



**Directorate General of Immigration and Integration Policies**

**GUIDELINES**

**IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES FOR VOCATIONAL AND CIVIC-LINGUISTIC TRAINING PROGRAMS  
AND CRITERIA FOR THEIR EVALUATION**

**pursuant to Article 23 of Legislative Decree No. 286 of July 25, 1998 (Consolidated Immigration  
Act) as amended by Law Decree 20/2023,  
converted with amendments by Law 50 of May 5 2023**

**Document approved on June 23 2023  
by the Services Conference  
convened by Directorial Decree No. 17 of March 30 2023**

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## **Foreword**

*These Guidelines represent the framework for the planning and implementation of vocational and civic-linguistic training programs in Non-EU countries, pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 1 letter c) of Law Decree No. 20 of March 10 2023, converted with amendments by Law No. 50 of May 5, 2023, amending Article 23 of Legislative Decree No. 286 of July 25, 1998.*

*The Guidelines also apply with reference to Article 34 of Presidential Decree No. 394 of August 31, 1999, Implementing Regulation of Legislative Decree No. 286 of July 25, 1998.*

*The following sources have been considered in the drafting the Guidelines:*

- *Council Recommendation of 20th December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01).*
- *Council Recommendation of May 22, 2018, on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01).*
- *Legislative Decree No. 81/2008, as amended and supplemented, Consolidated Act on the Protection of Health and Safety in the Workplace.*
- *Legislative Decree No. 13 of January 16, 2013. Definition of general standards and essential levels of performance for the identification and validation of nonformal and informal learning and minimum service standards of the national system of certification of competencies, pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 58 and 68, of Law No. 92 of June 28, 2012;*
- *Guidelines of March 12, 2015, Annex B.1 "Pathways to literacy and Italian language learning - Declination of learning outcomes into competencies, knowledge and skills" and Annex C "Guidelines for the design of the civic education and information session" pursuant to Article 3 of Presidential Decree 179/2011.*
- *Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of January 5, 2021, "Provisions for the adoption of guidelines for the interoperability of public entities responsible for the national system of skills certification".*
- *"National Strategic Plan for the Development of Competencies of the Adult Population" approved in the Unified Conference with the Agreement Repertory Acts No. 79/CU of July 8, 2021, pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 2, letter c) of Legislative Decree No. 281 of August 28, 1997.*
- *Interministerial Decree of December 7, 2021, Art. 4, c. 1, letter a) on language certification as part of applications for residence permits.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

After the jobs crisis of 2020 following the pandemic (-3.1% of employed people), the last two years recorded a slight recovery (+0.8%) in a labour market that appears, to date, to be highly segmented, with sectors or jobs characterized by a massive presence of immigrant workers (both male and female workers).

Foreign workers in Italy have almost reached pre-Covid levels: data<sup>1</sup> referring to 2022 show that 2,374,000 are foreign workers accounting for 10.3% of the total employed population. Two-thirds are non-EU nationals, 58.3% are male, and 62% are workers, craftsman, and unskilled personnel. Only 8.2% of foreign workers are employed in skilled and technical occupations.

Of the foreign workers present in Italy, 69.9% come from non-European countries and 30.1% from European Union countries. As for the production sectors, *Construction* has driven the labour market recovery for both Italians and migrant workers with an increase of 232,000 employed from 2019 to 2022. As well as for the Italians, most migrant workers work in *Services* (44%).

However, the presence of migrant workers is also significant in *Trade, Tourism* (hotels and restaurants) and *Industry*. In some sectors, the incidence of migrant workers exceeds the overall average of 10.3%, like in *Agriculture* and in *Construction* at 17.7% and 15.6%, respectively.

With reference to the employment rate, it is observed a quite wide disparity between male migrant workers and female migrant workers employment rate, that outpaces the Italian employment gender gap. Just 47.5% of working age female migrant workers are employed (Italian female workers employment rate is 51.5% in 2022), with a gap of about 30% compared to male workers, whose employment rate is 74.9%. This disparity can take on extremely alarming proportions, with employment rates among women dropping below 10% in some communities.

In addition, the data show migrants are more likely to be compelled to work in low-skilled jobs: 28.9% migrant workers are employed in unskilled jobs as blue-collar and 14.2% as craftsman.

Therefore, attention should be paid to two main issues: lack of social mobility, and the dispersion of human capital. It is well known that skilled migrant workers engage in unskilled jobs at a higher rate than Italians. In 2021, the share of overqualified non-EU workers was 67.1%, a value that, among European countries, was surpassed only by Greece. There is also a wide gender gap, with the rate for non-EU female workers being 6.3 percentage points higher. This situation is linked to several factors: language deficiencies, poor knowledge of the territory, the need for a job in order to renew residence permits, and the lack of a family support network resulting in greater difficulty in rejecting job offers not in line with their own skills.

However, the Italian production system has a constant need for manpower. As showed by the high number of applications submitted following the latest Flows Decree 2022 - Prime Ministerial Decree of December 29, 2022 – when more than 250,000 applications came in while only 82,705 entry quotas were available.

This need for manpower is further confirmed by the *Excelsior Survey*'s estimates on employment trends: for the five-year period between 2022-2026, a total employment need of 4.1 to 4.5 million workers is expected, 1.3 to 1.7 million of which are induced by economic growth. In relative terms, this is a contribution between 31% - 38%, resulting from the impact of the various interventions provided by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRP) under the Next Generation EU fund and financed by the European Union.

In particular, the survey shows that:

- The need for employees over the five-year period, resulting from the need to replace

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<sup>1</sup>XII Annual Report on the Economics of Immigration "L'italia della resilienza e i nuovi italiani" Leone Moretta Foundation and XII Annual Report "Foreigners in the Labour Market in Italy" published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

outgoing staff due to natural turnover, will exceed 2.8 million, confirming the consideration of the demographic aging in determining future employment needs.

- For *Trade and Tourism*, demand is estimated at 750,000 - 860,000 employees in the next five years following a two-year period of severe downturn. Other sectors with large employees' needs are *Education and Culture* (515,000 - 553,000), *Health* (498,000 - 502,000) and *Construction and Infrastructure* (339,000 - 376,000). In particular, Industrial sectors will experience intense employment growth due to the driving force of NRP investments.
- Green and digital transition processes will have a significant effect on the labour market, as green skills will be increasingly demanded in various sectors and occupational profiles. The need for people with basic digital skills is estimated at 2.1 to 2.3 million, while the demand for people with at least two high-level digital skills is estimated at 875,000 - 960,000.

Lastly, estimates show a significant mismatch between the supply and demand of labour for vocational education and training. The overall educational offer will only be able to meet about 60% of the potential demand, with especially critical predictions for logistics, construction, and mechanical specializations.

In order to cope with the shortage of personnel it will be necessary to attract the right skills to Europe<sup>2</sup> and to Italy by investing in vocational education and training, improving skills through strategic collaborations with countries of origin - or countries of first asylum or transit for refugees<sup>3</sup> - and with relevant economic and employer actors. These interventions can help improving the overall management of migration by providing legal alternatives through entry pathways for employment and training that also take into account a combination of personal characteristics such as gender, age, and/or the presence of specific vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, strengthening legal entry pathways for employment and training is one of the objectives of the European package of legal, operational and policy initiatives called "Attracting Skills & Talent to the EU"<sup>4</sup>, consistent with the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021 - 2027<sup>5</sup> and the European Year of Skills 2023<sup>6</sup>.

## DEFINITIONS

"Vocational and civic-linguistic training programs" consist of projects aimed at the implementation of training activities, for which these Guidelines define implementation modes, as well as criteria for their evaluation.

"Vocational courses/paths" refer to training activities aimed at providing specific skills and

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<sup>2</sup> [State of the Union address](#) delivered by President Von der Leyen in September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Since the 2016 New York Declaration, the international community has highlighted the promotion of ad hoc channels for working refugees as a response to the crises that have affected many countries in recent years, and subsequently, under the Global Compact on Refugees (December 2018), it has taken responsibility for increasing complementary channels of entry in an organized, systematic, and sustainable manner for refugees. The European Commission itself, in the new Compact on Migration and Asylum and in the Recommendation of September 23, 2020, recommended implementing new complementary pathways for the safe and orderly entry and protection of refugees and persons in need of international protection, such as study and work programs.

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_2654](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2654)

<sup>5</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files\\_en?file=2020-11/action\\_plan\\_on\\_integration\\_and\\_inclusion\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files_en?file=2020-11/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=10431&>

knowledge, including notions of safety and health protection in the workplace<sup>7</sup>, for the practice of a given profession or work activity and/or for the recognition of a professional qualification<sup>8</sup>.

"Civic-linguistic training courses" refer to training courses aimed at providing participants with the linguistic and civic skills necessary to ensure a better integration into the socio-cultural and working environment in Italy.

## GOALS

These Guidelines define implementation modes and set criteria for the evaluation, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (henceforth MLPS), of vocational and civic-linguistic training programs in countries of origin or countries of first asylum or transit for refugees, pursuant to Article 23 of Legislative Decree No. 286/1998, as amended by Law No. 50 of May 5, 2023.

In addition, these Guidelines may also serve as a reference for the vocational and civic-linguistic training programs referred to in Paragraph 4-ter of the same Article 3.

## SUBJECTS INVOLVED

### APPLICANTS

The following actors, individually or in partnership, can apply for the "vocational and civic-linguistic training programs":

- a. Regions and Autonomous Provinces and their instrumental bodies.
- b. Local authorities, their unions and consortia, as listed in Article 2 of Legislative Decree No. 267/2000 or their individual articulations, provided they have organizational and financial autonomy.
- c. National employers' organizations and trade unions comparatively more representative at the national level, as well as their own associations and articulations.
- d. Joint bodies and bilateral bodies, set up by the comparatively most representative national employers' organizations and trade unions at the national level.
- e. International and intergovernmental organizations.
- f. Civil society organizations and other non-profit entities registered in the List published and periodically updated by the Italian Cooperation Agency pursuant to Article 26 paragraph 3 of Law No. 125/2014.
- g. Non-profit associations or other private entities (entities, foundations, social cooperatives, non-profit organizations, etc.) enrolled in the Register of Associations and Entities engaged

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<sup>7</sup> Legislative Decree No. 81/2008, as amended and supplemented, Consolidated Act on the Protection of Health and Safety in the Workplace.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that Pathways for the Guarantee of Competencies of the Adult Population, as defined in the Guidelines issued by the Minister of Education, protocol no. 25084 of October 5, 2022, and in paragraph 3.2 of the National Strategic Plan for the Development of Competencies of the Adult Population (agreement in the Unified Conference of July 8, 2021 - repertoire acts no. 79/CU) are functional to vocational training programs. The Pathways are provided by the Provincial Centres for Adult Education for a duration of at least 50 hours, with reference to the ones aimed at developing basic and advanced level language skills.

in activities in favour of immigrants, pursuant to Article 42 paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree No. 286 of July 25/1998 (Consolidated Immigration Act), as amended and supplemented.

- h. Third Sector entities registered in the Single National Register of the Third Sector (*Registro Unico Nazionale del Terzo Settore* - RUNTS).
- i. Public and private operators accredited to carry out employment services, pursuant to Legislative Decree 276/2003 and Legislative Decree 150/2015.
- j. Bodies, accredited by individual Regions/Autonomous Provinces, to carry out vocational training and employment services activities pursuant to Decree No. 166 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of May 25, 2001.
- k. Universities and Research Institutes; ITS Academy pursuant to Law No.99, July 15, 2022.
- l. Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA), pursuant to Presidential Decree 263/2012 and Decree March 12, 2015.

In the case of a partnership, together with one or more of the subjects listed above, the participation of additional subjects in the initiatives is also allowed, subject to a documented declaration of compatibility of the corporate or statutory purposes with the activity foreseen in the program, as well as the absence of any causes of impediment on their part and their representatives, with respect to the activity of the program itself.

The presence in the partnership of subjects in the above letters **C**, **D** and/or **L** is a preference criterion in the approval process. It will, in addition, be positively evaluated:

- The involvement, as "Affiliated Party", of the Italian Diplomatic Representations in the countries where the training projects will be implemented. The affiliation of the diplomatic-consular Mission will be attested through the subscription, with a handwritten or digital signature, of the "Declaration of Affiliation of the Diplomatic Representation" according to the attached FORM 5;
- The involvement in the partnership of one or more public and/or private entities, operating in the country of implementation of the training programs.

With reference to the involvement of the subjects referred to in letter L, it will be, also, positively evaluated the involvement of Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA) in the project governance and in the implementation of activities of the civic-linguistic training pathway, the entry into Italy and the paths of the Guarantee of Competences<sup>9</sup>. As a entitled entity, the CPIA will be able to recognize the trainees, as a result of a process of Identification and Evaluation of Competencies following the entry, the skills acquired in order to obtain a valid qualification.

#### **RECIPIENTS OF VOCATIONAL AND CIVIC-LINGUISTIC TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Under these Guidelines, foreign nationals residing in third countries, and/or stateless and refugee foreigners present in third countries of first asylum or transit are recipients of the vocational and civic-linguistic training courses.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

## MAIN CONTENTS OF VOCATIONAL AND CIVIC-LINGUISTIC TRAINING COURSES

The training paths proposed must be aimed to providing skills consistent with the "Atlas of Work and Qualifications"<sup>10</sup> and with the purposes of job placement and the development of productive and/or entrepreneurial activities, as provided for by Article 23, paragraph 2, letters a), b), c) of Legislative Decree no. 286 of July 25, 1998 (Consolidation Immigration Act) and subsequent amendments and supplements.

These courses must necessarily include Italian language with an exam certifying the achievement of at least level A1, as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages contained in Recommendation R(98) 6 issued by the Council of Ministers on March 17, 1998 and elements of civic education<sup>11</sup>, with the acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution, the organisation and functioning of public institutions and the Italian socio-cultural context.

The certificate issued as a result of the A1 level<sup>12</sup> can be recognised by the CPIA for the purpose of completing the training path in Italy for the achievement of the A2 level and in case the acquisition of a qualification, in the perspective of continuous learning, improving human capital and supporting employability.

The vocational training path will also have to include notions of labour and workers' rights and elements of health and safety in the workplace<sup>13</sup>, as well as sector vocabulary, and provide work orientation sessions for the enhancement of transversal skills and support for active job search. The path should include both theoretical and practical training and be constructed on the basis of learning objectives expressed in competences.

Training may be delivered with the combined use of different teaching methodologies (frontal lesson, remote learning - FAD, other). In the courses co-designed with the subjects referred to in letter L of the preceding paragraph, the CPIAs may take care of the civic-linguistic training part to be delivered in remote learning, according to the indications of Annex C "Guidelines for the design of civic and information training sessions", Article 3 of Presidential Decree 179/2011.

## IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

At the end of each course, candidates must be issued with a final certificate of learning:

- As for vocational training, skills acquired in the training course will be tested in a final examination. Those who successfully complete the final examination will be issued with a certificate of attendance, indicating the knowledge and skills acquired, referring to the Economic and Professional Sectors (SEPs) and to the Activity Areas (ADAs) into which the "Atlas of Work and Qualifications" (a classification and information device supporting the National Directory of Education and Training Titles and Professional Qualifications) is divided.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/>

<sup>11</sup> For language training, please refer to the Guidelines of March 12, 2015, Annex B.1 " Pathways to literacy and Italian language learning - Declination of learning outcomes into competencies, knowledge and skills".

<sup>12</sup> With reference to civic education, please refer to Annex C "Guidelines for the design of the civic education and information session", referred to in Article 3 of Presidential Decree 179/2011.

<sup>13</sup> Please refer to Legislative Decree 81/2008 as amended, Consolidation Act on the protection of health and safety in the workplace.

- As for civic-linguistic training, the attainment of at least the language level A1<sup>14</sup>, to be ascertained by passing an Italian language proficiency test organised by the training provider and structured in accordance with the parameters adopted by the certification bodies referred to in Article 4, Paragraph 1, Letter A of the Interministerial Decree of December 7, 2021.

Alternatively, attainment of language level A1 may be attested through the issuing or presentation of one of the documents specified below:

- Certification of the level of knowledge, issued by one of the recognised certifying bodies, in accordance with article 4, section 1, letter A) of the Interministerial Decree of December 7, 2021, or by other entities that have an agreement with the aforementioned certifying bodies, in accordance with the current regulations.
- A certificate indicating the level of knowledge of the Italian language, issued by an Italian Cultural Institute, if present.

Before starting the training activities, the proposing parties must ensure that adequate information is provided on the opportunities offered by the training courses, and during the implementation phase the participants must be informed of any job offers, applicable contractual conditions and the types of entry<sup>15</sup>.

The proposing parties undertake to promptly notify the MLPS of any changes with respect to the approved programme and to send a final report at the end of the training programme. It will be the responsibility of the MLPS to monitor, on a sample basis, the programs, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements established by these Guidelines.

## PROGRAM PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

The programs, prepared by the proposing entities, must necessarily contain:

### I. Identification of labour demand

Definition of professional profiles and relative employment sectors, based on an accurate analysis of needs regarding the national and territorial production context of reference, as well as to internationalisation requirements, carried out with the involvement of the social partners and the requesting employers during the planning stage.

### II. Selection of the recipients of training activities

Procedures for the selection of recipients, candidates for admission to Italy for work reasons, based on the criteria of maximum transparency and equal opportunities, in compliance with current regulations in Italy and in Non-EU country, concerning the selection and recruitment of workers.

For selection purposes, the involvement of one or more local partners, preferably public (including the Italian Chambers of Commerce abroad (CCIE) and Italian-foreign Chambers of

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<sup>14</sup> See footnote 9 above.

<sup>15</sup> The procedures provided for in Article 3 co. 2-bis and 4-ter of Law 50/2023 are understood to refer to the provisions of Article 22 of Legislative Decree 286/1998 and Article 30-bis of Presidential Decree 394/1999.

Commerce), in the country concerned is desirable<sup>16</sup>.

The lists of those selected and trained (and subsequently the lists of those who have completed the training), drawn up according to the attached FORM 7, must be transmitted to the MLPS.

- III. Detailed information on the vocational and civic-linguistic training activities, specifying the duration and the expected starting date, as well as the envisaged teaching methods (lectures, remote learning, professional workshops, etc.) and the tools for the certification of the learning outcomes, including innovative ones (e.g. open badges).
- IV. Indication of the implementing subject (applicant) and of the details of the person designated as the educational/organisational manager of the course, with a description of the experience gained in the organisation of training programs.
- V. Indication of the human resources involved, specifying skills and experience in relevant training areas (vocational and civic-linguistic).
- VI. Indication of the instrumental resources used to carry out the activity and the availability of suitable operational teaching sites in the country of intervention.
- VII. Arrangements for coordination with local institutions and/or other public/private entities.
- VIII. Sources of funding used to carry out the activities.
- IX. Ways of involving Italian companies, to guarantee an effective match between labour demand and supply and for the job placement of the trainees.
- X. Provision of a qualitative and quantitative evaluation and monitoring plan of the proposed pathway.

The requirement set out in point VIII is aimed at ensuring compliance with the prohibition of charges on participants. To this end, it is absolutely forbidden for the proposing subjects to demand or, in any case, to receive remuneration from the recipients of training activities, either directly or indirectly.

## CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION AND APPROVAL

The Applicant will prepare and submit the vocational and civic-linguistic training programme to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies - Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies, who will examine the proposal according to the following evaluation criteria:

- a. Design area, relating to the subjective requirements of the applicant, the proposal's compliance with the purposes of art. 23 paragraph 2, letters a), b), c) of Legislative Decree no. 286 of July 25, 1998, as amended, the relevance of the partnership, the ability to implement the intervention and aspects relating to the financial plan.
- b. Labour area, concerning the relevance of the activated paths in relation to the precise identification of the labour demand and the nature of the employment relationship with reference to the sector, the territory, and the professional profile.
- c. Training area, concerning the organisational structure of the path, their hourly structure and overall duration; the monitoring actions included, the evaluation and completion of the

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<sup>16</sup> Foreign Chambers of Commerce recognised in accordance with Law no. 518 of July 1, 1970 and Italian-foreign Chambers of Commerce registered in the Register referred to in Art. 22 of Law no. 580 of December 29, 1993.

training path, as well as the adoption of innovative tools and methodologies.

## **TERRITORIAL SCOPE**

The vocational and civic-linguistic training programs referred to in these Guidelines, must be launched and implemented in the territory of one or more non-EU countries.

During the assessment of the training programs, the consistency of the proposed activities with the productive vocation of the territories in which they are to be implemented may be emphasised in order to promote projects that affect strategic areas in relation to the identified needs.

Activities of an instrumental, managerial, or technical-subsidiary nature may also be carried out in Italy if they are functional to ensuring the proper and effective implementation of the planned initiatives.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS**

Addressee	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies - Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies
Submission procedure	<p>In the view of the activation of a digital platform on the institutional website of the MLPS, the requests for approval of training programs and the related documentation, filled in accordance to the attached models, must be sent to the following Certified E-Mail address:</p> <p><a href="mailto:programmi.art23@pec.lavoro.gov.it">programmi.art23@pec.lavoro.gov.it</a></p> <p>For information or clarifications, please write to the following address:</p> <p><a href="mailto:programmi.art23@lavoro.gov.it">programmi.art23@lavoro.gov.it</a></p>
Programs approval	The evaluation of the proposals will be carried out by a special Inter-Ministerial Commission convened periodically by the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies of the MLPS <sup>17</sup> .

## **ANNEXES**

The following annexes constitute an integral part of these Guidelines:

- Form 1\_Approval Request
- Form 2\_Applicant Data Sheet
- Form 3\_Partner Data Sheet
- Form 4\_Project Description
- Form 5\_Declaration of Affiliation of the Diplomatic Representation
- Form 6\_Declaration of Affiliated Party
- Form 7\_List of Recipients

**Approved on June 23, 2023**

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<sup>17</sup> The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the procedural deadline laid down in Article 2 of Law No. 241/1990, as amended.