

## Experiences and tools

<b>Title:</b>	<b>APRE, the Italian NCPs' host organisation</b>
<b>Topic:</b> 1. Practices for fostering higher participation in EU research funding programmes	<b>ii - Structural support measures: National Contact Points (NCPs) and other advisory structures</b>
<b>Country:</b>	Italy
<b>Geographic level (regional or national)</b>	National
<b>Organisation</b> (Please include here the name and some background information).	APRE - Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea. APRE aims at providing information, support and assistance to Italian organisations, (public and private entities, physical persons) in matter of participation to initiatives and programmes at the national and European level, in the field of research and development, technological innovation and transfer.
<b>What were the aims of the experience/tool?</b>	The final aim of the experience is to increase the access of national (Italian) entities to European R&D funds through increasing their participation to European-funded projects. This aim is pursued through different support activities, described below.
<b>In which part of the decision tree is the experience (see image at the end of the document)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant awareness and readiness</li> <li>• Partner search</li> <li>• Proposal drafting</li> </ul>
<b>Who were the beneficiaries or the target group?</b>	All Italian entities and physical persons that may have a role in participating to European R&D funded projects. Besides the services provided to everybody, APRE has set a number of particular services specifically for its associated.
<b>Description of the experience of using the best practice:</b> (Describe the operating experience with particular focus on the evolution of its development, end user experience).	APRE provides to its beneficiaries the three following main types of services:  - INFORMATION - Info-days on European programmes and existing opportunities (call content and priorities, EU research policies, SME funding opportunities, opportunities for researchers international career opportunities and training).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setup of specific information and communication systems, notably public newsletters, and weekly dedicated news for APRE's associated members in order to reach-out to a widespread constituency.</li> <li>- Publication of monographic dossier focused on specific aspects of European R&amp;D funding programmes, written by researchers and sector experts.</li> </ul> <p><b>- ASSISTANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A partner search service to support beneficiaries in building well-balanced international consortia.</li> <li>- Proposals' pre-screening</li> <li>- Creation of a feedback collection system to know from the constituency the most frequent difficulties encountered when addressing European programme calls, in order to fine-tune APRE's assistance.</li> <li>- APRE is also part of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) ensuring valuable networking channels also for what concerns SMEs participation.</li> </ul> <p><b>- TRAINING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of trainings for a) researchers and other potential European funds beneficiaries (including webinars) on how best approaching European calls and write project proposals; b) other NCPs on APRE's assistance experience. At this regard, APRE has developed a number of NCP handbooks, distributed at the European level and beyond.</li> </ul> <p>The successfulness of APRE's user experience lies in particular on the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- service continuity for 25 years;</li> <li>- service centralisation under a same organisation, guaranteeing coordination among Italian NCPs;</li> <li>- service presence on the national territory, through a network of regional representation branches (19 branches in 17 regions).</li> <li>- APRE networking activity with other national and international entities (and in particular with the EU dedicated structures) in order to promote best practice and research result transfer.</li> <li>- APRE's international participation in international NCP networks or in other research organisations' networks in order to transfer its competences or align to others' best practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is the period during</b></p>	<p>APRE runs with continuity since 1989, when it was</p>

<p><b>which the experience/tool has been carried out?</b></p>	<p>founded as a development of a task-force set up the year before by the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research.</p>
<p><b>What were the results of this best practice?</b> (Please provide any charts, data, statistics, etc. showing the results of the implementation).</p>	<p>A single national and reference entry-point for the R&amp;D EU funds programmes and opportunities. Some data regarding the support given during the FP7 period (2007-2013):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Info Days: About 100 info-days per year / more than 10 per month (at the national and regional level, and also in collaboration with other entities).</li> <li>• Average number of request for assistance received per year: 13.000</li> <li>• Pre-screened proposals: 6000</li> <li>• Training organised: 95</li> <li>• Training with apre staff as trainers: 450</li> <li>• Over 11000 people trained</li> <li>• 1100 partner search requests published</li> <li>• Bilateral meetings amongst italian researchers and international research delegations: 60</li> <li>• Publications: 21 (Themes: Dossiers on FP7; guides on proposal drafting; European policies).</li> <li>• Information: (76 Monthly Newsletters, 193 Weekly newsletter for associated members; 173.000 page visit in 2012; 1800 email sent).</li> <li>• Registered users in the database: 46.000 (existence of a national widespread community on R&amp;D).</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is needed for the experience/tool to be successfully replicated?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good coordination amongst NCP, namely through co-presence in the same space.</li> <li>- one-flow coordination and communication with the national institutions (e.g. Ministries or agencies) in charge of research.</li> <li>- Investments in networking and communication</li> <li>- Continuity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Please include any references or bibliography here:</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.apre.it">www.apre.it</a></p>