ACF Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT 2026

ITALY

"Transforming food systems is at the heart of Italy's global agenda for sustainable development and climate action. Without transforming how we produce, trade, and consume food, we cannot deliver on the Paris Agreement promise. Italy is proud to stand with fellow champions to build food systems that nourish people, restore nature, and sustain our planet's future."

H.E. Ambassador Stefano Gatti, Director General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

HIGHLIGHTS

1	**A driving force for global food systems transformation:** Italy hosts the UN food systems architecture in Rome. It has driven the UN Food Systems Summit process, hosting the Pre-Summit (2021) and the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment (2023) and co-hosting UNFSS+4 with Ethiopia in Addis Ababa (2025). During its 2024 G7 Presidency it also launched the Apulia Food Systems Initiative.
2	**Italy has built one of Europe's strongest organic-food production bases**: 20.5% of agricultural land was organic in 2024, up from 16.7% in 2021, putting it close to the 25% national target.
3	**Biodiversity is being embedded in agricultural policy and law:** Italy's National Biodiversity Strategy sets a target for at least 10% of agricultural land to be kept as high-diversity landscape features (e.g. hedgerows, field margins, ponds, tree lines and other patches of natural habitat that support wildlife). An estimated 7–9% of farmland already meets that standard.

Headline Areas of Progress in 2026

INDICATOR	BASELINE	LATEST	DIRECTION
Agricultural land under organic farming	18.9% (2022)	**20.5% (2024)**	▲ Improving
Protected sea area (land protection stable at 21.7%)	11.2% (2021)	**11.6% (2024)**	▲ Improving
Food supply variability Per capita food supply variability (kcal/cap/day)	44 kcal/cap/day (2022)	**40 kcal/cap/day (2023)**	▼ Improving
Agri-food system GHG emissions (1,000t CO2eq)	136,308 (2021)	**135,656 (2022)**	▼ Improving
Farm-manager positions held by women	30.7% (2010)	**31.5% (2020)**	▲ Improving

Country context

Italy's agricultural sector and agri-food system are strong contributors to the country's economy, accounting for around 2% and 15% of the GDP respectively.

Italy produces primarily grains, soybeans, meat and dairy products in its northern regions, while the south specialises in fruits, vegetables, olive oil, wine and durum wheat. This makes the country one of the largest agricultural producers and food processors in the EU.

It has the largest number of EU-recognised Protected Designations of Origin and Geographical Indications, and is the world's largest wine producer by volume. It is also home to one of Europe's largest organic farming sectors.

INDICATOR	ITALY	SOURCE
Top three commodities produced (2023)	**Cow and buffalo milk (about €6.5bn), pigs (about €4.3bn), wine (about €4.0bn)**	*CREA, ISTAT*
GDP and agriculture as % (2025)	**€2,265,003 million at current prices 2.1%**	*ISTAT*
Global Food Security Index (2022)	**27 out of 113 countries**	*Economist Impact*
Prevalence of undernourishment (2025)	**<2.5%**	*Our World in Data*
Land use for agriculture as % (2023)	**44.26%**	*World Bank*
Total population (2026) and % employed in agriculture (2025)	**58 943 000 million and 3.35%**	*ISTAT/ILO*



KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025/26

Italy's **CAP Strategic Plan 2023–2027** earmarks over EUR 10 billion for climate and environment measures, including 34 voluntary schemes that pay farmers to cut fertiliser and pesticide use and protect biodiversity and soils, around **EUR 2 billion for organic farming**, and EUR 4.4 billion through five eco-schemes, among them pollinator protection and landscape-valuable olive groves.

Italy's Minimum Environmental Criteria for public catering require **at least 50% organic produce in school meals** for children and adolescents, 10 percentage points more than before, and national dietary guidelines anchor healthy, sustainable diets in the Mediterranean Diet.

Italy's **Legge Gadda** (Law 166/2016) makes it easier to donate surplus food, including food past its best-before date and unsold bread within 24 hours, and the Ministry of Environment leads the '**Stop Food Waste. Feed the Planet'** initiative, with a National Day for Food Waste Prevention every 5 February. In 2024 ,745 tons of food were recovered from large-scale distribution and restaurants, distributed through 7,645 charitable structures and canteens benefiting 1,750,000 destitute people (Food Bank Foundation).

Italy's **National Biodiversity Strategy 2030**, adopted by ministerial decree in August 2023 and governed by a 38-member committee of ministries and regions, sets targets that bear directly on food production:

- **Protection:** legal protection of at least 30% of land and 30% of sea, with one third under strict protection.
- **Farmland:** at least 25% of agricultural land under organic farming and at least 10% kept as high-diversity landscape features.
- **Inputs:** a 50% cut in plant protection products, nutrient losses halved and fertiliser use cut by at least 20%.

Italy submitted its **draft of the National Restoration Plan** to the European Commission in 25th of September 2026. Consistent with Article 11 of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, the Plan promotes the **restoration of agricultural ecosystems** by improving biodiversity, pollinators, soil health and landscape diversity, strengthening the sustainability and resilience of food production systems

Italy's **agricultural income rose by 12.5% in 2024**, against an EU average of 1.6%. The CAP Strategic Plan mobilises EUR 1.05 billion for young farmers, and ISMEA's **'Più Impresa'** scheme offers grants and zero-interest loans of up to EUR 1.5 million to young and women-led farms.

LEADERSHIP IN FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION: FROM ROME TO THE WORLD

Italy is home to the United Nations food systems architecture and a driving force behind the UN Food System Summit, hosting the 2021 Pre-Summit in July 2021 and UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) in July 2023 in Rome, and co-hosting the 2025 UNFSS+4 event in Addis Ababa alongside Ethiopia.

Italy launched the G7 Apulia Food Systems Initiative under their G7 presidency in June 2024 to tackle structural barriers to global food security, malnutrition, and climate change, with a primary focus on Africa. Italy pledged EUR 10 million over two years to support implementation of the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action.

The Mattei Plan for Africa, developed by the Italian Government, is focused on strengthening African agri-food value chains, supporting sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, improving food security and food sovereignty, and strengthening rural livelihoods and local economies. It also seeks to mobilise Italian private-sector expertise and investment, strengthen partnerships and market linkages, and support technology and knowledge transfer. Examples include initiatives on climate-resilient coffee value chains, responsible agribusiness and the development of agricultural supply chains.

Italy is also the home of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact which gathers cities from all over the world committed to advancing on the common goal of sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban food systems. It is an active member of multiple other food systems fora, including the G20 Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, One Planet Network, and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

