

PEER TO PEER REVIEW

Theme: Review of the CRS' individual SAT Report



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2. FOREWORD

The paradigm of the CERIM Self Assessment Tool aimed at identifying the competences portfolio held by the Universities/Research Centres that take part to the project.

The CRS analysis takes into account the same areas of evaluation characterizing the SAT, but the perspective is typical of a private company that provides professional services for Universities/Research Centres aiming at valorising the results of research projects.

The present document starts from a summary of the needs coming out from the main players of the tech transfer in Italy, that represent the CRS potential clients.

It is important to underline that some of these evidences come out from the Cerim WP3 analysis, that allowed to identify the real gap of competencies that the TTO and University Departments operating in Lombardia Region generally express.

The result of this peer review analysis is the identification of the key internal competencies to be strengthened and a related Plan for.

Finally, the present document has been elaborated with the external support of an advisor, that has been identified on the basis of his specific knowledge of innovative contexts and, in particular, of the Lombardia region.

3. CLIENTS & MARKET

The CRS market target can be segmented in four type of clients:

- Public Institutions&Policy makers, such as Regional Administrations, Central and Local Agencies for Innovation;
- Technology Transfer Offices, Grant Offices and other “mediators of research” operating in the Universities/Research Centres;
- Inventors/researchers that establish a direct contact with external professional companies such as CRS;
- Private companies (mainly SMEs) interesting in the transfer of technologies.

The following table aims at matching the five areas of competencies/services provided by CRS (marketing, networking, HR development, IP management and support to spin off creation) and the four potential clients (public institutions, TTOs, Inventors, SMEs).

Area	Clients'level of interest				CRS's level of interest
	Public institutions	TTO/Gran Office	Researchers/In ventors	SMEs	
Marketing					
Networking					
HR development					
IP management					
Spin off creation					



With reference to the public institutions, they ask for the following services:

- implementation of “system actions” aiming at supporting the diffusion of innovation in the territory;
- transfer of the international best practices and diffusion of the effective models for the territorial governance;
- creation of Regional/Local agencies or other dedicated structures.

Consequently, the key competence to be provided is the HR development.

With reference to the TTOs, the main interest is focused to the following areas:

- HR development, because most of the internal professionals have got an administrative background and should receive a more intensive training in the activities of business planning, market assessment and fund raising;
- Networking with the private companies and potential funders, because the traditional approach is mainly focused on the “technology push” rather than to the real analysis of the market needs.

With reference to inventors/researchers, they are interested to all the services and related competencies, because they are generally focused to the scientific competencies but they don't have got specific skills in the market valorisation.

The fourth target is represented by the private companies, that are considered in the specific context of Lombardia region a key stakeholder of the tech transfer processes.

The key areas for SMEs are marketing and networking, because they are interested to strengthen the qualified relations with Universities and researchers and to overpass the frequent barriers that reduce the effectiveness of the exchanges between enterprises and Universities/Research centres.

It is important to underline that the upcoming "Regional Strategic Document for Innovation&Competiveness" considers the "mediators of research" as a key player for the territorial innovation but states that they also should operate on the basis of the specific needs coming from the productive system.

With reference to the CRS positioning, the company intends to focalize its professional service in the 3 of the 5 areas that are characterized by the maximum proximity, in order to cover the typical gap expressed by the CRS potential clients in the field of valorisation.

On the other hand, it has been assigned a lower interest rate to the HR development (that is requested mainly by public institutions), while the IPR management is generally provided by specialized law firms and can be considered by CRS "out of scope".

4. CAPABILITIES AND TOOLS

The present paragraph aims at identifying the main competences, methodologies and tools that a CRS consultant has to detain in order to support the clients in the field of innovation&tech transfer.

MARKETING (High Priority Area)

The key competences deal with the capability of collecting and analyzing the information concerning the potential target markets of the research projects.

The expert has got the following skills:

- he is able to find, collect and analyze information and report (performed by specialized companies such as *Froost&Sullivan*, *DataMonitor*, etc.) concerning the economic trends of the sectors (biotech, new materials, ICT) in terms of market size, competitive structure, segmentation, barriers to entry, etc.
- He detains the technical skills and the methodologies for the elaboration of a marketing plan;
- He is capable to use specific methodologies (for instance the *Expected Method Value* method) to estimate the economic value of the project ideas
- He is capable to seek Data Base/repositories concerning patents and to cooperate with lawyers in order to analyse the “*freedom to operate*”.

NETWORKING (High Priority Area)

The activity of networking deals with the scouting, contact and negotiations with the various stakeholders operating in the “value chain” of the innovation&tech transfer.

Consequently, it deals both with the building of Data Base of the potential partners/funders and the management of the consequent contacts and negotiations.

The expert has got the following skills:

- he detains or is capable to use DataBases of contacts with business angels, venture capitalists, public funders. With reference to the Italian context, CRS detains specific Data Bases concerning all the TTOs/GOs included in the “RIDITT” national network and the Venture Capitalists/Private Equity Funds.
- He has got “intangible skills” concerning the methods for the commercial actions, the methods for the negotiations, etc;
- He is capable to elaborate business documents for the start up (confidentiality agreement) ,the conduction (selling memorandum, etc.) and the finalization (scheme of contracts) of the negotiations.

SPIN-OFF CREATION AND BUSINESS PLANNING (High Priority Area)

The support for the spin off creation deals with the following activities:

- business planning and technology assessment;
- providing of the administrative and bureaucratic requirements;
- temporary management for the start up phase.

Consequently, the expert has got the following skills:

- to elaborate a business plan, both in terms of market analysis and financial forecasts;
- to identify and manage the administrative requirements;
- to support the key issues of the start up phase (IT systems, organisational plant and selection of the professionals, establishment and management of the relations with partner and clients).

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR TT (Medium-Low Priority Area)

The expert has got the following skills:

- he is capable to apply methodologies for the analysis of the organisational process;
- he is capable to describe task, strategic and operative objectives, tools and methodologies that have to be adopted by TTOs/Grant Offices;
- he is capable to apply assessment methodologies of the tools and competencies detained by TTOs/GOs;
- he is capable to identify specific organisational needs and the related competencies for the improvement of efficiency/effectiveness.

5. WHICH CAPABILITIES DO WE HAVE TO REINFORCE TO BUILD UP A VALUE ADDING OFFERING?

The present section is based on the matching between the competencies that have been mapped in the n.4 paragraph and the level of skills available at present in CRS.

The contents have been aggregated in three categories: methodologies&tools; knowledge management (that deals with the practice of collecting, using and disseminating information inside the organisation); intangible skills (that deal with types of competencies that are difficult to be structured and systemized inside the organisation but represent a key “soft asset” in the field of innovative services.

Methodologies & Tools

The main area in which CRS will have to reinforce the internal competencies is the financial forecast; in fact these competencies are detained at the level of the apical positions of the company but they are not diffused at the level of the whole organisation so that CRS often integrates the internal teams with the free lance consultants operating in the CRS network.

Following it has been reported a list of the main methodologies/tools to be reinforced:

- methodologies for the estimate of the economic value of the research results and the business planning (Expected Net Present Value (eNPV), Discounted Cash Flow methodology, Evaluation AUTM, Approx. Valuation);
- methodologies for the market analysis (customer loyalty & segmentation, pricing, product management, sales management)

With reference to the internal Action Plan for the improvement of the mentioned key issues, CRS intends to organize both internal workshops and external training sessions.

Knowledge management

At present CRS has build up a section of its repository in the internal corporate site dedicated to the theme of Innovation&Technology Transfer.

It includes the following areas:

- studies&reports;
- methodologies&tools;
- Data Bases.

The main needs that have been identified in the present report are reported below:

- to consolidate the repository of business intelligence tools that can be used in the elaboration of the market analysis and business plans;
- to implement an internal practice of updating the corporate Data Base concerning companies and funders especially operating in the red biosector.

Intangible skills

At present the key intangible skills for the support to the research valorisation are placed in the apical positions of the company; in particular, we are referring to the capability of conducting a negotiation, the capability to establish and strengthen business contacts/relations, etc.

The aim of the action plan is the diffusion of the basic skills also at the junior consultants.

The training areas can be:

- methods/techniques for the building up of the consensus and the marketing approach (external trainers/participation to dedicated workshops);
- methods/techniques for the conduction of business negotiations/deals (internal sessions based on the description of a case study; participation/organization of “speed dating” meetings between entrepreneurs and researchers).

6. ACTION PLAN

On the basis of the guidelines described in the previous paragraphs, this section reports the Operative Plan that CRS intends to implement for the development of the key skills and the empowerment of its professionals.

The present section is articulated into three sections:

- ❖ **General training strategy.**
- ❖ **Training Plan**
- ❖ **Development of methodologies&tools and eventual coverage of the Intellectual Property.**

General strategy

The main pillars of the general strategy are reported below:

- to implement an internal policy of “continuous learning” in the field of innovation&tech transfer;
- to extend the key skills (“hard” and intangible skills) at the level of the junior professional (consultants and analysts), in order to enforce the capability to manage complex initiatives and to provide services for a larger panel of clients;
- to consolidate – both through training sessions and the improvement of the knowledge repository - some competencies that are not formalized/structured yet.

Action Plan for training&HR development

In the present document is reported a matrix that summarizes the action plan elaborated in order to enlarge the core skills in the field of innovation&tech transfer.

The matrix is articulated into four sections:

- the first section reports the areas interested by the training strategy (marketing; networking; spin off creation&business planning);
- the second section reports the contents that will be developed with reference to the mentioned areas, the type of users (Manager; Consultant; Analyst) and the priority that have been assigned to each content;
- the third section reports the articulation of the training strategy (in terms of hours for year);
- the fourth section describes the time table of the training strategy.

What comes out from the Action Plan is reported below;

- it has been estimated a need of 256 training hours (156 internal training hours and 100 training hours) in order to cover the key competences area;
- some of the specific contents have been classified as “high priority contents”; we are referring to “Sales methods/techniques for the negotiations” (to which have been assigned totally 32 training hours) and “Business matching/speed dating” (to which have been assigned totally 32 hours);
- in terms of type of professionals representing the activity target, “consultants&analysts” are interested in 7 of the 10 contents, while “manager&consultants” are interested in 3 of the 10 contents.

Area	Contents			Training strategy						Planning/months														
				Internal training			External training			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
	Titolo	Target	Priorità	People involved	Single Y / h	Tot Y / h	People involved	Single Y / h	Tot Y / h															
MARKETING	Customer loyalty & segmentation	Consultant; Analyst	2	2	2	4	1	8	8															
	Pricing	Consultant; Analyst	1	2	4	8	1	16	16															
	Product management	Consultant; Analyst	1	2	4	8	1	16	16															
	Sales methods/techniques for the negotiations	Manager; Consultant	3	3	8	24	1	8	8															
NETWORKING	Contacts&Networking	Manager; Consultant	1	2	8	16	1	8	8															
	Business Matching or Speed dating	Manager; Consultant	3	3	8	24	1	8	8															
SPIN-OFF FORMATION AND BUSINESS PLANNING	Expected Net Present Value (eNPV)	Consultant; Analyst	2	2	12	24	1	8	8															
	Discounted Cash Flow methodology	Consultant; Analyst	2	2	12	24	1	8	8															
	Evaluation AUTM	Consultant; Analyst	2	2	8	16	1	12	12															
	Approx. Valuation	Consultant; Analyst	2	2	4	8	1	8	8															
						156			100															