LORETA ISARAJ

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am an enthusiastic early-stage researcher with a multidisciplinary background and a keen interest in statistical and econometric analysis in Applied Social Sciences. I possess excellent analytical skills and a proven ability to research and analyse data effectively. I bring a results-driven approach to my work and am eager to leverage my expertise to drive positive change in society. Dedicated to advancing knowledge and fostering expertise in the research field, I am passionate about making meaningful contributions. Beyond my professional endeavours, I enjoy traveling, swimming, and listening to classical music.

EDUCATION

11/2020 – 10/2023
PhD in Applied Social Sciences
Sapienza University of Rome, Italy
Key Modules: Multivariate Analysis in Research, Advanced Methods of Data Treatment, Regression and Social Network Analysis, Methods for Constructing Composite Indices, Text Analytics Methods.
Thesis: "Evaluation of participation in Horizon 2020 and its impact on SMEs in European moderate innovator countries"
Date of doctoral thesis defense: 15 April 2024
Evaluation of the doctoral thesis: Excellent with honors

02/2021 – 03/2021
PhD Summer School on European Industrial, Innovation and Trade Policy in the Era of Strategic Autonomy
The Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on European Inclusive Open Strategic Autonomy (EU-IOSAC) at the Luiss Institute for European Analysis and Policy (LEAP), in partnership with the University of Strasbourg and UNU-MERIT in Maastricht, Italy
Key Modules: Industrial policy, Innovation policy, Trade policy, Global value chains

02/2021 – 03/2021
Winter School "The School of Methods"
SISEC (Societa Italiana di Sociologia Economica), Italy
Key Modules: Field Experiment, Process Tracing, Comparative Analysis and Case Studies.

10/2011 – 08/2013

Master of Science in Finance

University of Vlore "Ismail Qemali", Albania

Key Modules: Modern Theory of Portfolio, Public Finance, Advanced Financial Management, Research Methods in Applied Economy, Advanced Theory of Financial Markets, Advanced Econometrics.

Thesis: "Developments in the field of financing of individuals in Albania from the banking sector"

Date of master thesis defense: 19 April 2014

Average grade: 9/10

10/2008 – 08/2011

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

University of Vlore "Ismail Qemali", Albania

Key Modules: Financial Accounting, Business Management, Statistics, Econometrics.

Average Grade: 9.5/10

WORK EXPERIENCE

05/2024 – present

Research Fellow, Research Institute on Sustainable Economic Growth (IRCrES) at the National Research Council (CNR), Italy

- Research project "POTION - Policies for Transition: Impact and Governance (P2022FKLHH) – CUP E53D23016600001"- Project financed by the European Union – Next Generation EU, within the PRIN 2022 PNRR call.

09/2022 – 09/2023

Research Fellow, Statistical Area, Department of Business Engineering "Mario Lucertini", Tor Vergata University of Rome, Italy

- Multidisciplinary research project "For fair justice: Innovation and efficiency in judicial offices (AGILE Justice)" for the implementation of innovative operating models in the juridical offices for the disposal of the backlog for the courts of appeal of Rome, Florence and Perugia.

10/2014 – 07/2020

Assistant, "Reald" Private University, Vlore, Albania

- Preparation of seminars in the subjects of Managerial Finance and Cost Management Accounting.

10/2009 – 03/2011

Consultant at Tutorial Centre of Calculus, University of Vlore, Vlore, Albania

- Providing consultancy for students on Calculus subject.

LANGUAGES

Albanian:	Native
English:	Excellent writing and speaking abilities
Italian:	Excellent writing and speaking abilities

COMPUTER SKILLS

Excel: Working knowledge
Stata: Working knowledge
R: Working knowledge
SPSS: Working knowledge
Python Working knowledge

CONFERENCES & PUBLICATIONS

- Author, "Exploring Horizon 2020: SME engagement in European moderate innovator countries - Insights from Italy and Spain", presented at XII International Workshop on Computational Economics and Econometrics Science, Innovation, and Growth: Exploring New Inputs and Cross Effects (IWCEE 2024), organized by CNR-IRCrES, 27-28 June 2024, Rome, Italy.
- Author, Italian SME Participation in Horizon 2020: Which SMEs have greater absorptive capacities for European innovation funds? presented at ECR Night 2024, organized by the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) 12 December 2024, online.
- Author, "An Italian preview of evidence in accessing EU funds by SMEs for social and economic development leveraging in the R&D and Innovation capabilities", presented at 7th edition of National Conference of Doctoral Students in Social Sciences (CNDSS 2022) organized by University of Catania, December 2022, Catania, Italy.
- Author, "SMEs' potentials of R&D and the European Union Prospective. A Literature Review", published at 24th Issue of Academicus International Scientific Journal, 2021.
- Co-author, "Albanian`s case: The Covid-19 economic and health impact of disease" presented at the 1st Balkan Studies Congress, 17-19 September, Skopje, North Macedonia.
- Co-author, "Macroeconomic factors influencing unemployment in Albania", published in the Romanian Journal of Economics, 2021.
- Co-author, "Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder and impact in their social life. Literature Review", presented at 6th National Conference of Doctoral Sciences in Social Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, 2021.
- Author, "The usage of Internet Banking by businesses in Vlore Region", presented at 6th International Conference of the Scientific Challenges for Sustainable Development (SCFSD 2019) organized by University of Struga and University of Vlore, May 2019, Vlore, Albania.

OTHER PARTICIPATIONS

- Participant in T.A.K.E PART - Transational Activities for Key digital skills in Engagement and youth PARTicipation, Erasmus+ funded project led by the Italian Institute for the Future and the European Movement Albania, Naples, Italy, November 2019.
- Winner of the "Investire nei Giovani Oggi" project to attend the training course "Introduction to Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using Stata" at the Italian Stata Users Conference, organized by TStat, Florence, May 9-10, 2024.

REFEREES

1. **Prof. Dr. Domenica Fioredistella Iezzi,** Associate Professor of Social Statistics at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata"

E-mail: stella.iezzi@uniroma2.it, Tel: +39 347 9374806

2. **Prof. Arta Musaraj,** Professor in the doctoral program of Applied Social Sciences at Sapienza University of Rome

E-mail: arta.musaraj@uniroma1.it, Tel: +39 345 9322895 and +355 67 206 7900

3. **Lucio Morettini,** Researcher, Research Institute on Sustainable Economic Growth (IRCrES) at the National Research Council (CNR),

E-mail: lucio.morettini@ircres.cnr.it, Tel: +39 06 49937851

Rome, 20/01/2025

Loreta Isaraj

Cover Letter

Loreta Isaraj

E-mail: loreta.isaraj@uniroma1.it, Mob: +39 339 1261039

Viale Arrigo Boito 73, Rome, Italy

January 28, 2025

Kevin Bryan, Ina Ganguli, Kyle Myers

National Bureau of Economic Research

1050 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Professors Bryan, Ganguli, and Myers,

I am writing to express my strong interest in participating in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. Having recently completed my PhD in Applied Social Sciences at Sapienza University of Rome (with an evaluation of "Excellent with honors"), my research has been dedicated to exploring the European framework programs on innovation and the impact of SME participation in Horizon 2020. This expertise aligns closely with the boot camp's mission to encourage research on the economics of innovation and innovation policy.

My doctoral thesis, "Evaluation of participation in Horizon 2020 and its impact on SMEs in European moderate innovator countries," applied advanced econometric techniques to examine the accessibility of EU innovation funding and its influence on SMEs' innovation activity, and economic performance. This work has provided me with a deep understanding of how innovation frameworks intersect with public policy and organizational dynamics. Participating in the boot camp will allow me to further engage with cutting-edge research questions and advance my contributions to this field.

I have also benefited from specialized programs such as the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence's PhD Summer School on European Innovation Policy, which strengthened my knowledge of industrial policy, global value chains, and innovation systems. My postdoctoral research continues to focus on the impact of innovation policies, such as through my current involvement in the

POTION project, which evaluates the governance and societal impact of transition policies funded by the European Union.

The boot camp's unique structure, which includes lectures, participation in the NBER Summer Institute Innovation Policy meeting, and engagement with leading scholars, aligns perfectly with my research interests. I am particularly excited about the opportunity to learn from and interact with leading experts whose groundbreaking work has shaped the field of innovation economics. Additionally, the interdisciplinary nature of the program resonates with my multidisciplinary academic background in economics, finance, and social sciences.

I am honored to have the support of Prof. Arta Musaraj, my PhD supervisor and Professor in the doctoral program of Applied Social Sciences at Sapienza University of Rome, who will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf. Her mentorship has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey and the development of my thesis.

I am confident that participating in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp will provide the resources, mentorship, and collaborative environment necessary to advance my research on the economics of innovation. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of contributing to and learning from this prestigious program.

Sincerely,

Loreta Isaraj

Essay: Current and Future Research, and Motivation for Attending the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp

Throughout my academic journey, I have been dedicated to understanding the intersection of innovation, public policy, and economic development. My doctoral research, "Evaluation of participation in Horizon 2020 and its impact on SMEs in European moderate innovator countries," explored the role of European framework programs in fostering innovation and growth among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Through rigorous econometric analysis, I investigated how SMEs in moderate innovator countries accessed and utilized EU funding, and how this participation impacted their capacity to contribute to regional economic development. This work provided valuable insights into the mechanisms of innovation policy, its effectiveness, and its implications for economic inequality and growth. The findings from my thesis not only laid the foundation for my current research but also solidified my passion for examining innovation as a driver of economic and social transformation.

My current work as a Research Fellow on the POTION project (Policies for Transition: Impact and Governance) focuses on evaluating regional policies that support sustainable transitions within the framework of the Smart Specialisation Strategy. The project, funded by the European Union, examines how governance structures and policy frameworks can enable equitable and efficient transitions in response to environmental and social challenges. My specific role involves analyzing the design, implementation, and impact of these policies at the regional level, with a particular emphasis on how they address challenges such as resource efficiency, regional disparities, and inclusiveness. By aligning policy evaluation with the principles of Smart Specialisation, I aim to contribute to identifying pathways for regions to leverage their unique strengths in achieving sustainable and balanced development.

My current research interests have evolved to encompass the study of innovation as a key enabler of sustainable transitions. As global economies grapple with the challenges of climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities, I am particularly interested in exploring how innovation policies can foster sustainable growth while reducing disparities. I aim to investigate the intersection of innovation and sustainability, focusing on questions such as: How can public and private sectors collaborate to incentivize green innovation? What role can SMEs play in sustainable transitions, and how can their potential be maximized through policy interventions? How can innovation policies address regional disparities in innovation capacity to ensure inclusiveness?

Attending the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp will be an invaluable opportunity to deepen my understanding of the economics of innovation and its intersection with public policy, firm dynamics, and sustainable development. The boot camp's focus on foundational and frontier questions in innovation economics aligns perfectly with my research goals. I am eager to learn from leading scholars, engage in discussions on emerging challenges, and gain new perspectives on the methodologies and approaches used in the field. The exposure to cutting-edge research during the NBER Summer Institute Innovation Policy meeting and the opportunity to network with a vibrant community of researchers will significantly enhance my ability to contribute meaningfully to the academic and policy discourse on innovation.

The multidisciplinary nature of the boot camp resonates strongly with my academic background in economics, finance, and applied social sciences. It will equip me with the tools and insights necessary to expand my research agenda, which seeks to bridge the gap between innovation policy and sustainable development. By attending the boot camp, I aim to strengthen my expertise and contribute to shaping policies that not only foster innovation but also address the pressing global challenges of our time.

In conclusion, my motivation for attending the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp stems from a deep desire to advance my research on innovation as a catalyst for sustainable transitions. I am confident that the knowledge, mentorship, and collaboration opportunities offered by this program will empower me to make impactful contributions to the field and to the broader societal challenges we face today.

Program: PhD in Applied Social Sciences

Departament: Departament of Social Sciences and Economics

University: Sapienza, Roma, Italy

Completed PhD Courses

- Bianca Maria Potì - National Research Council (CNR): From Innovation systems to socio-economic transition: conceptual and methodological tools.
- Bianca Maria Potì - National Research Council (CNR): From Innovation systems to socio-economic transition: empirical studies on societal challenges and innovation.
- Francesco Antonelli - Roma Tre University: How to project European research; the case of Horizon 2020.
- Federico Neresini - University of Padua: Science, Technology and society: theories and methods.
- Orazio Giancola – Sapienza University: Two examples of advanced methods of data treatment: regression and social network analyis.
- Patrick Brown (University of Amsterdam): Critical approaches to risk and uncertainty: research pathways, conceptual tools.
- Arta Musaraj - Sapienza University: The Communication of the Results of the Scientific Research.
- Edoardo Esposto – Sapienza University: Researching and writing literature reviews for scientific products: resources, guidelines and styles.
- Orazio Giancola – Sapienza University: Multivariate analysis in research: techniques and models for big data.
- Marina Ciampi - Sapienza University: Using images in social research: the visual method.

- Stella Iezzi – Tor Vergata University: Text analytics methods.
- David Lyon - Queen's University, Kingston: Culture of surveillance: big data, AI and society.
- Matteo Mazziotta - Istat: Methods for Constructing Composite Indices.
- Michela Cozza - Mälardalen University: A sociomaterial approach to the study of organizational practices.
- Assunta Viteritti – Sapienza University: Laboratory studies: scientific practices.

- Silvia Gherardi - University of Trento: Open discussion with Phd on Practice, turn of affect and post-qualitative methodologies.

- Monica Massari - University of Milan, Vincenza Pellegrino - University of Parma: Emancipatory social science: theory and research.

- Orazio Giancola – Sapienza University): Policy evaluation in university and research and the policy implications.

Letter of Recommendation

To the Selection Committee,

I am writing to wholeheartedly recommend Loreta Isaraj for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025.

As Loreta's PhD advisor at Sapienza University of Rome, I have had the pleasure of supervising her doctoral journey, where she has consistently demonstrated exceptional academic aptitude, dedication, and a profound interest in the economics of innovation.

Loreta's dissertation, "Evaluation of participation in Horizon 2020 and its impact on SMEs in European moderate innovator countries," is a testament to her analytical rigor and deep understanding of innovation frameworks and their socioeconomic impacts. Her ability to apply advanced econometric techniques and her insightful analyses have significantly contributed to the discourse on how innovation policies can influence economic development.

Beyond her academic prowess, Loreta possesses a unique interdisciplinary perspective, seamlessly integrating insights from economics, social sciences, and finance. In addition to her impressive academic achievements, Loreta has demonstrated strong interdisciplinary knowledge through her involvement in various research projects, including the EU-funded POTION project, which focuses on sustainable economic transitions, and the Agile Justice project, which aimed to enhance efficiency in judicial offices.

I firmly believe that Loreta's participation in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp will not only enhance her academic journey but also allow her to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing conversations in innovation economics. She is an outstanding candidate, and I am confident she will be an asset to your program.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Arta Musaraj

PhD Advisor

Sapienza University of Rome

https://phd.uniroma1.it/web/ARTA-MUSARAJ_nC2304_EN.aspx