis of the participation purposes provided offers significant differences in terms of weight on the development of one or both territories partner in that given relation.

An interesting aspect of the analysis on where to place the Programme Seenet within the framework of the degree of mobilisation and awareness of a given territory and of the local authority partner to the Programme, is the one introduced by Ms Vanna Ianni¹⁰. Not having the claim to provide a mere classification of the modalities of involvement of local authorities in decentralised co-operation, we can still identify some of them, by placing Seenet within a specific spectrum. Therefore, in the Outline 3 we have earmarked some categories, according to a trend of *continuum* in the commitment guaranteed by the local authorities that goes from an external support - economic or political as it may be - to initiatives conceived and implemented by its territorial actors, that led to a real and direct involvement of its own structures in association with other actors of that given territory.

Outline 3 – Mechanisms to involve the Local Governments in the Initiatives of decentralised co-operation



¹⁰ Refer to Prof. Vanna Ianni, The Logic of Action in Decentralised Co-operation, page 62, in *Towards a New Vision of Aid* (Verso una nuova visione dell'aiuto), ed. Solaria-ANCI, 2004.

According to the aforesaid classification, and to what has been said in the previous chapters, we shall now analyse the way how Seenet has represented an initiative of high intensity as regards the commitment of the local authorities and actors of the Region of Tuscany in the field of decentralised co-operation, placing itself in the analysis of Prof. Ianni in the category of territorial cooperation¹¹. In fact, the partnership that characterising the whole Programme, still more intensively in its second phase, requested a strong commitment of the Tuscan structures of the local authorities. They have put at disposal of the partner their own specific competences and have had played an active role in networking with other subjects of their territory to support the South-East European partner to plan and implement their respective Priority Initiatives. Significant examples of these mechanisms are the share and the experiences offered by the Municipalities of Arezzo¹² and of Prato¹³, or the Province of Pisa¹⁴ that, in different occasions of the Programme implementation have involved those territorial actors able to better respond to the requirements expressed by their Balkan counterparts.

2.1.2 A Five Dimensions Network

If we take into consideration a multi actors reality, as a component of decentralised co-operation, it is implicit in it that the concept of a “network action” becomes an intrinsic characteristic of many projects of decentralised co-operation. The analysis of the Programme lead us to differentiate the term of “network” by considering its various elements, not all of them necessarily characterizing more complex mechanisms of territorial cooperation. We can therefore state that this Programme as set up five types of network, different among themselves, and each functioning with their own logic of management. Thus, our analysis expresses the concept of “short network” and “long network”, being typical of the literature on local development, where the term “short network” relate to that type of partnership existing among the subjects of a same territory, while with the expression “long network” refers to partnerships existing among subjects of different territories.

Outline 4 summarises the five network dimensions that have identified Seenet as a typical Programme of decentralised co-operation, in a logic of the strengthening of:

- short network of local development in every partner area of South-Eastern Europe;

¹¹ In territorial/decentralised co-operation, the partnership involves several actors and institutions, through a variety of methodologies that promote the awareness and a participatory approach of the whole area, often acting within a specific framework of agreement.

¹² The Office of the European Policies of the Municipality of Arezzo has involved them in the activities of the local Chamber of Commerce, its Business and Conferences Centre, of the Provincial Association of Handicraft, of A.I.S.A S.p.a. – the public utility company that manages the municipal disposal of solid urban waste.

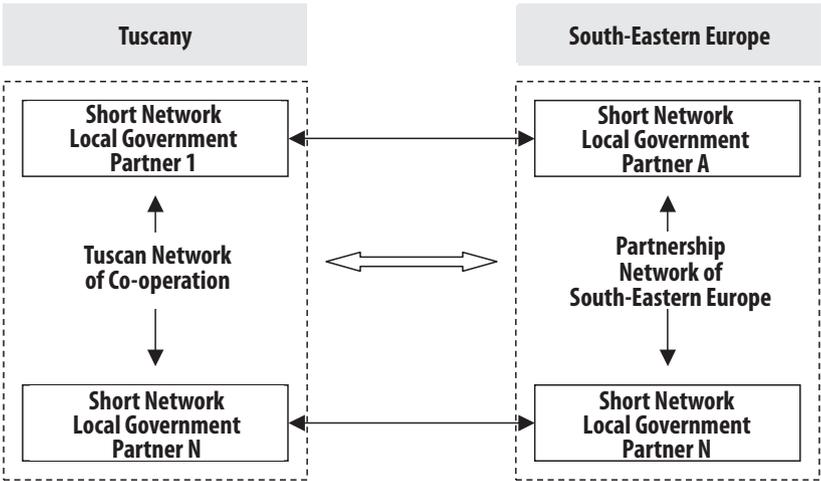
¹³ The Municipality of Prato, through its Department of Economic Development, has involved the Industrial District of Prato (Macrolotto Prato), the University of Florence, Department of Environmental and Urban Planning, and the Association of Business Shops of Prato.

¹⁴ The Province of Pisa has involved the Institution Centre North-South, Acque e Ingegneria S.r.l. (Water Engineering Ltd) and Publiservizi S.p.a. (Public Utility Company Network).

- short network of co-operation in every partner area of Tuscany;
- long network among the Tuscan partner;
- long network among the South-East European partner;
- long network among the Tuscan and South-East European partner.

In conclusion, it emerges a “complex” network dimension that has characterized the type of decentralised co-operation deployed by Seenet, differentiating it of other similar type of actions.

Outline 4 – The Network Dimension of Seenet.



2.2 The Strategy

2.2.1 The Progressive Commitment of the Partner

In the description of the origins of the network, section 1.1, we have analysed as the partnership was born from the relationships set up by some of the Tuscan and South-East European local governments during the emergency phase of the war period. Originally these partnerships have emerged from strong ideals, although they still showed some elements of extemporariness. Elements that brought along a poor degree of awareness within the structures of the local governments, and of the territories. In what way the Programme strategy has taken in consideration this framework

element? The answer, that has represented one of the successful characteristics of the Programme, has progressively involved the partner, through action phases where their acquaintance to the Project and engagement went progressively increasing. This logic has concerned the different network dimensions that have characterised the Programme action, as follows:

- Within the international partnership, by previewing progressive mechanisms of their involvement in the various Programme phases, passing from a greater acquaintance among the partner through the exchange of experiences and training cycle, to a consequent support to the next phases of planning and joint implementation of the Priority Initiatives;
- Within the South-East European short networks. By involving the territorial actors in the training cycle, and the one of exchange of experiences (initially not foreseen in the Programme), we have in fact, set up an experimental laboratory of joint experiences and work in each individual South-East European area;
- Within the short and long networks of the Tuscan co-operation. The progressive meeting of similar partnerships has been carried out according to an initial phase of deepening of interests of every partner. Nothing has been taken for granted and, following the formal agreement of the partner to the Programme, we proceeded to work towards the deepening of the specific interests in the sectors and geographic areas of engagement. As a matter of fact, within every Tuscan territory we built up a path of involvement of the respective territorial partnership lead by each local government¹⁵.

2.2.2 A Flexible Planning Method

This is one of the more successful elements of the Programme and appreciated by the partner. In this respect, a good component of the Programme action strategy has foreseen strong elements of flexibility that have helped to balance the actions with the partner in way specific and consulted manner. This element is the result of methodological choices that have characterized the entire action. Since its initial phases, that is through the implementation of the training seminars and the exchange of experiences, the Programme has foreseen a re-orientation of its actions in comparison to what drafted in the project document, by widening the number and the typology of actors, putting the bases of local consultation practices, and the overall project action plan according to the effective exchange of experiences on the management models. The same overall draft of the short and medium term planning document, as far as to identify the priority initiatives, anticipated in the project document their on-going fine tuning to be implemented by every South-East European partner. Therefore, we implemented a process planning according to what has been foreseen the European Union guidelines on Project Cycle Management.

¹⁵ Such involvement has concerned the interests and the willingness of the individual actors of the Tuscan territory in co-operating, not solely of the needs expressed by the South-Eastern European partner.

2.2.3 A Mixture of horizontal and vertical actions

At the beginning of the drafting phase of the project proposal and, subsequently, at the beginning of its implementation phase, the South-East European local governments have earmarked some predominant elements:

- **the damage or even the devastation of some important infrastructures** (traffic network, sewage works, aqueducts/water pipes), that provoked an obvious discomfort to the local population, and a consequent inevitable pressure on the local political class;
- **the progressive decentralization of the functions lacking a simultaneous increase of the available resources.** It is typical of many decentralization processes in their initial phase, and that is where the South-East European countries are still today, that the process of transfer of functions by the central to the local level of governments happens initially through national framework laws that do not offer a platform to the internal competences of the local government staff, neither a significant increase of the financial resources from the central government, nor the start up of a process of autonomy of taxes.
- **the lack of a direct access to the resources of international co-operation.** In the first phase of reconstruction immediately following the conflict the resources of the international co-operation have been often significant. Of these resources have, however, benefited mainly the central governments, without any significant back draft to the local governments.
- **the prevailing of horizontal and standardized actions of international co-operation.** If the local governments have not been able to benefit directly of the resources of international co-operation, a large part of these have instead been directed towards the important need of a change of mentality, and the consequent training of the ruling class of the local governments. However, as it often happens, the donors have channelled a whole package of resources aimed at training initiatives to character of excessive standardization that, according to the South-East European partners' perceptions, lacked also of concrete follow-ups.

As a consequence, the Programme action strategy had a combination of cross-sectional activities involving the whole partnership informally, although with homogenous mechanisms – and that is the case of the training cycle or the assessment of the territories – through vertical actions – such as the technical assistance on planning and implementation of the priority initiatives carried out in every territory, according to their respective peculiarities. This combination of actions has resulted to be functional to the consolidation of the trans-national partnership, strengthening the network awareness on the action, but obeying at the same time, to the requirements of the Programme practicability, as it has always been by South-East European partner.

2.2.4 The link between Analysis-Planning-Implementation

Among the strategic elements that have characterized the Programme, an important role has been played by including the three elements of analysis, planning and implementation of the initiatives in every territory partner of the South-Eastern Europe. As it has been also clear in a recent study that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has commissioned to the International Centre of Political Studies¹⁶ analysing some actions of the Italian decentralised co-operation in the Balkan area the impact on the strengthening variables on governance, as well as the degree of trust on the institutions and on the public life have had positive outcomes through specific actions. This is the case of the Programme Seenet that favoured the link among analysis-programming-implementation. Therefore, an opportunity has been given to the local stakeholders to experiment panels of consultancy that, being based on the independent capacity to assess the needs of the territory, have been in a better position to setting up scenarios of development in the medium term, accompanied by concrete initiatives. This methodology has started up a virtuous course favouring a real trigger of local resources to respond to specific problems.

The ability to involve the territory actively in its whole variety seems to be the necessary strategy to target directly the citizens and their needs. This process triggers virtuous mechanisms linked to the strengthening of the civil society through its members endowed by a greater initiative and a desire to change. A programme like Seenet, thanks also to its particular network structure, has the capacity to mobilise the peculiar experiences of the actors involved, with the purpose to support their efforts in the daily relationships with the institutional representatives. The strengthening of the local competences begins from bottom up, with the twofold intention to intervene on the real necessities of the territory, and to build up the civil society in the whole.

On the one hand, the same study of CeSPI proves that the projects focusing merely on the analysis and programming phases, without having the necessary resources to implement them, although they influenced the mechanisms of governance, they also generated an increase in frustration of the local actors that found themselves in the immediate impossibility to improve their services provision. Besides, those initiatives that focused exclusively on the implementation phase have performed positively on the side of the service improvement, although such a process was not supported by a strong motivation of the local actors. A process that can really come into effect through the facilitation of the consultancy mechanisms of analysis and programming. In this respect, these programmes have demonstrated to have a poor capacity in supporting the service improvement through the increase of local governance capability in the medium term.

¹⁶ Pietro Paolo Proto and Alessandro Rotta, "The Italian Co-operation for Democracy and the Rule of Law in the Western Balkans" - La cooperazione italiana per la democrazia e la legalità nei Balcani Occidentali, CESPI, September 2006.

2.3 The Management

2.3.1 The Role of the Secretariat

The same Seenet structure, equipped of an permanent coordination body, as is the Secretariat, represents a true added value of the Programme. This choice, beyond being innovative in its transferability element, it's in line with the increasing importance given to the civil society and the "Tuscan system" as a whole. The setting up a thematic managerial and organizational point of convergence, allows in fact to coordinate the individual efforts, thus strengthening the overall potentialities of its impact. Moreover, the presence of the Focal Points on the territory, and their continuous and constant relationship with the partner, their rapid capability to respond to the requirements of the territory is evidence of the one of the most innovative elements of the Programme. A precise strategic choice, intended to increase the degree of confidence and involvement of the beneficiaries, that has hence been considered by the local actors a real strength of the Seenet structure. In a territorial context loaded with deep divisions and with obvious dissimilarities among the partner, it is easy to catch the importance of a similar result within a fundamental course that enhances the abilities to the local agencies.

The work of the Secretariat concentrated its efforts on all the 5 network dimensions, according to the following instances:

- **Short Network in the South-Eastern Europe.** This is the role of the operative Programme coordination, in partnership with the representatives of the local governments as being implemented in the South-Eastern Europe. Such task has been developed through the Foreign Secretariat and its relevant Focal Point Offices in Pula, Sarajevo, Mostar, Belgrade and Skopje. It mainly concerned the following functions: a) facilitation of the execution of the Programme activities in every territory partner, b) Programme information to the various subjects of territory partner, c) stimulus for a definition of the local partnership, d) organisation of the technical assistance missions of the Tuscan and the South-East European partner, e) tie and coordination with other similar initiatives of international cooperation.
- **Tuscan Short Network.** This is the role of facilitation of the individual Tuscan partner in the Programme. This type of short network has demanded a complex level of involvement, through the direct participation of the local government structures as mentors of the South-East European partner. In this respect, the Italian Secretariat has offered the local government partner a technical assistance type of tutorship that has regarded the main following functions: a) support to the technical structures been involved in the needs analysis of the respective territories of the South-Eastern Europe, b) logistic organisation of the missions, c) facilitation in the relationships among the local government partner and the technical actors of their respective territories, d) technical assistance on the communication and information phases

of the Programme activities to the citizenry, e) networking with other similar Italian initiatives of international development co-operation;

- **Tuscan Long Network.** This is a networking role among the various Tuscan Programme partner, aiming at the development of partnerships and of a shared vision of the action foreseen. Given the current dimension and the number of partner involved, the Programme has offered a stimulus in setting-up a strategy of a Tuscan system-to-be in the field of international co-operation with the South-East European region. For instance, the Italian Secretariat has played the following role: a) link among the Tuscany local governments in their partnership with the several technical institutions, b) support and facilitate the shared joint networking opportunities among the partner, c) introduce the Tuscan partnership working methodology of the Programme within the Tuscan Panel of Coordination on South-Eastern Europe;
- **Long Network in the South-Eastern Europe.** It concerns the networking and communication role among the South-East European partner. It involved the following functions: a) coordination of the initiatives of exchange of experience among the partner with homogeneous interests and problems, b) facilitation of the interventions of technical assistance among the South-East European partner, c) facilitation of the working groups activity among the South-East European partner in developing future projects and initiatives.
- **Long International Network.** It concerns the role of the overall networking system within the Programme, that facilitates the communication among the whole network partnership, as well as a shared joint vision of the same one. In this respect, we can state that the Programme Secretariat has carried out an overall important role of “cultural mediation”, fundamentally all through its international staff in the field and their relationship with the local personnel and technicians, being background of the positive encounter and the exchange among the various territorial systems involved. It has regarded the following functions: a) single and shared planning of the Programme activities in the different areas, b) preparation and organization of the meetings of the steering boards, c) drafting of methodological network documents, d) preliminary drafting of the project priority initiatives, e) implementation and maintenance of communication tools, such as the internet website and the newsletter.

2.3.2 The Tripartite Board and the Active Role of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

As already examined in paragraph 1.2, the Programme has worked through a political board, being it the Steering Committee, and a technical board, being it the Executive Committee that have played, respectively, a role of political leadership towards the network and the Programme, and of technical task of platform of discussion to the working plans, and technical Programme direction.

Additionally, a peculiarity of the Programme has been the positive role played by its Tripartite Board. This board, the executive tool of the Steering Committee, had as its members the General Direction on International Co-operation on Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the DGCS MAE), together with the partner of the Region of Tuscany, the Region of Istria and the NGOs representing the Secretariat. The Tripartite Board has monitored the Programme in its entire development, drafting and discussing among its members the key decisions to be submitted to the analysis and the approval of the Steering Committee. The Tripartite Board has had a specific importance in reviewing the operative plans, in determining the criteria to set the priority initiatives, and approved the same projects related to them, thus supplying the necessary guidance to the partner during the implementation phase. Thanks to the active role of the DGCS MAE in the Tripartite Board we applied the right balance between the control of the decision-making process and the expenses within the Programme, face to the management of an on-going process that has brought to identify specific actions in each territory (the priority initiatives) only when the project had already been launched. The transferability element of this experience can result to be quite useful in future complex initiatives of decentralised co-operation.

2.4 The Network as a tool of dialogue and consultancy

2.4.1 A network for development: decentralised co-operation to favour post-conflict dialogue

The decentralization process is not a sufficient factor, alone, to put local governments in the position to satisfying the requirements of the territory. In order to guarantee the services and infrastructures to the community it is necessary that the governments are able to mobilise resources through an efficient and transparent administrative apparatus. To improve and upgrade these managerial abilities, through an adequate flow of information, know-how, procedural tools, is a central goal of the capacity building process.

A transition towards pluralistic open models of government does not depend on the mere government consultation process with various actors, distinct from the public institutions, but rather on its ability to grant their requests of changes and reforms based on new institutional orders. In this framework, Seenet has adopted an approach oriented to offering a direct support to the local institutional actors without trying instead to develop a coherent course of action between the civil society and the public administration, through the adoption of a joint work on the priority issues for the territory.

In a post-conflict situation, as that one in the Balkans, the element where the Programme has chosen to focus has been that of trust, under three distinguished levels:

- Firstly, the mutual trust among local governments separated by the dramatic events of the war, that has built a long series of fences difficult to overwhelm. The title of Seenet is therefore symbolic in this respect: *Local Governments as Engines of development, to rebuild the bridges of dialogue in South-Eastern Europe*. That is to establish an opportunity of exchanges of knowledge and experiences as first step to bridge together again these subjects. Therefore, the Programme went well beyond restoring forms of communication and choosing in fact to work through the effective sharing of common issues and needs that have promoted specific project initiatives. It has been a continuous networking, in a future perspective to work on common issues. This process has been possible thanks to the network activities and the same structure that has been set up. A large network of actors involved that has carried along the obstacles inherent to the deep context differences but that it has succeeded to bring together an entire region. Finally, a key element has been to bind together the training vocational phase to a coherent process of project implementation;
- Secondly, the restoration of the trust in the citizenry face to their respective public administration representatives. In the delicate and volatile post-Dayton, situation the Seenet Programme has increased the base of the beneficiaries of the several civil society actors, from the NGOs to the Universities. The various territorial actors have been actively involved in every initiative, thus strengthening the participatory and democratic component of the decentralization process. In this framework, the Tuscan system has been fundamental in contributing with its several institutional, social and economic realities to every phase of the Programme;
- Thirdly and finally, the renewed trust in the co-operation projects, whose disordered flow has often favoured a passive and ineffective reception by the Balkan actors. The doubts and the sense of mistrust have been progressively overcome thanks to a strongly innovative approach, built on a regular presence of the Focal Points in the partner countries and on the Programme flexibility able to respond to the various requirements coming from the territory, and to modify its initial layout, avoiding therefore a rigid and prearranged attitude. To build up trust through human relationships, and through concrete actions, a network organization and the mobilisation of the territory, is the key to restore reconciliation and the democratic participation processes.

THE POINT OF VIEW OF

Giuseppe Morabito – Deputy Director, Steering Board for the International Co-operation on Development (DGCS), Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE)

Why Seenet has been important?

Firstly, because it favoured the dialogue among the local communities and populations divided by their ethnic background and religions that have gone through long and painful conflict experiences. To debate on dialogue and peace within this region is therefore the priority, for the local populations as well as for Europe and the same Italian State due also to its geographic proximity.

In what way can the decentralised co-operation help peace and reconciliation?

Decentralised co-operation is essential when it works, and that one expressed by the Region of Tuscany works. There are several reasons of this success, choosing the right actors as competent and organized as the NGOs Ucodep and Cospes, has been one of them, especially thanks to their ability to involve an entire territory able to contribute with characteristics of added value to the co-operation. In the case of decentralised co-operation it is possible to build long-lasting relationships among the territorial actors working together, so as to favour the stability of the democratic institutions of the beneficiary countries, as well as the accession process to the European Union.

Hence, international co-operation, being multilateral or bilateral needs to have adequate implementing actors. The Region of Tuscany, similarly to the other Italian Regions, has the advantage of being able to activate a variety of actors, everyone with their own professional competences able to implement the actions required. An example can perhaps clarify this concept: the partnership existing among the Regions and their local governments, their system of enterprises, universities and centres of research is immediate, because it is the result of a daily relationship, beside the mere issue of international co-operation in itself, and that allows to capitalize experiences and interests of the various actors involved. This is a fundamental added value.

There is a third fundamental element: by involving the territory we create consensus on co-operation. It is time to stop thinking that international co-operation is a nice and noble exercise and that everybody can understand it. Co-operation is financed by the taxpayer and the taxpayer wants to understand what is its use, and have also some payback perhaps not in all cases, but often he/she requests them. "Paybacks" is perhaps a brutal term, but it helps to clarify the sense of it. We are not discussing of the sole economic paybacks here, more as works and activities that international co-operation finances and that can bring visible outputs. Decentralised co-operation renders these paybacks more evident and clear to the civil society thus increasing its degree of acceptability regarding the activities of co-operation.

However, we shall always remember that by applying the principles of decentralised co-operation we shall reward the quality of the actions implemented. In this respect a tool to optimize the financial resources is to apply the principles of decentralised co-operation.

What differentiates the Regions that work from those that do not work? How to create a virtuous mechanism?

In Italy, apart from Tuscany, there are several regional realities that apply good international co-operation. Our wish is that these realities may widen, thus involving several other actors. In the future of SEENET we believe there is a positive attempt of the Region of Tuscany to widen up the partnership to other regional contexts, as it is essential to join forces among the regions that have interest to participate. On the other hand, if they are not interested it is always better not to involve them or involve them in other type of initiatives.

Besides, a different issue relates to the concept of networking, where I believe that SEENET has demonstrated to be a successful case study. Networks play an important role in a logic of European integration. In this framework, the term "network" shall not be considered as an abstract concept, as it often happens. We believe that to transfer the Italian experience in its relations with the European Union, its financial tools and its planning experience to the South-East European partner is a clear example of the concrete application of the term "network". In this respect, the SEENET Programme has offered truly concrete contents to the term.

In this aspect, the Region of Tuscany has an important leadership role to play among the other Italian regions thanks to its long lasting direct dialogue with the European Union facilitated by its Brussels Office.

How would you judge the role of the NGOs in a networking programme as it is Seenet?

In this case also the approach we implement has a non-ideological character. The NGOs have not been included in the Programme because it was important that there were there not matter what. Instead, they have been included because it was fundamental to have an actor in a position to carrying out secretariat activities that, as it has been well described in this book, is a complex work, in need of a specific professionalism. The NGOs Ucodep and Cospe have this type of professionalism, beyond to having a strong tie with the Region of Tuscany and a regular relationship with the territorial actors. In this case the purpose has been achieved. However, this is not to say that every action of decentralised co-operation shall pass by the NGOs.

Which other elements of innovation do you think there are in the Programme?

I believe that the mechanism of the Tripartite Board, in its role of monitoring committee of the programme, in a combined participation of the Region of Tuscany, the Region of Istria, the NGOs and the same Ministry has played a fundamental role. This is an tool that has concurred to offer a more effective leadership role, and ensure the full involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in project implementation. Surely, this is a key element to discuss for its future transferability in other complex initiatives similar to Seenet.

In the light of this experience, what do you consider the future of the network to be, compared to the priorities of the Italian co-operation in the whole Balkan area?

The Balkan Region, together with the entire Mediterranean represents a priority to Italy. International co-operation is necessary in the Balkans, although these are not countries that can be defined as poor ones. The reasons are those already quoted before: to favour stability and dialogue among the peoples as a fundamental element for the future of Europe. It is a fact that the application of international co-operation in the Balkans need different strategies and tools from those applied in other areas of the world.

Seenet has contributed significantly to stability and dialogue, also in view of the topics treated: local economic development and the management of local public utility services, both topics that require a major dialogue between the institutions and the civil society, an epochal change, especially in those countries with a centralised system of government. An important contribution to the dialogue and the stability of countries in transition can be offered by decentralised co-operation with a specific reference to support the process of administrative decentralization.

In this framework, the role of the Technical Local Unit (TLU – the representative offices abroad of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is fundamental. I believe that the Embassies and the TLUs shall set up a “panel of consultancy” and offer a service to territorial partnerships, thus becoming a point of reference for those in the Balkans or Tuscany interested, or that could be interested to such a tool. I wish to remind that we have three TLU offices in the Balkans: in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Tirana. We invite you all to visit them regularly, also in view of their networking role and as a link with the various actors of the international co-operation.

2.4.2 The Tuscan System of Co-operation

The concept of network, meant as an organic system of relations among several actors on defined topics may represent one of the most innovative elements of decentralised co-operation. To set up a network capable to overcome the traditional problems of a decision-making and oligarchic structure means to promote a process of coordination of the actions, as well as the integration of experiences by involving progressively new territorial actors. Consequently, the network points to the participatory potentialities of the society, directed to favour a real strengthening of “widespread partnership”. A bottom-up type of development, from the local needs that puts at its centre of the process the actors favouring a certain degree of sharing and cohesion.

To answer the question posed by Lowe¹⁷ “What is decentralised co-operation?”, that is what are its operative distinctive features, we can resort to the concept of partnership meant as exchange among subjects that operate in the same territory face to implement a specific project. The concept of partnership as such is a project in itself, since it is a tool but also an objective of decentralised co-operation well structured that operates from bottom-up and that puts at the centre of the its action local sustainable development.

The development of “widespread partnership”, that uses a large base of participants (from local governments, to civil society actors, from public institutions to universities and religious institutions) represents the guideline of the Italian cooperation, and especially of the Region of Tuscany. The qualitative applied by decentralised co-operation, going from twinning to partnerships, becomes obvious when it succeeds to define its own model as “a system”. The Regional System of co-operation can be here described through the definition of Mr Stocchiero being that of “an integrated” model. In this respect, we refer to the power of coordination and the political will of the Region to transmit guidelines, establish criteria, to identify priority sectors and topics through continuous partnerships of the institutions, the economic and social actors of the Tuscan system, and not merely through an up above approach of predefined strategic lines, but thanks to a continuous collaboration among institutional, economic and social truths of the so-called from Tuscany system.

Undoubtedly, Seenet has had an important role in strengthening the Tuscan system of co-operation, favouring not only a synergic action among the various local governments and territorial institutions, but also a method of work aimed at strengthened the actors’ awareness and sense of identity. Hence, it is important to notice that, with time, the network partnership has been included within the Regional Panel of South-Eastern Europe to develop a shared action among the various local institutions that has brought to the formulation and the financing of three projects in 2007.

¹⁷ European Commission, DG on Development, the Director-General, “Operational guide to decentralised cooperation”, note January 2000.

3 The future of the Network

The accession process of the Balkans in the European Union has been clearly agreed by the European Council of Thessaloniki in September 2003. Until today such accession process has not assumed a linear course of action, to begin with the continuation of a similar processes of “secession” (of Montenegro and of Kosovo from Serbia) that the area has known. In the light of a significant degree of fragmentation of the region, it is undoubtful that this leaves open the issue on the political, economic and social sustainability of such processes.

At the same time, the EU continues its work to promote a processes of decentralisation. The same funds available to the programmes of assistance and co-operation are less and less distributed, and often through a single centralised channel, more and more through “fragmented” channels at first, and decentralised at last. Infact, the passage a process of decentralisation represents a fundamental step in fact transformation that opens the door in the Balkans to the European Union.

To discuss about the future of the network means firstly to analyse the value that decentralised co-operation can assume in the new context of South-Eastern Europe. Even though in a whole scenario that see still the presence of differing elements and specific issues open among the various states of the South-Eastern Europe, the period from 2002 to 2006 has confirmed and strengthened some significant common perspectives for the countries of the area. We remind here:

- **The Integration process within the European Union.** The Council of Europe met in Thessaloniki in June 2003 to confirm the will of the member states and those of South-Eastern Europe to proceed towards the integration process of the latter to the European Union. In the last few years this integration process has marked some steps ahead, such as: the attainment of the status of candidate country for Croatia, the agreement and the entry into force of the stability and association pact with Macedonia, the approval of a feasibility study for the negotiation of the stability and association pact with Serbia. The perspective of integration considers to be strategic at several levels (locally too) the issue of the *aquis communautaire*;
- **The new perspectives of territorial cooperation.** In line with our previous remarks we shall say that the European Union, Italy and other main international donors present in the area of the South-Eastern Europe have progressively made available the various tools of co-operation to the local territorial actors. This trend will be further strengthened with the modalities foreseen for the management of the new European co-operation funds that represent an opportunity to put the member states in the capacity to manage the structural funds that are available to them once they will acquire the status of effective members. According to this judgment, the strengthening of the governance capabilities of local authorities, of their capacity to network in their respective territories, at regional and international level alike, will be a fundamental element to the development of the area;

- **The priorities of co-operation on development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Italian local authorities.** In the past years, the Italian government has comprised the South-East European area among the priorities of its policy on international co-operation, thus assigning specific funding lines to it and activating partnership actions with the Italian regions. Additionally, the Italian local authorities too consider the area of the South-East European an important opportunity of cooperation among territorial systems;
- **The strengthening of decentralization.** In the integration process the administrative decentralization and the progressive handover of competences from central states to the various levels of the local government in the respective countries constitute a common element to the whole South-East European area. The initial important steps to the definite local development policies have been implemented in the various South-East European countries. In this respect, local institutional strengthening contributes strategically to the democratic consolidation and the speeding up of the same process of decentralisation.

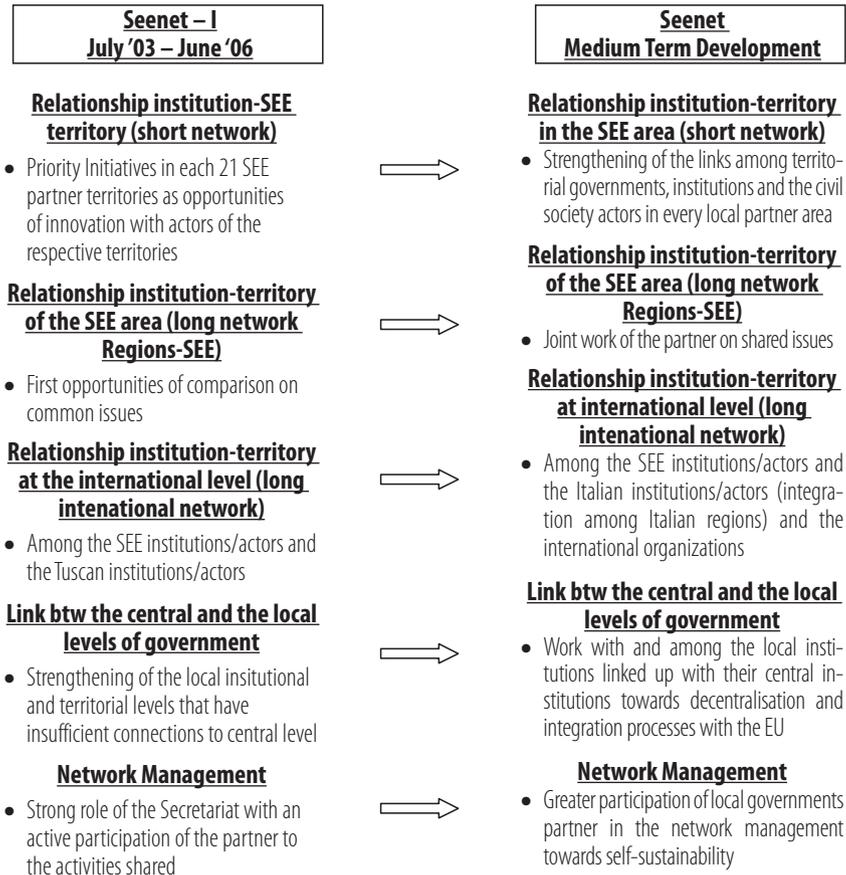
Nonetheless, it is in the light of the observations expressed in the previous paragraphs, related to the medium term network development that the Seenet partner must examine their involvement. To this purpose, we underline some key issues regarding the partners' future work, as summarised in the following Outline 5:

- **Continuity and strengthening of the local ties among governments-territory in the SEE.** The development of the future activities arises from the necessity to consolidate the interesting work carried out in the field of local economic development, and in the public utility services in the first phase of the Programme, particularly in view of developing and strengthening the partnerships among governments and actors of the respective territories;
- **Development of activities in common among the SEE partner (long network Region-SEE).** The first phase of the Programme focused mainly to implement the actions within the individual territories partner by sharing of the activities carried out mostly at distance and during the yearly meetings of the Steering Committee. The development of the following phase will have to focus instead on those activities shared among several South-East European partner, with a particular attention to strengthening the partnerships in this area;
- **Potential enlargement of partnerships to other Italian, European regional and/or territorial realities of the South-Eastern Europe.** The opportunity to strengthen the territorial partnership will have to be estimated, thus foreseeing potential enlargement useful to: a) strengthening regional relationships among the international partner in the light of the new financial opportunities offered by the European Union, b) involving the South-East European partner in a coherent logical of planning and management of the activities, c) networking the existing partnerships of the South-East European members to other Italian local authorities and/or European network partner. The relationship with the

European Union and the other international organizations, therefore, shall continue to be strategic for the future of the network;

- **Link up between the local and the central level of governments.** The partnership opportunity that SEENET has offered is an important workshop to develop of the process of decentralisation in each individual national reality. Hence, it is essential to establish a stronger formalised tie to the national institutions responsible for developing local self-government as well as of the European integration process, in the attempt to evolve from local planning towards a wider national policy on the matter;
- **Network Organisation.** The network shall evolve to foresee a greater involvement of the partner in the overall management component. In the continuation of the activities, through modalities that have still be agreed upon we expect a direct involvement of the partner in the overall network management, also through a minimum future financial contribution to the management expenses of the same Organisation.

Outline 5 - Evolution of the network partnership in a logic of process flow



If during the first phase the Programme focused mainly on setting up the network, on strengthening bilateral partnership between Tuscany and the South-Eastern Europe, as well as on implementing the pilot initiatives in each of the 21 partner territories of the -Eastern Europe, the future network outline shall consist in strengthening the partnership among the territories/governments of the Balkan area, and enlarge it to other Italian regions to foster in view of the European integration and trans-border co-operation.

The network will have the purpose to support the process of integration in the European Union of the public administrations members to the network. Through the new type of partnership the network actors are called to work on the evolution of the administrative decentralisation process in support to local development, thus offering concrete employment opportunities on specific sectors in line with the European standards.

The support to the partner actors of the South-Eastern Europe may take a twofold development:

1. To develop their own detailed organizational modus operandi so to increase their ability to link up with their national and European counterparts, as well as to develop autonomous project planning to access the financial resources of the European Union in the new Programme line 2007-2013;
2. To strengthe the planning capabilities and the implementation of local development policies on specific issues that may have a significant innovation element and/or impact in the South-East European territories by fostering a networking process among several partner as well as among them, and their respective national counterparts.

These elements may be implemented if we conceive the Seenet network as a whole sub-thematic network where the partner have specific vocations and interests may work according to a shared strategy. This approach considers to co-finance the Programme actions of Phase 2 as being characterised by a twofold criteria of analysis:

- **Innovative actions with a spin-off effect on the regional territory.** They are actions whose added value derives from the partnership and the networking of several territories. As an example, we can quote the identification of regional tourist strategies and packages in a context where to identify and to link up together several products of different areas may actually increase the competitiveness of the entire area;
- **Innovative actions shared among various partner territories.** They are those actions that, although limited to individual areas of intervention in the partner territories have a common character, with the aim to set up a whole group of methodologies transferable to the entire area. As an example we can quote the establishment of courses on rural development planning on, according to a participatory approach.



Il Programma Seenet – I Governi Locali Motori dello Sviluppo, finanziato dal Direzione Generale Cooperazione allo Sviluppo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri italiano, è un’iniziativa di cooperazione decentrata promossa dalla Regione Toscana con le ONG Ucodep e Cospe nell’area del sud est europeo. Ha coinvolto ben 21 enti locali di Albania, Bosnia Erzegovina, Croazia, Kosovo, Macedonia e Serbia e oltre una trentina di enti locali e organismi territoriali del sistema di cooperazione decentrata toscano. Tre anni di intenso lavoro, dal 2003 al 2006, in cui si sono realizzate specifiche iniziative territoriali, rafforzando il ruolo di governance degli enti locali e facilitando il dialogo tra istituzioni e soggetti della società civile.

Una delle principali sfide della cooperazione decentrata è riuscire a farsi sistema, aggregando soggetti del territorio in processi di collaborazione di medio periodo. Per questo motivo, il volume cerca non solo di fare sintesi sui risultati dell’iniziativa, ma propone spunti di riflessione metodologici all’interno del sempre più ricco dibattito sulla cooperazione decentrata.

La preparazione di questo volume è stata coordinata da Ucodep, quale ONG capofila del Segretariato del Programma, e dalla Scuola Superiore S. Anna di Pisa, quale soggetto responsabile della valutazione in itinere. Alla sua realizzazione hanno contribuito Roberto Barbieri, Lorenzo Paoli e Sorinel Ghetau per Ucodep; i prof. Andrea De Guttry e Francesco Strazzari e Fabrizio Coticchia per la Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna di Pisa.