

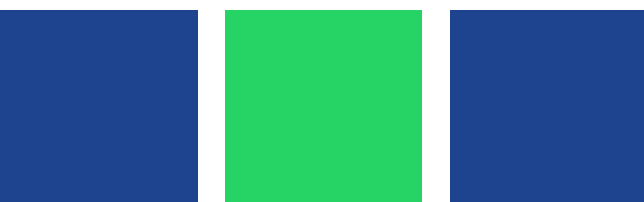
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# IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN PRIORITIES IN VET

Making national VET agile,  
flexible, innovative, attractive,  
inclusive and quality assured

## ITALY

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# Implementing European priorities in VET

Making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive,  
inclusive and quality-assured:  
Italy

**Thematic perspectives** provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

This thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems provided in [VET in Europe database](#) and the [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#). The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

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## CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Italian VET functions within a socio-economic context are characterised by multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance. To tackle recent socio-economic challenges, the country has adopted a holistic approach that considers the various aspects of social policies, labour and human capital development. There is a joint commitment among VET stakeholders to foster cooperation with the aim to deliver quality education and training as well as service accessibility to young people and adults.

Key strategic objectives in this context, include enhancing the adequacy and relevance of the educational and training services to meet labour market and societal needs. This involves ensuring the quality of these services by adhering to principles and criteria endorsed at the European level, while also promoting inclusivity and equity by making education and training more accessible to all citizens.

Furthermore, there's a focus on optimising available resources, avoiding duplications and operating within a framework of cooperation and subsidiarity between European and national funds.

Italy's national strategic documents and visions, and most recently the [National Implementation Plan \(NIP\)](#), align with the European priorities outlined in the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [the Osnabrück Declaration](#).

Italy's strategy for lifelong learning, consistent with EU guidelines, recognises individuals' right to lifelong learning across various life stages and contexts. This is seen as a strategic tool for enhancing individuals' knowledge, skills and competences, echoing the European vision of lifelong learning to address contemporary societal and labour market challenges. Italy also commits to fostering innovation in VET, supporting lifelong guidance, both for IVET and CVET learners, improving the relevance of training offer, and encouraging collaboration among various actors, in line with European directives.

Key challenges addressed in the Italian national context, in line with European priorities, include enhancing the relevance of education and training in relation to labour market opportunities, providing continuous guidance, targeting actions towards different groups such as young people, adults re-entering the labour market, and low-skilled workers, and effectively utilising tools for skill transparency and certification.

## CHAPTER 2. Main policy developments in 2023

### 2.1 Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market

The [2023 Employment Decree](#) <sup>(1)</sup> introduced several new provisions aimed at enhancing the design of [pathways for transversal skills and guidance](#) (PCTOs). These provisions include the appointment of a coordinating teacher; more specific regulations for the occupational safety

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<sup>(1)</sup> Decree-Law No 48 of 4 May 2023, converted, with amendments, into Law No 85 of 3 July 2023.

of students involved in PCTOs, extending the protection of the national insurance against accidents at work, managed by the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL), to encompass students and staff of the national education and training system, vocational tertiary training and higher education.

Furthermore, the 2023 Employment Decree strengthened the cooperation framework supporting the implementation of school-work exchange projects, particularly with the Alternation Register at the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Agriculture. Additionally, it introduced a platform that links the Ministry's information systems to the National School-to-work Alternation Registry, simplifying the process of matching supply and demand.

The NIP Measure 1, which supports innovation in VET (education sector) and accompanies the Reform of Technical and Vocational Institutes outlined in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) Mission 4, aims to enhance the flexibility of the training offer, in alignment with local needs to bridge the labour demand and supply gap. In this line, the Ministry of Education and Merit activated an experimental project for the establishment of a technological-professional training chain <sup>(2)</sup>, anticipating the forthcoming reform <sup>(3)</sup>.

Within the framework of the National Strategy for competences, the [New Skills Fund](#) was successful in terms of participation by enterprises. Through Union Agreements aimed at reducing working hours, based on skills upskilling pathway, the fund facilitated substantial training activities. The first call for applications in 2020-21, involved 6 700 enterprises and 375 000 workers, with a total amount of about 47 million hours of training (almost 50% of the applications accepted for funding concerned enterprises in the south and Islands, 30% in the north and 24% in the centre). Each worker participated in training activities lasting almost 110 hours. The participation of the regions was also crucial in the skills certification and transparency phase. The second announcement of 2022-23 included the intervention of the Interprofessional Funds, to finance the costs of training and to monitor the training plans, with a focus on the training needs connected to the green and digital transitions and including certification of competences through regional and national accredited/licensed bodies.

Moreover, article 19 of the 2023 Employment Decree increased the fund for new skills with both national (National Youth, Women and Employment Programme) and European funds (ESF+ and Complementary Operating Programme for Active Employment Policy Systems) to finance trade union agreements signed from 2023 onwards. This initiative aimed to upskill and reskill workers for the digital and green transition.

In line with the VET Recommendation, VET curricula, programme supplies and qualifications will undergo regular updates, facilitated by establishing and developing skills intelligence systems and strengthening analytical capacities for interpreting local Labour systems. As outlined in NIP Measure 3, which specifically targets the development of Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) tools, skills forecasting, labour market needs analysis for qualification design and training provision planning. The measure seeks to address the challenges of the Strategic Plan for Adult Skills by providing information hubs, services, and

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<sup>(2)</sup> Ministerial Decree No 240 of 7 December 2023.

<sup>(3)</sup> Draft law 'Establishment of the technological-professional training chain and revision of the discipline of behavioural assessment of students'.

tools to define upskilling and reskilling pathways and mitigate skills mismatch through improved intermediation capacities. These activities are built upon existing initiatives, such as the regional Labour Market Observatories and the national project Atlas of Work and Qualifications (Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni), as well as on statistical and needs analyses.

## 2.2 Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities

[Law No 92/2012](#) set the national system for validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences, regulating the structure and parties engaged, with a focus on transparency, usability and widespread access to validation and certification services (IVC).

Promotion of IVC processes was one of the three key intervention strategies within the NIP (Measure 6) targeting five primary issues: low qualification levels and functional illiteracy, inadequate digital skills proficiency, low participation rates in VET due to lack of appeal, horizontal and vertical mismatches and governance complexity. These challenges were strongly interconnected, stemming from various causes that affect different dimensions, including difficulties in integrating young people into employment, reintegration or career development of the older population, limited [citizenship participation](#), under evaluation and underutilization of education and training among low-skilled and low-qualified individuals.

In 2023, the first comprehensive monitoring of the National Skills Certification System (SNCC) showed that IVC services for competences at regional and autonomous province levels, while varying in levels of progress for some standards, were established in all administrations. In most cases, these services were active or in the implementation phase within the national framework of active labour market policies. The goal of the system, which aimed to provide open access to all citizens nationwide, will be fully achieved within the expected timelines set by various administrations.

Regarding the adoption of measures for providing information about IVC services, almost all regions and autonomous provinces (76%) have sections on their websites of institutional or regional agencies dedicated to disseminating information about the National Skills Certification System.

Regarding the implementation status of the identification and validation phase, a qualitative analysis showed that in ten regions/provinces <sup>(4)</sup> (48%) identification and validation services were operational, while in eight regions <sup>(5)</sup> (38%), the identification and validation phase was carried out with services under experimentation. In only three regions <sup>(6)</sup>, the services were inactive.

Regarding the implementation status of the competence certification procedure following a validation pathway for learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, in ten regions and autonomous provinces the service was fully operational (48%), while in eight regions <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>(4)</sup> Abruzzo, Basilicata, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia autonoma di Trento and Toscana.

<sup>(5)</sup> Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Marche, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Valle d'Aosta, Veneto and Umbria.

<sup>(6)</sup> Calabria, Campania and Molise.

<sup>(7)</sup> Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Marche, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto.

(38%) these services were under experimentation. In only three regions <sup>(8)</sup>, the IVC services were active only in certifying competences resulting from formal learning pathways. Seventeen regions and autonomous provinces <sup>(9)</sup> (81%) had a system for recognising training credits integrated into the IVC system.

The first monitoring of SNCC, as an overview of the implementation framework, showed that all regions and autonomous provinces integrated their own Qualifications Repository into the [National Framework of Regional Qualifications](#) (QNQR). Regarding unified regulatory frameworks for service use conditions, 18 out of a total of 22 regions/provinces fully comply, with three more in the implementation phase. Information on IVC services was in line with guidelines across regions/provinces with operational services. Staff qualifications for service provision were defined by 19 regions/provinces. Information system implementation varies, with several regions in the process of updating for national coordination. Nearly all regions/provinces aligned with administrative provisions, ensuring compliance with IVC process principles and minimum service delivery standards. Seventeen regions/provinces have published or are in the process of publishing lists of authorised entities, while four have yet to do so.

All the qualifications repositories of the regions and autonomous provinces were available online on regional websites. They were imported by the individual regions and autonomous provinces into the national repertoire within the QNQR framework and were accessed through the Atlas of Work and [Qualifications website](#).

The Atlas of Work and Qualifications collects and describes the world of work, qualifications and professions to provide all citizens and industry operators with a unique, precise and continuously updated tool. It aims to create a national collection of all educational, training and professional titles present in Italy.

In 2023, the Atlas of Work and Qualifications underwent content revision and the information for 71 new cases was updated. Additionally, the working group at INAPP conducted an in-depth analysis of the updated ISTAT Professional Code Classification ([Classificazione delle Professioni 2021](#)), effective from January 2023. Twelve professional economic sectors were updated, with updates affecting eight process sequences and 47 areas of activity, including eight newly created ones.

In June 2023, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies adopted the Italian Qualifications Referencing Report to the European Qualification Framework, to address gaps in the initial EQF Recommendation implementation phase. The report outlined theoretical and methodological foundations, aligning national objectives with the EQF and establishing criteria and procedures for referencing qualifications to the [QNQ/EQF](#). Many regional repertoires now include qualifications with EQF levels, forming the basis for implementing the referencing procedure for inclusion in the Italian QNQ/EQF Register.

## 2.3 Innovative and excellent VET

In 2022, Law No 99, introduced the Tertiary System of Higher Technological Education,

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<sup>(8)</sup> Calabria, Campania, and Molise.

<sup>(9)</sup> Abruzzo, Basilicata, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia autonoma di Trento, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto.



consisting of the ITS, created in 2008 and renamed into ITS Academies ([Higher Technological Institutes – Istituti Tecnologici Superiori](#)) ([ReferNet Italy](#); [Cedefop 2023](#)). The establishment of and support to the ITS Academies aims to drive policy developments in terms of innovative and excellent VET. The ITS system reform was considered as a milestone in the NRRP. It aims to consolidate ITS in the national system concerning the tertiary education level and to strengthen their active presence in the world of entrepreneurship mainly at local level. ITS are closely linked to local firms through various methods that ensure practical and job-oriented training. The ITS Foundations, which manage these institutes, are often chaired by representatives of the founding companies, ensuring that labour market needs are central to course planning. Collaborations with universities, research centres, and local entities allow for advanced and targeted training programs. Furthermore, most of the instructors come directly from the workforce, ensuring that students receive up-to-date and relevant training. It is noted that companies that invest in ITS can benefit from tax incentives, making these partnerships even more advantageous. This integrated system facilitates the professional integration of students and meets the needs of local businesses. Additionally, students must complete internships, a significant part of their training, often with opportunities abroad. All The operational and implementation aspects of the reform are being completed, through the gradual fulfilment of the provisions.

In 2023, a wide set of implementation Decrees <sup>(10)</sup> of Law No 99/2022 were launched to introduce the [Tertiary System of Higher Technological Education](#) in the Italian context.

In terms of innovative VET, the Ministerial Decree No 240 of 7 December 2023 created the necessary conditions for the implementation of a national experimentation project relating to the establishment of the technological-vocational training chain, which provides for the achievement of a four-year upper secondary education diploma (EQF 4) and the specialisation diploma for applied technologies at the end of the two-year ITS course (EQF 5), represented a relevant step forward for the national context.

## 2.4 Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision

In February 2023, Italy contributed to drafting the Compendium of Good Practices, an initiative by the G20 Countries, reporting on good practices of the National Plan for Digital Education (PNSD) and participated in the meeting of National Experts on School Resources organised by the OECD and the European Commission. In March 2023, the process for the identification of good practices was completed, after a consultation between the Ministry of Education and Merit and regional PNSD representatives and authorities, exchanging information about the regional aspects of the implementation of the PNSD.

The updated version of the PNSD, based on a [Technical Scientific Committee Report](#) (CTS Report) was subject to public consultation in May-June 2023 on 'ParteciPa', the national Open Government platform, also collecting contributions and suggestions from the school

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<sup>(10)</sup> Ministerial Decree No 87 of 17 May 2023; Ministerial Decree No 88 of 17 May 2023; Ministerial Decree No 89 of 17 May 2023; Ministerial Decree No 191 of 4 October 2023; Ministerial Decree No 203 of 20 October 2023; Ministerial Decree No 217 of 15 November 2023; Ministerial Decree No 227 of 30 November 2023; Ministerial Decree No 228 of 30 November 2023; Ministerial Decree No 229 of 30 November 2023; Ministerial Decree No 233 of 1 December 2023; Interministerial Decree No 235 of 5 December 2023; Ministerial Decree No 237 of 6 December 2023; Decree of the Minister of Education and Merit in agreement with the Minister of University and Research No 247 of 19 December 2023; Interministerial Decree No 246 of 19 December 2023; and Ministerial Decree No 259 of 30 December 2023.

world through a specific survey addressed to school directors, teachers and digital animators. The new plan, divided into three macro areas (didactics, innovation management and system actions), that will be accessible online, promotes collaboration and digital skills (DigComp 2.2) for personal development and active citizenship, in line with European recommendations and initiatives such as the Digital Decade Policy Programme.

The Operational Instructions, issued on 7 December 2023, guide selected schools serving as local training centres in the digital transition of their training system. These instructions assisted in designing and managing interventions under Investment 2.1 of Mission 4 - Component 1 of the NRRP. The interventions aimed to provide training for various school personnel (such as school leaders, administrative staff, teachers, and educational personnel) on digital transition in teaching and school organisation.

In line with the New Skills Plan (see also Section 2.5), the proposed pathway aims to maximise the usefulness of training for mobility and adaptation in the labour market. The 'guaranteed traceability of learning and its outcomes' is a significant added value. The main expected products include the prototype implementation of open badges or digitally signed credentials, testing these tools with various end beneficiaries (adults, NEETs, migrants, etc.) and drafting evaluation reports on the experiments. Expected results include the easy portability and storage of certificates, faster verification of qualifications, and a significant reduction in the burden of intermediate verifications.

## **2.5 Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities**

The [New Skills Plan](#) (Piano Nuove Competenze) launched in 2021 within the NRRP, aimed to enhance professional training, elevate skill levels among job seekers and facilitate job transitions. The plan consists of various initiatives and programmes, including the employability guarantee reform programme (GOL), designed to offer tailored pathways for job placement, training and retraining for long-term unemployed individuals, youth, women, and those aged 55 and above. In 2023, the Employment Decree introduced new measures of social and workplace inclusion, reviewing the so-called citizens' subsidy with a focus on training and learning to empower and promote the active inclusion of the more vulnerable groups. The initiative Support for Training and Labour (SFL) included measures of professional qualification through participation in projects of training and internship, professional requalification, active labour policies of all kinds and projects useful for the eligible persons and universal civil service. The Inclusion Allowance (ADI), combated poverty, fragility and social exclusion of the weaker community members through processes of social inclusion and training, occupation and active labour policies.

The Information System for Social and Labour Inclusion (SIISL), established in 2023, at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, and implemented by the National Institute for Social Security (INPS), aimed to facilitate the interoperability of all the digital platforms of the physical and legal entities registered to the social and labour system. The objective was to fully implement the Employment Decree by enabling the activation of customised skills enhancement and job search pathways for ADI and SFL beneficiaries. The SIISL platform was created within the procedure to facilitate job search and to identify training activities most

useful for the placement/retraining of beneficiaries. ADI beneficiaries aged 18 to 29, who haven't met their educational obligations to obtain a high school diploma or a vocational qualification by age 18, must show enrolment in an adult education course.

Applicants (for SFL and ADI) were called by the employment services to sign a personalised agreement after completing a digital activation agreement. This personalised agreement may involve enrolling in specific employment services and training programs outlined in the National Programme for the GOL.

## 2.6 VET underpinned by quality assurance

Following the indications of the EU Council Recommendation 2020 on VET, national VET policies are implemented with a quality assurance approach, aimed at a national quality assurance strategy, considering the EQAVET Framework and quality cycle, with the support of the Italian National Reference Point, hosted by INAPP.

The Italian Reference Point follows the EU priorities on quality assurance in VET, as set in the VET Recommendation and Osnabrück Declaration, at national, regional, and local levels through its functions and activities.

Particularly, a strategic measure in the national context, is the experimentation of the EQAVET Peer Review methodology at system level with a first piloting that took place at [national level](#) in 2022 and in 2024 the start of a second experimentation at regional level that will end in 2025.

In the Italian context, national quality assurance measures aim at improving the VET system and VET-related issues encompassing accreditation of VET providers, apprenticeship programmes and the dual system. Italy has implemented a national quality plan for VET, focusing on the [accreditation of VET providers](#) as a key instrument to ensure quality. This plan involves continuous dialogue among decision-makers, experts, and stakeholders to assess and improve the quality of training supply. Furthermore, Italy has adopted the dual system, which integrates classroom learning with practical work experience. This system is supported by quality assurance measures to ensure that both the educational and practical components meet high standards.

Through the dissemination of the EQAVET Peer Review methodology at system and provider level, actions are undertaken to underpin (self-)evaluation, developing quality assurance in both IVET and CVET as well as work-based learning and strengthening quality assurance of qualifications.

## CHAPTER 3. Involvement of VET stakeholders in the implementation of policy developments related to NIP

With the Joint Unified Conference Agreement of 20 December 2012, the Interinstitutional Table on Lifelong Learning (TIAP) was established. This was a major step in creating a cohesive, multi-institutional approach to lifelong learning in Italy. Its governance role focuses on harmonizing policies across national, regional, and local levels, ensuring strategic alignment with EU directives, and enhancing both economic and social outcomes through

lifelong learning.

The governance role of the Unified Conference Agreement through TIAP is to serve as a centralised platform to guide, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of lifelong learning policies. TIAP operates under the oversight of the Unified Conference, a high-level body that includes representatives from the national government, regional councils, and local administrations. This body is responsible for ensuring that policies enacted at different governmental levels align with national strategies and European Union recommendations, such as those from the European Commission on lifelong learning and upskilling.

A key element in TIAP's establishment was to respond to European Union directives and recommendations related to lifelong learning, which emphasise employability, adaptability, and social cohesion. By integrating policies across institutions, TIAP supports Italy's commitment to EU targets and benchmarks, such as reducing early school leaving, increasing adult participation in training, and improving vocational education. The TIAP enables the participation of both national and regional actors that play a key role in terms of policies and strategies related to education and training. Among the different national and regional authorities, the TIAP involves the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education and Merit, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Regions and the local authorities. It also makes use of experts from national agencies and research bodies based on the topics covered from time to time.

The TIAP has the task, among others, to develop proposals for the definition of minimum standards and strategic lines of intervention regarding services for lifelong learning and the organisation of local networks. The local networks for lifelong learning constitute the supporting structures of the lifelong learning system. They include the set of education, training and work services linked to strategies for economic growth, access to work for young people, welfare reform, active ageing, and the exercise of active citizenship, including by immigrants. The networks, therefore, represent the institutional places responsible for 'taking charge of adults' and here the citizens can access integrated services. Among others, universities, businesses, chambers of commerce, industry, crafts and agriculture, as well as employment centres, social partners and local authorities contribute to the development of local networks for lifelong learning.

Among its founding mandates, the TIAP has the observation of how policies linked to lifelong learning are implemented and for this purpose, it assumes a strategic role in setting up ad hoc technical groups, by identifying experts and managers among its members, to whom to entrust tasks related to the monitoring and evaluation of relevant national plans and programmes.

Moreover, the TIAP constitutes a table which, in addition to its institutional monitoring functions, also assumes the role of supporting and fostering a continuous and structured dialogue between the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the national priorities linked to VET policies.

In general, involving VET stakeholders in implementing policy developments related to the NIP is a key aspect of national governance. Consequently, active participation from stakeholders at the local level is also required.

At the local level, the need to foster and support closer collaboration between

stakeholders represents one of the quality elements of the interventions envisaged by the NIP and is at the same time one of its most significant areas of implementation challenges.

## CHAPTER 4. Achievements of implementation

In recent years, Italy has significantly progressed towards the VET priorities set by the European Union. Key achievements have been instrumental in enhancing the quality of VET and promoting inclusion and employability among citizens.

A notable area of advancement lies in the customisation of training paths. Italy has implemented measures to define and regularly update individual training projects for students, aimed at recognising and enhancing their skills in both formal and informal learning contexts. The customisation of training paths is crucial to ensure effective learning adapted to the individual needs of students and to enhance the quality of VET.

Another crucial aspect of progress involves the enhancement of Identification, Validation and Certification (IVC) services. These services are vital for ensuring access to training and employment opportunities for all citizens, enabling their fundamental right for training and fostering employability. This process helps individuals, including those with prior work experience or informal education, to gain formal qualifications. IVC services enhance employability, support lifelong learning, and facilitate the customization of training paths to meet individual needs.

Furthermore, Italy has promoted the creation of regional networks and strategic partnerships to facilitate cooperation among various institutional and socio-economic actors at local level. These partnerships contribute to effective governance of lifelong learning by facilitating an understanding and interpretation of local labour market needs and promoting multi-level and multi-actor governance.

Another significant achievement is the promotion of digital skills. Italy has intensified training in digital skills to meet the growing demands in today's labour market. This initiative aims to equip citizens with the necessary skills to navigate digital transformations, ensuring their inclusion in the labour market. One notable example of Italy's efforts to promote digital skills is the [National Strategy for Digital Skills](#). This strategy aims to bridge the digital divide and support digital inclusion by enhancing e-skills across various sectors. It includes initiatives to develop digital competencies in higher education, the active workforce, and among citizens.

Another example is the 'Repubblica Digitale' initiative, which promotes digital skills at all levels of the Italian economy and society. This multi-stakeholder initiative involves over 120 organisations and has launched more than 130 projects to improve digital literacy.

The main factors of success that have made these advances possible at contributed to the better alignment, compared to the past, of the national actions with the priorities established at European level, as highlighted in the Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration. This has helped to guide interventions towards common and shared goals. Enhanced collaboration among educational institutions, businesses, local entities, and other key actors played a crucial role in fostering effective and sustainable initiatives through the construction of regional networks and strategic partnerships aimed at sharing resources and best practices. For example, the initiative 'Pact for Skills' aims to foster effective and sustainable partnerships by sharing resources and best practices, contributing significantly to

the development of regional networks and strategic collaborations.

Regarding the development of social and labour policies in Italy, the programming approach has changed significantly to respond more effectively to challenges that emerged during the pandemic crisis, focusing on greater flexibility, resilience, and customisation, to adapt policies to a rapidly changing socio-economic context. Key changes include the reinforcement of local employment services, making them more homogeneous and capable of supporting structural economic reforms and a personalised approach to active labour policies, considering the specific needs and situations of workers, particularly the most vulnerable ones. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the structural and structured linkage of active policies with the labour market, to promote greater integration and coherence between policies and market needs, and on the necessity of regional planning and monitoring to verify expected results and policy effectiveness.

The NRRP plays a pivotal role in planning social and labour policies in Italy, directing investments and reforms needed to strengthen policies, promoting employability, vocational training, adjustment to labour market needs, and the resilience of the country's economic and social system. The NRRP also promotes the revision of the governance of the vocational training system in Italy through the adoption of the 'National New Skills Plan' in 2021. A key goal is to maintain coherence with European objectives: the NRRP aligns with the strategic goals of the European Union, particularly regarding the promotion of social inclusion, the creation of quality work, and the advancement of training and education.

Current policies and reforms aim to strengthen active labour policies, vocational training and VET governance. These measures aim, on one hand, to support the employability of transitioning workers and the unemployed through the expansion of active labour policy measures, with particular attention to vocational training and job placement; on the other hand, to promote the revision of the governance of the vocational training system through the National New Skills Plan, ensuring a training supply aligned with the labour market needs. This plan represents a commitment by the Italian government to define essential levels of education and vocational training, coordinating measures in upskilling and reskilling aimed at fostering professional mobility and increasing business competitiveness. The plan envisages also the enhancement of the dual system, which promotes the acquisition of new skills by young people through school-work alternation and dual apprenticeship contracts. Measures include aligning technical and vocational education offerings with market needs, particularly regarding skills related to digital, green, and environmental sustainability transitions.

Finally, it is worth noting: the reform of professional institutes (2017), which has involved radical changes to the educational and organisational structure of professional institutes, to personalise the educational supply based on labour market needs and adapt learning to the individual needs of students; the relaunch of the integrated local networks of education, training and employment services, which includes the array of public and private services linked to strategies for economic, employment, social and personal growth, to expand the audience of beneficiaries of lifelong learning services and facilitating job placement.

## CHAPTER 5. Challenges of implementation

The EU Recommendations and the priorities set at the European and national level have

accelerated and reinforced the process of reform and modernisation of the Italian VET system. Despite the definition of priorities, policies and strategies and their implementation phases, the challenges remain. First, the governance of the system and the stakeholders' commitment to collaborate and cooperate in the implementation of VET and VET-related policies, at national, regional and local levels, are strengthening.

Since interventions from the policymakers and decision-makers are registered concerning all the European priorities, the most challenging aspect is connected to the coordination of the policies, avoiding redundancies in specific fields, allowing a good allocation of the resources available.

The coordination of all the involved stakeholders who are called upon in the territories to carry out this implementation function and the anchoring to the forecast scenarios of the skills and training needs local, are essential conditions for avoiding delays and obstacles related to the efficient allocation and reallocation of financial resources, in a system which is, as described in the previous chapters, in a continuous, profound and rapid transformation.

The role in the reform and its implementation through the NRRP and other programmes is pivotal, especially in terms of financial resources. Therefore, it is also important to consider the challenges related to both the implementation and the conclusion of the NRRP and other funding schemes.

The need to achieve various alignments (between stakeholders, programmes, plans, financing, etc.) also arises with an element of attention regarding the innovation and development activities of the system and directly involves all Programmes, including those promoted by the European Union, which absolutely must overcome the risk of being reduced to mere formal requirements.

## CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

In 2023, Italy achieved significant progress in education and vocational training, focusing on adaptability, innovation, inclusiveness and digitalisation of the VET education system. Various initiatives were implemented to address these aspects effectively.

Regarding adaptability, the Labour Decree 2023 introduced provisions for cross-skilling and guidance pathways, promoting alignment with labour market needs. This integration between education and work environments enabled young people to acquire skills matching labour market demands. Additionally, the validation of non-formal and informal skills enhanced transparency and accessibility to certification services, boosting workers' professional growth and employability.

The establishment of the ITS Academies was a notable step towards innovative vocational training policies. It enhanced young people's technical and technological skills, making them more competitive in the labour market. The National Plan for Digital Education further promoted digital skills development, ensuring citizens' preparedness for the digital transformation era and active participation in society.

Moreover, funding aimed at promoting social and work inclusion reduced inequalities and boosted the employability of disadvantaged groups. These measures aim to provide equal

opportunities for access to training and work, fostering social cohesion and sustainable growth.

To overcome challenges in implementing education and vocational training policies, collaborative efforts, effective governance, policy coordination and efficient resource use are essential. Better governance and collaboration among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels can be facilitated through coordination platforms, exchange of good practices, and shared monitoring mechanisms.

To ensure efficient resource allocation and avoid overlaps, coordination of different education and training policies is crucial. This includes defining common goals, creating synergies among programmes, and adopting integrated approaches aligned with European and national priorities. Effective use of available financial resources, especially through programmes like the NRRP, requires careful planning and management.

Additionally, ongoing training and development of digital skills among education and training professionals are vital for supporting the system's digital transformation and innovation. Looking ahead to 2024-25, measures such as robust monitoring and evaluation systems, ongoing training for sectoral operators, enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, and promotion of innovation and digitalisation will further strengthen the VET system in Italy. These efforts aim to ensure the system's effectiveness and relevance in addressing the evolving economic and social landscape.

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

ADI	Assegno di inclusione (Inclusion Allowance)
CTS	Comitato Tecnico Scientifico (Technical Scientific Committee)
GOL	Garanzia Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (Worker Employability Guarantee)
INAIL	Istituto Nazionale Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro (National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work)
INAPP	Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche (Italian National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies)
INPS	Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale (National Institute for Social Security)
ISTAT	Istituto nazionale di statistica (Italian National Institute of Statistics)
ITS	Istituti Tecnici Superiori (Higher Technical Institutes)
IVC	Individuazione Validazione e Certificazione delle Competenze (Identification, Validation and Certification)
PCTO	Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento (Pathways for Transversal Skills and Orientation)
PNRR	Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (National Recovery and Resilience Plan)
PNSD	Pian Nazionale Scuola Digitale (National Implementation Plan)
QNQ	Quadro Nazionale delle Qualifiche (National Framework of Qualifications)
QNQR	Quadro Nazionale delle Qualifiche Regionali (National Framework of Regional Qualifications)
SFL	Supporto formazione e lavoro (Support for Training and Labour)
SIISL	Sistema Informativo per l'Inclusione Sociale e Lavorativa (Information System for Social and Labour Inclusion)
SNCC	Sistema Nazionale di Certificazione delle Competenze (National Competency Certification System)
TIAP	Tavolo Interistituzionale sull'Apprendimento Permanente (Interinstitutional Roundtable on Lifelong Learning)