



PUGLIA · BRINDISI & TARANTO

Puglia speaks

How two Local Dialogues and four thematic roundtables turned open, cross-sector conversation into a shared vision for Puglia's industrial transition.

Department of Economic Development — Research and International Relations Section

Puglia Region — with technical support from ARTI Puglia

THE PROJECT

A European conversation about local identity

LOTTI — *Local identity driving traditional industry transition* — is a four-year interregional cooperation project (2023–2027) co-funded by the Interreg Europe programme, the European Union's flagship instrument for regional policy learning between public authorities. It unites regional managing authorities and agencies across Europe, all facing the same structural challenge: moving on from traditional manufacturing models — once central to local pride and livelihood — towards industrial, digital and green futures, without losing the sense of place that generations of industry built.

Through interregional exchange and alignment with regional Smart Specialisation Strategies, LOTTI supports public authorities to engage citizens proactively in industrial transition, to re-create local identities as a source of innovation, and to connect that identity to new jobs and opportunity.

WHAT IS A LOCAL DIALOGUE?

At the heart of LOTTI is a simple idea: policy for industrial transition works best when it is co-created with the people who live it. Each partner region runs its own Local Dialogue — a structured, participatory process bringing citizens, businesses, institutions and experts together to shape real policy direction.

PUGLIA'S LOCAL DIALOGUES

In Puglia, LOTTI's Local Dialogues were organised by the Department of Economic Development — Research and International Relations Section of the Puglia Region, with technical support from ARTI Puglia. Held in Brindisi and Taranto — the two key industrial transition territories in Puglia — they engaged over fifty participants around four thematic tables anchored in the region's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

This storybook

tells the story of Puglia's two Local Dialogues — held in Brindisi on 24 January 2025 and in Taranto on 12 February 2025 — from why they were built around four S3-aligned thematic tables, to what each city surfaced, to the shared vision for industrial transition that emerged from both.

“Through active participation and structured dialogue, the Local Dialogues laid the foundation for a shared vision of industrial transition in Puglia — sustainable, resilient, and future-oriented.”

FOUR DRIVERS OF CHANGE

01 · ENVIRONMENT & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, industrial regeneration and circular-economy practices.

02 · INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Digital skills, innovative digital services and ICT as an enabler for industry and society.

03 · LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTH

The One Health approach, agri-food biotechnology transfer and digital healthcare.

04 · BLUE GROWTH & BLUE ECONOMY

Combining the protection of marine resources with industrial enhancement and technological innovation.

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LOCAL DIALOGUES — BRINDISI & TARANTO

4

S3-ALIGNED THEMATIC TABLES AT EACH EVENT

50+

PARTICIPANTS FROM PUBLIC, PRIVATE & THIRD SECTORS

TWO CITIES, ONE QUESTION

Brindisi and Taranto, in dialogue

Puglia's Local Dialogues were deliberately held in the region's two key industrial transition territories — Brindisi and Taranto — each carrying its own trajectory of change, but sharing a common question: how should the region's Smart Specialisation Strategy translate into a shared territorial vision for industrial transition?

24 JANUARY 2025 · PALAZZO GUERRIERI

Brindisi

Well-established best practices, a drive toward digitalisation, and the enhancement of natural and coastal resources sit alongside a dynamic — though fragmented — entrepreneurial fabric. The dialogue surfaced a need for greater cohesion, easier access to decision-making processes, and stronger digital skills within public administration.

12 FEBRUARY 2025 · ASSET HEADQUARTERS

Taranto

A territory undergoing structural transformation, where energy transition, urban regeneration and the enhancement of environmental and cultural heritage are emerging as levers for more resilient development — alongside real challenges: industrial dependence, demographic decline, and a fragmented business network.

A SHARED REGIONAL LENS

Both meetings activated the same four thematic tables, each tied to a key driver of change in Puglia's regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), and drew participants from businesses, startups, research institutions, universities, trade associations, professionals and institutional representatives across the public and private sectors.

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LOCAL DIALOGUES, ONE SHARED S3
FRAMEWORK

4

THEMATIC TABLES RUN IDENTICALLY IN
BOTH CITIES

50+

PARTICIPANTS ACROSS BOTH EVENTS

WHO WAS IN THE ROOM

Businesses & startups

Research institutions & universities

Trade associations

Professionals

Institutional representatives

Public & private sector bodies



Why these moments mattered

These moments of exchange offered a concrete opportunity to help design innovative, place-based industrial policies, to enhance local identities and productive traditions, to revitalise the attractiveness of the territories, and to explore new employment and entrepreneurial paths in the priority sectors of the S3.

BUILT AROUND THE REGION'S S3

One framework, two cities, four tables

As part of the Interreg Europe LOTTI project, two events were held under the name Local Dialogue, designed to stimulate open and participatory discussion among citizens, institutions, businesses and local organisations on the future of industrial transition in Puglia. The Local Dialogues were organised by the Department of Economic Development — Research and International Relations Section of the Puglia Region, with technical support from ARTI Puglia, and involved over fifty participants from public and private sectors, businesses, startups, research institutions, universities, trade associations, professionals and institutional representatives.

24 Jan 2025

Brindisi — Palazzo Guerrieri

The first Local Dialogue opens four thematic tables to public and private stakeholders from across the province.

12 Feb 2025

Taranto — ASSET headquarters

The second and final Local Dialogue repeats the same four-table framework, closing the process with a shared set of conclusions.

Both meetings included the activation of four thematic tables, each dedicated to one of the key drivers of change outlined in the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3):

Environmental sustainability & circular economy

Information technologies for industry & society

Life sciences & health technologies

Blue growth & marine economy



Participants at work on a thematic table, Taranto Local Dialogue, ASSET headquarters, 12 February 2025.

THE STANDING ORGANISING TEAM



Department of Economic Development — Research and International Relations Section, Puglia Region

Led the design, coordination and reporting of both Local Dialogues, anchoring the process to the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy.



ARTI Puglia — Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation

Provided technical support across both events, helping structure the four thematic tables and synthesise their findings into shared conclusions.

DRIVER 01

Environmental sustainability & circular economy

Brindisi discussed sustainability as a socio-economic process, energy efficiency in transport, sustainable agriculture and circular-economy practices, highlighting bioeconomy, industrial regeneration and intersectoral synergies. Taranto focused on energy transition, environmental technologies, heritage protection and site remediation — with challenges from industrial dependence and fragmented planning, and opportunities from hydrogen and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).

BRINDISI — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Sustainability as a socio-economic process: training, citizen participation, impact monitoring
- Energy efficiency in public transport: electric vehicles, solar panels, certifications
- Sustainable, inclusive agriculture: biodiversity, soil regeneration, inclusive employment
- Water resources and industry: the Cillarese dam as a strategic supply for business
- Circular economy & industrial symbiosis: universities supporting young entrepreneurs

BRINDISI — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Bioeconomy and waste recovery: valorising whey in a circular logic
- Interconnection between sectors: territorial fertility as a lever for development
- Industrial regeneration: reclaiming disused areas for tourism and sustainability

TARANTO — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Energy transition: feasibility studies and end-of-cycle renewable valorisation
- Environmental technologies: pollution-filtering innovations with resource savings
- Heritage protection: reducing land consumption, enhancing archaeology
- Contaminated site remediation: balancing development with public health

TARANTO — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- External industrial dependence limits the territory's capacity to lead its own transition
- Excessive urbanisation and fragmented planning need a coordinated vision
- Hydrogen, decarbonisation and the NRRP as green-technology opportunities
- Cultural and landscape heritage as a driver of territorial revitalisation

Both cities converged on the same underlying opportunity: turning disused or dependent industrial land into a testbed for regeneration — through bioeconomy and waste recovery in Brindisi, and through hydrogen and decarbonisation in Taranto.

COMMON GROUND

Industrial regeneration

Decarbonisation

Circular economy

Heritage & land value

Cross-sector synergy

DRIVER 02

Information technologies for industry & society

Brindisi's table emphasised digital-competence evolution, innovative digital services, and the need to move from tech fear to awareness. Taranto framed ICT as a cross-cutting enabler in services and innovation, highlighting inclusive technologies and startup support — with communication outreach and limited resources as shared constraints.

BRINDISI — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Skills evolution: traditional professions transformed by digital intelligence, requiring updated regulation and digital public administration
- Innovative digital services: CVs reimagined as digital competence portfolios
- Digitalisation and simplification of administrative processes, focused on social impact and business support
- Training and digital culture: a continuing skills shortage, especially among SMEs

TARANTO — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Cross-cutting innovation: ICT as an enabling element in design, research and territorial services
- An engagement tool fostering relationships among institutions, businesses and citizens
- ICT for well-being: supporting inclusion and access to public services
- Digital technologies as a springboard for new entrepreneurial and startup activity

BRINDISI — STRENGTHS

- An active ecosystem and engaged communities
- A shared strategic vision for the future
- Attractiveness through national events (e.g. SIOS)
- Active networking tools across the territory

BRINDISI — WEAKNESSES

- Limited participation from key operators
- A skills gap in public administration
- Limited operational awareness to implement strategies

TARANTO — STRENGTHS

- Solid content and ideas
- Ongoing communication efforts
- Qualified local skills

TARANTO — WEAKNESSES

- Poorly targeted communication
- A need to expand the engaged audience
- Limited human resources, hindering scalability

“Urgent need to shift from technological fear to awareness, empowering people to manage change.” — shared conclusion, Brindisi Local Dialogue



IN THE ROOM

Local Dialogues Puglia — thematic table work, Taranto, 12 February 2025

DRIVER 03

Life sciences & health technologies

Brindisi promoted the One Health approach, health digitalisation and innovative procurement, discussing cross-sector technology transfer and advanced medical devices as growth areas — including the INNOTIPICO project, which applies biotechnologies to local SMEs to improve the nutritional quality of traditional products. Taranto emphasised aerospace-health applications, sustainable fisheries and marine protection, viewing urban design and the circular economy through a health lens, with a clear need for integrated governance among public and private actors.

One Health approach

Agri-food biotech transfer

Digital healthcare

Aerospace-health applications

Sustainable fisheries

Integrated governance

BRINDISI — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Technological cross-fertilisation: applying aerospace and other sector technologies to improve diagnosis and treatment
- Innovative procurement as a strategic tool linking research, business and public healthcare
- Advanced medical devices: composite materials and personalised technologies for mobility and care
- Stronger research-industry-healthcare ties can create new skills, jobs and territorial attractiveness

TARANTO — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Aerospace technologies in healthcare: drones for emergencies show cross-sector potential
- Innovative public procurement to stimulate advanced healthcare, environmental and logistics solutions
- Urbanicity and health: urban design affects well-being and must be built into planning models
- Circular economy: recovering and reusing waste to improve sustainability and well-being

Both cities framed health as a systemic question — the One Health integration of human, animal and environmental well-being — rather than a purely clinical one, from Brindisi's agri-food biotechnology transfer to Taranto's marine protection and urban design agenda.

DRIVER 04

Blue growth & blue economy

Brindisi discussed marine biodiversity, green port technologies and stakeholder collaboration, with renewable marine energy, data integration and support for blue SMEs as key topics. Taranto addressed rethinking port functions, promoting maritime clusters and involving youth in blue innovation — facing a skills gap in the sector transition, but real opportunities in sustainable aquaculture and cross-border cooperation.

BRINDISI — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Decarbonising the port system through clean energy and efficient infrastructure
- Marine renewable energies: wind and wave power as alternatives to traditional sources
- Local blue-economy entrepreneurship: tourism, aquaculture, marine biotechnology
- Reconciling environmental protection with new employment opportunities

TARANTO — CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Transitioning traditional marine industries towards greener models
- Sustainable tourism and coastal development, balanced with conservation
- A blue-skills gap in marine logistics, monitoring and maritime technology
- Interregional cooperation to enhance competitiveness and attract investment



A thematic table works through priorities using sticky-note mapping, Taranto.



A facilitator addresses the room during the Taranto Local Dialogue.

BRINDISI — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Coastal resource management: integrated coastal-zone management and marine biodiversity protection
- Modernising port infrastructure with green technologies
- Digital tools and data to improve navigation, logistics and marine monitoring
- Specialised education and training paths through research partnerships

TARANTO — CURRENT CONTEXT

- Rethinking the port's industrial legacy with a focus on sustainability
- Maritime clusters integrating research, enterprise and local communities
- Experimental zones for sustainable marine technologies
- Youth engagement through training and awareness projects on the sea economy

A generational thread ran through this table: bringing young people into the blue economy, and building the specialised skills — in logistics, monitoring and marine technology — that a greener port and coastline will need.

TWO PROFILES, ONE DIRECTION

What Brindisi and Taranto told us

The two Local Dialogues organised as part of the LOTTI project represented an important opportunity for exchange and co-design among public, private and third-sector actors, bringing together experiences, ideas and development trajectories aligned with the drivers of the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3). Across the four thematic tables, a comprehensive vision emerged of the central role innovation can play in strengthening the competitiveness, sustainability and inclusiveness of Puglia's territories.

BRINDISI

A fabric ready to align

Well-established best practices, a drive toward digitalisation, and the enhancement of natural and coastal resources sit alongside a dynamic — though fragmented — entrepreneurial fabric that needs greater cohesion and a shared vision. Main challenges: accessibility of decision-making processes, operational implementation of strategies, and public-administration skills.

TARANTO

A territory in transformation

Energy transition, urban regeneration and the enhancement of environmental and cultural heritage can serve as key levers for more resilient development. Systemic limitations include industrial dependence, demographic decline and a disintegrating business network — set against opportunities in hydrogen, the circular economy, the blue economy and diversified value chains.

In both contexts, the need emerged to strengthen the ties between research, business and community, to adopt a systemic approach to sustainability, and to improve the effectiveness of territorial governance.

“Puglia has a solid foundation upon which to build its future: active networks, qualified resources, innovative projects, and strong territorial potential. To transform these assets into lasting impact, it is essential to ensure coherence, participation and continuity in public policies.”

FOUR TABLES, ONE SHARED THREAD

Environment

Industrial regeneration & decarbonisation

Digital

From tech fear to digital awareness

Health

A systemic, One Health approach

Blue economy

Greener ports, new maritime skills

Taken together, the four tables point in the same direction: Puglia's industrial transition depends less on any single technology than on stronger ties between research, business and community, and on governance able to turn active local networks into coherent, lasting policy.

From dialogue to policy

The results of Puglia's two Local Dialogues — recorded across four thematic tables in Brindisi and Taranto — form a shared evidence base for how the region's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) can translate into place-based industrial transition policy. Each table's findings connect research, business and community priorities directly to the S3 drivers they were built around: environmental sustainability and the circular economy, information technologies, life sciences and health, and blue growth.

As a project reference methodology, the Local Dialogue format itself — open thematic tables, structured around current context and challenges/opportunities, run consistently across two cities — offers Puglia a replicable model for future rounds of citizen and stakeholder engagement as its industrial transition continues.

THE PROCESS, IN BRIEF

24 Jan 2025

Brindisi Local Dialogue, Palazzo Guerrieri

12 Feb 2025

Taranto Local Dialogue, ASSET headquarters

4 tables

Run identically across both cities, tied to Puglia's S3

Ongoing

Findings feed forward into S3-aligned regional policy

LOCAL PARTNER

Department of Economic Development
Research & International Relations
Section, Puglia Region

DELIVERY PARTNER

ARTI Puglia
(Regional Agency for Technology and
Innovation)

PROJECT

LOTTI — Interreg Europe
interregeurope.eu/lotti

Puglia's Local Dialogues are one voice in a wider European conversation. Across the LOTTI partnership, ten regional managing authorities, agencies and discovery partners in eight countries are each running their own Local Dialogue — comparing notes on how citizen participation can shape better policy for industrial transition.

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EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN
THE LOTTI PARTNERSHIP

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REGIONAL MANAGING
AUTHORITIES, AGENCIES &
DISCOVERY PARTNERS