



## UK Science & Innovation Network Country Summary

# Italy

### 1. Science and Innovation Landscape

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#### Research in Numbers

In 2021 Italy's gross domestic expenditure on Research and Development (gross domestic expenditure on research and development) (GERD) was 1.45% of GDP, down of 0.6 points from 2020). This increased in absolute terms, with 0.78% from private R&D (Source: [OECD](#)), below the EU27 average. Even with comparatively low public R&D investment, the productivity and quality of the public science base outputs are remarkable. **Italy is second after Germany in the EU27 for world share of scientific publications** and for share of top 10% highly cited scientific publications. (Source: [Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU 2022](#)).

Italy is traditionally amongst the countries with the greatest capacity for attracting EU funding. While Horizon Europe is heading towards its third year, amongst the top 15 countries by proportion of project participants, Italy features third (9.8%), after Germany and Spain. (Source: [Sciencebusiness](#)).

Italy is currently 26th in the Global Innovation Index 2023, its relative strengths being resource productivity, public-private co-publications, design applications, business process innovators and government support for business R&D. Public-private co-publications is also scoring well above the EU average (Source: [European Innovation Scoreboard 2022](#)).

#### Government Structures and Policies

The Ministry for Universities and Research ([MUR](#), Minister **Sen. Anna Maria Bernini**), oversees funding for 14 research bodies, universities, and competitive research grants. This is due to Italy not having a national funding agency for research. The Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy ([MIMIT](#)), funds industrial and collaborative research and oversees policies and regulation. The Inter-ministerial Committee leads on space policies with MIMIT support.



Through the research chapter of Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan Next Generation Italia, in alignment to the National Research Plan, Italy intends to increase Research and Development funding. This funding will be increased to 1.8-2% of GDP (currently around 1.5%) by 2027 in line with EU. The funds allocated amount to €12bn. Italy's research priorities are defined in the [National Research Plan 2021-2027](#) (NRP).

### Research Institutions

Italy can rely on a critical mass of excellent research institutions;

- [Italian Space Agency](#),
- [National Research Council](#),
- [Italian Institute of Technology](#),
- [Italian Institute for Nuclear Physics](#) and
- [National Agency for Energy and the Environment](#).

## 2. UK- Italy Partnership on ST&I

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Italy is one of the UK's top research partners, and there are many ties linking the two countries. Italian academic staff make up one of the largest foreign communities in the UK research sector and contribute to maintaining cooperation with Italian institutions. Italy and the UK are also key partners in European Space Agency Programmes. They are also partners in the Square Kilometer Array projects and in the Cherenkov Telescope Array observatory. In 2024 Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) will celebrate 40 years of successful bilateral collaboration in neutron research.

In February 2023, SIN Italy completed the **UK-IT BEST+SHAPE** (Bilateral Exchange in Science and Innovation, Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for Economy and the People) project. This was a mapping study aimed at understanding the current state of UK-IT research collaboration. The final [report](#) captures five points of action on how to strengthen bilateral and multilateral exchange. This was a useful platform to inform dialogue while discussing the UK/IT MoU signed in London in April 2023. As a follow up to the MoU, both countries are planning the first Science, Innovation and Tech dialog to take place in 2024.

In May 2023, SIN Italy set up and launched the “**UK-IT Trustworthy AI Exchange Programme**”. A short-stay researcher exchange programme between Italian and British research institutions in partnership with The Alan Turing Institute and [FAIR Foundation](#)). This enables the development of bilateral and multilateral projects in Trustworthy AI and to bootstrap future bilateral collaborations. This project is ongoing.



UK Science  
& Innovation  
Network



### 3. SIN Contacts

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Alessandra Ferraris, [alessandra.ferraris@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:alessandra.ferraris@fcdo.gov.uk)  
British Consulate General Milan

Laura Nuccilli, [laura.nuccilli@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:laura.nuccilli@fcdo.gov.uk)  
British Embassy Rome