To the clients:

Subject: Self-Employment – Central-Northern Italy and "Resto al Sud 2.0"

Introduction and Objectives

Starting from 15 October 2025, young individuals aged between 18 and 35 (not yet completed) wishing to start a business—either as sole proprietors or in corporate form—will be eligible to apply for new public incentives, namely "Self-Employment Central-North" and "Resto al Sud 2.0". Applications must be submitted exclusively via the **Invitalia** online platform, which will be active from the same date.

The target beneficiaries are individuals meeting one of the following conditions: **unemployed, not in education or employment, inactive, or recipients of the GOL (Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori – Workers Employability Guarantee)** program. Particular attention is given to individuals experiencing social marginalisation or discrimination.

From a territorial standpoint, the program consists of two components: **Self-Employment Central-North**, active in the central and northern regions of Italy; **Resto al Sud 2.0**, targeted at southern and island region which eligibility criteria are substantially similar for both, the amount of financial support varies depending on the economic needs of each macro-area.

The incentives include non-repayable grants, *vouchers*, training programs, and business support services in the start-up phase. The dual aim is to foster labour market inclusion for young people facing economic or social hardship and to promote the creation of innovative and sustainable enterprises throughout the country. The intervention model is based on an integrated system covering guidance, application assessment, fund disbursement, and project monitoring. Additional merit-based benefits are provided for participants in preparatory courses. Furthermore, mandatory post-funding tutoring has been introduced to support applicants through the most critical phases of the entrepreneurial start-up process.

The legislative framework supporting this initiative is Decree-Law No. 60/2024, converted into Law No. 95/2024, within the scope of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and the National Programme "Youth, Women, and Work 2021–2027. The total budget is EUR 800.000.000,00, of which EUR 700.000.000,00 are sourced from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and EUR 100.000.000,00 from the PNRR funds.

Invitalia is primarily responsible for project evaluation, fund disbursement, and monitoring. The National Agency for Microcredit (ENM) is tasked with providing initial orientation and training services, including via structured online modules tailored to specific investment types.

Beneficiaries

The incentives under the **Self-Employment Central-North** and **Resto al Sud 2.0** programs may support various types of initiatives, including: **freelance work** with VAT registration, **sole proprietorships, general partnerships and limited liability companies, cooperatives and professional associations.**

The two programs are essentially "twins" in terms of objectives, target groups, and eligible expenses, differing only in their geographic scope. The **Self-Employment** applies to center-north Italy Italia (Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta, Liguria, Lombardia, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Emilia- Romagna, Toscana, Lazio, Umbria e Marche) while **Resto al Sud 2.0** applies to: south regions and islands, Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sardinia, and Sicily. This geographic distinction aims to promote **economic rebalancing** between different areas of the country by adjusting the incentives to the specific socio-economic conditions of each region.

Eligible initiatives must be recently established, i.e. no more than one month prior to the application date and must not yet be operational at the time of application. Applications deriving from the mere reopening of businesses that ceased operations within the previous six months (with the same ATECO code up to the third digit) **are not eligible**.

Types of Incentives

The incentive scheme is structured into **two alternative modes of access to financing**, designed to meet different project requirements.

The **first mode** provides for the granting of a **non-repayable voucher**, which may cover **up to 100% of the initial investment**. In the **Central-Northern regions**, the maximum amount of the voucher is **euro 30.000, 00** per individual project, which may be increased to euro **40.000,00** where the investment primarily concerns **innovative, digital, technological, or environmentally and energy-sustainable goods or services**.

In the **Southern regions**, the amounts are slightly higher: **up to euro 40.000,00**, extendable to **euro** 50.000,00 under the same conditions of innovation or sustainability.

In both cases, eligible expenses include the purchase of new machinery, plants, equipment, furnishings, software, ICT services, intangible assets, and technical or specialist consultancy services. However, consultancy services are eligible only if provided **by Third Sector entities** and **up to a maximum of 30%** of the total contribution**.**

Conversely**,** expenses for legal, fiscal, or tax consultancy, for application preparation, or for the purchase of real estate or land**, shall not be eligible**.

The **second mode of contribution** is intended to support **more structured investment programmes**, with a maximum eligible amount of euro 200.000,00. Specifically, in the **Central-Northern regions**, the incentive may cover **up to 65% of the investment** for projects not exceeding euro120.000,00**,** and **up to 60%** for investments exceeding euro 120.000,00**.**

In the **Southern regions**, the coverage rates are higher: **75%** for investments up to euro 120.000,00, and **70%** for investments exceeding that amount.

This latter mode also allows access to a broader range of eligible expenditures, including building works for renovation or extraordinary maintenance, provided that such costs do not exceed 50% of the total investment value.

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Certain costs shall, however, remain **excluded**, such as those relating to land, real estate, vehicles (except in duly justified cases), interest charges, and taxes, in accordance with EU Regulations (EU) No. FSE+ and No. 2021/1060.

Prior to the submission of the application, potential beneficiaries may participate in free training programmes promoted by the National Agency for Microcredit (Ente Nazionale per il Microcredito). Although participation is not mandatory, such programmes represent a competitive advantage, as they entitle applicants to additional points during the evaluation of the application.

The purpose of the training programme is to provide participants with the skills necessary to make full and effective use of the incentives, covering, inter alia, the preparation of the business plan and the management of administrative and authorisation procedures connected with the start-up of the business activity.

In addition, young applicants wishing to access the incentives **may take part in entrepreneurial training and support programmes** promoted by the National Agency for Microcredit. While not compulsory, participation in such activities shall likewise result in the **award of supplementary points** during the application assessment phase.

Craftsmen and Retailers

The 2025 Budget Law introduces a further incentive for **self-employment**: a three-year social contribution bonus for individuals registering for the first time in **INPS Special Scheme for Artisans or Retailers** (as per Law No. 207/2024, Article 1, Paragraph 186). INPS clarified, via Circular No. 83/2025 and Message No. 2449 of 7 August 2025, that eligible individuals will benefit from a **50% reduction in social security contributions** for **36 months**, provided they register by **31 December 2025**. Eligible business types include **sole proprietorships, family businesses, partnerships**, and **corporations** (e.g., S.r.l.). This incentive **cannot be combined** with other contribution reliefs and requires **continuous coverage of social security contributions.** Applications must be submitted exclusively via the **Portale delle Agevolazioni (formerly** DiReSCo).

Application Procedure

The **access procedure** shall be conducted entirely online. Applicants shall log in to the Invitalia platform using SPID, CIE, or CNS digital credentials, complete their personal profile, and upload the required documentation, including the **business plan**, **curriculum vitae**, and any relevant **certifications** (e.g., proof of unemployment or residence). The platform incorporates an **automatic pre-evaluation system**, which enables applicants to identify and correct potential errors prior to final submission. However, it is essential that all documentation be complete and compliant, as **subsequent integrations or amendments are not permitted**; any errors or omissions shall render the application inadmissible.

Applications shall be assessed in chronological order, subject to the availability of regional funds. The evaluation process consists of three phases: formal verification, substantive eligibility assessment and evaluation of the entrepreneurial project, with particular attention to the applicant's profile, the originality of the business idea, and the consistency of the expenditure plan. Invitalia shall issue the relevant **granting decision**, **within 90 days** from the date of submission of the complete application.

The disbursement of the contributions shall take place in **two instalments**: a first advance payment (between 30% to 70% of the total) may be requested after three months, upon presentation of proof of eligible expenditure already incurred. The final balance shall be requested within three months from the payment of the last expense and shall be disbursed following verification of the acquired assets. The implementation timelines vary according to the type: **up to** 9 **months for voucher** (extendable to 12)**, and up to 16 months** for **structured projects** (extendable to 20).

A qualifying feature of the programme is the inclusion of a free **entrepreneurial tutoring** service for each approved initiative, with a total value of euro **5.000,00**. This support is divided **into two components**: a **technical one**, managed by Invitalia (up to euro 4.000,00); and a **managerial one**, coordinated by the National Agency for Microcredit (up to euro 1.000,00), intended to assist young entrepreneurs in the management and development of their business activities.

The granted contributions may **not be combined** with other public incentives or tax credits, except in specific cases expressly provided for. However, **beneficiaries of the GOL Programme** may request the advance payment of NASpI in a single instalment, to be combined with the non-repayable contribution, thereby obtaining a larger initial capital endowment.

Finally, the initiative establishes certain binding obligations: **the assets acquired must remain in use for a minimum period of three years**, and the business activity may not be transferred, leased, or discontinued during such period. In the event of any breach of these obligations, the **grant shall be revoked**, and the **amounts disbursed** shall be **reimbursed in full**, together with accrued interest**.**

The management of the entire program is entrusted to an integrated system of public entities: **Invitalia** is responsible for the evaluation and disbursement of funds, **the National Agency for Microcredit** oversees training and managerial support, while **Sviluppo Lavoro Italia** oversees promotion, coordination with employment centres, and liaison with chambers of commerce and other local institutions.

These instruments constitute a tangible opportunity to support young people in the creation of new entrepreneurial ventures**,** thereby promoting employment**,** social inclusion, and economic development throughout the national territory.

14 October 2025 Lawyer dr. Angelo Pisciotta