

# National strategy for competences/skills

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** **ITALY**

## Timeline

**ID number 28319**

## Background

The general objective of recent reforms to the National strategy for competences/skills is to provide a comprehensive approach to the national system for 'creating, activating and updating' skills for better lives and jobs. This goal raised the awareness of national stakeholders. Another contribution was a national survey promoted by OECD in 2016/17 with the support of the European Commission, which led to the adoption of a skills strategy diagnostic report highlighting areas for medium- to long-term improvements and identifying key challenges for the country. The report drew on data, analysis and suggestions from Government, and from broad consultation with national stakeholders from the labour market and entrepreneurship representatives.

The country has introduced a series of ambitious reforms to improve the transitions from school to work and from work to work, highlighting the potential and the capacity of the school and VET system to respond to the labour market high speed demand of skills. However, a more progressive and effective approach to implementing the reforms, especially in digitalisation, is needed.

## Objectives

Given the results of the analysis, the overall objective of recent policy developments are:

- (a) to provide alignment between skills demand and supply;
- (b) to strengthen skills supply either in the education and training system, improving school-work transitions, or in the labour market, improving continuous training of the workforce, with a view to preventing exclusion from the labour market;
- (c) to implement investments in innovative assets for the skills supply chain, such as 'digitalisation';
- (d) to boost a high, demand-driven approach that can support the outbreak of the low-skill equilibrium data on skills mismatch demonstrated in the last decade.

## Description

A National strategy for competences/skills has been launched based on the education and training (Good school) and labour (Jobs Act) reforms. Both reforms aim to improve the competences of young people and adults, including NEETs, and to provide new competences for the (long-term) unemployed and employees. The strategy also links skills with the labour market demand. As a result of the National strategy for competences/skills, cognitive (including basic skills), professional and particularly 'soft skills', have been promoted through the introduction of a national model of 'dual' education and training in 2015. This was achieved by means of reinforced and compulsory work-school alternation schemes and through apprenticeship schemes linked to quality learning pathways leading to the acquisition of qualifications from EQF levels 3 to 8 of the education and training system.

Decree 81/2015 provides the opportunity of benefiting from apprenticeships in IVET systems in order to develop the skills of young people (Article 46, type 1 apprenticeship), so contributing to the implementation of the policy.

For the labour market, the Jobs Act, besides the introduction of a unique framework for a single contract with increasing employment protection (*contratto a tutele crescenti*), created the a National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL- Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive), and introduced an important shift from passive towards active labour market policies, strengthening the welfare system (unemployment benefits and the so-called citizens' subsidy, *reddito di cittadinanza*) and providing the definition of activation measures in the labour market, personalised and customised by target groups. To complement this national involvement, the implementation of the 'upskilling pathways' recommendation led in 2018 to the adoption of shared national strategy. This provided reform of adult learning, reinforcement of national and local networks for lifelong learning, and adoption of the national qualification framework (NQF) (supporting guidance and validation with the aim of maximising the validation of prior learning). The combination of these measures, in a unique governance framework, multilevel (State-region) and multiple actor (VET providers, schools, companies and districts of local developments) might improve the country's readiness in promoting quick reaction to changing paradigm in education and learning processes, along with better reallocation of workers in the labour market in sectors that may demonstrate structural industrial crisis in the present and future time.

### 2015 Design

In 2015, a series of reforms (in terms of legislative framework but also operational) began:

- (a) Reform of the school system the Good school;
- (b) Jobs Act;
- (c) reform of apprenticeship contract regulatory framework;
- (d) establishment of the National Agency for Active Labour policies (ANPAL).

### 2016 Pilot

The OECD and EU National skills strategy Italy was launched.

### 2017 Implementation

In 2017, OECD finalised the Italian diagnostic report.

### 2018 Implementation

In 2018, the re-design of adult learning in accordance with the suggestions included in the Upskilling pathways recommendation began.

### 2019 Implementation

In 2019, the opportunity to consolidate the dual system was presented by:

- (a) putting into the system pilot phase results of dual education schemes in VET and schools;
- (b) providing structural resources, in terms of benefits and tax reliefs, for companies hiring young apprentices or students in a work-school alternance scheme;
- (c) widening the inventories (regional and national) of VET;
- (d) redefining VET curricula valorising competences acquired in the workplace.

Also in 2019, a national upskilling strategy was adopted relevant to the Upskilling pathways Recommendation. The strategy includes a renewed governance framework within the National lifelong learning network, the launch of adult learning centres at local and at provincial levels, the consolidation of national guidelines for the accreditation of prior learning and the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

## 2020 Implementation

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020, a *New skills fund (Fondo nuove competenze)*, was launched with the aim of recovering the wide disruption of jobs, positions and opportunities in the professional sectors, linked with the economic crisis of entire parts and branches of national and international economies (including tourism, civil aviation, food and hospitality). This fund supports transitions in the workplace and helps avoiding a massive loss of jobs due to the crisis. The fund was created within the annual budget law (as per article 88 of law Decree No 34 of 19 May 2020) and implemented through inter-ministerial decrees adopted between the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021. For 2020, the financial resources, amounted to EUR 700 million, and were allocated either from the State budget or from the ESF Operational programme 2014-20 (SPAO). The *New skills fund* aims to provide financial support for up-re-skilling employees whose working time (shift) was reduced because of the crisis.

## 2021 Implementation

In 2021 the following policies were launched:

- (a) *National strategic plan for the development of skills of the adult population*, outlining a strategic framework for European and national planning for 2021-27, in fulfilment of the Italian strategy for adult skills, launched with Law 92 of 2012, and according to the guidelines of the European recommendation on Upskilling pathways in 2016;
- (b) the *New skills plan (PNC)*, which is developed in line with the National strategic plan. It defines a strategic coordination framework for upskilling and reskilling pathways in order to face the new skills needs created by the digital and ecological transitions as well as dealing with the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, as defined in the National recovery and resilience plan (PNRR) reform and investment initiatives of Mission 5, component 1;
- (c) the *Employability guarantee reform programme (GOL)*, as a pivot of the active employment policies reform action. Related to this reform programme, are PNC's measures that are directed to the vocational training beneficiaries of the GOL. These measures will be funded jointly with the Exceptional plan for strengthening public employment services, largely financed from the State budget (this plan also becomes part of the PNRR). The GOL programme was adopted in November 2021 by an interministerial decree. EUR 4.4 billion were earmarked for GOL plus EUR 600 million for strengthening the Job Centres and EUR 600 million for strengthening the dual system (these funds are earmarked up to 2025).
- (d) the dual system (SD) investment programme, promotes new skills for young people. It favours matching between the education and training system and the labour market through the strengthening of alternation measures, in particular the dual training contract.

For the first year of GOL, EUR 880 million were allocated, of which EUR 120 million was reserved for the dual system.

In the fourth path of the GOL Programme, particular attention is paid to vulnerable (in

terms of having difficulties accessing the labour market) target groups (e.g., disadvantaged people in need of targeted education/training support, people in need of economic and social support people without an income, low qualified people, people who live in remote areas with limited access to education and working opportunities, and people who belong to disadvantaged groups or minorities). At the same time, in GOL's path five, particular attention is paid to those employees who are more likely to lose their jobs and need to be involved in up and/or re-skilling activities.

Since March 2021, the initiatives planned in the *New skills fund* (for 2021) were implemented. Additional funding of EUR 800 million was decided for 2022, totalling EUR 1.5 billion since the fund was launched.

## 2022 Implementation

In 2022, paths one, two, three and four of the GOL programme started being implemented. As a result, a process of coordination and data sharing between the State and the Regions and the PP Register AA (this is a register containing the addresses of certified electronic emails of public administrations pursuant to legislative Decree 179/2012) began aiming to standardise services and improve their quality as the GOL programme envisages. More specifically:

- (a) the Regional implementation programmes (PAR) were approved;
- (b) the operational/legislative documentation of the GOL Programme (Acts, Decrees, Notes) was issued. This framework defines some of the characteristics of the provided services (in particular the Assessment, training and specialist orientation), the Essential Performance Levels (LEP) of the programme and the related standard costs;
- (c) the rules for achieving the 2022 targets were defined and shared with the competent authorities;
- (d) the activities planned for the period were launched (and the relevant programme monitoring documentation assessed that that objectives were achieved)

In 2022, additional functions were taken over by the *New skills fund* (i.e. to manage skills needs relevant to the digital and green transitions to which the industrial transition was added).

In these terms, the additional functions aim to enhance the skills of employees, as identified within the framework of various international classifications (e.g., for the digital transition, reference is made to DigComp 2.1 for basic digital skills and to the e-Competence Framework 3.0 for specialised skills. For the green transition, the point of reference is the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations - ESCO classification).

The intent is to use skills upgrading and retraining as a lever of development, supporting the active role of companies and workers' representatives in defining the skills gaps and the consequent design of interventions in conjunction with training agencies, reducing the risks for workers related to the processes of change taking place. In addition, it is aimed at the certification of skills acquired by the workers involved, also for the purpose of portability and usability of learning.

In September 2022, the financial resources for 2022 and 2023 amounting to EUR 1 billion were allocated to the *New skills fund*. Eligible to receive these funds are employers who reformulate the working and training hours, up to a minimum limit of 40 hours of work and a maximum of 200 hours of training after collective agreements to reformulate the working hours, up to a minimum limit of 40 hours and a maximum of 200 hours of training (the maximum limit of training hours is 250).

## 2023 Implementation

In February 2023, additional amount of EUR 800 million was allocated to the New skills fund (with the total budget for the years 2022 and 2023 amounting to EUR 1.18 billion).

The Employability guarantee reform programme (GOL), as a reform initiative was included in Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), Mission 5, Component 1, aimed at enhancing active labour policy services. The initial financial allocation for the programme was EUR 4.4 billion, increased by an additional EUR 1 billion following the reconfiguration of the NRRP by the ECOFIN Council decision on December 8, 2023, to be invested in workers' skills over the five-year period from 2021 to 2025.

On August 24, 2023, a decree was issued to implement the measures under the GOL. The allocation of resources assigned to the Regions and autonomous provinces for intervention M5C1 '1.1 Active Labour Policies and Training' of the PNRR, amounted to EUR 1.2 billion, an initial allocation of EUR 600 million is designated for 2024 and another EUR 600 million for 2025, to facilitate multi-year planning of interventions.

## **2024 Implementation**

Since March 1, 2024, ANPAL have ceased operations and ANPAL Services changed status. Sviluppo Lavoro Italia Spa was created to play a proactive and comprehensive role in the development and implementation of national and regional active labour policies. Due to the reorganisation of the labour ministry, labour policy programming and management of related EU funds activities, previously assigned to ANPAL, were transferred back to the ministry.

Another responsibility assumed by the ministry that previously was under ANPAL, is the coordination and monitoring of the GOL programme, oversighting of the implementation of regional interventions, and chairing the steering committee of GOL. This committee serves as the governance body for the programme, bringing together central and regional levels.

The New Skills-Transitions Plan (Decree March 30, 2024) updates the earlier New Skills Plan (2021-2023), as part of the REPowerEU chapter and under Mission 7 of the NRRP. The plan aims to tackle skills mismatches in the labour market by aligning training programmes with labour market needs and promoting work-based learning and micro-credentials. Key aspects of the plan include greater private sector involvement in training programmes' planning and implementation, particularly through Skills Pacts (agreements between the public and private sectors to align training programs with labour market needs) and structural networks for co-design and delivery, as well as technological specialisation courses linked to education and industrial policies (ITS Academy). It emphasises continuing training systems, focusing on work-based learning and improving skills identification and validation processes to enhance the effectiveness of training and measure the impact of interventions, in line with European recommendations for adult skill enhancement. The plan also includes implementing ex ante labour market analysis systems to improve labour market intelligence and monitoring the employment outcomes of funded training, especially continuing training managed by interprofessional joint funds.

The ITS Academies play a crucial role in the 'New Skills-Transitions Plan' as they offer technological specialisation courses linked to educational and industrial policies, promote work-based learning, and facilitate private sector involvement in planning and implementing training programs. Additionally, they contribute to continuous training systems and labour market analysis to enhance market intelligence and monitor the employment outcomes of funded training.

To further address labour market mismatches, the ministry has also approved improvements to the GOL Programme (GOL - Decree March 30, 2024). Following the termination of the Citizenship Income, the decree has introduced new provisions that expand access to the GOL Programme. This includes people receiving income support from the 2023 Labour Decree, specifically those getting Training and work support (SFL) and the Inclusion allowance (ADI), as well as all unemployed individuals, regardless of gender, age, or unemployment period. This integration emphasises the role of vocational training in boosting employment reintegration opportunities, with a focus on short-term training that leads to skill certification, including micro-credentials. A key component of the GOL reform, which is tied to EU funding, is the establishment of milestones and targets. By 2025, it aims to involve 3 million beneficiaries, including

800 000 in training activities, 300 000 of which will focus on digital skills.

According to data from the GOL monitoring until the 30 June nb 2024, over 2.5 million unemployed individuals enrolled in the GOL programme, with more than half in Pathway 1 for job reintegration. The rest are in Pathway 2 for upskilling (25.8%), Pathway 3 for reskilling (20.3%), and Pathway 4 for work and inclusion (3.5%). Women represented 55.5% of participants, youth 28.7%, adults aged 55 and over 17.2%, and foreigners 15.3%. Also, 31.4% had been unemployed for over 12 months.

The regulation of services for identifying, validating, and certifying skills, established by the ministerial decree dated 9 July 2024, establishes new ways for collaboration between the regional vocational training system and economic and social partners, emphasising the role of interprofessional training funds and bilateral funds for continuing training and income integration. In the GOL, income integration provides financial support to workers during training or job transitions. This aid, through interprofessional and bilateral funds, ensures participation in continuous training without income loss. It facilitates financial stability and collaboration between vocational training systems and economic and social partners. Additionally, the decree promotes the recognition of skills acquired in non-formal learning contexts, through collaborations with Regions and social partners, awareness campaigns, and incentives for businesses. Interprofessional and bilateral funds financially support these initiatives. The decree facilitates the validation and certification of skills acquired outside traditional educational paths, valuing experiences such as universal civil service, apprenticeship contracts, internships, entrepreneurship support programs, volunteering, and collective benefit projects. This marks a significant step in the reform of the national skills certification system and active labour policies, developed through close collaboration with Regions and social partners.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
- Regions and autonomous provinces

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Young people (15-29 years old)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Adult learners

Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

Unemployed and jobseekers

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Low-skilled/qualified persons

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

### Entities providing VET

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

VET providers (all kinds)

### Other stakeholders

National, regional and local authorities

## Thematic categories

## **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Coordinating VET and other policies

Optimising VET funding

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

## **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications**

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

## **Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences**

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

## **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

# **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET promoting equality of opportunities

### **Osnabrück Declaration**

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Sustainability - a green link in VET

# **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[Law No 107/2015 Good school \[Buona Scuola\]](#)

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[OECD \(2018\), OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report: Italy 2017, OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris](#)

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[Italian Report to Upskilling pathways](#)

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[The National recovery and resilience plan, PNRR \[Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza,](#)



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Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, Decree of 5 November 2021, Adoption of the Employability guarantee reform programme (GOL).

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Reallocation of funding for the national Skills Fund

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Re-Power Eu

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Decree-Law of May 4, 2023, No. 48 (published in the Official Gazette - General Series - No. 103 of May 4, 2023), coordinated with the conversion law of July 3, 2023, No. 85 (in the same Official Gazette, on p. 53), concerning:"Urgent measures for social

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Decree of August 24, 2023, Modalities for the distribution of the second tranche of PNRR resources allocated to intervention M5C1"1.1 Active Labour Policies and Training," within the National Program for the Employability Guarantee of Workers (GOL). (23A

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DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS November 22, 2023, No. 230, Regulation for the reorganization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Offices of Direct Collaboration. (24G00005) (Official Gazette General Series No. 38 of

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Decree of March 30, 2024, New Skills-Transitions Plan. (24A02572) (Official Gazette General Series No. 120 of May 24, 2024)

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Decree of March 30, 2024. Update of the GOL Program. (24A02573) (Official Gazette General Series No. 120 of May 24, 2024) Law of July 4, 2024, No. 95, Conversion into law, with amendments, of Decree-Law of May 7, 2024, No. 60, containing further urgent pr

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Sviluppo Lavoro Italia Spa

## Related policy developments

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### 2024 Implementation

#### Strengthening key competences in education and training

The 2015 reform ( Law No 107/2015- Buona Scuola) aimed to increase specific skills: foreign language (English) and communication skills, through the development of content and language integrated learning, literacy and the Italian language for foreign learners; mathematical-logical and scientific



##### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

##### Subsystem

IVET

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### 2024 Implementation

#### The Good school and subsequent reforms

On 13 July 2015, the Italian government adopted a reform of the national education system called the Good school (La Buona Scuola), emphasising alternance between classroom work and periods of workplace training.



**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## **The regulatory framework for apprenticeship**

Apprenticeship regulations were entirely reformed in 2015 (Legislative Decree No 81/2015). The State-regions conference is in charge of defining the minimum set of education and training standards valid for all regions countrywide.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**“ ... ” Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). National strategy for competences/skills: Italy. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28319>