

## The communication flow of research projects results

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### Introduction

Research projects and scientific grey literature are linked by a cause-effect relation [1,2]. Scientific Grey Literature (GL) production is generally originated by research activities related to more or less formalised projects. Research projects, in their turn, are represented through GL documents (deliverables, technical reports, etc.) and it often happens that research products themselves are also GL (patents, protocols, guidelines, etc.).

This relation is underlined by two types of links pertaining to their *information content* and to their *process*. The first type consists in a set of information, which is common to the project description and to the GL documents produced within the project. The second type of link regards the process and, from this point of view, each information unit represents the result of a precise activity within the communication flow, carried out during the project lifecycle, from the drafting of the proposal, to its approval, until the finalisation of the research and the diffusion of the results.

The need to develop Research Information Systems (RIS) dates back to 1975, they were promoted by Unisist, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [3]. The RIS, which at that time were simply called *registers of current research*, had two essential objectives, "to enhance communication among scientists concerning on-going projects" and "to provide an effective information base to managers of the national R&D program". A simple search in the current CORDIS database [4] reveals a far more complex framework, not only in relation to the quantity of data, but above all for the services offered, which are developed to support both participation in European projects (lists of experts, deadlines for tenders, etc.) and their technological transfer (information targeted to companies and SMEs in particular).

As a matter of fact, the evolution of today's CRIS (Current Research Information Systems) is at a crossroads [5] as they have become a research topic. On the one hand, they have to meet the needs of increasingly varied types of users (scientific community and policy makers, but also evaluators, intermediaries, companies, media); on the other hand they tend to represent the complexity of the world of research.

The trend is to build an integrated environment, which could represent and connect different types of information using the appropriate technology [6]. The various experiences related to the development of science portals [7, 8], or the systems automatically retrieving data from research web pages [9], national and international CRISs, all run in the direction of integration and interoperability. We too have considered this issue an important step and focused our attention on the integration of the information produced during the project lifecycle with its results, which is with the production of GL documents.

This paper describes the initial findings of a study carried out in collaboration between the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and the Italian National Institute of Safety and Health at Work (ISPESL) with the aim of developing an information system on research projects regarding occupational safety and health: RIS-OSH (Research Information System on Occupational Safety and Health). Such system will interface with the existing GL database (<http://www.ispesl.it/lq/default.htm>) and will allow the automatic updating of the documents produced within each research project. The ultimate goal of this commitment is to facilitate research evaluation activities and technological transfer through collection and updating of information related to research projects and to the documents produced within the process.

In this paper we will focus on the conceptual model of the RIS-OSH system and its integration with the GL database. The conceptual model is the result of the analysis carried out to obtain system requirements. The first paragraphs contain the rationale of the study and the