

# Road Map

## Country: Italy



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## 1. Stakeholders involved in developing the Road Map

In developing Italy's Road Map for the Upskilling Pathways initiative, a wide range of national and regional stakeholders collaborated to design and implement policies for adult education and lifelong learning. Their primary roles include identifying learning needs, creating tailored educational pathways and providing ongoing support to help adults build skills for the evolving labour market. They also work to raise awareness, encourage participation, and advocate for supportive policies. Key stakeholders and their roles are outlined as follows:

- INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation, and Educational Research) - serving as Italy's Erasmus+ National Agency, INDIRE promotes adult education through international exchange and professional development opportunities. It facilitates collaborations among educational institutions and stakeholders to ensure alignment with European standards, enhancing lifelong learning and workforce readiness;
- RIDAP (Italian Network of Public Adult Education Centres) provides a collaborative platform to enhance adult education access and quality across Italy. By sharing resources and innovative practices, RIDAP supports lifelong learning, helping adults to continually develop personal and professional skills in line with national and European policies;
- RUIAP (Italian University Network for Lifelong Learning) put together universities to expand access to adult education and lifelong learning. It encourages collaboration among institutions to develop learning programs, promote best practices, and create educational policies that improve adult employability and personal growth, aligning with broader national and European strategies;
- Forum del Terzo Settore (Third Sector Forum) representing Italy's non-profit and social enterprises and advocating for inclusive policies that foster social inclusion and community development. By supporting collaboration, capacity-building, and training among non-profit organizations, the Forum strengthens the civic and social framework necessary for lifelong learning;
- EDAFORUM, focused on adult education and lifelong learning, which acts as a platform for stakeholder collaboration. It promotes best practices, advocates for adult education policies, and raises public awareness, working to create a society that values continuous learning for both personal and professional growth;
- Erasmus+ Ambassadors for Adult Education, coordinated by INDIRE, who promote Erasmus+ by sharing success stories and providing guidance to potential participants. Their outreach efforts increase awareness of lifelong learning benefits, encouraging broader participation in international training and exchanges;
- Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning based in Bologna, Monza Brianza, Sardinia, and Campania, which facilitate regional collaboration among educational institutions, employers, and government agencies to improve adult learning access and quality. They create tailored educational pathways that address local needs, promoting innovation and capacity-building at the community level.

- Regional and provincial authorities develop policies and programs for adult learning, providing resources, partnerships, and guidance to support local educational opportunities. They fund and validate adult learning programs, aligning them with local employment and skills requirements.

## 2. Planning the Implementation Plans/ Road Map

To develop the Road Map for Italy, given the results of the project Development groups, the National Group for Lifelong Learning, including RIDAP, RUIAP, the Third Sector Forum (FTS) and EDAFORUM, proposes a collaborative, phased approach centred on inclusive stakeholder engagement to address educational challenges effectively, in cooperation with FORMA.Azione.

EDAFORUM started the **drafting process**, in collaboration with RIDAP, RUIAP, INDIRE and FORMA.Azione. These institutions/organisations, together with other core stakeholders, outlined strategic goals, identify priority areas and create the initial draft a strategy for Adult Education promotion and support.

The primary objective of the drafting process was to define the fundamental pillars of lifelong learning, such as increasing access to learning opportunities, addressing skill gaps, and ensuring inclusive educational practices for adult learners, especially targeting low-qualification and low-education populations.

After drafting the Road map, **key consulted parties** included public authorities and social partners at both national and regional levels, which provided feedback to align regional policies and experiences with broader national goals. Broader consultations involved local educational bodies, particularly CPIA (Provincial Centres for Adult Education) and non-formal education providers. Their input has been crucial for identifying region-specific needs, addressing barriers and leveraging resources to promote regional adaptability.

The development of the Road Map followed a structured **timeline** divided into phases. Phase 1 focused on initial drafting and consultation, involving primary stakeholders to gather feedback and make refinements. This phase took approximately 4 months. Phase 2 is involving Road map implementation, where strategies and actions are tested and adjustments made based on observed outcomes. This phase is in progress. Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are established to assess progress and make necessary adjustments over time. Phase 3 foresees a public awareness campaign through events and specific dissemination materials.

Methods for **effective engagement** and collaboration include territorial surveys and the establishment of collaborative networks. Stakeholders' reviews identified successful projects and actual/potential synergies among formal and non-formal education actors, businesses, and local governance bodies. Webinars have been organized to provide a forum for open dialogue among educational providers, employers, government entities and third-sector organizations, ensuring that a diversity of perspectives informs strategy development.

### 3. Successful Cooperation Mechanisms

**Territorial networks for lifelong learning**, recently set up in Bologna (local), Monza Brianza (local), Sardinia (regional) and Campania (regional) territories, which play a vital role in adult education by fostering collaboration among local institutions, organizations, and stakeholders to enhance access to learning opportunities for adults. These networks facilitate the coordination of resources, expertise, and initiatives at the community level, ensuring that adult learners have access to relevant and high-quality educational programs and services. By promoting partnerships between educational providers, employers, community organizations, and government agencies, territorial networks for lifelong learning support the development of tailored learning pathways that meet the diverse needs and interests of adult learners. They also serve as platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and innovation in adult education, contributing to the personal and professional development of individuals and the socio-economic development of communities.

**Polo Équipe Formativa Territoriale dell'Umbria** (Territorial Training Team of Umbria) established to ensure the dissemination of actions related to the Piano Nazionale Scuola Digitale<sup>1</sup> (National Digital School Plan), promote training actions for teaching staff, and enhance students' skills in innovative teaching methodologies. IT serves as a hub for educational initiatives and collaboration in the Umbria region of Italy. It functions as a coordinating body that brings together educational institutions, training providers, employers, and other stakeholders to enhance the quality and accessibility of education and training opportunities within the region.

### 4. Development of an Implementation Plan/Road Map

The **short-term goals** of the upskilling initiatives focus on establishing stronger cooperation mechanisms among adult education stakeholders and increasing participation in lifelong learning. They include identifying and addressing immediate educational gaps, building territorial networks to support continuous learning, and engaging public awareness to promote lifelong learning as a right. These initial efforts will help increase functional literacy and learning participation rates in the adult population, which aligns with stakeholders' priorities of fostering social inclusion, improving employability and bridging educational inequalities.

The **long-term goals** are to develop a sustainable, integrated national system for lifelong learning that provides continuous education and skill-building opportunities for adults across Italy, overcoming fragmentation. This system aims to create a "learning society" which is essential for equitable and sustainable development. Long-term objectives include reducing functional illiteracy, enhancing economic productivity through an educated workforce, and supporting active citizenship. These goals align with stakeholders' priorities by ensuring that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.miur.gov.it/scuola-digitale>

educational initiatives are integrated with employment strategies, social services and regional development plans.

### Implementation timeline and key milestones

**Phase 1** (March 2024 - January 2025): initial drafting and stakeholder consultations. The first milestone is the **Punto Zero** event (November 2024), marking the start of the collaborative journey toward lifelong learning. This phase includes the **first working group** during FIERIDA in January 2025, to generate a draft framework with stakeholder input.

**Phase 2** (February - October 2025): pilot programs to test and iterate strategies. Milestones include the **second working group** during the Festa dell'Europa (May 2025) and the **third and fourth working groups** (October 2025 and early 2026) for continuous refinement and regional adaptations.

**Phase 3** (February 2026 - May 2026): national rollout and public awareness campaign. This phase culminates in the **Stati Generali dell'Apprendimento Permanente** in May 2026, a cultural and political event to consolidate the system and finalise national integration.

The **governance structure** is coordinated by the National Group for Lifelong Learning (GNAP), comprising RIDAP, RUIAP, the Third Sector Forum and EDAFORUM, supported by FORMA.Azione. Responsibilities are distributed as follows:

- **GNAP, FORMAZione:** oversee national strategy, coordinate stakeholders and ensure alignment with European lifelong learning policies.
- **Public Authorities** (regional and national): Implement policies and manage resources for regional pilot programs.
- **Territorial Learning Networks:** act as regional hubs to gather data, adapt initiatives to local needs, and promote community engagement.
- **Third Sector and Non-Profit Organizations:** support inclusive education through non-formal pathways and reach underserved populations.
- **Educational Institutions and Networks** (RIDAP and RUIAP): develop and implement educational curricula, provide resources and share best practices-

To **ensure flexibility**, the Road Map includes regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms, with evaluation workshops scheduled in every phase to assess progress and identify areas needing adjustment. Stakeholder forums and working groups provide platforms for stakeholders to share feedback and make real-time adjustments or improvements to strategies and initiatives, ensuring the Road Map remains responsive to changing cultural and socio-economic conditions. Additionally, data-driven decision-making will play a critical role, with ongoing data collection and analysis from regional programs helping to refine approaches based on effective practices and emerging needs.

Potential **challenges**, such as policy change, or unforeseen socio-economic shifts, will be addressed through several adaptive strategies. Policy advocacy and support efforts will involve engaging with government bodies to secure continued backing, even in the face of

political changes. Flexible programme models will also be developed to ensure scalability, enabling adjustments in scope and approach according to available resources or shifting needs.

## 5. Summaries of the Implementation Plans

In developing Italy's Road Map for the Upskilling Pathways initiative, a diverse array of national and regional stakeholders collaborated to design and implement policies aimed at enhancing adult education and lifelong learning. These stakeholders play crucial roles in identifying learning needs, creating tailored educational pathways, and providing ongoing support to help adults build skills relevant to the evolving labour market. Additionally, they work to raise awareness, encourage participation, and advocate for supportive policies.

Key stakeholders include INDIRE, the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation, and Educational Research, which serves as Italy's Erasmus+ National Agency. INDIRE promotes adult education through international exchange and professional development opportunities while facilitating collaborations among educational institutions to ensure alignment with European standards. RIDAP, the Italian Network of Public Adult Education Centres, provides a collaborative platform aimed at enhancing adult education access and quality across Italy, sharing resources and innovative practices that support lifelong learning. RUIAP, the Italian University Network for Lifelong Learning, connects universities to expand access to adult education, encouraging collaboration among institutions to develop learning programs and improve adult employability. The Forum del Terzo Settore, representing non-profit and social enterprises, advocates for inclusive policies that foster social inclusion and community development. EDAFORUM promotes stakeholder collaboration in adult education, raising public awareness and advocating for policies that support lifelong learning. The Erasmus+ Ambassadors for Adult Education, coordinated by INDIRE, enhance awareness of lifelong learning benefits through outreach efforts.

Regional initiatives, such as Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning in Bologna, Monza Brianza, Sardinia, and Campania, foster collaboration among educational institutions, employers, and government agencies, improving access to quality adult learning opportunities tailored to local needs. Regional and provincial authorities also contribute by developing policies and programs for adult learning, providing resources and partnerships to support educational opportunities.

To develop the Road Map for Italy, the National Group for Lifelong Learning, which includes RIDAP, RUIAP, the Third Sector Forum, and EDAFORUM, proposes a collaborative, phased approach centred on inclusive stakeholder engagement, in cooperation with FORMA.Azione. The drafting process began with outlining strategic goals and identified priority areas, as emerged in the PARTNER UP Development Groups. The drafting aimed to define key pillars of lifelong learning, such as increasing access to opportunities and addressing skill gaps, especially for low-qualification and low-education populations. Following the initial draft, consultations with public authorities at national and regional levels provided valuable feedback to align policies with broader goals. Local educational bodies, such as CPIA and non-



formal education providers, were also consulted to identify region-specific needs and barriers.

The development of the Road Map followed a structured timeline divided into phases. Phase 1 focused on drafting and consultation over four months, culminating in the *Punto Zero* event in November 2024, marking the collaborative journey toward lifelong learning. Phase 2 involves implementing regional pilot programs to test strategies, with key milestones including working groups during significant events. Phase 3 will focus on national rollout and a public awareness campaign, culminating in the *Stati Generali dell'Apprendimento Permanente* in May 2026. Effective engagement methods have included territorial surveys and collaborative networks, fostering sustained collaboration among stakeholders through webinars for open dialogue.

The short-term goals for upskilling initiatives include establishing cooperation mechanisms among stakeholders, increasing participation in lifelong learning and addressing immediate educational gaps. These efforts aim to enhance functional literacy and learning participation rates among adults, aligning with stakeholders' priorities to foster social inclusion and improve employability. Long-term goals focus on developing a sustainable national system for lifelong learning that provides continuous education and skill-building opportunities. This system aspires to create a "learning society," critical for equitable development, as follows:

### **Objective 1: Strengthening consistency and coordination in the adult education system**

To improve the governance of adult education, actions are planned to map the skills and resources of key stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers and civil society organizations. Forums and thematic working groups will be established to promote ongoing and structured collaboration, facilitating coordination between public and private actors. Participatory workshops and co-design labs will be used to share best practices and develop memoranda of understanding that facilitate the creation of an integrated learning system at the national level. Additionally, the establishment of new territorial networks will be promoted to systematize and expand access to educational opportunities for adults.

### **Objective 2: Engage employers in lifelong learning policies**

To encourage employer commitment, the Road Map includes a mapping of employer organizations to identify their skills and potential contributions to upskilling policies. Workshops and co-design labs are planned to involve companies, training entities, and public institutions in developing joint solutions and targeted learning pathways. The introduction of mechanisms for recognizing and validating skills acquired in the workplace will be promoted, aiming to motivate employers to invest in the continuous training of their employees and collaborate with educational institutions.

### **Objective 3: Increase participation in lifelong learning among low-skilled adults**

To further engage adults with low qualification, the Road Map includes awareness campaigns using digital channels and in public places (such as libraries and other community reference points) to raise awareness about lifelong learning. Accessible and visual educational materials

will be developed, suitable for individuals with low literacy or basic digital skills. Furthermore, each Territorial Network will organize informational events and orientation sessions to illustrate the benefits of skill validation and specific learning opportunities, fostering inclusion and motivating citizens to actively participate in learning pathways.

The governance structure is coordinated by the National Group for Lifelong Learning, comprising RIDAP, RUIAP, the Third Sector Forum, and EDAFORUM, in cooperation with FORMA.Azione. Responsibilities are divided among public authorities, territorial learning networks, third-sector organizations, and educational institutions, all working to ensure alignment with lifelong learning policies. The Road Map includes mechanisms for regular monitoring and feedback to adapt to changing circumstances. Potential challenges will be addressed through adaptive strategies, such as flexible programme models, ensuring scalability and responsiveness to unforeseen challenges.

## 6. Lessons Learned

The development of Italy's Road Map for lifelong learning and upskilling initiatives has provided several key lessons.

First, collaboration among a diverse group of stakeholders, including public authorities, educational institutions, third-sector organizations and regional networks, proved essential. This broad coalition facilitated a more inclusive, adaptable approach, where each phase was refined based on stakeholder input and insights emerging at local level.

During the Road Map elaboration, the importance of integrating monitoring and feedback mechanisms became clear. Regular evaluation workshops and stakeholder forums were not only effective in tracking progress but also critical for making real-time adjustments to keep the plan responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Furthermore, the adoption of a data-driven decision-making mechanism has proven to be a valuable tool, allowing the Road Map to remain an adaptable guideline in response to changes in the context, through regular analysis of results and the needs emerging at local level.

## 7. Annex: Implementation Plan

**Challenge/Obstacles:** the fragmentation of governance and the lack of clarity in the relationships among the various actors and stakeholders in adult education undermine the effectiveness of the learning system for adults.m

**Objective:** Strengthening coherence and coordination in the Adult Learning System

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Mapping competences and experiences of key stakeholder in adult learning, including educational institutions, employers, government agencies, and community organizations.	INDIRE, FORMA.Azione	GNAP	Google form developed and administered to at least 25 organisation at national/local level	September 2024-January 2025
2	Creation of forums or working groups to foster communication and collaboration among stakeholders, to provide an effective governance to the road map implementation.	GNAP	INDIRE, FORMA.Azione	Regular working groups in specific thematic areas	September 2024-May 2026
3	Participatory workshops and co-design labs to involve key stakeholders in the adult education sector. These workshops will serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration among public and private actors to share best practices, identify strengths and challenges, and develop strategic pathways for enhancing lifelong learning. This collaborative approach will help draft a political document and a protocol of understanding among different actors, ultimately aiming to create a more integrated and effective system of lifelong learning across Italy.	GNAP, FORMA.Azione	INDIRE	4 workshops and co-design labs	November 2024-May 2026



4

Establishment of new Territorial Networks for lifelong learning, as provided for by Law 92/2012, supporting their establishment and systematizing initiatives aimed at the adult population. The networks will act as catalysts for best practices and promoters of effective governance.

RIDAP, RUIAP

EDAFORUM, INDIRE, FTS, FORMA.Azione

Piloting of 3 new Territorial Networks, modelling of existing ones (4)

November 2024-May 2026

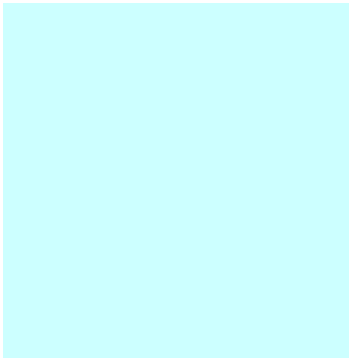
**Challenge/Obstacles:** low involvement and commitment of employers in planning and implementing adult education policies

**Objective:** increasing employer involvement and commitment in policies and initiatives supporting lifelong learning.

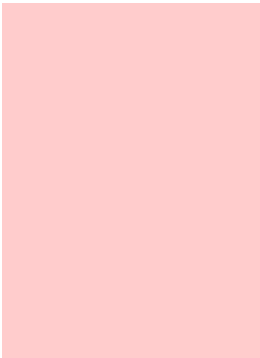
	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Mapping of employer organizations, their competencies, their functions as well as their potential contribution in strengthening lifelong learning and adult education and make it more relevant to labour market needs	INDIRE, FORMA.Azione	GNAP	Google form developed and administered to at least 25 organisation at national/local level	September 2024-January 2025
2	Participatory workshops and co-design labs to involve key stakeholders in the adult education sector. These workshops will serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration among public and private actors to share best practices, identify strengths and challenges, and develop strategic pathways for enhancing lifelong learning. This collaborative approach will help draft a political document and a protocol of understanding among different actors, ultimately aiming to create a more integrated and effective system of lifelong learning across Italy.	GNAP, FORMA.Azione	INDIRE	4 workshops and co-design labs	November 2024-May 2026
3	Development of mechanisms that enable the recognition of skills acquired by workers, encouraging	RIDAP, FORMA.Azione	Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning	n.15 agreements with employers/companies for the implementation	November 2024-May 2026



employers to support validation and certification pathways for non-formal and informal learning.



of skill identification and validation programmes.  
n. 15 collaborations started among companies, training institutions and universities for skill identification and validation programmes.



**Challenge/Obstacles:** low participation of adults with **low** qualifications in lifelong learning initiatives, particularly in recognising and validating their non-formal and informal learning experiences

**Objective:** actively informing and involving adults in the education opportunities and validation processes for non-formal and informal learning

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Informative and awareness-raising campaigns across various channels (social media, materials in public places such as libraries, community centres, Employment Centres).	GNAP, FORMA.Azione	Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning	2 awareness raising campaign on social media (1 in 2024, 1 in 2025)	February 2025 – May 2026
2	Development of clear, visual, and accessible informational materials suitable for an audience with low literacy or basic digital skills.	GNAP, FORMA.Azione	Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning	1 brochure and 3 motivational cards	February 2025 – May 2026
3	Organization of informational events and guidance sessions in each territorial network to explain the benefits of skill validation and learning opportunities.	GNAP, FORMA.Azione	Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning	Organization of at least 1 informational event and 5 guidance sessions	February 2025 – May 2026





To learn more about the Partner UP project and the results from other countries, visit the **Partner UP Virtual Map**.



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