

Sector briefing

R & D Opportunities in Italy

Why Italy?

Italy is widely associated with concepts like fashion, design and creativity, but it also has a long standing record of excellence in scientific areas such as aerospace, robotics, instrumental and precision engineering, micro-electronics, ICT, life sciences, new materials, cultural heritage conservation and, more recently, nanotechnologies.



Find general information on the Italy market conditions on [UKTI's website](#). [The Doing Business Guide for Italy](#) gives an overview of Italy's economy, business culture, potential opportunities and an introduction to other relevant issues.

Institutional competencies and strategies

In Italy R & D (policy and investments for private and public sectors) are fragmented amongst several budget holders and decision making centres, both national and local, which makes it difficult to ensure an adequate level of coordination.

Public research and innovation national strategy is defined by the Ministry of Education University and Research in the latest 3 year National Research Plan 2010-2012. The draft Plan provides for an increase in public research funding from 0.56% to 0.67% of GDP, alongside the implementation of an industrial policy aimed at encouraging private investments in R & D and at facilitating access to innovation by SMEs. Investments will be directed to the following enabling technologies, which will help industry improve its competitiveness through innovation: genetics, energy, materials, neurosciences, ICT and environment.

Support for development will be provided to the 24 technology clusters, to hi-tech spinoffs and to research for development of innovative industrial sectors, along those currently funded by the "Industry 2015" programme through the Industrial Innovation Projects (IIPs). IIPs aim to stimulate and promote the development of high-tech products and services in the following five strategic areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for health and life sciences, new technologies for Made in Italy, new technologies for cultural heritage. So far nearly 650 million Euros have been allocated to fund IIPs.

The main players

The main players in government funded R & D are universities and public research bodies, such as the National Research Council (the largest body including over 100 research institutes), the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA), the Italian Space Agency (ASI), the laboratories and research groups of the National Institute for the Physics of Matter (INFN), the National Health Institute (ISS). Despite still being below the European average, the willingness to exploit research findings and to collaborate with industry is rising amongst Italian

universities. From 2002 to 2007 the budgets for university Technology Transfer Offices raised by 69% and the number of patents and licensing agreements increased as well. This is partly due to the government's policy to allocate funds to Universities according to an evaluation system which rewards collaboration with the private sector.

Italian researchers are amongst the most active and successful participants to the European Seventh Framework Programme and the government intends to coordinate national with European research programmes, pursuing harmonisation of Italian technology platforms with EU ones.

Opportunities

UKTI's R & D Partnership programme also attracts many innovative Italian companies who see it as an ideal way to access the UK market and knowledge-base.

More and more Italian universities are working to strengthen their links with business and investors to help innovative ideas and technological start-ups to market. The Startup business plan competitions are probably the most successful initiatives. They are run by academic incubators all over Italy to select the best innovative enterprise projects that can then participate in the National Award for Innovation

The Investment section of UKTI Italy has become involved in some of these events offering "The Bright Future Ideas Award" to the most internationally minded projects that could translate to high quality investment towards the UK.

If you have any questions on the opportunities above, contact the UKTI contacts named in this report. Business opportunities aimed specifically at UK companies are added daily to UKTI's website. These leads are sourced by our staff overseas in British Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, across all sectors and in over 100 markets.

You can be alerted to business opportunities on a regular basis by registering on the UKTI website. [Find out more on UKTI's business opportunities service on the UKTI website](#)

Useful links

Ministry for Education University and Research

<http://www.miur.it/> (Italian only)

Ministry for Economic Development

<http://www.sviluppoeconomico.gov.it/> (Italian only)

Industry 2015

http://www.ipi.it/en_inside.asp?id=1267

The Conference of Italian University Rectors

<http://www.cruis.it/english/>

Italian Network for Innovation and Technology Transfer to SMEs

http://www.riditt.it/?set_language=en&cl=en

CNR, National Research Council

<http://www.cnr.it/sitocnr/Englishversion/Englishversion.html>

ENEA Italian National agency for new technologies, energy and sustainable economic development

<http://www.enea.it/com/ingl/default.htm>

ASI, Italian Space Agency

<http://www.asi.it/en>

INFN, Italian National Institute for physical sciences of matter

<http://www.infn.it/>

ISS, the leading technical and scientific body of the Italian National Health Service

<http://www.iss.it/chis/?lang=2>

PNICube, Association of academic incubators and academic business plan competitions

<http://www.pnicube.it/en/home.html>

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Next steps - How UKTI can help

British companies wishing to develop their business in the Italian market are advised to undertake as much market research and planning as possible in the UK. UKTI's team in Italy with its wide local knowledge and experience, can provide a range of services to British-based companies wishing to grow their business in global markets.

This can include:

- Provision of market information
- Validated lists of agents/distributors
- Key market players or potential customers in the Chinese market
- Establishment of interest of such contacts in working with you

- Arranging appointments
- Organise seminars or other events for you to meet contacts and promote your company in the Chinese market

This work is available via our [Overseas Market Introduction Service \(OMIS\)](#) a chargeable service which assists British-based companies wishing to enter or expand their business in overseas markets.

To find out more about commissioning this work, or accessing other UKTI services and specialist advice, please visit the UKTI website to find [contact details for your local UKTI office](#).

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