

Innovation in Italian enterprises

Years 2014-2016

In 2014-2016, 47.8% of Italian enterprises with at least ten persons employed undertook innovation activity. As compared to the previous period 2012-2014, the propensity to innovate increased greatly (+ 4 percentage points).

The innovation propensity increased largely among small and medium enterprises (-8,0 percentage points compared with the previous period in the first category, -3.9 percentage points in the second one), while it decreased slightly among large enterprises (81.8%, -1.5 percentage points). Such a decrease was partly explained from the reduction of investments in innovation in the service sector.

Industry is still the most innovative sector: 57.1% of enterprises with innovation activities and an increase of +7,0 percentage points. Within this sector, it concerns most of large enterprises (91.8%, +1.7 percentage points), for which innovation is confirmed to be a key element of the business strategies.

In 2014-2016 almost three quarter of innovative enterprises was involved in product-process innovation activities ('innovative enterprises strictly speaking'), 21.8% introduced just soft innovations (not linked to technologies) and 4.9% undertook innovation activities that are still ongoing at the end of 2016.

The adoption of integrated innovations practices is confirmed as a tendency: 53.2% of innovative enterprises is involved in developing new products-processes and at the same time introduced organization or marketing innovations. Further, 50.2% of 'innovative enterprises strictly speaking' innovated both products and productive processes.

In 2016 innovation expenditure per person employed (measured taking into account just the product-process innovative enterprises) was 7,800 euros, a wide increase compared to 2014 (6,200 euros). The growth involves all the sectors: from the industry, which is confirmed as leader (9,600 euros against 8.000 in the previous period), to services (6,000 euros against 4.300 in 2012-2014) and construction (4,900 euros against the previous 2.800).

In 2016 the component of R&D, and in general of investments in intangible assets, increased greatly (+6.7 percentage points).

In 2014-2016 a wide increase is shown by the enterprises that received a public funding for innovation (31.7% of 'innovative enterprises strictly speaking' against 23.6% in the previous period). The main beneficiaries of public support are the industrial enterprises (39.1% against 23.3% in construction and 20,5% in services).

In 2014-2016 a relevant percentage of enterprises developed products "new to the market" (37,8% of innovative enterprises strictly speaking, even if it shows a slight decrease (-2,2 percentage points compared to the previous period). Even more marked is the decrease of innovative enterprises with products "new to the international market" (14,5% and -4,8 percentage points compared to 2012-2014).

The capacity to innovate through cooperation with other enterprise decreased: it regarded 13.6% of innovative enterprises strictly speaking (they were 19.8% in the previous period). Small, but stable over time, is the percentage of enterprises that cooperated with foreign partners (4,3%).

MAIN INNOVATION INDICATORS FOR ENTERPRISES WITH AT LEAST 10 PERSONS EMPLOYED BY MACRO-SECTOR AND SIZE CLASS. Years 2014-2016, percentage values (except differently indicated)

MACRO-SECTOR SIZE CLASS	Enterprises with innovation activities (a)	Enterprises with product and/or process innovation activities (a)	Enterprises that introduced at least a product or process innovation	Innovation expenditure per person employed (thousands of euros) Year 2016	Enterprises that had cooperation arrangements on innovation activities that had co-operation arrangements on innovation activities (c)
Industry	57.1	49.5	(a)	9.6	13.2
Construction	30.8	19.5	18.2	4.9	9.0
Services	44.8	31.1	29.3	6.0	15.1
10-49 persons employed	45.6	35.0	32.8	8.9	11.6
50-249 persons employed	68.3	57.6	53.9	7.1	18.3
250 and over persons employed	81.8	74.9	70.0	7.7	35.7
Totale	48.7	38.1	35.7	7.8	13.6

(a) % on total enterprises.

(b) % on total enterprises that introduced at least a product or process innovation.

(c) % on total enterprises with product and/or process innovation activities.

For more details please refer to the Italian version.

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