

IAF SYMPOSIUM ON INTEGRATED APPLICATIONS (B5)
Tools and Technology in Support of Integrated Applications (1)

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ESA BUSINESS APPLICATIONS AMBASSADOR PLATFORM FOR ITALY COVID-19
EXPERIENCE: TOOLS FOR ACCELERATING THE ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS AND
INNOVATION**Abstract**

The New Space Economy has radically changed the role of the Space sector. In both Europe and Italy, the Space sector plays a key role in accelerating economic growth, permeating the industrial ecosystem and fostering the development of innovation. The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the activities carried out by the ESA Business Applications Ambassador Platform for Italy (AP-IT) and to highlight the strategy followed in the 2020-2021 biennium, given the global and national economic difficulties of this timeframe. Indeed, AP-IT, part of the ESA Space Solutions network, aims to facilitate the development of innovation by assuming the role of enabler and promoter of the use of Integrated Applications, supporting start-ups and SMEs interested in accessing the ESA Business Applications programme and promoting the ESA InCubed+ one by organising training courses on the exploitation of hyperspectral data in conjunction with other emerging technologies such as Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Big Data. Although the 2020-2021 timeframe has been strongly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, this has created an opportunity to develop new innovative tools based on space assets, favouring for example the creation of key solutions such as connectivity support for remote regions, digitisation of education, and innovative ideas aimed at counteracting the repercussions of the pandemic. Specifically, the first public call to support society against the epidemic "Space in Response to COVID-19 outbreak" of the ESA Business Applications programme proposed by ASI, in agreement with the Italian Minister for Technological Innovation and Digitisation, received more than 100 proposals. Italy has allocated EUR 10M and about 80% of the 100 received proposals have been funded, exceeding expectations in terms of both quality and quantity. In this context, the vision of AP-IT is to contribute to the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to facilitate interactions between investors, stakeholders and new entrepreneurs, shaping the connective tissue between the Space sector and the rest of industrial sectors in Italy, supporting start-ups from seed stage to exit.