

TRAILS

Enabling Data Analytics for Actions
Tackling Skills Shortages & Mismatch



PRESS RELEASE
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TRAILS Publishes new research on skills, education and emerging forms of work

The TRAILS project has released two new research outputs examining **how education systems, skills development, and labour markets are evolving in response to technological transformation, automation, and the green transition.**

[Deliverable D5.2 – Portfolio II: Resilient education and training in the era of automation and climate change](#), and [Deliverable D5.3 – Portfolio III: Skills portfolios and new types of labour](#) provide new insights into how skills are developed, combined, and used in modern labour markets.

Together, the studies contribute to a **better understanding of the competences individuals need to remain resilient and adaptable in rapidly changing economic and technological environments.**

Rethinking Basic and Transferable Skills for the Digital and Green Transition

Deliverable **D5.2** proposes a new framework for understanding “basic” skills in the 21st century. While traditional definitions often focus on literacy and numeracy, the TRAILS research extends this concept to encompass a broader set of **decision-relevant literacies** required in technologically advanced, sustainability-oriented societies.

The study introduces a **multidimensional literacy framework** encompassing financial literacy, health and medical literacy, digital and AI literacy, media and information literacy, environmental literacy, sustainable finance literacy, and human and cultural literacies. Using harmonised data from the **TRAILS Survey I**, the research identifies significant differences in how these skills are distributed across European populations.

The findings reveal clear patterns of **cross-country and demographic disparities**, with literacy gaps often clustering together and reinforcing existing inequalities linked to education, age, income, gender, and region. At the same time, the research shows that these skills play an important role in strengthening both **labour-market adaptability and economic resilience.**

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A key methodological innovation in the report is the **ISCO-ESCO linkage**, which connects occupational classifications with detailed skill profiles. This approach allows researchers to situate individual skill sets within broader occupational skill structures and analyse how different literacies relate to digital, green, cognitive, and social skill demands in the labour market.

By offering a new classification and measurement framework, the report provides an analytical foundation for discussions on **curriculum development, adult learning policies, and skill-based labour-market analysis in the context of Europe's digital and green transitions**.

Understanding Skills Portfolios in the Platform Economy

Deliverable **D5.3** focuses on another major labour-market transformation: the growth of **platform work and new forms of digital labour**.

The study explores how platform workers combine skills into portfolios and how these portfolios relate to motivations, learning behaviour, and labour-market outcomes. Drawing on detailed platform-worker data and population-representative surveys, the research maps occupational profiles to the **ESCO skills taxonomy**, enabling consistent comparisons of skill bundles across different types of work.

The analysis highlights strong **heterogeneity within platform work**. Workers engaged in higher-autonomy, project-based activities tend to build more **diversified and transferable skill portfolios**, are more motivated by professional development and autonomy, and report more active engagement in learning and upskilling.

In contrast, workers involved in routine or highly fragmented tasks often have **narrower skill portfolios**, lower levels of autonomy, and fewer structured opportunities for skill development.

At the same time, the research identifies an important tension between **adaptability and economic security**. Many platform workers show strong engagement with learning and skill development, yet those most dependent on platform income are also more likely to experience **financial strain and limited economic buffers**.

These findings contribute to ongoing policy discussions on **platform worker classification, skill recognition, and targeted upskilling policies**, while also informing future research on labour-market mobility and transitions toward green and digital occupations.

Supporting Evidence-Based Skills Policy in Europe

Together, Deliverables **D5.2 and D5.3** strengthen the evidence base on how skills are evolving in the context of technological change and new labour-market structures. By combining innovative measurement frameworks, harmonised survey data, and occupational skill analysis, the research offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and labour-market stakeholders.

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The results support ongoing discussions on **education and training strategies, adult learning systems, labour-market resilience, and the future of work in Europe**. **ABOUT TRAILS**

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).

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.



The consortium is led by the [Democritus University of Thrace](#) (D.U.Th, Greece), in partnership with the [Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II / Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance](#) (UNINA/ CSEF, 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).

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