

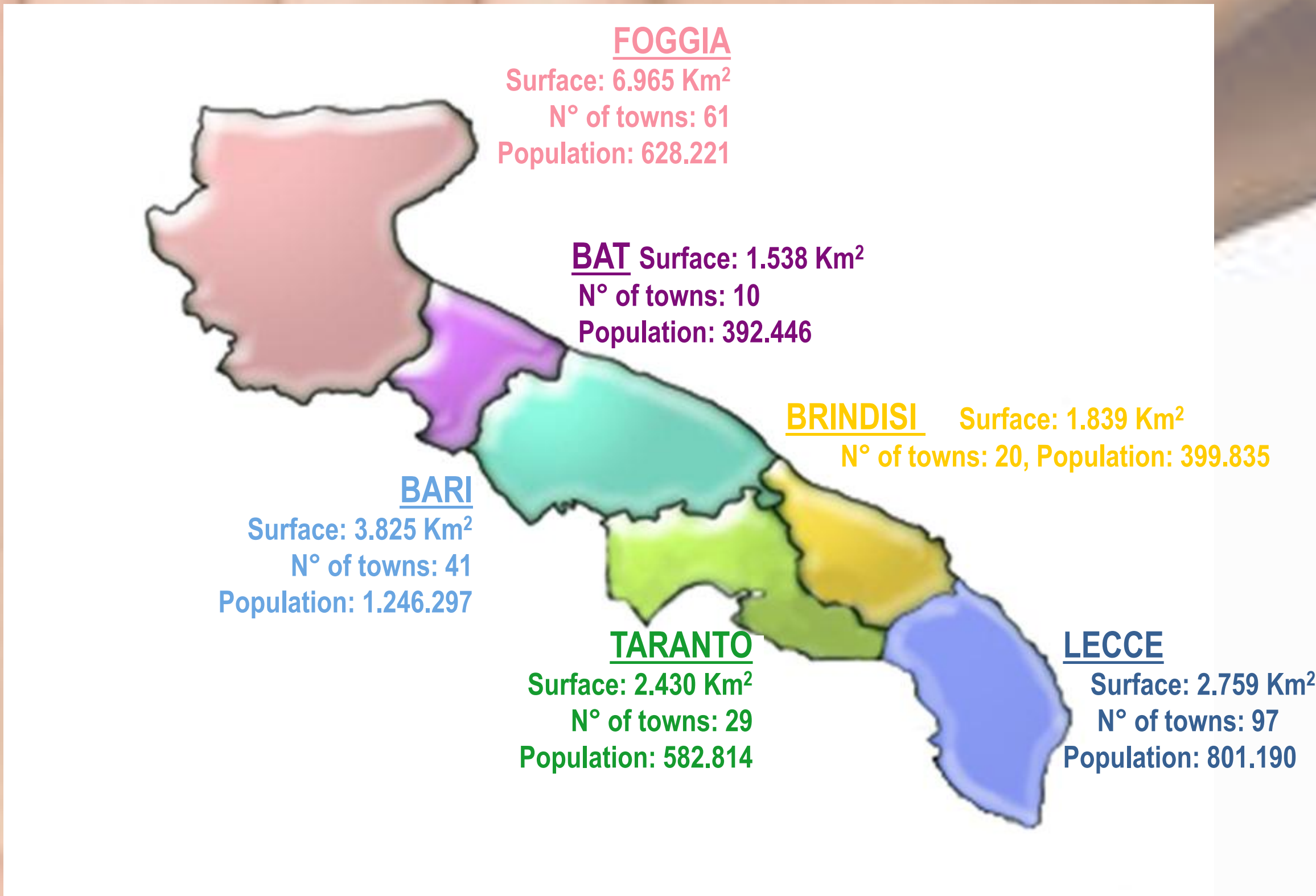
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Background and introduction

RTP, a regional population-based cancer registry, has been activated since 2008 to ensure standardized and comparable data about cancer epidemiology in a large Italian region. Puglia, an Italian south-east region consists of six administrative districts (Foggia, BAT, Bari, Brindisi, Taranto and Lecce) and in each district there is a Local Health Unit (ASL). RTP has been established with a regional deliberative act and it has been structured to address the needs of homogeneity and comparability of cancer data.



Results

Three of the six sections (BAT, Lecce and Taranto) are to date accredited by AIRTUM and this constitutes a guarantee of their completeness and accuracy, therefore for their use in different contexts. A fourth section (Brindisi) is going to submit the data to the accreditation process. Indicators as incidence, mortality, survival data have been provided for the accredited sections and the main purposes of use are for environmental issues (clusters, existence of point source of pollution), health planning and organization, analysis of care-pathways, scientific research.

There are already examples of use of data mostly for environmental issues in the areas at high environmental risk of Taranto and Brindisi: incidence data contribute to highlight critical health issues and support identification of intervention strategy, both on health system organization and on environmental risk factors.

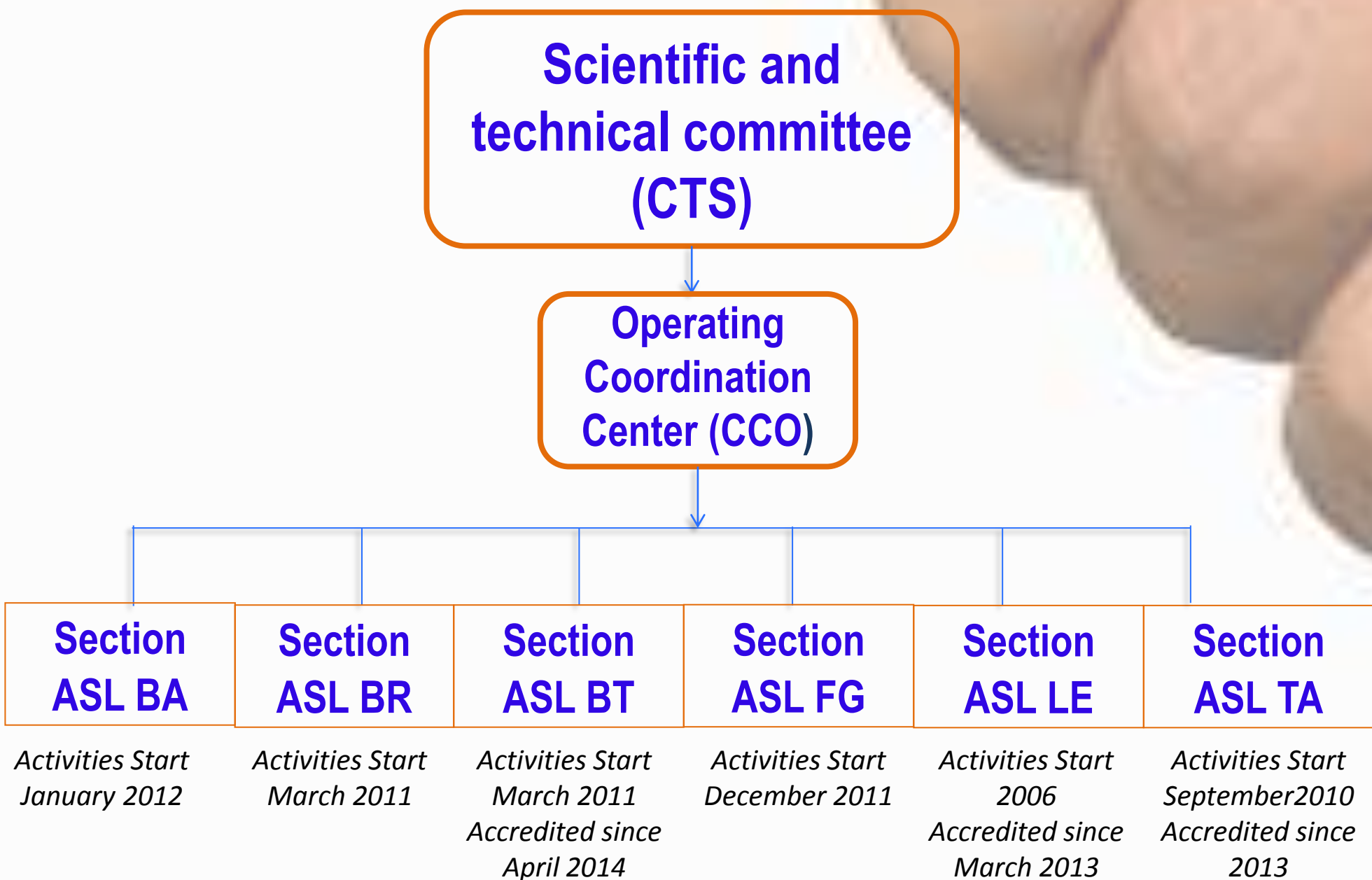
Materials & Methods

RTP consists of six sections in each ASL and an Operating Coordination Center, located in the Cancer Research Institute in Bari, which that ensures the uniform application of the rules of registration, provides training and information support; moreover it carries out statistical analysis and coordination of collaborative studies. This kind of network allows an abiding interchange of knowledge and information among RTP researches and, at the same time, it ensures a local autonomy work and responsibility. Availability, completeness and accuracy of data are the most relevant features in a collaboration network, such as RTP.

- The strengths of RTP are:
- A strong Regional commitment
 - A good collaboration among local section and Coordination Center
 - A full inclusion in the Italian network of cancer registries (AIRTUM)
 - A good level of expertise acquired through training and on-field activity

- The weaknesses of the registry are:
- A medium-high level of migration of patients to hospitals in other Italian Regions, but a downward trend has recently been observed
 - A registry staff undersized given the needs of different areas

Organization chart of Cancer Registry of Puglia (RTP)



Conclusions

In large and heavily populated areas, such as Puglia Region, a collaborative network between cancer registries appears to be the best way to achieve an improvement of data quality . RTP shows that a close relationship among different actors can lead to good results in terms of regional studies about cancer epidemiology, therefore it is very important to carry on following this direction. It is essential that the commitment by regional institutions and government remains strong and that future funding continues to ensure the complex operations of the RTP.

The main goal in the coming years will be to reach a good timeliness of data, and this can be achieved only if it is guaranteed staff stability, adequate access to the information flows and databases, improvement of ICT equipment and continuing training.