



Camera di Commercio
Roma

IRFI
Azienda Speciale

IRFI

Istituto Romano per la Formazione Imprenditoriale

Training Agency of the Rome Chamber of Commerce

COMPANY PROFILE



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1. INSTITUTE PRESENTATION

The designated training agency of the Rome Chamber of Commerce (IRFI) is a non profit organization based on the principles of efficiency and transparency, acting in compliance with its institutional mandate granted by the Chamber of Commerce and controlled by a board of auditors appointed by the Ministry of Productive Activities, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Lazio Region. Principally, IRFI aims to develop research and consultancy, and to offer quality training courses in entrepreneurship.

IRFI actively works with **national and foreign institutions (Ministry of Internal Affairs , OIM, etc.), universities and research centres (Rome University “La Sapienza”, National Research Council, etc.)**, Italian and foreign Chambers of Commerce (Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Eurochambres, etc.), and has developed projects for companies of all sizes (from Telecom Italia to small handicraft enterprises). IRFI is part of **AsseforCamere**, a consortium agency of the Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Agriculture for the promotion of entrepreneurship and professional training. Since its founding in 1991, IRFI has conducted more than 1.100 courses, training about 23.500 students, averaging a turnover of 3 million euros in the last three years.

The quality of IRFI’s services is verified by the certifications and accredits it holds: Business Quality System certification based on the **ISO 9001:2000** standard concerning planning and carrying out vocational training activities (**Bureau Veritas International**); **Local Cisco Academy** certification for conducting CCNA training courses (2003-2008); **AICA certified Test Center** (2003-2008). Permanently accredited to conduct educational courses in **Advanced Training, in Lifelong Learning and job orienting** activities in the Province of Rome (Law of Lazio Regione n. 23/92 titolo V – D.D. nr. 0860 del 1/2/2010).



2. ACTIVITIES

IRFI's institutional mandate is to promote not only **training activities traditionally offered by the Chamber of Commerce** (courses for commercial agents and representatives, business brokers and agents, etc.), but more recently also activities with a view of **emerging market sectors**¹.

IRFI particularly promotes and offers training courses and seminars for small and medium businesses and their managers, and courses funded with public money (e.g. the **European Social Fund – ESF**), offering free courses to **help young people enter the labour market**.

2.1 MASTERS COURSES

Vocational Masters in International Business Communication

In **2001** IRFI launched the first edition of its **Vocational Master in International Business Communication**, running a total of 7 editions to date, one financed by the European Social Fund. The purpose of this course is to train professionals to operate decisively in a variety of business situations, particularly in the international marketplace through a course of study conducted entirely in English and focusing on the development of communication skills both in spoken and written English.

Vocational Masters in Quality – Safety – Environment (QSE)

The beginning of **2003** saw the launch of the first edition of the **Vocational Masters in QSE**, a full-time, 10-month training course for recent university graduates, including 4 months in the classroom and 6 months of project work in companies using advanced quality management systems. The master includes **3 courses for Appraisers** (Management Systems for Quality, Environmental Management Systems, Safety Management Systems), leading to a final certification issued by BVQI, a world leader in certification activities.

¹ A catalogue of training courses may be consulted on the internet at www.irfi.it



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Vocational Master in Quality Management

Master in Food Quality and Safety Management

Two further initiatives have been added to the **Quality sector**, the **Vocational Master in Quality Management** and the **Master in Food Quality and Safety Management**.

The **Vocational Master in Quality Management (MQM)**, launched in **October 2005**, is run by IRFI in cooperation with the Bureau Veritas Quality International Italia, an accreditation certification body of SINCERT, among the best in Italy and belonging to **BVQI**. The aim is to train professionals for a consolidated labour market high in resource demand (in Lazio alone there are more than 8.000 companies that operate under a Quality Management System following ISO 9001:2000).

In **March 2006**, the (Vocational) “**Master in Food Quality and Safety Management**” was started up, specialising in the training of experts in the management of food production, with two editions being run to date. This program is offered by IRFI and BVQI, with **ARM** – Azienda Romana Mercati, a Special Agency of the Chamber of Commerce of Rome for the promotion and improvement of the agroindustrial sector. The Master represents a response to continual demands from agroindustrial companies for professionally qualified experts able to assist such companies in providing quality products.

Master in Cultural Experience and Design (MED)

Targeted to professionals with significant working experience in the cultural field, the MED is a 13-month, full-time Masters course. Launched in **2007**, it combines design workshops (5 four-week workshops) and lectures focusing on four scientific-cultural areas. A multidisciplinary approach typical of design, is taken, comprising in-put and methodologies aimed at developing the design skills in specific cultural fields. During the course, all students are expected to gain on-the-job experience at specific bureaus and institutions.

2.2 MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Fare Impresa

In **2003**, IRFI started the first edition of the training course **Fare Impresa**, an initiative addressed both to people interested in setting up their own business and those already in business who want to improve their skills and the quality of their company. The second edition (2005) saw a change in



name - “**RUNNING A BUSINESS**”, and was organised in cooperation with **SENIORES ITALIA**, the largest Italian non-profit international apprenticeship organisation.

From June to October **2010** a third edition, composed of 13 seminars, were run in co-operation with the Banca del Credito Cooperativo and Ass.For.Seo.

Social Enterprise Manager

2005: This project aimed at teaching Business planning and strategic management competences in non-profit organizations.

Management of non profit organizations for immigrant women

2006: This project aimed at providing to immigrant women with basic knowledge for creating non profit companies, with particular focus on legal, fiscal and managerial issues.

Seminars on International Trade

In **2003** a series of seminars were held to provide in-depth analysis of **International Trade**, with the aim of supporting companies doing business abroad, to help them cope with complex and constantly evolving situations.

Bank broker

Two editions of a new course for bank brokers have been held (**2009, 2010**) addressed both to people interested in starting a new profession and to people already working in this field who want to improve their skills.

Training courses for the Chamber of Commerce

In **2009** some courses were organized for employees and executives of the Chamber of Commerce of Rome and its Special Agencies, three English language courses, one Spanish and one in Informatics. The same courses were run in **2010**.

2.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate)

At the end of the year **2003**, after qualifying as a **Local Cisco Academy**, IRFI started the first edition of the **Cisco Networking Academy Program - CCNA** (Cisco Certified Network Associate) course. This program is internationally recognised as a standard of excellence in the field of networking and 7 editions have been run so far.



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Financial Promoters Online

In **October 2004**, IRFI opened its new e-learning internet portal, www.irfionline.it. This instrument, designed to be flexible and easy to use, aims to extend IRFI training opportunities to new targets, utilising a combination of e-learning and more traditional approaches. The first e-learning course offered through this Portal is “***Financial Promoters Online***”.

Test Center ECDL

IRFI has hosted several exams to achieve the ECDL certification (European Computer Driving Licence) since **2003**.

2.4 LANGUAGE COURSES FOR BUSINESS

Courses of Arabic, Chinese and Turkish for “Language and Business”

In collaboration with the Italian Institute for Africa and the East, IRFI now offers **biennial courses in Arabic, Chinese and Turkish “Language and Business”**. With a view of keeping pace with the growing importance of cultural and commercial relations with the Arab, Chinese and Turkish worlds, the goal of these courses is to enable the students to converse in different contexts and situations, course components including both language input and study of the local cultures. So far, 3 Chinese courses have been run, 2 Arabic, and one Turkish.

In addition, IRFI is among the sponsors of the **first substantial Chinese-Italian dictionary**.

2.5 PROJECTS FOSTERING EMPLOYMENT (National and International)

2.5.1 NATIONAL PROJECTS

Quality in Handicraft and Commercial Services

In **2000** IRFI received about 8 billion lire (equivalent to € 4.131.655,19) in public financing earmarked for training (Lazio Region and Ministry of Labour), organising training courses with



company internships for unemployed youth as well as managing the project “**Quality in Handicraft and Commercial Services**” which resulted in 1.850 employees and entrepreneurs being trained.

Job Network Agency for Women

In **2001**, within the Operating Programme of the European Social Fund, Objective 3, IRFI received approval for projects valuing € 7.473.691,13. In particular, the project “**Job Network Agency for Women**” was set up, for a total value of _ 4.334.838,00. The project grew from an idea developed by IRFI in collaboration with the G. Reiss Romoli School of Telecom Italia with a view of creating a “virtual agency” for women in the Lazio Region interested in improving their professional competence within the sphere of the new/net economy. In support of this project, a portal was created, “**Leionline.net**”.

European Social Fund and Ministry for Communication

In **2002** IRFI presented projects valued at € 4.903.153 (equal to Lit. 9.493.828.059) both under the Lazio Regional Operations Programme of the ESF and in the sector of the Institute for Communication and Technology of the Ministry of Communication.

School - Job Rotation

In **2003** in connection with the Moratti Educational Reform, with regard to school-job alternation IRFI carried out a project entitled “**A scuola di impresa: Azioni integrate a sostegno della riforma della scuola e dell’alternanza scuola – lavoro nel Lazio**”, aimed at trying out learning programs and models incorporating school – job alternation.(I don’t understand what is meant here).

Kometa

From **2003** to **2004**, the Kometa project, run in association with AsseforCamere and financed by the European Social Fund (through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies), aimed at promoting lifelong learning for workers small enterprises.

A.L.A. Project (Starting Work in a Firm).

In April **2004** IRFI, as the Vocational Training Centre of the Chamber of Commerce of Rome and by virtue of its experience in the development and management of training programs, was **entrusted by the Province of Rome** with the planning and running of the **A.L.A. Project** (Starting Work in a Firm). Promoted by the Department of Labour of the Province of Rome, the project’s aim is to fill the gap between labour demand and the skills available on the labour market by conducting brief training courses on demand and promoting the employment of personnel trained ad hoc. Till



now, € 1.600.000 has been invested in the project, 630 people being trained, 471 of them obtaining contracts in companies involved in the project.

L'Albero delle Conoscenze (Knowledge Tree - a job orientation system in the New Roma Exhibition Centre) involved the investment of about € 600.000 (provided by ESF) **2006-2007** to develop a new system of job orientation, fostering employment and self entrepreneurship in the New Rome Exhibition Centre, promoting networking synergies and local development. The project mainly aims to encourage and facilitate the skills-matching through a software of competences mapping called "knowledge tree".

BLUS (Borsa Lavoro Università Sapienza)

In **2006 - 2007** IRFI took part in the Project called **BLUS – Borsa Lavoro Università Sapienza** – the career service of the University La Sapienza of Rome. In **2008** the system changed its name to **SOUL** (Sistema Orientamento Università Lavoro), becoming the new career guidance service of the seven state Universities of Lazio region (www.jobsoul.it).

The project received the contribution and co-operation of the following Institutions: **Ministry of Labour, Lazio Region, Province of Rome, Chamber of Commerce of Rome, Laziodisu, IRFI, Trade Unions Organizations.**

Riprendere Il Filo (Taking up the thread)

In **2007**, in co-operation with the handicraft entrepreneur organization, the Department of Social Affairs of Rome City Council and the Employment Centre of the Province of Rome, IRFI ran a project aimed at teaching the job of model maker to 20 socially disadvantaged women.

Ponte Rosa (Pink Bridge)

This project was financed in **2008** by ESF (€ 500.000) under the line E 1 (aimed at improving women's standard of life) in cooperation with the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and University of "Roma Tre". The main purpose of this project was to investigate the employment conditions of women in the province of Rome and to publish a report on it. Following the results of this report the project gave the chance to 50 unemployed women to have a 6 month paid work experience in companies of the Province.

KN (Knowledge Network)

Since 2008 till now IRFI has run this project to collect the knowledge and competences companies in the Province of Rome need in real time, made possible through the company associations and a sophisticated database, leading to the running of specific training courses.



KN II (Knowledge Network)

In **2010** the project were refinanced in order to refine the techniques of data detection and data processing and to upgrade the software and the database.

European Social Fund Projects 2007-2013

2010: Two training Projects have been **approved** for employees in companies of the most relevant sectors in the province (IT and Audiovisual) aimed at updating skills and maintaining the employability.

KNE (Knowledge Network Estero)

2009-2010: This initiative, **financed by EIF (European Integration Fund)** and the Chamber of Commerce of Rome for a **total amount of €3,500.000** and projected by IRFI, is aimed to develop a new system of professional training combined with a period of work experience in companies, which express a specific need of foreign workers. The KNE project particularly implemented actions and measures aimed at facilitating integration and social inclusion of extra-EU citizens with employment difficulties who have been resident in Italy for no more than 5 years. This aim was pursued inserting the selected resources in training paths of Italian language, civic orientation and professional qualification or retraining.

The project took advantage of the contributions of many different players in the socio-economic fabric of the province (the most representative entrepreneurial associations) as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Dante Alighieri company, market leader in teaching Italian as foreign language.

Projects numbers: More than 4,000 application forms registered; 1,100 candidates eligible for the selection phase; 335 people selected, 18 professional training paths realized. All the activities were realized by **303** students and **96** of them obtained a work contract, of different type, at the end of the training of the job phase.

In October 2010 were published a report to work out the SWAT analysis of the project.

2.5.2 INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Pole Star (Leonardo da Vinci Programme)

2003-2004: Pole Star Project - European Standard and Tools for ODL trainers. The project identifies activity areas and skills in structures delivering ODL services and develops and classifies



processes/functions according to activity areas and implement products and tools, which could be useful for sharing, disseminating and analysing these standards. (Should the past be used?)

N.I.S.I.A. (New Immigrant Entrepreneurs Entering Handicraft Enterprises)

2005 – 2007: The project was presented under the European community initiative **Equal II Phase** and financed by the Ministry of Welfare, in partnership with I.S.R.I. (Institute for the Study of Industrial Relations) and AsseforCamere.

Women on Board

Between **2006** and **2008** IRFI carried out the project ***Women on Board of Local Development*** financed by **Eurochambres** co-ordinate by Eurochambres Women Network in the framework of the EU Programme PROGRESS, sustaining the access to bank credit for women entrepreneurs.

Job Rotation

2007-2008: The EU **e-ten Programme** financed a project aimed at fostering a new model of training closely tied to companies needs: employees in one or more companies start a training and education period, and they are temporarily replaced by unemployed workers. The matching is carried out through a specific portal. The project involved several countries (Italy, Greece, Poland, Germany and Slovenia).

Leonardo da Vinci Project (LLP - Lifelong Learning Programme)

In **2010** one **Leonardo da Vinci/TOI (Transfer of Innovation) Projects** was approved in the framework of LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme) for a total amount of € 399.867,69. This Project, called SMART KNOW NET (Skills Matching and Route for Knowledge Network), intends to build on the success of IT platform “KN”, developed by IRFI and currently operating in province of Rome, by developing the software product and experiences gained, by enhancing the cultural and national diversity offered by the international partnership (University of Rome “La Sapienza” plus 5 European partners: University of Riga - Latvia, CCI of Cracow – Poland, Employment Agency of Madrid – Spain, Union of hellenic SME’s and an ICT company - Greece). KN is a development process, supported by a software tool, which helps VET (Vocational and Educational Training), other professionals and SMEs in assessing skills mismatch, providing evidence of professional development needed to meet the requirements thus offering greater precision in HR development and training.



2.6 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1999: “*Research on the requirements for open-ended and distance training in Italian public ministries*” to investigate the training requirements of public ministries

2001: “*Feasibility study for a post-university course in the economics of convergence*” to create a permanent structure for defining the specific operational jurisdiction of markets in the IT sector as applied to the media

2005 – 2007: “*Micro-business and urban development*”. In addition to an analysis of metropolitan micro-business trends, the Report undertook a special investigation aimed at collecting the opinions and attitudes of approximately 800 businesses from different representative sectors (food and informatics in the first report; catering industry and audiovisual sector in the second one; fashion and coffee bar/ice cream shop in the third one). This research assumes that it is necessary to reinforce the smallest company units in order to consolidate and integrate the urban system. At the same time it is necessary to qualify the entrepreneurs to encourage the start up and the growth of new enterprises. In this context a strategic role is played through education and training.

2008: “*Employment conditions and professionals aspirations of women in the province of Rome*” in cooperation with University “La Sapienza” of Rome and University “Roma Tre”. The main purpose of this report was to investigate the employment conditions of women in the province of Rome under three aspects: employment outlook and training paths preferred by the women, professional requirements coming from the companies and the matching services.

2010: The backer and the hairstylist – Report on the KNE training project financed by European Integration Fund aimed at facilitating social inclusion of extra-EU citizens inserting them in training paths of professional qualification. The report worked out the SWAT analysis with the purpose of a constructive prosecution of the project.



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2.7 SCHOLARSHIPS

With a view of encouraging the entrepreneurial training, in **2004** IRFI established an agreement with the **Iacocca Institute** to create and assign two scholarships that would allow the participants to attend, free of charge, a six-week summer course in management, “**Global Village for Future Leaders of Business and Industry**” at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania.

In **2005 and 2006** the Institute selected a particularly capable and deserving student to receive a grant for an internship of three months with the Italian **Chamber of Commerce of Houston** (Texas).

Since **2004** IRFI has yearly offered 3 grants to the students with the best performances. The grant covers the subscription fee, refunded according to merit (test results, frequency, etc).