

**Programme for a “National Strategy for Financial,  
Insurance, and Pension Education”,  
2017 - 2019 three-year period**

The Programme, adopted by the Government after acquiring the favourable opinions of Parliament, concretely outlines the main initiatives through which the National Strategy for Financial, Insurance and Pension education will be implemented over the 2017-2019 three-year period.

The Programme aims to promote large-scale initiatives, build a system of incentives, ensure excellence in interventions, and work together and in a coordinated manner with other public and private entities.

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## 1. Introduction

This Programme concretely outlines the main initiatives through which the National Strategy for Financial, Insurance and Pension Education will be implemented during the 2017-2019 three-year period. The three-year planning period corresponds with the mandate of the “Committee for the Planning and Coordination of Financial Education Activities”, which operates bearing in mind that the ultimate goal of the National Strategy is a long-term one, epitomised, in the so-called *Vision*, as well as the achievement of a state of *Financial Knowledge and Skills for all, in order to create a bright and secure future*.

In order to reach this ultimate goal, the Committee, as defined in its *Mission Statement*, will work to *promote and coordinate initiatives to increase financial, insurance, and pension knowledge and skills, and improve everyone's ability to make choices that are consistent with their goals and conditions*.

The Programme will be structured according to the 4 main guidelines of the National Strategy (promoting large-scale initiatives, building a system of incentives, ensuring excellence in initiatives, working together and in a coordinated manner with other public and private entities).

The Committee has been allocated a budget, amounting to EUR 1 million per year, for each of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 years. During the first year, resources were largely devoted to the preparation of a portal that will be tested by the end of 2017 and then publicly launched in January 2018. Financial resources are allocated exclusively to the expenses for the implementation of the Strategy; the members of the Committee do not receive compensation for participating in its activities.

Given the high number of entities potentially involved in the promotion and coordination of the initiatives envisaged by the Programme, the Committee itself has proposed the establishment of a technical secretariat at the Ministry of Economy and Finance, with a staff dedicated to financial education.

## **2. From strategy to implementation**

### **2.1. Strategy target audience**

The Strategy target audience will be the entire population and specific groups of citizens, identified according to a scale of vulnerability expressed by the deficit of knowledge and skills. The Programme presents the main initiatives by grouping them by the following target audiences:

1. the entire population;
2. young people;
3. adults;
4. some vulnerable groups (women, elderly, migrants);
5. small entrepreneurs.

The target audience will be reached, first of all, through mass communication campaigns aimed at raising the level of awareness and attention to the need to acquire knowledge and skills in the financial, pension and insurance fields; the campaigns will also aim to orient individuals towards some basic behaviours that can improve consumers self-protection. Schools, on the other hand, are the selected place for real training initiatives for young people of school age. Likewise, the workplace is where training initiatives for employed youth and adults, as well as small entrepreneurs should be promoted. The Committee may sign agreements with organisations, professional associations and other public and private bodies and institutions, with the aim of creating a widespread network capable of reaching specific segments of the population.

The initiatives will be aimed at improving basic financial, insurance and pension knowledge and skills, for youth and adults, with a special focus on the 4 skill areas identified by the OECD.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 2.2. First steps

The Committee will formalise consultation and research groups that will be responsible for implementing and coordinating initiatives. The groups will work closely with the Committee, also collaborating with experts and stakeholders. The groups will be responsible, inter alia, for defining contents suitable for each type of initiative, setting priorities and objectives to be achieved; for studying the most effective communication/education methods for the various target groups; and for identifying criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the various initiatives.

A new census of financial education initiatives in Italy will be launched in January 2018. The census will be a key operational tool:

- to get a more complete overview of the current offer and its characteristics;
- to identify good practices, already tested and validated through impact audits, to be expanded, spread, used as “pilot projects”;
- to inform the target population of the available offer;
- to verify the willingness of individual proposers to collaborate with the Committee and the ways to accomplish this;
- to promote a coordination that fosters the proper allocation of resources, avoiding the overlap of multiple initiatives on the same objectives.

In addition and as anticipated, between December 2017 and January 2018, the National Portal of Financial, Insurance and Pension Information and Education will be launched as detailed below.

### **3. Key initiatives for the 2017-2019 three-year period**

#### **3.1. Initiatives targeting the general population**

The first initiative is the Financial, Insurance and Pension Information and Education Portal, currently under construction. The first version will be released by December 2017, while the actual public launch is scheduled for January 2018. In this way, the Committee believes it can properly test the portal, also collecting indications from stakeholders before promoting its diffusion. As the experiences of other countries show, the portal represents the pivotal initiative of each National Strategy, around which other projects are launched.

In the first version, the portal will contain basic information. The main content will be organised by “life events”, a mode recognised as accessible and useful, adopted in many financial education portals around the world, and by banking, financial, pension and insurance tools available to consumers. It will offer some guidance on desirable and undesirable behaviours, and guides with specific explanations of, for example, behavioural traps or factors to consider in retirement planning. The content’s language and structure are intentionally simple and accessible by everyone, even those without basic knowledge.

The design for this first version of the portal was tested through a large number of focus groups. The research report produced at the end of the tests has provided useful guidelines for the development of the portal in terms of content, language and graphics.

Later, toolkits and educational tutorials will be developed to facilitate the transition from theoretical knowledge to practical experimentation (applications for financial planning, behavioural tests and interactive games), also to enable trainers and promoters of the initiatives to take advantage of a modular educational path, complete but flexible, that explores the themes of the Strategy.

The Portal will therefore be able to support the initiatives that will be carried out by the Committee and other stakeholders: looking ahead, it will be the “place” where documentation and material referring to each type of intervention that will be planned will converge. It will also serve as a source of information for initiatives or

opportunities for financial, insurance and pension education that the Committee intends to promote.

Another crucial lever for the spread of basic knowledge to a large number of citizens is the awareness-raising and information campaign that will make use of advertising tools and the mass and social media. The first awareness-raising campaign, scheduled for spring 2018, will also help to inform about the existence of the national portal with the aim of making it the point of reference on the web for all citizens who want to acquire basic information on appropriate behaviour in the financial, insurance and pension fields.

The following initiatives are also planned for 2018:

- The establishment of the Financial Education Month, during which initiatives and one or more events on a national and/or international basis will be organised to raise the level of awareness on financial, insurance and pension education. Above all, it represents an opportunity to foster coordination among the stakeholders interested in financial education, so that we can work together and make planned initiatives more effective, regardless of the actors active in this field.
- Collaborations with national and local agencies and newspapers, as well as business or financial newspapers in order to increase public awareness. Collaboration with newspapers targeting vulnerable segments of the population, such as women, in order to increase awareness through information tools usually used, with content and language perceived as close by such citizens.
- Collaboration with the national radio and television service for the purpose of introducing basic knowledge in the financial, insurance and pension fields as part of popular dramas and games on the schedule.

### **3.2. Initiatives in favour of young people**

In collaboration with the MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research) the Committee will promote financial education initiatives across schools with the aim of introducing financial education, over time, among the priorities to be pursued in the

strengthening of the education offer and, for those courses of study for which this seems appropriate, in the curricula.

For initiatives related to students aged 15-18, the Committee will draw on the expertise and guidance offered by OECD/INFE and PISA data analysis<sup>[2]</sup>.

The Committee believes that it is important to create incentives for both teachers and students regarding financial, pension, and insurance knowledge, and to enhance existing initiatives. In particular, the following initiatives are planned:

- Enhancement of curricula. Law No. 107 of 2015 established 48.812 teaching jobs across schools (from primary up to secondary level), intended to enhance the legal educational offer through additional and optional activities, usually in the afternoon, in favour of pupils, with the aim of pursuing some priority objectives listed by the same law (Article 1, paragraph 7). These include “enhancing knowledge in legal and economic-financial matters.” The MIUR annually assigns more specific goals to schools through a circular regarding the enhancement of the curricula. Therefore, it would be possible, beginning with the 2018/2019 school year, to include financial education goals in the newsletter.
- Teacher training. It is possible to enrich the National Training Plan for Teachers by including financial education in some of the existing objectives (it is now included in the “School and Work” goal, but it would be possible to include it also in “Global Citizenship”) or by planning new objectives. This would serve to inform teachers of the importance of training in financial, insurance and pension education, provided that it would depend on schools to decide whether or not to devote part of the resources to them allocated, however substantial, to this priority. The Plan is a four-year plan and the current one covers the 2016-2019 period. Each year, the MIUR issues an implementation circular, which could integrate the plan as stated above, as early as the 2018/2019 school year, pending the new edition of the plan itself.
- National Guidelines. The national guidelines contain the specific learning objectives, and the targets for the development of skills expected for all the courses activated across every level and stage of education. It would be possible to start an in-depth study aimed at evaluating the potential inclusion

into the guidelines, starting from 2019/2020 school year, of new skill development goals or learning objectives related to financial, insurance, and pension education knowledge, or declining existing goals and objectives in order to promote it.

- **INVALSI Surveys.** INVALSI has previously collaborated with the PISA programme, conducting sample surveys to assess the financial literacy knowledge and skills of pupils and students. INVALSI could carry out a survey reporting the evolution, over time, of the financial knowledge and skills of pupils and students, also integrating it into existing tests. Finding any additional funds for this purpose would be helpful.
- **Teaching Experiments.** Article 11 of Presidential Decree No. 275 of 1999 provides that the Minister of Education may authorise, upon request of individual schools, experiments that change the structure of the school system, both with regard to the time plan of lessons and to national directions, without prejudice to the achievement of one of the existing qualifications. The MIUR has already received requests to start an experiment, at some Humanities High Schools, aimed at an in-depth study of the themes of financial education. If it is favourably evaluated by the supervisors in charge, it may be authorised beginning with the 2018/2019 school year.
- **Memoranda of Understanding.** The MIUR, individual Regional School Offices or individual schools may sign memoranda of understanding with associations and bodies interested in promoting financial education. Within the framework of the memoranda, it is possible to distribute in-depth study materials to schools, organise seminars, etc. There are many initiatives already underway in this regard (e.g., with the Bank of Italy/IVASS (Institute for Insurance Supervision), Agenzia delle Entrate (the Revenue Agency), Corte dei Conti (Court of Auditors), Guardia di Finanza (Finance Police), etc.), which can be enhanced. It is possible to activate them at any time during the school year, thus representing the most flexible tool for the MIUR. The Committee could provide useful guidance to accomplish their coordination.
- **Olympics and competitions.** The MIUR can organise student competitions, either individually or organised in teams, on any subject or on specific topics,

so it would be possible to organise some on financial education as well. Among the long-standing, the most famous ones are those of Mathematics, Italian and Latin. Winners of the competitions receive a cash prize. Besides the MIUR, the organisers may also be associations, entities or individual schools, which may apply for accreditation with the MIUR if they intend to make use of funds budgeted for student awards. To date, no financial education Olympics have been organised, but it would be possible to plan one for the 2018/2019 school year, if supported by entities or associations with experience on the subject or interested in (co)financing the event.

- Hackathon. For two years the MIUR has been organising events, called “hackathons”, which last two days, during which 100-200 students from schools all over the country and bearers of different knowledge, complementary to each other, come together in order to build, starting from scratch, finished and usable products in various fields. This is a format that is traditionally used in the field of software, from which it borrows its name (“hacking marathon”), and in fact the MIUR has organised several hackathons during which students of computer science, design and literature were asked to collaborate to produce apps of various kinds. Recently hackathons have also been experimented in different areas (food, mountain knowledge, etc.) by the above with good success. The model may be tested within the themes of the Strategy.

Some of the programmes of the initiatives already active could be strengthened and/or improved: for example, that of the Bank of Italy/IVASS, which in the last edition reached over 100.000 students, could benefit from more direct collaboration with experts from the MIUR that will result from participation in the Committee.

### **3.3. Initiatives in favour of adults**

The Committee intends to promote and coordinate financial, pension and insurance education initiatives in the workplace, also in collaboration with the National Social Security Institute (INPS) and the Ministries.

There are initiatives and pilot projects, with positive feedback, that can be scaled up.<sup>[3]</sup> The experience of other countries shows that these initiatives, when well structured

and with robust programmes, have proven to have not only a positive impact on, but also good outreach to, large segments of the population.

As mentioned above, concerning the Portal, the Committee will also promote the development of toolkits and tutorials over time. To share best practices or role models, the Committee will establish awards for the best programme, creation of apps, calculation engines, and interactive games that facilitate financial and retirement planning in the workplace as well. In the area of social security, the Committee also intends to promote initiatives with COVIP (the National Authority responsible for the supervision of Italian pension funds), INPS, Professional funds, and Ministries to inform and educate workers on pension issues.

The Committee also intends to support and contribute to the development of the activities carried out by the Ministry of Economic Development (MiSE), in collaboration with IVASS, in the field of financial education with particular reference to insurance education.

It also intends to collaborate with the MiSE as part of the institutional tasks connected with consumer protection, for the preparation of calls for tenders relating to initiatives for the benefit of consumers financed by the fines imposed by the Competition and Market Authority (AGCM), pursuant to Art.148 of Law No. 388/2000; the calls are addressed to nationally representative consumer and user associations (registered in the ministerial list referred to in Art. 137 of the Consumer Code) and to the Regions. Committee members, who in many cases already cooperate with consumer associations, may provide support in the development or improvement of shared and effective financial education pathways. In this context, the Committee intends to promote information and communication campaigns.

### **3.4. Initiatives in favour of vulnerable groups (women, elderly, migrants)**

The Committee intends to promote, strengthen, and coordinate financial, insurance, and pension education activities aimed at vulnerable groups. Precisely because these groups are of particular interest, there are already initiatives promoted by some Committee members, such as the Bank of Italy, Consob (the Italian Commission for Companies and the Stock Exchange), and IVASS, which the Committee intends to develop more broadly.

Thanks to the new census that will begin in January, other third-party initiatives will also be identified and promoted, as well as opportunities to partner with other entities to expand the reach of these programmes. The Committee will play an important coordinating role on all of these new activities.

Collaborations between Committee members and the private and not-for-profit sectors have already been carried out to increase the level of knowledge of women on financial, pension and insurance issues. The Committee intends to encourage the development of initiatives dedicated to women.

A route that the Committee intends to explore for the elderly is the University of the Third Age and other associations dedicated to them, which have a good spread throughout the territory and with which some members of the Committee have already cooperated.

The Bank of Italy has partnered with the MIUR to work with the Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA), a particularly useful channel for reaching a wide range of disadvantaged people and groups, such as migrants. The Committee will promote the integration of financial education into CPIA programmes.

### **3.5. Initiatives in favour of small entrepreneurs**

The Committee intends to promote and coordinate financial education for entrepreneurship in schools and at the Chambers of Commerce through the involvement - thanks to the Ministry of Economic Development - of the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craftsmanship and Agriculture (Unioncamere).

It also intends to collaborate with the Bank of Italy, Consob, and IVASS on other initiatives that they will launch on the basis of a memorandum of understanding with Unioncamere.

The described Programme does not exclude taking into account further collaborations or proposals useful to achieve the *Vision* and *Mission* of the Strategy, always keeping in mind the need to enhance synergies and limit overlaps.

[1] OECD, 2016, *Core competencies framework on financial literacy for adults*; OECD, 2015, *Core competencies framework on financial literacy for youth*.

[2] OECD, 2015, *Core competencies framework on financial literacy for youth*.

[3] Billari, F.C., C. A. Favero and F. Saita, 2017, *Nudging financial and demographic literacy: experimental evidence from an Italian Trade Union pensions fund*, Baffi Carefin working paper, Università Bocconi, Milan.