

# Review of adult immunization in Italy: successes, lessons learned and the way forward

## Insights and strategies from the Adult Immunization Board country meeting

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### Introduction

Italy has long been a leader in adult immunization, being one of the first to propose a **life-course vaccination** schedule with the guidance from the **Board of the Lifetime Immunization Schedule**, and recently set European benchmark with its **new National Immunization Plan 2023-2025**, that emphasizes a life-course approach, extending vaccination efforts to adults (Figure 1). The recent **Adult Immunization Board (AIB) country meeting** in Italy, Florence (6-7 December 2023) highlighted **key strategies, challenges, and successes in enhancing adult vaccination across the country**.

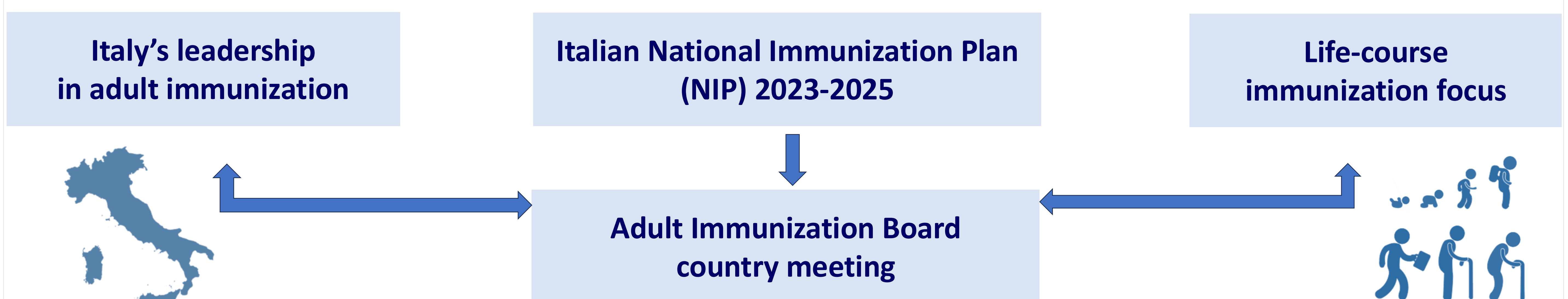


Figure 1. The rationale for choosing Italy as the country where to held the first AIB country meeting

### Methods



**Invited experts** were selected through a thorough review of the scientific literature, and based on their recognized expertise and (inter)national standing in the field of vaccinations. During the meeting, AIB advisors and local experts discussed **national and region-specific topics on adult immunization in Italy**. Talks covered all aspects of adult immunization, from **policymaking to vaccine acceptance and vaccine coverage**, and were delivered by **local academics, healthcare professionals, public health representatives, civil society, and policymakers**.

### Results

#### NIP 2023-2025

**Clear Targets:** Specific coverage goals for adult vaccines like influenza and pneumococcal.

**Free Vaccines:** All recommended vaccines are provided at no cost to all citizens.

**Priority Focus:** Emphasis on high-risk groups, including elderly and healthcare workers.

#### Vaccine confidence and data gaps

**Declining Confidence:** Trust in vaccines like HPV and MMR is decreasing due to misinformation and distrust in authorities.

**COVID-19 Success:** Italy adopted an integrated vaccine registry that enabled real-time monitoring, a model not yet used for other vaccines.

#### Regional disparities

**Impact of Decentralization:** Differences in vaccine procurement, delivery, and coverage due to the decentralized system, as well as in coverage data collection.

**Vaccine coverage:** While some regions achieve high vaccination coverage, others continue to struggle.

#### Success stories and challenges

**Innovative approaches:** Lombardy boosted COVID-19 uptake by integrating pharmacists.

**Targeted outreach:** Apulia achieved 99.9% vaccination in those 60+ through effective access and communication strategies.

**Persistent Barriers:** Challenges remain in reaching underserved populations

The meeting agenda and all meeting presentations are available on the AIB website: <https://www.adultimmunizationboard.org/meetings>

### Conclusions

Italy has made significant improvements in the field of adult immunization, with the NIP 2023-2025 reinforcing existing policies that ensure free vaccine access and set clear coverage targets. However, challenges persist, including regional disparities, declining vaccine confidence, and data gaps. Moving forward, integrating data systems, improving targeted outreach, and addressing vaccine hesitancy is needed to further enhance Italy's immunization efforts.

For more information, visit the website: [www.adultimmunizationboard.org](http://www.adultimmunizationboard.org) or contact: [adultimmunizationboard@uantwerpen.be](mailto:adultimmunizationboard@uantwerpen.be)

