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FIELDS: Addressing the current and Future skIll needs for sustainability, digitalization, and the bio-Economy inAgricuLture: European skills agenda and Strategy

Newsletter #3

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FIELDS building up Occupational Profiles for future Agri and Food skills

After the completion of a first round of tasks under Work Package 1 to identify the existing skills gaps and sectorial requirements, the FIELDS partners set up a task to sort the information in a manner compatible with ESCO criteria.

Within the FIELDS partners, working groups with specialists in each sector (Agriculture, Food-industry, and Forestry) and each area of the project (Sustainability, Digitalization, Bioeconomy) were created.

The identified skill and knowledge gaps were arranged in “Occupational Profiles” describing the employment requirement for future Operators (EQF level 4) and Technicians (EQF level 5) in each of the three employment sectors and within the three different areas: Bioeconomy, Sustainability, and Digitalization.

During the first rounds of sessions of the Working Groups, it was identified that the Soft Skills, IT Skills, and Business & Entrepreneurship skills that were identified as key elements of future employments requirements, were common to all Occupational Profiles and necessary to all sectors and should therefore form a Core Curriculum applied to all profiles, rather than a separate Occupational Profile.

Furthermore, considering the identified skill and knowledge gaps and sectorial requirements, it was decided to create only one EQF level 5 profile on forestry, combining skills in the areas of sustainability, bioeconomy, and digitalization, while maintaining three separate profiles for each area for the food-industry and the agriculture sectors respectively.

Finally, The EQF level 4 profiles were created based on the same area EQF level 5 profiles, by selecting and merging content relevant for this lower EQF.

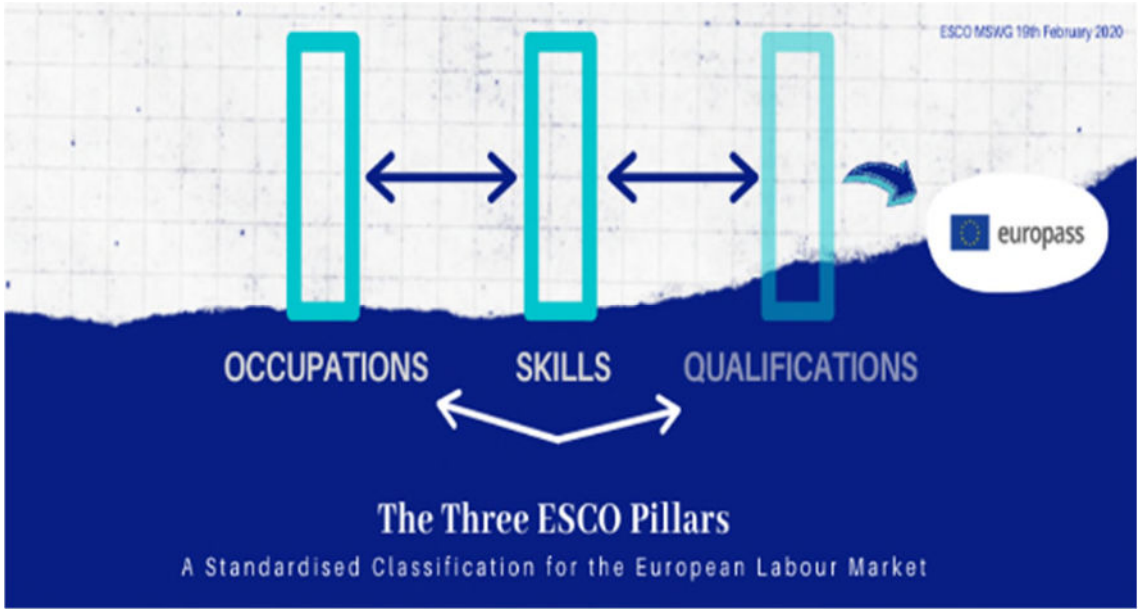
	Area : Bioeconomy	Area : Digitalisation	Area : Sustainability
Sector: Agri-Food	EQF level 5 profile	EQF level 5 profile	EQF level 5 profile
Sector : Agriculture	EQF level 5 profile	EQF level 5 profile	EQF level 5 profile
Sector : Forestry	1 EQF level 5 profile for all 3 areas		
	EQF level 4 profile on Bioeconomy (for all sectors)	EQF level 4 profile on Digitalisation (for all sectors)	EQF level 4 profile on Sustainability (for all sectors)
Core Curriculum for all profiles: Soft Skills / Business & Entrepreneurship skills			

Table 1: 10 Occupational Profiles and additional content

Each of the Occupational Profile is made up of a general information section describing future employments requirements for the profile, to be later matched with ESCO descriptions. It then describes essential and optional skills and knowledge related to the profile.

These profiles are ready to be matched with ESCO criteria to identify existing curricula and target the further teaching materials to be created. They will also serve as a basis for next tasks of the project, such as creation of Curriculums 'describing the trainings to be followed by students or reach the expected Skills and Knowledge, then for gathering or creation of relevant training contents.

FIELDS Occupational profiles and ESCO.



European Skills, Competences, and Occupations (ESCO) describes, identifies, and classifies professional occupations, skills, and competences relevant for the EU labour market and the education and training sector. One of ESCO's main missions is to build stronger bridges between the world of education and training and the world of work, contributing to reducing skill mismatches and supporting the better functioning of the labour market.

At the end of 2021, FIELDS partners started organizing meetings to determine the most suitable course of action. Two main tasks were identified: 1) explore ESCO and contrast the occupational profiles previously developed against the database and 2) explore the linkages between FIELDS outputs and the broader EU policies, frameworks, and tools landscape to determine their transferability.

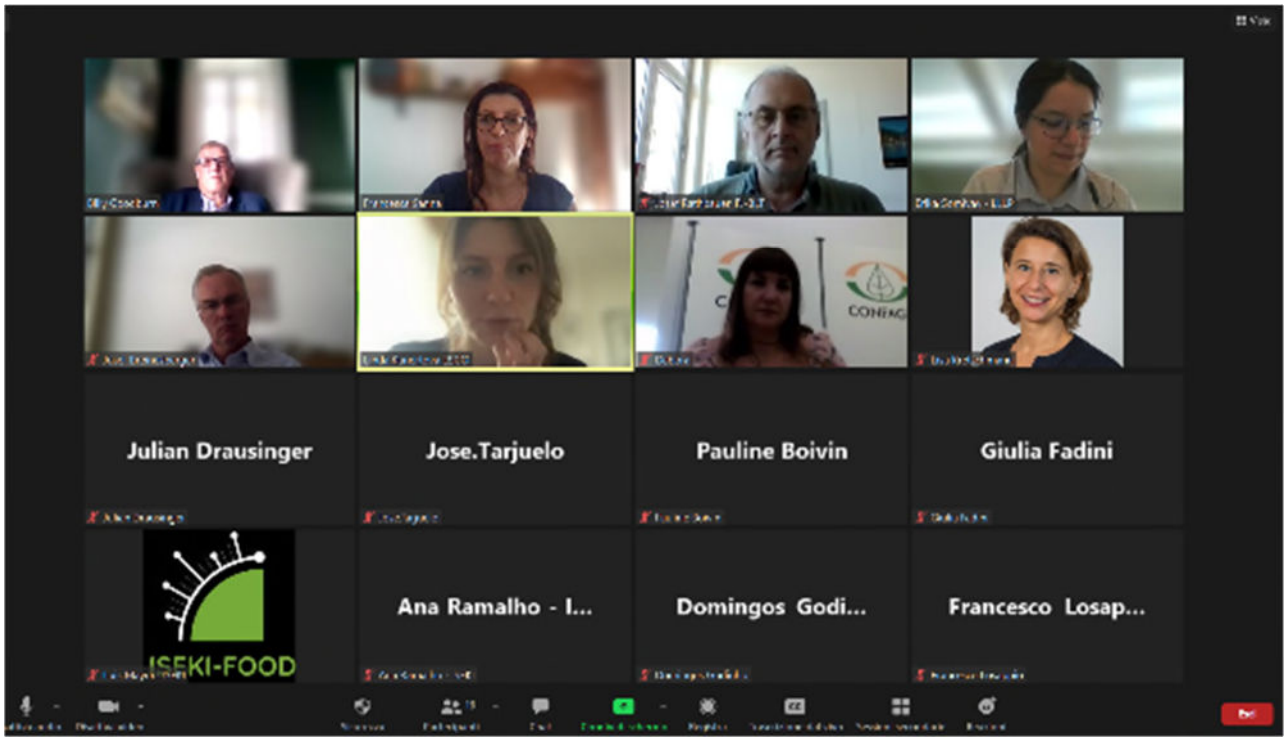
FIELDS Occupational profiles and ESCO covers the initial exploration, the consultation with partners and the exchange with ESCO secretariat to formalise our feedback before the next update process starts.

Some of the main feedback from FIELDS in terms of new skills and new knowledge concepts were grouped in different clusters. **Mismatches**: In some cases, there were mismatches between what was proposed by project partners and what could be found in ESCO. The label was not appropriate, or it referred to other fields not covered by the project. Similarly with the description, some of them referred to general skills and knowledge concepts,

whereas in some cases the profiles for FIELDS, given their focus, needed more nuanced ones. **Competence level:** partners shared that the ESCO database does not offer different levels of a given competence. In the case of FIELDS which aims at building profiles for level 4 and 5 of the EQF it would be helpful if there would be descriptions of what can be achieved at each level.

Skills vs knowledge concept: one of the problems when determining the skills was the labelling. In this case ESCO helped matching appropriate verbs to the skills proposed. **Relationships:** there were gaps between the relationships presented in the database and what happens in reality. For example, systems thinking is only mentioned to be related to software concepts and linked to ICT occupational profiles when in reality it is a key transversal competence, also found as one of the sustainability competences in GreenComp.

The analysis was done after collecting grey literature and having interviews with experts from CEDEFOP on ECVET and EQAVET. General guidelines for partners were developed to facilitate the alignment and transferability of FIELDS outputs with the broader EU landscape.



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