

Electric Energy Corporation (ENEL), the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI), the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (ENI), the Manufacturing Industry Shareholdings and Financing Corporation (EFIM), the Experimental Institute of the Italian Railway, the Superior Institute of the Post and Telecommunications Department, and the Italian Agency for Air Navigation Services. All of these agencies offer potential for technology transfer and cooperation.

In addition there are industrial organizations such as the CECCP of Turin, Foreign Centre of Piedmont Chamber of Commerce, which help to locate and transfer technologies; the Cestec in Milan with its mandate to help SMEs with their operational problems, tech development; the UCIMU (tech transfer division) which is an association of major manufacturers of machine tools and automation; they also help in development of new technologies; and the polytechnics of Turin, Milan, Pisa.

The patent office in Rome is responsible in issuing patents. In the private sector licensing of technologies is undertaken by companies using legal services. Lately however, major Italian banks have increasingly become interested in arranging for technology transfer and venture capital.

KEY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Financial support provided by the Italian State to research is available from different sources. Specific funds have been established for applied research and for technological innovations. Financing, often taking the form of generous grants, is also available under regional development programs, especially those aimed at the South of Italy.

Italy has also invested both money and scientific expertise in collective research. It is third, after West Germany, in terms of participation in the European collective research effort. An example of this collective effort is the Common Research Center, where multiple

research initiatives are aimed at increasing European competitiveness in avant-garde industrial technologies. Today, there are four such centers throughout Europe. However, the original and still the largest center was founded by the Italian Government when it transferred ownership of the Ispra Center for Nuclear Studies to EURATOM. Italy is also one of the main thrusts behind European research programs such as EUREKA, ESPRIT, RACE, BRITE, EURAM, BAP, JET etc.

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS

There are no known specific conditions which apply to foreign firms and research organizations wishing to collaborate with Italian firms. In licensing, companies come to mutual agreement often using legal assistance. Where patents are involved arrangements become more complex. Post requires additional time to determine actual conditions to license technology.

TECHNOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIANS

Key areas of technology opportunities are: machine, tools, automation, flexible manufacturing, plastics machinery and process, robotics, controls and sensors, ceramics, food processing, packaging, special machine and tools, wood working machinery, leather tanning and processing, furniture design and manufacturing, new materials and composites, industrial design, glass, textiles, dimension stone processing.

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