vinetur

Italy more than doubles its 2026 wine export promotion budget to €19 million

The Italian Trade Agency plans 63 initiatives in 26 markets after wine exports fell 6.2% in the first half

Tuesday, October 6, 2026



Italy is more than doubling its public budget for promoting wine abroad in 2026, raising the allocation for the sector to €19 million from €9 million in 2025, according to figures from the Italian Trade Agency, or ITA. The increase of €10 million represents a 111.1%

jump and comes as Italian wine exporters face weaker foreign sales after two decades of long-term growth.

The expanded budget is part of a broader export push organized by ITA, the state agency that supports Italian trade overseas. Based on information cited by WineNews and reported by Vinabox, the agency plans 63 wine-focused initiatives across 26 foreign markets in 2026. The effort is aimed at reinforcing Italy’s position in key destinations at a time when shipments have slowed, especially in the United States, which remains the top foreign market for Italian wine.

The spending increase follows a difficult start to the year for exporters. In the first half of 2026, Italian wine exports fell 6.2% from the same period a year earlier, according to the report. That decline followed a drop in annual export value from a record €8.07 billion in 2024 to €7.7 billion in 2025. Those figures, drawn from Istat data analyzed by WineNews, provide historical context rather than a new official update released now, but they frame the pressure on producers and policymakers as demand softens.

Industry conditions have become more difficult for Italy, as they have for other major wine-producing countries. The reported causes include U.S. tariffs, inflation, international tensions, moderation in alcohol consumption and changing preferences among younger consumers. The market has also been affected by high inventories, which have weighed on prices in parts of the Italian wine sector.

Against that backdrop, Rome is choosing to respond with more coordinated overseas promotion rather than retrenchment. ITA, formerly known as ICE, operates under Italy’s Foreign Ministry and has become a central tool in the country’s export strategy. The agency’s role has expanded alongside support from producers, regional groups and European Union promotion funds used by wine companies to market their products abroad.

In 2025, ITA’s agrifood office carried out 50 actions focused on wine and alcoholic beverages, according to the figures cited in the report. Those actions included collective participation and institutional presence at trade fairs abroad, communication campaigns in markets including China, Taiwan, South Korea and the United States, direct promotional events such as tastings and workshops, buyer-hosting programs in

Italy, and wine training programs. A total of 959 companies from the sector took part in those activities, the report said.

The 2026 program is set to go further. Across the agrifood sector, ITA plans more than 240 initiatives, with 63 dedicated specifically to wine. The focus is on maintaining visibility in established markets while supporting producers in destinations where competition is growing and consumer behavior is shifting.

The United States is expected to receive the greatest attention. ITA considers the market a priority both because of its size and because trade barriers there have had a direct effect on sales. In October, the agency is backing two major efforts in New York. One is Italian Wine Week, scheduled for Oct. 12 through Oct. 25, which is expected to involve more than 100 wine shops across Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Jersey City through promotions and tastings.

The other is Vinitaly.USA, which will take place in New York on Oct. 26 and Oct. 27 after two previous editions in Chicago. Organizers expect about 300 exhibitors and 2,500 labels at the event. The fair will bring together producers and consortia representing some of Italy’s best-known wine regions and denominations, including Asti, Brunello di Montalcino, Prosecco DOC and Lugana.

According to the report, ITA is contributing €1.5 million to the U.S. edition of Vinitaly. That support is part of a total €5.8 million investment linked to Vinitaly events in Italy and abroad, up 66.1% from 2025. The figures point to a strategy centered on large, visible trade platforms that can gather importers, distributors, retailers and media in one place.

The new spending does not mean exports have recovered, and it does not measure commercial results on its own. The budget increase reflects promotional spending, not completed sales or proven economic return. But the scale of the increase shows how strongly Italian authorities are leaning on export marketing as a response to weaker trade data.

The move also highlights how much Italy’s wine industry has come to depend on overseas markets. Wine exports rose from €3 billion in 2005 to €8.07 billion in 2024, according to the historical data cited in the report, an increase of 169% over two decades. That growth continued through major disruptions including the global financial crisis and the pandemic, even if the recent slowdown has interrupted the upward trend.

For producers, the stronger public effort may help maintain access to buyers and shelf space in markets where competition is intense and consumer spending is under pressure. For importers and retailers, especially in the United States, the larger campaign is likely to mean more trade events, tastings and promotional activity tied to Italian wines over the coming months.

The emphasis on the U.S. market suggests that Italy is trying to defend its strongest export outlet while broadening its reach elsewhere through the 26 markets included in the 2026 plan. The strategy rests on the idea that consistent promotion, backed by the state and coordinated with trade fairs and producer groups, can support sales even when external conditions are unfavorable.

Whether that approach will reverse the export decline remains unclear. What is clear from the 2026 budget is that Italy is putting significantly more public money behind wine promotion abroad at a moment when global demand is under strain and export competition is becoming harder.