

## BACKGROUND

The local production systems of Italy based on small firms, have experienced increasing difficulty during the last decade in ensuring the competitiveness of their production. A change in the composition of production activities is needed, especially in the manufacturing sector, with a move from traditional towards high-tech sectors. Since the 1960s, local production systems in Italy have been characterized by high industrial entrepreneurial rates. The great development, which occurred during the '60s and '70s in the North-eastern and Central regions, was primarily the result of the mobilization of entrepreneurial energy to create small businesses which were often part of specialized clusters (industrial districts). Over the last decade, there seems to be a slowdown of entrepreneurial rates, especially in the case of novice entrepreneurs, and a change in the entrepreneurial models.

## OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to identify the reasons for the slowdown of entrepreneurial rates and to provide a better understanding of the new entrepreneurial models that are emerging. Moreover, the study aims at investigating the resources mobilized by the novice entrepreneurs and the problems they encounter in implementing and developing their business ideas. It takes as a reference the Marche region (located in central Italy) as it can be considered emblematic of the North-Eastern and Central regions of Italy.

## METHODS

In the study we use two main sources of data: the first is the result of a survey of the adult population of the Marche region conducted according to PSED (Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics) methodology. Besides the sample of the adult population, there is a specific focus on university students to assess the propensity for entrepreneurship among young people with a high level of education; the second source of data is the survey of new businesses actually started in the Region in 2010, selecting a sample from the list provided by the Chamber of Commerce.

Data will be analyzed using statistics and econometric techniques.

## RESULTS

At present we have completed the screening phase of the adult population, using a sample of 3.000 people (telephonic interviews). The screening identified 42 nascent entrepreneurs; this means an entrepreneurial rate of the adult population of 1.4%. This low entrepreneurial rate is confirmed by the information taken from the Chamber of commerce: the new businesses formally registered during the last year were 10,963, which means an entrepreneurial rate of about 1.1% of the adult population.

## NEXT STEPS

We started the first wave of interviews with nascent entrepreneurs identified in the screening phase and with a sample of entrepreneurs randomly selected from the list provided by the Chamber of commerce. We are going to complete about 100 direct interviews. We will complete the analysis of the screening phase and we will have the preliminary results of the first wave of in-depth interviews. The results allows the comparison of results obtained in Marche with those of different contexts. This information is important even for policy makers because allows to identify any specific features of the model of entrepreneurial activity in the region and its possible strengths and weaknesses.

## CONTACTS

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