



European  
Commission



# BLUEPRINT FOR SECTORAL COOPERATION ON SKILLS

## Automotive

Responding to skills  
mismatches at  
sectoral level

A key action of the New  
Skills Agenda for Europe

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# Introduction

Technological progress and globalisation are revolutionising the way we live, learn, work and do business. Digital and other key technologies are reshaping the foundations of industry and the wider global economy.

This offers tremendous opportunities for innovation, growth and jobs, but it also requires skilled and adaptable people who are able to drive and support change.

In order to deliver **sector-specific skills solutions**, the New Skills Agenda for Europe has launched **the Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills**. The Blueprint is a new framework for strategic cooperation between key stakeholders (e.g. businesses, trade unions, research, education and training institutions, public authorities) in a given economic sector. It will stimulate investment and encourage the strategic use of EU and national funding opportunities. The aim is to develop concrete actions to satisfy short and medium term skills needs to support the overall sectoral strategy.

The Blueprint can only bring results if it is driven and owned by sector stakeholders. In this respect, the full involvement of social partners is very important. The Blueprint has been and will continue to be discussed in an open exchange with interested parties, including in the context of sectoral social dialogue committees.

The Blueprint builds on previous work by the European Commission and sectoral partners (in particular the Sector Skills Councils<sup>1</sup> and the European Sector Skills Alliances<sup>2</sup>) to fight sector skills mismatches. Going forward, it could also support smart specialisation strategies, which help regions choose to specialise in sectors where they can be most competitive.<sup>3</sup>

All relevant EU and national qualitative evidence and quantitative data produced under the Blueprint will contribute to the Skills Panorama and the new Europass Framework.<sup>4</sup>

In this publication we outline the steps towards cooperation on skills across the six pilot sectors of this initiative. We then review specifically the needs and benefits of the Blueprint in the context of the automotive sector.

For more information about the overall initiative please visit <http://europa.eu/!gc96YU>

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# Three steps to match skills to sectors' needs

The Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills fosters sustainable partnerships among stakeholders to translate a sector's growth agenda into a comprehensive skills strategy and to take action to address sectoral skills needs.

## Six Pilot Sectors



AUTOMOTIVE



DEFENCE



MARITIME  
TECHNOLOGY



SPACE  
(GEO INFORMATION)



TEXTILE,  
CLOTHING,  
LEATHER AND  
FOOTWEAR



TOURISM

The Blueprint will be extended to additional sectors in the future.

## 1. Is the sector ready for an EU-wide partnership on skills?

In this preliminary phase, skills gaps in the sector and their potential impact on growth, innovation and competitiveness are assessed.

The presence and maturity of the overall growth strategy for the sector is verified, as well as the link to EU policy priorities. On this basis, the decision is taken on whether to move to the next phases or not. This groundwork is carried out by the Commission in cooperation with social partners and stakeholders. It can take place in more or less structured ways, depending on the way the sector is organised.

## 2. Launching sustainable sectoral partnerships

Once the sectors have been chosen, the Commission supports the set-up and the work of sectoral partnerships at EU-level. Each partnership will develop a sectoral skills strategy to support the objectives of the overall growth strategy for the sector and match the demand and supply of skills.

Partners will look into how major trends, such as global, societal, and technological developments, are likely to affect jobs and skills needs, as well as their potential impact on growth, competitiveness and employment in the sector (e.g. restructuring, hard-to-fill vacancies). It will then identify priorities and milestones for action and develop concrete solutions. The partnership will:

- Revise or create occupational profiles and the corresponding skills needs, drawing on the classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)<sup>5</sup> and existing competence frameworks<sup>6</sup>;
- Update or create curricula while promoting sectoral qualifications and certifications;
- Promote benefits of choosing a career in the sector and foster gender balance;
- Promote job-seeker and student mobility across Europe in the sector, capitalising on the use of existing EU tools<sup>7</sup>;
- Identify successful projects and best practices, including effective use of EU funding;
- Design an industry-led action plan for the long-term roll-out of the strategy and its results and ensure sustained cooperation among stakeholders at European, national and regional levels.

The platforms will build on European tools relating to skills and qualifications.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Roll-out at national and regional level

Building on the results achieved at EU level, the Blueprint will be **rolled out at national and regional level**, in cooperation with national and regional authorities, and stakeholders. The members of the EU partnerships and the Commission will actively engage in dissemination and awareness raising activities to rally all interested national and regional stakeholders and ensure broad involvement and take up. The main tasks of national/regional partnerships will be to:

- Implement the EU-level sectoral skills strategy and action plan recommendations, while adapting them to national contexts and priorities;
- Implement business-education-research partnerships on the ground, including in the context of smart specialisation<sup>9</sup>;
- Raise visibility and share results widely to influence EU, national and regional policies, initiatives and intelligence tools.

#### Funding the Blueprint

The Blueprint is a new framework for strategic cooperation between stakeholders and is independent from individual funding instruments. However, a number of funding opportunities are available to support the different steps.

Lessons learned during the pilot phase will help in refining the Blueprint, including funding arrangements.

#### Step 1

This is a preliminary phase of the Blueprint. It is only at the end of the step that the decision on going ahead with the Blueprint is taken, therefore there is no dedicated funding. However, relevant activities can be funded by existing instruments. Work on step 1 should start with the sector's interest. It should reflect how the sector is organised and take previous work into account. For example, calls for tender on sectoral studies could be launched by the Commission. Or, sectoral stakeholders could apply for projects under Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliances (E+ SSA) Lot 1. Alternatively, work could be taken forward within existing structures at EU level, such as high level groups or sectoral dialogue committees.

#### Step 2

For the pilot phase, a specific call, open only to **the six pilot sectors**, will be published in early 2017, under the new **Lot 3 of the Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliances**<sup>10</sup>. The call will make available € 4 million per sector to cover up to 80 % of eligible costs over a 4-year period. Only one European Alliance per sector will be supported. It must ensure good coverage of EU Member States and be representative of the sector. It must be led by representatives of the industry (e.g. companies, chambers or trade associations) and include education and training providers. The presence of social partners and public authorities is highly encouraged.

In 2017, calls for tenders will also be published under the COSME programme<sup>11</sup>. Other funding opportunities and arrangements could be considered in the future, also taking into account the results of the pilot phase.

#### Step 3

This step needs to be financed at national and regional level. EU Structural and Investment Funds<sup>12</sup> (ESIF) could support Step 3 of the Blueprint, but this would require a decision by the relevant managing authorities. The EU partnerships will look into replicable models to facilitate the use of EU funding to support this step. Other public and private funding should also be used.

## AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

# Why a blueprint for cooperation on skills in the **automotive sector**?



The automotive industry is one of the main driving forces in the European economy; it accounts for almost 7 % of the EU's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides employment to 12.2 million workers (5.6 % of total EU employment). Direct jobs in automotive manufacturing amount to 2.3 million people. It is world leader in terms of product innovation; accounting for 20 % of Europe's industrial research funding. It constantly develops and furthers flexible and modular production systems, high-end design, alternative powertrain technologies and complex value chain management systems.

The automotive industry faces increased shortages of suitable workers (qualitative and quantitative). This is due mainly to the ageing workforce (23 % are approaching or starting to approach retirement age); the poor image of the manufacturing sector among young people (particularly women); the wide diversity of national education systems and cultures; and the accelerating pace of technological change.

Taking account of a pressing need to replace employees leaving the sector due to retirement or for other reasons, an estimated 900 000 automotive jobs will need to be filled between 2016 and 2025.

The automotive industry lacks STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) profiles and engineering jobs and is facing stiff competition from other sectors in the search for those highly skilled employees.

The sector is facing many structural changes, including stricter emission standards and decarbonisation, new mobility concepts; growing use of connectivity and digital technologies in vehicles; changes in consumer preferences; relocation to low-cost countries and the development of global manufacturing systems.

Such change and the growing automation of manufacturing processes requires automotive

industry workers to acquire more advanced technical skills. Employers therefore depend not only on a steady supply of STEM graduates. They need to build workforces that are not only technically skilled, but which also have the ability to solve problems, to work in teams and adapt fast.

For instance, the continued development of cleaner vehicles is projected to impact considerably on the occupational and skills profile of the sector. Over half of the total job openings to 2025 are forecast to require high-level qualifications. The number of jobs requiring low- and medium-level qualifications will decline. The push for clean vehicles will lead to new jobs in research & development (R&D), design and will require an increase in senior positions in the manufacturing process.

Similarly, the need to have connected vehicles with advanced electronic information and entertainment features will require new skills and novel technologies in the near future. New areas of expertise, including those which result from the ongoing shift to highly sophisticated, digital manufacturing (Industry 4.0), will therefore need to be added in order to bridge the existing knowledge gap between the automotive and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

These changes involve the whole automotive value chain, including the replacement market, whose products are becoming increasingly technology-intensive, requiring new and more complex expertise, combining several competences.

Furthermore, many Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the value chain lack the capacity to develop specific education programmes on their own.

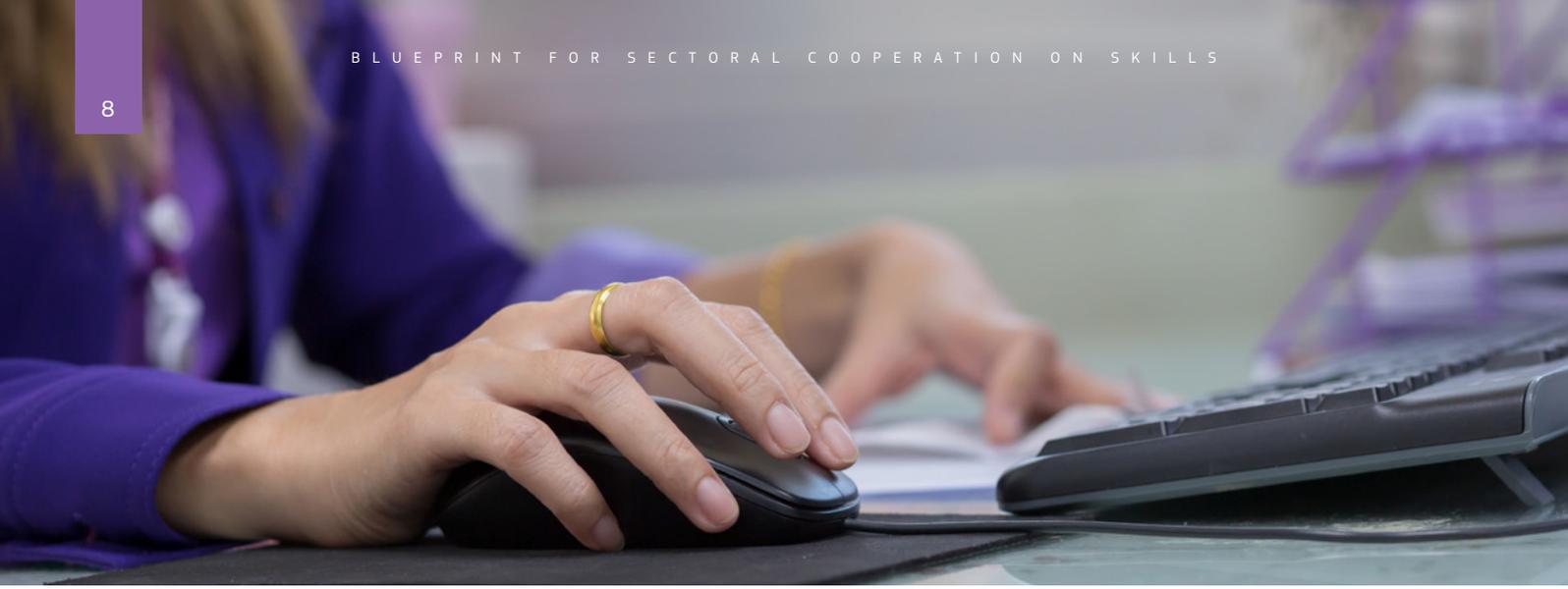
The workforce must adapt to new technologies and changes in customer expectations and acquire the new skills to prevent further relocation of business processes outside Europe. The mobility of graduates and skilled workers will also be vital in tackling regional skills mismatches in the EU.

**Find out more****Automotive Skills Council:**<http://www.euautomotiveskillscouncil.eu/>**GEAR 2030 initiative:**[http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/automotive/policy-strategy\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/automotive/policy-strategy_en)

## What can the blueprint achieve?

The Blueprint will gather stakeholders from across Europe and throughout the automotive value chain to:

- 1 Address the mismatches between the industry's needs and education supply by:**
  - Promoting upskilling and the acquisition of digital, mechatronic, mechemtronic and transversal skills (including by identifying relevant teacher training/industry exchange and equipment for education and training providers) enabling the sector to keep up with the challenges stemming from new technologies;
  - Developing programmes for **inter-generational learning**;
  - Developing **innovative educational tools, vocational training and apprenticeship programmes**.
- 2 Improve the image of the automotive sector by:**
  - Developing and implementing programmes/schemes (recruitment initiatives, first-hand experience of the industry in action, support material, presentations and webinars promoting the new profiles in the automotive sector) **to attract and retain young graduates and women**;
  - Developing hybrid programmes in vocational education and training and universities, including seminars on industry subjects and apprenticeships to put skills into practice;
  - Developing **awareness raising activities** and social media campaigns to promote the industry to students.
- 3 Establishing long-term cooperation and exchange of good practice among:**
  - Industry stakeholders and research institutes;
  - Education and training providers involved in skills development within the sector at EU, national and regional levels.



## Links to other related projects and initiatives

In 2014 the Commission launched, together with the industry, the European Automotive Skills Council (EASC) as part of the actions in the CARS 2020 Action Plan. EASC conducted a survey to map the skills mismatch and identify the future training needs for the automotive industry. The final report was published in February 2016.

Moreover, ESCO classification (European Skills/Competences, Occupations and Qualifications) was developed for the Manufacturing of Transport Equipment skills.

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## Endnotes

1. **European Sector Skills Councils:** <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=784>
  2. **Projects financed by Erasmus+:** [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/sector-skills-alliances\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/sector-skills-alliances_en)
  3. **Smart Specialisation Platform:** <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home>
  4. **Skills Panorama:** <http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en>; Europass: COM(2016) 625
  5. **European Skills, Competences, Occupations, and Qualifications(ESCO):** <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home>
  6. **Examples of competence frameworks:** Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, **the** Entrepreneurship Competence Framework **and the** European e-Competence Framework
  7. **Examples of EU employability and mobility tools:** Erasmus+, EURES, Drop'Pin, European Alliance for Apprenticeships
  8. **Examples of EU skills & qualifications tools:** European Qualifications Framework, ESCO, Europass, ECVET **and** EQAVET
  9. **Smart Specialisation Map:** <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/map>
  10. **Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliances:** [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/home/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/sector-skills\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/home/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/sector-skills_en)
  11. **COSME Programme:** [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme_en)
  12. **EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF):** [http://ec.europa.eu/contracts\\_grants/funds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/funds_en.htm)
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The Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills is a new framework for strategic cooperation to address short and medium-term skills needs in a given economic sector. This publication focuses specifically on the automotive sector and shows how stakeholders (businesses, trade unions, public authorities, research, education and training institutions etc.) can apply the framework to address challenges, illustrating the steps towards delivering sector-specific skills solutions through sectoral partnerships.

The Blueprint currently focuses on six pilot sectors including: Automotive; Defence; Maritime Technology; Space (geo-information); Textile, Clothing, Leather & Footwear (TCLF); and Tourism. It will be extended to additional sectors in the future.

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