



Guidebook for consultants

Best practices
in workforce planning

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Purpose of the Guidebook

This guidebook is intended for consultants certified by the Ministry of Labour who support companies in the implementation of the Skills-Plang programme.

Its purpose is to provide methodological guidance and practical recommendations for the design and implementation of forward-looking workforce planning and skills development measures, in line with the applicable legal framework. The guidebook presents best practices and implementation principles; it does not constitute a prescriptive template for workforce planning. Consultants are expected to adapt the approaches described herein to the specific context, size, and maturity of each company.

1. State of Mind

The Skills-Plang programme operates at the intersection of labour market policy, organisational strategy, and individual career development. It addresses sensitive topics such as employability, skills evolution, internal mobility, and professional identity. Consultants are therefore expected to adopt a professional mindset characterised by discretion, ethical conduct, and respect for both organisational and individual realities.

Workforce planning must be understood within its broader socio-economic context. Structural trends—technological, regulatory, environmental, and societal—continue to reshape employment and skills requirements across all sectors. Recent crises have further highlighted the importance of anticipatory workforce planning and the need to strengthen employability as a preventive response to labour market disruptions.

The Skills-Plang programme places employability preservation at its core. While employer needs and strategic priorities are an integral part of the analysis, sustainable outcomes require alignment between organisational objectives and individual career perspectives. In cases of uncertainty, decisions should favour long-term employability, in line with the programme's preventive logic.

Throughout the programme, consultants act as methodological experts, strategic facilitators, and trusted intermediaries. They support analysis, structuring, and documentation, while responsibility for decisions and implementation remains with the company.

2. Key Concepts

For the purposes of the Skills-Plang programme, the following concepts apply:

Impacted employee

An employee with at least 12 months' seniority whose position is affected, or likely to be affected, by structural trends in the economic environment and who requires at least 120 hours of training to secure and maintain employability within the company and on the external labour market.

Structural trends

Long-term technological, environmental, regulatory, or societal developments that significantly affect business activities, job profiles, and skills requirements.

Upskilling

The acquisition or enhancement of skills enabling an impacted employee to continue performing or expanding their role within the same occupation or field, while contributing to transferable employability.

Reskilling

A process of professional redeployment enabling an impacted employee to transition to a different role or occupation, within or outside the company, in response to structural labour market changes.

3. Skills-Plang Programme Phases and the Consultant's Role

3.1 Company Application to the Skills-Plang

Companies wishing to participate in the Skills-Plang programme must submit an application including a quotation issued by a certified consultant, in accordance with Article L.514-2 (3) of the Labour Code.

The consultant prepares a service proposal (devis) specifying:

- scope of services;
- estimated workload in person-days;
- daily rate;
- software tools and costs, where applicable;
- names and contact details of involved consultants.

At this stage, consultants must gain a general understanding of the company's activities, workforce structure, strategic challenges, and maturity in workforce planning. The consultant supports the company in ensuring that the application is coherent, justified, and aligned with programme objectives. The application is submitted by the company to ADEM for approval.

3.2 Company Assessment (Art. L.514-4, 1°)

This phase establishes a structured understanding of the company's current situation (as is) and its strategic outlook over a one- to five-year horizon. The consultant supports management in formalising strategic orientations and identifying structural trends affecting the organisation.

The assessment covers:

- strategic objectives and planned projects;
- organisational structure and key functions;
- workforce composition, age structure, and mobility indicators;
- job profiles and qualification levels;
- recruitment and turnover data;
- existing HR processes, systems, and training practices.

Active involvement of senior management is essential. Workforce planning is a strategic exercise and should not be treated as an exclusively HR-driven activity. Consultants should also advise on internal communication principles to ensure transparency and engagement.

3.3 Impact Assessment (Art. L.514-4, 2°)

Building on the company assessment, the impact assessment translates strategic and external drivers into concrete implications for departments, roles, and skills.

The assessment covers:

- strategic objectives and planned projects;
- organisational structure and key functions;
- workforce composition, age structure, and mobility indicators;
- job profiles and qualification levels;
- recruitment and turnover data;
- existing HR processes, systems, and training practices.

Active involvement of senior management is essential. Workforce planning is a strategic exercise and should not be treated as an exclusively HR-driven activity. Consultants should also advise on internal communication principles to ensure transparency and engagement.

The consultant supports the identification of:

- departments and functions likely to be affected;
- existing and emerging skills gaps;
- roles expected to grow, transform, or decline.

Structured discussions with heads of department are essential to assess:

- the nature and drivers of change;
- expected timelines;
- workforce implications.

The analysis should consider:

- job categories affected;
- number of employees concerned;
- short-, medium-, and long-term impacts.

This phase provides the analytical foundation for identifying impacted employees.

Methodological Approaches

Several complementary approaches may be used to identify and assess job impacts. A combination of methods is recommended in order to ensure robustness and relevance.

These may include, for example:

- Considering publicly available research:

➡ On jobs at risk of automation:

- WEF Future of jobs report: [Website](#)
- Routine task index of 427 different occupations (based on ISCO taxonomy): [Website](#)
- Automation probabilities of 702 occupations (SOC codes):
 1. [Website](#)
 2. [Website](#)
- Job futuromat: [Website](#)

➡ On jobs on the rise:

- WEF Future of jobs report: [Website](#)
- WEF Jobs of tomorrow report: [Website](#)
- Optionally, IT systems can be used to support such an assessment, such as:
 1. [Website](#)

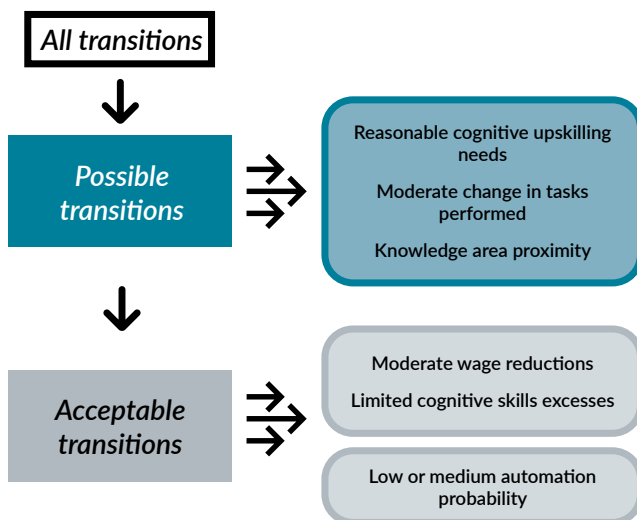
The examples and tools referenced in this context are indicative only and are intended to serve as inspiration rather than as mandatory instruments.

3.4 Mobility and Skills Plans (Art. L.514-4, 3° & 4°)

The mobility and skills planning phase translates impact assessment results to the individual employee level. Employees requiring reskilling due to job displacement risks, or upskilling due to job transformation, are identified.

Mobility trajectories should:

- align with company strategy (top-down);
- reflect employee preferences (bottom-up);
- be feasible within reasonable timeframes;
- remain acceptable in terms of working conditions and employment quality.



For each impacted employee, skills gaps are identified in relation to current and future roles. The analysis must cover technical, digital, and transversal skills. Soft skills are explicitly prioritised due to their critical role in adaptability and lifelong learning.

Skills gaps are assessed through structured methods (job analysis, interviews, skills mapping). Individual skills plans must be validated with the employee during at least one one-to-one interview and formally signed.

A number of international studies, frameworks, and labour market analyses may support the identification of relevant mobility pathways. These references are indicative and may serve as inspiration; they do not replace company-specific analysis.

- > OECD Skills Outlook 2019: [Website](#)
- > NESTA approach: [Website](#)
- > NESTA trajectories based on Singapore skills framework: [Website](#)
- > Singapore sectoral skills frameworks and career pathways: [Website](#)
- > ROME “emplois proches” & “emplois envisageables”

3.5 Training Plan (Art. L.514-4, 5°)

The training plan consolidates all training measures required to implement individual skills plans. For each skills gap, it specifies:

- provisional training title;
- estimated duration;
- estimated cost.

The plan covers all impacted employees and forms the basis for budget validation by ADEM. Estimates must reflect realistic maximum costs.

Eligibility criteria (Art. L.514-6, 2°) include:

- approved training providers;
- contribution to employability;
- alignment with the validated report;
- documented attendance or achievement;
- invoicing and skills documentation.

Training approaches may include formal learning, on-the-job learning, coaching, or digital formats. Flexibility and alignment with adult learning principles are essential.

3.6 Optional Measures (Art. L.514-6)

Employee coaching (3°)

Individual support may be provided to facilitate transitions.

Support for training organisation (4°)

SMEs may request consultant assistance in training selection and scheduling during the 24-month implementation period.

3.7 Submission of the Final Report and Scope of the Programme

A final report must be submitted to ADEM, including:

1. Company assessment
2. Impact assessment
3. Identification of impacted employees
4. Signed individual skills plans
5. Consolidated training plan and budget

The training plan must be submitted to the employee delegation for consultation; their opinion must be attached.

The Skills-Plang programme exclusively covers workforce planning and training. Other consulting services may be offered separately but are not eligible for funding.

4. Financial Contribution from the Employment Fund

PHASE	BUSINESS CATEGORY		
	Micro and Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises	Large Enterprises
Forecast analysis and development of the training plan	Between 2 and 12 person-day	Between 9 and 20 person-day	Between 12 and 25 person-day
	Optional: plus 1 person-day per impacted employee		
Employee coaching fees	1 person-day per impacted employee		
Company support fees for training organisation	Maximum of 10 person-days	N/A	
Optional: Software	Maximum of 5.000€		

Consultant fees - Funding Caps:

- 60.000€ in total;
- 1.200€ per person-day.

Please note that the financial contribution from the Employment Fund to the company will vary depending on the phase and the business category. More details can be found in the table below:

PHASE	BUSINESS CATEGORY		
	Micro and Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises	Large Enterprises
Forecast analysis and development of the training plan	75%	50%	15%
Employee coaching fees	75%	50%	15%
Company support fees for training organisation	75%	50%	0%
Optional: Software	Real cost of the license fees but cap of 5.000€		

Micro and Small Enterprises: less than 50 employees **AND** with an annual turnover or total annual balance sheet not exceeding €10 million.

Medium Enterprises: less than 250 employees **AND** with an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million **OR** with a total annual balance sheet not exceeding €43 million.

Large Enterprises: over 250 employees **OR** with an annual turnover exceeding €50 million **OR** with a total annual balance sheet exceeding €43 million.

5. GDPR, Data Management and Confidentiality

Consultants must ensure full compliance with GDPR. Data must be processed lawfully, proportionately, and exclusively for programme purposes. Clear data structures, appropriate safeguards, and strict confidentiality are mandatory. Transparency regarding data use should be established at project outset.

6. Lessons Learned and Final Recommendations

Consultants should adapt their approach to organisational maturity, particularly in companies without HR departments. Communication timing is often defined by senior management and should be aligned early.

The workforce plan is developed with consultant support, but implementation remains the company's responsibility. Workforce plans and training plans must be clearly distinguished.

Shared documentation tools are recommended to support collaboration. Training scheduling during working hours is a critical success factor for employee engagement and programme effectiveness.