National Operational Program
FOR SCHOOL
New opportunities from Europe

Unione Europea

FONDI STRUTTURALI EUROPEI

PON 2014-2020

PER LA SCUOLA - COMPETENZE E AMBIENTI PER L'APPRENDIMENTO (FSE-FESR)

MIUR

Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca
Dipartimento per la programmazione e la Gestione delle Risorse Umane, Finanziarie e Strumentali
Direzione Generale per interventi in materia di Edilizia Scolastica per la gestione dei Fondi Strutturali per l'Istruzione e per l'Innovazione Digitale
Ufficio IV

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FONDI STRUTTURALI EUROPEI PON 2014-2020

2014-2020 National Operational Program

FOR SCHOOL

SKILLS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

New opportunities from Europe

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WHY A NATIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAM [PON]?

SECTION 1

WHY A NATIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAM [PON]?

"High quality education and training systems, which are both effective and fair, are essential to ensure Europe's success and to enhance employability ". Such is the description of Objective no. 2 of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020).

Given the importance played by education for the development of the Country, it was decided to adopt a National Operational Program (PON) to give Italian schools the opportunity to access community resources, additional to those made available by the national government, in order to improve the system as a whole.

The **PON "For School - skills and learning environments"** (hereinafter, PON "For School") becomes, therefore, an important tool to support Italian policies in the field of Education, together with the "Buona scuola" Government contributions to reform the Italian school system.

The Program covers the seven-year 2014-2020 period, and is intended to fund both interventions of a tangible nature, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and intangible actions, through the European Social Fund (ESF).

The **PON "For School"** has a dual purpose: on one hand to pursue **impartiality and cohesion**, encouraging the reduction of territorial

disparities, strengthening the most disadvantaged schools and supporting students with difficulties; on the other, to **promote excellence** to guarantee equal access to education for everyone, also ensuring the potential for educational success and the enhancement of individual talent, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Quality of learning and **inclusiveness of education** represent the two main cornerstones of the intervention strategy of the new Program, aimed at supporting innovation through:

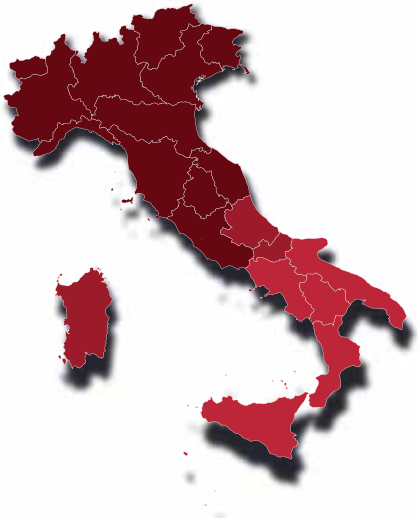
- Extension of **school hours** and the **types of activities** offered by schools;
- **An "open" school** conceived as civic center not only for students, but also for citizens, a hub for bringing together the local community to promote actions preventing youth and school dropout problems;
- Early school access through the **strengthening of kindergarten**, and the increasing of school time and the number of choices for all children;
- Organization of technological didactic spaces responding to new qualitative and architectural standards with the aim of creating **smart schools**;
- Development of **innovative school buildings**, endowed with **modern technological equipment** able to respond directly to the needs requested by the "information society";

- Special attention to **more disadvantaged school areas and those at greater risk for high dropout rates**;
- Organization of specific programs for **the integration of disadvantaged students and/or those with sociocultural and language deficits**;
- **Orientation** of the students aimed at encouraging maximum development of potential and attitudes, neutralizing the effects of social inequalities and enhancing individual merit regardless of the social situation;
- Promoting of processes for **school internationalization** aiming at language enhancement and participation in European programs;
- Development of an **adult education system** able to govern training processes throughout life;
- Revival of **technical and professional education**, through the re-planning of interventions that are primarily aimed at strengthening the link between training and the employment market;
- **enhancement of school staff**, particularly teachers, with new career prospects and adequate training and updating of skills;
- Starting of an appropriate **national evaluation system**, which allows to define measurable performance objectives and to verify their achievement, with the aim of transparency and social accountability, as well as to international benchmarking.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE PROGRAM?

The PON "For School" is intended for the structural and qualitative enhancement and improvement of schools of all levels and types present throughout the national territory.

In line with the regulations established by the European Commission for the 2014-2020 Programming period, the Italian regions have been divided into three categories:



Less developed regions :
Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily

Regions in transition :
Abruzzo, Molise and Sardinia

More developed regions :
Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, Tuscany, Trentino Alto Adige, Umbria, Val d'Aosta and Veneto.

The interventions are financed throughout the national territory according to EU agreement. The amount of resources devoted to the three categories have been fixed in consideration of the local needs and the social economic context.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PON INITIATIVES?

The direct recipients of the PON are:

- Students from kindergarten to high school
- Teachers
- School staff
- Adults
- Officials and management

WHICH FUNDS WILL BE USED AND HOW MUCH IS NEEDED?

For the 2014-2020 Program, an overall budget of just over 3 billion euros is available, of which about 2.2 billion allocated by the European Social Fund (ESF) and 800 million by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The total budget is divided into the three categories of regions.

Less developed regions – € 2.100.000.000

Regions in transition – € 193.000.000

More developed regions – € 714.000.000

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION ENTAIL?

To participate in the PON, each school is requested to make a self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses. Through this assessment the school Improvement plan containing a set of proposasl, is drawn up. This Plan regards both ESF and ERDF actions.

To submit their Plan, schools will have tools provided by the MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research) and they will apply, from time to time, for:

- **An integrated plan of interventions**: a competition notice with a diversified set of measures that will be identified by schools according to their needs.
- **Public bulletins on single actions**: interventions on specific objectives.
- **Centralized actions**: initiatives promoted by the Managing Authority to implement centralized system-oriented measures.

At operational level, schools will have two managing platforms available:

- "Intervention management" (GPU) an online application to be filled in with project modules and useful to manage their own activities;
- "Educational Information System, SIDI, to manage administrative and financial reporting of projects, once they have been funded

HOW IS THE PON STRUCTURED?

The PON "For School" is divided into **four axes**:

- **Axis 1 - Education**: aimed at improving the quality of the education system and supporting skill enhancing, by promoting greater participation in training courses and lifelong learning processes.
- **Axis 2 - Educational infrastructures**: aimed at promoting and supporting education, vocational training and lifelong learning through actions aimed at increasing school attractiveness of infrastructures and upgrading, technology and learning environments improving and ensuring architectural spaces tailored to innovative didactic approaches.

- **Axis 3 - Institutional and administrative ability**: aimed at increasing the institutional ability and the efficiency of public administration with the aim of improving overall governance in the education sector.
- **Axis 4 - Technical Assistance**: aimed at improving the implementation of the Program by strengthening the fund management capacity of Ministry of Education and other subjects involved and to ensure compliance with European and national legislation.

INVESTING IN SKILLS, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

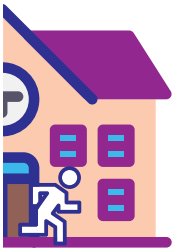
SECTION 3

INVESTING IN SKILLS, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

CREATING A QUALITY EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, SCHOOL STAFF BENEFIT

The ESF will make available to Italian schools resources for interventions contrasting school dropout, improving student key competences, strengthening professional training of teachers and school staff, and fostering lifelong learning.

SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION



The phenomenon of dropping out of school, albeit with different characteristics, is common to all the Regions of Italy. In order to contain dropout rates, the PON "For School" will greatly act on those aspects linked to education (e.g., promoting greater self-awareness and social sensitivity among students), as well as those related to social dynamics (e.g. active involvement of families in inclusion strategies). Actions for school dropout prevention will focus on the on the most affected areas of the Country and on particularly fragile students or

with specific needs. The main intervention strategy will be focused on the concept of school as a civic center, for local communities, and will be based on the following factors:

- Extending opening times;
- Diversifying educational offer
- Implementing building projects to make schools more welcoming;
- Enhancing technological equipment and didactic spaces according the different educational fields of studies (scientific and technology high schools, music and dance high schools, vocational-technical secondary schools).

INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

In this view, schools will contribute to reduce dropout rates and at the same time will become a place of social utility at the service of the community, fostering the integration of more vulnerable groups and promoting social economy. To achieve such as ambitious goal, the contribution of already existing groups (public authorities, private subjects, tertiary sector organizations) it is essential.

PREPARED AND COMPETITIVE STUDENTS

The PON "For School" aims at improving student's learning level, both for main subjects (communicating in Italian and in foreign languages, scientific and mathematical competence, digital skills) and cross-cutting skills ("learning to learn", social and civic competences, **environmental education**, sense of initiative and **entrepreneurship**, awareness and cultural expression). The goal is to ensure acquisition of a solid entry level for all students, balancing cultural, economic, and social disadvantages of reference, easing the acquisition of the necessary skills and competences for personal development, active participation in social life, and access to the labour market. This objective can be achieved through four main lines of intervention:

EXPERTS IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE COURSES ABROAD

- Actions **enhancing both basic and cross-cutting key competences**, with specific attention to those aimed at spreading the entrepreneurial culture and connection with the labour market;
- Education and training programmes combined with work experience schemes, promoting **internships abroad** within inno-

vative business environments;

- Measures to **qualify education offer and vocational training**, promoting the relationship between schools, training and business and facilitating the creation of school-university-business networks;
- **Orientation** actions, not only in selecting educational programs, but also in order to help young people willing to enter the labour market.

In compliance with EU guidelines, emphasis is therefore placed on the need to step up measures to counteract youth unemployment, also improving the **relevance of training** programs in reference to the labour market, and facilitating the transition to employment. The Program is thus aimed, as highlighted in the third line of action, to develop and strengthen this connection. This perspective takes into account the recent National Education Policy Guidelines, highlighting the need to focus on dual education to increase the number of learning hours per year, the "Impresa Didattica", to develop apprenticeships. To this end, the PON will focus on actions aimed at strengthening key competences, and inter alia "learning to learn" and "sense of initiative and entrepreneurship". These actions will bring school and work closer, through the direct experiences of students in a working environment.

AMONG CROSS CUTTING SKILLS: EUROPEAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIC EDUCATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LEGALITY EDUCATION

QUALIFYING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

Professional development of Teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of the service offered by the educational system. The Program thus includes actions impacting on teacher's professional development enriching their skills in the most innovative disciplines (ICT, globalization, multiculturalism, school reforms, etc.) and ensuring continuous training, also including peer exchange supporting those teachers more open minded in innovation and education. The main lines of action will be:

- **teacher training professional development**, especially with regard to basic skills and other cross-cutting subject, in particular, **mobility actions for language learning**. These actions might be primarily focused on teachers in charge of CLIL programs. As for subject areas,paths for innovation can be opened, as well as grants to attend summer schools;
- Strengthening **of those teacher's skills in specific areas**, closely related with industry needs, such as **computer science** (integration between mathematics and information technology) for high schools and **robotics** (robotics/domotics applied to the various area of study) with particular reference to science, technology and vocational-technical schools;
- School managers and staff training and upgrading, organisation improving with efficiency implementing.

SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

The PON "For School" also engages in training actions for **adults**, supporting both the improvement of competence and the reintegration into education and training programs. These activities will be carried out in the Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIAs), which will foster lifelong learning and territorial networks. PON Education is focused on developing cross-curricular competences among adult people, acquiring useful skills for the labour market, increasing level of participation in social, political and economic life.

It will also counteract illiteracy and social isolation and promote active ageing.

These actions will help raising levels of education and knowledge, improving the offer for training and education and facilitating mobility, integration and reintegration into work.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOOLS

SECTION 3

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOOLS.

CREATING SMART SCHOOL, UPGRADING SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND ENHANCING WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

The ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) intervenes to strengthen and increase the quality of school environments, support and increase access to new technologies, and provide learning tools up to date with technological development.

A PLEASANT LOOKING, SAFE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY SCHOOL

The main objective of the interventions is to make **schools safer, smarter and in line with technological development**.

PON Education aims to favour the permanence of young people at school through the upgrading of educational structures and spaces and the improvement of the safety and accessibility of school environments. This will facilitate learning processes and will also make schools more useful and more integrated with the community. Interventions on structural and infrastructural problems will make **schools eco-efficient and safe**. In connection and in addiction to the national school building plans more spaces will be dedicated to **sports, art and recreational activities**.

The updating of institutions will take place through the provision of electrical, fire-prevention systems and emergency stairs; energy savings with insulation measures, photovoltaic systems construction, waste disposal systems, etc. Moreover, other interventions, include the removal of architectural barriers and the adaptation of furnishings and educational facilities.

The achievement of these objectives may also involve interventions planned for other purposes, such as the dissemination of a knowledge-based society and raising raising adult population level of education. By transforming schools into unique, integrated centres, these actions will contribute to support European strategies aimed at increasing social cohesion, also in fragile areas.

THE DIGITAL, INNOVATIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL

Dissemination of a knowledge-based society, in the world of education and training, plays an essential role. PON education contributes to the the promotion of new teaching approaches (i.e.new digital literacy) in line with the National Curriculum guidelines (DM 254/2012 and "La Buona Scuola" Programme). In this perspective, training plans shall be provided for students and school staff, with the dissemination of digital education contents and online learning resources.

Schools, therefore, will need all the necessary tools and structures to become increasingly digital. Investments shall therefore be aimed at upgrading and adapting technological equipment promoting online learning and **creating digital school centers** able to make rural and inland areas more accessible.

The educational institutions will be provided with multimedia technology in every classrooms. Interventions shall also be made to upgrade **schools workshops** (scientific, IT, technical, language, musical, theatrical, artistic, or specific depending on the chosen field of study), to improve key skills learning and the attractiveness of school environments for students and to raise the level of educational services offered.

Such actions will support the digitization, simplification and "dematerialization" process recently launched in Public Administrations. Some of the interventions will concern teacher training environments upgrading, thanks to the creation of specific study and work areas in compliance with the most modern technological standards.

Access to the **Information and Communication Technologies** (TIC) areas will thus be enhanced. This will facilitate a better exchange of information among the different school staff and between the staff employed in other school buildings in the area referred to.

Furthermore, the following will be developed and enhanced:

- Access to digital libraries and newspapers;
- More modern furnishings and tools to promote self-learning;

- Technological supports for digital content and for creating web platforms;
- E-learning practices and use of open networks;
- Connectivity and connection with the territory.

MODULAR AND FLEXIBLE SCHOOL AREAS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE NATIONAL TERRITORY

Another goal is the creation of **smart schools**, increasingly online, connected and integrated with the territory; innovative in the use of spaces, technologies and teaching-learning approaches. This shall promote the use of buildings beyond school hours, and the development of more advanced teaching and learning systems.

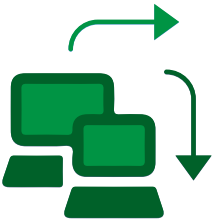
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL ABILITY AND PROMOTING AN EFFICIENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 4

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL ABILITY AND PROMOTING AN EFFICIENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Axis 3 of the PON includes actions to **strengthen institutional ability**, aimed at improving the governance of the overall "Education" sector. Specifically, this axis will concern the entire national territory, including all those projects having a systemic value or function of coordination, implementation, and evaluation of interventions.

OPEN DATA AND TRANSPARENCY



The PON "For School" wants to help schools to become transparent and accessible places, ensuring the diffusion of the open data and making our databases more accessible. The following actions are expected to be implemented:

- **E-government** dissemination;
- Design and development of information tools for collecting, processing, and disseminating information and for ensuring interoperability of databases (**open data**).

Through the PON "For School", educational institutions will be guided in the activation of the process of administrative documents dematerialization and of computerized management of services in order to have interoperable, reliable, open, and transparent databases (open data).

Therefore, it is necessary to develop communication, computer and data collection systems for school data collection system to enable a targeted and appropriate planning of interventions in relation to the different criticalities encountered. In this perspective system-oriented measures will be promoted to support schools improving their capacity of self-diagnosis, self-assessment and assessment. The extension and setting up, within the full Italian territory, of the **National Evaluation System** will perform a fundamental service of strengthening the system[1].

In this manner, each school can be supported to monitor indicators of effectiveness and efficiency of the educational offer, and to move towards a progressive improvement, providing the School Administration with useful information to plan support actions for schools in difficulty and offering the public and political decision-makers the due report on the actual implemented changes and effectiveness of the education and training system. The strengthening of evaluation processes in the direction of broadening of subject tests aimed at monitoring student performance (currently restricted to Italian and mathematics) may offer an important contribution to increase young people's skills, also in terms of their integration into the wider context of the European and global labour market.

[1] In line with the provisions of the Regulations on the national evaluation system for education and training.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

The Program, includes actions to support governance and strengthen institutional ability, such as:

- Training of school managers, executive and officials of central and peripheral Administration;
- Study, research, and support for the definition of standards, essential levels of service and development of quality systems.

The PON, therefore, intends to encourage the efficiency of the education system as a whole, through a series of interventions to support schools management, such as the professional preparation and updating of managers and officers increasingly involved in highly complex management processes.

At the same time, the Program intends to strengthen the network linking the MIUR, the Regional School Offices and schools, particularly by improving and enriching the applications and support services, in order to better coordinate the activities between the central and peripheral bodies and to ensure simplification, greater efficiency and effectiveness of actions.

THE PON "FOR SCHOOL" STRUCTURE

SECTION 5

THE PON "FOR SCHOOL" STRUCTURE

Axes, priorities, and expected results

AXIS I
EDUCATION (ESF)

I) REDUCING AND PREVENTING SCHOOL DROP OUT; PROMOTING EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO GOOD QUALITY PRESCHOOL, PRIMARY, AND SECONDARY EDUCATION [...]	10.1 Reduction of early educational failure and dropout rates 10.2 Improvement of student's key competencies 10.9 Improvement school capacity in terms of self-diagnosis, self-assessment, assessment and teaching methods innovation
II) STRENGTHENING EQUAL ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL AGE GROUPS IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTEXTS [...]	10.3 Raising education level among adult population, with particular regard to the lower segments of education
III) IMPROVING EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM RESPONSIVENESS TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS	10.6 Qualifying education and vocational technical training offerings 10.8 "Knowledge-based society" dissemination in the world of education, training and innovative teaching approaches adoption

AXIS 2
EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES (ERDF)

INVESTING IN EDUCATION, FORMATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION AS WELL AS IN LIFELONG LEARNING, DEVELOPING THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

10.7 Increasing the propensity of young people to stay in training contexts and improve the safety and accessibility of school environments

10.8 "Knowledge-based society" dissemination in the world of education, training and innovative teaching approaches adoption

AXIS 3
INSTITUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY (ESF)

INVESTING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS AND PUBLIC SERVICES INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS [...] IN TERMS OF REFORMS, BETTER REGULATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

11.1 Increasing of transparency and interoperability, and access to public data

11.3 Improving of the performance of the Public Administration

11.5 Increasing levels of integrity and legality in PA

AXIS 4
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (ESF)

Improving efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the interventions financed, as well as verification and control

Improving and developing information and advertising methods, forms, contents, actions and results of the Program.

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