

TRAILS

**Enabling Data Analytics for Actions
Tackling Skills Shortages & Mismatch**

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Explanation
EARLALL	European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning
WP	Work Package
HVET	Higher Vocational and Education and Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
R&D	Research and Development
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
EfVET	European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
EVTA	European Vocational Training Association
EVBB	European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)
GA	General Agreement
CMS	Content Management System
API	Application Programming Interface

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

D6.1 SYNTHESIS I: The Dissemination and Business Plan describe dissemination, exploitation, and impact creation actions. This Deliverable gathers all the activities that aim to ensure that TRAILS solutions and results are disseminated and communicated to academic and industrial parties and the general public. It also includes a road map for exploiting the project's results.

D6.1 provides the starting point for both dissemination and exploitation in the project, which will continue under D6.2 SYNTHESIS II: Dissemination & Business Report (due on M36).

1. INTRODUCTION

The **European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)** leads **TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch (TRAILS)** dissemination and communication activities under the WP6. Therefore, EARLALL is responsible for coordinating project activities and dissemination, communication, and impact activities. This gives all partners a clear overview of tasks, responsibilities, timelines and dissemination actions. In addition, the project counts a Dissemination Manager (Marco Pagano from UNINA), a Communication Manager (Vasiliki Kotsirou from DUTH) and an exploitation and innovation Manager (Christoph Bretgeld from SkillLab).

- The **Dissemination Manager** is responsible for maximizing the impact of TRAILS outcomes by ensuring that the project's solutions and results are appropriately disseminated and communicated to academic and industrial parties, as well as to the general public and consumers.
- The **Communication Manager** focuses on the management of TRAILS communication strategy. By developing communication plans, ensure the consistent dissemination of the project's accomplishments, both within and outside the project
- The **Exploitation and Innovation Manager** manages the exploitation strategy built around the project's exploitable assets. This includes managing the intellectual property developed throughout the TRAILS project, identifying potential stakeholders and partnerships for the project's innovations, and monitoring and evaluating the TRAILS exploitation activities throughout the project's lifetime.

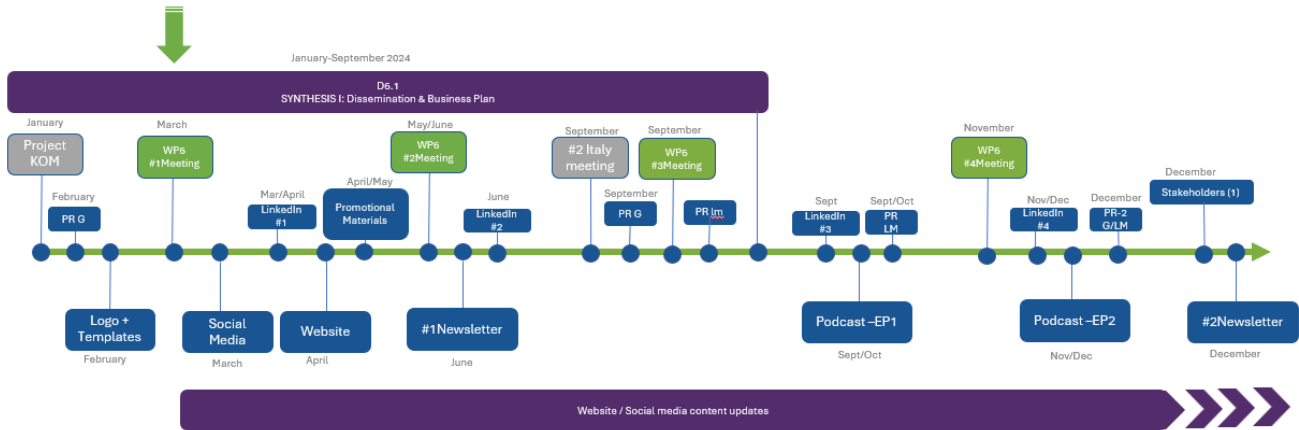
EARLALL will coordinate their dissemination and communication actions with them.

Dissemination, exploitation, and activity production represent an essential element in the success of the TRAILS project, as they ensure that the results are adopted by academic and industrial parties as well as the general public beyond the initial funding period.

This Work Package (WP) will also investigate the business perspectives of TRAILS's solution. SkillLab will be responsible for the work of the D6.2 SYNTHESIS II: Dissemination & Business Report (to be submitted in M36). This Deliverable will further explain the exploitation and business and exploitation activities.

The dissemination plan identifies instruments and targets. The figure below presents an overview of the first year. This will be updated in M24 and M36.

Figure 1 Dissemination and Communication Timeline Year 1



Both dissemination and exploitation plans should be viewed as dynamic documents, as outlined in D6.2 SYNTHESIS II: Dissemination & Business Report. This report will outline the new opportunities that have emerged throughout the project's duration. D6.2 will provide comprehensive descriptions of dissemination activities, exploitable results, and associated endeavors that will be generated towards the project's conclusion.

2. PURPOSE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The Dissemination and Business Plan serves as a comprehensive tool that equips consortium partners with the necessary information to carry out their individual and collective dissemination and communication activities effectively, thereby enhancing the project's visibility. The plan's actions and activities will be regularly updated and tailored to meet the project's evolving needs. The action plan outlined in this document will provide partners with essential guidelines for developing their dissemination and communication activities. Additionally, the plan includes a list of communication activities/channels or tools and recommendations for engaging local stakeholders. Furthermore, it encompasses sections for measuring impact and monitoring progress, aimed at establishing key performance indicators to be achieved throughout the project's duration. The plan will undergo revision and approval by the consortium partners.

In particular, the document defines the following Dissemination and Communication activities:

- Internal activities
- External activities

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

The deliverable is organised as follows:

- **Section 1 – Introduction:** This section introduces the deliverable.
 - **Section 2 – Purpose of the deliverable:** This section describes the purpose of the present deliverable, outlines its structure, introduces its objectives, target groups and the communication team
 - **Section 3 - Dissemination and communication content:** This section outlines the target group and key messages and channels
 - **Section 4 - Exploitation and business plan:** This section introduces the exploitation and business activities that are foreseen after the life of the project. It includes exploitable activities per the Working Package (WP)
 - **Section 5 - Dissemination and communication activities:** This section covers all the channels, tools and activities that are foreseen to be carried out during the life of the project from the corporate identity, website, social media channels, newsletter, policy briefs, dissemination and audio-visual materials events participation, stakeholders engagement and the organisation of workshops.
 - **Section 6 - Actions to disseminate:** This section compiles the list of public deliverables and the potential actions/channels/tools to disseminate the outcomes. In addition, it includes a list of communication and dissemination materials for partners
 - **Section 7 - Measuring impact:** This section lists the key performance indicators that TRAILS aims to reach through its communication and dissemination tools and channels.
 - **Section 8 - Monitoring and reporting:** This section explains how TRAILS will evaluate their different communication and dissemination activities
 - **Annex 1 – partners dissemination channels:** This annex compiles the dissemination and communication channels per partner.
-

OBJECTIVES

This Dissemination and Business Plan is assigned to carrying out dissemination actions and creating and substantial impact in the skill intelligence tools. The following principles drive it:

- Set clear and measurable dissemination objectives and targets that are time-related, can be evaluated and can change as the project progresses.
- Identify the most appropriate dissemination tools and channels for each project target group (assuming that there will be different requirements and mechanisms).

TRAILS' main **dissemination goals** are to:

- 1) Make the research results and content accessible to all categories of stakeholders across different levels of government (local, regional, national, and supranational).
- 2) Enable a deeper understanding of the research evidence, by policymakers.
- 3) Integrate the project into the European skills, lifelong learning, and VET ecosystem, based on liaisons and collaborations with labour-related institutes, international research organizations and associations where several partners participate with leading roles.
- 4) Raise awareness about the jobs of the future, inspire, educate, and train for new green taxonomies and the EU's upcoming policies.
- 5) Disseminate the research and open science results of the project to relevant scientific communities
- 6) Attract participants to the project activities, namely HVET/VET providers, companies, SMEs, R&D stakeholders, and regional and local Authorities.
- 7) Promote the use of project materials beyond the project consortium to create a European brand for the project.

2.1.1 COMMUNICATION VS DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

It is important to clarify the actions and objectives that the dissemination, communication and exploitation activities cover. As described in the European Commission guide “How to communicate your project: a step-by-step guide on communicating projects and their results (1).”

- Communication involves sharing information about projects and their outcomes.
- Dissemination involves describing and making results available for use.
- Exploitation involves utilizing the outcomes.

The dissemination and communication activities are divided into **two different categories**:

- i. **Internal communication** is related to the communication among the project's partners.
- ii. **External communication** aims to engage people in the project activities.

This report should be read and implemented by project partners. A dissemination tracker will be made available by EARLALL for project partners to facilitate reporting and monitoring.

The project will be promoted at all levels (local/regional, national, European and international) due to its strategic relevance for all partners' missions and activities in the years to come.

Each partner will be responsible for contributing to the dissemination of the project’s results (creation and dissemination of the brand, identifying dissemination opportunities, support dissemination activities...etc.), both at the local level (through the local relationships and meetings with stakeholders) as well as at international level. This will be done using each partner’s internal communication channels (online/offline), local stakeholder engagement, ambassadors, and online social networking (X, LinkedIn, etc.)

2.2 TARGET GROUPS

The TRAILS project will involve a large number of external stakeholders, including policymakers, employee and employer associations, adult education, VET private and public providers, the research and scientific community, and finally, the general public. In all cases, Dissemination and Communication will design specific actions, activities, and messages to involve them in the project and achieve its objectives.

TRAILS’ consortium is already composed of research institutions in Labour Market and Economy research, Public Affairs experts, technology providers, and regional and local authorities’ representatives. WP 6 -Dissemination & Business Planning acts as an overarching platform that connects an active consortium with the necessary stakeholders to reach its objectives.

Table 1 target groups

Target group and profile	Rationale	Example
<p>Policymakers</p> <p>Profile: Regional, local, national and European authorities</p>	<p>The support of policymakers is fundamental to the project to provide a direct opinion, implementation, and policy support to parliaments across the EU and at the European and international institutional levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Agencies such as Cedefop, European Labour Association • International organisations: International Labour Organisation
<p>Employee’s and employers’ associations</p> <p>Profile: At the regional, national, and European level</p>	<p>The presentation and discussion of the project results with this target group will support the project to enlarge its results and to transfer their knowledge to Social partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BusinessEurope • SMEunited • SGI Europe • ETUC - the European Trade Union Confederation.
<p>Adult Education, VET private and public providers</p>	<p>Their active involvement in labour market research ensures that education and training programs are responsive to the needs of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAEA • Lifelong Learning Platform, • EfVET, • EVTA

<p>Profile: European Associations (Adult Education, VET, Digital Learning), VET centres (public/private-</p>	<p>economy, ultimately leading to a more skilled and adaptable workforce. Therefore their support to transfer the knowledge is essential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVBB
<p>Research and Scientific Community</p> <p>Profile: Universities Scientific clusters</p>	<p>To support the development of scientific or technical know-how in product development and to bring together different interest groups to facilitate dialogue at European and international levels and provide critical assessment of project deliverables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University partners and • Research centres • Journal of Labour Economics • Economic Journal • Journal of the European Economic Association • European Economic Review • Labour Economics • Journal of Applied Behavioural Science
<p>General public</p>	<p>To advertise the project activities collect the major challenges and answer their current needs; to increase the awareness level of TRAILS.</p>	

2.3 TRAILS COMMUNICATION TEAM

EARLALL, as WP leader, set up the Project Communication team in March 2024. The team aims to organise dissemination activities to ensure all partners follow the same communications and dissemination guidelines. One or more representatives of each partner integrate the team. The contact person might be updated.

Table 2 TRAILS Communication Team

Name	Partner
Ioannis Pragidis	DUTH
Vaso Kotsirou	DUTH
Athanasia Kazakou	DUTH
Marco Pagano	UNINA
Alicia Gaban Barrio	EARLALL
Noelia Cantero	EARLALL
Georgios Panos	AUTH
Paul Redmond	ESRI
Luke Brosnan	ESRI

Christoph Bretgeld	SkillLab
Sylvana Hiltrop	SkillLab
Vincenzo Pezone	Tilburg
Sara Gysen	IPSOS
Maria Fernanda Gomez	IPSOS

3. DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION CONTENT

A comprehensive dissemination and communication plan is essential to achieving TRAILS' objectives. The project will leverage the extensive expertise of the partnership in areas such as skills mismatch trends, new skills protocols, and the use of machine learning. The dissemination and communication plan will outline the channels and tools required to execute project activities and communicate their outcomes to the targeted stakeholders. Subsequently, partners will be responsible for identifying dissemination opportunities at the local, regional, or national levels.

Every three months, the dissemination coordinator requests partners submit a plan for their dissemination activities. Furthermore, partners are expected to present and discuss their plans. It is essential for partners to plan activities and provide reports on these activities in the dissemination tracker to the dissemination coordinator.

Table 3 lists the main stakeholders from section 2, along with the communication channels and key messages to be communicated.

Table 3 Target group and key messages and channels

Target group and profile	Key Messages to Communicate	Communication Channels
Polymakers	A novel dataset through household survey design and experiments for illuminating the elements of behavioural, and social changes and to empower awareness towards participation in Lifelong learning across countries	Project website; social media content; in-house newsletters; policy briefs; workshops; press releases
Employee's and employers' associations	Strategic policy interventions based on innovative findings both for the demand and the supply side of the labour market	Project website; social media content; in-house newsletters; conferences, workshops

Adult Education, VET private and public providers	A unified AI-based framework for identifying skills gaps and shortages	Project website; social media content; in-house newsletters; conferences, workshops
Research Community	New elements and learning objectives for lifelong learning and VET	Project website; social media content; in-house newsletters; conferences, workshops, Scientific publications/journals, Scientific conferences, press releases
General public	A new measure for skill mismatch based on ML and novel matched employer-employee datasets across European countries.	Project website; social media content; in-house newsletters; conferences, workshops, press releases

4. EXPLOITATION AND BUSINESS PLAN

The strategy for exploitation of the project results will be developed during and implemented after the project.

The strategy is based on identifying the main Exploitable Assets and their presumed licence and performing an initial market analysis. Extensive business plans will be developed in the context of D6.2. TRAILS exploitation strategy is connected to the project objectives and aims to establish the overall exploitation goals. TRAILS strategy is two-dimensional:

- a. exploitation of specific assets/components,
- b. exploitation of the TRAILS system and methodology as a whole. Given the multidisciplinary nature of TRAILS, the consortium will explore the potential of developing partnerships and/or business agreements between 2-3 sub-teams of partners to mutually leverage the exploitable assets and capitalise upon joint market opportunities.

TRAILS' exploitation plan will be flexibly structured, including direct exploitation by consortium members and non-exclusive licensing and/or distribution agreements, among other things.

The plan combines two (2) complementary pillars:

1. **Joint Exploitation of the TRAILS Exploitable Assets:** This is focused on collaborative efforts to commercialize, sustain, and widen the uptake of the project's exploitable assets. It will be based on establishing a vibrant community of interested and committed stakeholders around the TRAILS project. All TRAILS partners will work collaboratively and intensively in community development around this joint exploitation path.

2. **Development of detailed exploitation plans by each partner:** These plans will be developed in line with each partner’s business and research strategy. These plans will concern the commercialization of the exploitable assets and solutions that the partners have developed.

Next to the exploitation strategic plan of TRAILS providing a degree of evaluation, the internal and external environment is given by the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. These position the exploitable outcomes of TRAILS in a precise risk assessment scenario, contrasting its main strengths and identified opportunities to existing weaknesses and potential threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solid scientific basis and partners that are experts in labour market research; - Automated AI-based tools (analyzing user skills, decisions, behaviors, etc.); - State-of-the-art ML methods for estimating the skills gap using novel databases and producing robust results - Unified and novel framework for analyzing skills-related topics - Easy to use and robust analytical tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automated AI-based tools (analyzing user behaviour, influence, bias, etc.) must be constantly tested to ensure accuracy of generated information since they may produce results that are not reflecting users. - Increased operational & maintenance costs to host larger communities - Collection of data must comply with national and EU legislation & regulations
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological advancements that make traditional opinion mining processes look outdated. TRAILS can be used to modernize them; - Participation in online tools to discuss about choice of VET and AL programmes, and resilient job search & matching; - Rise of initiatives for increasing citizen participation in EU decisions like European Citizens' Initiative - Reduce deficits by policy makers in inclusive decision making; - EU recently updated the taxonomy of green categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-standard preferences, beliefs, and decision-making pertaining to the adult learning; - Increased economic instability due to COVID19, reduced income and turnover; - Resistance to change, technophobia and reduced experience with e-participation among vulnerable groups

Figure 2 SWOT analysis

The exploitation strategy for the TRAILS project centres on two primary revenue streams: the **data offering** and **consulting services**. The business plan is built on a *resource-based approach*, ensuring that the project makes the most of the consortium’s expertise while acknowledging the constraints and challenges inherent to bringing these innovations to market. While the consortium aims for flexibility and scalability, the TRAILS consortium is aware of the resources available and the realistic limitations the consortium faces in pursuing different go-to-market strategies.

1. Resource-Based Approach to Business Plan Creation

The business plan for the TRAILS project will focus on practical, achievable objectives based on the consortium’s existing capacity and work on the TRAILS project, avoiding a "from market to product" approach. Instead, TRAILS will respect the resources available and channelled into TRAILS, ensuring that our go-to-market strategies are realistic and well-aligned with the consortium’s strengths.

Key Tasks in Business Plan Creation:

Task 1: Defining the Market Segments

The consortium will conduct a targeted market segmentation analysis to identify key customers and stakeholders:

- **Government Agencies:** Local, regional, and national agencies engaged in workforce development and policy-making.
- **Research Institutions:** Universities and think tanks that require labour market data for research, forecasting, and academic work.

By focusing on clearly defined segments, we will ensure that our go-to-market strategy is practical and targeted, aligning with the consortium's strengths and constraints.

Task 2: Develop the Value Proposition for Each Stream

The **business plan** will clearly articulate the value of TRAILS' two revenue streams:

- **For the data platform:** Emphasis will be placed on the unique granularity, customizability, and localization of TRAILS' labour market data.

Relevant Deliverables to take into consideration:

- D2.4: QUESTION IV – Survey Data Generation and Analytics
- D3.1: COMPARE I: Skills mismatching in Europe pre- and post-pandemic
- D3.2: COMPARE II: Technological change, training, and upskilling in Europe
- D3.3: COMPARE III: The impact of skills mismatching on well-being across sectors
- D4.1: NOVEL I: Using machine learning to measure skills matched to needs

- **For the consulting services:** The added value will come from expert guidance in interpreting and applying the data to specific regional or sectoral needs, helping clients take action based on insights from the data.

Relevant Deliverables to take into consideration:

- D1.1: REVIEW I – Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe
- D1.2: REVIEW II – Innovative initiatives for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe
- D1.3: REVIEW III – Functional requirements for the TRAILS innovations
- D3.4: COMPARE IV: Behavioural, social, and cultural change for successful development of skills matched to needs
- D5.1: BUNDLE I: Skills bundling and labour market mobility in Europe
- D5.2: BUNDLE II: Skills acquisition and firm performance in different sectors

2. Designing and Executing the Business Plan

The **business plan** will address both revenue streams, focusing on pragmatic execution that respects the consortium's time, budget, and resources. Key tasks for each stream are outlined below.

A. Data Platform: Tasks for Monetization

The data platform will serve as the foundation of the **TRAILS business model**, providing labour market data to government agencies and research institutions. The following tasks will be critical for its successful monetization:

Task 3: Defining Data Access Models and Products

The **business plan** will define various access models for the TRAILS data platform, such as:

- **Subscription Tiers:** Offering basic, advanced, and premium levels of data access, each with varying degrees of granularity and customization.
- **Customised Data Sets:** Tailored datasets designed to meet the specific needs of individual clients, such as regional governments or research institutions.
- **API Access:** Providing clients with direct access to TRAILS data through API integration, allowing seamless use of data in their existing systems.

Task 4: Market Testing of the Data Platform

Early-stage partners, such as select government agencies, will be engaged to pilot the data platform. These pilot programs will provide valuable feedback, helping refine the platform's user interface, data accuracy, and market positioning before a broader rollout.

Task 5: Pricing Model Development

The data platform's pricing strategy will involve a tiered subscription model, ensuring scalability and accessibility for clients of different sizes and needs. A task force will conduct market research to define pricing that reflects the value of TRAILS data while covering operational costs.

Task 6: Marketing the Data Platform

The marketing strategy will focus on:

- **Direct Outreach:** Reaching out to government agencies, research institutions, and labour market observatories to highlight the value of TRAILS data for policy and workforce planning.
- **Webinars and Workshops:** Showcasing the data platform's capabilities through interactive online events.
- **Thought Leadership:** Publishing articles, white papers, and case studies that illustrate how TRAILS data can be used to drive strategic workforce planning and policy development.

B. Consulting Services: Tasks for Service Development

The **consulting services** will complement the data platform, offering expert guidance in localising, interpreting, and applying the data. The following tasks will support the development of a sustainable consulting arm:

Task 7: Structuring Consulting Packages

- The **business plan** will outline modular consulting packages that are tailored to client needs. These packages will focus on:
 - **Strategic Workforce Planning:** Using TRAILS data to help government agencies develop policies to address skills shortages and workforce gaps.
 - **Policy Impact Analysis:** Assisting organisations in evaluating the effectiveness of labour policies using advanced analytics and data insights.

Task 8: Pricing Model for Consulting Services

The **pricing for consulting services will be flexible**, based on project scope, duration, and complexity. This will ensure that both small and large organisations can benefit from TRAILS' expertise. A structured project-based fee model will be created, allowing for customised engagements.

Task 9: Building Synergies Between Data and Consulting Services

The **business plan** will identify opportunities for cross-selling consulting services to clients of the data platform, and vice versa. For example, clients who access TRAILS data may also require help interpreting and applying that data for workforce planning, creating opportunities for deeper engagements.

3. Compliance with Best Practices in Business Planning

While the TRAILS project adopts a resource-based approach, the Consortium will comply with key best practices to ensure a robust business plan. The following tasks will ensure that the plan is realistic and actionable:

Task 10: Risk Management and Contingency Planning

The business plan will include a detailed risk management section, identifying potential risks (e.g., regulatory changes, data privacy concerns) and outlining contingency strategies. This will help the consortium navigate any challenges that arise during the commercialization process.

Task 11: Financial Planning and Sustainability

Financial projections will be created to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business models. These projections will include:

- **Revenue Forecasting:** Estimating potential revenue from both the data platform and consulting services, based on market demand and pricing strategies.
 - **Cost Analysis:** Managing operational and development costs, ensuring that the business remains financially viable without exceeding the consortium's resource capacity.
-

Task 12: Ongoing Market Research and Adaptation

The **business plan** will include a process for **ongoing market research**, ensuring that TRAILS' offerings remain aligned with emerging labour market needs. This iterative process will allow the consortium to adapt its data and consulting services to reflect new trends and client feedback.

4. Integration Between Data and Consulting Services

The **final piece of the business plan is the integration between the two streams**, ensuring that both the data platform and consulting services work in synergy. The consortium will carry out *Task 13: Joint Service Packages*, offering bundled services where clients can access both data and consulting support, maximising the value delivered to them.

5. DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

This chapter describes the different tools, channels and activities that the TRAILS partnership will use to disseminate the project outcomes to the different target groups mentioned in the previous section.

As indicated in “D8.1 COORDINATE I: Project Administrative, Technical & Data Management Handbook” all the activities covered in this deliverable should follow the “dissemination policy” as described in section 3.1.14 of the report:

Unless otherwise agreed with the granting authority, the beneficiaries must promote the action and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) by Annex 1 (of GA) and in a strategic, coherent and effective manner. Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the beneficiaries must inform the granting authority.

Acknowledgement EU Funding and Disclaimer — European flag and funding statement

Unless otherwise agreed with the granting authority, communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



Figure 3 Funded by the European Union emblem

Source : https://rea.ec.europa.eu/communicating-about-your-eu-funded-project_en#acknowledge-eu-funding

The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight EU support.

When displayed with other logos (e.g., of beneficiaries or sponsors), the emblem must be displayed as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For their obligations, the beneficiaries may use the emblem without obtaining approval from the granting authority. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo by registration or other means.

Disclaimer GA art. 17.3 must be added to any publication/output (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“Funded by the European Union. However, the views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

Funding information

All the project documents must have an explicit reference to EU funding and the Programme, including a reference to the number of the GA.’

“This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101132673.”

Consequences of non-compliance

If a beneficiary fails to meet its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced (see Article 28 of the GA). Such breaches may also result in other measures outlined in Chapter 5 (GA) such as marks, brands, or text.

A manual for the dissemination activities/brand manual can be found on SharePoint:
[TRAILS Brand manual.pptx](#)

5.1 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The internal communication tools are part of the project management section. These tools have been set up and managed by the Project Coordinator. As indicated in the “D8.1 COORDINATE I: Project Administrative, Technical & Data Management Handbook” TRAILS project counts on the following internal communication tools:

- **Internal Mailing lists:** The TRAILS project uses mailing lists per WP and for administrative and financial issues
- **Collaboration management platform:** A common collaboration space is available for the TRAILS partners to share documents and access all available information, both public and

confidential, using Microsoft SharePoint. This web-based workspace allows users to upload documents, share files, and organise information in sections for easy collaborative editing.

- **Teleconference platform (Microsoft Teams):** Microsoft Teams is cloud-based team collaboration software that is part of the Microsoft 365 and Office 365 suite of applications. Its core capabilities include business messaging, calling, video meetings, and file sharing. Businesses of all sizes can use Teams.
- **Control repository:** To support code development and collaboration within the technical activities of the TRAILS project, the TRAILS partners will utilize GitHub. GitHub is a developer platform owned by Microsoft that allows developers and analysts to create, store, manage, and share their code.

For further information please refer to the “D8.1 COORDINATE I: Project Administrative, Technical & Data Management Handbook” section 3.1.10.

5.2 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

Table 4 External communication tools and activities

Tools and Channels	Target Group	Timeline / Status	Target
Corporate and design-level branding	All stakeholders, and the general audience	Done	/
Website	All stakeholders, and the general audience	In progress	YR1: min.2 publication /month(M); YR2: min. 3 publication /M; YR3: min: 4 publication /M
TRAILS portal	All stakeholders, in particular, stakeholders in the labour market and policymakers	Scheduled	YR: 2 visualization tools for presenting results from secondary databases YR3: 2 novel primary databases related to the labor market covering EU countries/ 2 analytical tools related to

			occupations and skills
Newsletters	All stakeholders, and the general audience	In progress	YR1: min 4; YR: min 8 YR3: min 12
Press Releases - General audience	General audience	In progress	12 press clippings
Press Releases - Labour Market	All stakeholders, in particular, stakeholders in the labour market and policymakers	In progress	YR1: min 3; YR2: min. 6; YR3: min 14
Scientific Journals	Research and Scientific communities	Scheduled	15 articles in top-rated journals
Policy Briefs	Policymakers	Scheduled	YR1: 2 YR2: 2 YR: 2
Social Media Visibility	All stakeholders, and the general audience	In progress	X (<i>former Twitter</i>): YR1: min 3/M YR2: min 6/M YR3: min 10/M LinkedIn : YR1:=1post/month YR2: >=3 posts/month
Dissemination materials	All stakeholders, and the general audience	Done	/
Audio-visual materials	All stakeholders, and the general audience	Done	1 general video
Participation in third-party events and communication channels	Different stakeholders depending on the topic of the events	In progress	Participation in 15 conferences Min. 20 back-links across major stakeholders

Presentation to different audiences and synergies	Different stakeholders depending on the topic of the events	In progress	Building synergies with at least 2 EU funded projects Liaison with ≥ 50 public or private actors in training as well as related associations and organizations;
Stakeholder database	All stakeholders, in particular, labour market experts, policymakers	In progress	M12 > 20 profiles M24 > 30 profiles M36 > 50 profiles
Workshops	Selected stakeholders	Scheduled	1 workshop in physical presence 2 online workshops (>30 attendees per workshop)

5.2.1 CORPORATE AND DESIGN-LEVEL BRANDING

TRAILS dissemination and communication team has defined its corporate and brand guidelines. The logo, templates and guidelines are included in this section.

5.2.1.1 LOGO AND COLOUR PALETTE





The project logo consists of the project title: TRAILS – Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch



Figure 4 TRAILS Logo

The official project colours are based on its logo. These colours shall be used in all materials developed for this project and/or made to promote it or its outputs. Other colours within the same range can be used when needed.

Table 5 TRAILS Colour Palette

	 Blue				 Green				 Blank			 Purple				
RGB (digital)	81	179	219		127	174	64		0	0	0		83	44	108	
CMYK (printed)	100	52	0	25	48	0	100	14	5	5	0	3	75	100	0	25
Hex. (web)	#195593				#7FAE40				#000000			#532C6C				

5.2.1.2 VISUAL IDENTITY AND BRAND MANUAL

TRAILS brand guideline manual is a document that explains how the TRAILS brand should be presented in public and how the logo, colours, fonts, and EU-funding acknowledgement should be used. In addition, provides elements, icons, pictures and useful resources to support partners in their dissemination efforts. This document is available in the project’s SharePoint.

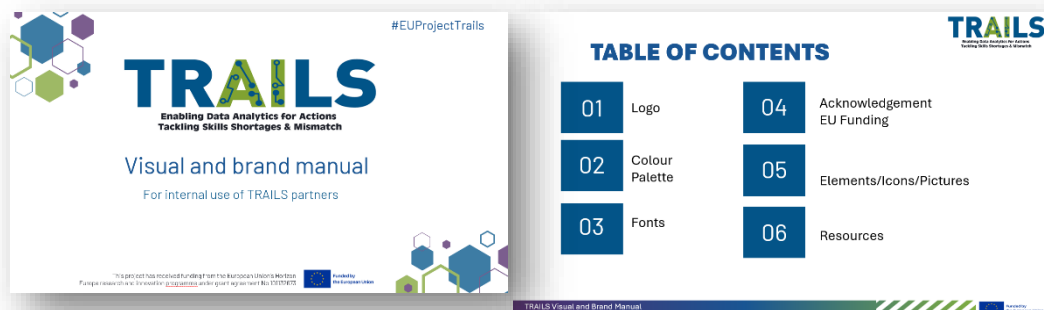


Figure 5 TRAILS Brand manual

5.2.1.3 TEMPLATES

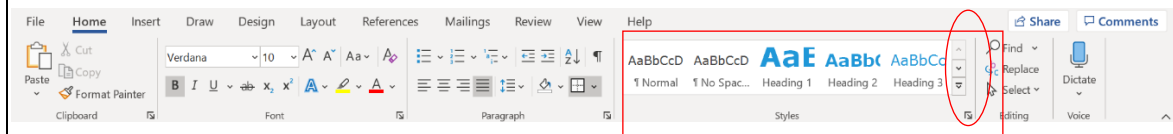
EARLALL produced Word document templates (reporting, agenda minutes, meeting, participants) for the partners' use in internal and external communication activities. These documents are available in the project's SharePoint.

Please note that partners must use the template provided by the WP Leader. Below, you can find some instructions about how to work with the template:

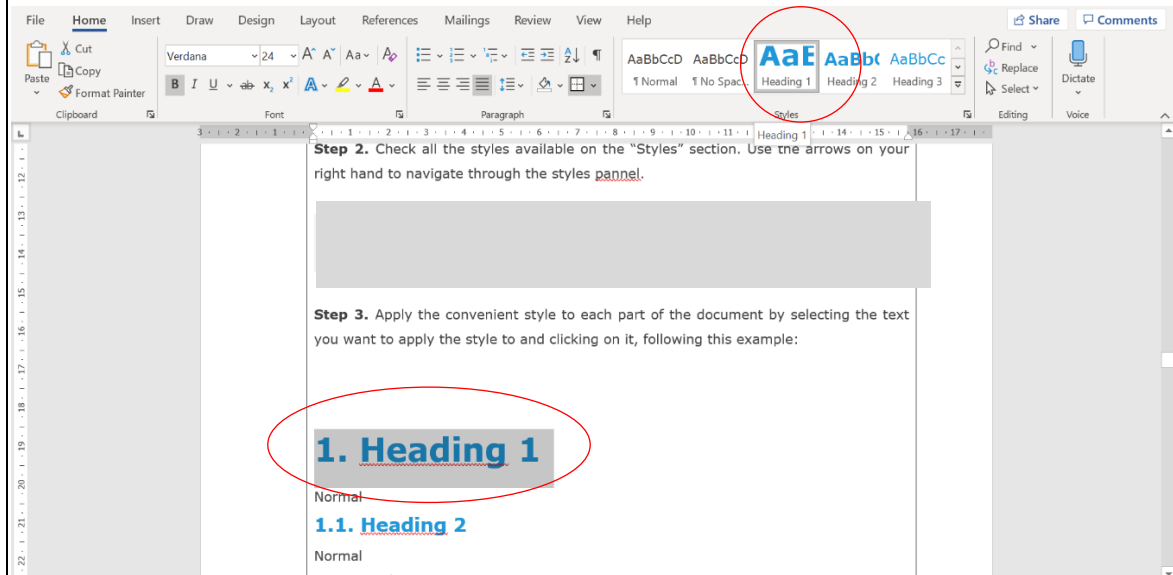
Tips to use styles on Microsoft Word

Step 1. Double-click on the document template (.dotx) to create a new document using the NEETs for NEETs template.

Step 2. Check all the styles available in the “Styles” section. Use the arrows on your right hand to navigate through the styles panel.



Step 3. Apply the convenient style to each part of the document by selecting the text you want to apply the style to and clicking on it.



Step 4: Check that all parts of the document have an adequate style, following the example of this very Dissemination Plan.

Figure 6 TRAILS templates

Likewise, the **PowerPoint presentation template** produced by EARLALL is available in the project's SharePoint for use by the partners in internal and external communication activities.



Figure 7 TRAILS PowerPoint presentation template

5.2.2 WEBSITE

The website is understood as nonstop online access to all project developments and final results, which facilitates the target audience's adoption of project results. The domain for the website is <https://www.trails-project.eu/>. The website was launched in May 2024.

The website will be directly linked to the TRAILS Portal (WP7: System Design and Integration) which will be entirely developed and managed by the partner DUTH.

The website and its content will be managed by EARLALL through the WordPress CMS. Project partners should send regular updates to EARLALL about their work to be published on the website, such as:

- Articles / Blog Posts
- Pictures
- Briefings ideas
- Public Deliverables once finished
- Project-related events (not necessarily directly linked to the project itself, but also to the topics it tackles)
- Resources / Research papers ...



Figure 8 TRAILS website banner

The project website includes sections dedicated to:

- About (text from the website)

TRAILS seeks to build on current data in skills mismatches and create novel tools and databases, harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence. It will empower Vocational and Adult Education training to match employers with educational opportunities to reallocate workers efficiently.

Motivation

TRAILS motivation is driven by the:

- urgent recognition of skills mismatch as a multidimensional challenge affecting productivity, social welfare and overall cohesion*
- changing labour market requirements triggered by several external trends and shocks, such as the pandemic COVID-19 pandemic or the energy crisis.*
- the need to allocate work efficiently, minimise unemployment and fill the skills gaps created by the “great restructuring”.*

Scope



Figure 9 TRAILS Scope

TRAILS Scope: novel tools and databases, AI real-time skill profiling and matching, VET and Adult Learning Training, Policy implications

Architecture in a nutshell

TRAILS aims to create a complete ecosystem that serves as a basis for research-led, policy-relevant and social impact-oriented actions. The aim is to establish the necessary conditions for the successful development of competences adapted to the needs of the European Union. The novel approach of TRAILS is that its concept is based on an open-loop architecture.

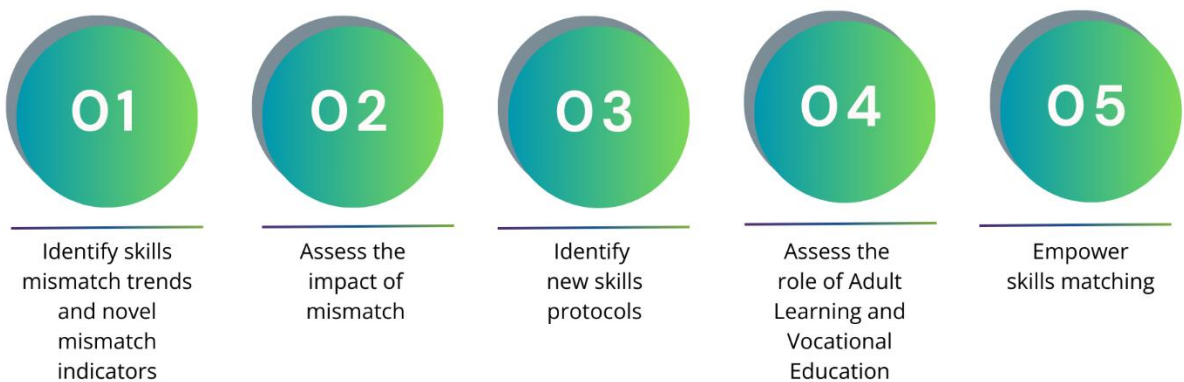


Figure 10 TRAILS architecture

Objectives

1. Generate innovative European primary survey data
2. Create a novel framework of analysis for identifying the main causes of labour shortages
3. Enable new instruments and indicators based on machine learning and Big-Data methods
4. Develop new instruments for balanced training
5. Initiate and improvise upon a bottom-up approach to identify the determinants of education and training choice, and enable skills profiling that classifies and promotes transferable skills for the needs of inclusive labour markets in Europe
6. Assess the role of behavioural, social and cultural factors in the decision for participation and choice of VET and Adult Learning programmes, including informal learning
7. Enable wide communication and scientific dissemination of the innovative results to the labour market institutions, citizens, employers, VET providers, and policy actors.

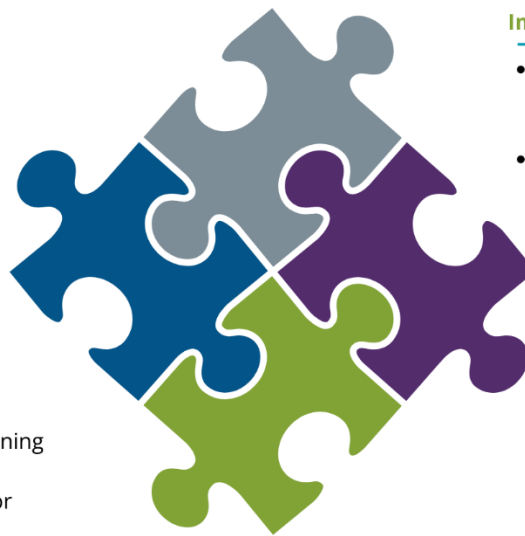
Working Package structure

Supportive and preliminary actions

- **WP1** - State-of-the-art, research and tools requirements (UNINA)
- **WP2** - Data management and survey design (IPSOS)

Core analysis and research results

- **WP3** - Changing technology, mismatching and on-the-job training (UNINA)
- **WP4** - Using machine learning for matching skills to needs (ESRI)
- **WP5** - New skills, skills bundling and labour market mobility (AUTH)



Impact and policy actions

- **WP6** - Dissemination & Business Planning (EARLALL)
- **WP7** - System Design and Integration (DUTH)

Management

- **WP8** - Project Management (DUTH)

Figure 11 TRAILS Working Package structure

Working package structure: supportive and preliminary actions, core analysis and research results, impact and policy actions, management

Expected impact

Among its results will be an innovative methodology to measure skills mismatches; an analysis framework of training in the area of artificial intelligence, as well as a selection of best practices for tackling skills shortages and mismatches in Europe.

- Partners
- Publications: Briefings, Deliverables, Research papers
- Media: Blog, Materials, News, Newsletters, Podcasts and Press Releases
- Contact

The project website will be continuously updated with relevant information about the project activities, briefings, deliverables, research papers, blog posts – expert voices, news, newsletters, podcast episodes and press releases (for the general audience and labour market stakeholders).

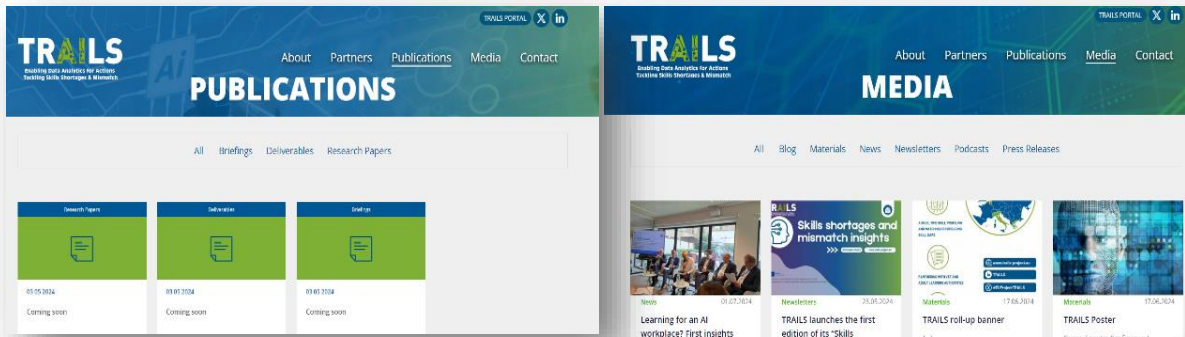


Figure 12 TRAILS website sections

All project partners will disseminate the website and its updates via social media and other digital means. They are also responsible for adding a link to it from their official website. In this sense, a page within each partner’s website will be dedicated to the project and will include a link to the project website.

It is expected that by year 1, two items per month will be published; by year 2, three items per month; and finally, four items per month will be published by year 3.

The website complies with the General Data Protection rules and includes a [Cookie and Private Policy section](#).

The **expert voice section (blog)** is relevant as spotlights the expertise of TRAILS research partners. They will provide back-to-back with the submission of the main deliverables blog posts covering relevant subjects linked to the project’s core topics. This milestone will place TRAILS as a reference source for other projects or experts in the domain. As an example, it is included in the last two blog posts; during the life of the project, more will be added.

1. Skills Mismatch in Europe by Dr Paul Redmond and Luke Brosnan, The Economic And Social Research Institute (Ireland) (see [here](#)).

What is Skills Mismatch?

Skills mismatch is a broad term that incorporates a variety of different concepts. The most commonly studied measure is vertical mismatch, which occurs when an employee’s skills or education level are either too high or too low compared to what is required to do their job. For example, a person with a masters degree working in a job that requires only an undergraduate degree would be “overeducated”. On the other hand, a person with an undergraduate degree working in a job that requires a masters degree would be “undereducated”. Other forms of mismatch include horizontal mismatch and skill shortages. Horizontal mismatch occurs when an employee’s field of education does not relate to the occupation they work in. Skill shortages occur when employers cannot find suitably qualified workers to fill vacancies.

Why is Skills Mismatch Important?

Skills mismatch can have important consequences for both employers and employees. Firstly, for employees, a large body of research has found that overeducation is associated with a wage penalty. An overeducated employee may be paid 10-15 percent less than an employee in a matched occupation with the same level of education (McGuinness et al., 2018). By stunting skills acquisition, mismatch can leave a lasting scar on individuals’ earnings, even after they switch to a matched occupation (Guvenen et al., 2020). As well as wages, being overqualified can also lead to lower job satisfaction for employees (Cabral Vieira, 2005).

Like vertical mismatch, horizontal mismatch has also been found to be associated with a wage penalty for employees. This wage penalty is particularly large for employees who are horizontally mismatched for involuntary reasons, such as no other job being available (Bender and Roche, 2018). Other work, however, has found that horizontal mismatch only leads to a wage penalty when the worker is also vertically mismatched (Montt, 2015). In addition, horizontal mismatch is associated with lower job satisfaction and a higher level of employee turnover (Bender and Heywood, 2009; Bédoué and Giret, 2011).

Vertical mismatch also has important implications for a firm’s performance. Firms that employ undereducated workers have been found to be both less productive and less profitable. This has been highlighted as an “alarming result” that requires more initiatives across European countries to tackle undereducation and to ensure workers’ skills and knowledge remain up-to-date (Kampelmann et al., 2020). On the other hand, hiring more overeducated workers is associated with both higher profitability and productivity, especially among high-tech firms (Mahy et al., 2015). Skills shortages, whereby firms experience difficulties recruiting employees with the appropriate skills, have been found to lead to negative consequences across a range of measures. Firstly, skill shortages have negative consequences for firm productivity (Bennett and McGuinness, 2009). However, the consequences of skill shortages have wider implications, with potential negative impacts on GDP, employment and earnings (Frogner, 2002). One estimate indicates that a 10 percent increase in the number of firms experiencing skills shortages lowers investment by 10 percent and research and development (R&D) by 4 percent.

The Role for Policy

Given the potentially harmful impacts of skills mismatch, it is perhaps unsurprising that this is a policy area that receives a great deal of attention and funding at both a national and international

level. In May 2023, the European Year of Skills ran for the past 12 months. This is a major EU initiative with the broad aim of reducing skills shortages and helping individuals to upskill and retrain so that their skills and education match current requirements in the labour market.

It is envisaged the European Year of Skills will provide a fresh impetus for achieving several skills-based targets that form a core part of EU policy. For example, the EU 2030 social targets aim to have at least 60 percent of adults in training every year. The 2030 Digital Compass sets targets of at least 80 percent of adults with basic digital skills, along with 20 million employed ICT specialists in the EU. Current metrics suggest that there is still a long way to go to address issues related to skills mismatch in Europe. It is estimated that three quarters of companies in the EU find it difficult to recruit employees with the required skills, while just 37 percent of adults undertake training regularly.[1]

Trends in Vertical Mismatch in the EU

Using data from the European Skills and Jobs Survey (ESJS), we examine the prevalence of vertical mismatch (over- and under-education) in the EU over time. The ESJS is administered by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), and is an EU-wide survey aimed at collecting information on skill requirements and skills mismatch in Europe.[1]

Figure 1 below shows the average incidence of under- and over-education in the EU over two time periods – 2014 and 2021. We see that both over- and under-education decreased over this time period. The average rate of overeducation of participants in the survey went from 26 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2021, while undereducation went from 18 percent to 12 percent. There was a corresponding increase in the incidence of workers in matched occupations, going from 55 percent to 68 percent. While this is an aggregate picture for the EU overall, it hides significant country level variation. For example, countries including Croatia, Portugal, Czechia and France experienced particularly large decreases in overeducation rates, while in other countries, such as Germany, the rate of overeducation remained flat. For undereducation, countries including France, Poland, Ireland and Italy saw large falls in the percentage of undereducated workers. Understanding what is driving changes in skills mismatch over time is one of the key areas of study for the TRAILS project. Forthcoming research will provide important insights and policy relevant evidence for understanding changes in mismatch over time in Europe. The country level insights offered by the TRAILS research will be particularly valuable for improving our understanding of the different experiences of individual EU countries.

What Leads to Skills Mismatch?

While understanding the changes over time in vertical mismatch in Europe is an ongoing area of active research within the TRAILS project, we can look to the existing literature for information on the potential drivers of skills mismatch, in particular overeducation. Overeducation has been found to be more prevalent among social sciences graduates, while a vocational qualification is associated with improved matching (Ortiz and Kucel, 2008; Marvomaras et al., 2010). Overeducation also tends to be more prevalent in areas where commuting is difficult, as this may pose a barrier to workers finding a matched job (McGowan and Andrews, 2015).

At a broader level, overeducation represents an imbalance between the supply and demand for highly qualified workers. While national governments continually pursue greater educational attainment, if the number of available high-skilled jobs does not keep pace then this will lead to increases in overeducation (McGuinness et al., 2018). Overeducation is also likely affected by changes in economic conditions, as during recessions the demand for labour, and how workers are used within firms, is likely to change.

As the TRAILS project will analyse changes that occurred between 2014 and 2021, a potentially important factor is the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to fundamental changes in labour markets across the world, which likely affected levels of skills mismatch. There was significant movement of workers, as people moved out of sectors that were negatively impacted by the pandemic into sectors that were not. As noted by ONS (2021), the impact of this, in terms of increasing or decreasing mismatch is not clear, as some displaced workers will find a matched job while others will not. In this article, we have highlighted some of the key policy areas relating to skills mismatch. In the coming months and year, the TRAILS project will provide important evidence to improve our understanding of skills mismatch in the EU.

2. Towards a skills-focused labor market: using technology to drive a paradigm shift, By Arijana Radic, Dr. Brian Hutchison, and Dr. Nour Alhiyari and originally published in Skilllab site (see [here](#))

A paradigm shift is underway in the world of work. Traditional approaches to career development focus on stories, personality preferences, and experiences, while we want to highlight how a skill-focused approach can benefit clients. It provides information, ideas, and tools to shape the practices of career counselors and the career outcomes of job seekers in diverse environments, focusing on creating more equitable labor markets with employment opportunities for everyone.

The whole article was originally published in the APCDA Conference Proceedings Vol 1 in June 2024. The whole publication is accessible on this link: <https://asiapacificcda.org/apcda-cp-vol1/>

Skill-based approach in the labor market

Skill-based hiring first gained popularity among employers. Around 2010, this approach sparked debate as major global employers announced that they were striving to eliminate unnecessary degree requirements from their job postings and hiring processes. By 2020, the proportion of job postings requiring a bachelor's degree declined overall by 12%; however, these changes in job postings were most often employer-specific, and the trend either came to stall or was even reversed in some cases. For instance, as of 2024, among all companies intending to adopt skill-based hiring, 37% completed the transition successfully, while 45% implemented no relevant changes. Meanwhile, the remaining 18% initially adopted skill-based hiring but reverted to previous hiring practices.

Regardless of these recent trends, evidence suggests that skill-based hiring will play a significant role in the future world of work. The European Commission recently concluded The European Year of Skills in 2023 (https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index_en) with a focus on fostering long-term sustainable growth through a skilled workforce equipped with the most in-demand skills. Such innovative initiatives suggest that career guidance and employment services must also follow this skill-based trend, which we label as skill-focused career development.

Currently, a mutual struggle is ongoing between employers and job seekers. In particular, employers struggle to identify suitable talent, while job seekers struggle to effectively communicate their skills. Furthermore, universities and colleges remain siloed in their understanding of outcomes and are often protective of their assets. This struggle is exacerbated by the increasing emergence of complex skills sought by employers, prompting some to steer away from the practice of using degrees as a proxy for assessing soft skills to compensate for a gap in hard-skill assessment practices and procedures.

We want to show you how skill-based requirements can be put into practice by incorporating them into a technology tool developed by SkillLab, and used by SkillLab's partners worldwide. After conducting an internal research with some of the counselors that use the SkillLab tool in their work, we analyzed the collected data, and identified three themes illustrating the effects of the skill-focused approach in counseling.

"People can explore and build their profile according to what they want to show without the need of a third person. I am talking about concepts like self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence that are connected to what you have accomplished."

Empowering the people

Counselors all agreed that a skill-focused approach can first and foremost empower their clients. Implementing the skill-focused approach and the SkillLab tool significantly helped clients understand themselves better, and recall their previous experiences in relation to their work skills. In the past, counselors had to mostly rely on their clients' memories, often leading to incomplete assessments owing to forgotten experiences. In addition, the participating counselors reported that the SkillLab platform made the career counseling process shorter.

The SkillLab tool enables clients to learn about various career options aligned with their skills, and acknowledge skill gaps for roles they aspire to pursue. This makes it much easier for counselors to recommend possible educational and career paths.

Focusing on skills and using the SkillLab-generated CV enhanced the visibility of job seekers to employers. Some counselors even reported that employers viewed the SkillLab CV as a model of the high-quality and modern CVs frequently sought from applicants.

One important impact of the SkillLab tool is that it educates both counselors and their clients about skills in general, including different skill categories and transferable skills: "The tool offers you more technical skills to choose from, which is an upgrade from what we did before when we had more general, overarching descriptions like 'digital skills', and now we, can choose any specific skill that people have."

Most importantly, the participating counselors highlighted that the SkillLab tool and the skill-focused approach significantly enhanced their clients'.

"Before, our approach was purely work-based learning, and we did it all manually. With SkillLab, we were able to automate everything. The sectors are easier to identify, as are the industries, the career interests, and the matching. Everything is done swiftly compared to how we did it before, and it provides an additional layer of complexity and more industry-aligned terms and industry-aligned features of CVs."

Empowering the counselors

Implementation of the skill-focused approach and SkillLab’s tool also brings important changes in the counseling process. Counselors reported that using the tool enabled them to understand their clients better and communicate with them more effectively and efficiently: “This is extremely important for us because people are at an emotional low point, and it is very important to encourage a person to engage in a sincere conversation so that they formulate for themselves what they want in the end. [...] This makes it easier for us to communicate with the job seekers, and find them a job.”

Adopting skill-based technology, such as SkillLab, enables both counselors and their clients to save time, enables counselors to automate processes, and adds complexity to their career advice.

“You do not need a laptop or a computer or anything else, as it’s easy to complete the assessment, save the CV, and then send it from your phone. This takes two minutes—while you’re on the bus, you create and update your CV, and apply for a job.”

Leveraging the technology

The third and final theme is leveraging technology to not only support skill-focused career guidance but also make career guidance accessible to as many people as possible. Counselors emphasized how technology, particularly mobile-first solutions such as the SkillLab tool, can benefit individuals with limited resources. This is particularly relevant for target groups from vulnerable backgrounds, as they often do not have computers or access to internet cafes.

Counselors also frequently discussed the SkillLab CV, noting that the process of creating and obtaining a modern, skill-based CV is made much easier by the tool.

The work of counselors that use the skills-based approach and the skills-based technology developed by SkillLab proves that a skills-focused approach in career guidance is possible, and is yielding positive results for different labor market stakeholders. Especially by empowering counselors and their clients, it is making a long-lasting impact on people’s lives and the future of labor markets.

3. The evolution of Skills Mismatch in Europe, By Prof. Georgios Panos, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) (see [here](#))

The first quarter of 2014 brought about the largest increase in skills mismatching across European labour markets. Using data from some 46 million European employees between 2006 and 2022 from the yearly EU Labour Force Survey[1], figure 1 documents this massive decline in skills matching[2] in European labour markets (Panos, et al. 2024).

How big was the decline?

At the peak of the Eurozone debt crisis between 2013 and 2014, all countries experienced large declines in skills matching ranging between -3.2% (Czech Republic) and -29.5% (Ireland). The absolute magnitude of the increase in skills mismatching was between 2.7 and 15.5 percentage points. The only exception was Iceland, which started experiencing large rises in mismatching gradually between 2010 and 2014, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. An inspection of the quarterly data of the EU-LFS confirms that it was the first quarter of 2014 which brought about the biggest drops in skills matching in labour markets across Europe.

Why did it occur?

The notable increase in skills mismatching in 2014, as opposed to previous years, can be understood in the context of several economic, political, and structural factors that either fully materialized or became more evident around that specific year. While the groundwork for these mismatches was laid earlier, particularly in the aftermath of the global financial crisis and Eurozone debt crisis, the specific dynamics converged in 2014 for the following reasons:

Delayed economic recovery and labour market lag after the Eurozone debt crisis: In 2013, Europe was still grappling with sluggish economic growth, high unemployment, and fiscal austerity measures, especially in Southern Europe. It wasn't until 2014 that modest GDP growth returned to many parts of Europe, resulting in more job creation. The effects of economic recovery on the labour market typically lag behind GDP growth. The recovery in employment, and thus the recognition of mismatches between new jobs and available skills, became more apparent in 2014 as companies started hiring again. This delay is a normal pattern after recessions, as businesses wait for sustained recovery before making large-scale hiring decisions.

Shift from crisis management to long-term restructuring: Throughout 2012 and 2013, many European countries were still heavily focused on austerity measures aimed at stabilizing public finances. These measures often came at the expense of investments in education, training, and active labor market policies, which are crucial for addressing skills mismatches. By 2014, the focus in many countries began to shift toward more structural reforms and longer-term economic planning, revealing deeper labour market issues that had been masked by crisis management. Moreover, many of the emergency policies implemented to stabilize labour markets during the crisis (such as short-term work schemes) were scaled back around 2013. As these temporary measures ended, more structural challenges, including skills mismatches, became visible.

Impact of structural reforms becoming evident: Several Southern European countries undertook significant labour market reforms between 2012 and 2014 as part of bailout agreements or national economic recovery strategies. These reforms included measures to make labour markets more flexible, reduce protection for permanent workers, and encourage more part-time or temporary work. While these reforms helped reduce unemployment in some cases, they also contributed to a rise in precarious, low-skill jobs that did not match the qualifications of the available workforce. Many European countries also initiated education and vocational training reforms during this period to better align the education system with labour market needs. However, the impact of these reforms was not immediate, and by 2014, many workers, particularly young people, were still entering the labour market with qualifications that did not align with available jobs.

Youth unemployment peaking and lingering "Lost-Generation" effects: Youth unemployment across Southern Europe peaked between 2012 and 2013, with countries like Spain and Greece experiencing youth unemployment rates above 50%. The long-term effects of this youth unemployment crisis became more visible in 2014, as young people who had been out of work for years struggled to find jobs that matched their qualifications. This created a notable mismatch, particularly for recent graduates and young people with outdated skills. Prolonged periods of unemployment lead to a loss of skills, particularly for younger workers. By 2014, many of the young people who had been unemployed since the early 2010s were finding it increasingly difficult to re-enter the labour market because their skills had become obsolete or mismatched with the new jobs being created.

Migration and labour mobility patterns intensified: By 2014, the trend of skilled workers migrating from Southern and Eastern Europe to wealthier Northern and Western European countries had intensified. The aftermath of the debt crisis had led many workers, especially younger and highly educated people, to seek better opportunities abroad. This exacerbated skills mismatches in the countries they left behind, particularly in sectors like healthcare, engineering, and education, where skilled labour was needed. Skilled migrants who moved to other European countries, particularly during the crisis years, often struggled to find jobs that matched their qualifications. By 2014, many of these workers were still working in lower-skilled jobs, contributing to an overqualification problem in their host countries and a mismatch between skills and job opportunities.

Rise of technological change and digital transformation: While technological advancements were ongoing throughout the early 2010s, the pace of digitalization and automation began to accelerate around 2014. This was due to both the increasing adoption of digital technologies across industries and the rising importance of ICT sectors within the European economy. By 2014, digital skills had become crucial for a growing number of jobs, and the gap between the demand for such skills and the available workforce became more apparent. Companies often delay large-scale technological changes during periods of economic uncertainty, such as during the debt crisis. Once the economy began stabilizing around 2013 and 2014, many firms started implementing new technologies that automated certain processes, leading to job displacement and creating a demand for new, higher-level digital skills.

Is there any recovery?

Around 2014, the European Union and national governments began shifting their focus more explicitly toward addressing the skills gap. The EU launched initiatives like the Youth Guarantee and the European Skills Agenda to help reduce youth unemployment and improve skills matching. These initiatives recognized the growing gap between the skills taught in education systems and those demanded by the labour market, and they aimed to provide training and reskilling opportunities to workers across Europe. By 2014, the EU's focus on transitioning to a green and digital economy began to take shape.

It is clear from figure 1 that European labour markets have not yet recovered from the mismatching shock that occurred in 2014. The recovery has been modest and can be seen mostly in the new member states of Eastern Europe, which were affected the least in 2014. This pattern can not be seen in other datasets that only provide snapshots at different points in time post-2014 from smaller samples.

Conclusion:

2014 was a pivotal year for skills mismatching in Europe because it marked the intersection of several factors that had been building up since the global financial and Eurozone debt crises. Economic recovery started to gain traction in 2014, but it revealed deeper structural labour market issues that had been masked by the crisis. Technological advancements, the effects of prolonged youth unemployment, labour market reforms, and migration trends all became more pronounced, highlighting the mismatch between the skills that workers had and the skills that employers needed. Thus, while many of these trends began earlier, they culminated in a significant increase in skills mismatching in 2014 specifically, from which the European labour markets have yet to recover. The realization that Europe needed to upskill and reskill its workforce to meet the demands of the green

transition and digitalization led to new policy initiatives. This acknowledgment of the mismatch in digital and green skills also contributed to the focus on the issue from 2014 onwards.

[1] The EU-LFS covers several millions of individuals from 27 EU countries, and 4 non-EU countries, namely Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

[2] The notion of skills matching used is the vertical definition, i.e., the highest educational qualification being similar to that of workers in a given country, year, and occupation category (3-digit ISCO code).

5.2.3 TRAILS PORTAL

The TRAILS portal will provide various services aimed at offering valuable insights to policymakers and the general public. These services will be accessible through a web platform and a smartphone application. Specifically, the TRAILS portal will aggregate research indicators developed by the consortium, focusing on topics such as skills gaps, shortages, and mismatches, vocational education and training, and transferable skills.

The portal itself will be developed using Django, a robust web framework written in Python. For data visualization and insights, it will leverage Apache Superset, an open-source visualization engine. This setup will allow the creation of interactive dashboards featuring advanced graphics and metrics. These tools will facilitate in-depth data exploration and pattern identification that might be difficult to detect otherwise.

The portal's development falls under WP7: System Design and Integration, led by the DUTH partner. Development is scheduled to commence in month 15 and is expected to be launched around month 33. In the upcoming months, the portal will be accessible at <https://portal.trails-project.eu>.

Technical information about the design and development of the TRAIL Portal will be available in all WP7 deliverables over the next months.

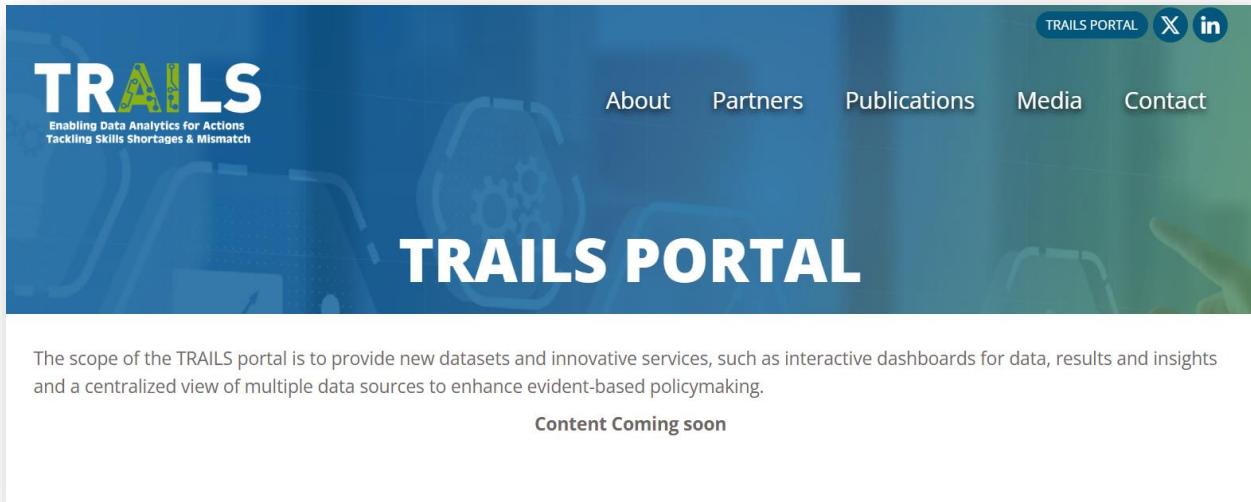


Figure 13 TRAILS Portal landing page in TRAILS Website

5.2.4 NEWSLETTERS

The project foresees the publication of 12 newsletters during the life of TRAILS, each year will be published a total of 4 newsletters. To reach this goal, the dissemination officer, EARLALL, has decided to create two categories of newsletters: one that will be like a flash newsletter and sent/produced via TRAILS LinkedIn account and a second one that will be sent to a larger audience who will subscribe via the website.

5.2.4.1 LINKEDIN NEWSLETTER - “SKILLS SHORTAGES AND MISMATCH INSIGHTS”



Figure 14 TRAILS LinkedIn newsletter banner

In this series of newsletters, we will draw upon the expertise of TRAILS researchers to present their insights on various topics. These discussions will encompass a range of subjects such as insights on new skills gap indices, labour mobility, digital employment opportunities, methods in AI and Machine Learning, the impact of the twin transition on the labour market, and the concept of resilient workplaces, among others. This will be a bi-monthly newsletter

The first edition is available [here](#). Once the project's LinkedIn profile reaches 150 followers, LinkedIn will allow the TRAILS project to produce a specific newsletter using its software.



5.2.4.2 MAILCHIMP NEWSLETTER

A second bulletin will be produced every six months to reach a larger audience. The newsletter will inform the relevant stakeholders of the project’s updates, relevant updates from the partnership, and a must-read section with interesting research sources and key events. It is important to mention that the TRAILS team has created a newsletter structure that will appeal to readers beyond the project.

A [subscription button](#) is available on the website. The e-newsletter respects the General Data Protection Regulation, allowing each subscriber to continue their subscription or to unsubscribe if they are no longer interested in the content.

Thanks to the partners' expertise, an “Expert voice” section has been set up. In this blog post issue, TRAILS experts will share their knowledge in different areas related to the project's core activities. For example, the first blog post was written by Dr Paul Redmond and Luke Brosnan, The Economic And Social Research Institute (Ireland), on the subject of “Skills Mismatch in Europe.” It can be found [here](#).

The first newsletter was sent in Month 5 and published [on the website](#) and social media channels:

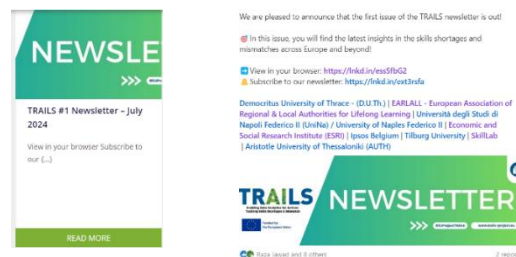
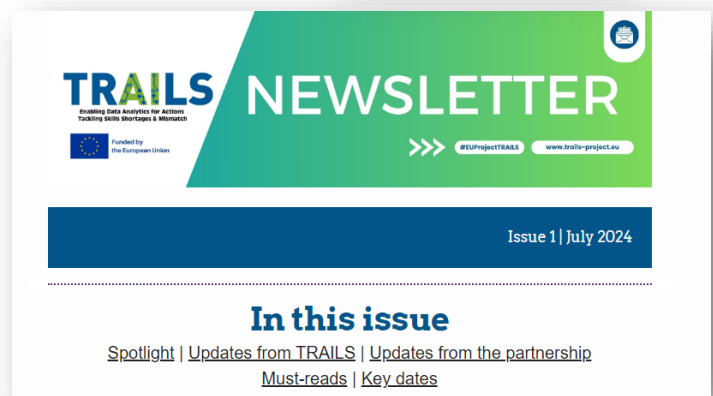


Figure 15 TRAILS newsletter banner

Structure of the #1 issue – July 2024:

- Spotlight
- Updates from TRAILS
- Updates from the partnership
- Must-reads
- Key dates

Content

Spotlight:

EXPERT VOICE - BLOG POST


Skills Mismatch in Europe by Dr Paul Redmond and Luke Brosnan, The Economic And Social Research Institute (Ireland)

Skills mismatch is a critical issue affecting both individuals and businesses in the labour market. It refers to the disparity between the skills possessed by workers and those demanded by employers. This blog post explores the different dimensions of skills mismatch and its implications, as well as recent trends observed in the European Union (EU). [Read more](#)

Updates from TRAILS:


TRAILS website

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our brand-new website, designed to provide you with more knowledgeable information about our project research.

 *Research in the field of skills shortages and mismatch*

 *Expert voices and insights*

 *Meet our partners*

 *Coming soon: TRAILS portal - to provide new datasets and innovative services*

First edition of TRAILS “Skills Shortages and Mismatch Insights” LinkedIn newsletter

In this series of newsletters, we will draw upon the expertise of TRAILS researchers to present their insights on various topics. These discussions will encompass a range of subjects such as insights on new skills gap indices, labour mobility, digital employment opportunities, methods in AI and Machine

Learning, the impact of the twin transition on the labour market, and the concept of resilient workplaces, among others. [Read more](#)

Get to know TRAILS' External Advisory Board members.

In early June, the TRAILS General Assembly appointed four members of the External Advisory Board:

- ◆ Prof. Michael Price (University of Alabama, US).*
- ◆ Prof. Giorgio Brunello (University of Padua, Italy).*
- ◆ Prof. Keith Bender (University of Aberdeen, UK).*
- ◆ Ms Katarina Pietrzak (Research Institutes of Sweden, RISE).*

The members are independent experts of recognised standing, covering mainly labour economics and empirical applications, lifelong learning and VET, and policy evaluation methods from Europe and abroad. These members ensure a diverse and comprehensive team that, with their expert guidance, will support and ensure that TRAILS remains competitive, innovative and aligned with its objectives.

Skills Horizon Webinar

On May 8, 2024, the TRAILS project was presented as part of the Skills Horizon Webinar. The event had the goal of networking and dissemination of Horizon Europe projects focused on skills, jointly organized by iRead4Skills, MEGASKILLS Project and Skills2Capabilities. The webinar was an opportunity for projects to seek potential synergies and to learn from each other's practices, attended by over 100 participants. [Read more](#)

TRAILS Kicks Off in Brussels

From 21-22 January 2024, TRAILS Horizon Europe project kicked off its activities in their first in person meeting hosted by EARLALL in their offices at the Basque Delegation to the EU in Brussels. The two days in Brussels were an opportunity for partners to meet and orientate themselves to the ambitious three-year work plan of the project. Moreover, partners heard from Simone Rosini (DG EMPL) and Andrea Rotondo (European Research Executive Agency), project officers for TRAILS. They congratulated the team for their project being selected out of a large number of applications and confirmed the Commission's support for the project. [Read more](#)

Updates from the partnership

Learning for an AI workplace? First insights from Cedefop's AI skills survey in Brussels

On 24 June 2024, Cedefop and the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU organised the "Learning for an AI workplace? First insights from Cedefop's AI skills survey" seminar in Brussels.

The seminar addressed the main skill challenges associated with the transition towards human-centric EU workplaces as opposed to one governed mainly by artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

Seamus McGuinness, from ESRI and partner in the TRAILS Horizon Europe project, presented a research paper which provides data on 'Automation and upskilling of European workers'. [Read more](#)

Webinar on Upskilling for Smart Specialisation Strategies


On 12 June 2024, EARLALL organised the webinar “Upskilling for Smart Specialisation Strategies” in the framework of the SKYLA – Smart Specialisation Skills Ecosystems for the Twin Transition – Interreg Europe project. The webinar welcomed more than 35 participants to learn from good practices to address skills forecasting and matching at the local and regional levels.


Both newsletters will be disseminated by email to a contact list of relevant stakeholders and posted on TRAILS' social media channels. [Read more](#)


Must-reads


- *Cedefop: This study examines the drivers of labour shortages in European labour markets based on unique data from the second wave of the Cedefop European Skills and Jobs Survey (ESJS2).*
- *ILO: International Labour Organization - Global Skills Forum: The Global Skills Forum brought together representatives from around the world to take part in a conversation about how to shape skills development in our ever-changing economies and societies. A topic link to TRAILS research core activities.*

Key Dates:

 *10-12 September 2024: Forum on Vocational Excellence 2024, organised by the European Commission, Community of Practice Centres of Vocational Excellence, Campus Des Métiers Et Des Qualifications and WorldSkills, Lyon (France) - [Read more](#)*

 *05 September 2024: Consortium meeting hosted by the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II / Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance (CSEF) - Naples (Italy)*

 *24-25 September 2024: OECD Local Development Forum, organised by OECD, Malmö (Sweden) / Copenhagen (Denmark), [Read more](#)*

 *7-10 October 2024: European Week of Regions and Cities, organised by the European Committee of the Regions, Brussels (Belgium), [Read more](#)*

5.2.5 PRESS RELEASES

The press releases will target two different audiences: stakeholders in the labour market and the general audience. This project foresees the publication of a minimum of 14 press releases addressing stakeholders in the labour market and 12 press clippings addressing a general audience. These will be published on TRAILS' website section, project and partners' social media and

communication channels. Likewise, it will be included in the newsletter of the project so the reach can be increased.

Press Releases (stakeholders in the labour market): The press releases will be focused on the results of the outcomes of the research work done by the TRAILS partners. The audience will receive tailored and timely messages

- **Press Release 1 focuses on Review I - Review II (M010) – WP1 (upcoming)**
- **Press Release 2 focuses on introducing Questions I, II, III (M12) – WP2 (upcoming)**

Press Releases or News entries (general audience): As TRAILS activities begin, more news items will complete the following press releases.

- **#1 PR: General about the Project (available on Share point) –M02 – Partners to share in their communication channels an example (upcoming)**

Brussels 23 January 2024

In Europe, there is an urgent need to recognise skills mismatch as a multidimensional challenge impacting productivity, social welfare, and overall cohesion. Today, our societies are facing fast-changing labour market demands caused by megatrends and external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the energy crisis. Therefore, it is essential to relocate workers efficiently, minimize unemployment, and bridge the emerging skills gaps caused by the “Great Reshuffling.”

In this context, TRAILS – Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch – Horizon Europe project seeks to build on current data in skills mismatches and create novel tools and databases, harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence. It will empower Vocational and Adult Education training to match employers with educational opportunities to reallocate workers efficiently. Among its results will be an innovative methodology to measure skills mismatches; an analysis framework of training in the area of artificial intelligence, as well as a selection of best practices for tackling skills shortages and mismatches in Europe.

TRAILS is funded under the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme, Thematic Priority “Innovative research on social and economic transformations” and will last three years (2024-2027). The consortium is led by the Democritus University of Thrace (D.U.Th, Greece), in partnership with the University of Naples Federico II (UNINA, Italy), IPSOS NV (Belgium), the Economic and Social Research Institute LBG (ESRI, Ireland), SKILLAB BV (Skillab, the Netherlands), University of Tilburg (TiU, the Netherlands), European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL, Belgium), and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH, Greece). Partners will work on eight work packages and seven objectives to contribute to strengthening social and economic resilience and sustainability boost inclusive growth and reduce vulnerabilities.

TRAILS officially launched its activities on 21-22 January 2024 with the first partners meeting at EARLALL’s premises located at the Basque Delegation to the EU in Brussels (Belgium). Simone Rosini (from the European Commission’s DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion) and Andrea Rotondo (from the European Research Executive Agency), project officers for TRAILS participated in this first meeting in Brussels.

- **#2 PR: Announcing the two reviews available on the website/consortium meeting in Naples - M 09 (published)**

Naples, Italy – 11 September 2024

On Thursday, September 5, 2024, the second Transnational Partners' Meeting for the TRAILS project – “Enabling Data Analytics for Actions Tackling Skills Shortages & Mismatch,” under Horizon Europe – took place at the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Centre for Economics and Finance (CSEF). Representatives from all consortium partners came together to assess the project's progress, address management challenges, and plan the next steps for various Work Packages (WPs) essential to the project's success.

The TRAILS project focuses on leveraging data analytics to address skills shortages and mismatches in Europe. By developing innovative tools, databases, Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions, and training modules for Vocational Education and Adult Learning, TRAILS aims to better match employers with relevant educational opportunities, ensuring a more efficient allocation of workers. Among the anticipated outcomes are a new methodology for measuring skills mismatches, an analytical framework for AI-related training, and a compilation of best practices for addressing skills gaps across Europe.

Project coordinator Ioannis Pragidis (Democritus University of Thrace, Greece) opened the meeting, acknowledging the strong collaboration among partners in delivering high-quality research and overcoming challenges. As the project marks its tenth month, several deliverables have been completed on time. The consortium reviewed key milestones, identified any management issues, and discussed strategies to maintain steady progress.

Under the state-of-the-art research and tool requirements work, three pivotal deliverables (1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, upcoming) were discussed.

- *REVIEW I – Theoretical and Empirical Questions for Tackling Skills Shortages and Mismatches in Europe: Coordinated by the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II (CSEF) and co-authored by Luca Coraggio, Monica Langella, Armando Miano, Marco Pagano, Marco Stenborg Petterson, Vincenzo Pezone, and Annalisa Scognamiglio. This report explores the theories behind skill mismatches, their causes, effects, and the economic policies that can address them, as well as how skill mismatches have been measured and analyzed in practice. Read more here.*
- *REVIEW II – Innovative Initiatives for Tackling Skills Shortages and Mismatches in Europe: Coordinated by EARLALL – European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning, this report presents 92 initiatives at regional, national, EU, and international levels and examines their relevance to TRAILS. The initiatives utilize digital tools, like online platforms, to support upskilling. The report identifies gaps in existing initiatives and highlights how TRAILS can address these gaps. It also reviews related EU-funded projects and suggests opportunities for collaboration. Read more here.*

These deliverables have been officially submitted to the European Commission, though revisions may occur in the coming months.

Looking ahead, TRAILS will continue its research with a focus on Data Management and Survey Design (WP2), with Deliverables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 upcoming. The project will also examine the impact of technological changes, skills mismatches, and on-the-job training (WP3), particularly regarding Deliverable 3.1. Future activities will further explore the application of Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for aligning skills with labour market needs (WP4), and innovative strategies for skills development, bundling, and workforce mobility (WP5). Discussions will continue to emphasize key tasks, milestones, and strategies to address any outstanding issues.

In closing, the meeting highlighted the importance of ongoing collaboration and effective communication among partners. The third project meeting is scheduled for Spring 2025 and will be hosted by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Press release ready to be released

- **#3 PR: General talking about this year’s accomplishment – M12 (upcoming)**

In January 2024, the first Press Release was published to announce the project kick-off in Brussels. Once the website was launched, the Press Release was also published in the news section; see [here](#). In addition, a general Press Release about the project was made available for partners to publish on their communication and dissemination channels.

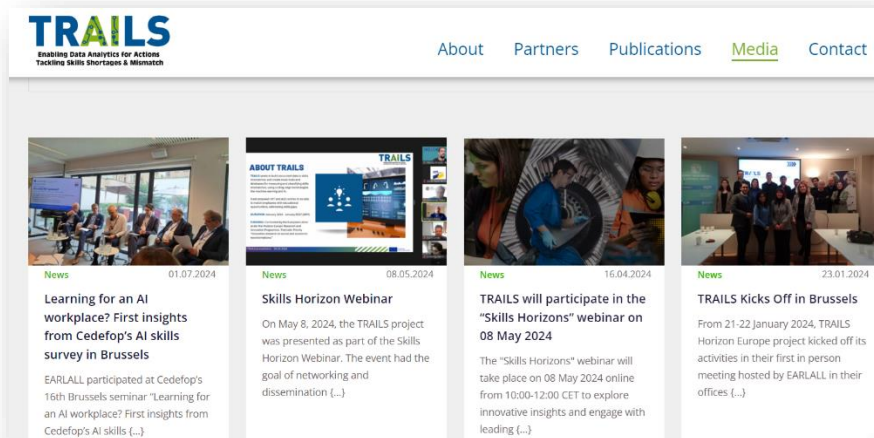


Figure 16 TRAILS website media section

5.2.6 SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS

TRAILS will share its findings in reputable scientific journals that offer open access to preprints and datasets. This will allow the project's research and open science results to reach relevant scientific communities. Academic partners will take the lead in this endeavor. TRAILS partners must publish at least 15 articles in esteemed journals, including but not limited to the Journal of Labour Economics, Economic Journal, Journal of the European Economic Association, European Economic Review, Labour Economics, and the Journal of Applied Behavioural Science.

5.2.7 POLICY BRIEFS

Policy briefs are short papers addressing policy and practice with evidence-based recommendations derived from research findings. They will be presented in year 2, when the main research content will be available.

A template has already been created to present the content.

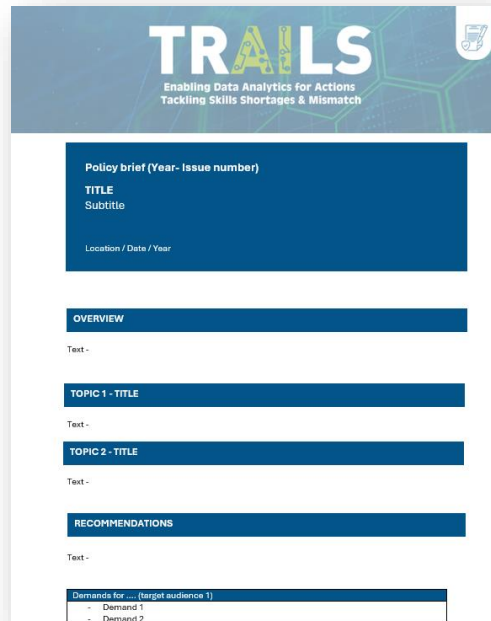


Figure 17 Policy Brief template

5.2.8 SOCIAL MEDIA VISIBILITY

The TRAILS partnership has chosen to establish a presence on two social media platforms: LinkedIn, due to its alignment with the target audience, and X (formerly Twitter). For LinkedIn, the partnership has created a community page, while on X, its presence will be centered around a hashtag rather than a dedicated account. Although the social media network X is experiencing a decline in followers and relevance, it remains the most effective channel for reaching policymakers and media. As a result, partners have agreed to adopt a common hashtag, #EUProjectTRAILS, to be used not only on X but also across all social media platforms where partners are active. This approach will facilitate tracking of project-related publications and maximize their impact. However, it is essential to highlight that each partner is responsible for monitoring the impact of their publications individually, including views, reactions, and so on, through the dissemination tracker.

The social media accounts will be regularly updated with project news and related updates to engage stakeholders and launch campaigns. These accounts were launched in the second month of the project, February 2024. The links to the pages are introduced below.

- TRAILS LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/102828148/admin/dashboard/>
- TRAILS X hashtag: [#EUProjectTRAILS](https://twitter.com/EUProjectTRAILS)



Figure 18 TRAILS Social media channels

Though EARLALL will be the accounts manager, partners will share their updates/content to feed these social media channels properly. The aim is to feed these accounts at least once weekly, and the working language will be English. The content will be focused on updates and related news from the EU, national, regional and local related to the situation of skills in the Labour Market and the use of novel tools /Machine Learning tools to research in this field, disseminate the results of the project and the events (local and High-Level Conferences). However, it must be noted that each partner shall keep track of the impact of their publications individually (views, reactions, etc.) through the dissemination tracker.

EARLALL will eventually make specific materials for output release and promotion available in different formats for use by project partners in their channels.

EARLALL will develop a content calendar. The calendar aims to inform partners about the project’s milestones and potential events to disseminate TRAILS’ content or international days that can help increase the project’s reach.

5.2.9 DISSEMINATION MATERIALS

Additional materials will be elaborated to support dissemination and communication between online and offline activities during the project. In month five of the project, the following materials were produced:

- A brochure presenting the project to promote the project to its various stakeholders
- A general poster will promote the project to a general audience.
- An informative poster that can be used for conferences, exhibitions, or scientific congresses targeting an expert audience.
- A roll-up banner to promote the project in different spaces

In addition to these materials, TRAILS will produce a brochure presenting its first-year results and a final brochure introducing its achievements in the middle of the project. Furthermore, a fact sheet will be made when the data from the first deliverables are available.

These materials will be published on the TRAILS website under the materials section and shared with partners via the SharePoint internal platform. Although the materials are produced in English, partners can translate them into their national languages to expand engagement with local stakeholders.



Figure 19 TRAILS Dissemination materials

5.2.10 AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Promotional video

A short promotional video has been produced to introduce TRAILS objectives, partners, and activities. The video was presented before the end of Year 1 (M09). It was produced in English and will respect the project's visual identity and include the EU funding acknowledgement.

It was published by the end of Year 1 on EARLALL's YouTube Channel, project and partners' communication and dissemination channels. See [here](#)

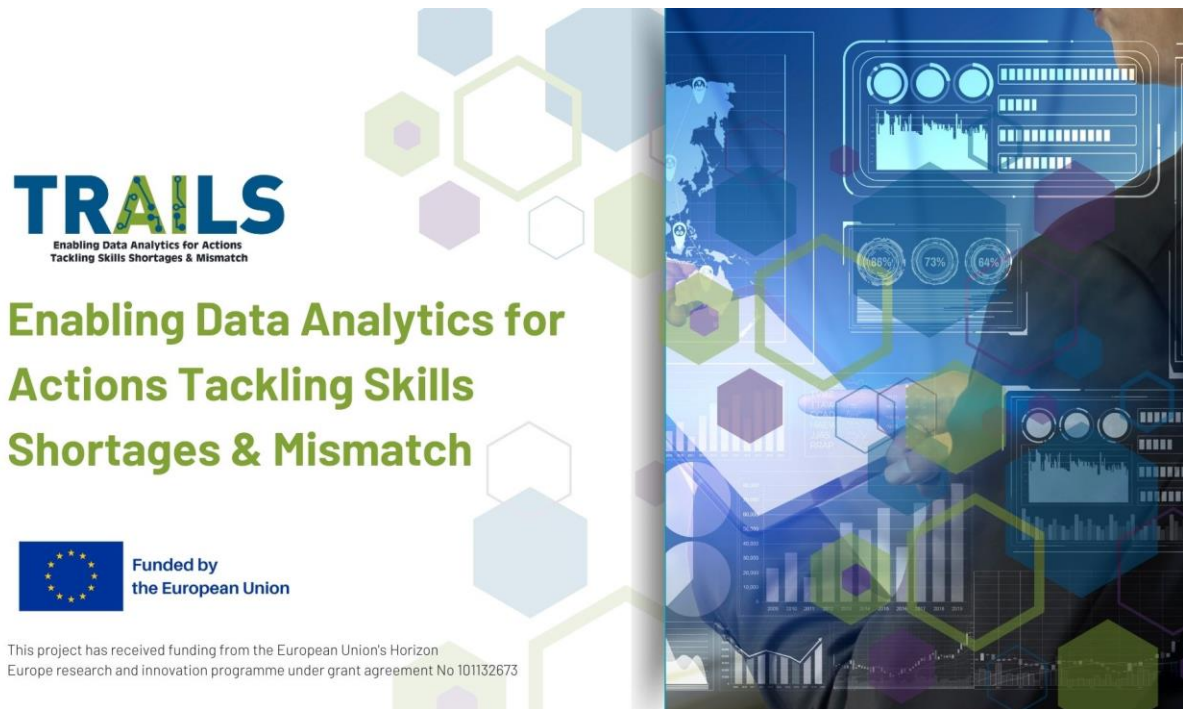


Figure 20 TRAILS video preview

5.2.11 PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS/CONFERENCES AND BUILDING SYNERGIES

Participating in third-party events will support TRAILS in developing collaboration with policymakers, VET, and lifelong learning schools. Furthermore, TRAILS will disseminate the research and open science results of the project to relevant scientific communities and will participate in sound conferences such as the European Association of Labour Economists (EALE), the IZA conference on the labour market and policy evaluation, and the International Labour Conference (ILO). Academic partners will mainly develop this task.

All in all, this cooperation will enlarge the project's reach and build synergies with potential stakeholders that can use the project's outcomes to, for example, design new policies or implement new methodologies in their schools. Furthermore, appearance/mention in third-party communication channels is also relevant for broadening the project's scope. To this end, TRAILS will appear in at least 20 back-links across significant stakeholders.

To this end, it will identify different types of relevant events per stakeholder category and potential synergies (as defined in the dissemination strategic goals) to raise awareness of TRAILS from the very outset of the project and ensure interaction leads to concrete actions.

EARLALL will prepare a calendar of external events and have all partners fill it out to plan their participation in the selected events and disseminate information. After each event, each partner is expected to provide a report shared during these events, including the conclusions, next steps, and visual material, when possible.

It is expected that the TRAILS partnership will participate in 15 conferences.

Building synergies: EU-funded projects collaboration

TRAILS has started building synergies with other projects that are participating in the same call. On May 8, 2024, the TRAILS project was presented as part of the Skills Horizon Webinar. The event aimed to network and disseminate Horizon Europe projects on skills jointly organized by iRead4Skills, MEGA SKILLS, and Skills2Capabilities. The webinar was an opportunity for projects to seek potential synergies and to learn from each other's practices, and over 100 participants attended it. In the future, TRAILS expects to continue collaborating with this and other EU-funded projects.

The TRAILS partnership is expected to engage with at least 2 EU-funded projects to share research ideas and datasets.

5.2.12 STAKEHOLDER DATABASE

It is crucial for the success of TRAILS projects to establish strong connections with labour-related and training stakeholders. Therefore, we plan to identify various profiles that align with this category at an early stage. We will create a database of contacts for community development and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, these stakeholders will be invited to contribute their expertise by participating in the project's communication channels, such as the Expert Voice website section, podcast/live interviews, and providing input for TRAILS scientific work. We aim to gather 20 profiled stakeholders by Month 12, 30 by Month 24, and 50 by Month 36. We have already shared a table with our partners via SharePoint. As of Month 5, we have identified 4 profiles selected to be part of the Evaluation Advisory Board.

5.2.13 WORKSHOPS ORGANISATION

Two online workshops, gathering around 30 participants, will present the results of the TRAILS projects to outreach to non-specialised audiences. An accessible language will be used during the events. In addition, a final open event will be organised targeting an industrial audience.

6. ACTIONS TO DISSEMINATE

This section lists the materials and actions TRAILS will disseminate in the project context. It starts with the list of public deliverables/outcomes that TRAILS consortium partners will present during the project's life. It ends with a list of dissemination/ communication materials the consortium will use to increase its visibility.

6.1 PUBLIC DELIVERABLES

TRAILS will produce a list of public deliverables disseminated to the project stakeholders through different tools and channels. Each indicates the tool/channel that can be used for dissemination. These actions will be coordinated with each WP leader to meet their expectations.

Table 6 TRAILS public deliverables

Deliverable (No.)	Title	WP Number	Type of document	Delivery Date	Dissemination channels
D1.1	REVIEW I – Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatches in Europe	1	R	M06	Website, Press Release, Social Media
D1.2	REVIEW II – Innovative initiatives for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe	1	R	M08	Website, Press Release, Social Media
D1.3	REVIEW III – Functional requirements for the TRAILS innovations	1	R	M10	Website, Social Media, Policy Brief (2)
D2.1	QUESTION I – Review and Analytics of the Core Secondary	2	R	M09	Website, Social Media
D2.2	QUESTION II – Design of Survey Instruments	2	R	M12	Website, Social Media
D2.3	QUESTION III – Design of Interventions and Experimental Protocols	2	R	M14	Website, Press Release, Social Media

D3.1	COMPARE I: Skills mismatching in Europe pre- and post-pandemic	3	R	M12	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D3.2	COMPARE II: Technological change, training and upskilling in Europe	3	R	M24	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D3.3	COMPARE III: The impact of skills mismatching on wellbeing across sectors	3	R	M28	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D3.4	COMPARE IV: Behavioural, social, and cultural change for successful development of skills matched to needs	3	R	M32	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D4.1	NOVEL I: Using machine learning to measure skills matched to needs	4	R	M18	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D4.2	NOVEL II: Teleworking, digitization and labour market segmentation	4	R	M24	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D4.3	NOVEL III: Skills Matching and Firm Resilience in the Post-Covid era	4	R	M30	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D4.4	NOVEL IV: Technological empowerment of skills matching	4	R	M33	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode

D5.1	PORTFOLIO I: Training for labour market inclusiveness and resilience	5	R	M18	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D5.2	PORTFOLIO II: Resilient education and training in the era of automation and climate change	5	R	M23	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D5.1	PORTFOLIO III: Skills portfolios and new types of labour	5	R	M26	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D5.2	PORTFOLIO IV: Skills portfolios in times of change	5	R	M34	Website, Press Release, Social Media, Scientific journal, podcast episode
D6.1	SYNTHESIS I: Dissemination & Business Plan	6	R	M09	Website
D6.2	SYNTHESIS II: Dissemination & Business Report	6	R	M36	Website
D7.1	INTEGRATE I: TRAILS portal architecture, design and integration documentation	7	R	M15	Website
D7.2	INTEGRATE II: TRAILS portal	7	Other	M24	Website, Press Release, Social Media, podcast episode
D7.3	INTEGRATE III: Validation Report for the final version of the TRAILS portal	7	R	M33	Website, Scientific journal
D8.1	COORDINATE I – Project Administrative,	8	R	M06	Website

	Technical & Data Management Handbook				
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6.2 PARTNERS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISSEMINATION PLAN

The main goals of the dissemination and communication activities are to make the research results and content accessible to all, to enable a deeper understanding of the research evidence, to integrate the project into the European skills, lifelong learning, and VET ecosystem, to raise awareness about the jobs of the future, inspire, educate, and train stakeholders, to disseminate the research and open science results of the project, attract participants into project activities and to promote the use of project materials beyond the project consortium. To reach these goals TRAILS consortium partners must commit to this plan and support EARLLALL, as the WP leader, in this mission.

Below are the materials that partners can use in their communication or dissemination activities. EARLALL will provide these materials.

Table 7 Communication and Dissemination tools/materials

Communication <i>informing about projects and their results</i>	Dissemination <i>describing and making results available for use</i>
Publications (no scientific) Press Releases, e-newsletters, news, site articles, blogs	Publication Scientific publications, articles in scientific/academic journals, policy briefs
Events – for the general Public open doors, public talks	Events Stakeholder events, market showcases, b2b networking
Online promotion Website, social media platforms	Online promotion Disclosure of the results, reporting the results, social media platforms
Meetings Exchange with citizens, interviews, workshops	Meetings Stakeholder engagement, feedback sessions, industrial events, training, workshops
Materials Dissemination materials such as brochures, posters, roll-up banners, leaflets	Materials Conference posters, publications...

Media: mass media campaign, newspapers, local, radio	Media: presentations in scientific conferences, workshops, and seminars.
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7. MEASURING IMPACT

The continuous monitoring and evaluation of the dissemination activities listed in this document is essential as this will contribute to the overall success of the Dissemination and Communication strategy. Therefore, the Leader of the WP7, EARLALL, will monitor the here-below targets. In the final revision of this Plan (M 36), the targets will be compared with the real Key Performance Indicators achieved.

In addition to the impact listed here, the following section of this document explains the monitoring and reporting system developed by the leading partner.

Table 8 KPIS per dissemination activities

Dissemination activity	Overall dissemination objective	Indicator	Target	Month
Project Website	Dissemination channel to inform about the progress of the project, activities going on and related achievements	Number of unique visitors	Website unique visitors: <5,000–poor 7,000– Good 10,000+ – excellent	M36
		Content published	Content published per month : YR1: min.2/month(M); YR2: min. 3/M; YR3: min: 4/M	
Social media visibility: X and LinkedIn	Reach out to target groups to encourage and stimulate communication in TRAILS-related fields.	Number of followers Number of people reached	Number of followers on LinkedIn: <150 – poor 150-300 – Good 300 + - excellent	M36

Newsletters	Disseminate the project’s progress, achievements, and activities to TRAILS target groups.	Number of Newsletter publications Number of subscriptions	Number of newsletters: 12 YR1: min 4; YR: min 8 YR3: min 12 Number of subscriptions: 50 – poor 100 – good 100+- excellent	M12 M24 M36
Press Releases	Reach out to labour market stakeholders and the general audience and communicate the project’s vision, objectives and outcomes	Number of press releases	Number of press releases: YR1: min 3; YR2: min. 6; YR3: min 14	M12 M24 M36
Number of media appearances	Reach out to a broader audience and communicate the project’s vision and objectives	Number of media publications	Number of media/stakeholders appearances: <15 - poor 20 – good +20 - excellent	M36
Scientific articles	Disseminate scientific excellence and gather interest in TRAILS results	Number of publications	Number of scientific papers submitted: <10 – poor 15 – good 15+ excellent	M36
Policy Briefs	Disseminate policymakers or labour market stakeholders	Number of policy briefs published	Number of Policy Briefs: 6	M12 M24 M36
Participation in conferences and events	Disseminate our target groups in related events and identify	Number of events with the project’s presence and	Number of non-project events <7– poor	M36

	exploitation interest in our results.	project disseminated	10 – good 15+ - excellent	
Synergies	Cooperate with other EU-funded projects to share research ideas and datasets	Number of projects connected for sharing research ideas and datasets	The number of projects: 1 – poor 2 – good 3 + - excellent	M36
Stakeholders database	Develop a database of contacts for community development and stakeholder engagement.	The number of profiles gathered	M12 > 20 profiles M24 > 30 profiles M36 > 50 profiles	M12 M24 M36
Workshops	Disseminate to TRAILS target groups and get feedback on the scientific results.		The number of workshops: 1 workshop in physical presence 2 on-line workshops	M36
			Number of participants in stakeholder workshops <15 – poor, 30 –good, 35+ -excellent	

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

A “dissemination tracker” tool will be made available by EARLALL. This will facilitate partners to monitor and report their dissemination activities. Partners will be responsible for reporting back their activities every six months via a “Dissemination Tracker”. This tool was introduced to the partners in the first meeting of the WP7 in month three.

The tool has been set up in the format of a [Google Form questionnaire](#), shared with partners one month before the reporting process. Partners will have to answer simple questions to report their dissemination and communication activities over the past six months. The questions refer to:

- a) Partner name
- b) Web page shared content: In this section, we ask partners to share webpage content that they have shared about TRAILS, target groups and measurable impact.
- c) Social media visibility
- d) Media appearances or event participation
- e) Publications / Journals
- f) Any other activities

In every section of the form, specific questions are asked about the type of activity, target groups, links or visual proof of the activity, and measurable data (e.g., views, engagement, participants).

Once complete partners will receive a copy of their answer in the indicated e-mail address.

The information collected through this questionnaire will be a source for completing the dissemination activities report in month 36.



TRAILS
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TRAILS Dissemination and Communication Reporting: Period M1-M6

This form asks TRAILS partners to report on their communication and dissemination activities. Please fill it out **as extensively as possible**, as the results will be used in the project's reporting.

Please take into account that the content of the form will be automatically saved once you click on "submit"

Figure 21 Dissemination and Communication reporting

9. ANNEX

Table 9 Annex Partners Platforms for Dissemination

Organisation name	Website	LinkedIn	X	Facebook	Other channels
Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH)	https://duth.gr/en/Home https://econ.duth.gr/en/home-en/		https://twitter.com/DuthFET	https://www.facebook.com/duth.gr/	
European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)	https://www.earlall.eu/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/earlall/	https://twitter.com/EarlallEU	/	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdda8yisJPSwAtJgG1Vttg
Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II / Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance (CSEF) -	https://csef.it/	https://www.linkedin.com/school/unina/	https://twitter.com/csef_unina		
IPSOS NV Belgium	https://www.ipsos.com/en-be		https://twitter.com/ipsospa		

Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)	https://www.esri.ie/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/economic-and-social-research-institute-esri-/	https://twitter.com/ESRIDublin		https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpzRsg-0wya_ao1bvb1Q9VA
SkillLab	https://skilllab.io/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/skilllab/			
Tilburg University	https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/about	https://www.linkedin.com/school/tilburg-university/	https://twitter.com/tilburgu	https://www.facebook.com/TilburgUniversity	https://www.youtube.com/@TilburgUniversity
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	https://www.auth.gr/en/research-en/	https://www.linkedin.com/school/aristotle-university-of-thessaloniki-auth-/	https://twitter.com/Auth_University	https://www.facebook.com/Aristoteleio	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8x_oAJqJoXGDyxp63tD0mg