

### State of play of technology and digital skills gaps in WISEs

This article focuses on technology, digitisation and digital skills of WISEs in the 13 B-WISE participating countries. It summarizes the results of 403 face-to-face and 175 online surveys carried out between October and December 2021. For a more comprehensive report (English), please consult chapter 7 of the "[Report on trends and challenges for work integration social enterprises \(WISEs\) in Europe. Current situation of skills gaps, especially in the digital area.](#)"

Коментирал [LB1]: Doesn't need to be translated.

### Relevance of technology and digitisation for WISEs

Based on the surveys filled out by enablers (e.g., manager, area coordinators, and ICT specialists) we can state that:

- The digitisation of management processes (e.g. cloud computing services and e-invoicing) is the most significant domain in which WISEs apply technologies and digitisation processes.
- The second important domain is the digitisation of standardised production processes (e.g. ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software packages).
- In addition, the technological adaptation of individual workplaces is considered less relevant today and in the future.
- Artificial Intelligence (including big data and Internet of Things), rapid prototyping and assistive technologies are rarely used.
- Large WISEs reach in almost all cases a higher level of digitisation. As a consequence, scale will be an important factor for WISEs if they want to take further steps towards digitisation and towards the implementation of technologies.

### Enablers: relevance of digital skills, needs and gaps

In the face-to-face survey targeting enablers, the relevance and the level of endowment of digital skills of the enablers in their WISE (their own digital skills and those of colleagues with a similar role) were questioned. Five competence areas were investigated in this survey: (i) management of digital content and data literacy; (ii) communication and collaboration through digital technologies; (iii) creation and editing of digital content; (iv) addressing safety issues in digital environments; and (v) solving digital problems. The survey shows following results:

- No significant discrepancies between the relevance of digital skills for enablers (upper table) and the level of endowment (lower table).
- According to enablers, all competence areas are relevant for enablers.
- This goes together with the level of endowment.

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
Not relevant	2.2	2.2	5.6	7.9	9.0
Low	4.5	7.9	12.4	16.9	12.4
Medium	46.1	33.7	48.3	39.3	50.6
High	46.1	55.1	33.7	36.0	28.1
N.A.	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1: Relevance of digital skills of enablers in WISEs

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
None	0.0	0.0	3.4	5.6	3.4
Low	10.1	9.0	9.0	10.1	16.9
Basic	43.8	44.9	62.9	55.1	49.4
Above basic	42.7	40.4	20.2	21.3	22.5
Not applicable	2.2	4.5	3.4	6.7	6.7
N.A.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2: Level of endowment of digital skills of enablers in WISEs

#### Supporters: relevance of digital skills, needs and gaps

To get a clear impression of the digital skills of supporters (e.g. job coaches, trainers), the survey for enablers included a judgement on the relevance and the level of endowment of the digital skills of the supporters in their WISE. The survey shows following results:

- According to enablers, following competence areas are most relevant for supporters:
  - management of digital content and data literacy;
  - communication and collaboration through digital technologies.
- According to enablers, 9.7% of supporters have no digital skills, 24.7% have a low level, 30.4% a basic level and 22% an above basic level of digital skills.

- For the two competence areas considered as most relevant for supporters, over 60% of supporters have a level of endowment that is basic or above basic (no significant discrepancies between relevance and level of endowment).

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
Not relevant	11.2	9.0	15.7	24.7	22.5
Low	12.4	11.2	21.3	24.7	23.6
Medium	75.3	77.5	61.8	47.2	51.7
High	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.2	1.1
N.A.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3: Relevance of digital skills of supporters in WISEs

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
None	3.4	4.5	13.5	15.7	11.2
Low	23.6	20.2	21.3	25.8	32.6
Basic	39.3	36.0	36.0	23.6	16.9
Above basic	24.7	30.3	18.0	15.7	21.3
Not applicable	6.7	6.7	9.0	16.9	14.6
N.A.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4: Level of endowment of digital skills of supporters in WISEs

Moreover, the face-to-face survey addressed to supporters included a self-assessment, collecting information on the use of digital skills at work and at home. Supporters were asked if they performed a certain action (at work or at home) during the last three months. The self-assessment covered six categories: information skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills (A "Basic" and B "Advanced"), and software skills for content manipulation (A and B). Based on the survey results, we can state that:

- Supporters use and need digital skills both at work and at home.

- Although the use and importance of digital skills at work is high, supporters use more digital skills at home.
- Only basic and advanced software skills for content manipulation (e.g. word processing software, spreadsheet software or software to edit photos, videos or audio files) are more frequently applied at work.

#### Workers with support needs: relevance of digital skills, needs and gaps

To map the digital skills of workers with support needs, the survey addressed to supporters included a judgement on the relevance and the level of endowment of the digital skills of the supporters in their WISE. The survey shows following results:

- Overall, according to supporters, digital skills are not very relevant for workers with support needs at work.
- According to supporters, following competence areas are most relevant for workers with support needs:
  - management of digital content and data literacy;
  - communication and collaboration through digital technologies.
- According to supporters, 13.8% of workers with support needs have no digital skills, 28% a low level, 24.6% a basic level and 7.7% an above basic level of digital skills.
- According to supporters, there are no significant digital skills gaps among workers with support needs: relevance and level of endowment go hand in hand.

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
Not relevant	35.9	26.9	56.6	51.0	55.9
Low	26.2	22.8	20.7	25.5	22.8
Medium	24.1	31.7	15.9	13.8	11.0
High	13.8	18.6	6.2	9.0	10.3
N.A.	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5: Relevance of digital skills of workers with support needs in WISEs

Skill	Management of digital content & data literacy	Communication & collaboration through digital technologies	Creation & editing of digital content	Addressing safety issues in digital environments	Solving digital problems
None	8.3	4.1	15.9	18.6	22.1
Low	32.4	26.2	24.8	33.8	22.8
Basic	29.0	41.4	20.0	12.4	20.0

Above basic	10.3	11.0	6.9	5.5	4.8
Not applicable	19.3	16.6	31.7	29.0	29.7
N.A.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6: Level of endowment of digital skills of workers with support needs in WISEs

The face-to-face survey addressed to workers with support needs included the same self-assessment as the one inserted in the survey targeting supporters, covering the same six categories of digital skills. Workers with support needs were asked if they performed a certain action (at work or at home) during the last three months. Based on the survey results, we can state that, overall, workers with support needs use significantly fewer digital skills at work than at home.

#### Digital skills training

- Most WISEs interviewed do not provide training on digital skills themselves. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions: more than 50% of the WISEs interviewed in Austria, France, Spain and the Netherlands organise training on digital skills themselves.
- The larger the WISEs, the more likely they will provide training on digital skills.
- Among the three target groups, the main beneficiaries of training initiatives on digital skills are enablers, while the participation of workers with support needs in training activities aimed at improving their proficiency on digital skills is lower.
- The fact that the level of endowment of digital skills is high for enablers shows that the current training initiatives meet their needs.
- Overall, a limited share of the WISEs interviewed (16.9%) have established partnerships with other local/regional organizations to promote external training initiatives for WSNs.

Country	Yes	No	N.A.	Total
Austria	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Belgium	40.0	60.0	0.0	100.0
Bulgaria	20.0	60.0	20.0	100.0
Croatia	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
France	83.3	16.7	0.0	100.0
Greece	14.3	85.7	0.0	100.0
Italy	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Latvia	33.3	66.7	0.0	100.0
Netherlands	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Poland	33.3	66.7	0.0	100.0
Romania	16.7	83.3	0.0	100.0
Slovenia	11.1	88.9	0.0	100.0
Spain	66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7: Digital skills training provided by WISEs

#### **Relevance of digital skills, needs, gaps and training: conclusions**

- Considering digital skills, there are no significant discrepancies between the relevance of digital skills and the level of endowment for the three target groups.
- Enablers need most digital skills at work, consequently there are more training initiatives targeting enablers. These initiatives meet the needs of enablers, given that their level of endowment of digital skills matches the relevance of the skills.
- Supporters need digital skills to a certain level and their level of endowment is considered basic or above basic for the skills they need most.
- Finally, it can be noted that workers with support needs require little digital skills at work, this also matches with their level of endowment. Moreover, there are little training initiatives for workers with support needs. The workers do not need digital skills at work, but the self-assessment shows that they do use digital skills at home. This raises the questions if WISEs should pay more attention to the need for digital skills in other contexts, outside of the working environment.