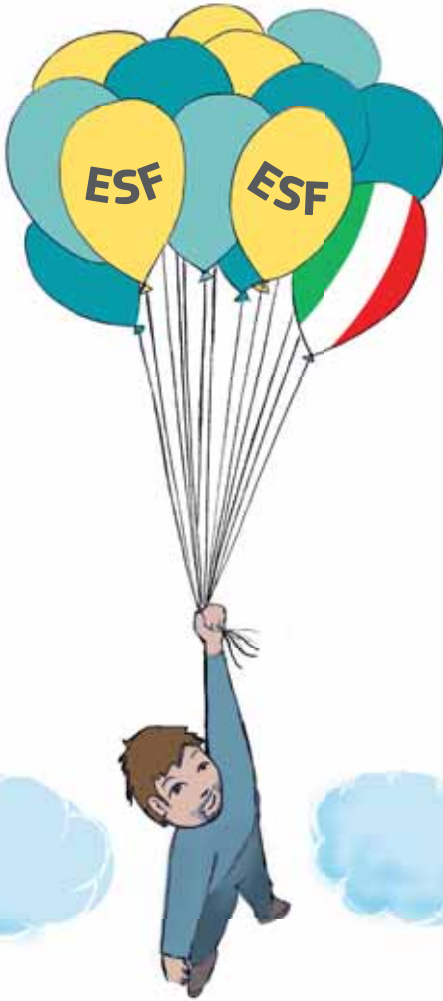




European
Commission



ITALY

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Italy is supporting job creation in its many successful SMEs by giving workers the skills they need to improve competitiveness and boost export-led performance. ESF funding is also focusing on helping more women and people from disadvantaged groups into work, while building stronger entrepreneurial links between universities, graduate students and industry.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITALY

At the core of Italy's economic policy is the intention to increase the competitiveness and productivity of its workforce. To achieve this, Italy needs to improve workers skills such that they can benefit from the move to more productive and innovation-led industrial sectors. For this, the school and university system needs strengthening and must offer the training and skills people require to find better jobs.

*“More young people
in work”*

As part of this effort, Italy aims to reduce its school drop-out rate to less than 16% and increase the number of young people with tertiary qualifications to 40% by 2020. Better R&D performance and well-qualified graduates are needed to support the many Italian SMEs which – although generally strong exporters – they often lack the technical and management skills to grow and create more jobs. Italy also needs to get more young people into work – especially in the south of the country

which lags in jobs and skills compared to the north. To remove other bottlenecks to economic growth, it must also help more women and older workers into jobs – with training and other measures – as part of a move towards more inclusive labour markets. By 2020, Italy aims to have 2.2 million fewer people in the at-risk-of-poverty group, and training and skills accompanied by help in overcoming obstacles to work are integral to achieving this target.

ESF spending in Italy

For 2007–2013, Italy is receiving EUR 6.9 billion in ESF funding. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to EUR 15.3 billion, the second highest in Europe. Italian ESF programmes are targeting the adaptability of companies and workers, the education, training and employability of individuals at all levels, and improving social inclusion of vulnerable groups. There are also programmes for transnational employment projects and for enhancing public administration in the south of the country.



ITALY'S ESF PRIORITIES

More adaptable and employable workers

In the Italian regions, the ESF is supporting a wide range of projects to protect jobs and help the unemployed back to work – indeed, close to 2 million people have already participated in such activities. An example is Piedmont's employment initiative which is supporting jobs for young people and adults through in-house training and apprenticeships – with a focus on female employment.

“More than 2 million participants”

Elsewhere, projects are helping more women get jobs through wage support for employers and activities to help balance work and home commitments – such as with childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements. One example is the childcare voucher system for working parents in the Emilia-Romagna region. Immigrants who need the language and citizenship skills to get jobs are another focus of ESF activities, such as the training courses in professional restaurant and hotel skills offered in Turin to improve their job prospects and help them integrate into Italian society. And the northern South Tyrol region is helping its mountain communities with projects to build sustainable communities and employment and help more women into higher education – aimed at reversing the emigration of its qualified citizens.

Linking learning and labour

Many projects are addressing the transition from the world of education and training into the workplace by promoting skills development and partnerships with companies in vocational training activities. For example, wide-scale projects run by the Ministry of Education are providing thousands of students in southern regions with opportunities for traineeships in companies and language training. Constant monitoring of skills gaps in Italy's regions and economic sectors is driving projects for work placements and training where they are needed most. A project for improving the professionalism, marketing skills and language abilities of tourist guides in the Liguria region is one example of this, while training for 500 additional cruise-operator staff to crew new Italian-built cruise ships is another.

Many projects are boosting university education and links to industry. For example, EUR 46 million in subsidies is available to companies and research centres in Sicily for postgraduate studies, industrial R&D and internships – designed to boost the region's innovation performance and retain its young talent. And Tuscany is using ESF funding to send its postgraduate students for academic courses and internships in Silicon Valley in California – with the aim of building vital innovation and technology skills in the Tuscan region. Another example is training in renewable energy systems for graduates in the Ascoli Piceno region that supports job creation and the region's SME expertise in photovoltaic-system manufacturing.

THE ESF IN ITALY: SOME EXAMPLES

Bright ideas take off

In Umbria, the 'Ideas' project launched by the regional research agency gave promising young entrepreneurs a flying start. Potential businessmen and women with bright ideas for innovative products and services were able to spend six months in successful companies in France, Spain, Denmark and Sweden, among other countries. The purpose was to give them first-hand experience of good practice in innovation and entrepreneurship and then to bring this knowledge back to Umbria. The expertise gained covered a wide range of sectors, such as pharmaceuticals and tourism.

Holding fast to young people

To support Italy's world-beating musical tradition and culture, the Pergolese Spontini Foundation launched the 'Sipario' project to train people for jobs in the performing arts of music and theatre. Thirteen vocational training courses, covering skills such as singing, dance and orchestral conducting, were provided to over 150 young people from across Europe. Backstage skills, such as costume design, lighting and scenography, were also covered, and after taking part in musical productions, many of the participants were helped to find jobs in the creative sector in Italy.

Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Italy?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

Then visit the ESF website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/italy>

