

TRAILS

Enabling Data Analytics for Actions
Tackling Skills Shortages & Mismatch



Policy brief #10 HARNESSING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FOR SMARTER AND FAIRER SKILLS POLICIES

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WHY IT MATTERS

Policymakers need reliable, timely evidence to design, monitor, and evaluate labour market policies. Traditional survey data alone cannot fully capture the dynamic interactions between workers, firms, and training systems. Administrative data—derived from tax, employment, education, and social security registers—offer continuous, high-quality, and representative information on employment trajectories, wages, occupations, and training participation. Leveraging these data is essential to understand skills development, utilisation, and mismatch across Europe.

WHAT DATA SHOWS

The TRAILS project has mapped national administrative datasets to assess their potential for monitoring labour markets. Administrative data allow tracking of individuals and firms over time, revealing how qualifications translate into jobs, how training affects wages and mobility, and how labour-market opportunities differ across regions and population groups. When harmonised using shared classifications (ESCO, NACE, ISCED), these datasets enable cross-country comparisons and longitudinal analysis.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **Scale and precision:** Administrative data cover large populations and reflect real economic behaviour rather than self-reported perceptions.
- **Longitudinal insight:** Data track employment trajectories, sectoral transitions, and the impact of technological and demographic changes.
- **Interoperability is crucial:** Harmonised classification systems allow meaningful comparisons across countries and sectors.



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- **Policy relevance:** Administrative data provide a robust foundation for understanding skills mismatch, career mobility, and the effectiveness of training policies.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strengthen collaboration:** Foster cooperation among statistical offices, education ministries, social security agencies, and social partners to enable secure and anonymised data linkages.
- **Ensure interoperability:** Adopt and maintain harmonised classifications (ESCO, NACE, ISCED) for consistent cross-country analysis.
- **Invest in governance and expertise:** Develop transparent access procedures, strong privacy safeguards, and analytical capacity to maximise the use of administrative data.
- **Integrate into policy frameworks:** Use administrative data as a cornerstone of the European Skills Intelligence Platform to continuously monitor career trajectories, wage dynamics, and training outcomes, supporting 2030 EU targets.

LOOKING AHEAD

Administrative data represent both a technical and strategic opportunity. By combining harmonised standards, cross-institutional collaboration, and robust governance, Europe can transform fragmented datasets into a comprehensive, evidence-based system. This supports smarter, more inclusive, and adaptive skills policies, helping ensure resilient labour markets capable of responding to digital, green, and demographic transitions.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

- Full deliverables: D6.3 and TRAILS reports
- For more information, please visit the TRAILS website(<https://www.trails-project.eu/>) and social media channels.

