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Italy Opens a Wine Tourism Funding Program for 2026/27

Regional authorities will decide whether to activate aid for vineyard visits, promotional events, Wine Roads and digital route-planning tools.

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Italy is moving ahead with a new funding program for wine tourism for the 2026/27 campaign, after the Agriculture Ministry signed a decree setting the general rules and the national farm payments agency AGEA issued the operating guidance that regions will use to manage applications, checks, and payments.

The measure was announced Friday by Fi.R.A., citing decree No. 483420 signed by Italy's Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests on Sept. 18 and AGEA circular No. 79521 published on Oct. 1. The ministry decree is still being registered by oversight bodies, but it formally sets the framework for access to public support aimed at promoting wine tourism in producing regions.

The new tool comes from the recent reform of the European Union's wine package under the Common Agricultural Policy. According to Fi.R.A., the goal is to strengthen the reputation of Italian vineyards through tourism promotion tied to wine-producing territories. The broader EU reform, set out in Regulation (EU) 2026/471, was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on Feb. 26 and took effect on March 18. It updates the wine market rules at a time when the sector is dealing with lower consumption, unstable international markets, and the effects of climate change.

Within that broader reform, wine tourism has been recognized as an economic development lever and as a way to support rural communities. In practice, the Italian decree identifies two main groups of eligible actions. One covers promotional and advertising initiatives that highlight the standards of products made in wine regions, with attention to quality, traditions, food safety, and environmental issues. The other covers the organization of events, fairs, and exhibitions intended to promote wine tourism in production areas and improve the reputation of Italian vineyards.

AGEA's circular adds more detail on what can be financed under regional calls. Eligible activities include wine cycling tourism linked to wine territories, guided visits and experiences in vineyards and wineries, educational and cultural initiatives, and projects that promote wine landscapes and wine heritage. The circular also allows support for incoming activities, educational tours, and press tours designed to increase knowledge of wine territories and their production.

The rules also open the door to business-to-business initiatives that promote tourism offerings tied to wine regions. These can include meetings with tour operators, travel agencies, food-and-wine tourism operators, and other intermediaries, as long as the initiatives are directly aimed at helping visitors discover, promote, and book tourism experiences in the wine areas covered by the project. The guidance makes clear that

the funding is not meant for simple commercial promotion of wine products.

Another part of the program covers digital and route-planning tools. AGEA says funding can support the design and creation of maps, wine tourism routes, and itineraries, as well as digital tools and platforms, including those with geolocation systems. These tools are meant to help users identify vineyards, wineries, and other places involved in wine tourism, find information on experiences and events, and organize visits in the territories included in a project.

The circular also allows actions to enhance officially recognized Wine Roads under Italy’s Law No. 268 of 1999. That can include itineraries, events, information activities, and digital tools aimed at giving visitors integrated access to vineyards, wineries, and surrounding wine territories.

Starting with the 2026/27 wine-growing campaign, the program will be open to a broad range of organizations active in the wine sector. Eligible applicants include professional organizations representing wine production, wine producer organizations under EU rules, associations of producer organizations, interbranch organizations specializing in wine, and producer groups that manage protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications in the wine sector. Authorized protection consortia are included, as are wine producer organizations established as consortia, consortium companies, or cooperatives with proven experience in the wine business. Some interbranch organizations that qualify as public-law bodies can also apply, along with temporary or permanent associations of wine producer organizations.

Projects will have a regional basis, but the rules account for cross-regional initiatives. If a project involves two or more regions, the beneficiary must submit an application in each region where the project will be carried out. AGEA also states that informational, advertising, and promotional activities can be distributed outside the region covered by the project, either elsewhere in Italy or in other EU countries, as long as the purpose is clearly to attract visitors to the vineyards, wineries, and wine territories of the producing regions involved.

That point could matter for Italy’s wider beverage industry as well as for tourism operators. If regions activate the measure and applicants use it effectively, the funding could help channel more travel demand toward vineyard areas, strengthen the reputation of local wine territories, and create more revenue opportunities for consortia, winery hospitality businesses, and operators that package tasting, cycling, cultural, and rural experiences around wine.

The calendar includes a special deadline for the first year. Under the ministry decree, applications are generally supposed to close by Oct. 30 each year, with procedures set by AGEA in agreement with the regions. For the 2026/27 campaign alone, however, the deadline to request support has been extended to Dec. 15, 2026.

Even with the national framework in place, the final rollout will depend on regional decisions. Fi.R.A. said it will be up to each region to decide whether to activate the wine tourism intervention. That means access to the new funds may vary across the country depending on whether regional authorities choose to launch the measure and publish the relevant calls.

The program arrives at a time when Italian wine producers and local institutions are looking for ways to diversify income and build stronger links between agricultural production, hospitality, and place-based marketing. By tying support to visits, events, educational activities, routes, and digital access tools, the measure is designed to push spending beyond the bottle itself and toward the broader visitor economy built around vineyards and wine regions.