

CONTINUOUS VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND APPROACHES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ITALY

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PRESENTATION PLAN

1. TOWARDS A MORE INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE CVET SYSTEM

**2. APPROACHES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE:
FROM SYSTEM LEVEL TO PRACTICAL
IMPLICATIONS**



**TOWARDS A
MORE
INNOVATIVE AND
INCLUSIVE CVET
SYSTEM**

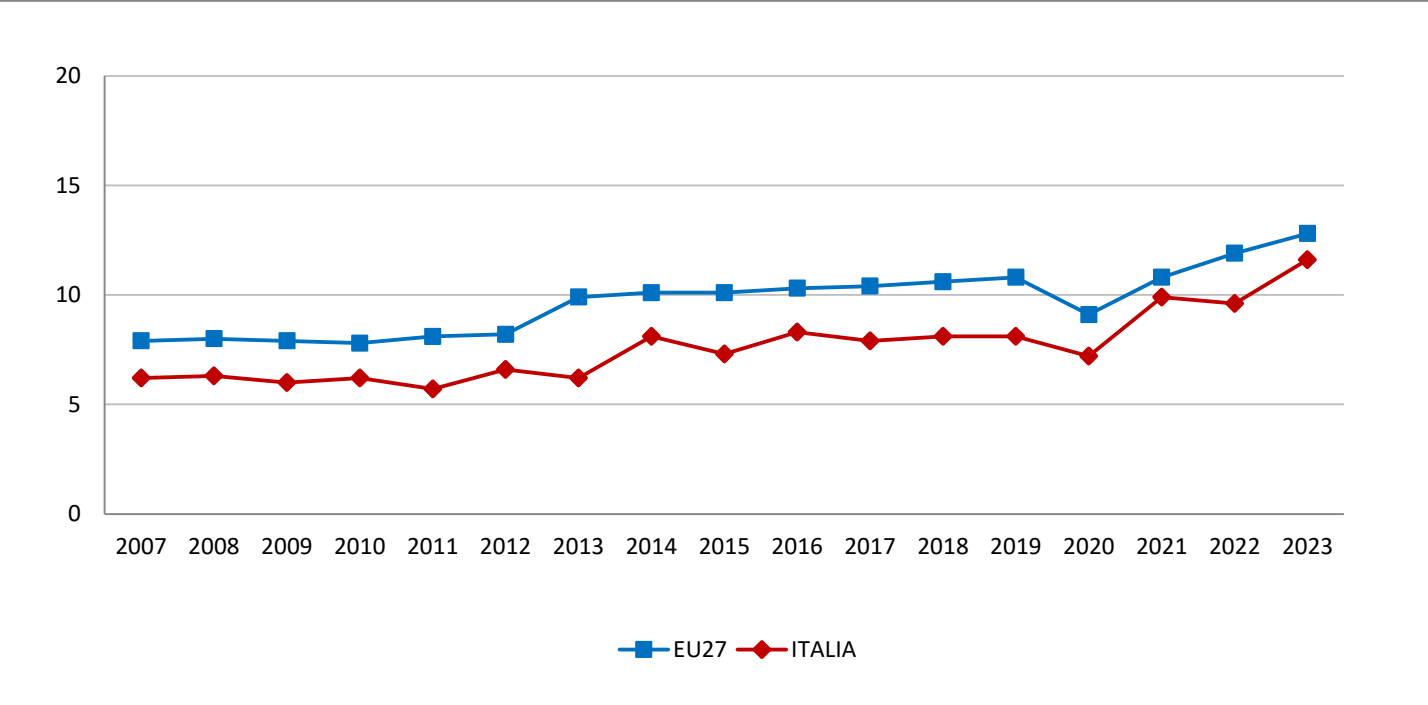


The Relaunch of Continuing Vocational Training in Italy

- Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) in Italy is experiencing a **recovery** after years of stagnation, marked by some signs of change.
- Among the main driving factors are some **policy actions** and **innovative training models**, which enhance dynamism, inclusiveness, and quality.
- **Participation** is increasing and methodologies are evolving, but **inequalities** in access remain.

The Growth of Training Participation

Participation rate of the population aged 25-64 in education and training activities (4 weeks, %)



- **Participation** rate in training: 11.6% in 2023, exceeding the 10% threshold
- Italy: 14th place in Europe, with a **growth** of four positions in a year
- **End of stagnation**, but the rhythm of growth remains low

Source: Eurostat, LFS

[XXIV Report to Parliament on CVT in Italy](#)

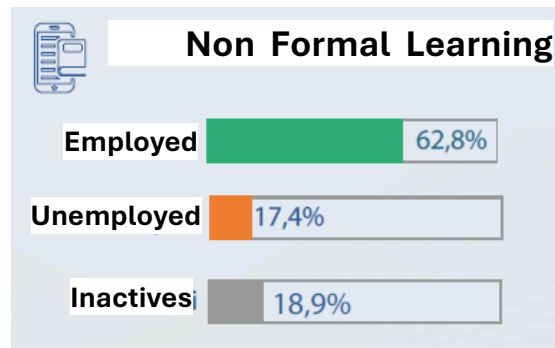
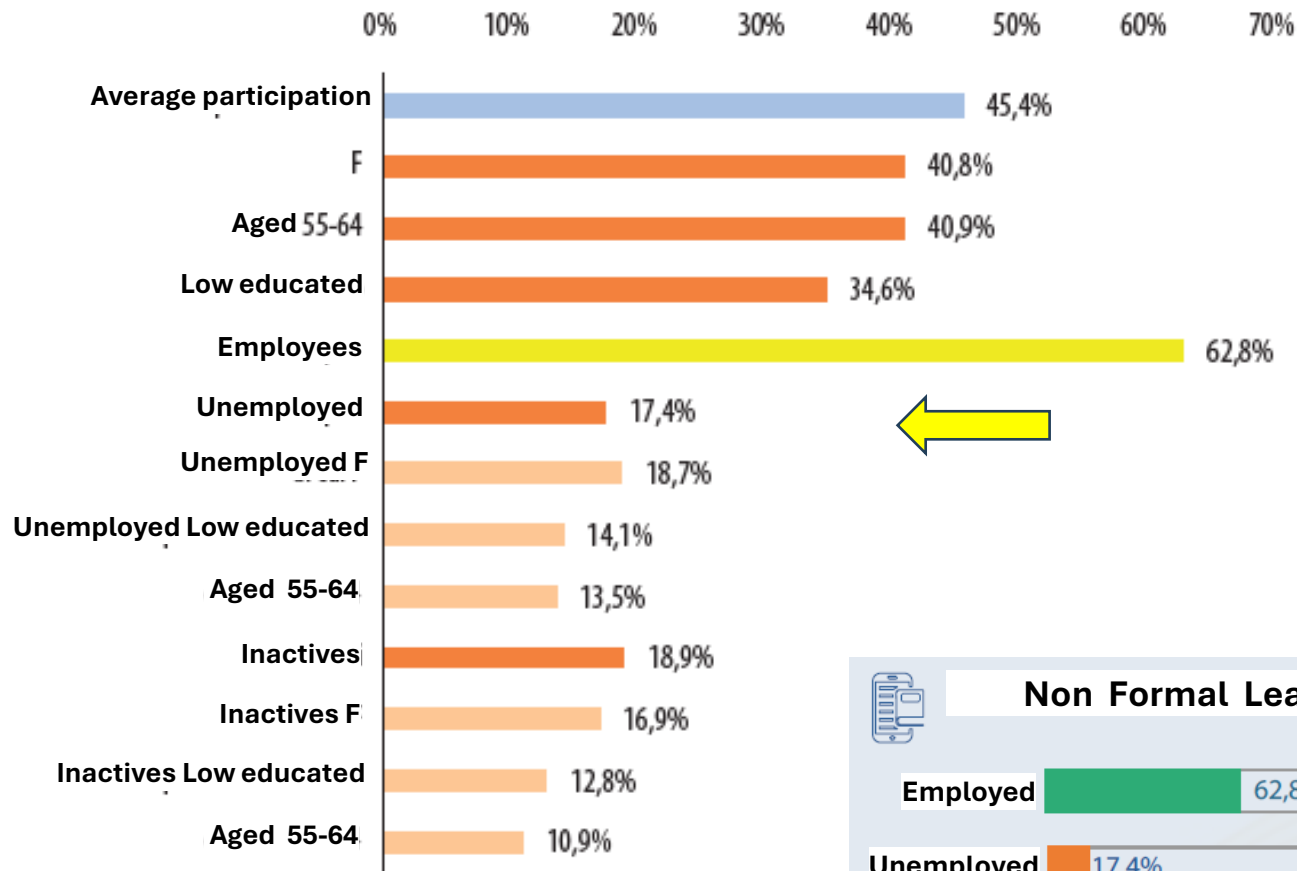
The Impact of the New Skills Fund

- Central role of **New Skills Fund (NSF)**: 1 million workers trained in digital and green skills.
- Other programs are also playing an important role:
 - **Interprofessional Funds**
 - **European Social Fund**
 - **GOL Program** (Guarantee of Workers' Employability).
- Econometric studies highlight the role of the NSF in promoting **innovation** and improving the **quality** of training at all levels.

[The impact of the New Skills Fund on CVT. Evidence from INDACO-Enterprises \(data 2022\)](#)

Key Participation Gaps

Participation rate of the population aged 18-64 in non-formal learning activities (12 months, %)



Training Paradox

Those most **in need** participate **the least** (over-55s, low education, low skill, SMEs, less innovative sectors)

Causes

Poor **infrastructure**, weak **learning culture**, challenges in **micro-enterprises**

Source: INAPP, **INDACO** Adults Survey (Adult Learning Survey)

Towards a More Innovative and Inclusive CVET System

■ Flexibility

Microlearning = short, targeted, and accessible modules

- 👉 Overcomes time and logistical barriers
- 👉 Enables continuous, **personalized** learning

■ Governance & Monitoring

Engage institutions, companies, and training providers

- 👉 Use shared **indicators** to track skills development, employability, and impact

■ Innovation & Inclusion

Invest in:

- Modern teaching methods
- **Micro-credentials**
- SME support
- Training for over-55s
- Digital skills
- **Intergenerational learning** (*e.g. reverse mentoring*)

● Goal:

a CVET system capable of addressing today's and tomorrow's challenges

Evolution of Training Accredited Providers (2020-2022)

	TYPE OF PROVIDERS			CLASSROOMS			LABORATORIES
	Single-site (%)	Multi-site (%)	Total (%)	Average number of classrooms per site	Average number of workstations per provider	Average number of workstations per classroom	Structures without Laboratories (%)
2020	73,9	26,1	100	5,3	93,5	17,3	36,4
2022	72,7	27,3	100	4,6	81,0	17,7	44,4
Difference 2022 - 2020	-1,2	1,2	-	-0,7	-12,5	0,4	8,0

Source: INAPP, **OFPI** 2022 Survey (Supply of Vocational Training in Italy)

Between 2020 and 2022, the following trends emerged:

- a **slight shift toward territorial reorganization**, with a modest increase in multi-site providers (+1.2 percentage points)
- a **reduction in the number of classrooms and workstations** (-0.7% and -12.5%, respectively)
- a **concerning rise in providers without laboratories**, which may reflect financial difficulties or a declining focus on hands-on training

Trends in the training offer provided (2020-2022)

	COURSES	HOURS		LEARNERS	
	Total No. Courses	Total No. Course Hours	Average No. Hours per Course	Total No. Students	Average No. Students per Course
2020	78.363	8.463.480	108	897.869	11,0
2022	87.335	8.125.163	96	842.684	9,6
Difference 2022 - 2020	8.972	-338.317	-12	-55.185,0	-1,4

Source: INAPP, **OFPI** 2022 Survey (Supply of Vocational Training in Italy)

Between 2020 and 2022:

- **The courses increased** (+8,972), **but** with a **reduction in the total hours** provided (-338 thousand) and the average **duration** (-12 hours per course)
- **The number of students** (-55 thousand) and the average number per course (-1.4) also **decreased**
- The trend highlights **a broader but fragmented offer**, with shorter training courses and fewer participants

Evolution of Training Channels: From Providers to Enterprises

- In 2023, **CVT** grew significantly, supported by public funding and internal company resources.
- Between 2020 and 2022, **accredited providers** delivered more courses but with fewer hours and participants, due to post-COVID restructuring and increased use of distance learning.

A structural shift?

Training is moving increasingly into the corporate sphere, redefining the role of accredited institutions?

**APPROACHES TO
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Accreditation of VET providers in Italy (1)

Italy's accreditation of VET providers is shaped by a distinctive decentralised system. While the national government established the general legal framework (Law 196/1997, Legislative Decree 13/2013), it is the regional authorities that hold the responsibility for implementing and managing the accreditation process. This structure (**multilevel governance system**) reflects Italy's broader approach to education governance, where regional autonomy plays a significant role.

According to INAPP's research, there are two main **approaches to accreditation** based on the typology of activities provided:

- funded activities (publicly financed);
- recognised but non-funded activities (e.g., self-financed courses).

According to INAPP's data gathered:

- **67.1%** of training bodies are accredited for both funded and non-funded activities.
- **20.9%** only for funded training.
- **12.1%** only for recognised (non-funded) training.



Accreditation of VET providers in Italy (2)

Table 1: Accreditation status of the operational site/center for VET (absolute values and %)

	Geographic Area				Total Italy	Total Italy
	North-West	North-East	Center	South and Island	Absolute Value (a.v.)	%
Yes, for funded training activities	20,1	33,0	14,2	19,8	20,9	358
Yes, for recognized but unfunded training activities (self-financed)	17,5	6,5	11,1	9,8	12,1	208
Yes, both for funded and recognized activities	62,3	60,6	74,7	70,4	67,0	1.150
No, the structure can access regional funding without accreditation, as it is a public educational institution	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
Total (absolute values)	578	279	360	500		1.717

Source: INAPP, OFP 2022 Survey (Supply of Vocational Training in Italy).



Accreditation of VET providers in Italy (3)

In Italy, given the different regional regulations on accreditation and the extreme heterogeneity of regional lists of accredited training bodies/operating units – as well as the unavailability of data and information on the nature and characteristics of the various structures – preliminary information was requested from training providers in order to better identify their scope of activity within the vocational training system.

First, it was verified whether the training structures were accredited for “**funded**” **training activities**, or only/also for activities “**recognized**” by the regional administration but not funded. In fact, many regional administrations publish comprehensive lists of accredited organizations without always distinguishing between the two traditional streams of activity and the related accreditation.

The majority of respondents (1,150 structures, or 67.1%) are accredited for both funded and non-funded activities, while 20.9% (358 structures) are accredited only for funded activities and 12.1% (208 structures) only for recognized (non-funded) activities. A territorial breakdown shows that in the North-East of the country, there is a higher proportion of organizations accredited exclusively for funded training compared to other geographical areas.



Overview of accreditation systems (1)

Table 2: Accredited organizations for funded training that have received regional funding in the past five years (absolute values and percentages)

	Geographic Area				Total Italy	
	North-West	North-East	Center	South and Island	a.v.	%
	Yes, through regional calls/notices under the ESF (and/or continuous training funds Law 236/93 or Law 53/00)	69,4	80,1	54,1	65,0	1006
Yes, other European funds	4,8	11,5	4,7	5,8	94	6,2
Yes, Youth Guarantee	26,6	34,1	16,9	37,9	441	29,2
Yes, other	3,8	7,3	5,0	5,5	78	5,2
No	23,5	11,5	37,2	23,9	369	24,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0		100,0
Total v.a.	477	261	320	451	1.509	

Base respondents: 1,509 accredited organizations eligible for public funding.

Note: Column totals may exceed 100% as multiple positive responses were possible.

Source: INAPP, **OFPI** 2022 Survey (Supply of Vocational Training in Italy).



Overview of accreditation systems (2)

In line with findings from previous editions, most of the structures fall into two main categories: **for-profit entities** (47.4%), which include both organizations whose main mission is vocational training and businesses for which training is a secondary activity alongside other economic operations, and **non-profit training bodies and organizations** (27.0% non-profit organizations and 10.5% third-sector entities, totaling 37.5%) .

The vast majority of the structures are accredited for the “**continuing/permanent training**” macro-type (83.2%). About 47.8% of the centres have obtained accreditation for **higher education**, while a smaller share – **31.9%** of the surveyed structures – is accredited for **initial education and training** (obbligo formativo). Lastly, **6.5%** of the structures operate in regions or provinces where accreditation by macro-type is not foreseen. Territorial differences are more attributable to the **nature and focus of the responding organisation** than to variations in regional policy frameworks.



Overview of accreditation systems (3)

Table 3: Distribution of interviewed training organizations by type and geographical area (absolute values and percentages)

	Geographic Area				Total Italy	
	North-West	North-East	Center	South and Islands	v.a.	%
	Public body (includes publicly owned companies/special agencies)	8,5	3,9	1,4	2,0	75
Third Sector organization registered or registering with RUNTS	6,2	12,9	10,6	14,0	180	10,5
Other non profit organization/NGO	28,2	30,1	15,3	32,4	464	27,0
Private/recognized school	1,2	1,1	2,2	1,4	25	1,5
ITS Foundation	1,0	0,0	0,8	0,6	12	0,7
Private university	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0	0,0
Public university or affiliated structure	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,2	1	0,1
Bilateral body	2,1	3,2	1,9	1,8	37	2,2
Employment agency	1,0	0,4	1,7	1,8	22	1,3
Company/business/other for-profit entity	44,5	45,2	61,1	42,0	813	47,4
Other	7,3	3,2	5,0	3,8	88	5,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0		100,0
Total absolute values	578	279	360	500	1.717	

Source: INAPP, OFP 2022 Survey (Supply of Vocational Training in Italy)



Overview of accreditation systems (4)

Looking at the main **types of accreditation**, the system shows overall continuity. Continuous training remains the most common category, covering 83.2% of providers in 2022, though this represents a slight decline compared to 2020. Accreditation for higher education covers nearly half of the providers, while accreditation for compulsory education activities declined to below 32%. Additionally, 6.5% of providers operate in regions that do not distinguish between accreditation types.

Around half of the providers are also active in continuous training funded through **inter-professional training funds**. This model is more prevalent in northern regions, highlighting a more structured private training system in those areas.

In terms of the **timing of first accreditation**, the system is becoming increasingly younger. While in 2020 over 29% of providers had been accredited before 2004, this figure dropped to 21.8% by 2022. At the same time, more than one-third of the providers surveyed in 2022 received their accreditation after 2014, indicating growing dynamism and a steady influx of new actors into the system.



CONCLUSIONS (1)

Accreditation remains one of the primary mechanisms for external quality assurance (QA) in Italy's vocational training system, acting as a basic guarantee of institutional and organizational compliance.

However, the 2022 data reveal that: **24.5% of accredited providers did not access regional funding**, suggesting that formal accreditation does not necessarily equate to actual delivery of publicly funded training.

Many accredited institutions **primarily operate on the private market**, reducing the public system's ability to steer quality through funding mechanisms. Accreditation provides baseline eligibility but **is not sufficient** to monitor or ensure actual training quality.

Given the growing **diversity of training providers** (for-profit, non-profit, public) and delivery models (multi-site, microlearning, inter-professional funds), an integrated approach is essential: accreditation offers a **top-down, standardized framework**; but quality must be built through **internal, continuous improvement processes**.

Stakeholder engagement—training providers, enterprises, trainers—is crucial for **co-creating and sustaining quality**, not just auditing it.



CONCLUSIONS (2)

The OFP 2020–2022 reveals several potential quality concerns:

- An **increase in providers without training laboratories**, potentially reflecting financial constraints or a reduced focus on practical learning.
- **Fewer hours per course and fewer participants per course**, indicating a fragmented and possibly less robust training offer.
- **Growth in digital delivery and microlearning**, which improves accessibility but needs to be monitored for learning effectiveness. These trends highlight the need for **indicators** beyond formal accreditation: such as hands-on training availability, completion rates, employability outcomes, and learner satisfaction.

National programs like the **New Skills Fund** and the use of **inter-professional training funds** are promoting:

- Digital and green skills;
- Company engagement;
- Modular, personalized training approaches.

These tools can support a **more dynamic QA model**, focused not only on regulatory compliance but also on **measurable outcomes and societal impact**.



Future reflections...

The relationship between **accreditation and quality in Vocational Education and Training (VET)** is based on a balance between **external evaluation** and **internal quality management**.

Accreditation represents an **external quality assurance mechanism**: it serves to verify that VET providers meet certain standards. However, it is not sufficient on its own. External evaluation **cannot replace** the internal monitoring and assessment carried out by the training institutions themselves.

The two approaches must complement each other: **accreditation provides top-down direction**, while **internal quality management enables continuous bottom-up improvement**.

Finally, in order to truly improve the quality of VET, it is essential that the process involves local stakeholders directly — **training providers, teachers, companies, and other local actors**. Only through **active and shared participation** will it be possible to meet European objectives and develop effective and sustainable VET systems.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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