

IAF SYMPOSIUM ON INTEGRATED APPLICATIONS (B5)  
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THE ESA BUSINESS APPLICATIONS AMBASSADOR PLATFORM FOR ITALY: A CLOSER LOOK  
TO THE NATIONAL SPACE ACTIVITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD OF THE ITALIAN AND  
EUROPEAN BUSINESS APPLICATIONS ECOSYSTEM**Abstract**

Ambassador platforms are strategically placed around Europe to make it easier for new businesses to access ESA's Business Applications support and co-funding for space downstream applications development. The Ambassador Platform for Italy (AP-IT), as managed by Fondazione E. Amaldi (FEA), follows the economic priorities of Italian industry and government to help stimulate growth among space-related businesses and newcomers. As stated in the Strategic Vision Document, the main strategic goal for ASI is: "Promote the development of services and applications for the Space Economy". AP-IT mandate encompasses the inclusion of non-space SMEs and promotion of ESA Business Applications opportunities to diverse and non-space related sectors to meet real users' needs. Furthermore, Italy's 2017 National Sustainable Development Strategy identifies a knowledge-based approach, improved data collection and management, as well as data analysis as crucial for identifying cross-sectoral policy interactions, addressing trade-offs and harnessing synergies to help support the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and the related Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, space technologies are meant to improve the lives of citizens on Earth enhancing the performance of existing businesses or creating new ones thanks to operational, customised, commercially viable and marketable products and services in almost all the industrial sectors. In this context, the objective of the AP-IT as proposed by FEA is to shape an ecosystem of space business applications based on the exploitation of satellite data (EO, SatNav, SatCom and Human Space Flight Technologies) for the benefit of end-users and customers. This ecosystem will enhance the Italian business structure, stimulating the development of new entrepreneurial skills and increasing opportunities for SMEs, start-ups and newcomers in proposing innovative solutions to the growing grand societal challenges. AP-IT set ambitious innovation benchmarks establishing a simple and coherent system based on a strong expertise, knowledge, network and finance. Indeed, AP-IT is provided with long-standing partnerships that includes national institutions, academia, national and European investors, regional and national Business Incubation Centres and Brokers, SMEs, Innovation Partner Network, accelerators and research centres. This paper presents an analysis of the ESA Business Applications and Space Solutions programme in Italy following the ESA Ministerial and the new internal re-organisation of the previous Integrated Applications Programme (IAP). It will also propose a comparison between the Italian activities and the ones at European level by the other Ambassador Platforms and the European Commission initiatives to present and implement effective strategies that enable commercially viable applications for downstream markets in Europe.