

# Future-proof Your Career

## Career guidance for a modern labour market A short overview...

**Future-proof Your Career** (FYC) is a European project aimed to support marginalised job seekers to understand and gain awareness of key competencies which are essential **employability competences** for a **future labour market**, and to support guidance practitioners and other associated practitioners to engage in a culture change whereby they will utilise online tools to look forward and to participate in their own up-skilling so as to further support their clients into sustainable careers.

Overarching aim is to design, develop and implement a Future of Work Framework focused on the development of transversal skills that can be used to future proof the careers of disadvantaged job seekers, since skill needs are changing as a result of the **digital transformation, globalisation, climate mitigation, demographic changes and COVID-19 emergency**.

In this regard FYC wants to **support guidance practitioners and other associated practitioners to engage in a culture change** whereby they will utilise online tools to look forward and to participate in their own up-skilling so as to further support their clients into sustainable careers.

This report is the result of a desk and in the field research conducted by the project partners in own Country (Italy, Romania, Spain, Austria, Ireland and Germany) to understand in-depth, needs, expectations and experiences of different key actors, mainly employers, guidance practitioners, and jobseekers, on the topic of new skills needed in the future job market, to identify:

- soft skills useful for disadvantaged job seekers and methodologies and strategies to make them emerge
- perspectives and needs of the future labour market in term of automation, digitalization and future job opportunities and soft skills

### in order to:

- explore and document the process of recognising worker-oriented skills, soft skills, cognitive skills, technical skills in each partner country and identify how disadvantaged or marginalised job seekers access and use such services;
- research the potential future labour market at EU and national levels (partner countries) so as to define how it will differ from the current labour market in terms of automation, digitalisation and future job opportunities;

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- define the types of capabilities developed formally, informally and non-formally through work experiences, community and civic participation, lived experiences, education and training;
- identify existing tools/methods designed to identify or measure these skills;
- outline the process of developing a model of skill identification specific to disadvantaged job seekers;

### Ireland Summary (Headway)

- Ireland is a key location for **digital technologies and digital transformation** is a key component of business success. This is likely to be a gradual process as enterprises invest in technology and adopt its use over many years and changes to job roles, rather than job losses, is likely to occur (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs 'Digital Transformation: Assessing the Impact of Digitalisation on Irelands workforce' report, 2018).
- Industries expected to be significantly affected include **transportation and storage, agriculture, forestry and fishing, wholesale retail and construction**. Those anticipated to be least impacted include education, human health and social work activities and information and communication.
- There is an inverse relationship between the degree of automation risk and level of educational attainment (Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service, 2018). Elementary roles may consist of repetitive manual tasks which are more susceptible to automation.
- Workers will need to invest in skill development as occupations are replaced by automation or tasks reconfigured. In demand skills will include **'human skills', such as cognitive, emotional, social, communication skills, numeracy, literacy and digital skills** (Future of Jobs Report, 2018).
- The Irish Government has taken steps to address the challenges that **digitalisation and automation** will present in the coming years to help prepare students and workers of today for employment in later years when the biggest impact will be felt. (Digitalisation Report, 2018). This includes initiatives such as greater emphasis on teaching soft skills in the education system and retraining and reskilling programmes e.g. the Technology Skills 2020 ICT skills action plan. However, none appear to specifically target the training needs of persons with disabilities considering these future digital developments.
- Irish employers interviewed perceive automation as beneficial in areas such as **increasing speed and accuracy of tasks, mitigating the risk of human error, driving efficiencies, reducing labour costs**, allowing 24/7 support, providing better customer service and increasing employee satisfaction through the reduction of workload and focus on more challenging tasks.
- They feel the following employee skills will be required in the future world of work: **technical or hard skills including computer programming, data analysis/ predictive modelling, project/ programme/ product management, people management, language fluency** (verbal and written), as well as **soft skills such as influencing, negotiating, change management, coaching, problem solving, decision making, resilience, emotional intelligence, communication skills, adaptability and flexibility**. An increased awareness of the benefits of a diverse workforce was also noted.
- Irish job seekers with Acquired Brain Injury interviewed reported challenges with keeping up with **the pace of technological changes and difficulty interacting with unfamiliar technology**, as well as the benefits of technology for disabled employees in the workplace in supporting specific needs.
- Some but not all the guidance practitioners interviewed were aware that technology is becoming more prevalent in the workplace and identified some challenges associated with this, such as an employee's skills no longer being valid for their role and the **challenges of persons with disabilities in keeping up with technological advancements and their ability to learn the new skills required resulting in reduced job opportunities**. Benefits associated with this noted in relation to automation include increased support for employees in their role through technology. Most practitioners expressed a need for further information and training to support their clients effectively through these digital changes but were unsure where to source this.

Today we are inevitably going towards an increasingly digital and technological world, and the COVID emergency has further accelerated the ongoing process, so the only way to take part in it is to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance the possibilities that technology offers us, without letting ourselves be succumbed to it.