



D3.3 (D7)

Synthesis Report on the Decisions made in the Piloting Countries on Sectors, the Learning and Skills Needs of the Workforce, and the Motivation Actions

Developed by IARP | July, 2026

PROJECT NUMBER: 101195968 / EDU-2024-POL-EXP-ADULT



Co-funded by
the European Union

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Methodology.....	5
4. Comparative Analysis of Sector Selection Across Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Cyprus ...	6
5. Comparative Analysis of Workforce Learning and Skills Needs.....	8
6. Comparative Analysis of Motivation and Awareness-Raising Actions.....	10
7. Sector selection process	12
8. Common and country-specific skills needs.....	13
9. Barriers to participation and implementation	15
10. Comparative Analysis of Motivation and Awareness-Raising Actions.....	18
10.1 Employer Mediated outreach	18
10.2 Involvement of Public Employment Services	19
10.3 Recognition of Prior Learning and Certification	19
10.4 Community and Inclusion Outreach	20
10.5 Digital Communication and Awareness Raising Campaigns	20
10.6 Summary.....	21
11. Common Patterns and Country-Specific Differences.....	22
11.1 Common Patterns.....	22
11.2 Country-specific Differences	23
11.3 Summary.....	24
12. Implications for the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab Model	27
13. Transferability and Recommendations	28
14. Conclusions	29

1. Executive Summary

The COOPSKILLS project introduces the concept of **Learning Companies and Reskilling Labs** as collaborative local ecosystems designed to support adult learning, workforce reskilling and the green and digital transition. Rather than focusing solely on the provision of training, the project promotes a place-based approach in which municipalities, employers, sectoral organisations, VET providers, public authorities and civil society jointly identify labour market challenges and develop coordinated responses to emerging skills needs.

This synthesis report presents a comparative analysis of the decisions taken during the establishment of the Reskilling Labs in the four piloting countries: **Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania and Spain**. It brings together the findings of the national reports prepared under WP3.1 and examines three interrelated dimensions that constitute the foundation of each pilot: (1) the selection of declining sectors to be addressed through the Reskilling Labs, (2) the identification of workforce learning and skills needs, and (3) the motivation and awareness-raising actions designed to engage employers, workers and other stakeholders in reskilling activities. The report presents a synthesis of evidence contained in the four national reports produced by the project partners.

Although each pilot operates in a distinct economic and institutional context, the comparative analysis reveals a high degree of convergence in the challenges affecting local labour markets. Across all four countries, partners identified the accelerating impact of digitalisation, the green transition, demographic change and persistent labour shortages as the principal drivers of workforce transformation. These developments require not only new technical and digital competences but also stronger transversal skills, greater organisational adaptability and more effective cooperation between education providers, employers and local authorities.

At the same time, the pilots demonstrate that sector selection must remain firmly rooted in local economic realities. Rather than applying a common sectoral model, each Reskilling Lab selected areas reflecting regional strengths, labour market demand and opportunities for sustainable economic development. Consequently, the selected sectors differ across countries while pursuing the common objective of facilitating workforce transition from vulnerable or transforming activities towards sectors with stronger growth potential.

Despite these sectoral differences, the analysis identifies several common priorities regarding workforce development. Digital competences emerge as the most consistently identified learning need across all pilots, complemented by customer-oriented competences, communication skills, entrepreneurship, adaptability, problem-solving and continuous learning capabilities. Depending on the national context, additional emphasis is placed on sustainable production methods, accessibility, inclusive services, advanced technical competences and sector-specific digital applications.

The comparative review also highlights that successful reskilling depends not only on identifying relevant training content but equally on creating effective mechanisms for motivating participation. Across the four pilots, partners consistently recognise that adult learners, particularly those employed in SMEs or belonging to vulnerable groups, often face significant barriers to participation, including limited time, financial constraints, low confidence, insufficient information and uncertainty regarding the benefits of training. Consequently, all national reports emphasise the importance of practical,

flexible and employer-supported learning opportunities accompanied by targeted awareness-raising activities.

Although communication approaches differ between countries, several common principles emerge. The most effective mobilisation strategies rely on trusted intermediary organisations, close cooperation with employers, practical demonstration of training benefits, locally adapted communication channels and continuous stakeholder engagement rather than one-off promotional campaigns, as well as the recognition of prior learning. The reports consistently underline that motivation should be understood as a continuous process accompanying the entire reskilling pathway—from initial awareness raising through recruitment, participation and continued learner support.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the Reskilling Lab model provides a flexible framework capable of responding to diverse regional labour market conditions while maintaining a coherent methodological approach. The pilots aim at confirming that sustainable workforce development requires integrated local partnerships combining labour market intelligence, employer engagement, learner support, tailored training provision and continuous evaluation. Rather than promoting a single model of reskilling, the project illustrates how common methodological principles can be adapted to different socio-economic contexts while maintaining a shared commitment to inclusive, demand-driven lifelong learning.

2. Introduction

Rapid technological progress, demographic change, environmental sustainability objectives and evolving labour market structures are fundamentally transforming the skills required by European economies. These developments have increased the importance of lifelong learning and highlighted the need for local mechanisms capable of supporting workers, employers and communities in adapting to changing economic conditions. While many sectors continue to experience labour shortages, others face structural transformation resulting from digitalisation, automation or changing consumer expectations. Consequently, reskilling and upskilling have become central components of European, national and regional employment and education policies.

The COOPSKILLS project addresses these challenges through the establishment of **Learning Companies and Reskilling Labs**, conceived as collaborative local ecosystems that strengthen cooperation between municipalities, employers, vocational education and training providers, chambers of commerce, public employment services and other local stakeholders. Rather than functioning solely as training providers, the Reskilling Labs aim to facilitate evidence-based decision-making regarding workforce development, identify emerging skills needs and coordinate local actions supporting adult learning and economic resilience.

As part of Work Package 3, each piloting country conducted a comprehensive national analysis leading to the establishment of its Reskilling Lab. These analyses examined local labour market conditions, identified sectors requiring intervention, mapped existing and emerging workforce skills needs and proposed motivation and awareness-raising strategies to encourage participation in lifelong learning activities. Together, these national reports provide valuable evidence on how common project

objectives can be translated into locally relevant implementation models while reflecting the diversity of economic structures across Europe.

The present synthesis report integrates these national findings into a comparative perspective. Rather than reproducing individual country reports, it identifies common trends, shared challenges and distinctive national approaches that together inform the further development of the COOPSKILLS methodology. The report therefore contributes not only to documenting pilot implementation but also to strengthening the transferability of the Reskilling Lab model to other municipalities, regions and sectors.

The synthesis covers the four piloting countries—Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania and Spain—and focuses on three key analytical dimensions that guided the national implementation process:

- Decisions regarding the selection of declining and growing sectors
- Identification of workforce learning and skills needs
- Development of motivation and awareness-raising actions supporting participation in reskilling activities
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Through comparative analysis, the report seeks to identify transferable elements of the Reskilling Lab approach while recognising the importance of adapting interventions to local economic, institutional and social conditions. In doing so, it supports one of the central objectives of the COOPSKILLS project: demonstrating how collaborative local partnerships can strengthen workforce resilience during periods of economic, technological and environmental transition.

3. Methodology

The synthesis adopts a **comparative qualitative approach** based exclusively on documentary analysis of the four national reports prepared by the project partners within Work Package 3.1. The analysis follows the reporting framework established in the WP3.1 guidelines and examines the evidence generated during the design of the Reskilling Labs in Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania and Spain.

The national reports document the decision-making processes undertaken by each partnership during the establishment of the pilot Reskilling Labs. Each report combines labour market analysis, stakeholder consultation, sector selection, identification of workforce learning needs and proposals for mobilisation and awareness-raising activities. Together, they provide a sufficiently comparable evidence base for identifying both common patterns and country-specific solutions.

The synthesis was conducted using a thematic comparative analysis. Rather than comparing countries sequentially, information from all four reports was systematically coded according to common analytical categories derived from the WP3.1 reporting structure. These categories include:

- Rationale for sector selection
- Characteristics of declining sectors
- Governance arrangements of the Reskilling Labs
- Target groups
- workforce learning and skills needs;

- barriers to participation in adult learning;
- motivation and awareness-raising actions;
- implications for local implementation and future transferability.

Following thematic coding, similarities and differences across the four national contexts were examined to identify recurring patterns, distinctive approaches and transferable practices. Particular attention was paid to distinguishing between findings that appear consistently across all pilots and those reflecting specific regional economic structures or institutional arrangements.

The synthesis deliberately avoids ranking national approaches or assessing their effectiveness, as all pilots remain at an early implementation stage. Instead, the report focuses on understanding the rationale underlying national decisions and identifying methodological lessons that may support the future development and replication of the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model.

Accordingly, the report should be understood as an analytical synthesis rather than an evaluation. Its purpose is to consolidate knowledge generated by the pilot countries, identify common implementation principles and highlight contextual factors influencing the design of local reskilling ecosystems. This approach supports evidence-based refinement of the COOPSKILLS methodology while preserving the flexibility necessary for adapting the model to diverse regional labour markets.

4. Comparative Analysis of Sector Selection Across Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Cyprus

The four national reports confirm that sector selection in COOPSKILLS was not treated as a purely administrative decision, but as a strategic step in adapting the Reskilling Lab model to local labour-market realities.

Across the four pilots, the selected sectors differ significantly, but the logic behind the choices is consistent. Each pilot selected a sector or sectoral interface where local SMEs, workers or traditional economic activities face pressure from digitalisation, green transition, changing customer expectations, labour shortages or weak adaptability. At the same time, each selected sector offers a realistic pathway for employment, business continuity and local economic resilience.

Spain selected the tourism, hospitality and agri-food sectors, with particular emphasis on catering and food service. The Spanish **Reus Talent Living Lab** is located in Reus, Catalonia, and its focus reflects the economic profile of the city and the wider Camp de Tarragona area, where tourism, hospitality and agri-food SMEs are important sources of employment, especially for low-skilled and seasonally contracted workers. The Spanish report indicates that the selected sectors were chosen because they combine local economic relevance, SME concentration, inclusion potential and alignment with the green and digital transition. The pilot targets both SME leaders and workers, including unemployed persons registered with SEPE and adults with special needs.

Greece selected the digital and green transformation of local SMEs, with a strategic emphasis on retail commerce, localised services and agri-food distribution networks. The **Thermi Digital Skills Lab** is embedded in the Municipality of Thermi and is explicitly designed to support micro-enterprises, family-owned businesses and agricultural cooperatives facing digital competition and market pressure.



The Greek report shows that heavy manufacturing was rejected because of its limited local relevance and capital intensity, while digital creative industries and IT development were rejected as too specialised and insufficiently connected to the immediate survival needs of the traditional local workforce. Traditional retail commerce, local services and agri-food distribution were selected because they represent a large share of the local SME fabric and have strong potential for localised export scaling if supported through digital and green skills.

Lithuania selected the food industry as the focus of the **Kaunas-based Reskilling Lab**. This choice is more directly labour-shortage-driven than in the other pilots. The Lithuanian report links the decision to regional labour-market evidence: in 2025 more than 2,800 employers in Kaunas County posted around 31,600 vacancies, and occupations such as cook, baker and food machine operator appeared consistently on the national shortage list. The report also notes that the share of manufacturing companies reporting labour shortages rose from 33.5% in 2022 to 55.6% in 2025. The sector selection therefore responds to both immediate workforce shortages and the need to modernise skills in food production, safety, automation and digitalised production environments.

Cyprus selected a transition pathway from traditional agricultural and rural business activities under pressure towards agrotourism, connected to tourism, hospitality and agri-food. The Cyprus report defines the traditional agricultural and rural business sector as the sector under pressure, particularly small-scale rural enterprises that are locally rooted, often family-run and usually have limited capacity to respond to digital, accessibility and labour-market changes. Agrotourism was selected as the growing sector because it links rural products, hospitality, cultural heritage, gastronomy and sustainable tourism experiences, allowing rural SMEs to connect traditional activity with a growing service-based economy.

The comparison shows four different models of sector selection. Spain represents a **combined sectoral interface model**, linking tourism, hospitality and agri-food. Greece represents a **horizontal transformation model**, where the selected focus is not one narrow sector but the digital and green transformation of traditional local SMEs. Lithuania represents a **labour-shortage and industrial modernisation model**, focused on the food industry. Cyprus represents a **transition-from-traditional-sector-to-growth-pathway model**, connecting rural and agricultural businesses to agrotourism.

These differences are important because they demonstrate the flexibility of the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model. The pilots do not replicate the same sector across countries. Instead, they apply a common methodological logic: identify a local economic area under pressure, assess its adaptation or workforce gap, select a realistic growth or transformation pathway, and define reskilling actions that can support workers and SMEs within that pathway.

Table 1. Comparative overview of sector selection

Country	Reskilling Lab	Selected sector / focus	Sector under pressure or problem addressed	Main selection rationale
Spain	Reus Talent Living Lab	Tourism, hospitality and agri-food, with	SMEs employing low-skilled and seasonal workers; need for	Local economic relevance in Reus and Camp de Tarragona, SME concentration,



		emphasis on catering and food service	green and digital transition	inclusion potential, alignment with green and digital transition
Greece	Thermi Digital Skills Lab	Digital and green transformation of local SMEs, especially retail commerce, local services and agri-food distribution	Traditional micro-SMEs exposed to e-commerce competition, weak digital maturity and green transition pressures	High share of local SME fabric, immediate survival needs of traditional workforce, potential for digitalisation and local export scaling
Lithuania	Kaunas P-LAB	Food industry	Labour shortages in food-related occupations and manufacturing; need for modern production skills	Regional vacancy evidence, shortage occupations, rising labour shortages in manufacturing, need for food safety, automation and digital production skills
Cyprus	Cypriot Reskilling Lab / Local Roots	Transition from traditional rural/agricultural businesses to agrotourism linked to tourism, hospitality and agri-food	Small rural and agricultural businesses with limited capacity to adapt to digitalisation, accessibility and tourism expectations	Rural identity, tourism potential, SME needs, digital and accessibility gaps, sustainable tourism and rural development relevance

5. Comparative Analysis of Workforce Learning and Skills Needs

The four national reports confirm that skills needs are both common and highly context-specific. Digital skills appear across all pilots, but they are interpreted differently depending on the sector. In Spain, digital skills relate to hospitality operations, ordering systems, digital payments and the use of AI tools in food service. In Greece, digital skills are connected to digital brand strategy, campaign management, web analytics and content marketing for micro-businesses. In Lithuania, digital skills are linked to automated production, data use and connected food industry systems. In Cyprus, digital skills are associated with daily business operations, online visibility, websites, social media, booking platforms and customer communication.

The Spanish report identifies five major competency gaps: digital skills for workplace operations, customer service quality, food safety and hygiene, green and sustainability competences, and transversal or soft skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving and basic foreign language proficiency. These skills are strongly connected to the selected tourism, hospitality and agri-



food sectors. The Spanish pilot therefore combines technical skills, service quality, sustainability and employability-related transversal skills.

The Greek report presents a narrower and more digitally concentrated skills profile. The five most critical gaps identified for Thermi are digital brand strategy and identity, digital campaign management, web analytics and performance tracking, content marketing and optimisation, and cooperative and cross-border communication skills. The report emphasises that the core training needs respond to a major digital deficit in local micro-businesses, especially those exposed to competition from larger digital platforms.

The Lithuanian report identifies skills needs linked to the food industry and modernised production environments. The most important gaps include food safety and hygiene, including HACCP knowledge applied on modern automated lines; operating modern automated production and packaging equipment; food technology, recipe development and quality control; Lithuanian language proficiency among labour migrants; and digital confidence to work with data and connected production systems.

The Cyprus report identifies practical learning needs for rural SMEs and workers moving towards agrotourism. These include digital readiness for daily business operations, digital marketing and online visibility, use of websites and social media, booking platforms and messaging applications, accessibility standards, inclusive tourism practices, customer service, accessible communication and technical skills linked to internationalisation and service quality.

A key comparative finding is that **digital skills are the dominant cross-country priority**, but they are not generic. The national reports do not call for abstract digital literacy. They identify applied digital competences embedded in work processes: digital ordering and payment in Spain; digital branding and analytics in Greece; automated food production in Lithuania; and online visibility and booking tools in Cyprus. This confirms that the Reskilling Lab model should avoid one-size-fits-all digital curricula and instead design sector-specific digital modules linked to immediate work tasks.

The second cross-country priority is **customer-oriented and communication skills**, though again with different meanings. In Spain, this relates to service quality, complaints handling and customer satisfaction in HORECA. In Greece, communication is linked to cooperative and cross-border SME activity. In Cyprus, it is linked to inclusive tourism, accessible communication and interaction with diverse visitor groups. In Lithuania, communication needs are more specifically connected to language integration, especially Lithuanian language proficiency among labour migrants.

The third common area is **green and sustainability-related competence**, though it is more explicit in Spain, Greece and Cyprus than in Lithuania. In Spain, green skills are connected to ecological transition, waste reduction and eco-friendly materials. In Greece, green skills are linked to green logistics, packaging and SME transformation. In Cyprus, sustainability is embedded in agrotourism, rural development, accessible tourism and sustainable visitor experiences. Lithuania's report focuses more on food safety, automation and production quality, although these can also support more efficient and quality-oriented food production.

Table 2. Comparative overview of workforce learning and skills needs

Country	Main target groups	Priority skills	Main barriers / gaps
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Spain	SME leaders, HR managers, entrepreneurs, workers, unemployed persons registered with SEPE, adults with special needs	Digital workplace operations, customer service, food safety and hygiene, green and sustainability skills, transversal skills, foreign languages	Low digital readiness, service quality gaps, compliance gaps in food hygiene, need for recognised and employability-oriented training
Greece	Traditional SME owners and employees, unemployed and underemployed youth, disadvantaged groups, older workers	Digital brand strategy, campaign management, web analytics, content marketing, cooperative and cross-border communication	Digital maturity lag, competition from digital platforms, technology anxiety, time and financial barriers for micro-enterprises
Lithuania	Food industry workers, unemployed persons, NEET youth, pre-retirement adults, labour migrants, food-sector SMEs	Food safety and hygiene, HACCP, automated production equipment, packaging equipment, food technology, quality control, Lithuanian language, digital production confidence	Labour shortages, automation-related skill gaps, language barriers among migrants, need for modern production competences
Cyprus	Rural SMEs, SME owners, entrepreneurs, workers in transition, unemployed and inactive adults, low-skilled and vulnerable groups, migrants in agriculture	Digital readiness, digital marketing, online visibility, booking platforms, accessibility standards, customer service, inclusive tourism, internationalisation	Limited technical knowledge, financial constraints, low training access, accessibility gaps, physical infrastructure constraints, low confidence

6. Comparative Analysis of Motivation and Awareness-Raising Actions

The national reports confirm that motivation and awareness-raising actions are not secondary communication activities, but core implementation mechanisms for the Reskilling Labs. Across the four pilots, motivation strategies are designed to overcome similar participation barriers, including low awareness, limited time, cost concerns, weak employer engagement, low learner confidence and uncertainty about the value of training.

Spain applies a multi-layered mobilisation strategy built around trusted local intermediaries. The Spanish report states that the mobilisation logic is anchored in Chambers of Commerce, SEPE, NGOs, local employers' networks, digital communication and concrete training offers linked to certification, employment outcomes or social inclusion benefits. The Reus Talent Living Lab uses employer outreach through the Reus Chamber of Commerce, individual profiling and guidance by SEPE, NGO and civil-



society outreach for vulnerable groups, digital communication and social media campaigns, and recognition of prior learning and certification as motivational levers.

Greece uses a strongly municipal and event-based mobilisation logic. The Thermi report refers to a multi-channel framework that includes institutional matching with public employment services, zero-cost training delivery, operational-friendly class scheduling for businesses and high-visibility guerrilla marketing campaigns integrated into municipal festivals and youth forums. It also highlights structural scheduling, local recruitment alliances with DYPA and widespread municipal advertising as ways to dismantle financial, temporal and psychological barriers.

Lithuania's motivation strategy combines employer engagement, recognition of prior learning and targeted outreach to groups at risk of exclusion or labour-market detachment. Planned actions include direct SME engagement through KCCIC, recognition of prior learning for experienced workers, awareness campaigns through trade union and chamber channels, signposting towards Employment Service financial incentives, and motivational workshops for unemployed persons, NEET youth aged 16–29 and pre-retirement adults.

Cyprus uses a motivation strategy adapted to rural SMEs and agrotourism transition. The report emphasises compliance-oriented messages, business continuity arguments, funding and certification information, employer-mediated outreach, short motivational workshops, multi-channel awareness campaigns, tailored guidance and practical support for low-skilled and vulnerable adults. It also states that broad campaigns alone are weak and that mobilisation works better when it is targeted, trusted, practical and linked to real labour-market or business benefits.

Across the four Reskilling Labs, one common lesson is that adult learners and SMEs are unlikely to respond strongly to generic messages about lifelong learning. Motivation must be connected to concrete value. For employers, this means productivity, competitiveness, compliance, business continuity, customer acquisition, staff retention or access to funding. For workers and unemployed adults, it means employability, confidence, certification, practical skills and access to growing sectors.

The channels also differ by country. Spain relies on a structured ecosystem involving the Chamber of Commerce, SEPE, NGOs, local government and digital channels. Greece relies strongly on municipal visibility, public employment service matching, youth forums and local cultural events. Lithuania combines chamber and trade union channels with Employment Service incentives and RPL. Cyprus uses sector organisations, chambers, municipal networks, employer-mediated communication, NGOs, community organisations and one-to-one guidance.

Table 3. Comparative overview of motivation and awareness-raising actions

Country	Main campaign logic	Key channels	Main motivational levers	Main target groups
Spain	Reskilling as employability, certification and social inclusion	Reus Chamber of Commerce, SEPE, NGOs, City Council, employer networks, social media	Certification, employment outcomes, individual guidance, employer	SMEs, workers, unemployed persons, vulnerable adults

			outreach, inclusion support	
Greece	Reskilling as practical support for SME survival, digital inclusion and local competitiveness	Municipality, DYPA, local cultural events, youth forums, municipal advertising, VET providers	Zero-cost training, flexible scheduling, public employment matching, municipal visibility, short micro-credentials	SME owners and employees, unemployed youth, older workers, disadvantaged groups
Lithuania	Reskilling as a response to labour shortages and modernisation in the food industry	KCCIC, trade union channels, Employment Service, Steering Committee partners	RPL, SME engagement, financial incentives, targeted workshops, sector labour-demand evidence	Food industry workers, SMEs, unemployed persons, NEET youth, pre-retirement adults, migrants
Cyprus	Reskilling as business continuity, compliance, accessibility and agrotourism competitiveness	Cyprus Agrotourism Company, Chamber of Commerce, NCCI, municipalities, NGOs, community organisations, digital channels	Funding information, certification, compliance, employer-mediated outreach, mentoring, practical support, success stories	Rural SMEs, workers, low-skilled adults, unemployed and migrant adults, entrepreneurs

7. Sector selection process

The sector-selection process across the four pilots shows that COOPSKILLS does not apply one fixed sectoral model. Instead, each country identifies a local economic area where reskilling can support transition, competitiveness and employment.

In Spain, the process led to a **combined sectoral interface model**, because tourism, hospitality and agri-food are closely connected in the Reus context. The selected focus on catering and food service reflects a local economy where employment, food production, hospitality and service quality overlap.

In Greece, the selection followed a **horizontal SME transformation model**. Rather than choosing one narrow sector, the pilot focuses on digital and green transformation across local retail, services and agri-food distribution SMEs. This is relevant for municipalities where many micro-businesses face similar digitalisation pressures.



In Lithuania, the process resulted in a **labour-shortage and industrial modernisation model**. The food industry was selected because of clear evidence of vacancies, shortage occupations and automation-related skill needs.

In Cyprus, the selection reflects a **traditional-to-growth transition model**, supporting rural and agricultural businesses to move towards agrotourism and inclusive tourism services. This approach is useful where traditional sectors can remain viable by connecting to tourism, sustainability and service innovation.

Overall, the table shows that sector selection should begin with local diagnosis, not with a predefined sector. The transferable element is the process itself: identify a sector under pressure, define its growth or transformation pathway, assess skills gaps, and select a focus where the Reskilling Lab can create practical value.

Table 4. Typology of sector-selection models

Sector-selection model	Country	Description	Transferability potential
Combined sectoral interface model	Spain	Links tourism, hospitality and agri-food around catering and food service	Useful where local economies combine tourism, food service and agri-food production
Horizontal SME transformation model	Greece	Focuses on digital and green transformation across local retail, services and agri-food distribution SMEs	Useful for peri-urban municipalities with many micro-SMEs facing platform competition
Labour-shortage and industrial modernisation model	Lithuania	Focuses on the food industry due to vacancies, shortage occupations and automation needs	Useful where a sector has strong labour demand and clear technical skills gaps
Traditional-to-growth transition model	Cyprus	Moves rural/agricultural businesses towards agrotourism and inclusive tourism services	Useful where traditional sectors can diversify into tourism, services or sustainability-oriented growth pathways

8. Common and country-specific skills needs

The comparison of workforce learning and skills needs demonstrates that, although all four pilots address the challenges of digital and green transitions, the specific competency requirements are closely aligned with the economic profile and sectoral priorities of each country. Rather than identifying generic skills shortages, the national reports highlight applied competences that reflect the day-to-day realities of local businesses and labour markets.

Spain's Reskilling Lab prioritises competencies required in the tourism, hospitality and agri-food sectors. Consequently, digital skills focus on the use of ordering systems, digital payment technologies and AI-supported tools in hospitality operations. These are complemented by green skills related to ecological transition, waste reduction and environmentally friendly materials, as well as customer-oriented competencies such as service quality, complaint handling and customer satisfaction. Technical training concentrates on food safety, hygiene standards and restaurant operations, while transversal skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving and foreign language proficiency to support the international character of the hospitality sector.

In Greece, the identified needs are strongly connected with the digital transformation of local SMEs. The emphasis is placed on digital branding, online campaigns, web analytics and content marketing, reflecting the need for small businesses to strengthen their digital market presence. Green competencies are associated with sustainable logistics and packaging, while customer-related skills focus primarily on attracting and retaining customers through digital channels. The technical profile therefore centres on digital marketing and business communication rather than occupation-specific technical skills. Among transversal competencies, particular importance is given to cooperative working and cross-border communication, supporting the networking and internationalisation of SMEs.

Lithuania presents a different competency profile shaped by the needs of the food manufacturing sector. Digital skills relate primarily to data use, connected production systems and automated manufacturing processes rather than customer-facing technologies. Green competencies are less explicitly emphasised, although they are reflected indirectly through efficient production processes and quality management. Customer service skills play a relatively minor role, with greater attention devoted to food product quality and compliance with production standards. The most important technical competencies include HACCP implementation, operation of automated equipment, food technology, recipe development and quality control. A distinctive feature of the Lithuanian pilot is the recognition of Lithuanian language skills for migrant workers and digital confidence as important transversal competences supporting labour market integration.

Cyprus focuses on supporting the transition of rural businesses towards agrotourism and therefore identifies a competency profile closely linked to tourism services and rural entrepreneurship. Digital skills include website management, social media communication, booking platforms and messaging applications that increase the visibility of rural enterprises. Green competencies are associated with sustainable agrotourism and rural development, while customer-related skills emphasise visitor experience, accessible communication and inclusive tourism services. Technical competences include accessibility standards, digital promotion, booking systems and internationalisation, enabling small rural businesses to reach wider markets. Transversal skills focus on customer communication, confidence-building and service orientation, reflecting the importance of interpersonal competences in tourism and hospitality.

Overall, the comparison demonstrates that **digital skills constitute the only competency area common to all four pilots**, but their content varies considerably according to sectoral needs. Spain applies digital technologies to hospitality operations, Greece to SME marketing and business development, Lithuania to industrial production processes, and Cyprus to rural tourism promotion. Similarly, while green skills are present across the pilots, they are interpreted differently—from ecological practices in hospitality and sustainable logistics to efficient food production and sustainable



agrotourism. Customer-oriented competencies are particularly prominent in Spain and Cyprus, less central in Lithuania, and approached primarily through digital customer acquisition in Greece. Technical skills remain highly sector-specific, whereas transversal competencies consistently emphasise communication, adaptability and collaboration, albeit in forms that reflect national labour market conditions. These findings confirm that, while the COOPSKILLS methodology is built around common principles, the content of reskilling programmes must remain responsive to local economic structures and workforce needs.

Skill area	Spain	Greece	Lithuania	Cyprus
Digital skills	Ordering systems, digital payments, AI tools in hospitality	Branding, campaigns, analytics, content marketing	Data use, connected systems, automated production	Websites, social media, booking platforms, messaging apps
Green / sustainability skills	Ecological transition, waste reduction, eco-friendly materials	Green logistics and packaging linked to SME transformation	Less explicit; indirectly linked to quality and efficient food production	Sustainable agrotourism and rural development
Customer / service skills	Customer needs, complaints, satisfaction, service quality	Customer acquisition through digital presence	Less central; linked mainly to food product quality	Visitor experience, accessible communication, inclusive tourism
Technical sector skills	Food safety, hygiene, restaurant and bar service, kitchen and pastry operations	Digital marketing and communication for SMEs	HACCP, automated equipment, food technology, recipe development, quality control	Accessibility standards, digital promotion, booking systems, internationalisation
Transversal skills	Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, foreign languages	Cooperative and cross-border communication	Lithuanian language for migrant workers, digital confidence	Customer communication, confidence, service orientation

9. Barriers to participation and implementation

The comparative analysis of the four national reports demonstrates that, despite differences in sectoral focus and target groups, the Reskilling Labs face a similar set of barriers that may limit participation in lifelong learning and the effective implementation of reskilling activities. These barriers relate not only to the availability of training but also to organisational capacity, financial resources, learner motivation,

employer engagement and digital preparedness. The pilots therefore combine skills development with targeted support measures designed to reduce these obstacles and increase participation among both employers and adult learners.

Time constraints represent one of the most consistently identified barriers across all four countries. SMEs often operate with limited human resources, making it difficult to release employees for training during working hours. Consequently, all pilots propose flexible delivery models that minimise disruption to business operations. Spain addresses this challenge through modular and flexible training formats that allow participants to combine learning with work responsibilities. Greece similarly promotes operational-friendly scheduling and asynchronous micro-credentials that enable employees to learn at their own pace. In Lithuania, time limitations are particularly relevant for food industry workers and SMEs operating within continuous production cycles, requiring training solutions that fit around production schedules. In Cyprus, the challenge is especially pronounced among small rural enterprises with limited staffing capacity; therefore, short, modular learning activities are proposed to facilitate participation without interrupting daily business operations.

Financial constraints also constitute an important obstacle, particularly for SMEs and low-skilled workers who often perceive training as an additional cost rather than an investment. Each pilot adopts different mechanisms to reduce this barrier. Spain frames participation through employability benefits while relying on EU- and project-funded support to lower financial costs. Greece removes financial barriers by offering training free of charge, making zero-cost participation one of its principal motivational tools. Lithuania complements training opportunities with information about incentives available through the Employment Service, encouraging employers and individuals to make use of existing financial support schemes. In Cyprus, communication activities place particular emphasis on funding opportunities and cost-reduction messages, helping SMEs understand how external support can facilitate participation in reskilling activities.

Beyond practical barriers, the national reports identify **low confidence and psychological barriers** as important factors limiting participation, particularly among unemployed adults, older workers, low-skilled individuals and those with limited previous learning experience. Spain addresses these challenges through personalised profiling by SEPE and mentoring provided by non-governmental organisations, enabling participants to better understand available opportunities and build confidence. Greece focuses on local recruitment, strong municipal visibility and targeted support for older and disadvantaged groups in order to reduce hesitation towards training participation. Lithuania promotes confidence through motivational workshops and the recognition of prior learning (RPL), acknowledging existing competences and encouraging individuals to continue their learning pathways. In Cyprus, mentoring, learner-friendly communication and introductory digital support are used to reduce anxiety associated with digital technologies and lifelong learning, particularly among rural entrepreneurs and vulnerable adults.

The reports also highlight **employer engagement** as a prerequisite for successful implementation. Since SMEs constitute the primary target group across the pilots, employer involvement is essential for identifying workforce needs, encouraging employee participation and ensuring that training remains relevant to labour market demands. In Spain, employer engagement is coordinated primarily through the Chamber of Commerce, which serves as a bridge between businesses and the Reskilling Lab. Greece similarly relies on chambers and local business associations to connect the Lab with the SME community and promote participation. Lithuania assigns a central role to the Kaunas Chamber of

Commerce, Industry and Crafts (KCCIC), which directly engages food industry SMEs and supports cooperation with training providers. In Cyprus, employer outreach is coordinated through the Cyprus Agrotourism Company, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Nicosia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), ensuring that rural enterprises are actively involved in the design and implementation of reskilling activities.

Finally, **digital readiness** emerges as a cross-cutting challenge, although its nature differs across the four pilots. In Spain, insufficient digital competences are particularly visible within hospitality and food service businesses, where the adoption of digital tools remains uneven. Greece identifies limited digital maturity among micro-SMEs as one of the main barriers to competitiveness, making digital transformation the central objective of the pilot. In Lithuania, digital readiness is closely linked to the ability of workers to operate connected production systems and data-driven manufacturing processes within the food industry. In Cyprus, digital gaps are associated primarily with the online visibility of rural businesses, including the use of websites, booking platforms, social media and digital communication tools necessary for participation in the agrotourism market.

Overall, the comparison shows that while the specific manifestations of these barriers vary according to national and sectoral contexts, they fall into five common categories: limited time, financial constraints, low learner confidence, insufficient employer engagement and inadequate digital preparedness. The four pilots consistently demonstrate that overcoming these barriers requires a combination of flexible learning formats, financial support mechanisms, personalised guidance, strong cooperation with employers and practical, sector-specific digital training. These findings suggest that barrier reduction should be considered a core component of the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model, rather than an accompanying activity, as it directly influences the accessibility, effectiveness and long-term sustainability of adult reskilling initiatives.

Table 6. Barriers to participation and implementation

Barrier	Spain	Greece	Lithuania	Cyprus
Time constraints	Addressed through flexible and modular training	Addressed through operational-friendly scheduling and asynchronous micro-credentials	Relevant for workers and SMEs in production schedules	Important for small rural SMEs; addressed through short modular formats
Financial constraints	Mitigated through EU/project-based support and employability framing	Zero-cost training delivery is a key lever	Employment Service incentives are signposted	Funding guidance and cost-reduction messages are central
Low confidence /	Addressed through SEPE	Addressed through local recruitment, municipal	Addressed through	Addressed through



psychological barriers	profiling and NGO mentoring	visibility and support for older/disadvantaged groups	workshops and RPL	mentoring, learner-friendly language and basic digital support
Employer engagement	Chamber-led employer outreach is central	Chambers and local associations connect Lab to business community	KCCIC provides direct SME engagement	Cyprus Agrotourism Company, Chamber and NCCI are key business channels
Digital readiness	Major skills gap in hospitality and food service	Central barrier for micro-SMEs	Linked to production data and connected systems	Linked to online visibility, bookings and daily operations

10. Comparative Analysis of Motivation and Awareness-Raising Actions

The national reports demonstrate that motivation and awareness-raising activities constitute an integral component of the Reskilling Lab model rather than complementary dissemination measures. Across the four pilots, these activities are designed to reduce participation barriers, strengthen stakeholder engagement and ensure that both employers and adult learners recognise the practical benefits of reskilling. Although the specific actions reflect national and local contexts, the comparative analysis reveals a common implementation logic based on five complementary dimensions: employer-mediated outreach, involvement of public employment services, recognition and validation of skills, community and inclusion activities, and digital communication. This approach is consistent with the WP3.1 guidelines, which emphasise the need to analyse campaign logic, communication channels, targeting strategies and mechanisms for increasing participation in lifelong learning.

10.1 Employer Mediated outreach

All four Reskilling Labs recognise employers as key actors in motivating participation and shaping training provision. Rather than approaching workers independently, the pilots rely on business organisations and sector representatives that already enjoy the trust of local enterprises.

In **Spain**, employer outreach is coordinated primarily through the **Reus Chamber of Commerce** and wider employer networks, which promote the Reskilling Lab among SMEs operating in the tourism, hospitality and agri-food sectors. Business engagement activities are complemented by cooperation with Redessa and the City Council, ensuring that employers participate in identifying skills needs and encouraging employee participation.

The **Greek** pilot similarly relies on **chambers of commerce and local business associations**, which serve as intermediaries between the Digital Skills Lab and local SMEs. These organisations support the dissemination of information, recruitment of companies and promotion of training opportunities among business owners.

In **Lithuania**, employer engagement is centred on the **Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (KCCIC)** and leading food-sector companies. Their involvement ensures that training priorities remain aligned with labour market demand and that employers actively support workforce participation in reskilling activities.

The **Cyprus** pilot builds its employer outreach around the **Cyprus Agrotourism Company**, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Nicosia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI). These organisations play a central role in mobilising rural SMEs, validating sectoral needs and promoting participation among businesses involved in agrotourism and related sectors.

Across all four countries, employer-mediated outreach reflects the understanding that employers are not merely beneficiaries of reskilling but strategic partners whose engagement significantly increases the credibility, relevance and sustainability of the Reskilling Labs.

10.2 Involvement of Public Employment Services

Public employment services constitute another important component of the mobilisation strategy, although their role differs across the pilots depending on national institutional arrangements.

In **Spain**, the Public Employment Service (**SEPE**) plays an active operational role through participant profiling, career guidance and individual counselling. These activities help identify suitable learners, match them with appropriate training opportunities and provide continuous support throughout the learning pathway.

The **Greek** pilot cooperates closely with **DYPA**, using recruitment alliances and referral mechanisms to reach unemployed people and connect them with local training opportunities. This partnership strengthens the link between labour market policies and lifelong learning initiatives.

In **Lithuania**, the Employment Service primarily supports mobilisation by providing information on financial incentives available to employers and jobseekers, thereby encouraging participation in reskilling programmes while reducing economic barriers.

The **Cyprus** Reskilling Lab also collaborates with employment services, particularly in reaching unemployed adults, inactive individuals and migrant workers employed in agriculture. Employment services contribute to identifying potential participants and directing them towards appropriate training and support opportunities.

Although their operational roles differ, all four pilots demonstrate that cooperation with public employment services improves the identification, recruitment and support of target groups, particularly unemployed and vulnerable adults.

10.3 Recognition of Prior Learning and Certification

The national reports consistently identify recognition and validation of existing competences as important motivational factors for adult learners. Rather than requiring participants to begin learning from the outset, the pilots seek to acknowledge previously acquired knowledge and skills while providing pathways for further development.

In **Spain**, recognised certification and formal learning outcomes are presented as strong incentives for participation, increasing the perceived value of training among both employers and workers.

The **Greek** pilot links learning achievements with **micro-credentials aligned to ESCO**, allowing participants to document newly acquired competences through flexible and labour-market-relevant certification.

In **Lithuania**, **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is explicitly promoted for experienced workers in the food industry. This approach values practical experience while encouraging workers to complement existing competences with new technical and digital skills.

The **Cyprus** pilot proposes **skills audits and validation of informally acquired competences**, particularly for workers with extensive practical experience in agriculture or rural tourism who may lack formal qualifications but possess valuable occupational knowledge.

Together, these approaches demonstrate that recognising existing competences increases learner confidence, reduces duplication of learning and strengthens motivation to participate in further training.

10.4 Community and Inclusion Outreach

Each Reskilling Lab includes dedicated activities aimed at reaching groups that are traditionally underrepresented in adult learning. While the mechanisms vary, all pilots recognise that effective mobilisation requires cooperation with community organisations and trusted local actors.

In **Spain**, NGOs and civil society organisations play an important role in reaching disadvantaged groups and supporting their participation through personalised guidance and mentoring.

The **Greek** pilot adopts a particularly community-oriented approach by combining outreach through **youth forums, municipal festivals and activities targeting disadvantaged groups**, thereby embedding the Reskilling Lab within local community life and increasing its visibility.

In **Lithuania**, inclusion activities are coordinated through **trade unions, the Chamber of Commerce and targeted workshops** for NEETs, unemployed adults and people approaching retirement age. These actions seek to engage groups that may otherwise remain outside formal lifelong learning systems.

The **Cyprus** pilot collaborates extensively with **NGOs, community organisations and rural networks**, reflecting the dispersed geographical nature of the target groups and the importance of trusted local intermediaries in rural areas.

Across the pilots, community outreach is recognised as an effective means of reducing social barriers, increasing trust and ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to reskilling opportunities.

10.5 Digital Communication and Awareness Raising Campaigns

Digital communication forms the final pillar of the mobilisation strategy, although each pilot adapts communication channels to local stakeholder networks and target audiences.



In **Spain**, awareness-raising activities are implemented through **DomSpain's digital communication channels**, supported by local press and partner networks. These channels promote training opportunities while increasing the visibility of the Reskilling Lab among employers and potential participants.

The **Greek** pilot combines **municipal advertising with high-visibility communication campaigns**, using public events and local media to strengthen community awareness and encourage participation among SMEs and citizens.

In **Lithuania**, digital communication relies primarily on **trade union and Chamber of Commerce awareness campaigns**, ensuring that information reaches employers, workers and sectoral organisations through established institutional networks.

The **Cyprus** pilot adopts a broad digital communication strategy that combines **social media, short promotional videos, participant testimonials and communication through municipalities and chambers of commerce**. This approach reflects the need to reach geographically dispersed rural communities while demonstrating the practical benefits of participation through concrete examples and success stories.

Overall, the comparative analysis demonstrates that awareness-raising activities extend far beyond information dissemination. Across all four pilots, communication strategies are designed to build trust, demonstrate the practical value of reskilling and maintain continuous engagement with employers, learners and local stakeholders.

10.6 Summary

Although the specific actions differ according to local institutional arrangements and target groups, the four Reskilling Labs share a common mobilisation philosophy. Effective participation is achieved not through single awareness campaigns but through an integrated combination of employer engagement, cooperation with employment services, recognition of existing competences, community-based outreach and continuous communication. This integrated approach reflects the broader objective of the COOPSKILLS project: to establish Reskilling Labs as locally embedded ecosystems that connect businesses, public institutions, training providers and communities in support of lifelong learning and workforce resilience. The comparison further suggests that these five categories of motivational actions should be considered **core components of the COOPSKILLS methodology**, while allowing individual pilots to adapt specific tools and communication channels to their regional socio-economic context.

Table 7. Motivation actions across pilots

Motivation action type	Spain	Greece	Lithuania	Cyprus
Employer-mediated outreach	Strong, via Chamber and employer networks	Strong, via chambers and associations	Strong, via KCCIC and food companies	Strong, via agrotourism and chamber networks
Public employment	SEPE profiling and guidance	DYPA recruitment alliances	Employment Service incentives	Employment services for



service involvement				unemployed and migrant adults
Recognition of prior learning	Certification and recognised outcomes	Micro-credentials linked to ESCO	RPL for experienced workers	Skills audits and informal skills validation
Community inclusion / outreach	NGOs and civil society	Youth forums, municipal festivals, disadvantaged groups	Trade union and chamber channels; NEET and pre-retirement workshops	NGOs, community organisations, rural networks
Digital communication	DomSpain channels and local press	Municipal advertising and high-visibility campaigns	Trade union and chamber awareness campaigns	Social media, short videos, testimonials, municipal and chamber channels

11. Common Patterns and Country-Specific Differences

11.1 Common Patterns

The first common pattern is that all four pilots define reskilling as a local economic resilience mechanism rather than only an education activity. Each Reskilling Lab connects skills development to the survival, adaptation or growth of SMEs and workers. This is visible in Spain's focus on the tourism–hospitality–agri-food interface, Greece's focus on micro-SME digital and green transformation, Lithuania's response to food-industry labour shortages, and Cyprus's pathway from traditional rural businesses to agrotourism.

The second common pattern is the dominance of applied digital skills. However, the reports show that digital skills must be sector-specific. A generic digital literacy course would not meet the needs of all four countries equally. Spain needs digital tools for hospitality operations, Greece needs digital market presence and analytics for micro-SMEs, Lithuania needs digital confidence in automated production systems, and Cyprus needs digital visibility and booking tools for rural tourism.

The third common pattern is that trusted intermediaries are essential for mobilisation. None of the pilots relies only on broad public campaigns. Chambers, municipalities, sector organisations, trade unions, public employment services, NGOs and local business networks are used to reach employers and learners. This confirms that Reskilling Labs should be understood as coordination platforms embedded in local ecosystems.

The fourth common pattern is the importance of flexible, practical and short learning formats. The reports repeatedly identify time constraints, workload, limited SME capacity and learner hesitation as

barriers. The proposed solutions include modular courses, operational-friendly scheduling, short workshops, micro-credentials, mentoring and personalised guidance.

The fifth common pattern is the need to combine employer-facing and learner-facing messages. Employers need to understand the business value of participation, while learners need confidence, clarity and visible benefits. This is why the pilots combine arguments around competitiveness, compliance, productivity and business continuity with learner-level messages around employability, certification, confidence and progression.

11.2 Country-specific Differences

Spain's distinctiveness lies in its structured multi-stakeholder mobilisation model. The Reus Talent Living Lab combines DomSpain and Redessa co-leadership, the Reus Chamber of Commerce, Reus City Council, SEPE, NGOs and Open Europe as VET provider. Its sectoral focus is also distinctive because it joins tourism, hospitality and agri-food instead of treating them separately. The Spanish model is particularly strong in combining employability, certification, social inclusion and local business engagement.

Greece's distinctiveness lies in its municipal digital transformation model. The Thermi Digital Skills Lab is built around the municipality as a strong institutional coordinator and uses municipal visibility, public employment service links, local events and youth forums to mobilise participants. Its training focus is heavily digital, centred on branding, campaign management, analytics and content marketing for traditional SMEs. This makes it especially relevant for peri-urban areas with many micro-enterprises exposed to e-commerce competition.

Lithuania's distinctiveness lies in its strong labour-shortage evidence base. The food industry was selected because of documented regional vacancies and shortage occupations. Its skills needs are also more industrial and technical than in the other pilots, covering food safety, HACCP, automated production and packaging equipment, food technology and quality control. Lithuania also gives particular attention to migrant workers' language needs and to recognition of prior learning for experienced workers.

Cyprus's distinctiveness lies in its transition logic from traditional rural activity to agrotourism. The selected pathway does not assume that traditional rural or agricultural businesses should disappear. Instead, it frames their challenge as an adaptation, competitiveness and skills gap. The Cyprus model is also distinctive in its emphasis on accessibility standards, inclusive tourism, digital promotion and business continuity. Its motivation strategy is strongly linked to compliance, certification, funding, practical guidance and trusted rural or sectoral intermediaries.

Taken together, the four pilots show that the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model is most effective when it combines common design principles with strong local adaptation. The common principles are stakeholder coordination, sector relevance, practical learning, employer engagement, learner support and continuous mobilisation. The local adaptations concern the sector chosen, the digital skills required, the motivational message, the delivery channels and the role of municipal or sectoral actors.



11.3 Summary

The comparative analysis demonstrates several important findings:

1. **A common methodology can support different economic contexts.** Although each pilot selected different sectors, all followed the same decision-making process based on labour market diagnosis, stakeholder consultation, skills gap analysis and employer engagement.
2. **Digitalisation is the strongest common driver of reskilling.** However, digital competences are highly sector-specific, confirming that generic digital literacy programmes should be replaced by occupation-oriented digital training.
3. **Successful reskilling depends as much on motivation as on curriculum.** All pilots identified similar barriers—limited time, low awareness, financial constraints and uncertainty regarding training benefits—highlighting the importance of integrated awareness-raising strategies.
4. **Municipality-based governance provides flexibility.** The different governance arrangements illustrate that the Reskilling Lab concept can be successfully adapted to diverse institutional settings while preserving its collaborative character.
5. **The diversity of the four pilots strengthens, rather than weakens, the COOPSKILLS methodology.** Instead of demonstrating one fixed implementation model, the pilots collectively validate a flexible methodological framework capable of responding to different labour market realities across Europe.

Table 8. presents a synthesis of all decisions taken while creating Reskilling Labs across the piloting countries.

Table 8. Cross-country synthesis of Reskilling Lab strategic decisions

Dimension	Spain	Greece	Lithuania	Cyprus	Cross-country synthesis
Economic focus	Tourism, hospitality and agri-food	Digital and green transformation of local SMEs (retail, services, agri-food distribution)	Food industry	Transition from traditional agriculture to agrotourism	All pilots selected sectors with strong local relevance and future growth potential rather than applying a common sectoral model.
Main labour market challenge	Seasonal employment, service quality, digital transition	Digital maturity gap of SMEs, platform competition	Labour shortages and industrial modernisation	Structural transformation of rural economy	Although challenges differ, all pilots respond to structural labour market transformation driven by

					digitalisation, the green transition and demographic change.
Primary target groups	SME owners, workers, unemployed, vulnerable adults	SME owners and employees, unemployed youth, disadvantaged groups	Food industry workers, unemployed, NEETs, migrants	Rural SMEs, entrepreneurs, unemployed, vulnerable adults	All pilots prioritise SMEs together with workers requiring reskilling, while adapting target groups to local socioeconomic conditions.
Priority digital skills	Digital ordering systems, AI tools, digital payments	Digital marketing, branding, analytics	Automated production systems, digital manufacturing	Online promotion, booking systems, digital communication	Digital skills are the common denominator across all pilots but are applied differently according to sector-specific needs.
Priority green skills	Sustainable hospitality, waste reduction	Green logistics, sustainable business practices	Efficient production processes	Sustainable tourism and rural development	Green competences are integrated into each pilot according to sectoral priorities rather than through generic environmental training.
Transversal skills	Customer service, teamwork, communication	Cooperation, entrepreneurship, communication	Adaptability, language skills, quality culture	Customer service, communication, entrepreneurship	Soft skills are recognised as equally important as technical skills for successful labour market transitions.

Main participation barriers	Low awareness, time constraints, limited motivation	Digital anxiety, financial and time constraints	Skills shortages, language barriers	Low confidence, limited digital readiness, infrastructure constraints	Barriers are remarkably similar across countries, suggesting that motivational strategies should accompany technical training.
Main mobilisation mechanisms	Chamber of Commerce, SEPE, NGOs, certification	Municipality, DYPA, festivals, local campaigns	Chamber, Employment Service, trade unions	Chamber, municipalities, NGOs, employer outreach	All pilots rely on trusted local intermediary organisations rather than mass communication alone.
Governance model	Living Lab partnership	Municipality-led Reskilling Lab	Chamber-centred partnership	Public-private rural partnership	Governance structures differ institutionally but all are based on multi-stakeholder cooperation.
Strategic strength	Strong SME ecosystem and tourism relevance	High municipal ownership and SME orientation	Strong labour market evidence	Integrated rural development perspective	Each pilot contributes complementary strengths that enrich the overall COOPSKILLS methodology.
Transferability potential	High for tourism regions	High for municipalities with SME-based economies	High for manufacturing regions	High for rural and peripheral regions	The diversity of pilots demonstrates that the Reskilling Lab methodology is transferable across different regional contexts while maintaining a



12. Implications for the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab Model

The comparative analysis of the four national pilots confirms that the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model should be understood as a **local skills ecosystem**, not only as a training delivery mechanism. Across Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Cyprus, the Labs combine sector selection, stakeholder coordination, employer outreach, learner motivation and practical training design.

The first implication is that the Reskilling Lab model must remain **place-based and demand-driven**. Each pilot selected a different sectoral focus because each local economy faces different pressures. Spain focuses on tourism, hospitality and agri-food; Greece on the digital and green transformation of local SMEs; Lithuania on the food industry; and Cyprus on the transition from traditional rural and agricultural businesses towards agrotourism. This shows that the model should not prescribe one sector for all contexts. Instead, it should provide a structured method for identifying sectors where reskilling can generate practical value for workers, SMEs and local development.

The second implication is that the Reskilling Lab model should combine **sector-specific skills intelligence with flexible training design**. Digital skills appear in all four pilots, but they take different forms: digital tools in hospitality, digital marketing for SMEs, automated food production systems, online visibility and booking platforms. Therefore, the COOPSKILLS model should avoid generic digital training packages. Its added value lies in translating broad transition challenges into practical, occupation- and sector-specific learning pathways.

The third implication is that **employer engagement is a structural condition for success**. All four reports show that SMEs are central to the pilot logic, but also that SMEs face limited time, weak training capacity, financial constraints and uncertainty about the benefits of training. The Lab model should therefore include employer-facing tools as standard elements: a skills needs template, employer motivation messages, short business cases, practical scheduling options and clear information on funding, certification or recognition.

The fourth implication concerns **learner support**. The pilots target not only employed workers but also unemployed people, low-skilled adults, vulnerable groups, migrants, older workers and people at risk of exclusion. For these groups, access to training depends not only on the training offer itself but also on confidence-building, guidance, mentoring, accessible communication and recognition of prior learning. The Reskilling Lab model should therefore integrate learner support before, during and after training.

Finally, the model should include a **continuous mobilisation cycle**. The national reports show that one-off awareness campaigns are not sufficient. Motivation needs to be built through trusted intermediaries, repeated communication, employer encouragement, local events, public employment services, chambers, NGOs and sector bodies. The Reskilling Lab should therefore operate as a permanent coordination point linking demand identification, learner recruitment, training provision and follow-up.

13. Transferability and Recommendations

The four pilots demonstrate that the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model is transferable, but only if it is treated as a flexible methodology rather than a fixed institutional template. The core model can be transferred across countries, municipalities and sectors, but the sectoral focus, communication messages, training content and stakeholder configuration must be adapted to local conditions.

A first transferable element is the **sector-selection process**. Each Lab should begin by identifying a sector under pressure and a realistic growth or transformation pathway. This does not always mean choosing a declining sector and replacing it with a new one. In Cyprus, the transition is from traditional rural and agricultural activities towards agrotourism. In Greece, the transition is horizontal: local SMEs remain in their sectors but need digital and green transformation. In Lithuania, the focus is on a sector with labour shortages and modernisation needs. In Spain, the focus lies at the intersection of tourism, hospitality and agri-food. Future Labs should therefore use a diagnostic process that asks: which local sector is under pressure, what kind of transformation is required, and which skills would make that transition realistic?

A second transferable element is the **multi-stakeholder governance model**. All pilots rely on cooperation between project partners, municipalities, chambers, VET providers, public employment services, employers and social or community organisations. This should become a standard COOPSKILLS requirement. However, the leading actor may differ: a municipality may be central in one context, a chamber or sector organisation in another, and a training or consulting organisation elsewhere. The key condition is not identical governance structure, but clear division of roles.

A third transferable element is the **combination of employer outreach and learner-facing support**. Future Labs should not assume that workers will participate simply because training is available. The national reports show that participation requires practical reasons, trusted messengers and reduced barriers. Therefore, the model should standardise a set of mobilisation tools: employer engagement kit, learner motivation script, short workshop format, social media toolkit, RPL template, funding information sheet and monitoring dashboard.

A fourth recommendation is to make training **short, modular, practical and linked to real workplace tasks**. This is especially important for SMEs, which often cannot release workers for long courses. Micro-learning formats, blended learning, evening or flexible scheduling and practical workplace examples should be prioritised. Training should also be linked to visible outcomes, such as certification, recognition of prior learning, improved business processes, better online visibility or stronger employability.

A fifth recommendation is to strengthen **recognition and validation mechanisms**. Spain, Lithuania and Cyprus all point to certification, recognition of prior learning or skills audits as motivational levers. This is particularly relevant for experienced workers, migrants, low-skilled adults and people whose competences have been acquired informally. Future Labs should include simple procedures for documenting existing skills and connecting them to further training pathways.

A sixth recommendation is to ensure that **digital and green transitions are translated into sector language**. The terms “digital transformation” or “green transition” may be too abstract for SMEs and low-skilled workers. The national pilots show that these concepts become meaningful when connected to concrete tasks: managing bookings, improving customer communication, using automated



production equipment, reducing waste, improving packaging, reaching tourists online or making services more accessible.

Table 9. Transferable elements of the Reskilling Lab model

Transferable element	Why it matters	Adaptation needed locally
Sector diagnosis	Ensures that the Lab responds to real local labour-market needs	Sector focus must reflect local economic structure
Multi-stakeholder governance	Connects training, employers, municipalities and inclusion actors	Lead actor and stakeholder composition may differ
Employer engagement toolkit	Helps SMEs understand the business value of training	Messages must reflect sector-specific benefits
Learner support and guidance	Reduces fear, low confidence and dropout risk	Support should match target groups, e.g. migrants, older workers, unemployed adults
Modular practical training	Fits SME time constraints and adult learner needs	Modules must be adapted to occupations and work tasks
Recognition of prior learning	Motivates experienced and low-skilled adults	Validation methods should fit national qualification systems
Multi-channel communication	Improves outreach and participation	Channels should include trusted local intermediaries

14. Conclusions

The four national reports confirm that the COOPSKILLS Reskilling Lab model offers a relevant and flexible response to local workforce transformation challenges. Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Cyprus differ in sectoral focus, target groups and institutional settings, but they share a common challenge: workers and SMEs need practical support to adapt to digitalisation, green transition, changing customer expectations, labour shortages and new forms of competitiveness.

The main conclusion is that the Reskilling Lab should be treated as a **coordinated local mechanism for skills transition**, not as a single training programme. Its function is to connect sector diagnosis, employer engagement, learner motivation, training provision and stakeholder cooperation. This integrated approach is particularly important in SME-dominated environments, where businesses often lack the time, resources and internal capacity to plan reskilling independently.

The second conclusion is that **sector selection must remain locally grounded**. The diversity of the four pilots is a strength of the project. It shows that the same methodology can support different transition pathways: from hospitality and agri-food modernisation in Spain, to SME digital transformation in Greece, food industry modernisation in Lithuania and rural-to-agrotourism transition in Cyprus.



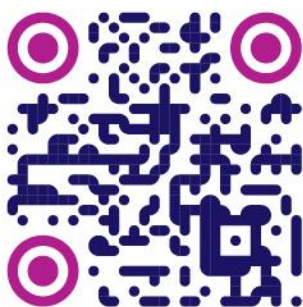
The third conclusion is that **digital skills are a cross-country priority, but not a uniform one**. Future COOPSKILLS activities should avoid generic digital training and instead develop applied digital modules linked to real work processes in each sector.

The fourth conclusion is that **motivation is as important as training content**. Adults and SMEs will participate when training is practical, trusted, flexible and visibly useful. Employer outreach, guidance, recognition, certification, funding information and confidence-building should therefore be embedded in the Lab model from the beginning.

Finally, the reports indicate that transferability depends on balancing standardisation and flexibility. COOPSKILLS can standardise the methodology, tools and implementation logic, but each Lab must adapt its sector focus, communication approach and training content to local needs. This balance between common structure and local adaptation is the central condition for the sustainability and wider replication of the Reskilling Lab model.

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PROJECT NUMBER: 101195968 / EDU-2024-POL-EXP-ADULT



**Co-funded by
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