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The “Digital TCLF” project confirms the emerging need for digital skills in the TCLF sectors

The results of a company survey conducted under the Erasmus+ Project “Digital TCLF 2025” have been published, confirming the relevance of 9 emerging digital occupations in the Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear (TCLF) sectors. It details the extent of the demand for each digital occupation in the respective TCLF sectors and alerts educational centres to the need to adapt or create new training programmes as companies will require qualified people to fill such emerging occupations with a strong digital component.

As part of the Erasmus+ project “Digital TCLF”, co-financed by the European Commission, the European Footwear Confederation (CEC) launched a survey on the need for specific emerging digital occupations in the Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear (TCLF) sectors. As the project aims to help the TCLF sectors take advantage of digitalisation opportunities, this survey was the first step in signalling which skills education and training providers need to deliver.

The survey’s aim was to validate the future relevance of the 9 digital occupations previously identified by the consortium, the EU social partners Euratex, COTANCE, CEC and industriAll Europe. In this view, it was addressed primarily to companies as well as to associations, educational and training centres, research institutes, and trade unions, and the results showed that digital skills are expected to be needed by companies in the very near future.

The answers provided by 205 participants, more than a half of which were companies, identified some occupations as more important than others, also depending on the sector, but generally confirmed the provisions of the project. All the 9 occupations, from Supply Chain Data Manager to 3D Designer and Pattern Maker, were indeed predicted to be in demand in the future. For the Footwear sector, the occupation with the expected highest demand was 3D Footwear Designer and Pattern Maker (91% of stakeholders agreed). For Leather, it was Leather Technologist (96% of respondents); for Textile, it was Research, Development and Information Researcher (89% of respondents), and for the Clothing sector, they were Digital Marketing Responsible & Process Analyst (100% of respondents).

The survey also sought to measure the presence of these occupations in the TCLF sectors, confirming that the majority of the companies currently lack employees in the identified occupations. Therefore, the market potential for these occupations is expected to rapidly grow in the next years, which also leads to the urgent need for educational centres to adjust to this scenario and work towards the bridging of the digital skills gap.

In this way, current and future workers will be able to acquire the skills requested by companies, while at the same time enabling the industry to take the most advantage of the digitalised economy within the continually evolving and innovation driven TCLF sectors.

The detailed results of the survey can be found in the latest project newsletter, [available on the website](#).