

Unlocking regional resilience: HEROES Skills and Competences Need Map Report highlights the requirements for future skills

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The publication of the HEROES Skills and Competences Need Map marks the release of a foundational report exploring future skills requirements across nine diverse European regions. This comprehensive analysis serves as a compass for navigating the evolving landscapes of these regions, focusing intently on building smart regional resilience for people, businesses, and nature. Resilience is defined as the capacity of regions to adapt to and recover from economic, social, technological, and environmental disruptions through innovation, collaboration, and sustainable practices.



Image 1. HEROES partners.

The primary objective of the report is to provide a thorough assessment of both current and future skills demands within each region where HEROES institutions are located. This assessment is driven by the imperative to align upcoming joint educational offerings with the dynamic needs arising from three interconnected interdisciplinary focus areas: the resilience of people, businesses, and nature. Fundamentally, these needs are being reshaped by the powerful forces of digital transformation, the ongoing green transition, and the changing expectations of the workforce, often referred to as the workers' agenda.

Future skill demands

The HEROES Skills and Competences Need Map was developed using a thorough methodology that combined comprehensive desk research of EU and regional documents with advanced AI analysis tools. Additionally, expert interviews in each region helped validate and enhance the findings, and collaborative feedback among HEROES partners further refined the report.



Image 2. Digital competence and adaptability, among others, are important future skills.

The report paints a multifaceted picture of future skill demands, consistently highlighting that a skilled and adaptable workforce is paramount to managing profound changes. Across all nine regions, several overarching themes emerged as critical for strengthening resilience:

- **Digital Competence** is universally fundamental, ranging from basic digital literacy for individuals to advanced expertise in AI, data science, programming, and cybersecurity for businesses. The practical application and ethical understanding of AI are particularly emphasised.
- **Sustainability Expertise and Green Skills** are indispensable, encompassing knowledge of the circular economy, energy efficiency, sustainable materials, and climate adaptation. This extends to a ‘green mindset’ for individuals and strategic integration of sustainability for businesses.
- For individuals, **Adaptability and Lifelong Learning** are crucial for thriving amidst rapid technological advancements and labour market transformations. This includes critical thinking, problem-solving, and strong communication and collaboration skills.
- For businesses, **Innovation and Entrepreneurship** are vital for developing new products and services, leading green and digital transitions, and maintaining competitiveness. Strategic skills management and strong leadership are also essential for resilient ecosystems.
- **Enhancing Nature’s Resilience** demands expertise in environmental science, sustainable production, water management, climate adaptation, and innovation in green solutions.

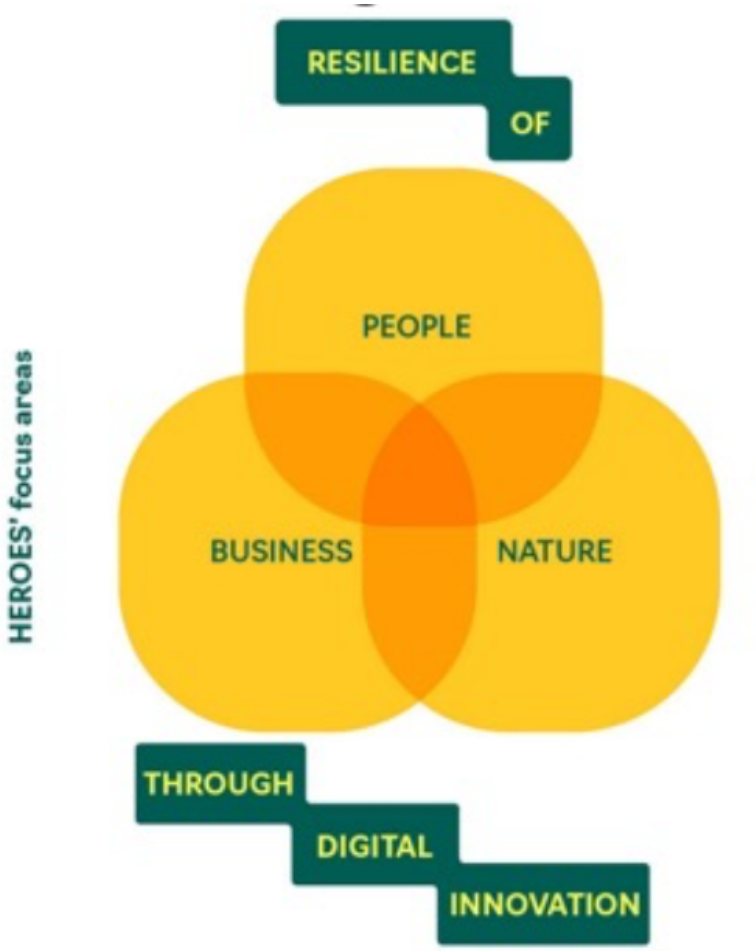


Image 3. HEROES' focus areas.

The report is expected to be of practical use and widely applied throughout the HEROES project, guiding collective efforts in education and regional development.

Adapting to new developments

It is important to recognize that the report, while extensive, does not claim to offer an exhaustive or completely comprehensive picture of all future skills and competences needs. It serves as a vital first step, a catalogue rather than a definitive account of every single need. The landscape of skills is continuously evolving, and our understanding must evolve with it. Therefore, this work is ongoing. Continued research is planned, and an updated version of the HEROES Skills and Competences Need Map will be developed and released later during the project period, building upon these initial findings and adapting to new developments.

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