





# Sustainable cooperation of VET providers and enterprise for improving graduates' employability

#### SUCCESS

# **National Report: Italy**

# 1. Executive Summary:

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Italy is organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, social partners, regions, autonomous provinces and companies. Training courses are identified and implemented at regional or provincial level, but there is a national quality control office. TVET are financed by the State on the one hand, and by companies on the other. Learners can start TVET from teenage years (upper secondary) through to post-secondary and higher education. After each of these levels, learners can opt to continue their studies or enter the job market directly. These bridges are a great opportunity for learners. In addition, learners can take part in paid internships, apprenticeships and dual training courses. All these measures contribute to making TVET attractive to young people and adults alike, in view of its contribution to the development of the human capital essential to the competitiveness of businesses and the socio-economic development of individuals and the country.





#### 2. Introduction:

Technical education and vocational training are an essential component of human capital development for the socio-economic development of individuals and countries. They enable learners to acquire technical and practical skills that are directly applicable in the workplace. From this point of view, technical education and vocational training are an essential factor in the fight against unemployment and the promotion of decent employment for young people and adults.

Technical education and vocational training contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises by providing them with a skilled and competent workforce. To achieve this, technical education and vocational training must be in line with current needs and trends in the labour market and be based on a dynamic collaboration between schools and companies.

As part of the European Union funded SUCCESS project, this study examines the organization and management of technical education and vocational training in Italy. It focuses on the collaborative relationship between technical and vocational education schools and companies in Italy.

#### 3. Methodology:

To conduct our work on models of cooperation between technical and vocational education and training (TVET) providers and companies in Italy, we used a literature review. This methodology provides an overview of the subject of TVET in Italy, and raises the issues faced by TVET. It also encourages further research on the subject.







We have opted for articles and documents published after 2015, as the current reform of TVET in Italy was initiated in 2015<sup>1</sup>. This choice is intended to be in line with the current state of TVET in Italy. We used mainly papers published on Google Scholar, Euroguidance, Cedefop european database on apprenticeship schemes and other sources of information.

#### 4. Types of Cooperation Models:

In terms of models of collaboration between technical and vocational schools and companies, we can distinguish several models, ranging from the least engaging to the most structured.

### 1) Training internships

Young people or adults undergoing training at a technical and vocational education and training center either seek out an internship with a company themselves, or obtain one through their training center. This internship is generally of relatively short duration. As stipulated by Italian law, this internship is remunerated. The minimum amount that the employer must pay the trainee depends on the region where the internship takes place. Each Italian region sets a different minimum wage, which can vary from 300 to 800 euros per month.

#### 2) Apprenticeship in Italy

The national apprenticeship system is one of the main education and training policy instruments used to upskill and integrate young people in the labour market.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Italy, Organization of the education system and of its structure: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/italy/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure





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"Apprenticeship in Italy designates a work contract with a specific training purpose; it includes both on-the-job and classroom training. The regions and autonomous provinces, together with social partners, are responsible for the definition of the training component and its implementation. The national collective labour agreements or inter-sectors agreements regulate apprenticeships in detail, with the obligation to respect some general principles. The apprenticeship contract, which is distinct from other work-based learning forms in TVET (such as internships), must be drafted in written form, defining the roles and responsibilities of all parties, as well as the terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, the probationary period, the occupation tasks, wage increases, both the entry and final grade levels, and the qualification to be obtained<sup>2</sup>".

In the case of apprenticeship, the training programme is an integral part of the contract. Both the contract and the training programme must be signed by the employer and the apprentice. Since apprentices are considered employees, they are entitled to insurance benefits for job injuries and accidents, occupational diseases, health reasons, ageing and disability, maternity, household allowance and, since 2013, labour social security insurance<sup>3</sup>.

The apprenticeship system includes three types of contract:

• Type 1 - (apprendistato per la qualifica e il diploma professionale, il diploma di istruzione secondaria superior e il certificato di specializzazione tecnica superior). This apprenticeship is designed for young people aged 15 to 25 enrolled in three- or four-year school-based regional TVET programmes and post-secondary higher technical (IFTS) programmes in view to acquire the corresponding qualifications, as well as to take up the examination for entry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Apprenticeship: <a href="https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3">https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3</a>

<sup>3</sup> Idem

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to higher technological tertiary education. The labour ministry has the overall coordination of Type 1- apprenticeship implementation strategies, regulations and activities at national level, also through dedicated bodies<sup>4</sup>.

- Type 2 (apprendistato professionalizzante): professionalisation apprenticeship, for young people aged 18 to 29, which is enterprise-based. It is targeted at young people but also adult workers who have been made redundant. It has a training component, which is marginal: a maximum 120 hours in three years, to be carried out inside or outside the company. No qualification from the formal education system is awarded upon completion, but the apprentice can become a skilled worker by acquiring a contractual qualification defined and recognised by collective labour agreements<sup>5</sup>.
- Type 3 Higher education and research apprenticeship, for young people aged 18-29, which leads to a university degree or fulfils requirements for carrying out research or compulsory traineeship to access liberal professions<sup>6</sup>.

In Italy, there is a National Technical Board for Apprenticeship that coordinates and technically supports apprenticeship programmes at national level. Its main functions include developing guidelines, monitoring and evaluating apprenticeship programmes, as well as promoting this type of job placement. It is made up of representatives from various ministries, regions, social partners and sector experts<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Apprenticeship: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Idem

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Idem

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Idem





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# 3) The dual system in TVET

"The apprenticeship system -mainly types 1 and 3 leading to formal education qualifications- was reformed (2015) and has been gradually redesigned by the competent national authorities in cooperation with the regions and autonomous provinces. The National Institute of Public Policy Analysis (INAPP) monitors the dual system in IVET, in collaboration with the Regions<sup>8</sup>". The dual system is fully supported by the Ministry of Labor through policy making, coordination and financial support.

In Italy, the dual system of Vocational Education and Training (IeFP) and Higher Techniques (IFTS) is supported by three structural tools linked to apprenticeship contracts.

- Type 1 Apprenticeship allows young people (15-25 years) to obtain professional qualifications by combining school training and business practice.
- Type 2 Apprenticeship (18-29 years) focuses on the acquisition of specific technical-professional skills, strengthening the connection between training and work.
- Type-3 Apprenticeship (18-29 years) allows to obtain higher education qualifications, alternating study and work, facilitating the transition to the world of work through concrete work experiences<sup>9</sup>.

These tools are essential to implement the dual system in Italy.

EACEA can be held responsible for them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Apprenticeship: <a href="https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3">https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3</a>
<sup>9</sup> Idem

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# 5. Analysis of Best Practices:

There are many successful strategies and innovative approaches that foster effective collaboration between TVET providers and companies in Italy.

# 1. Organization of technical education and vocational training in Italy

In Italy, technical education and vocational training are available from the upper secondary level. In 2019, the number of students in vocational courses represented 54% of the total number of students in upper secondary education 10. That figure shows how important and how appealing is technical and vocational trainining in Italy.

Technical education and vocational training in Italy is organized into three types depending on the target audience and objective 11. Students can access to initial vocational training once they have completed lower secondary education. So, they can obtain diplomas or certificates at EQF level 3 or 4. These qualifications allow them to enter the job market and/or continue their studies. We would like to highlight that EQF means European Qualifications Framework. The three types of vocational training in Italy are:

- Type 1: this refers to training leading to qualifications, diplomas or attestations at upper secondary and post-secondary levels. These qualifications, diplomas or attestations are:
- Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale: This attestation grants a professional qualification at level EQF 3. It takes three years to obtain. The holders can continue their studies or enter the job market.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> La formation professionnelle en Italie: <u>https://www.euroguidance-france.org/actualites/la-</u> <u>formation-professionnelle-en-italie/</u>

<sup>11</sup> Idem





- Diploma professionale di tecnico: This is a level EQF4 diploma that gives the status of professional technician. It takes four years to complete and enables students to continue their post-secondary studies at EQF4 level, or to enter the job market.
- Technical education diplomas: These are EQF 4 diplomas, which take five years to complete. They allow students to continue their studies at a higher level (EQF 5).
- **Type 2:** this is a training leading to professional qualifications (*Apprendistato* professionalizzante).
- Type 3: this training in higher education/teaching and research, for higher-level qualifications and/or diplomas (Apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca).

The minimum age for training is 15 for type 1, and 18 for types 2 and 3.

For type 1, apprentices sign a contract that makes them both employees and students. As such, they enjoy the benefits associated with this status (wages set by collective bargaining agreements, social security, etc.). In Italy, several incentive mechanisms are in place to encourage apprenticeships <sup>12</sup>.

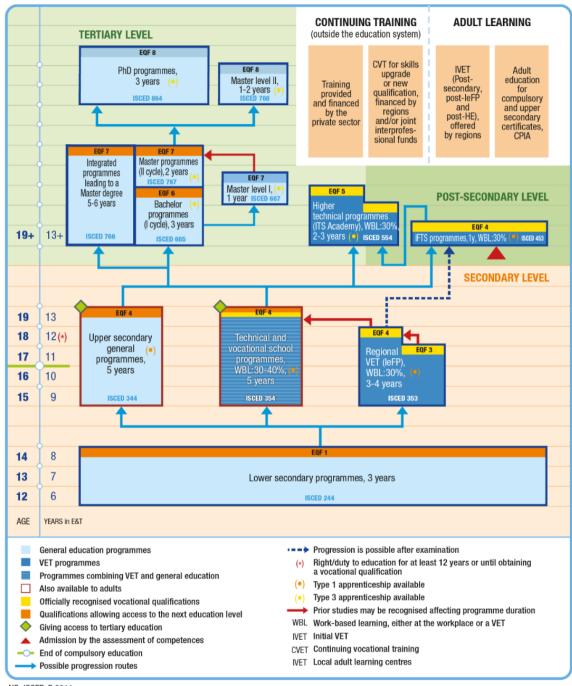
The signing of a type 2 apprenticeship following a type 1 apprenticeship opens the way to a deduction in social security contributions for employers. Periods of alternation between the training school and the company vary from region to region, depending on the program and the company's capacity to take on apprentices <sup>13</sup>. The following table shows perfectly the organization of vocational training in Italy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>La formation professionnelle en Italie: <u>https://www.euroguidance-france.org/actualites/la-formation-professionnelle-en-italie/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> idem







NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Italy: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3

### Ilustración 1: Organization of vocational training in Italy







# 2. Key actors of technical and vocational education and training system in Italy

The key actors of the technical and vocational education and training in Italy are the public agencies and private agencies. In fact, the State plays a key role through the Ministries of Education and Labor, by setting the general principles for TVET.

Then, the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies, that mission is to monitor continuing education, technical training and apprenticeships, intervenes for monitoring, control and evaluation.

Other key actors are the regions and autonomous provinces which have the power to legislate on vocational training and are responsible at local level for implementing vocational training policies. In fact, each region and autonomous province, depending on its economic realities, prioritizes the skills to be developed through technical education and vocational training to meet the needs of the local job market. So, the role of the regions and the autonomous provinces is very important.

Then, the last but not the least, the social partners that are mainly the companies and the unions. Their role is crucial because they make recommendations on the design of employment and vocational training. As the other actors, the social partners are also involved in financing the technical and vocational education and training in Italy.

#### 3. Financing technical and vocational education and training in Italy

In Italy, the State is a key provider of financial resources for financing the technical and vocational education and training. Everyear, through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, the State distributes to the regions and the autonomous





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provinces around 15 million euros for apprenticeships. The amount is allocated in proportion to the number of apprentices in their jurisdiction. But the companies also contribute to financing the TVET in Italy. In fact, the companies must pay a contribution of 0.3% of payroll to the Institute for Social Security (Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale - INPS) to finance continuing training<sup>14</sup>.

# 4. Quality assurance for technical and vocational education and training in Italy

In a decentralized technical and vocational education and training system, it is important to have a quality reference system to ensure that the quality of training is guaranteed throughout the country. That's why in Italy, two structures are in charge of quality assurance. These are:

- The National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI), which coordinates the evaluation of technical and vocational education and training by defining objective indicators to assess the quality of the training system.
- The National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Research in Education (INDIRE), whose role is to improve the education system by training teaching staff.

#### 6. Impact on Students and Entrepreneurs:

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the cooperation models for both students and enterprises.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>La formation professionnelle en Italie: <u>https://www.euroguidance-france.org/actualites/la-formation-professionnelle-en-italie/</u>





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The impact of collaboration between TVET providers and companies on students is manifold. For the purposes of this study, we can highlight a few points of impact:

- The possibility for learners to start TVET training at an early age (upper secondary school) or later (adult age).
- The gateway always offered after each level of training (upper secondary, post-secondary, higher education) to join the job market or continue TVET.
   This TVET-Employment-TVET gateway is a great opportunity for learners.
- The possibility of studying while working, which enhances the acquisition of practical skills while ensuring the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. What's more, learners benefit from remuneration for practical work in the company, as well as payment of their training costs at the school. This is a great incentive for TVET learners.
- The learners benefit from public (State) and private (company) funding for their training.
- Several measures have therefore been implemented to make TVET highly attractive. For example, in 2019, 54% of upper secondary school students in Italy were enrolled in TVET courses.
- Territorial Adaptability: TVETs respond to local labor market needs, facilitating job placement.
- Practical Learning: A strong hands-on component and workshops that help students acquire operational skills.
- Collaboration with Businesses: Partnerships with local companies for internships and apprenticeships, which improve students' employability.
- Skills Certification: A national system that ensures transparency and European-level recognition of qualifications.







Regarding the impact on the enterprises, we could mention a few:

- The involvement of the enterprises in defining the talents needed in each region or autonomous province and in setting the correspondent training required.
- The enterprises also receive public funding for internships, apprenticeships and dual training promotion. In fact, the enterprises, even if they contribute financially, they receive a financial support from the state for implementing TVET at the regional and provincial levels.
- The enterprises benefits from the talents of the students at reduced cost that is even sponsored by the state.

However, there are some challenges such as:

- Regional disparities in terms of training offer and qualification recognition.
- Low attractiveness, as vocational education is often perceived as less prestigious compared to academic or university pathways.
- Limited mobility, meaning it is difficult to transfer qualifications between regions due to a lack of uniform national standards.

### 7. Level of Scalability:

African partners can learn a lot from the Italian models of TVET and companies' collaboration. We can mention a few potential learnings:

- TVET is well organized and structured, with bridges between trainingemployment-training.
- TVET is open to learners from an early age through to adulthood.





- Talent needs are identified at regional and autonomous province level, in consultation with businesses and public decision-makers.
- TVET is financed by the State and companies.
- Learners can attend a TVET school and work in a company at the same time and receive salaries in addition to their training costs.
- As TVET is highly decentralized, a national quality control office has been set up.

#### 8. Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that technical education and vocational training in Italy is very well organized, involving the national government, the regions, the autonomous provinces, companies and trade unions. The law organizing technical education and vocational training in Italy structures this essential aspect of human capital preparation very well. Funding for technical education and vocational training in Italy is provided by the central government, the regions, the autonomous provinces and companies. Collaboration between technical education and vocational training schools is organized by law, enabling internships, apprenticeships and dual training. It should be noted that, in accordance with Italian law, all these models of collaboration between training schools and companies give rise to paid internships.

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#### 9. References:

Here is a complete list of the sources used (academic articles, reports, sector studies).

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