

Training Endowment Language Training Courses for Taxi Drivers

ITALY
General Policy



Executive Summary

The Lombardy Region – DG Education, Training and Employment provides citizens with a contribution (endowment) that accompanies them in the decisive moments, throughout life, to support them in their growth, to help in job search and to promote employment and continuing education

The endowment is a collection of resources and services directly targeted to the citizens, to promote their possibility to choose, within a network of accredited (at regional level) operators, the best services to meet their needs. Through an ICT platform, the beneficiaries may proceed with the request of the endowment according to their needs.

There are many different kinds of endowment (Training endowment, Job endowment, School endowment, etc) devoted to different type of beneficiaries (unemployed; disadvantaged; etc.; taxi drivers; etc; young; etc.).

In the specific case of taxi drivers, endowment is used to increase their language skills. Lombardy Region promotes language training courses for taxi drivers by using the “training endowment”, co-financed through the ESF - Regional Operational Programme (Axis IV – Human Capital, Specific object i)). In particular, Lombardy Region is committed to encourage, in view of Milan Expo 2015, the enhancement of language skills for those exercising the profession of taxi driver, and thus to create the conditions to achieve the annual quality targets and in particular the one related to the knowledge of a foreign language agreed by Lombardy Region, local authorities and taxi drivers trade associations. In particular, by the year 2014 at least 66% of licensed taxi drivers will have to certify the knowledge of a foreign language - at least level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Lombardy Region has issued a call/notice to participate to the language training courses for taxi licence holders (Regional Operational Programme, ob.2, ESF 2007-2013 - Axis IV- Human Capital - Specific object i)) through the access to the “training endowment”.

To apply for the endowment, the beneficiaries should contact an accredited training provider (which has presented a language training proposal), identified by consulting the training offer catalogue on the (regional) web site. The selected operator will take the beneficiary in charge and will support him/her in all phases of the provided services.

The “training endowment – language training courses for taxi drivers” is directed to taxi drivers with licences issued by municipalities that are part of the airport system area of Lombardy Region, that are not in possession of a bachelor's degree with at least one foreign language examination or a high

secondary school diploma in foreign languages. The objective is to improve the level of service within the taxi transportation, specifically with regard to language skills.

There is no clear reference on if and how traditional classroom-based language training are supported by periods of learning in a country of the target language and through elements of distance learning.

The training program is specifically designed to provide language knowledge and skills equal to level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The “training endowment – language training courses for taxi drivers” can be readily and usefully implemented in other countries and/or sectors to improve the language skills of the same target of beneficiaries or of different target of beneficiaries.

The “training endowment – language training courses for taxi drivers” has not been transferred to other places yet. Nevertheless, in Lombardy Region the endowment is used in many sectors (Education, Training, Employment, etc.) and with different purposes (to increase employment and employability, to promote continuing education and life-long learning, etc.) and it is aimed to many different target groups (unemployed, disadvantaged, etc.)

The endowment aiming to increase the language skills of the taxi drivers is an innovative policy tool because it is a collection of resources and services directly targeted to the person, to promote the possibility of the citizens to freely choose – through an ICT platform and within a network of accredited operators, the best services to meet their needs for what concerns education, training, job searching, etc.

The endowment has been recently adopted by Lombardy Region (in the last 2/3 years) and this is one the reasons why it has not been transferred yet and why there is still lack of evidence of existing transfer.

Transferability depends on specific assumptions relating to political context: the training endowment to improve the language skills of taxi drivers is co-financed by the European Social Funds. Hence, it can be easily transferred in other EU countries. In general, the endowment tool adopted by Lombardy Region is an high flexible tool allowing for transferability. Lombardy Region adopted the endowment in different sectors, for different purposes and for different target groups (although the most disadvantaged ones in terms of income, vulnerability, education, training and employment, etc. are the most relevant target groups). The “training endowment for taxi drivers” devoted to promote language training courses for taxi drivers is just an example of how much flexible is the endowment, which can be also easily adapted to other sectors as well as to other target groups due to the nature of this tool

originally conceived by Lombardy Region to incentive the free of choice of the citizens among accredited (at regional level) services providers. Being co-financed by the ESF, the “training endowment for taxi drivers” may be transferred to any region within the EU. But if there are the necessary funds, it can be easily transferred at world-wide level.

1. Reflects current EU and regional policy on multilingualism

Lombardy Region promotes language training courses for taxi drivers by using the “training endowment”, co-financed though the ESF -Regional Operational Programme (Axis IV – Human Capital, Specific object i))

Lombardy Region is committed to promoting the enhancement of language skills for those exercising the profession of taxi driver. In particular, by the year 2014, at least 66% of licensed taxi drivers will have to certify the knowledge of a foreign language.

In other terms, Lombardy Region is committed to encourage, in view of Milan Expo 2015, the enhancement of language skills for those exercising the profession of taxi driver, and thus to create the conditions to achieve the annual quality targets and in particular the one related to the knowledge of a foreign language agreed by Lombardy Region, local authorities and taxi drivers trade associations. In particular, by the year 2014 at least 66% of licensed taxi drivers will have to certify the knowledge of a foreign language - at least level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

2. Includes incentives to enhance and sustain language learner motivation and employment benefits

Lombardy Region has issued a call/notice to participate to the language training courses for taxi licence holders (Regional Operational Programme, ob.2, ESF 2007-2013 - Axis IV- Human Capital - Specific object i)) trough the access to the “training endowment”.

The call/notice includes two annexes

- Annex A "Promotion of language training courses supply - invitation to the network of accredited training operators aimed at the development of their language training supply;
- Annex B "Notice for the participation in the training endowment - language training courses for licensed taxi drivers".

The endowment permits to access to an ad hoc training service providing for a language course lasting from a minimum of 8 hours up to a maximum of 60 hours and devoted to the acquisition of a regional certification of language skills equivalent to the level A2 of the "Common European Framework reference for Languages".

To apply for the endowment, the beneficiaries of the call/notice should contact an accredited training provider (which has presented its language training offer proposal), identified by consulting the training offer catalogue on the (regional) web site. The selected operator will take the beneficiary in charge and will support him/her in all phases of the provided services.

3. Reflects regional strategy for employability and intercultural benefits

The purpose of the "training endowment – language training courses for taxi – driver" is to implement the commitments assumed by Lombardy Region in the agreement signed (the 17th of September, 2008) with Local Authorities of the (nearby) Airports area and the representatives of Taxi Drivers Associations.

Lombardy Region is committed to encourage, in view of Milan Expo 2015, the enhancement of language skills for those exercising the profession of taxi driver, and thus to create the conditions to achieve the quality annual targets including the one related to the knowledge a foreign language. In particular, by the year 2014 at least 66% of licensed taxi drivers will have to certify the knowledge of a foreign language - at least level A2 of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages".

This minimum target represents one of the expected results to ensure, in view of the Milan Expo 2015 event, an improved level of service within the taxi transportation, specifically with regard to language skills.

4. Addresses local language minority and migrant community language resources

The "training endowment – language training courses for taxi drivers" is directed to taxi drivers with licences issued by municipalities that are part of the airport system area of Lombardy Region, that are not in possession of a bachelor's degree with at least one foreign language examination or a high secondary school diploma in foreign languages.

5. Provides for international networking and/or mobility

There is no clear reference on if and how traditional classroom-based language training are supported by periods of learning in a country of the target language and through elements of distance learning.

6. Incorporates the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) with transparent validation/ credits

The training program is designed to provide language knowledge and skills equal to level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, in order to:

- understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (i.e. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, work);
- communicate in a very simple way on the basis of a simple and direct exchange of information on routine matters;
- describe in simple terms aspects of his/her own life and his/her own environment and about the most immediate needs.

7. Can be readily & usefully implemented

The policy can be readily and usefully implemented.

The Lombardy Region – DG Education, Training and Employment provides citizens with a contribution (endowment) that accompanies them in the decisive moments, throughout life, to support them in their growth, to help in job search and to promote employment and continuing education

The endowment is a collection of resources and services directly targeted to the person, to promote the possibility to choose, within a network of accredited (at regional level) operators, the offer of services that best meets his/her needs. Through an ICT platform, the beneficiaries may proceed with the request of the endowment according to their needs.

There are many different kinds of endowment (Training endowment, Job endowment, School endowment, etc) devoted to different type of beneficiaries (unemployed; disadvantaged; etc.; taxi drivers; etc; young; etc.). In the specific case of taxi drivers, endowment is used to increase their language skills.

8. Transferability assessment

8.1. Evidence of transfer

The policy has not been transferred to other places yet. Although, as underlined before, in Lombardy Region the endowment is used in many sectors (Education, Training, Employment, etc.) and with different purposes (to increase employment and employability, to promote continuing education and life-long learning, etc.) and it is aimed to many different target groups (unemployed, disadvantaged, etc.)

8.2. Innovation

The endowment (and the endowment for increase the language skills of the taxi drivers) is an innovative policy tool because it is a collection of resources and services directly targeted to the person, to promote the possibility of the citizens to freely choose, within a network of accredited operators, the best services to meet their needs for what concerns education, training, job searching, etc. Through an ICT platform, the beneficiaries may proceed with the request of the endowment according to their needs.

The endowment has been recently adopted by Lombardy Region (in the last 2/3 years) and this is one the reasons why it has not been transferred yet and why there is still lack of evidence of existing transfer.

8.3. Dependence on political context

Transferability depends on specific assumptions relating to political context: the endowment (and the training endowment for taxi drivers) is co-financed by the European Social Funds and therefore transferability may be limited to eligible territories or classification of beneficiaries as well as to the proportion of national ESF grant for management training. But these limits seem to be not so binding for most of the EU Member States.

8.4. Flexibility

The analysed policy is high flexible to allow for transferability. As previously described it is possible to adopt the endowment in different sectors, for different purposes and for different target groups (although the most disadvantaged ones in terms of income, vulnerability, education, training and employment, etc. are the most relevant target groups). The “training endowment for taxi drivers” is an example of how much flexible is the endowment: in this case it is used to promote language training courses for taxi drivers.

The “training endowment for taxi drivers” can be easily transferred in other EU countries. And it can be also easily adapted to other sectors as well as to other target groups due to the nature of the endowment as tool originally conceived by Lombardy Region to incentive the free of choice of the citizens.

8.5. Multi-region transfer

Being co-financed by the ESF, the “training endowment for taxi drivers” may be transferred to any region within the EU.

But if there are the necessary funds, it can be transferred at world-wide level.