Agenzia Umbria Ricerche - AUR - was instituted in 2000 (l. r. n. 30/2000 - l.r. 5/2008 - l.r. 4/2011) as the Research Agency of the Umbria Region for social, economical and territorial affairs. AUR is a public body with statutory competences and scientific, organizational and financial autonomy and it has been intermediate body of the Umbria Region during the 2007-2013 EU programming period.

AUR aims to promote knowledge, to improve competences, develop a culture of communication and evaluation through the integrated activities of data collection, research, analysis, studies, reflections and debates upon emergent issues. AUR is also involved in actions and projects with experimental and innovative nature and it has also participated in various projects to promote scientific and mathematic knowledge and research.

AUR, with reference to the regional context:

- arranges the collection, observation and analysis of data referred to major economic, social and territorial phenomena;
- develops analyses, studies and researches regarding changes and trends related to the social and economical structure;
- arranges cognitive data for the formulation of territorial, economical and financial policy of the Umbria region and, moreover, prepares data which will be used for the evaluation and verification of the effects and efficiency of the same policy in itinere and ex-post;
- promotes cooperation and operating relationships with Italian National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) and local boards in order to create a territorial data-base, in comparative and cognitive terms, as a support of local programming choices and of negotiated instruments elaboration for policy planning;
- provides an analytic and detailed survey of all data-bases, in order to coordinate local boards with other private and public regional operators (i.e. observatories, firms, regional agencies, etc.) within an integrated information network;
- edit an annual report about the regional economical and social situation, developed even in sub-regional territorial areas;
- acts as an Intermediary Body of the Umbria Region managing innovative projects and pilot actions delegated by the Umbria Region and co-financed by the ESF & ERDF including Interreg Programme. In particular, AUR promotes pilot actions with a bottom-up approach as a policy instrument by the regional government;
- directly supports regional policy, by arranging the collection, observation, and analysis of data referred to major economic, social and territorial variables and taking part with its competences in "Alliance for the development of Umbria", that is the political and programming instrument designed to create synergies and to bring together human, economic and social resources for the implementation of the "Umbria System" action plan.
RESEARCHES AND STUDIES

AUR’s Research Areas area are:

1) **Social and Economic Processes and Policies Area** producing studies and analysis on Regional accounts and economic performance, employment and labour market, poverty, welfare and social services, income situation of families, economic and social conditions of young people, equal opportunity and gender studies, immigration. Since 2004, AUR has also carried out research activities on the topic of education and professional training. Studies and surveys have been undertaken on continuing vocational training, on the education system, on the system of accreditation of training facilities, and on traineeship and apprenticeship programmes in the framework of education.

2) **Innovation and Local Development Processes and Policies Area** producing studies and analysis on regional accounts and economic performances, small and medium sized enterprises, industrial sectors, trade and services. It focuses its initiatives also in supporting creative youngsters in developing their ideas into business activities; promoting actions to enable the creation of conditions for SMEs’ development and ensuring local empowerment; promoting international mobility schemes both for young trainees and new entrepreneurs; stimulating new innovative markets; stretching networks of cooperation and technological districts and exchanging good practices.

Among the functions recognized to AUR by the Umbria Region, there is the publication of an **Annual Report about the regional economical and social situation**, that is jointly written by the two Research Areas. The public presentation of the report is an important annual event for the all local stakeholders.

The Agency also participates and manages the activities of the the **Permanent Observatory on Continuing Vocational Training in Umbria (OPFCU)** has been created in 2009. The main aim of the Observatory is to monitor, evaluate, study and research on professional training in the region, promoting the exchange and dissemination of relevant activities.

On behalf of the Umbria Region, the Agency has recently elaborated the feasibility study of the project “**MODH – Monteluce Digital Hub**” aimed to create a public Living Lab in Perugia, the principal city of the region. The project intends to turn public buildings no longer used, into open spaces, digital labs (living lab, fab lab, coworking) aimed to enhance digital skills and foster the development of new activities linked to the Digital Agenda Strategy for the Region and the creation of Smart City Culture and related activities.

EXPERIMENTAL AND INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

**Brain Back Umbria**
The project aims to study the phenomenon of the emigration of Umbrian citizens to a foreign country, encouraging the return to Umbria of expatriate researchers and workers. Brain Back counters the “brain drain” problem by encouraging the creation of an international network of
collaboration in the field of research and entrepreneurship. It supports European research projects by offering scholarships to successful proposals that cannot otherwise be funded and promotes the creation of new enterprises by providing assistance to start a new business.

**Creativity Camp**
The project aims to encourage the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Umbria, by supporting young people (18-35 yo) to approach the world of employment and entrepreneurship, trying to make them aware of their potential and to stimulate the creation of innovative ideas through the enhancement of creativity and talent. Young people are invited to present an innovative idea, that will be evaluated by experts in economic, finance, business. Best ideas are rewarded with training experiences and a financial contribution to develop and implement the entrepreneurial idea.

**Eurodyssée**
Eurodyssée is a mobility and exchange program among European regions that allows young people (18-32 yo) to carry out traineeships abroad, giving them the opportunity to develop their professional skills through their work experience and the chance to improve and learn a foreign language through their stay abroad. Umbria is the second region in Italy that has joined the Programme promoted by the Assembly of the European Regions and AUR is the host organization for the Umbria Region.

**Promoting Entrepreneurship in Schools**
The pilot action aims to promote a business culture as well as to develop an entrepreneurial spirit among young people, through the implementation of practical learning experiences.

The project aims to involve Umbrian schools to allow high school students (17-18 yo) to participate in experimental and innovative competitions. The students, divided into teams, following a targeted training, develop a business plan starting from their business idea. School teams are then involved in a competition and the best business plan will be awarded with a study visit to the EU institutions in Brussels.

**MIND**
The MIND project is dedicated to young umbrians in upper schools. It aims to improve the level of mathematic knowledge and of problem solving methodologies, through the constitution of a virtual class of participating pupils and a contest and knowledge-sharing that take place through an online platform accessible to students and professors. The project seeks to implement a regional education system based on the cooperation between various institutions in order to identify the best practices in teaching and learning methodologies for maths in Umbria and Europe. The Italian experience of the Maths Olympiad has been extended on a European scale through this project.

**Networking with Europe**
The project aims to promote the cooperation between universities, research centers and the business sector through the constitution of networks and the exchange of good practices at an inter-regional and transnational level. The main focus of the project is on the management of networks and on the valorization of research results.

**Action to support the regional law on apprenticeship (Lr. 18/2007)**
The project "Action to support the regional law on apprenticeship" supports the regional system in the implementation of the discipline about apprenticeship through in-depth analysis, in order to highlight any improvement and implementation measure.

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**Investing in culture**
This pilot project aims to turn historical, archaeological, cultural and landscape areas of the Umbria Region into a competitive advantage for the Region as well as to create job opportunities by promoting international mobility schemes and entrepreneurship training.

**Ideas! New enterprises!**
The pilot action aims to foster entrepreneurship in Umbria Region by enhancing the skills and capabilities of people with business ideas and promoting international mobility schemes in favour of an European dimension of knowledge. The project has been recognized as a good practice by the ESF. At national level, a protocol agreement has been signed by 15 Italian Regions in the framework of "ESF in favour of research and innovation“ and many of them have already started to replicate the project.

**International mobility scheme supporting the candidature of Perugia as European Capital of Culture for 2019**
The project allows 12 young Umbrian graduated to attend traineeships in several cities already selected as European Capital of Culture.

**APRE HELPDESK**
APRE Umbria is the Regional Help Desk of APRE (Agency for the Promotion of European Research) that carries on information, technical assistance and training activities regarding the participation in programs and national and European cooperation initiatives in the field of Research, Technological Development and Innovation and the dissemination of research results.
APRE Umbria is hosted and managed by Umbria Research Agency and deals, specifically, with the following areas of activity:
- mapping, research and study;
- promotion and dissemination of European and national programs about research, development and innovation;
- networking and training activities;
- support to the projects’ development of the companies belonging to innovation and research clusters in Umbria.

**APPLYING TO DIRECT EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES**

**Interreg Med**

**WASMAN**
Waste Management as Policy Tool for Corporate Governance was approved in the framework of the European MED programme for transnational cooperation and it was directed to create a model of smart management of the waste cycle with the use of new processes and innovative technologies. AUR was the leader of the partnership composed by seven members of six European countries.

**Erasmus +**
AUR has been involved as a partner in Erasmus + projects

- Erasmus+: Youth in Action - Key Action 1 - Mobility of Individuals, Moving Green - Take your chance and make Europe go green!;

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- Erasmus+ KA2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Capacity Building in the field of Youth: FROM IDEA TO EUROPE! International training program on entrepreneurship for youth workers;

**NETWORKING ACTIVITIES**

At national level, a protocol agreement has been subscribed among 15 Italian Regions in the framework of "ESF in favour of research and innovation“, many of them have started to implement Ideas project regarding the mobility of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial training and financing.

At European level, a protocol agreement has been signed among West Sweden, Catalunya (Spain) and Pays de la Loire (France). Moreover, we belong to the following networks: EARALL – working group “Mobility” and ESFCoNet.

AUR is part of European Business Game (EBG) network.

EBG is an European contest based on a specific methodology which has been developed since 2003 by Ecipar Ravenna – Training and Innovative Services – System Company CAN Ravenna. The latter is also responsible for the management and coordination of the contest. The EBG constitute the final phase of a business simulation process. Indeed, the contest involves around 3.000 students of various European high schools who are called upon to take entrepreneur’s roles and establish a fictitious business. The projects benefit from the technical support of institutional and private entities. The EBG provide students the opportunity to design their own fictitious company and, hence, to turn their original innovative ideas into hypothetical new and competitive firms.

AUR is member of the European network "Startup Europe Week" a bottom up network that aims to set up a meetup in every single region of Europe to inform startups about the available support and resources both at local and EU level. Promoted by the European Committee of the Regions, it brings together more than 400 organizers mobilising their ecosystem to inform startups and to tap all the resources available. AUR is the subject co-organizer of the Umbrian event during the "European Week of Startup" that take place every year connecting over 200 cities all along Europe.

**RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS**

In addition to the Annual Report about the regional economical and social situation, the periodical magazine AUR&S, which collects scientific contributions about the Agency's research topics, and most of the researches conducted by AUR, the editing activity involves also the production of e-books, which are available in the website.

These are some of the recent publications:

**Youth studies**

- **Diventare grandi in tempi di crisi. Il passaggi alla vita adulta in Umbria e in Italia** (**2014**)
  *Growing up during the crisis. The passage to adulthood in Umbria and Italy*

- **La sfida della partecipazione giovanile** (**2010**)
  *The challenge of youth participation*

- **I giovani adolescenti in Umbria un’indagine su valori, culture, stili, relazioni, linguaggi, della nuova generazione tra quattoridici e diciannove anni** (**2009**)
  *Young teenagers in Umbria. A survey on values, cultures, styles, relations, languages of the new generation between fourteen and nineteen years old.*
Scholarship, education, professional training & learning

- Cultura d’impresa e imprenditorialità nella scuola. La buona pratica dell’Azione Pilota “A scuola di impresa” (2016)
  Entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship at schools. The good practice of pilot Action “Promoting entrepreneurship at school”
  Brain Back Umbria. A success story
  The Eurodyssée Programme in Umbria. Analysis on European mobility schemes for young trainees.
- Rapporto sulla Formazione Continua in Umbria (2008 - 2012 - 2014)
  First report on continuing vocational training in Umbria
- Talenti in fuga: quali strategie? (2014)
  Brain drain, which strategies?
  Apprenticeship in Umbria. Experiences, critical aspects and perspectives 2010-2013
- L’Istruzione in Umbria (2013)
  Education in Umbria
  Apprenticeship in Umbria. On conditions of training and fiscal benefits
- I fondi paritetici interprofessionali nel sistema umbro della formazione continua (2009)
  The impact of interprofessional joint funds in the Umbrian system of continuing vocational training

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