Enhancing Qualification of Adult Learners through the implementation of Upskilling pathways

Project Presentation

E.QU.A.L
Upskilling pathways Italy

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Context – Reason Why

Italy remains one of the countries across Europe where the need to up skill is both great and most challenging. In particular:

➢ the percentage of adults scoring at or below level 1 in literacy in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) is 27.7%, (19.9% at EU-level), and in numeracy the results are 31.7% and 23.6% respectively. In addition, the percentage of individuals without basic digital skills is 57% of the population aged 16-74, 26 p.p. above the EU average;[1]

➢ although the participation in education and training of people aged 25-64 increased from 6.2% in 2007 to 7.5% in 2015,[2] the country ranks 15th in the EU and is still below the EU (10.6%) average.

➢ regarding the share of population with either less than primary or primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 0-2) Italy ranks 4th with 40.1%,[3] above both the EU (23.5%) average. Italy has stayed in the same position since 2006, but has improved by 8.6 percentage points (p.p.) since;

➢ concerning the share of the population with either upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED levels 3-4) Italy ranks 18th with 42.3%. This figure is slightly below the EU (46.5%) average, but it does represent an increase in comparison to the 38.4% rate registered in 2006.

Significant policy efforts are being carried out to address this, however:

➢ there is a continuing need to strengthen employment services capable of promoting upskilling and tailored on individuals' needs;

➢ the reform of Provincial Centres for Adult Learning (hereafter PCAL, DPR 263/2012) introduced key innovations that are pertinent to the UP but may need further emphasis towards full implementation;

➢ there is a need to better address the negative intertwining between fragility in terms of adult skills and high unemployment rates forcing many people out of employment or out of the labour force through labour market relevant upskilling.

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1   Source: OECD.

2   European Commission, Summary of the Partnership Agreement for Italy, 2014-2020, 2014. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/partnership-agreement-italy-summary-oct2014_en.pdf

3   Italy trails only Malta (56.5%), Portugal, and Spain in this ranking (latest data: 2015).

Why a regional focus?

Regional asymmetries as a key characteristic of the Italian economy both in general and specifically with respect to the distribution of skills; heterogeneity is market also with respect to the organisation and delivery of upskilling

Regions are the relevant public body with respect to the implementation of the Adult Learning Strategy, having the responsibility of spending and organising all the services related to the adult learning.

Why a transnational approach?

to allow a comparison between a benchmark country in the field of Adult learning as France and the Italian national and regional strategies to maximise positive spill-over and to act in turn as the project unfolds.

Governance

In order to ultimately address the needs of the end beneficiaries of this call, namely the low skilled adults, an effort is made to engage all stakeholders comprised in the governance of the adult learning pipeline. These are:

➢ the relevant line ministries and governmental agencies (Ministry of education and Ministry of Employment and related governmental agencies: eg Anpal, Indire, Inapp);

➢ Provincial Centres for Adult Learning (hereafter PCAL) and relevant secondary education institutions;

➢ Regions and relevant ESF Managing Authorities;

➢ public and private VET providers;

➢ Social Partners, including labour unions, employer associations etc.

The Ministry of Education (MIUR):

- is in charge of the education policy in Italy;

- it is Managing Authority of the National Operational Programme on Education and has recently published a call (budget 20 million euros) on basic skills;

- is in charge of more than 500 centres for Adult Learning, with over 1 million adult applicants per year;

- monitors and evaluates the implementation of up skilling policies, relying on INDIRE – research institute controlled by the MIUR and aimed at studying the evolution of skills and the related policies;

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies;

- is in charge of active labour market policies;

- is responsible for PES, which play a key role in supporting their clients with job searching strategies, also assessing competences and analysing available coherent vacancies. It is relevant to the project's objectives to recall here the profiling of unemployed people and the management of the OECD PIACC on line assessment tool;

PCAL are key to the UP in that they:

- are in charge of dealing with basic skills needs for adults (up to EQF 2) and provide an offer aimed at obtaining relevant certification for primary education, including the definition of a personalised plan, which is germane to UP intervention logic;

- are the main player of the "territorial networks of service" which encompasses also secondary education institutions;

Regions are a key public authority for the design and implementation of active labour market policies; they also contribute to the definition and implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes' strategy and can somewhat orientate public expenditure towards specific objectives

Secondary education institutions are key as they are the main provider of upskilling towards EQF levels 3 and 4

Public-Private VET providers, key actors for the provision of upskilling

Social partners, other than representing a crucial link with priority groups, possess unique knowledge of labour market and skills needs and are a key actor also for the dissemination of any upskilling initiatives. They are also responsible for "inter-professional funds" which provide CVET opportunities.

Inizio modulo

- Fine modulo

As shown in the previous paragraphs, Italy presents important development challenges related to the employment and social inclusion prospects of low skilled adults. There already exists on the field a wide range of tools and resources that would need to be made more coherent and synergic, through a strong coordination with institutional and private stakeholders and this is what our project sets out to do.

The implementation of the UP Recommendation could greatly contribute to improve the existing situation.

To start with, **the intervention logic of this project** is set to ensure full relevance of the activities put in place. The starting point is that this proposal is geared to contribute to all three objectives of the call through an incremental and innovative approach.

It starts by defining and categorising low skilled adults, to map the population concerned by this intervention and make sure that the project is accurately focused on its end beneficiaries. In tacking stock of existing policies, practices, tools and resources for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, it engages all players concerned with the provision of adult learning in a targeted analysis of existing gaps, so as to portray a clearer picture of the country's existing provision related to Upskilling Pathways elements.

This lays the foundation for the identification of those sub-groups whose needs are more pressing, to be selected at the regional/ national level through a simple and flexible tool that exploits quality information on UP's target groups and their needs, for policy makers to take properly informed decisions.

Pending the identification of a target group for the implementation of the UP at the national level, the provision of such a tool is considered key in ensuring that those in charge of outlining measures for the implementation of the UP in Italy receive qualified support to do so. In addition, key indications on how to better the governance of the system can be drawn from such analysis, building upon existing studies and current policy efforts in the domain of adult learning in Italy also by virtue of its transnational dimension and expertise.

Finally, this proposal makes sure that the capacity of managing stakeholders is increased both as they are equipped with a model for the implementation of the UP Recommendation which is devised in strict cooperation with them and because a comprehensive dissemination and outreach plan is developed.

A number of **additional elements** are viewed as contributing to the relevance of this proposal, amongst others:

Extensive normative and administrative work has been carried out in Italy over recent years to improve the provision of upskilling initiatives, including that of improving visibility and comparability of qualifications (Atlante del lavoro e delle professioni).

The proposal builds upon the long-lasting expertise and on the relevant preparatory work carried out in the field of adult learning by INAPP - since 2012 INAPP is the national Coordinator for the Adult Learning Strategy implementation in Italy. that can and should be built upon to ensure the effective implementation of the UP.

In an ongoing study, carried out by FGB for DG EMPL on the support of the European Social Fund (ESF) to the New Skills Agenda (NSA), response from an e-survey point to a need for higher awareness among ESF MAs on the details of the UP, further to the Ostuni meeting of November 2016; the study found that in Italy relevant ESF resources and targets are geared towards supporting upskilling for low skilled and such potential should be unleashed and fully exploited. This confirms the findings of a previous study (Dal Miglio and Vitali for INAPP, 2015) which assessed relevant resources for adult learning in the ESF programming both at the regional and national levels.

Boosting the skills of low-skilled adults (over 13 million adults with low basic skills and 40% of 25-64yrs olds have low levels of literacy and numeracy), promoting skills assessment (avoiding skill mismatch) and promoting hiring ad skills are key policy priorities in Italy (OECD).

The OECD is currently in the process of defining a skills strategy for Italy (diagnostic phase). The preliminary analysis highlight the strong need of actions aimed at supporting low-skilled adults in a process of upskilling. Among these skills the OECD emphasizes the key importance – beside literacy, numeracy and soft-skills - of digital skills given the technological transition underway.

The relevance of this proposal is further substantiated by the set of Regions involved, which, as detailed further below, ensure a good coverage of among a rather fragmented framework of local provision of upskilling/employability services.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

WP1 - TAKING STOCK-EXISTING ADULT LEARNING POLICIES, MEASURES AND RESOURCES

WP activities aims to map existing upskilling provisions, stakeholders, tools and resources upon which Upskilling Pathways can be built, building upon partners' expertise and resources. It will rely on analysis of PIAAC microdata, additional desk and field research and the review of available literature. Furthermore, a specific action will be developed in collaboration with Cereq, in order to widen the perspective of the current provisions within a direct comparative analysis with the French context.

The literature review and desk research will cover the national territory, while a more in-depth analysis in involved regional and local territories on specific needs and trends will also be included.

The analysis and mapping activities to be carried out in this WP lays the foundations upon which the subsequent WPs will be developed and it will provide the theoretical and conceptual frame-work of the project.

The key elements of this WP are:

- mapping and reviewing relevant indicators to identify low-skilled individuals and under-skilling in general, in order to single out vulnerable groups and regional differences among them.

- Mapping and reviewing existing policies, measures and resources relevant for the definition and implementation of the UP strategy, in connection with existing qualifications and skills validation frameworks, in line with the low-skilled profiles identified.

- Comparative analysis developed in collaboration with CEREQ of the existing experiences, tools and best practices in France (i.e. VAE).

- Analysing and taking stock of available tools, practices and data at different levels: i) European (gathering information from data different sources, such as the EU Skills Panorama, EPALE and Eurostat), ii) national (National Qualifications Framework and the certification system , PIAAC and Adult learning); iii) regional levels, focusing on specific relevant practices in the in-volved partners' regions.

- Investigating ways to increase coherence and coordination among them.

The actions of this WP1 build on the expertise in the analysis and implementation of key initia-tives in this domain by the E.QU.A.L. partners, such as primarily the analysis carried out by IN-APP within the national qualifications framework development (such as the Atlas of Labour and Qualifications and the database on Professions, Occupations and Needs). This is a key strength of the present proposal and will greatly contribute to the achievements of the objectives of the call in Italy.

The approach of this WP also takes into account what has already been done in Italy to improve the provision of upskilling services, in terms of legal framework, infrastructures and service organ-isation. Nevertheless, further efforts in advancing the governance of the system are viewed as key enablers for reaching full effectiveness of the system.

Proposed activities

Activity 1.1: profiling of 'low-skilled individuals' and relevant sub-categories

Target group: *Stakeholders in the field of Adult Learning*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): *M1/M2, Italy*

Short description: *Desk research activity for the identification of adequate indicators to identify "low-skilled" taking stock of existing literature and PIAAC measurements in order to outline sub-categories of low-skilled individual among those showing similar characteristics by their socio-economic status (e.g. sex, age, income, location, nationality, educational attainment etc.). In do-ing so, INAPP will liaise with the co-applicant regions to fine-tune their findings.*

Activity 1.2: Mapping of existing policies, measures and resources

Target groups: *Stakeholders in the field of Adult Learning*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): *M1/M2, Italy*

Short description: *Desk/Field analysis to draw an overview of existing policies and tools. Infor-mation will be collected covering the following: policies, measures, stakeholders and resources which are relevant for the UP development, having in mind all sub-groups of low-skilled defined in activity 1.1. This activity will build upon and update existing analysis carried out in Italy by the National coordinator for adult learning (INAPP), namely on mapping stakeholders for the gov-ernance of adult learning at the national and regional level both from public and private sec-tor organisations. In the same line, there is a need to update the work carried out on available*

funding instruments for adult learning and their potential synergies, so as to quantify relevant resources for the implementation of the UP and, above all, seek ways to make them fully available[4]. This will be further integrated with information from territorial partners. For example, consideration will be given to issues such as how to exploit flexibility in the regional and national ESF programming to better support the implementation of the UP. An assessment will also be made of the amount of funding already spent /still available, so to inform relevant stakeholders on existing funding opportunities. Recommendations will be also developed that will suggest ways for multi-level stakeholders to share information, best practices and tools, so as to increase coordination and effectiveness of the governance. *The mapping exercise will also present suggestions on how to exploit to the fullest available tools and resources. Partners are aware of the need to build upon the work already*

Activity 1.3: Rapid assessment of European policies and best practices and benchmarking analysis with the case of France

Target group: *Stakeholders in the field of Adult Learning*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): M2, Italy and France

- *Short description: Literature review/Appraisal of EU-level tools and instruments facilitating the implementation of UP. Comparative analysis French system, to maximise spill-overs and by virtue of the expertise of CEREQ in this field, providing a report of desired features that a model for the implementation of the UP should include[5]*

Activity 1.4: Launch event of the action

Target group: National and regional authorities and socio-economic partners in the field of Adult Learning

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): M1, Italy (Rome)

Short description:

The aim of this activity is to inform all key actors of the UP about the aim and content of the action so as to ensure their active involvement since the early stages of the project, agree on information needs and fine tune the scope of the action in line with their needs and suggestions. The activity will take the form of a ½ day stakeholders' workshop and will be hosted by INAPP.

WP Main deliverables

Taking stock report, including:

- analysis of indicators and data and mapping of **'low-skilled individual'** at different level by subgroup

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4   See Dal Miglio and Vitali (2015)

5   Commission's staff working document (2016) 195 final, part 2/4 of 10.06.2016 'Tackling low skills: The Skills Guarantee.

- analysis of the national legal framework for the provision of upskilling services, specific policies and initiatives, resources and stakeholders; on existing stakeholders' networks, measures and funding upon which the UP can be built

- Eu overview and comparative analysis with the French context, tools and practices

- recommendations, drawing from European best practices and recommendations, on how to increase coherence, coordination and synergies among existing provisions in Italy

Taking stock tool:

Grid for analysis matching a) policies, devices, best practices, resources, infrastructures with b) target groups and priority groups and Recommendations

WP2 - TARGETING. A MODEL TO IDENTIFY PRIORITY GROUPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UP RECOMMENDATION IN ITALY

WP aims to contribute to meeting the Specific Objective 2, by supporting the national bodies in charge of the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation in Italy in the identification of priority groups. Activities will be carried out in parallel to those of WP1, to maximise work efficiency and, above all, providing decision makers with a timely and relevant tool to identify priority groups for the UP.

Building upon the analysis developed through WP1, a three-pronged approach will be adopted to come to the actual identification of priority groups:

- Elaboration of data and methodology of measurement using PIAAC findings (and other surveys such as ESS for instance) to better define each sub-group of low-skilled individuals and pinpoint those whose needs appear as more pressing;

- Identification of labour market relevant skills needs and learning needs at the national and regional level;

- Scenario analysis, including social innovation and skills-biased technical change.

The main output of this phase is a model which collates quality information on possible target groups of the UP, for the decision makers to avail themselves of a powerful but simple tool for their actual identification.

The starting point is the grids developed for WP1, complemented with PIAAC data, labour market needs and a scenario analysis as described above so as to come to a definition of groups that due to various reasons (e.g. lack of sufficient dedicated resources, severe skills gaps, lack of appropriate tools for their upskilling etc.) should be given priority for the implementation of the UP.

Activities are based mainly on desk research, but will include field research especially for the identification of labour market skills needs.

Proposed activities

Activity 2.1: Analysis of data and methodology of measurement (PIAAC, ESS)

Target group: *Bodies in charge of the implementation of the UP, Regions*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): *M3, Italy*

Short description:

This activity entails further analysis of PIAAC data (and other relevant surveys such as the European Social Survey) and the methodology of measurements in order to define proficiency levels of each sub-group identified in WP1, therefore the actual skills endowment of sub-groups of low skilled. Skills endowments will be therefore employed as a component for the attribution of priority to a specific sub-group.

Activity 2.2: Identification of labour market relevant skills needs and learning needs

Target group: *Bodies in charge of the implementation of the UP, Regions*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: M3

Short description:

Assessing skills endowments cannot by itself suffice to inform the design of relevant upskilling pathways and foster the participation of the low-skilled to education and training. Quite to the opposite, where upskilling fails to provide participants with skills they can spend on the labour market to actually find a job or improve their labour market position, it contributes to increase their reluctance to re-join education and training – and face the social stigma thereto connected. Thus, this activity is concerned with accurately define labour market needs and learning needs, focussing on regional LMs and their occupations. Full stock will be taken of the relevant work carried out in the frame on Professions, Occupations and Needs *developed by Inapp, to identify specific characteristics and learning needs.*

Activity 2.3: Scenario analysis, including social innovation and skills-biased technical change

Target group: *Bodies in charge of the implementation of the UP, Regions*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: *M4*

Short description:

Picturing the state of the art of skills endowments and skills needs risks to return an untimely description of sub-groups of low-skilled more at risk of marginalisation, given the pace of technical change. Hence the need to factor in how labour markets are changing and will continue to change in the future. This includes tacking stock of forward-looking strategies such as "Industry 4.0" and the Internet of Things (IoT) with an effort to exploit the development applications which have been developed and deployed in recent years. However, these rapid advances in technology are accompanied by new demands in the workforce. To get the benefits of the technological development, it is important to consider that certain tasks, that have always been done separately, are now converging, and this requires additional skills and training for both employees and enterprises. Specific attention need also those more repetitive occupations where human labour may be soon replaced through robotization and new technologies. Within this activities a comparative analysis with the French context regarding the impact on new technology on occupations will be developed.

Activity 2.4: finalisation of a model to identify sub-groups of low-skilled to be given priority

Target group: *Bodies in charge of the implementation of the UP, Regions*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place (if already known): *M4*

Short description:

This activity consists of taking stock of all findings of WP1 and previous activities of WP2 to eventually identify priority groups in each region. As a result the standard grids developed in WP1 (legal framework and policies, resources, skills endowments, skills needs, learning needs, evolving scenarios and relevant stakeholders for each sub-group of low-skilled) will be filled in for each region. Priority will be scaled according to how worrying is the picture resulting from the analysis of each of these elements on a specific target group (e.g. severe lack of skills, lack of dedicated resources, high risk of substitution through robotization etc).

Deliverables

Targeting report including:

- analysis of data and methodology of measurement

- analysis on skills and learning needs with a focus on co-applicant local territories

- Scenario analysis on forward-looking strategies and new skills required

A model for the identification of priority groups among the target groups identified.

WP 3 - MODELLING: REGIONAL CASE STUDIES FOR THE DEFINITION OF A MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPSKILLING PATHWAYS, INCLUDING VALIDATION

WP aims to contribute towards Specific Objective 1 and 3 of the call for proposals, by defining a model for implementing the UP at the regional level and validating it with relevant competent stakeholders at the territorial and national level through the organisation of four dissemination and validation workshops.

Three case studies at the regional level will be conducted with a view to understanding how existing measures, tools and services may be streamlined and organised in order to highlight regional features, observing in particular:

strengths and weaknesses of existing upskilling pathways, by using as a benchmark:

- the recommendation in the Commission Staff Working Document - Annex I - Tackling low skills: The Skills Guarantee and in comparable relevant literature;

- funds to be leveraged on at the regional, national and EU level (e.g. ESF, Erasmus +, AMIF);

- priority groups to be addressed, why they are deemed priority and how to effectively reach them.

These will be carried out at the regional level through field activities, in close cooperation with local players and relevant regional services and agencies, tacking full stock of the extensive work of mapping and analysis carried out during WP1 and WP2.

A SWOT analysis or a comparable tool will set the ground for the definition of a model, which will also give consideration to its transferability/scaling up.

This activity will further integrate findings from WP1 on how to increase coherence among existing elements of the UP Recommendation (skills assessments, modular/personalised training, skills certification and their enablers).

Once the model has been defined through the comparison of best practices and lessons learned validation activities will be carried out, with the purpose of:

testing the project's findings against a broader scrutiny also to better gauge the transferability/ scaling up of the model as well as the criteria for the selection of target groups;

further disseminate knowledge and build capacity for a larger audience of stakeholders.

One workshop will be organised in each region and one at the national level to present the results of the analysis and validate together with the stakeholders its legitimacy, feasibility, anticipate possible weaknesses and ultimately improve it.

Such activities are seen as key to enhance capacity within the administration of upskilling services at multiple levels (regional and operator-specific). In this line of reasoning, all stakeholders will be provided with a model to shape their upskilling pathways.

Proposed activities

3.1 Identification of relevant existing upskilling pathways for in-depth study

Target group: *Regions, Social Partners, PES, secondary education providers (both public and private), Adult learning centres (such as CPIA), low skilled adults*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: *M5*

Short description:

Building on the mapping of regional tools and practices for adult upskilling, this activity will entail the identification and in-depth study of 2/3 pathways per co-applicant region which already adopt the three-step structure of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation and possibly its enabling principles (outreach, guidance and support measures, coordination, follow-up and evaluation). They should ideally address the same priority group/s of low-skilled identified in WP2 for the given region. This will be discussed and shared among partners through the organisation of a Steering group meeting (see below WP6 - Project Management), during which clear selection criteria for the collection of the upskilling pathways to be studied in greater detail will be defined.

3.2 developing three case studies

Target group: *Regions, Social Partners, PES, secondary education providers (both public and private), CPIA, low skilled adults*

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: M5-M7

Short description:

Strengths and weaknesses of each pathway will be analysed by the research team which will consist of INAPP and FGB researchers as well as those in charge of the design and delivery of such pathways at the regional level. Consideration will be given also to existing opportunities for further development of such pathways such as current/ expected financial and administrative capacity.

3.3 Definition of a model for the effective implementation of the UP:

Target group: Regions, Social Partners, PES, secondary education providers (both public and private), CPIA, low skilled adults

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: M7

Short description:

Based on the case study activity, a cross-institutional group of experts will work towards an agreement on a model of implementation of the UP, to be devised by combining information on existing regional practices already suitable to the UP (from the case studies) and ideas on how to improve these (findings from WP1 on EU recommendations, comparative analysis with the French system, other relevant literature exploited etc.)

3.4 Validation of a model for the effective implementation of the UP

Target group: Regions, Social Partners, PES, secondary education providers (both public and private), CPIA, low skilled adults

Foreseen implementation time, duration and place: M7-11

Short description:

Prior to the model dissemination, it is paramount to test the Model framework and contents against a broader scrutiny, particularly to ensure its transferability/replicability/upscaling. The main validation tool will be the organisation of 4 workshops, one in each territory covered by the action and one at the national level. Additional validation activities will consist in the application of a Delphi analysis.

Deliverables

Model for the implementation of UP including three case studies on existing upskilling pathways in co-applicant regions, including detailed info regarding the process and criteria employed for their collection

A fully-fledged model for the implementation of the UP on each regions' priority group

Recommendation including concrete measures, funding and target groups of the proposed model for the implementation of the UP

This WP will take on board the following tools and experiences:

- processes connected to the assessment of qualifications, competences and certification frameworks, validation of non-formal and informal learning

- the Referencing process, including the Italian Qualifications Referencing to the EQF, the Legislative Decree no. 13/2013; the Inter-ministerial Decree of 30 June 2015 on an Operative Framework for the national recognition of the regional qualifications and competences, within the national Repertory of qualifications.

- the online tools: the Atlas of Labour and the Repertory of Qualifications and and the database on Professions, Occupations and Needs

- the pilot experiences to validate and make transparent skills and competences within the national program of Civil Service volunteers, in connection to the Youth Guarantee program (2015/2016);

SHORT SUMMARY OF THE E.QU.A.L. ACTION

The E.QU.A.L. action will contribute to preparing the ground for the effective implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation in Italy by providing a concrete contribution in the identification of the main elements of an UP strategy. It will do so by mapping existing policies, tools, and resources following the three-step approach envisaged by the Recommendation (skills assessment, personalized training and skills validation); developing a methodology for the identification of priority groups that can be customized to the needs of the different regional contexts; developing a model for the implementation of the UP building on existing practices. It will work in close cooperation with relevant actors in the field of adult learning and main bodies in charge of the UP strategy in order to ensure that activities and outputs are tailored to their information needs and their awareness is raised. To this end a multi-level and transnational partnership has been developed, involving public and private bodies covering different geographical levels.

Outputs and deliverables will be assessed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders as well as to the general public through a multi-channel communication strategy.

Specific objective(s)

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to the upskilling of low skilled adults by supporting relevant Italian national authorities in implementing so called Upskilling pathways in response to the relevant Recommendation of October 2016. In particular the UP recommendation calls on Member States to design and implement schemes characterised by a three-step approach (skills assessment, provision of tailored training and education and validation of acquired skills) aimed at increasing basic numeracy, literacy and digital skills of adults or facilitating the achievement of a higher qualification. To this effect MS are encouraged to submit a national plan of action defining actions and priority group(s) by mid-2018. Based on our knowledge of the Italian governance framework for skills development, we propose to articulate our support as follows: overview of the current situation; identification of criteria for the identification of priority groups; and further support to national and regional stakeholders in devising such upskilling schemes by drawing on existing tools and resources. Our action is characterized by the promotion of a participatory and enabling approach by aiming at maximum dissemination of findings and tools developed throughout the action.

More specifically the action aims at:

1. Providing an overview of existing tools and resources upon which UP can be devised and organised, by identifying relevant gaps and weaknesses and proposing ways to overcome them. The overview will be enriched by a transnational benchmarking exercise built around the French experience. The stock-taking action will build upon European Commission and other European institutions analyses and guidelines and the work carried out by the lead applicant

in its role as the national coordinator of adult learning, and more in general by capitalising on partners' unique knowledge and expertise. This objective is fully in line with Specific Objective 1;

2. Supporting relevant national authorities as well regional and local partners with the identification of priority groups of Upskilling Pathways, in line with the UP Recommendation. This will be achieved by developing a methodology for the identification of priority groups that can be tailored according to the needs of the different contexts. This objective is in line with Specific Objective 2, calling for provision of support to national authorities in the targeting of UP at priority groups;

3. Defining a model for implementing the UP based on the systematization of findings of three regional representative case studies. These are carried out with a view to understanding how existing measures, tools and services may be streamlined and organized so as to support full UP, what works best and other lessons learned. The model will be validated by relevant territorial and national stakeholders with the purpose of testing the adequacy and transferability of the model, the accuracy and usability of the targeting tool and to better gauge its transferability/up scaling. This objective contributes to Specific Objective 1 as it supports competent authorities in taking full stock of the potential for building the UP on the territories and by providing them with a concrete support tool (model). It also contributes to Specific Objectives 3 in that it contributes to raising their capacity to design and implement UP on their territories.

Duration of activities: Months 18

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION: WORK PLAN

The workplan is structured around 6 work packages, as follows:

WP1: Taking stock of existing Adult learning policies, measures and resources in Italy; overview and appraisal of tools and practices.

Duration: 6 months, from M1 to M6.

Activities: *Desk and field research for the definition of low skilled individuals, Mapping of existing policies and resources, Transnational benchmarking.*

Event: Launch workshop and Stakeholders meeting (Rome) (covering also WP2)

W2: Targeting: a model to identify priority groups for the implementation of UP.

Duration: 3 months, from M1 to M4.

Activities: *Data collection and analysis using primary and secondary data for Identification of labour market relevant skills and learning needs, Scenario analysis, development of a model for identification of priority groups.*

Event: Action launch workshop and Stakeholders meeting (Rome) (covering also WP1)

WP3: Modeling: regional case studies for the definition of a model for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways, including validation.

Duration: 7 months, from M4 to M11.

Activities: *Field research at regional level for Identification of relevant existing upskilling pathways, drafting of case studies, development and validation of a model for UP implementation.*

Events: three regional validation workshops (Milan, Rome and Trento), 1 national validation workshop/stakeholders meeting

WP4: Disseminating: multi-channel communication strategy and dissemination activities.

Duration: 18 months, from M1 to M18.

Activities: *Organisation of dissemination initiatives, development of dissemination materials and tools (such as final report, guidance notes, communication material, website/portal) according to dissemination and communication plan, drafting of guidelines.*

Event: Final conference (Rome)

WP5: Monitoring and evaluation.

Duration: 18 months, from M1 to M18.

Activities: Development of quality assurance plan, ongoing monitoring, drafting evaluation report

WP6: Programme management and coordination.

Duration: 18 months, from M1 to M18.

Activities: *Provision of scientific and organisational support to all partners, Development of guidelines for project management and internal consortium procedures and communication tools, drafting final work plan*

Events: *Kick off meeting (Rome), Steering Committee meetings (Rome, Milan, Trento).*