

Fill the gap between public administration strategic management and plan management. The Italian PNRR and digital transition case

Preencher a falha entre a gestão estratégica da administração pública e a gestão de planos. O caso italiano do PNRR e da transição digital

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Abstract

The paper tries to clarify the gap between strategic management and plan management. This gap is not the only one in European and Italian plans. The research starts from the observation that co-governance between the central government and municipalities and local government failed in Italy so then the reforms and investment expected outcomes are at risk. The problem was detected when the author worked as a consultant in the last Italian resilience (PNRR) and digital (DTI) plans in 2022. To work together and have coordinated goals, PNRR and DTI must have a strategic control room and network governance very different from the one decided in 2019 (PNRR) and 2022 (revised DTI) and approved. The paper clarifies, using standard European tools, and using the case of DTI and its link with PNRR, the missed connections were essentially due to weak decisions, lack of methodology, and skilled people that put on risk the plans. The discussion doesn't seek political implications and mistakes, it's only an explanation of the risks due to the failure of technical skills and foresees implementation risks into the definition phase of the plans. The paper results in a suggestion for reformulation of the whole strategy and plan management process and new tools in Italian central and local public administration.

Keywords:PNRR, Digital Transition Plan DTI. Public Administration. Strategic Management. Plan and project Management.

Resumo

O artigo tenta esclarecer a lacuna entre gestão estratégica e gestão de planos. Esta lacuna não é a única nos planos europeus e italianos. A pesquisa parte da observação de que a co-governança entre o governo central e os municípios e o governo local falhou na Itália, então as reformas e os resultados esperados dos investimentos estão em risco. O problema foi detectado quando o autor trabalhou como consultor nos últimos planos italianos de resiliência (PNRR) e digital (DTI) em 2022. Para trabalharem juntos e terem objetivos coordenados, PNRR e DTI devem ter uma sala de controle

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estratégica e governança de rede muito diferentes do decidido em 2019 (PNRR) e 2022 (DTI revisado) e aprovado. O documento esclarece, recorrendo a ferramentas standard europeias, e recorrendo ao caso do DTI e à sua ligação com o PNRR, que as ligações perdidas devem-se essencialmente a decisões fracas, falta de metodologia e de pessoas qualificadas que colocam em risco os planos. O trabalho não pretende discutir implicações políticas e erros, é apenas uma explicação dos riscos devido à falha de habilidades técnicas e prevê riscos de implementação na fase de definição dos planos. O resultado final se concretiza em sugestões de reformulação de gestão estratégica e implementação de novas ferramentas de gestão de estratégias e planos na administração pública central e local italiana.

Palavras-chave: PNRR. Plano de Transição Digital DTI. Administração Pública. Gestão Estratégica. Gestão de Planos e Projetos.

1. Introduction

Italian economy boosts and resilience strategies pass through coordinated policies together with European Union. The NextGeEu Plan is the plan supporting Italy which starts in 2019 the Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR) or National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)The main aim of this plan is to reduce country costs and increase efficiency focusing Italian Public Administration renew and flexibility. This change must provide better local services combined with an Italian Digital Transition Plan (DTI).

According to CALVINO (2022) analysis the main factors that affect the diffusion of digital technologies and the low digitalization is a combination of three factors: i) workers' weak skills, ii) management incapacibilities, and iii) lack of handling intangible assets (CALVINO 2022), having the COVID-19 crisis contributed to widening this gap. In this paper, we add to the list the problem of weak methodology and network governance of complex strategies and plans.

According to Aveni (2022), complex plans in Europe like NextgenEu didn't take much care of stakeholders' relationships and are weak in technical Public Administration methods and methodological approaches. Moreover to manage complex plans one must take care also of Public Administration rules or laws that run the organization. A general reform is mandatory. Especially care must be taken about control that usually is not on time, weak reports, and public appraisal.

Thus the Public Administration change strategy and complexity management is supported by a digital transition (DTI) and needs some care to fix goals because the lack of preparation and training of Italian public administrators managers is risky. These issues observed by the author's latest experience in complex project management in the Italian Public Administration indicate a methodology and operational failure link between European, central, and local government political level and technical skills and strategy management.

The main paper goal of the paper is to clarify and suggests improvement and practice bypass difficulties in managing the complex environment and plans. This is because the evidence and experience of the author as project manager in Italy PNRR plan, conclude that something's wrong today in strategic and plan/project management in Italy. A possible cause of it is the stress of an early start and low attention to technical details.

The research uses the Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR) and Digital Transition Plan Italy (DTI) to show the gap under the lens of European suggested standards. The paper seeks the objective to clarify how the failed link between strategic

management and plan management could reduce planned benefits. The paper justifies methodological insight to support the Italian Public Administration to reach the final expenditure and have the Public Administration's digital transition expected.

The leading hypotheses of the weak performances and methodological basis in Italy suggest a failure moment after the endorsement of the plan and the following moment when the high-level strategies and tools were decided. That implies a network governance plan and project management recursively linked to the main strategy management tools. The European methodologies suggested are COGOV and PM² explained in the methodology section.

The paper starts with a methodological and academic discussion. Then the discussion is about the Digital Transition Italian Plan 2021-2023 case. Using the COGOV and PM² framework as methodology approach the paper analyzes the case and confirms the hypothesis. The final sections will produce technical suggestions to fill the gap between strategic management and plan/project management. Use o parágrafo como modelo (fonte: Arial 12 – justificado – espaço 1,0).

2. Methodology

The paper sequence and methodology proceed step by step. The first step explains the hypothesis or the main problem observed when, in complex plan management, strategic management methods and tools are not used and are not linked to the project management of the plan itself. The complexity of the decentralized Public Administration in Italy needs a strategic network governance and a clear chain of goals and outcomes between Central Governance of the Plans and Local Governance of the Plans this wasn't found by the author in all documentation at the disposal.

Then the second step is to explain possible project management methods to be used in the plan management and the link with strategy management to fill the gap. The methods chosen were COGOV and PM² as project management methods suggested by European Union. These were not included in the explanation and strategies of the plans.

A third step is to show the problem using a study case. This, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, is an explanation or set of reasons describing how a decision will improve a product, service, etc., and, in our case how it will affect the implementation of the organization's strategy. The case study here clarifies how a strategic Public Administration decision will improve using European Union standards as a reference.

The final step is a results discussion identifying and focusing on strategic complex plan management and project management when both processes are linked to the plan's outcomes. The paper suggests, following the analysis, possible solutions.

This methodology has some limits. One is the lack of quantitative analysis because it is impossible to evaluate the case with quantitative methods to establish a project value. This is because the Plans have interdependence of many programs and projects and there are no comprehensive reports actually to be used with this quantitative approach.

Another limitation is the use of the COGOV and PM² methods and not a comparative use of whatever else method. No central PMO or strategic department was detected in Italy so there are fragmented operational methods used by the Public Administration that depends on the manager's skills and locations driven by the historical background of service level and local managers. In this situation, there is no main specific method to discuss.

3. Discussion, Case and Results

3.1 Discussion

Strategic Management of a Public Plan: using COGOV.

Strategy in business was discussed early in the last century by Alfred Sloan and A. Chandler followed by academics like C. R. Christensen, K. Andrews, I.H. Ansoff, P.F. Drucker. P.Selznick M. Porter, T.Peters, and G. Hamel, and was developed at Harvard University or consulting companies like Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey, only in the early 80s the process framework to formulate strategies by a corporation consolidated under increasing competition and economic petroleum shock.

In the early 80s, a generic strategy was defined as a Strategic Business Unit (SBU) portfolio. This mark is important for understanding further development into complexity and strategic planning management. Dividing the business into strategic units was useful to define portfolios of focused projects. Moreover, according to Ghemawat, P. (2002) the changes in strategic management involved also criticism of the tools and packages or standard business definitions. We have to add also the impact of new analyses like Porter's competitive strategy framework defined at that time.

Thus from the late 80s of the last century Strategic Management was developed as a tool to manage and seek to assure competitive advantages, it was not only a strategic decision-making framework for the CEO. It involved all the organization and stakeholders later following a sustainable development tendency too. This last encompasses environmental and social issues to be included in strategic analysis.

In this latest configuration to define strategic management, a business process method must be chosen because Strategic Management has a double base for decisions: 1) assessed the internal and external environments in which the organization operates and 2) define major goals and initiatives. Following also the SunTzu (2019) oldest Chinese book of war and strategy one must add to these bases evaluation, implementation and control to be perfumed in sequence. All these sequences are implemented into the current strategic management academic method. So the current strategic management is a decision-making process recursive cycle as designed in the following figure.

Figure 1 - Strategic Management process steps



Font: <https://www.wallstreetmojo.com/strategic-management/>

A strategic management process sample steps shown above could be developed with different tools and reports. In Business when goals are defined and meet the mission or the organization's business idea, the strategic management method chosen provides overall direction to an enterprise developing policies and plans to achieve those objectives with the allocated resources to implement the plans. The same for all organizations like Public Administration strategic management is a complex, dynamic, and recursive process including a feedback loop to monitor execution and to inform the next round of planning as a form of a quality cycle.

The process has the limitations of managers' skills and attitudes. Moreover, every complex plan management and its definition of governance is related to a well-known agent-principal problem which refers to the conflict in interests and priorities that arises when the "agent" takes actions on behalf of the "principal" In a Public Administration context we call the politicians (agents) and the Public or citizens (principal or stakeholders). In between, some technical managers run the plans defined.

The most cited reference to this comes from economists Jensen and Meckling (1976) because is also a cost of information asymmetry, uncertainty, and risk closely related to the moral hazard problem, and in the context of law the agency as a contract up with agency costs. In terms of game theory, it involves changing the game's rules. Consensus is a way to avoid this paradox and a tool to govern the strategy.

European Union starts in 2019 a project to standardize strategic management for Public Administration called Co-Production and Co-Governance: Strategic Management, Public Value and Co-Creation in the Renewal of Public Agencies across Europe (COGOV). This framework uses a post-New Public Management method as a strategic management approach for Public Administration. Such an approach pretends to develop downwards-facing models of public management including, public value, network governance, digital governance, collaborative leadership, co-governance, co-production, and co-creation. These models mean that all public sector organizations must adapt themselves to innovation and uses all possible resources to solve problems.

This new approach seeks to bypass the agent-principal paradox and support a central and decentralized public organization. The COGOV mobilizes external capabilities and resources and anticipates and responds effectively to major challenges to solve complex issues. It is concerned with complexity arising out of ambiguous and non-routine situations organization-wide. It is an approach that likes to define the consensus rather than operation-specific or day-to-day implications (JOHNSON ET AL., 2009).

COGOV seeks to enable local governments and public agencies to exploit the drivers and overcome the barriers. Strategic governance in Public Administration needs co-production or co-creation outcomes at both organizational and project levels. This means that the 'Public Administration bureaucracy' that conforms to its duty for all citizens as legal subjects should have to turn into a 'Public Administration service provider'. But it means to treat citizens are "customers" not only an abstract concentration of rights. A COGOV could be performed into so-called 'arenas for co-production, and co-creation in which the citizen co-creation must emerge. It implies a new framework for governance that link local to central bureaucracy too.

According to Stoker's definition of Networked Governance referenced in the COGOV literature review, this is a 'particular framing of collective decision-making that is characterized by a trend for a wider range of participants to be seen as legitimate members of the decision-making process in the context of considerable uncertainty

and complexity' (STOKER, 2006, P 41 AND STOKER 1998). This "consensus" in democratic arenas should be able to bypass the agent-principal paradox but is also time-consuming and font of conflict.

Thus following the COGOV report (EUROPEAN UNION 2020), in the literature, there are two constructions in a framework for governance: a) to depict the defining feature of governance or the core component of a new management paradigm or b) to manage the role and effectiveness of both network members and the networks themselves.

So Network Governance (or case b above) is a societal mode of governance, while Governance Networks refer to a tool of governance (EUROPEAN UNION 2020). In strategic management, we must use both definitions and understand that Governance Network is made with current methods, not only digitalized ones, in all countries. Thus in public, when a government (the executive) must develop strategic plans it also needs strategic tools (PROVAN, K. G., & KENIS 2008). In the actual paper, we refer to strategic management tools as a best practice to have the best outcome and the more efficient.

Following Purbani (2017) the most important factor in establishing a cooperative strategic governance is the interdependence between stakeholders. Stakeholders must realize that their strategies will be implemented only through cooperation. The discussion between stakeholders allows them to recognize problems, establish effective working arrangements and reach agreement through shared understanding.

So a strategic management process must start in Public Administration strategic management with many steps: a) explore how cooperation has been operationalized b) understand the obstacles to enacting cooperation and define leadership or other factors(e.g. local history and context); c) legitimate and define how can a choice be made between individual and collective leadership; d) define a tool to measure the effectiveness of the collaborative approach and for representing different values, goals, and knowledge when engaging stakeholders in a collaborative process.

To allow the strategic management to enable the public and other agencies to exploit the drivers, and overcome the barriers to the co-production or co-creation of innovative public value outcomes at both organizational and project levels, a tool (or a combination of many) for the Network Governance must be chosen and followed. The tool must assure that Network Governance in strategic Plans like NextGenEu or PNRR, means the whole society must be motivated and participate in the goals.

Thus if the goals are only linked to European Union leaders or financial institutions like BCE it seems like to have some resistance at a local level. The COGOV must solve it. A wise strategy must foresee these issues and define following the Network Governance of the country the tools of the best practices want to use.

However, when strategic tendencies are decided in European Union there is no direct co-creation and co-production of a strategic plan with all European Counties and into that countries. It is not like having a co-production and co-creation plan between central and local Public Administration. But the plans tied to European tendencies and orientations must have citizen endorsements. As the financial and Public Administration reforms were a priority and a source of money a better solution for many goals of the plan, to deliver a plan like PNRR and its investments as a central plan, is better to use a dedicated task force than a COGOV.

Moreover the main strategic co-creation must be already in place, as a strategic local plan, so there must be a strategic management cycle at the local level to explore the creative and positive attitude of citizens towards the overall plan changes and PNRR opportunities and to use additional financial revenues in their plans.

But again, the COGOV implies more employment to manage the new tasks and new costs. A huge amount of current expenses had to be discussed to fit the constraint boundaries of Public Expenditure limits. The plan must be implemented, but accountability management of the Public Balance must define financial boundaries.

In terms of the presentation of a complex plan and network governance central and local, co-creation European Council and Country governments claim to have performed these tasks properly in their documents. Moreover writing a plan or presenting a plan is different to implement it and to establish a Network Governance or tools that work. In the case presented we analyze some fails encountered using COGOV definitions.

We can anticipate that in Italian plans the COGOV step was made when European Council and Italian Government agreed to a PNRR, then was defined as a strategy and country goals. A COGOV in Italy under the Italian Government could have been developed but it wasn't. The local-level strategy of linking local objectives and nationals meant central and local strategy co-creation working together to have the same outcome.

But in Italian strategic management, each local level was constrained to make plans and starts projects without a co-creation supposing the local and the central objectives and goals were trusted and accepted by all the stakeholders. The local plans and projects should have had all in place before the PNRR started and combined with central strategies but it was not.

Project Management of a Public Plan : European PM2

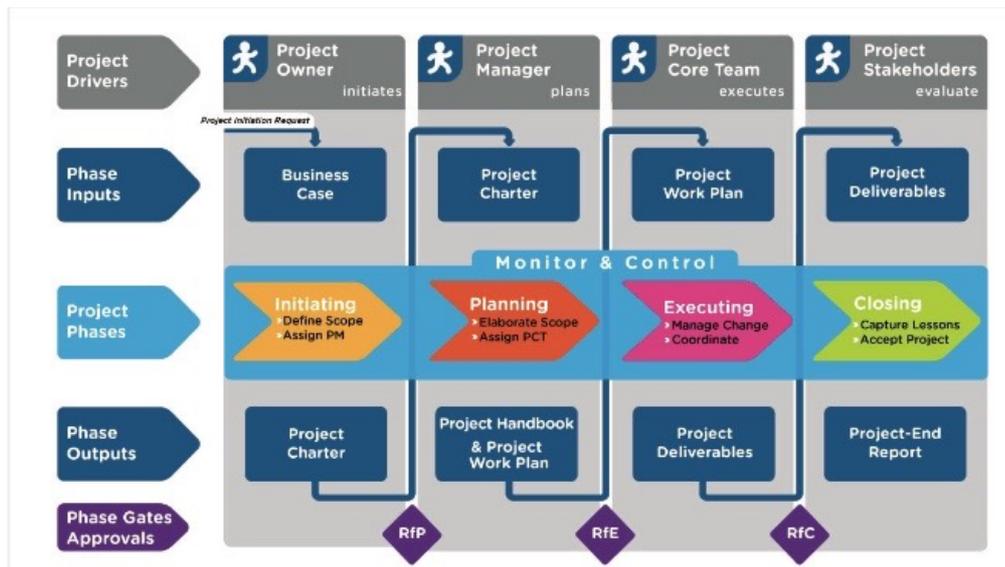
The Project Management framework PM² or the project management methodology for European Union (EUROPEAN UNION 2022, 2021a,2021b,2021c European Commission 2021, 2018)) , discussed here in the paper, differs from ISO 27000, PMI, Prince2 and other tools and frameworks already used in business and the market.

It must be clear that the general plan as NEXTgenEU and PNRR Italy and Digital Transition must be managed and tied together because of the strategic value of the whole investment and political tendency in Europe. It could be defined as a strategic management of all plans and a specific technical department. Thus it is not an European Council or Prime Minister's task to implement plans but a special branch of the government. The overall strategy must manage a combination of different plans and a process that implies a project or a portfolio of projects. However NextGenEu, PNRR ITALY, and DTI (ITALY DTI 202) are not just a simple portfolio of projects, because of their complexity must be clear the methods to manage this and the technical teams apart from politicians.

The method or methodology to operate and deliver the plan goals or the Network Governance must be clear before to start a strategic plan not ongoing. The "governance" is not an empty word to write in the executive plan summary. The strategy implies a strategic management tool that implies again the plan's governance. This only can be done with skilled managers.

To make this clear following the mainstream project management rules (PMI 2021) sponsors (agents, or stakeholders) and a PMO must be defined to support, facilitate and improve the results of the plans and projects at a strategic level. These are Network governance tools to be used mandatory. There is an absolute priority on strategic management and the governance of the portfolio of programs and projects or the plan.

Figure 2 - Swimlane of Project Management



Font: PM² Swimlane Diagram (European Commission 2021 pg. 27)

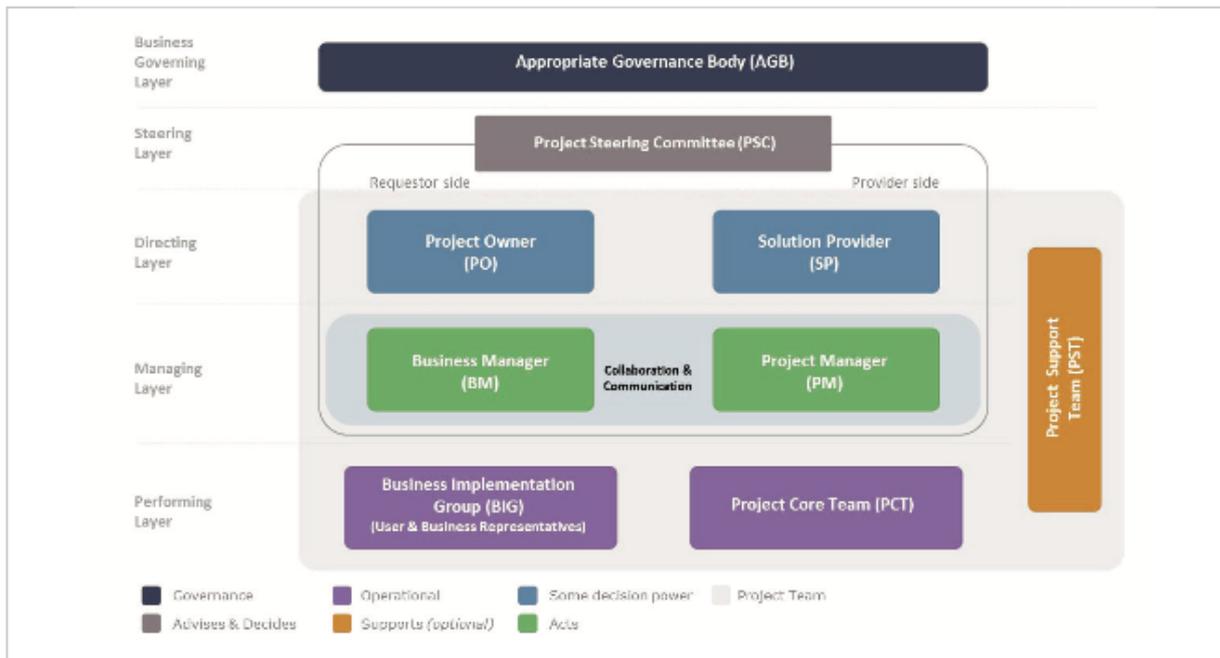
Thus according to Sofia Ribeiro-Lopes et al (2021), PM² has few followers and applications yet in European Public Administration. The diagram in figure 2 shows the PM² Swimlane Diagram (European Commission 2021) because Projects depend on people to define, plan and execute them. These project drivers change from phase to phase in a PM² project. Project Initiation Request Formalises the commitment to explore a problem, need, or opportunity further and captures the context. During the Initiating Phase, the Project Owner (PO) is the main driver, initiating the project and being accountable for all documentation.

The PO could endorse specialists to run the project or uses Public Administration's skilled managers. In the Public Administration, there are special rules to do that. In Italy, it must be decided and asked for a public competition. Due to an emergency to run PNRR has created a shortcut hiring one thousand specialists to support the plan. But there is a difference between a consulting group (even for Public Administration) and a public administrator. All expenditures and organization or plan operative decisions must pass only through a public administration manager with powers or the delegation to do that and is responsible for it.

So then, to work properly, the process is needed a clear span of control and delegation of decision powers all over the hierarchy line in the project. But the same problem of decision power and span of control is found at a higher or strategic level of the plan/project management. In fact, in the next figure of project organization, the Appropriate Governance Body (AGB) states that this is the entity responsible for strategic planning and portfolio management.

In terms of projects, this is the governance level with the authority to approve a project. It also agrees with its stated objective and releases the funding required to implement it. This governance encompasses members from the requestor and provider side of the project.

Figure 3 - Project Management Governance



Font: PM² Governance (European Commission 2021 pg. 30)

According to European Commission PM² manual (2021), the AGB's main task is the following:

- Defines the corporate and business domain strategy.
- Agrees to and implements a portfolio management framework
- Identifies, evaluates, and authorizes programs and projects for implementation.
- Monitors and controls portfolio delivery performance.
- Optimises and manages portfolio resources and benefits.

Seeking the strategic management process discussed in the block above (COGOV, Network Governance) it is clear that AGB Business Governing Layer is, in the Business Governing Layer (BGL), the committee that determines the vision and strategy for the organization of the plan. It must consist of one or more management committees where decisions about priorities are defined, investment decisions made, and resources allocated. This BGL is not committed to operational phases.

It is the Steering Layer that has the responsibility to provide general project operations direction and guidance. It keeps the project focused on its objectives. It reports to the whole AGB and especially to BGL. The Steering Layer has the roles defined in the Directing and Management Layers plus other optional roles. This layer presents the Project Steering Committee (PSC) which has at least four roles: Project Owner (PO), Solution Provider (SP), Project Manager (PM), and Business Manager (BM). Other roles can also participate as per the project's needs.

Thus it is clear that following the PM² method the governance of the project must have all those layers well clearly defined and organized. But a step further must be made because of the Public Administration's complex organizations, and the governance difference in all the countries, a complex problem is to develop a plan or a project

that could manage these layers when there is a bureaucratic and decentralized organization like in Italy.

It seems less complex, but also more expansive or inefficient, to duplicate the AGB model for all the Local and decentralized centers of Public Administration in the country. So then an AGB could be the governance framework (central government) and a local AGB could be the decentralized one.

Without clear definition in PM², in case of complex Public Administration, this seems likely the solution adopted in Italy called Control Room in PNRR

Which are the risks of that solution:

- Missing milestones of central and local control rooms. The solution adopted was a clause in PNRR that states a direct intervention by central AGB into local in case of failure of the operations.
- Lack of clear governance rules and processes. The solution was ongoing defining in 2022 but stopped when governing changes in late 2022.
- AGB and Steering layer (PSC) overlap.

Even if not operative, it could be said that the first two risk had some mitigate rule, but the last hadn't. A single Control room confusing plan of governance. because the AGB call in Italy Control Room is the same Steering layer or PSC. The prime minister of the Country Executive and his staff mustn't be committed to an operational committee (PSC). Their commitment is strategic and defines goals for the AGB of the plan. When the strategic and only in the AGB layer, otherwise AGB and PSC performs all control and operate a strategic and operational cycle at the same time and with confusion.

The AGB decisions must be separate from PSC to allow the operation ongoing. An AGB of the plan like PNRR should have to concentrate to have overall information on all Public Administration and its performance, to prevent goals failures. In Italy's case, the AGB must respond not to the prime Minister's governance of all PNRR but to the Public Administration's technical strategic management of it.

The local AGB of the plans or projects should have an AGB direct control and could be a political organism linked to central decisions. It could be called a Control Room also. However the PSC, in reverse, must be local and should have been made hiring technical and specialists not politicians. As was underlined above the PSC must be endorsed by a decision-making special clause that allows the making of organizational and financial decisions. So the Control Room (or whatever is called) mustn't control the PSC operate as a PSC.

The problem of how and in which terms must develop complex governance depends on each country's organization and its mechanisms. In Italy the solution here discussed using a confused control room, carrying the risks of process confusion in a strategic layer and having wide impacts on local decisions.

The Link between COGOV and PM² or the strategic and plan management.

Europe suggested two methodologies to develop a synchronized process of strategic management and plan/project management: a) Co-Production and Co-Governance: Strategic Management (COGOV) and b) PM² project management tools. It is important to underline again that, when the words strategic and strategic management in the PM² method they are related to the project or the portfolios. As was explained in the sections above the strategic management of Plans and policies is an outcome of strategic management or, in other words European or Country strategy. The plans and portfolio of plans or projects are only a part of the overall strategy and strategic management or its network governance definition.

So then strategy management (not the decision of strategic goals) is an executive process task and the PNRR could be managed by a special department of the Ministry of Innovation or some other Ministry but certainly not by the chief executive who has a strategic task using COGOV. When a complex organization must run a plan that includes central government and local governments the last ones have to implement investments and reforms at a local level and the central government must support it with a proper Network Governance. The country's strategic management and the local strategic management could not be supposed to be already harmonized but there is a moment to build a solid network of governance and COGOV to support the strategy. It must be defined one or many strategic tools to be managed by skilled managers and as many as they are needed to run the additional plans decided, not politicians or CEO.

Both methods, COGOV and PM² must care of National, local, and European stakeholders but the coordination between strategies and plans communications. However, as was seen, all the methods as COGOV and PM² hardly explain the operating process that involves a double simultaneous cycle (strategic management and plan management). And there could be confusion when strategic managers and plan/project strategic managers are involved in operations, coordination, communication, and control.

Maybe the problem is not only of methods but only semantic because to have a different interpretation in translation from English is possible to misunderstand. I.e. a control room(or other committees) is typical for plans, programs, and projects at a different level and depends on the assignment matrix of governance, but a steering committee or a control room is necessary for strategic management, for project management, and for a quality cycle too. So the control room could be interpreted as the control room of the plan and the control room of strategic management as well. This seems the case to be analyzed in the Italian management of plans. The English grammar and syntax sometimes are too simple to be used without a good glossary because in Latin languages there are more definitions of a single English word.

Thus there must be a transparent way to manage strategic moments and plan management. The decision process and the operational mechanisms couldn't be left to amateurism and political ideology that could change following public opinion. A plan must be developed by managers addicted to methods and with a solid background to explain what they are going to do, and not to political evaluations. Aveni (2022) suggested a more intensive use of legal advisors and a manual of ethics and governance rules of engagement. Calvino alert about the management skills and practices.

Because of the Public Administration organization's processes when a Public Manager heads a plan or a project, it is needed a conflict of interest control and a responsibility assignment together with a responsibility expenditure. So if there is no separation of tasks and people to perform it could be a conflict about the goals and outcomes expected and who is responsible.

The conflicts between politicians, managers, committees and responsibilities is summed up with conflicts between local and central authorities. The conflict here is also seeking the duration and the timing of reforms to run efficiently and effectively all plans. For example a transaction from a manual or analogical system to improve service as in digital transition plans could be postponed by a local Public Administration because of a local decision and this, multiplied by several local delays could cause a general delay to fill the 100% result expected in one year of the plan.

Finally, to have a clear picture of strategic management and plan management, a full report for each level and impacts interactions of the Public Administration should be present to follow the management of the plan o project. This is not a summary as

seen in internet pages of the plans. This is only advertising. When no communications or sound report are at the disposal to understand how the plan is running the strategic management and the overall plan portfolio outcomes link is missed. Some type of communications and also plan reports between stakeholders could easily hide deep problems.

3.2 DTI case, History and complexity of the European plans

At a strategic level, the NextGenerationEU² is the European plan that supports PNRR ITALY and Digital Transition as complementary plans. The planning process started in 2018. The EU long-term budget and the proposal of a NextGenerationEU plan were explained on 2 May 2018 and the framework proposal was followed by 37 sectoral programs (e.g. cohesion, agriculture, Erasmus, Horizon Europe, etc.). After the pandemic crisis caused by Coronavirus, on 27 May 2020, the European Commission proposed the NextGenerationEU plan as a temporary recovery instrument, which has targeted reinforcements to the long-term EU budget for 2021-2027.

On 21 July 2020, EU heads of state or government reached a political agreement. This was approved on 10 November 2020 by the European Parliament and the Council. On 10 December 2020, the EU Member States Governments agreed with the adoption of the MFF Regulation and the Own Resources Decision, at the level of the Council. After that, on 17 December 2020, the Council indeed decided to adopt the next long-term EU budget for the period 2021-2027. At last, on 18 December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the Recovery and Resilience Facility to start the NextGenerationEU (EU 2021c, 2021d).

NextGenerationEU is more than a recovery plan. It was defined that the President is the head of the European Commission. The President decides on the organization of the Commission and allocates portfolios to individual Commissioners, as a turning point as it stressed sustainable development goals. Europe ought to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 reducing greenhouse gases to the level ecosystems can naturally absorb them.

The digital goal in Europe is to be able to connect everywhere with 5G and EU-wide ultra-fast broadband, receive a digital identity (eID), make it easier to access online public services, and give people more control over their data. Furthermore, cities must become smarter and more efficient, making online shopping more secure, developing artificial intelligence, and improving healthcare, transport, and education.

Thus the Recovery and Resilience Facility is the central piece of the NextGenerationEU with €723.8 billion in loans and grants available to support reforms and investments undertaken by EU countries. The plan has a dual purpose: to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable. Added to these actions, there is a Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) that in the NextGenerationEU includes €50.6 billion

PNRR ITALY or Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) (D'ALFONSO 2022) decided to use its entire national allocation under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), including its loan component (€122.6 billion). Totaling €191.5 billion. In June 2022, Italy's grant allocation was revised upwards slightly to €69 billion(+0.2 %)and added resources worth €30.6 billion to further strengthen reforms and investments All measures under the plan are to be completed by 2026.

To promote synergies, Italy decided on the PNRR "governance" structure system divided by milestones and targets for the projects. In line with RRF provisions, the

² https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en

plan's strategic objectives are to: 1) help Italy recover from the severe socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus pandemic; 2) contribute to addressing structural weaknesses of the Italian economy (i.e. low productivity growth; significant and persistent gaps in territorial development; women's low participation in the labor market; delays in digitalization, education, and research systems); and 3) focus on the three strategic axes agreed as common challenges at EU level (digitalization and innovation; ecological transition; and social inclusion).

Addressing the seven flagship areas for investments and reforms identified by the European Commission the plan is structured around six fields of intervention (called 'missions') and includes 16 components, each to be implemented through a mix of investments and reforms. The objectives of the six missions are as follows: 1. 'Digitalisation, innovation, competitiveness, culture, and tourism' 2. 'Green revolution and ecological transition' 3. 'Infrastructures for sustainable mobility' 4. 'Education and research' 5. 'Inclusion and cohesion' 6. 'Health' Across its six missions, the plan exceeds the expenditure targets and identifies three horizontal priorities (youth, gender equality, and territorial cohesion) that all missions are to address, in line with the specific challenges of the Italian economy.

Seeking strategic governance of the Italian Government and PNRR project management as planned there is a governance "mitigation risk" clause of PNRR Italy to avoid delays of the Public Administration machine due to complexity. This is because the government could have direct control of a decentralized control room (of different levels of Public Administration) when the plan could have trouble and could be delayed. But this is a null clause because is not possible to implement it without skilled people hired in advance and planned (ITALY 2019).

It is possible to observe in Italy a greater discrepancy of interests and information as well as to punish the fails. The punishment takes also a long time to be performed. So in Italy the "agency costs", or the opportunity cost resulting from the agent problem are not overlapped with a COGOV consensus as expected by the strategic management proper process. Thus the relationship between agents and principals in Planning complexity management results in fewer outcomes than the ones planned as the theory explains.

Moreover, PNRR strategic goals pass through interventions and complementary plans: some central, some local, or both. One of these last is the complementary Digital Transition Plan. The objectives and actions of the Digital Transition Italy (DTI) three-year plan, were re-defined in 2022 and identified following the indications of the PNRR Mission 1. This has as a goal the Digital transformation to give a decisive boost to the relaunch of the country's competitiveness and productivity. Digitization affects and is affected by all transversal goals.

In this context the "Directive for defining the objectives of the Agency for Digital Italy" and the agency AgID were entrusted to ensure that the same objective of supervision, verification, control, and monitoring is exercised, starting from 2022, also regarding the digital transformation projects activated by the individual Administrations as part of the initiatives of the PNRR, having the decree-law of 19 May 2020, n. 34, also guaranteeing that the monitoring activities of the Three-Year Plan for IT in the public administration are aimed at promoting coordinated action between the various levels of the PA, to support the choices made by the PA and their operational planning.

The DTI is also a tool to support the implementation of the PNRR itself. Finally the same decree law of 31 May 2021 n. 77 with article 41 introduces article 18-bis of the Digital Administration Code and provides for a complex sanctioning procedure for public administrations for violations of the obligations regarding the digital transition.

As required by art. 17 of the CAD, since 2016, Public Administrations have been required to identify the Head RTD or Digital Transition Manager in charge of the Digital Transition Office and the relative registration on the Index of digital domiciles of the Public Administration and Public Service Managers ([www .indicepa.gov.it](http://www.indicepa.gov.it)).

However, as of September 2022, there are still almost 4,000 RTDs to be appointed in the PAs, of which about half are in municipal administrations, especially small ones. Some local PAs, based on their own needs, have seized the opportunity to proceed with the appointment of the RTD in an associated form in compliance with the provisions of paragraph 1-species of art. 17 of the CAD.

Were also defined the targets to Increase in Public Administrations with Digital Transition Manager appointed using 2021 control has found that 17,714 Public Administrations(PA) have appointed their own RTD (81% of the PAs present in the IPA with the obligation to appoint RTDs equal to 21,925). The targets are 2022 - At least 85% of administrations that have appointed RTDs out of the total of PAs, at least 90% in 2023, and 92% in 2024. Also were defined more targets for the promotion and dissemination of methods and models for consolidating the role of RTDs, also in aggregate form at the PAL, strengthening the level of consistency (connection) of the ICT programming of the PAs with the three-year plan.

To consolidate the role of the Digital Transition Manager there are courses of action in sequence from 2022 to 2024: a) Launch of a Workshop on the organizational/operational models of the Digital Transition Offices and the appointment of associated RTDs b) Activation of at least 8 territorial/thematic digital communities within the RTD community c) Implementation of a new advanced training program for RTDs and their office staff coordinated with the objectives and times of the Operational Plan of the National Strategy on Digital Competencies - (AGID) - d) Dissemination of the results of the Laboratory on the organizational/operational models of the Digital Transition Offices and the appointment of associated RTDs - (AGID) - e) Activation of at least 10 territorial/thematic digital communities within the RTD community ReteDigitale.gov.it - (AGID)

To proceed further with the discussion a summary of strategic and planning issues is done in the actual section.:

- DTI is supposed to be coordinated with PNRR ITALY and NEXTGenEU
- Its mission is central for PNRR
- In 2022 were defined and issued governance systems which refer to the oldest reforms and rules currently not completed
 - There is an RTD request for each level and Public Administration node
 - There is a sanction procedure for violation
 - Targets to have fully completed RTD or direct governance are defined till 2024.
- There is an action program to consolidate the RTD all over local municipalities.

3.3 Results and suggestions from the DTI case

Results

The central manager to run local DTI is the Digital Transition Manager RTD. But he is only a part of project management team not the unique solution of a digital transition plan. If we use the PM² European Framework to assign a responsibility to run the plan this must be shared with AGB and then PSC. A Manager of Transition is a part of a Plan/ Project team, and for transition could be the reference and the endorsed

manager of a TI department but not the strategic manager of a plan as seems to be in this Italian Digital Transition. Here some point of discussion.

a) COGOV - Strategic management

The DTI plan is the responsibility of the department of Digital Transition of the Ministry for Innovation. This department truly started in 2019 and was developed mainly because of the COVID-19 crisis. There is no information about strategic management and strategic management tools to orient operations and plans. The plan is the only document that could clarify the strategic orientation or the way to do it. So we assume the strategic goal of digital transition in Italy is the same as the plan.

A differentiation between the country strategy and the plan strategy must assure a full strategic analysis and control of objectives, resources, and strategic outcomes. In this case again the Italian DTI plan starts with no COGOV activation process. It is a mandatory decision from a Ministry, it was urgent and necessary because of the COVID-19 crisis, which implies some risks. But there was no link to local IT plans using COGOV tools.

Thus the lack of executive strategic management tools to orient and manage the DTI plan imply some risks:

1) **DTI plan has not COGOV.** Without strategic management, there are no alternatives to governance and convergence of goals of other plans in advance. PNRR link has is not strategic but a resources provider because the PNRR implies the DTI is running and renewing Public Administration, and at the same time or before the PNRR could deploy its financial attitude. This is cause effect expectation that the Public Administration and TI department of all central and local Technical Responsible Managers could develop a digital transition in time to hit the targets, but without a full engagement of the plan owners (PO) and stakeholders not having COGOV tools in place.

2) **DTI has not hired RTD skill managers for local plans.** Without strategic management, there is no convergence and consensus between plan and project local managers. Not only governance could be at risk because the different level managers are not organized and supported by a Public Digital Administration but the two plans don't have the same roadmap, milestones, and even "areas" to reach the same objective. Thus a generic control room, as was defined, is not sufficient to manage and control the whole strategic process and plans. So if we want a control room this must interact with national stakeholders (eventually all the citizens) and the plan/project control room that is technical governance of the portfolio of all central and local plans.

3) **DTI has only a central timing schedule.** Even with no COGOV or likely others method, or if there is a hierarchy organisation of Public Administration it must be clear a timing schedule and outcome of all the plans combining all TI milestones and goals. S.m.a.r.t. goals imply a combined network of cause-effect between reforms, investment, and outcomes. So a lack of strategic management methodology, which is reading the Plans (TALY 2019, ITALY 2022), even in case of lack of local COGOV implies risk in the whole process.

4) **DTI is a reform or a plan?** As an evaluation of strategic management goals included in PNRR, there are a low number and weak reforms to change the Public Administration and uses of the local COGOV process.. This means the goals included in this plan were not properly unfolded and linked to the resources and internal analysis. DTI is part of reforms but it also imply a strategic renew plan for Public Administration. So then is more complex than a simple plan to be managed by only a department of Public Administration central executive.

b) Project management

The same the lack of use project management tools could have risks for the plan:

1) **The DTI plan doesn't use fully PM²** nor a group of manuals suggestions like using Agile planning or operational agile process. and this doesn't means there is no strategic management and governance of the plan. But as was said in the plan/ project management discussion of the European method there is a risk. AGB and PSC are not developed because there is a constraint of Public Administration bureaucracy and law rules. The AGID is a department of the Innovation Ministry so has a central purpose. Local TI systems are not centrally developed and must be defined by the local government. The only method that combines all the Public Administration TI is network governance with standards to be used by all. The evidence no one locally uses the same standard of projects and systems in the bureaucratic processes of digitalization.

2) **The main goal for DTI is high digital services** in all Public Administration to provide minimum European standards like digital identification and controlled payment systems and so on. A standard design is required and the security plan is mandatory. So DTI is part of a possible strategy for a better TI for Public Administration. But DTI implies a fragmentation of methods, interventions, and results all over local Public Administration. Especially local governments with low skills and a low number of workers could not stand by these goals. A Public Administration process is people and time-consuming. The overall work process to provide services is the same if it is developed for a little municipality as for a great city. But to provide investments only to the local organisations that could develop plans It means creating a gap between good and rich local organizations (that have resources) and local little communities.

3) **The DTI implies concurrency and reuse.**As the Central department doesn't rule or use a plan/project methodology standard like the European the local government of the Public Administration has not established governance. This implies that the "control room" and the RTD are the only appointed structures to govern the DTI and its process. A concurrency of software factories is then disputed in the Public Administration market and every local government creates a TI external branch to develop and manage local TI. It is again a risk to have such a fragmented and not homogenous system. The reuse clause informed as a strategy is already a "null clause" because one can imagine what it means to share part of systems between local governments without central coordination. Different skills and numbers of specialists, strategic goals and services, and different local cultures imply different customers (citizens).

4) **The RDT in DTI is not an AGB.** The DTI has to define an AGB for all portfolios of projects. This must a) defines the TI strategy, b) agrees to and implements a portfolio management framework to achieve the strategic objectives c) identifies, evaluates, and authorizes programs and projects for implementation d). monitors and controls portfolio delivery performance e) optimizes and manages portfolio resources and benefits. The RDT is useful in the Italian Public Administration because is the responsible of a process or a procedure. It means he can spend public money and authorizes all sort of bureaucratic decisions in his mandate. But again strategic or team governance is different from an operation or an operative activity or task, ad again there is a risk of interest conflict between managers and activities in the local governance.

5) **DTI hire Consultants and experts.** As in some business these are not a solution for Public Administration project management. As was clarified in the explanation of the PM² section, in the swimline the process runs, and there are appointed responsibilities. The plan/project team must work together and with the same objectives but also with a clear line of command and decision powers. When a consultant or an expert hired temporarily has not the endorsement of the organization and the powers to develop its part of the job the risk is to pay people only to have suggestions and reports

that are not solving or complete the processes. The outcomes expected never will be reached.

Suggestions

Following this analysis and the discussion under the lens of the two European methodologies, it is possible to comment and suggestions as follows:

First: Reforms. An evaluation of strategic management goals included in PNRR Italy report a low number and weak reforms to change the Public Administration and the local COGOV process. Thus PNRR and DTI goals are not linked and coordinated. The PNRR only supports DTI by investments. PNRR where included goals to achieve reforms in Public Administration with a low level of coordination of other strategic reforms and other plans. Public Administration reforms take time and the change will result only after some months from the reform.

Second: Central and Local Governance. Seeking strategic network governance of the Italian Government and PNRR project management was found in a governance "mitigation" clause of PNRR to avoid delays of the Public Administration machine due to decentralization issues. This is because the government could have direct control of a decentralized control room (of different levels of Public Administration) when the plan could have trouble and could be delayed. But this is a null clause because is not possible to implement it without skilled people hired in advance and with a governance control planned and the necessary local authorizations. The plan didn't fix complex management methods such as both strategic management and project management.

Third: controls. In Italy there is a greater discrepancy and fragmentation of interests and information as well as when the principal lacks the means to punish the agent, or the punishment takes a long time to be performed. So in Italy the "agency costs", or the opportunity cost resulting from the agent problem are not overlapped by a consensus or punishment. Thus the relationship between agents and principals in planning complexity management results in an underestimated outcome, usually low and far from the planned.

Again the more complex the Public Administration organization the more problems there are all over the process. Tools, methods, and theoretical understanding of a complexity plan must encompass all human organization and environmental change aspects. The more complex the plan, the more stakeholders needed to decide and cooperate with the planners. It is fallacious to try to shortcut the process needs using digitalization or other cost-saving tools with an expectation of being more efficient in a short time. As the complex plan is not easy to define and forecast, the system entropy is reached raising energy or costs to manage all the problems that spread up when the plan starts.

Fourth: strategic management and plan management tools. The PNRR has included a control room as the stakeholders' real orientation of the whole plan and defined at each Italian Public administration level a control room. The control room benefits a PMO central service subject to the powers of direction and supervision of the President of the Council of Ministers or the Minister delegated by him and the AGID (Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale) as digital PMO.

The solution seems in line with the main methods and methodologies and wishes to have a continuous interaction between strategic management of the plan and the strategic planning of the plan throughout their stakeholders. But unfortunately, this main control room doesn't work as a control room of the control rooms on the lower levels. Thus a mechanism of conferences was also created to support the grey part of

the PNRR process and this creates more difficulties when the conference act as a clearing of problems in the process.

The control room is in line with the PM² Portfolio methodology (European Union 2022). According to this (EUROPEAN UNION 2022 p.5) the organization's mission provides the direction and a series of goals business domain to be reached. In this sense, all portfolio objectives are closely linked to the definition and realization of a business strategy (EUROPEAN UNION 2022 pg. 9). The Portfolio Management Framework Definition process defines and specifies the structure of portfolios, the governance bodies' responsibilities, and the necessary processes to manage the portfolios and engage the stakeholders. It is reviewed regularly to adjust to changing circumstances and evolving needs.

But the European methodology suggests two bodies of management: the Portfolio Directing Group (PDG) and the Portfolio Steering Committee (PSC). The first defining the portfolio framework is the top-level governance responsible for the investment decisions across portfolios. The second is responsible for the portfolio's efficient delivery. The sessions of this propose adaptations to the portfolio composition and monitor the portfolio performance. The separation between strategic and operational management of a portfolio is more than once time underlined.

Finally the control room in PNRR, DTI, and the local control rooms, following the European method, should have had a clear differentiation framework in which a least have had a PDG and its PSC but also program and project Steering committees for each decentralized administrative level in Italy.

Fifth: Ethics, conflicts and rules of engagement. The plan's management of Italian Public Administration has a decentralized organization. Italy Public Organisation has a central, Regional, intermediate local authorities (metropolitan areas, provinces) and municipalities carrying out all administrative tasks except for those expressly assigned to the State. In the case of shared responsibilities, the Regions have the legislative power, except for establishing the fundamental principles reserved to the State (art. 117).

The Regions carry out their functions through specific offices called Assessorati. Through the State/Regions Conference (Conferenza Stato/Regioni), the Regions work closely with Ministries. The responsibilities of the Regions include interventions aimed at a first placement in the labor market, including higher technical-vocational training, vocational specialization, re-qualification, in-service training, etc.

In part linked to PNRR the reforming public investment enrolment in 2022 modified the Codice del Appalti or Public Administration Procurement Code and it was said that the majority of local public investment will be run at a different speed. But it is doubtful that only a law or a Ministry Ordinance is sufficient to change immediately the local administrations and especially those without plans and programs ready. As was shown if not properly and clearly defined a strategic control room of the PNRR plan and a strategic control room for plan management could confuse the process and delay the investments. Finally who is responsible for what? To low the level of control is not a wise strategy to speed investments.

All strategic plans should have had defined as well as a local plan or portfolio of projects should have had decided before PNRR, or today being the PNRR must be coordinated. To mitigate this risk of overlap and lack of mechanisms of share power of strategic and steering committees along with a better definition of control rooms, stakeholders, and measures a central strategy control must also define the cross-over impacts of the complex plan and outcomes of the whole Italian strategy. The Missions and their Reforms in PNRR are in checkmate when one considers the time necessary

to develop DTI and have a full digital Public Administration in time. But the same without a local plan control progress.

Sixth: efficiency and digital transaction goals. The case of the new Code of contracts approved in late 2022 and the E-procurement for Public contracts impact is a clear example of the difficulty between performing the PNRR, and DTI and reaching results and the overall impact of the reform. In this example again E-procurement in Italy is not fully employed by the Central and Local Public Administration all over the territory. Many Municipalities and Regions have not performed the basic transition because, as the Reform dictate some e-procurement were built and certificates. The whole system, due to change in late 2022, must be recalibrated and controlled. The mechanism is not working as was defined and it will make some time to verify and to become efficient.

Final remarks

As a results of the discussion and suggestion the tools and methods lower the risk of the process being deviated or misunderstand. Unfortunately doesn't assure the risk of inefficiency and loss of quality of the strategic process. It is known that centralization and decentralization approaches are more suitable for structured plans that use a legal framework to control programs and projects and their bureaucratic process as a Public Administration because of the structure of laws and rules of it. This is because an institutional framework for responsibility and hierarchy in each country must be followed to certify accountability of the whole process. A reform process imply also hiring skilled people.

In 2022 the author was senior consulting to follow one of these control systems and produced a report to the local government because of the lack of transparency regarding the controls and the way to perform such a task, but this was not a priority for local government. This Agile management of projects should have been the best method when task forces such as Thousand experts of PNRR were raised are perfectly skilled and have clear goals and power to perform tasks and projects.

However the overall process of the plan needed a previous strategy and a quality focus. The agile method uses inputs and interacts with stakeholders as is needed in a flexible process and in general into a better delivery system. To create value there are various components, such as portfolios, programs, projects, products, and operations. An Agile process is made to create value on the other side Strategic Management and PCDA are processes needed institutionally for governance and for goal orientation purposes they refer to the external and internal environment of an organization (see PMBok 7th ed. 2021 pag.10). It's a slight difference in words but a great means operationally.

The overall complexity of an holistic network governance was sub-estimated because usually strategists and managers especially in public plans have diverging positions about strategic management. This is part of the agent-principal problem. Politics as strategists don't want to assume a low level of Public Administration efficiency. This is because the strategic management process consists of a processing cycle into a quality cycle. The low quality causes a loss in the political capital of the owner of the plan. This could be mitigate by a technical strategic and plan management run by Public Administration skilled managers and not by the government or the executive.

So virtually it is needed a Triple Cycle Complex Plan Approach (CPA) that works synchronously because if there are changes in any cycle phase processes' the whole process is affected. Control and measures or indicators are the main features performing such a complex performance and stakeholders' attitude (agreement and negotiation) is the driver of the whole process. All Public Administration projects at all levels

must have a predictive base due to necessary accountability and legal framework. Must be granted a certain degree of adaptive approach to have an incremental and interactive Agile process. This kind of cycle is wasting political capital so every politician is likely to avoid the risks of this assessment or appraisals.

If we want to summarising the suggestions into actions, two are the main points to improve the actual management of the DTI and PNRR plans: 1) use a tool that links CPA in a triple integration of processes (quality, strategic management, and plan management) and stress stakeholder COGOV. 2) a team of technicians must be appointed to manage the strategic and plan management processes.

As a control tool to improve transparency and communications, it is mandatory the cross-over matrix impacts and indicators to measure process overflow time. The conformity of the rules, legal framework, and stakeholder agreement avoids criticism and potential risks when the process is ongoing.

In term of timing a three years plan is not a good length of time to work with. Especially under the suggestion of time appraisal explained before in the paper. The changes in Public Administration must take more than three years in Italy. It must be from five to ten main plans and strategy and annual appraisals with three or fewer years of possible adjustment. There must be a clause when the plan is aborted too.

If the plan is five years long it fits exactly the time from a public vote period and a majority in parliament (and virtually an executive government as well) It is a clause that could be used to gain the political capital of the success of the strategic plan. Another timeline conflicts with government elections, but again, being a question of technical skills and management it should be possible to assume that technical strategy management is separate from political management.

4. Conclusion

The Paper tried to clarify the main weaknesses between strategic management and project management in Public Administration plans having the case of Italy as practical example. The methodological and governance failures of plan governance were analyzed using the author's experience work as a PNRR consultant, and his academic skills. At a first sight, following the speech or the presentations, the PNRR and Digital Transition Italy are well organized and have all control and communication in place. The paper shows some cracks in this surface layer.

The paper briefly explained the methodological approach failure and difficulties using EU to suggest a framework for the project or the PM2. Thus, PM² and COGOV framework standards should be improved and linked to a Quality process assessment. However, the governance between strategic management and project management is the missing link in Italy that causes all the processes and plans to risk failure. It is a general European problem because also COGOV and PM² are not very clear as operating methodology framework and need local adjustments that are delivered to local Public Administration.

When strategic governance and plan governance are working together the rules and the agreement between different bureaucratic levels are negotiated at the political level. The result is a loss of efficiency in the whole system that needs more effort to reduce entropy. This could be done with more skilled managers and specialists working on plans. The Italian "one thousand specialists contract" probably carry less people than was required. It is doubtful if a task force would have had more success because of local resistance of change or central-local politics conflicts. However, in our opinion, the Public Administration reforms and public managers skills must have had prioritized and more people hired or employed.

It could be seen that result of decentralized Italian Public Administration is a irregular process and depends also of the size of local Administration favouring great concentration. Italy is losing control of PNRR and expected a late outcome because of political decentralization governance and define a investment rule based on local's number of citizens.

As usual, when we discuss after the plan had started is easy to see the errors. But an interesting remark is that there is no doubt that the first PNRR outcomes in 2022 were more simple to reach than in the following years and this was a political calculus to show how good were the executive in 2021. It is for sure the PNRR and DTI plans were not very clear and transparent from the beginning. The public transparency of the plan means a wide public discussion, risk analysis, cost-benefit analysis strategic environment assessment, and so on. No COGOV seems to be discussed before the start of the plan but was an autocratic decision of central government.

A finally remark is that a conflict of interest between politicians, technicians, and bureaucrats in Europe is resulting in a Weak Public Administration organization and low outcomes facing amounts of money involved. There is not only one answer or solution to that. But it must be asked to adopt best practices and more transparency as methods indicated. The trust in the European and National Systems could fall and a high political capital lost if a front of taxes it is delivered a low level of service to citizens.

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