

# UNDERSTAND - European Regions UNDER way towards STANDard indicators for benchmarking information society

Programme zone / Zone de programme:  
East / Est

Type / Type  
Individual Project / Projet Individuel

Topic / Thème  
Innovative actions / Actions Innovatrices

## Problem description / Description du problème ciblé par le projet

The operation "UNDERSTAND - European Regions UNDER way towards STANDard indicators for benchmarking information society" is based on the need for regional benchmarking as outlined in the e-Europe Action Plan 2005. Whilst benchmarking can provide useful concrete evidence on the level and nature of ICT investments at regional level, the partnership wants to go one step further towards a qualitative "benchlearning" exercise aimed at understanding which ICT investments clearly add value to regional development.

## Overall objective / Objectif général de l'opération

The main objective of this project is to compare and evaluate the regional development of the Information Society by defining and applying a set of common regional e-indicators. This will enable policy-makers to better understand the impact of Information Society investments and decide how to make more efficient and effective use of Structural Funds. Specific objectives are, inter alia, to define common indicators and methodologies (a benchmarking tool-kit) for at least 4 e-domains, evaluate these indicators through the proactive involvement of regional policy makers, design and establish a trans-regional database for regional Information Society indicators and to disseminate guidelines, methodologies and tools among EU regions.

## Expected results / Résultats attendus

The operation will enable decision-makers in partner regions to evaluate regional performances with regard to the Information Society, providing partner regions with a complete methodology for benchmarking and providing a tool for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of Structural Funds as regards ICT investments. To non-partner regions, UNDERSTAND provides a ready-to-use methodology enabling them to compare themselves with other regions and, thus, lower benchmarking costs and increase their effectiveness (in terms of data comparability).

Lead partner / Partenaire principal	Contact person / Personne à contacter	Duration / Durée
Regione Emilia-Romagna Via Aldo Moro 18 40127 Bologna ITALY	Sandra Lotti Tel.: 0039 051 6397908 Fax: 0039 051 6397810 E-Mail: progeur@regione.emilia-romagna.it Web: www.understand-eu.net	February 2004 - October 2006
		Total budget / Budget total: 1.370.000 €
		ERDF contribution / Contribution FEDER: 811.825 €
		Norwegian contribution / Contribution des fonds norvégiens: 0 €



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Source / Source: www.interreg3c.net

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## Partnership / Partenaires

Name of Institution, Town /Titre de l'institution, Ville	Country / Pays	Region / Région	Contact information / Détails de contact
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#### Activities / achievements so far

The operation, started in 2004 (kick off meeting 8th March 2004 - 14 participants), aims to define a common methodology for regional benchmarking of information society is being pursued with good success. In terms of output, all deliverables planned for each period have been released for each active component. In particular in the first reporting period a draft version of the methodology has been prepared after a wide review of the state of art on the issue. Active links have been established with all the Italian and Spanish regions, with national statistical offices in Italy, Hessen, Denmark, Netherlands, UK and with the Committee of the Regions, in addition to already cooperating networks such as Italian RCCs and ERIS@. A set of indicators (about 200) and the related methodology to carry out the surveys has been identified covering four main domains: e government, e business, citizens and broadband. The results has been discussed in an international workshop held in Bordeaux in May 2004 where 10 benchmarking projects participated providing useful input. Following to the definition of the methodology the first round of surveys have been made and the data have been checked, analysed and presented in the first international conference held on the 17th of March 2005 (162 participants) at the premises of the Committee of the Regions - Rue Belliard 152, Bruxelles. In the following months the consortium finalised the process of revision of the methodology including the feedback coming from experts, other regions and direct experience gained from the first round of surveys. Furthermore the data collected have been elaborated and refined and a first framework for their interpretation has been designed, as a reference for the benchmarking activity. These results have been discussed with policy makers in the region with face-to-face meetings. A final version of the database has been released and all the regions have uploaded the results coming from the surveys. In the last period the 2nd round of surveys has been carried out and the results collected in a report. The surveys involved most partners plus Apulia and Tuscany who joined the project activities, taking up the Understand methodology fully at their costs. 4 regions participated to the surveys in the broadband domain, 8 in the social infrastructure one, 7 in e-business and 7 in e-government. In the following months 2 international conferences have been held: in Brussels on the 30th March 2006 to present the result of the surveys and in Poznan on the 22-23rd June to disseminate the Understand methodology and the best practices behind in newly added regions. In the last months the partners checked the possibility to continue the project activity despite the official project end.

More information:

[www.understand-eu.net](http://www.understand-eu.net)



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