

UNDERSTANDING SKILLS DEMAND IN A CHANGING WORLD

CALL FOR PAPERS

The [European Training Foundation](#) (ETF) invites researchers, practitioners, authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, and experts that work on employment and skills issues to submit abstracts for papers for a new flagship publication. The publication will be produced in 2020 and should address the issue of how global developments are having an impact on jobs, employment patterns and skills demand in transition and developing countries. Successful applicants may be invited to present their work at a future ETF international conference on this topic.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The ETF is seeking, in particular, country examples with case studies, backed up with research, including data analysis, which document changes in the labour market in transition and developing countries. These might include changes in sectors and jobs, employment patterns/relations, work places, occupations and skills needs. The papers could be either research-based or analyses of different policies or practices. Examples that focus on the [ETF's partner countries](#) are particularly welcome. Further details of specific topics can be found below.

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 30 June 2019. Abstracts, of around 500 words, should be in English, include a preliminary title and the full names and titles of the authors. The ETF will evaluate the abstracts on the basis of relevance, content quality and language. Decisions will be communicated by 15 July 2019 and final full papers should be submitted by 31 December 2019.

CONTACT

Ummuhan Bardak is the ETF's lead expert on this activity. Please submit abstracts to her: ummuhan.bardak@etf.europa.eu and for further information please contact her by phone on +390116302222 (switchboard) or +390116302450 (direct).

BACKGROUND

The ETF launched a first debate in 2018 to identify future skills trends and needs in its partner countries. The preliminary analysis, which was presented at the ETF international conference 'Skills for the Future: Managing Transition' in November 2018, showed the need to further document and

monitor the changing skills demand and go further than macro analyses on the topic¹. To continue to contribute to the debate, the ETF plans to produce a flagship publication on understanding skills demand in transition and developing countries against the background of significant global transformation. The publication will collect a number of well-evidenced papers on the changes occurring in jobs, employment patterns/relations, and skills demand in transition and developing countries from interested authors.

We live in a rapidly changing and uncertain world, but the impacts of these changes on labour markets, jobs and skills are far from clear. Many studies highlight the automation of routine tasks, job polarisation between low and high-skilled jobs, and rising demand for cognitive skills in advanced economies. Digitalisation impacts all skills levels by changing the composition of occupations; reshaping, replacing or displacing existing jobs or creating new ones. As new labour markets reward different skills sets and worker attitudes, there is a growing mismatch reported everywhere between the skills of workers and the needs of employers. Labour markets are becoming more segmented and less stable with a widening range of non-standard forms of employment.

As individuals, firms, education and training providers need to make decisions about education, training and career paths that will offer the best returns, demand for information on future developments and scenarios has risen. The identification of skills demands in this context has become important for labour market and skills strategies, conditional on carrying out regular and participative updates of trends. The information gained from these exercises could feed back into the preparation of people for life. Investing in people is more important than ever, in particular for instilling key competences and soft skills and ensuring lifelong learning.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTED TOPICS

- **New forms of employment:** examples of new types of employment that have emerged as a result of new trends in labour market, such as online work in the platform economy, own-account workers, self-employment and entrepreneurship, diversification of employment contracts (e.g. part-time work, fixed-term work, temporary work via private employment agencies, sub-contracting, remote work, on-call work, home-based work, work-share, flexible work time model), changing work-life balance.
- **New occupations:** concrete examples of new occupations that have emerged in the labour market, analysis of current jobs and vacancies in terms of changing occupational profiles, the highest-demand occupations, existing occupations which have changed, occupations which are declining or disappearing, risks posed by automation to human labour in certain occupations.
- **Skills demand:** concrete examples of skills need analyses, growing/declining demand for skill-sets, results of skills need analyses combining the use of traditional labour market data and anticipation tools (forecast, foresight, sectoral studies, employer surveys, etc.) with new and innovative methods such as Big Data and other digital technologies, analysis of 'skills-biased' changes such as higher demand for high-skills or job polarisation trends.
- **Employment changes in economic sectors:** documented changes in the employment share of sectors over time (e.g. agriculture, services, manufacturing, construction); the integration into global value chains, offshoring/reshoring trends, employment shifts within sub-sectors of services from low value-added jobs such as personal services and hospitality to high value-added jobs such as financial intermediation and business services, or vice versa.

¹ See Briefing Note [Getting ready for the future](#) prepared for the ETF international conference 'Skills for the Future: Managing Transition', which took place on 21–22 November 2018 in Turin (Italy).

- **New technological changes and informal employment:** concrete examples of employment trends in digitalised labour markets and the platform economy, profiles of online workers, empirical studies on whether the platform economy generates new forms of informal employment, or on the contrary, formalises the informal economy, with online transparency replacing the old word-of-mouth methods of finding work and unrecorded cash-in-hand payments by trackable online payments.
 - **Employment relations including working conditions:** concrete examples of changes in working conditions, blurred lines between private and working life, risks from lack of clarity on employment status, regulation loopholes, 'dependent self-employment', erosion of traditional employer-employee relationship and social security benefits, losers and winners of new employment relations, casualization, devaluation and disguising of work.
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