

## **Countering educational poverty: the call for tenders expired on 1 February: 648 tenders submitted. Minister Provenzano, “Proud to have promoted this first call, an important political and cultural signal”**

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As many as 648 tenders were submitted in response to the call published by the Territorial Cohesion Agency for Third Sector projects aimed at countering educational poverty. Expired on 1 February, the call raised remarkable interest, confirmed by the 6,088 overall registrations on the Portal by Third Sector organisations, the world of education, institutions, regional systems of education and vocational training, universities, research and enterprises.

The initiative provides for EUR 16 million funding for Third Sector organisations in regions such as Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Apulia, Sardinia and Sicily, and EUR 4 million funding for Third Sector organisations in Lombardy and Veneto regions (most hit by the pandemic). The funding is to be provided through the resources of Italy’s Development and Cohesion Fund. Out of the total tenders received, 510 relate to Italy’s southern regions and 138 to northern regions such as Lombardy and Veneto. To ensure prompt implementation of the procedure, a committee will promptly be appointed to assess the quality of the project proposals submitted.

The success of this first call will be essential to continue and strengthen a strategic line of action through other funds (including EU funds). A general call will soon be published to support also other Third Sector activities in southern regions.

Giuseppe Provenzano, Minister for Southern Italy and Territorial Cohesion, declared "This initial measure sends out an important political and cultural signal: the Third Sector goes well beyond the social policy sphere and is fully involved in development and cohesion policies, starting with its fundamental contribution to countering a modern scandal such as children’s educational poverty. I am proud to have promoted this real change of pace. The Third Sector is essential for relaunching our Country. Because a strong, organised and active civil society generates trust and helps develop a sound economy, posing strong barriers against the erosion of rights and against criminal infiltration. And all this can and must start with children, primarily in our southern regions."