



NATIONAL REPORT: ITALY

Deliverable: IO1 – A2



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
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2019-1-ES01-KA202-063864

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description	Action	Pages
1	31/1/20	ERIFO	National report for IO1-A2		18

(*) Action: C = Creation, I = Insert, U = Update, R = Replace, D = Delete

Referenced Documents

ID	Reference		Title
1	IO1-A1 Survey		4EXPORT Survey

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Introduction

The following research is conducted according to the criteria defined in IO1: *Interdisciplinary apprenticeship for internationalization: Research Study and Analysis on apprenticeship schemes in Europe, specific needs of interdisciplinary apprenticeship in countries, and role of in-company tutor.*

This first phase of research focuses, therefore, on the main topics of the 4EXPORT project, such as: "**Apprenticeship**", "**Internationalization**" and "**In-Company Tutors**". The analysis of the various topics will constitute the study basis for the definition of the national strategies, also taking into account the Good Practices identified on the interdisciplinary Apprenticeship and on the Internationalization activities. It will also help to provide a first description of the abilities, knowledge and skills necessary for the In-company Tutors, with the aim of effectively carrying out the activities of tutoring and promoting the internationalization of companies.

The research, in the first part, will analyze the national strategies and policies for the apprenticeship: we will study the apprenticeship system in Italy, the rules that regulate it and its use for actions to promote internationalization. The second part of the research will focus instead on the internationalization of SMEs, specifically on national strategies and best practices for the internationalization of SMEs. In the third and final part, the research will deepen the topics concerning the In-company Tutors, such as: skills, knowledge, abilities, educational opportunities and the necessary certifications.

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1. Apprenticeship Strategies and Policies

1.1 National Apprenticeship system

Vocational training is a relevant component for a career in all its phases: initial and continuous. This is because it allows the acquisition and expansion of necessary technical and transversal skills. Recognizing its intrinsic value, professional training can be included in employment contracts, in order to allow the regulation of work performance; training the employee should be considered as an obligation for the employer.

What characterizes the apprenticeship is represented by the fact that the employer, in the performance of the obligation placed against him, is required to provide, as consideration for the work, not only the remuneration, but also the training necessary for acquisition of professional competences. These two obligations have equal dignity and are not alternative or accessory to each other.

Expressly defined by the legislator, pursuant to paragraph 1 of art. 41, as an "*open-ended employment contract aimed at training and employing young people*", apprenticeship is one of the cornerstones of the Italian dual system in which, alongside the purpose of exchanging work for pay, which is typical of the subordinate employment contract, the purpose of training arises. This peculiarity is reflected in a large part of the regulatory framework of the case, directly affecting both the formal and substantial requirements of the contract and the economic treatment of the worker.¹

¹ Source: ANPAL,

<https://www.anpalservizi.it/documents/20181/88812/Guida+Operativa+Apprendistato+di+AFeR.pdf/e3bf5fd8-6449-4b36-8432-8c0a64922fb9>

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Apprenticeship in Italy is divided into three distinct categories:

1. **apprenticeship for professional qualification and diploma, upper secondary education diploma and higher technical specialization certificate**, for young people aged 15 to 25, aimed at achieving one of the aforementioned qualifications in the workplace;
2. **professionalising apprenticeship**, for young people aged 18 and 29, aimed at learning a job or attaining a professional qualification;
3. **higher education and research apprenticeship**, for young people aged 18 and 29, aimed at obtaining university and higher education qualifications, including research doctorates, diplomas related to the courses of higher technical institutes, for research activities as well as the internship for access to the ordinary professions.

For the professionalizing apprenticeship and for the advanced training and research apprenticeship it is possible to hire apprentices even from the 17th year of age, if they have a three-year qualification of vocational education and training.

1.2 National policies for apprenticeships

The apprenticeship contract in Italy is governed, also for the part concerning the remuneration and contribution system, by Legislative Decree no. 81 of 15 June 2015 (Chapter V articles 41 to 47), implementing the "Jobs Act", and is characterized by being an interesting form of employment for employers who - regardless of the activity carried out and the sector to which they belong - can benefit from a series of significant advantages from a regulatory and economic-contributory point of view. Paragraph 1 art.41 of Legislative Decree 81/2015 underlines even more the main function of apprenticeship or that of facilitating the entry of young people into the world of work. In effect, the apprenticeship contract remains, even in the changed regulatory framework of reference, a "special" subordinate employment relationship which gives the employer the

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obligation to give the worker the training necessary to obtain specific technical and operative skills. This determines the achievement of a specific qualified framework for the benefit of the correct corresponding work performance. Hence the essential change of perspective towards a truly successful apprenticeship, passing from a formalistic approach of prior legal and regulatory qualification to a substantive vision of constant training and professional qualification.²

The apprenticeship contract can be concluded between employers operating in all economic sectors and workers aged between 15 and 29, depending on the purpose of the contract.

Furthermore, art. 47, paragraph 4, of Legislative Decree 81/2015 contemplates what many have defined as the fourth type of apprenticeship, that is the apprenticeship for workers benefiting from mobility allowances or unemployment treatment, attributable to the professionalising apprenticeship.

There is also a new form of apprenticeship, "outsourced apprenticeship", outlined by the Consolidated Law on Apprenticeship (Legislative Decree 167/2011) repealed by Legislative Decree 81/2015, in which it was recognized to the Administration Agencies the possibility of hiring apprentices to be employed for the execution of outsourced work missions in all production sectors. In general, the possibility of hiring outsourced apprentices is expressly provided for by Legislative Decree no. 81/2015 in article 42, paragraph 7, according to which *"the total number of apprentices that an employer can hire directly or indirectly through the authorized outsourcing agencies, it cannot exceed the ratio of 3 to 2 compared to the specialized and qualified workers employed by the same employer. This ratio cannot exceed one hundred percent for employers who*

² Source: ANPAL

<https://www.anpalservizi.it/documents/20181/88812/Guida+Operativa+Apprendistato+di+AFeR.pdf/e3bf5fd8-6449-4b36-8432-8c0a64922fb9>

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employ fewer than ten workers. The possibility of using apprentices on a fixed-term outsourcing contract is in any case excluded".³

By virtue of this regulatory provision, the outsourcing contract, or the commercial agreement that binds the user and the employment agency and to which the apprenticeship contract between the agency and worker is linked, must be a permanent contract (so-called staff leasing). This legislative framework applies to all three types of apprenticeships and, therefore, also to the higher education apprenticeship. In this case the company that manages the contract and relations with the training institution is the Employment Agency.

1.3 Apprenticeships and Internationalization

Apprenticeships apply to all sectors of activity, including agriculture, employer associations and trade union organizations. In the industrial sector, the total number of apprentices hired cannot exceed 100% of the number of qualified and specialized personnel already employed by the employer. Employers who do not employ skilled or specialized workers (or have fewer than three) can hire up to three apprentices. Different limits apply to craft businesses (Law 443/1985, art. 4). With the circular of the Ministry of Labour of 10 November 2008 n. 27, it is clarified that the apprenticeship contract can also be started within consortium companies that remain in place for a shorter period than that established by the contract for the qualification of the apprentice. The current contribution benefits will be recognized to the employer who enters into apprenticeship contracts, the disbursement of which is subject to verification of the training carried out, according to the methods defined by decree of the Ministry of Labour.

³ Source: ANPAL

<https://www.anpalservizi.it/documents/20181/88812/Guida+Operativa+Apprendistato+di+AFer.pdf/e3bf5fd8-6449-4b36-8432-8c0a64922fb9>

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As regards the apprenticeship to promote cross-border activities, the Euradria project is active in Italy. The Euradria network is active in the field of promoting the mobility of people looking for work in the EU, in particular in the cross-border area between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia in accordance with the free movement of the workforce. With the help of the network of specialized partners of different categories of subjects in the world of work (employment services, employer associations, trade unions, etc.) and EURES consultants, Euradria provides assistance and advice to people looking for job and employers in the region who are looking for specific staff with appropriate skills. It also encourages measures targeting specific segments of the cross-border labour market, such as job retention, solving problems in the field of cross-border employment and the possibility of growth in the cross-border area.⁴

Another example for the cross-border apprenticeship is EURES (European Employment Services), a cooperation network made up of public employment services, which also includes trade unions and employers' organizations. Its aim is to facilitate the free movement of workers in the European Economic Area (the 28 member states of the European Union, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland) and Switzerland. The EURES network was established both for jobseekers interested in moving to another country to work and study, and for employers wishing to hire people from another country.

⁴ Source: EURES <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/it/eures-in-cross-border-regions#/details/4218>

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2. Internationalization of SMEs

2.1 National strategies supporting internationalization of SMEs

For some years now, Italy has set itself the objective of increasing the degree of internationalisation of companies, with particular attention to small and medium-sized enterprises representing about 99% of the total, setting up promotional and financial instruments to accompany its projection on international markets.

In 2015 Italy started the "Plan for the extraordinary promotion of "Made in Italy" and the attraction of investments in Italy", which aims to increase both international trade and the attractiveness of SMEs to a global and European public. The plan provides for the allocation of funds aimed at promoting the internationalization of SMEs, promoting internationalization activities, aimed at enhancing exports of SME products and services, and increasing the attractiveness of SMEs to foreign investors. More specifically, the objectives of the plan are:

- **Increase the volume of exports**, expanding the international presence, especially in countries where the potential is greatest;
- **Increase the overall number of exporting companies**, transforming potentially exporting companies into habitual exporters;
- **Seize the opportunities linked to the growth of global demand** and the increase of the middle class in emerging markets;
- **Increase the ability to intercept foreign investments**, aiming to obtain additional cash flows.

The "Plan for the extraordinary promotion of Made in Italy and the attraction of investments in Italy" was developed for the three-year period 2015 - 2017. However, the Ministry of Economic Development (MiSE), given the success and the slow recovery of the economy and the slow internationalization of SMEs, has decided to continue investments on an annual basis, in order to further increase the internationalization of SMEs, with the intent to improve the economic situation in Italy.

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2.2 Good practices on SMEs internationalization

In Italy, the Ministry of Economy has created Invitalia - *Agenzia per l'attrazione degli investimenti e lo sviluppo d'impresa* (Agency for the attraction of investments and business development)- , which has the primary purpose of helping Italian SMEs in their growth and development, also as regards their internationalization. Invitalia manages all national incentives that encourage the growth and development of companies, as well as the promotion of new businesses and innovative start-ups.

In 2015, MiSE created the "*Voucher for Internationalization*", managed by the "*Direzione generale per le politiche di internazionalizzazione e la promozione degli scambi*" (DGPIPS) of the Ministry of Economic Development, which aims to facilitate access to and consolidation of Italian SMEs on international markets, granting a contribution in the form of vouchers to cover the costs for the specialist consultancy service provided by a Temporary Export Manager (TEM) company, chosen from among those accredited by MiSE. The overall financial allocation for the initiative is 49.6 million euro, of which 31.6 million euro from national resources and 18 million euro from the PON for Enterprise and Competitiveness 2014-2020 (European funds).

In 2017, the "*Voucher for Internationalization*" was re-proposed with a total financial allocation of 38 million euro, with a further increase of 10 million euro resulting from the inter-ministerial decree of 19 February 2018 art. 1, paragraph 1, letter i). This was possible thanks to the strong success found in the 2015 voucher, which made a strong contribution to the internationalization of Italian SMEs.

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3. In-company trainers

3.1 In-company trainers' skills and competences

In the company, the Trainer works in the Human Resources Department, responding to the director or manager of the "Training" or "Human Resources Management" unit, and is responsible for the implementation of the training policies of incoming staff and of the path of professionalization and skills development. In the event that the implementation of the training intervention is entrusted to an external company, its responsibility is reflected in: definition and analysis of the needs, design, coordination and evaluation of the activity carried out. If the training course is carried out directly by the company, the in-company trainer can manage and coordinate the entire process.

The trainer organizes and manages initial professional training processes, business training, continuous training, from design to evaluation, adapting them according to the different types of users. He is able to develop and create routes both in presence and at a distance. In particular, the company trainer must have the following general **Skills**:

- Apply organizational analysis techniques;
- Apply procedures foreseen by the Quality System;
- Apply public speaking techniques;
- To transmit the contents addressed by the intervention;
- Apply statistical processing techniques to the results of the evaluation;
- Apply techniques for drafting activity evaluation reports;
- Apply reporting techniques for the activities carried out.

More specifically it will have to be able to:

- Use tools to analyse the difference between existing and expected skills;
- Apply methodologies to detect training and professional needs;
- Apply training planning methodologies;

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- Apply training design techniques;
- Apply methodologies for drafting teaching content;
- Use methodologies to promote the training path;
- Use IT and audiovisual educational applications;
- Apply classroom management techniques;
- Apply learning verification methodologies;
- Use tools and strategies for personal self-updating and self-training.

In addition, the company trainer must have general **Knowledge** of:

- Regulatory framework on vocational training and work;
- The social, economic and institutional context of reference;
- Notions on the quality system in force in the reference organizational context;
- Elements of business organization;
- Elements of human resource management;
- Dynamics of learning groups;
- Elements of interpersonal communication;
- Methods and tools for the evaluation of training projects;
- Tools and strategies for self-updating and self-training.

And have specific knowledge of:

- Pedagogical elements with particular reference to adults;
- Methodologies for adult education;
- Methodologies for analysing skills;
- Methods for detecting training and professional needs;
- Training planning methodologies;
- Training planning techniques;

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- Methods for drafting teaching content;
 - IT and audiovisual tools for teaching.

Since there are no specific rules or laws that regulate the profession, there are no specific educational qualifications, authorisations, enrolment in registers or minimum periods of mandatory professional practice.⁵

⁵ Source: Atlante delle Professioni (Università degli Studi di Torino)

<http://www.atlantedelleprofessioni.it/professioni/Formatore-Formatrice>

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3.2 Learning and certification opportunities of in-company trainers

In Italy there are no specific rules governing the profession, however, since February 10th 2013, Law no. 4 of 14/01/2013, published in the Official Gazette n. 22 of 26/01/2013, which governs the non-regulated professions aimed at the provision of services to third parties and exercised mainly through intellectual work. With Law 4/2013 these professions become "professions not organized into orders and colleges", assigning recognition and visibility to a wide range of typologies and where aggregated forms (associations) in the future will increasingly play an essential role in the organization and in the national economic development of professional work.

The profession of the in-company trainer is not regulated neither is it included into specific registers. However, there is a professional association - Italian Association of Trainers (AIF) - which has been included in the "Non-organized professions" list regulated by MiSE (Law 4/2013) among the professional associations that issue the Quality and Qualification Certificate of the Services provided by its members. The AIF offers specific courses, certified by MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research), aimed at training new professional trainers. The main themes of the AIF trainers training course are:

- **dialogue:** ability to dialogue with customers, on non-linear thematic, to intercept the weak signals of personal and organizational improvement;
- **design:** basic skills necessary to process the data and basic requirements detected during the analysis phase and transform them into a training course capable of supporting the organization in its improvement process;
- **provision:** ability to sequentially assemble teaching methodologies and classroom management tools which are consistent with the objective of continuous improvement agreed with the client;

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- **customer satisfaction:** capacity to transform the training evaluation process into data collection, processing and analysis system in order to produce useful information to increase individual and widespread well-being.⁶

In addition to the courses provided by the AIF, there are several learning opportunities provided by professional schools and accredited VET bodies, which offer specific "training of trainers" courses, which, as well as the AIF, issue specific certifications to trainers.

Conclusions

Apprenticeship, in Italy, is considered one of the cornerstones of the dual system, as it allows both the acquisition of new skills and abilities, in specific sectors for the apprentice, and an opportunity for the workforce, with facilitated contributions, for an employer. The apprenticeship also has no limits, if not age, as regards the professional framework since the apprenticeship contract is applicable to all bar professions. For SMEs, apprenticeship can be an important growth factor, as there are programs in place to link apprenticeship to Internationalization.

With regard to the internationalization of SMEs, Italy is making enormous progress. The continuous effort to create incentives to encourage the internationalization of SMEs is slowly paying off, contributing to economic recovery by increasing GDP production.

For the field of professional trainers working within companies (SMEs), Italy does not have specific regulations, however it has contributed, with Ministerial Decrees, in the creation of accredited institutes for vocational education and training (VET); these institutes can provide specific training courses, and therefore issue certifications that provide a formal recognition of the competences that are necessary to work as in-company trainers.

⁶ Source: AIF (Associazione Italiana Formatori) <http://associazioneitalianaformatori.it/>

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