

OSKA overview of the skills necessary for green and digital transition

Summary of key findings

Background

The environmental agreements of the European Union and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals will have increasingly stronger impacts on all economic sectors in the next few years.

In the allocation of resources from the COVID-19 recovery package, the EU has declared **green and digital transition to be priority areas**. This suggests that the need for skills and knowledge necessary for sustainable and environmentally friendly management will be growing fast in all economic areas.

Once compliance with environmental requirements and objectives becomes an increasingly stricter operational standard, a prerequisite for project funding, and a condition for participation in public procurement, the need for skills for the more efficient use of resources and environmental knowledge will also increase in all sectors.

To support sustainable development in Estonia, it is essential to better exploit the opportunities offered by automation, and similarly, more complex digital technologies should be implemented to support competitiveness. However, technological solutions alone do not guarantee success, workers with sector-specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills are required, from engineers to skilled workers.

Skills necessary for digital transition

Digitalisation and automation will have the greatest impact on the future demand for labour and skills in almost all areas of life and economy.

- Both automation and digitalisation help reduce labour exploitation and dependence on labour.
- The need for even more highly skilled experts engaged in complex work will increase in all areas.

General information and communication technology skills are becoming an elementary need on the labour market.

- The opportunities for employment in the areas of ICT and technology will increase, as will the need for technological competence in most professions.
- Increasingly, more emphasis should be placed on developing sector-specific ICT skills in different areas of life.
- Implementation of innovative solutions based on digital technologies requires workers who are capable of introducing digital change at every level and in every field and who have an understanding of sector-specific needs and knowledge of the possibilities of using ICT.

Skills necessary for the green transition

In order to implement the green transition, a **transnational strategy** is required together with broad agreements which all sectors must follow.

First and foremost, it is necessary to **establish a basis for systemic change** in areas which are most closely linked to the objectives of reducing our carbon footprint and environmental impacts, preserving ecosystems, and achieving resource-efficiency (e.g. energy, transport, construction, industry, agriculture, environment). Digital transition and the development of and investment in digital technologies create the preconditions for change.

- Both **general skills** (e.g. co-operation skills, project management, critical thinking, creativity, entrepreneurship) and **specialised green skills of increasing importance** (e.g. skills in renewable energy, materials science) are needed for the green transition.
- **At different levels of governance**, general green knowledge is more important, as experts and skilled workers are expected to have the skills to further develop and/or implement the new knowledge.
- Higher education institutions and vocational education institutions are expected to **provide training that supports lifelong learning** and the acquisition and development of green skills.

The level of green competencies is very inconsistent across different economic sectors, thus central leadership is required to increase knowledge and skills levels.

Knowledge in the fields of management, communication, marketing, and ICT and strategic and innovative thinking are of key importance for the **achievement of green transition**.