

## IT-Implementation of the EU Agenda for Adult Learning 2024-2025 Project

Project: 101144098 – IT-AL AGENDA 24-25 – ERASMUS-EDU-2023-AL-AGENDA-IBA

### Project description

#### Background and general objectives

The project proposal was conceived trying to identify what could have been the most concrete contribution that the project activities could have made with respect to the broad themes, priorities and raised in the Call. The skills ecosystem in Italy is characterized by a large, multilevel and multiactor governance: by consequence, to respect the **first priority** “...supporting relevant actors joining forces for common actions for adult learning...”, It was necessary to identify the type of accompanying interventions most requested both from the context and from the needs that the various actors could manifest.

During several meetings with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and Merit, it was concluded that policy advice was no longer as necessary as it had been at the time of drafting the national ESF+ plans, the Measures contained in the NRRP and, above all, in the definition of the NIP of the VET Recommendation and the Osnabruck Declaration. As is known, in fact, especially in the case of the preparation of the NIP, the National coordinator was directly involved in its drafting, working in close cooperation with Ministries, Regions, Social Partners and Representatives of the third sector.

Rather, in the next two years it will be necessary to move from the planning phase to that of implementation, that is, it will be necessary to concretely substantiate what is currently foreseen within new legal frameworks and intervention plans. *Not only is implementation crucial, but monitoring it is critical.*

Finally, many of the actions that are currently starting are characterized by innovation and the operators called to implement them need upskilling and reskilling pathways to do so effectively. For this reason the actions included in **WP1** (“Implementation of priorities on increasing adult participation”) are focused on highly operational objectives and are not limited to mere communication and awareness-raising activities, however planned (as the organisation of a national adult learning conference and EYS). Increasing participation does not only mean promoting existing educational services, but also preparing operators to use processes and tools that accompany new students to enter flexible educational and training pathways, trying to reach them and attract them with a more personalized VET supply adapted to their needs. This objective will be mainly achieved by organizing workshops and training courses for CPIA teachers engaged in the validation of skills.

As regards the **second Priority** (“Promoting increased adult participation in learning and addressing the needs of the green and digital transition”), the activities will essentially concern actions to enhance and disseminate the results of the relevant measures contained in the NIP and in the capitalization of the results of the activities of some interventions that have just been concluded (with particular reference to those deriving from the EaSI - Value project Chain Competitiveness, which has not only made it possible to adapt the EU Digicomp 2.1 standard to the national regulatory framework governing the certification of skills, but above all has allowed the concrete design of modular and flexible training courses for the training of basic digital skills that in some cases are already used by Training Providers). **With regard to Priority 3** (“Supporting adult learning at the workplace and innovative learning environments”) it is believed that the main activity (carried out under **WP3**) should consist in highlighting how Skills for life and, in general, non-cognitive and transversal skills, are crucial to increase not only employability but also to reduce the phenomena of social exclusion and lack of participation in working life. This can take place during events, which will be prepared and focused on ad hoc documents and analyses carried out (for example, the analyses may concern all the actions carried out in the CPIAs to develop these skills, or verify the presence of relevant contents within the collective labour agreements in the most important production sectors).

Finally, it was considered that with respect to **priority 4** (*Dissemination Strategy and activities at EU level*)

it is necessary to promote as much as possible a joint action between the different national coordinators, capable of complementing and strengthening the results resulting from participation in transnational events and seminars. The exchange of practices and

experiences will therefore also take place during an articulated action of study visits and preparation of joint reports (WP4). The action will undoubtedly benefit from the fact that the national coordinator is also a member of the Adult Learning Working group of the EEA Strategic framework and has recently been directly involved in the national coordination in support of the EYS.

## **Needs analysis and specific objectives**

Main policies and data are presented below thus contributing to define the context in which both the definition of the specific objectives and the selection of the interventions envisaged in the proposal are located.

The last two years have been characterized by an intense programming and planning of national policies on VET and adult learning accompanied by a particularly significant dimension of financial investments planned to support it. The policy making and design in the field of active labour market policies has been characterized by the constant increase in interinstitutional dialogue with all socio-economic actors in various capacities participating in multi-actor and multilevel governance operating in policy relevant sectors. This has led to the adoption of shared principles, the identification of more clearly defined strategic and operational objectives with the definition of implementation responsibilities, the achievement of better levels of consistency between different policies. In other words, with particular emphasis on VET issues, programming has evolved from a summative model of fragmented interventions towards a holistic approach that - starting from a strategic and multi-year vision - was better able to take charge of the complexity of phenomena and challenges. The IT National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) is the programming act in which the discontinuity described above finds immediate evidence.

To strengthen skills, with a view to consolidating the transition to a knowledge-based economy, investments in upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning activities are planned within the NRRP, which aim to restart productivity growth and improve the competitiveness of Italian SMEs and micro-enterprises. Training and the improvement of skills, in particular digital, technical and scientific ones, play a decisive role in encouraging and accompanying the mobility of workers - and citizens, in general - and providing them with the skills to meet the future challenges of the labor market.

Within the PNRR, some lines of action are identified to strengthen active labour market policies, vocational training and the strengthening of the national education system:

1. promote the revision of the governance of the vocational training system in Italy, through the adoption of the "National New Skills Plan (PNNC)";
2. support the employability of workers in transition and the unemployed, through the extension of active labour market policy measures, as part of the new national Programme for the "Employability of Workers Guarantee" (GOL);
3. Strengthening the dual system
4. adaptation of the supply of technical and vocational education to the demand for skills coming from the productive fabric of the country, in particular for skills related to the digital, ecological and environmental sustainability transition.

The implementation of what is planned - and briefly described above - is strongly interconnected with the implementation of the Extraordinary Plan for the strengthening of employment centers and active labour policies. In the case of the ESF+ National Programs - "Youth, women and employment", "School and skills" and "Inclusion and fight against poverty" - which therefore insist on all categories of regions on these themes, the logic of intervention is inspired both by the need to directly promote people through individual capacitation actions, and by the realization of "system actions" aimed at testing and developing intervention models that promote homogeneity of performance and result (standard) throughout the national territory.

The data on the consistency of functional illiteracy of the Italian population must be read in association with the evidence relating to the participation of citizens in the educational and training offer. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant reduction in the level of adult participation in lifelong learning in Europe. The trend in the rate of adult participation in education and training in Europe had declined considerably, after showing signs of growth in recent years.

According to the latest available data (Eurostat - LFS), the propensity of EU citizens to invest in their skills is showing important signs of growth, although it is still too low. After 2020, in fact, positive rebounds have occurred almost everywhere in the countries of the European Union. But after the good performance recorded in 2021, with an increase in

the participation rate compared to 2020 - from 7.2, moreover after years of stagnation, to 9.9, in 2022 (last available data) there is a new decrease, not excessively significant, but worrying if compared to the progressive expansion of the training offer that has occurred in the meantime.

Tab. 1 - Adult participation in learning by sex (Total)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Union - 27	10,6	10,8	9,1	10,8	11,9
Italy	8,1	8,1	7,2	9,9	9,6

Fonte: Eurostat - LFS

Participation in adult education and training is certainly influenced by individual socio-demographic characteristics. Those who participate most in learning are younger, have more years of education and are employed in more skilled occupations.

The chances of being involved in training activities are lower among those who are poorly educated (see Tabs 2, 3 and 4) are over 45 years old and are poorly qualified.

Tab. 2 - At most lower secondary educational attainment  
Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)  
From 25 to 64 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Union - 27	22,2	21,6	21,0	20,9	20,5
Italy	38,3	37,8	37,1	37,3	37,0

Source of data: Eurostat - LFS

Tab. 3 - Population by educational attainment level, sex and age  
Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)

TIME	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Union - 27	74.841,4	73.007,9	70.962,3	70.585,3	70.191,4
Italy	15.541,7	15.299,4	14.938,8	14.727,6	14.475,2

Source of data: Eurostat - LFS

Tab. 4 - At least upper secondary educational attainment  
Age group 25-64 (Total)

TIME	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Union - 27	77,8	78,4	79,0	79,1	79,5
Italy	61,7	62,2	62,9	62,7	63,0

Source of data: Eurostat - LFS

It is quite evident how much the educational level achieved and the possession of basic skills by citizens influence, and condition, performance related to employment conditions.

The most recent Eurostat-LFS surveys show that there is still an important gap between Italy (67.3) and the EU27 average (74.2) compared to the employment rate of those who have an educational level attributable to an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary school qualification (Isced 3-4).

Tab. 5 - Employment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level (%) - Confronto Italia - UE27  
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4) - From 20 to 64 years

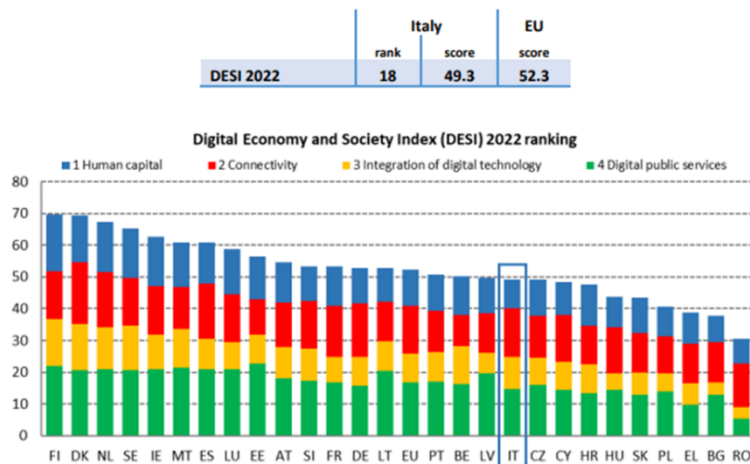
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Union - 27	72,8	73,4	72,1	72,7	74,2
Italy	65,7	66,3	65,1	65,1	67,3

Fonte: Eurostat - LFS

A particular focus of attention should be placed on the issue of digital skills needs (basic and advanced) of the Italian population. The availability of recent data on the subject, traceable in the DESI 2022 Report and in the specific in-depth analysis on Italy, allows a brief presentation of this specific criticality and the size of the challenge that education and training systems are called to face in the short term (see Fig. 3).

Briefly, also in 2022 Italy ranks 25th of 27 EU countries for what concerns the Human Capital component of the Index and only 46% of people have at least basic digital skills. Only 1.4% of Italian graduates study ICT programmes where just the 15% of Italian enterprises provide ICT training to their employees.

Fig. 1 - DESI 2022 ranking



**PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Concept and methodology

As requested, the relevance elements of the project and the methodology and approach adopted with the Quality criterion as described in the Call are below illustrated:

**A) logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept)**

The links between main problems and the project lines of intervention are clarified in the table below:

Issue/problem	Project intervention
fragmented governance - need to improve the dialogue between different members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ facilitation to improve the quality of relationship among the diverse governance components</li> <li>✓ support with data, analysis, recommendations to existing Network (formal/non formal)</li> <li>✓ support to draft the strategy for the EYS</li> <li>✓ active participation in the Interinstitutional Table for Life long learning</li> </ul>
lack of updated information on policies implementation	Support in monitoring the implementation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ National Strategic Plan on Skills for adult population;</li> <li>✓ NIP for VET Recommendation and Osnabruck declaration</li> </ul>
Irrelevance of proposed activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Close cooperation with NA (project planning and support in NIP monitoring)</li> <li>✓ Co-realization of activities and continuous monitoring of project activities (action shared with Ministries)</li> </ul>

**B) methodology for implementing the project (concept & methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks & risk management, monitoring and evaluation)**

The guiding principle of the work-program is the maximum sharing and transparency of processes and results between the whole community (institutional and non-institutional) involved in the field of adult learning. From an organizational point of view, the project provides for the strengthening and enhancement of existing networks and their relations. These networks are generally homogeneous in terms of membership (the CPIA and CRRoS network, the RUIAP university network, the third sector network - National Forum, the interprofessional fund network, etc.), but which are in great need of reducing their self-referentiality and confronting each other and the institutions in a more "open mind" way. The National Coordinator and his staff are already members of all these organizations, and this will facilitate the process of rapprochement and dialogue, also through the

organization of more structured meeting events or training activities on specific topics. From a methodological point of view, an alternating and functional use of research techniques that provide both on field and desk activities, followed by shared validation actions of the results of these surveys (in particular, those concerning Skills for life) will be implemented.

As far as management procedures are concerned, they are described in more detail in 2.1.2. As far as the approach is concerned, however, the envisaged monitoring and assessment activity is borrowed from Quality Management Standard procedures, whose purpose is to continuously verify the state of the work and the achievement of project interim and final objectives. The main aim is therefore to identify possible gaps between what was planned and what has been achieved, be aware of possible risks, quickly and effectively apply preventive and corrective actions, realign specific activities in order to guarantee the achievement of planned objectives. In this sense, the Quality Management is closely connected with Resource Management and its main actions aims at guaranteeing the following: process transparency; awareness of general objectives and roles among all project partners; possibility of measuring the achieved results; prevention of non-conformity risks; variance management.

### **C) feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame**

The possibility of operating on a two-year basis guarantees the feasibility of the proposed activities, the realization of the planned products and the achievement of the identified objectives. This is also possible because, unlike previous projects, the Inapp team has been expanded and now provides a composition capable of ensuring greater coverage of all the competences necessary to ensure the performance of all the activities envisaged. However, it will be necessary to use external services to carry out some activities planned in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and merit both for the actions foreseen and illustrated in WP 1 and for the analysis foreseen in WP3

### **Outside resources**

In general terms, Inapp has most of the skills necessary for the implementation of the planned actions.

Nevertheless, it is considered useful to be able to make use of a collaboration with a school that acts as leader of the national network of research and development centers and that is currently already coordinating a work promoted by the Ministry of Education and Merit concerning the development of innovative processes and tools for skills assessment and validation. The project provides for the further development of this activity accompanied by an action to upskill the teachers operating in the 130 CPIAs to make the best use of the produced outputs (WP 1 - Task 1, 2 and 3).

In addition, to support the same activity it may be necessary to involve in the same Task a national expert in skills assessment methodologies.

It is also envisaged the contracting of a national expert for the analysis of the contents of collective labour agreements, in order to identify in the various articles those relevant to the development of basic and transversal skills, where they are provided for. This expert will also be in charge of interacting with representatives of the social partners to enrich, through interviews, the report provided for in WP3 that concerns this issue.

### **Work plan**

Work package	Main activities	Duration (from month to month)
WP 1 Implementation of priorities on increasing adult participation in learning and addressing the needs of the green and digital transition	This WP includes actions aimed at increasing the availability of courses of trusted quality, guidance, validation and the flexibility of learning offer, including by micro-credentials. These activities have been planned in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Merit and concern the improvement of the effectiveness of the processes of recognition and validation of incoming skills of adult students who enrol in CPIAs.	M3 to M18
WP 2 Support relevant actors joining forces for common actions for adult learning, in	The activities concern both project management issues and way of cooperation with stakeholders in order to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of all policies affecting adult skills, increase visibility and understanding of	M1 to M24

<p>line with the objectives of the EU initiatives "Pact for Skills" and national skills strategies</p>	<p>European policies and opportunities in the field, work with stakeholders to secure their commitment to increase adult participation in learning and on actions that are geared towards widening flexibility and access and work with national authorities to ensure that adult learning provision is evidence-based, comprehensive, accessible and effective.</p>	
<p>WP 3 Supporting learning at the workplace and innovative learning environments for developing skills</p>	<p>under WP3 should consist in highlighting how Skills for life and, in general, non-cognitive and transversal skills, are crucial to increase not only employability but also to reduce the phenomena of social exclusion and lack of participation in working life. This can take place during events - open to the participation of learning centres, libraries, the wider community and civil society - to promote the development of skills for life which will be prepared and focused on ad hoc documents and analyses carried out (for example, the analyses may concern all the actions carried out in the CPIAs to develop these skills or verify the presence of relevant contents within the collective labour agreements in the most important production sectors).</p>	<p>M1 to M14</p>
<p>WP 4 Dissemination Strategy and activities at EU level</p>	<p>Activities in this WP will be aimed to guarantee the active participation at stakeholder meetings, conferences or seminars, especially at regional level, to awareness raising, supporting national debates and dialogue on adult learning policies, and to ensure the largest dissemination and acquisition of knowledge about good practices in adult learning policymaking. The participation in up to 5 meetings (online and/or face to face) per year organized by the Agency, the Commission or another National Coordinator will be ensured. Two cycles of transnational study visits will be organized in cooperation with BE and FR colleagues.</p>	<p>M1 to M24</p>