

GreenLift Framework

for the Green Reskilling/Upskilling of
the TCLF Workforce

Short Edition

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HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS FRAMEWORK

Chapter 1: The GreenLift Framework: Scope and Usage	3
Scope of the GreenLift Framework	4
Target Groups	5
Structure of the Framework	6
How to Use the GreenLift Framework in Practice	7
Chapter 2: The GreenLift Pillars	8
Pillar I: A Holistic Support Model Guide	9
Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff	34
Chapter 3: Social Impact Assessment Toolkit	45
Purpose and Scope of the Toolkit	46
Social Impact Dimensions Addressed	47
How to Apply the Social Impact Assessment Toolkit	49
Ethical Considerations and Data Protection	50
Closing Note	51
The Partnership	52



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CHAPTER

01

The GreenLift Framework: Scope and Usage



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Scope of the GreenLift Framework

The GreenLift Framework is a practical reference tool designed to support organisations, especially SMEs, in managing workforce transition within the green transformation of the TCLF sector. It provides a structured model that organisations can use before, during and after reskilling and upskilling processes, helping them identify workforce needs, plan appropriate support measures, and accompany workers throughout their transition journey.

Rather than offering technical training content itself, the Framework focuses on the organisational, social and human-centred support mechanisms needed to make reskilling and upskilling processes more inclusive, effective and sustainable. It aims to help TCLF organisations manage green transition processes in a smooth and structured way, taking into account inclusion, worker well-being and the specific psychosocial needs identified through the GreenLift needs analysis.

The need for such a model became evident through the evidence collected during stakeholder engagement. Many SMEs highlighted that they lack the internal capacity, tools and structured methods needed to guide their workforce during periods of change, including the ongoing green transition of the sector.

In this context, the Framework targets HR managers, SME owners and other organisational decision-makers, equipping them with practical knowledge, tools and guidance to support workforce transition in a holistic and person-centred way. Ultimately, the GreenLift Framework seeks to ensure that no worker is left behind in the green transition of the sector. It places inclusion, well-being and person-centred reskilling and upskilling at the core of organisational transition planning.



Scope of the GreenLift Framework

Building on this approach, the GreenLift Framework should be understood as an **enabling framework** rather than a technical training resource. Its role is not to replace or supplement vocational, technical or sector-specific training, but to address the non-technical barriers that may prevent workers from accessing, engaging with and benefiting from reskilling and upskilling opportunities.

Within this scope, the Framework focuses on strengthening organisational capacity. It supports TCLF organisations in identifying skills and knowledge gaps within their workforce and in creating internal processes, support structures and learning environments that facilitate continuous learning and inclusive workforce transition

Target Groups

- 1 HR managers and SME owners in the TCLF sector
- 2 Support staff, mentors and counsellors
- 3 TCLF manufacturing companies and clusters
- 4 Stakeholders supporting adult workforce transition

Structure of the Framework

The structure of the Framework spins around two basic pillars, which are interlinked and complementary to each other:

Pillar I: Needs-based holistic support Framework

It primarily focuses on non-technical support mechanisms such as career guidance, mentoring/coaching and promotion of workers' well-being. The specific pillar is in direct relation to the evidence gathered during the needs assessment phase, which indicates that pure technical and green skills training without provision for inclusion, prevention and generally a more holistic approach is insufficient for a successful workforce transition.

Pillar II: Training programme for HR managers and support staff

Pillar II complements the Holistic Support Framework of the GreenLift project via a short, structured and practice-oriented approach of the necessary skills that HR managers and support staff need to strengthen the internal capacity building of SMEs.



It follows a train-the-trainer logic, to ensure that TCLF sector organisations design, implement and sustain socially responsive, viable and holistically supportive actions of labour transition.

In essence, Pillar I defines what type of support mechanisms are needed, while Pillar II is oriented towards how organisations of the sector can use these mechanisms effectively.

How to Use the GreenLift Framework in Practice

1

Workforce needs identification: Organisations use reflective practices and needs assessment to identify skills gaps and psychosocial challenges affecting their workforce, and specifically the most vulnerable groups.

2

Selection of appropriate support measures: After assessing needs, organisations use the findings to select targeted measures from the Holistic Support Framework, enabling tailored support rather than a general approach.

3

Implementing guidance, mentoring and well-being actions: With external stakeholders, organisations implement the selected support mechanisms, focusing on structured yet flexible processes aligned with daily practices.

4

Training HR and support staff: HR managers and support staff actively participate in implementation to build capacity and ensure consistent internal adoption of support mechanisms.

5

Linking support to upskilling pathways: Finally, support mechanisms are linked to existing upskilling/ reskilling pathways to ensure coherence and longevity of results.



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CHAPTER

02

The GreenLift Pillars



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Pillar I: A Holistic Support Model Guide

This Pillar provides **practical guidance and tools for HR managers, employers and support staff** on how to support workers throughout the green transition. Each of the sections below combines short explanatory content with concrete, ready-to-use support tools.

1. Career Guidance and Transition Pathways: How to support workers in planning their green transition



Career guidance is essential for supporting the TCLF workforce transition, helping workers understand how sustainability, circular economy and Industry 5.0 are reshaping their roles. This enables informed decisions on reskilling, upskilling or career transitions, while helping SMEs build workforce resilience, promote equal development opportunities and support a fair green transition. In this context, the **following challenges** reflect how systemic gaps are experienced at the individual level by workers navigating transition processes:

- **Uncertainty about the future:** Digitalisation, new technologies, and sustainability shifts create uncertainty, leaving workers unclear about the future relevance of their roles.
- **Fear of change/lack of confidence:** Low-skilled and older workers may feel anxious about new technologies, resist training, and underestimate their transferable skills.
- **Lack of clear career pathways:** New green roles are poorly communicated, limiting workers' understanding and ability to envision themselves in these positions.
- **Lack of proper career guidance:** Especially in SMEs, career guidance is often lacking, leaving workers to make reskilling or transition decisions with limited information.

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Phase 1. Identifying workers in need of career guidance

HR managers and support staff should proactively identify workers needing extra guidance, such as those affected by automation or sustainability changes, low-skilled workers with limited digital confidence, workers overwhelmed by the transition, and women or workers in transition with limited access to development opportunities.

Identification of all the above should be subject to observation, use of simple profiling tools

Tool 1: Simple worker profiling template

Field	Information to be completed
Worker's name	
Current role/ department	
Key tasks/ responsibilities	
Years of experience	
Self-perceived strengths	
Challenges faced	
Interest in learning	
Notes from HR/supervisor	

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Phase 2. Supporting reflection and skills awareness

Once the workers in need of support have been identified, they should reflect on their current responsibilities, existing skills, transferable competences, aspirations, motivations and possible barriers. This builds self-awareness and supports informed career decision-making.

To guide this reflection process and translate insights into actionable planning, the following tool supports the structuring of individual career development pathways:

Tool 2: Transition and career planning template

Field	Information to be completed
Worker's name	
Current role/ level of skills	
Roles of interest/ skills of interest	
Goals (6-12 months ahead)	
Goals (1-3 years ahead)	
Training/ support required to achieve goals	
Next steps	
Review date	

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Phase 3. Supporting informed career decision-making

To make informed decisions, workers need to understand how the green transition affects their roles. HR managers and employers can support them by explaining role changes, presenting reskilling/upskilling and mobility opportunities, linking goals to training pathways, and helping define realistic career steps.

To ensure that career guidance discussions are structured, consistent and outcome-oriented, a checklist can be used as a practical reference during the interaction between HR staff and workers.



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Tool 3: Checklist for HR managers to support career discussions

<u>Before the discussion</u>	
The worker is adequately informed about the nature of the discussion and why it is taking place.	Yes No
I am aware of the sectoral and organisational changes and therefore can support the worker effectively.	Yes No
<u>During the discussion</u>	
I am actively listening to the workers' concerns and aspirations.	Yes No
The worker's transferable skills have been identified and acknowledged.	Yes No
All possible career options, training opportunities and future expectations have been presented and shared thoroughly.	Yes No
<u>After the discussion</u>	
Next steps for the worker's development have been agreed on a mutual basis.	Yes No
The worker has established a connection to relevant training and support mechanisms.	Yes No
A follow-up discussion has been scheduled.	Yes No

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2. Mentoring and Coaching Support: How to organise and deliver mentoring in practice

Across Europe, industries are transforming due to digitalisation, technological innovation, sustainability demands and changing market conditions. In the TCLF sector, where many SMEs combine traditional craftsmanship with modern production practices, workers must continuously update their skills and adapt to new roles linked to automation, digital tools, new materials and greener processes.



While formal training remains essential, workers often need additional support to apply new knowledge in daily work. Mentoring and coaching can complement training by offering personalised guidance, reflection and knowledge exchange directly in the workplace.

For TCLF SMEs, these approaches are practical and cost-effective, as they use existing internal expertise, reduce time away from work and support learning in real production contexts.

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MENTORING

Mentoring is a developmental relationship in which an experienced professional guides a less experienced colleague by sharing knowledge, supporting skills development and building confidence. Unlike support focused on immediate operational problems, mentoring usually addresses longer-term professional growth.

Through regular interaction, mentors help mentees reflect on workplace experiences, understand organisational expectations and gradually expand their competencies. In the TCLF sector, mentoring is particularly useful for transferring practical and tacit knowledge developed through years of experience. However, it should be complemented with other learning methods to avoid overdependence on one mentor and support broader reskilling and upskilling.

COACHING

Coaching is a structured approach to professional development that focuses on achieving specific objectives. Unlike mentoring, which relies on sharing experience and supporting long-term growth, coaching helps individuals reflect on their situation, identify solutions and define strategies for improvement. Rather than giving direct advice, the coach supports individuals in developing their own problem-solving approaches through focused conversations.

Coaching is particularly useful for strengthening transversal skills such as leadership, communication, decision-making, time management and adaptation to change. Coaching relationships are usually shorter and more goal-oriented than mentoring, often addressing specific challenges or performance needs.



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INFORMAL SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

In many SMEs, especially in production environments, much learning happens informally during daily work. Employees often exchange knowledge while completing tasks, solving problems or supporting colleagues. This informal workplace learning is flexible, immediate and closely linked to real work situations.

Examples include asking colleagues for help, receiving spontaneous advice from supervisors, or sharing practical tips during daily routines. However, because it is unstructured, access to learning may not be equal for all employees.

For this reason, informal support is often complemented by structured mentoring, which provides clearer objectives, regular interaction and reflection, making knowledge transfer more systematic.

	Mentoring	Coaching	Informal Support
Focus	Professional development and knowledge transfer	Performance improvement and goal achievement	Immediate assistance and problem solving
Structure	Semi-structured relationship	Highly structured process	Unstructured
Duration	Medium to long term	Short to medium term	Occasional
Relationship	Experienced mentor supports mentee	Coach facilitates reflection	Peer interaction
Main objective	Career development and knowledge sharing	Achieving specific goals	Solving day-to-day issues

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SETTING UP A MENTORING/COACHING SCHEME IN SMES

For many SMEs, establishing a mentoring or coaching programme may initially seem complex. However, these schemes can often be implemented using simple structures that rely on the knowledge and experience already present within the organisation. Mentoring and coaching programmes are particularly valuable in sectors like TCLF because they encourage collaboration between employees, facilitate the transfer of practical expertise, and support both personal and professional development. By creating opportunities for experienced workers to support colleagues, organisations can strengthen internal learning processes and build a culture of knowledge sharing.

Setting up a mentoring or coaching scheme generally involves several key steps:

STEP 1

Defining the Objectives of the Programme: Before introducing a mentoring scheme, organisations should clearly define its purpose. Clear objectives ensure that mentoring activities align with organisational priorities, help participants understand the expected outcomes, and provide a basis for evaluating the programme's effectiveness. Mentoring objectives may vary depending on the organisation's needs.

STEP 2

Identifying Mentors and Mentees: Selecting suitable participants is essential for an effective mentoring programme. Both mentors and mentees should be motivated, committed and willing to invest time in the process. Mentors are usually experienced professionals who can share knowledge and support colleagues' development. Key qualities include professional expertise, communication skills, patience, empathy and willingness to help others grow. Mentees are employees who may benefit from guidance, such as new recruits, workers learning new techniques, employees moving into new roles or individuals preparing for career progression. Participation should ideally be voluntary to strengthen motivation and commitment.

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STEP 3

Preparing Mentors: Although experienced employees have valuable technical knowledge, effective mentoring also requires communication and interpersonal skills. Basic mentor preparation can improve the quality of mentoring interactions and help mentors feel more confident in their role. Preparation may cover active listening, effective communication, open-ended questions, constructive feedback and support in setting realistic development goals. Even brief orientation sessions or guidance materials can help ensure that mentoring relationships are constructive and supportive.

STEP 4

Establishing a Programme Structure: Mentoring relationships should remain flexible, but a basic structure helps participants stay organised and maintain continuity. This may include defining the programme duration, setting meeting frequency, using simple progress-tracking tools and planning a final feedback session. Regular meetings help mentors and mentees reflect on progress, address challenges and maintain momentum. At the end of the cycle, participant feedback can be collected to evaluate the programme and improve future mentoring activities.

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Clear mentor and mentee roles help create productive mentoring relationships based on mutual respect, open communication and shared commitment to learning.

MENTOR ROLE

Mentors act as **guides and facilitators** rather than supervisors. They support skills development, encourage reflection and create a safe environment where mentees can discuss challenges. They should maintain confidentiality, respect mentee autonomy and promote independent problem-solving.

MENTEE ROLE

Mentees also play an active role by taking responsibility for their development. They should identify learning goals, prepare questions, share workplace experiences, reflect on feedback and apply new insights in their daily work.

INDICATIVE PRACTICAL SUPPORT TOOLS

An effective mentoring programme requires practical tools to structure interactions, track progress and clarify responsibilities.

These tools should be simple, adaptable and suitable for SMEs in the TCLF sector, where resources may be limited but practical guidance is essential. A key tool is the **mentor-mentee matching template**, which supports a thoughtful and transparent matching process. Matching should consider not only technical expertise, but also learning styles, career interests, availability and personal compatibility.



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Example elements of a matching template:

Category	Mentor	Mentee	Notes / Considerations
Name	John Smith	Jane Doe	Mentor has experience in leather craftsmanship; mentee is transitioning to production role
Department / Role	Footwear Production	Junior Production Operator	Matching within production team for technical relevance
Skills / Expertise	Leather cutting, quality control	New production techniques, digital patterning	Identify overlap for mentoring focus
Learning Goals	–	Improve production efficiency, learn new tools	Goals to inform mentoring sessions
Availability	Weekly 1-hour sessions	Weekly 1-hour sessions	Schedule alignment
Additional Notes	Mentor has strong mentoring experience	Mentee prefers hands-on learning	Personality and learning style considerations

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MENTORING SESSION GUIDE

Structured mentoring sessions are more productive when both parties understand the purpose and flow of the meeting. The mentoring session guide is a document that outlines a framework for discussion while allowing flexibility depending on the mentee's needs.

Example structure of a mentoring session guide:

<i>Step</i>	<i>Session Phase</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Key Activities</i>
1	Welcome and Check-in	5'–10'	• Mentor and mentee briefly discuss current challenges and achievements • Establish a comfortable environment for open discussion
2	Review of Previous Session / Actions	5'–10'	• Discuss progress on tasks, goals or skills identified in previous meetings • Reflect on successes and areas for improvement
3	Focus Topic for the Session	20'–30'	• Discuss specific skills, projects or challenges • Mentor provides guidance, demonstrates techniques or asks reflective questions
4	Action Planning and Goal Setting	10'–15'	• Agree on practical actions to complete before the next session • Define measurable objectives and timelines
5	Feedback and Reflection	5'–10'	• Mentee reflects on what they have learned • Mentor provides constructive feedback and encouragement

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MENTOR ROLE DESCRIPTION AND CHECKLIST

Providing mentors with a clear role description and checklist helps set expectations and supports consistency across the programme. This ensures mentors understand their responsibilities and feel confident in guiding mentees.

Example structure of a mentoring session guide:

Category	Description
Key Responsibilities	• Provide guidance and share expertise with the mentee • Support mentee development in technical and professional skills • Encourage reflection, critical thinking and problem-solving • Maintain confidentiality and trust within the mentoring relationship • Monitor mentee progress and provide constructive feedback
Mentor Checklist (Before, During and After Sessions)	• Prepared for each session with topics or questions • Actively listens and responds to the mentee's needs • Encourages the mentee to set realistic goals • Provides examples from own experience without taking over • Maintains a safe and supportive environment • Records key discussion points and agreed actions • Reflects on own mentoring practice for continuous improvement

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SIMPLE MONITORING FORM TO TRACK MENTORING PROGRESS

Tracking the progress of mentoring relationships is essential for programme evaluation and continuous improvement. A simple monitoring form allows both mentors and programme coordinators to record activities, goals, achievements and challenges.

Example content for a monitoring form:

Session Date	Topics Discussed	Actions Agreed	Progress / Outcomes	Next Steps / Notes
1/3/2026	Leather patterning techniques	Practice new cutting method	Mentee completed first trial under supervision	Schedule review session
15/03/2026	Use of digital production tools	Apply digital layout to sample	Mentee confident in tool usage	Introduce efficiency metrics next session
1/4/2026	Team collaboration	Shadow senior operator	Observed best practices in workflow	Mentee to lead small team task next week

A structured monitoring form provides transparency and accountability while supporting programme evaluation and reporting.

Pillar I: A Holistic Support Model Guide

3. Well-being and Psychosocial Support: How to recognise and address psychosocial needs at work

The role of psychosocial well-being in workforce transition

Psychosocial well-being refers to how the organization, management, and experience of work affects workers' mental health, motivation, and engagement (EU-OSHA, 2014). Periods of organisational change are particularly high-risk moments for work-related stress (EU-OSHA, 2022a). Psychosocial well-being is therefore not only a health issue but a transition issue. Workers experiencing long-term stress are less likely to engage in upskilling, adopt new technologies, or participate actively in organisational change (APO, 2014). Chronic unmanaged stress can reduce confidence, increase capacity to learn, and affect long-term employability.

Well-being as a success factor for reskilling and upskilling

Continuous reskilling and lifelong learning are essential for adapting to circular economic principles, eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and digital tools. However, workers who fear job loss, feel overwhelmed or lack confidence may disengage from training opportunities. Organisational measures such as clear communication, participatory change processes, and reasonable workload expectations can strengthen engagement and support effective learning (APO, 2014; Pijpker et al., 2019). Therefore, psychosocial well-being enables innovation, employability, and sustainable transformation.

Well-being, employability and organisational resilience

Psychosocial well-being is closely linked to employability and organisational resilience. Workers who feel supported and informed are more likely to engage in learning and remain committed during transition processes (APO, 2014). Within the GreenLift framework, psychosocial well-being is understood as a foundational component of a fair and inclusive green transition.

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PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS IN TCLF WORKPLACES DURING TRANSITION

Definition of psychosocial risks at work

Psychosocial risks arise from how work is designed, organised and managed, as well as from the wider social and organisational context (EU-OSHA, 2014). They are linked to work organisation, the work environment and workplace culture.

If not properly managed, they can lead to stress, reduced engagement and burnout (EU-OSHA, 2022a). Since these risks affect individuals, teams and organisations, prevention requires integrated multi-level responses rather than isolated measures (APO, 2014).

Transition-related psychosocial challenges

Organisational transitions, such as digitalisation, automation and the shift to sustainable production, can increase psychosocial strain (EU-OSHA, 2016). In the **TCLF sector**, key risks include job insecurity, fear of skills obsolescence, higher workload and cognitive demands, resistance to change, and concerns about professional identity.



TCLF-specific risk factors

While psychosocial risks occur across sectors, certain structural characteristics of TCLF workplaces can amplify them:

- Production pressure and tight deadlines
- Physically demanding and repetitive tasks
- Informal organisational structures in SMEs
- Precarious and segmented employment patterns

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GENDER-SENSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE WELL-BEING NEEDS

Gendered dimensions of psychosocial stress

Gender inequalities remain visible in employment patterns, working conditions and access to career progression across the European labour market (EIGE, 2025). **Women** are more often concentrated in **part-time, lower-paid and precarious roles**, frequently linked to caregiving responsibilities. In the TCLF sector, this is reflected in workforce segmentation, with women often found in lower-skilled production roles and men more likely to occupy technical or supervisory positions (ILO, 2025). If access to digital and higher-skilled roles remains uneven, technological upgrading may reinforce these inequalities.

These structural patterns also create **psychosocial risks** for women, including increased work-life conflict, reduced access to flexible training opportunities, greater exposure to job insecurity and under-recognised emotional labour in team coordination roles.

Other vulnerable workforce profiles

Beyond gender-related patterns, other groups may face increased psychosocial strain during transition processes due to accumulated structural disadvantages rather than individual weakness (Kersten et al., 2022). In the TCLF sector, this may include **low-skilled workers, older workers, migrant workers and those in precarious or non-standard employment** (ILO, 2025).

These groups may experience stronger fears of dismissal, reduced participation in training due to limited digital literacy or reluctance to disclose stress because of stigma. Without targeted support, transition processes may reinforce existing inequalities.



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Principles for inclusive well-being support

Inclusive psychosocial risk management does not require separate systems but an equity-based approach embedded within existing organisational practices.

- Equity rather than uniformity
- Psychological safety and dignity at work
- Cultural sensitivity and non-stigmatising approaches

RECOGNISING EARLY SIGNS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS

Individual-level indicators

Indicator	Signs
Behavioural changes	□ Withdrawal from colleagues or meetings □ Irritability or heightened emotional reactions □ Avoidance of new tasks or training
Reduced concentration and motivation	□ Decline in work quality □ Reduced initiative □ Slower decision-making
Absenteeism and presenteeism	□ Increased short-term absence □ Frequent lateness □ Being physically present but disengaged
Physical symptoms	□ Persistent fatigue or sleep disturbances □ Stress-related headaches or discomfort
Physical and psychosomatic symptoms	□ Headaches, fatigue or sleep disturbances □ Gastrointestinal issues □ Increased musculoskeletal discomfort

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Team-level indicators

Psychosocial strain often affects team dynamics.

WARNING SIGNS

- Increased interpersonal conflict
- Reduced collaboration or knowledge sharing
- Resistance to training or innovation
- Withdrawal from meetings or discussions

Organisational-level warning signs

Organisations should also monitor broader trends:

- Dropout from upskilling programmes
- Rising turnover intentions
- Uneven participation in reskilling across workforce groups
- Persistent workload imbalance during transition



When signals recur across levels, organisational factors should be reviewed before problems escalate.

Tool – Early Warning Signs Checklist

The checklist aims to support managers and HR staff in identifying early signs of psychosocial strain across different levels of the organisation.

Individual Level Signals	
Noticeable behavioural changes	Yes No
Decline in concentration or motivation	Yes No
Increased absenteeism or presenteeism	Yes No

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Team Level Signals	
Increased interpersonal conflict	Yes No
Reduced collaboration or communication	Yes No
Resistance to training or innovation	Yes No
Withdrawal from meetings or discussions	Yes No
Organizational Level Signals	
Dropout from training or upskilling	Yes No
Rising turnover or intention to leave	Yes No
Reduced participation in change initiatives	Yes No
Patterns of silence or disengagement	Yes No

Tip for SMEs

Focus on patterns, not isolated events, one difficult week is normal. Persistent or repeated signals across levels require attention

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CREATING A SUPPORTIVE AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Preventive well-being approaches in SMEs

SMEs form a significant part of the TCLF sector. While SMEs may have limited HR capacity, they often benefit from closer relationships between managers and workers. Preventive well-being approaches can be both practical and proportionate.

Clear communication during periods of change

Poorly managed change increases psychosocial strain (EU-OSHA, 2016). Workers should understand why change is occurring, how it affects their roles, and what support is available.

Participation and reasonable workload expectations

During digital or sustainability shifts, workers are often required to learn while maintaining production targets. Adjusting expectations during reskilling phases and inviting employee feedback reduces overload and strengthens engagement (APO, 2014).

Recognition of effort and fairness

Temporary performance fluctuations are common during learning periods. Recognising effort, adaptability and skill development reduces stress and supports long-term adaptation.

Psychological safety in practice

Psychological safety means that employees can raise concerns, ask questions and admit difficulties without fear of negative consequences (APO, 2014). During transition periods, it helps prevent disengagement and withdrawal. Supervisors can strengthen psychological safety by inviting feedback, responding constructively to concerns, acknowledging uncertainty, avoiding blame-oriented language and presenting stress as a normal response to change. Supportive leadership does not require clinical expertise. It depends on respectful communication, fair treatment, workload awareness and clear escalation pathways. By recognising early warning signs, adjusting expectations and maintaining open dialogue, supervisors can reduce psychosocial strain before it escalates.

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Integrating well-being into daily work practices

Preventive well-being does not require separate programmes. It can be embedded into routine management practices, particularly during reskilling and organisational change.

Structured check-ins during transition phases

Regular check-ins help supervisors identify overload early through simple questions about **workload**, **confidence** and **support needs**.

Adjusting expectations during reskilling

Expecting full productivity while workers acquire new skills can unnecessarily increase stress. Temporary flexibility in targets, task distribution or timelines can support both well-being and long-term performance (APO, 2014).

In physically demanding TCLF roles, supportive and psychologically safe working conditions strengthen **adaptability**, **participation** and **organisational resilience** during the green and digital transition (ILO, 2025).

PEER SUPPORT AND INTERNAL WELL-BEING ACTIONS

The role of peer support in TCLF workplaces

Peer support can:

- Reduce fear of skills obsolescence
- Encourage knowledge exchange on new tools
- Strengthen solidarity during uncertainty
- Prevent isolation among vulnerable workers

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Peer support formats

Peer support does not require complex programmes. Resource-light approaches are often sufficient.

1

Buddy systems during reskilling: Workers are paired to provide mutual support during training or technological adaptation. Pairings may combine complementary strengths to encourage reciprocal learning.

2

Group reflection moments: Short (20–30 minute) structured discussions allow teams to share challenges, identify practical solutions and provide feedback to management. These sessions should focus on work processes rather than personal counselling.

3

Informal safe dialogue spaces: Time-limited sessions dedicated to discussing transition-related concerns. Clear purpose and agreed ground rules are essential.

REFERRAL PATHWAYS AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Preventive measures and peer support mechanisms strengthen organisational resilience. However, some situations require professional intervention beyond the scope of workplace action. Clear referral pathways protect both workers and organisations by ensuring timely access to qualified support while maintaining ethical and legal boundaries.

Understanding organisational limits

Organisations are responsible for preventing psychosocial risks and facilitating early help-seeking. They are not healthcare providers.

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Tool: Referral Red-Flag Checklist

Consider referral if you observe:	
Persistent emotional distress over several weeks	Yes No
Severe withdrawal or inability to perform basic tasks	Yes No
Repeated or long-term absence linked to stress	Yes No
Expressions of hopelessness or crisis	Yes No
Escalating conflict or breakdown in functioning	Yes No

Identifying and mapping external support services

Organisations should identify relevant external support options, which may include:

Occupational health or EAP services	• Occupational physicians • Workplace counselling • Employee Assistance Programmes
Public healthcare services	• Primary healthcare providers • Public mental health services
Community and specialised organisations	• Migrant support organisations • Gender equality or anti-discrimination bodies • Disability support associations

Ethical considerations

Referral procedures must be grounded in **data protection, confidentiality, and consent**.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 1 – Understanding the Green Transition and Workforce Needs

The green transition creates opportunities for competitiveness and innovation, but it also brings significant challenges for the workforce, especially in SMEs with limited financial and human resources. Workers are increasingly expected to develop green, digital and transversal skills, such as sustainable material use, waste reduction, digital traceability, data monitoring, problem-solving and communication. However, not all workers have equal access to learning opportunities. Low-skilled, older, in-transition workers and women may face greater difficulties in adapting, which can increase skills gaps, uncertainty and disengagement.

Beyond technical skills, the transition also affects workers' career confidence and psychosocial well-being. Many employees are unsure how their roles will evolve or what career pathways are available to them. This lack of clarity can reduce motivation, create resistance to change and discourage participation in training.

For HR managers and employers, the green transition is not only a regulatory or technical process; it is a people-centred transformation. Their role is to anticipate future skills needs, support fair access to training, communicate organisational changes clearly and provide career guidance. In SMEs, where formal HR structures may be limited, practical tools, cooperation with VET providers and gradual support mechanisms can help ensure that the transition is inclusive, realistic and sustainable.



Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 2 – Career Guidance and Transition Planning in Practice

Effective career guidance begins with **profiling and needs assessment**. In a sector marked by diverse skills levels, workforce backgrounds and vulnerable groups, HR managers should use simple and structured methods such as one-to-one discussions, short surveys and workplace observation. The aim is not formal evaluation, but a better understanding of workers' concerns, skills, motivation and support needs. Particular attention should be given to women, low-skilled workers, older employees and workers in transition, who may need additional guidance.

The next step is **skills mapping**, which helps workers understand how their current competences relate to evolving roles and future opportunities. This includes identifying transversal skills such as communication, coordination and problem-solving, as well as gaps in green and digital skills. Career orientation then supports workers in exploring how their current role may change, what alternative pathways may exist, and which upskilling or reskilling opportunities are realistic for them.

Individual Transition and Career Action Plans turn these discussions into clear and achievable steps. They help workers understand their future within the sector while enabling employers to align workforce development with sustainability objectives. Such plans should include short- and medium-term career goals, skills to be developed, training activities, internal support such as mentoring or job shadowing, indicative timelines and regular follow-up. When used effectively, these plans promote continuous learning, reduce resistance to change, support internal mobility and strengthen organisational resilience during the green transition.

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Module 3 – Mentoring and Coaching for Workforce Transition

Mentoring and coaching help bridge skills gaps, promote knowledge transfer and strengthen continuous learning. Mentoring connects experienced employees with workers who need guidance, while coaching supports reflection, goal setting and personal development. Both approaches can increase confidence, adaptability and professional growth. Below is provided guidance for designing and implementing mentoring programmes.

MENTORING SCHEMES

Mentoring schemes can take different forms depending on the organisation's objectives, target groups, resources and context. Selecting the most suitable model is important, as it influences participant engagement, learning outcomes and programme effectiveness.

One-to-one mentoring is the most traditional model. It is based on a structured relationship between one mentor and one mentee over a defined period. This approach is useful when workers need personalised guidance, confidential support or targeted competence development.

Group mentoring involves one mentor supporting several mentees. It is useful when organisations aim to develop common competences, such as sustainability awareness, digital skills or transversal skills. It encourages peer discussion, shared reflection and collaborative problem-solving.

Peer mentoring is based on mutual support between individuals with similar levels of experience. It is particularly valuable when workers face similar challenges, such as adapting to new technologies, entering a new sector or developing new competences. Peer mentoring reduces hierarchy, promotes inclusive learning and strengthens communication, but it still requires clear objectives and structure.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 3 – Mentoring and Coaching for Workforce Transition

Reverse mentoring allows less experienced or younger employees to mentor senior staff, especially in areas such as digital tools, sustainability practices or emerging technologies. This model recognises that expertise is not always linked to seniority. It promotes intergenerational learning, innovation and openness to change.

Career mentoring focuses on long-term professional development and career planning. It helps workers identify transferable skills, explore alternative career pathways and prepare for evolving labour market needs. This model is especially relevant during green and digital transitions, where employees may need to redefine their roles and develop new competences.

E-mentoring, or digital mentoring, takes place partly or fully through online platforms, video calls, messaging tools or learning management systems. It increases accessibility and flexibility, especially in remote, international or large-scale programmes. Effective e-mentoring requires clear communication rules, digital literacy, reliable platforms and attention to data protection.

Situational mentoring is a short-term and flexible approach used when a worker needs guidance for a specific challenge, task or decision. It is useful during role changes, technology implementation, restructuring or project-based work. It provides timely support without requiring a long-term mentoring relationship.

MENTOR-MENTEE MATCHING

Effective mentoring depends on **careful matching** between mentors and mentees. Matching should be based on the mentee's development needs, the mentor's expertise, learning goals, experience levels and communication preferences. The process should also consider availability, preferred interaction methods and the type of support required. Once the match is completed, **roles and responsibilities** must be clearly defined.

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Module 4 – Well-being and Psychosocial Support in TCLF Workplaces

Organisational transitions can create several **psychosocial risk factors**. In TCLF workplaces, these may include restructuring, new digital tools, sustainability compliance requirements, increased production targets and changes in roles or responsibilities. **Automation** and restructuring can create fear of redundancy, uncertainty about future job roles and concern about access to new skills pathways. **Technological change** can also increase anxiety about skills obsolescence, especially among older or low-skilled workers who may lack confidence in digital learning environments.

Because workers may hesitate to express these concerns directly, supervisors should observe early warning signs such as withdrawal, reduced motivation, increased mistakes, emotional exhaustion or reluctance to participate in training. Workload can also increase during transition periods, particularly when workers are expected to maintain production targets while learning new systems. These pressures become stronger when job control is low, communication is unclear or workers are not involved in planning processes. Resistance to change should therefore not automatically be interpreted as unwillingness to adapt; it may reflect uncertainty, fear or concerns about professional identity.

Certain characteristics of the TCLF sector can intensify psychosocial risks. **Production pressure, tight deadlines, seasonal peaks, fast fashion cycles and global supply chain dependencies can increase stress.**

Work is often physically demanding and repetitive, while new technologies may add cognitive pressure. In many owner-managed SMEs, informal structures and close supervisor-worker relationships can support trust, but the absence of formal HR systems may mean that psychosocial risks are addressed only when problems become visible.

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Module 4 – Well-being and Psychosocial Support in TCLF Workplaces

Inclusive and gender-sensitive well-being practices are essential because psychosocial risks do not affect all workers equally. Exposure can vary according to gender, age, employment status, migration background, role and skills level. Women, who are often concentrated in lower-paid production roles, may face additional barriers linked to work-life balance, care responsibilities, limited access to training or informal emotional labour within teams. Migrant workers, older workers, low-skilled employees and part-time workers may also face increased stress if training formats, communication methods or expectations do not reflect their needs.

Psychological safety is central to effective support. Workers should feel able to ask questions, raise concerns and admit difficulties without fear of negative consequences. Supervisors can strengthen psychological safety by using clear and respectful language, inviting feedback, allowing time for questions, avoiding blame and adapting communication to different educational or cultural backgrounds. Inclusive support should be based on equity rather than identical treatment. For example, workers with care responsibilities may need flexible training schedules, migrant workers may benefit from translated or simplified materials, and workers with lower confidence may need additional mentoring or coaching.

Practical psychosocial risk management can begin with simple workplace tools. A **psychosocial risk mapping exercise** can help organisations identify risks before, during and after upskilling, determine who is most affected and prioritise risks that are structural, repeated or linked to vulnerable groups. A worker well-being self-check questionnaire can also help employees reflect on energy, motivation, workload, concentration, physical and emotional signs, and the quality of support and communication. Such tools are not diagnostic instruments; they are designed to encourage early awareness, constructive conversation and timely support.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 4 – Well-being and Psychosocial Support in TCLF Workplaces

Peer support can be especially useful in TCLF workplaces, where informal collaboration and craft-based learning are already common. Structured peer support can reduce isolation, normalise learning challenges and encourage shared problem-solving during reskilling and organisational change. Practical formats may include buddy systems, small group reflection sessions or informal dialogue meetings. To be effective, peer support should be voluntary, confidential, respectful and clearly separated from counselling. It should complement organisational responsibility rather than replace managerial action or professional support.

However, not all psychosocial strain can be managed internally. Managers, supervisors and trainers are not therapists. Their role is to provide organisational support, such as workload adjustments, flexible scheduling, supervisor check-ins, peer support and clarification of expectations. **Professional support may be needed when distress persists despite workplace adjustments**, when there is severe emotional distress, repeated absence linked to psychological strain, significant withdrawal, expressions of hopelessness or inability to perform essential tasks.



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Module 5 – Inclusion and Support for Vulnerable Groups

During transition processes, **vulnerable groups** may be more likely to **withdraw from training** or **avoid digital learning** opportunities. This can create a cycle of cumulative disadvantage: existing barriers increase stress, stress reduces participation, limited participation restricts progression, and reduced progression reinforces insecurity. For this reason, organisations should monitor participation patterns and identify whether certain groups are less represented in training or internal mobility opportunities.

Inclusive guidance is essential to prevent exclusion. Rather than applying the same measures to all workers, organisations should adopt an **equity-based approach** that responds to different needs and starting points. For example, workers with care responsibilities may need flexible training schedules, migrant workers may need simplified or translated materials, and low-confidence workers may benefit from mentoring, coaching or gradual exposure to new tasks.

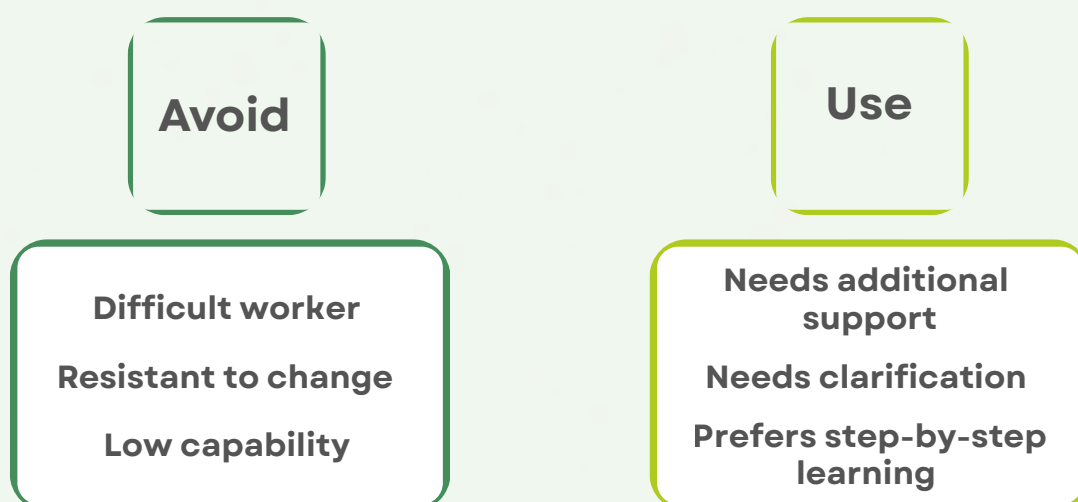
Equal treatment does not always create equal outcomes when workers face different barriers.

Four principles should guide inclusive support. First, guidance should be **individualised and respectful**, based on dialogue rather than assumptions about motivation or ability. Second, it should use a **strength-based approach** that recognises existing experience, practical knowledge and transferable skills instead of focusing only on gaps. Third, it should be **culturally and gender sensitive**, avoiding stereotypes and ensuring that underrepresented voices are encouraged to participate. Fourth, **communication** should be **clear and accessible**, using simple language, practical examples and opportunities for clarification.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 5 – Inclusion and Support for Vulnerable Groups

HR managers, trainers and supervisors play a key role in making transition processes inclusive. Their responsibility is to facilitate participation, ensure transparent selection criteria for training, identify possible exclusion patterns and build trust with workers. They should avoid deficit-based labels such as “resistant” or “low capability” and instead frame adaptation as part of professional development.



Support measures should also be adapted to individual needs. Peer support, mentoring and career guidance can be adjusted through smaller groups, buddy systems, language-matched support, gender-sensitive mentoring or simplified career planning. During reskilling, organisations should allow gradual exposure to digital tools, extend learning timelines where possible and separate learning from performance evaluation. If productivity expectations remain unchanged during training, stress may increase, especially for workers already facing structural disadvantages.

At the same time, adaptations must avoid stigmatisation. Support should be voluntary, confidential and framed as good practice for all workers rather than as a special arrangement for specific individuals. Personal information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis and handled according to data protection rules. Offering flexible learning options to all staff can normalise adaptation and reduce stigma.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 6 – Linking Support Mechanisms to Upskilling and Training Pathways

FROM SUPPORT TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development during the green transition requires an integrated approach that connects support, training and skills acquisition. As the TCLF sector adapts to sustainability requirements, technological change and new labour market demands, workers need both technical skills and transversal competences such as adaptability, problem-solving and continuous learning.

The development pathway can be organised around four main stages:

- needs identification
- activation and engagement
- skills development
- application and consolidation.

These stages are not strictly linear, as workers may move back and forth depending on their progress, challenges and emerging learning needs. Support mechanisms should therefore be available throughout the entire process.

Career guidance helps workers identify their skills, interests and possible career pathways. **Mentoring and coaching** strengthen motivation, confidence and knowledge transfer, while psychosocial support helps reduce stress, fear of change and risk of dropout. Together, these mechanisms improve access to learning and support the successful completion of training.

In the context of the green transition, the TCLF sector requires new skills in three main areas. **Technical skills** include eco-design, sustainable product development, circular production methods, sustainable material management and the use of digital production tools. **Transversal skills** include adaptability, critical thinking, collaboration and communication. Green competences include the ability to apply sustainability principles in daily work and contribute to environmental objectives.

Pillar II: Short Training Programme for HR Managers and Support Staff

Module 6 – Linking Support Mechanisms to Upskilling and Training Pathways

However, skills development may be limited by **several barriers**. At individual level, workers may face low confidence, limited digital literacy, lack of motivation or fear of change. At organisational level, SMEs may lack HR capacity, structured training strategies, flexible schedules or management support. At systemic level, training provision may be fragmented, poorly aligned with labour market needs or difficult to access for some groups.

To overcome these barriers, **upskilling** should be organised through integrated pathways that connect assessment, support, training and validation. Assessment identifies skills gaps and future needs. Support provides guidance, mentoring and encouragement. Training combines formal courses, workshops, on-the-job learning and peer learning. Validation recognises acquired skills through certificates, qualifications, badges or employer acknowledgement.

Referral to appropriate training opportunities is also essential. Structured referral systems help workers choose training that matches their needs, skill level and career goals. Effective referral requires mapping available training options, using tools such as ESCO to align skills with occupations, and ensuring cooperation between employers, training providers, public employment services and local authorities.

Continuity between support and upskilling is a key success factor. **Workers should receive support before, during and after training.** Before training, they need guidance, motivation and preparation. During training, they need follow-up, feedback and practical support. After training, they need opportunities to apply new skills, receive recognition and explore career progression.



GreenLift
Green Transition of the TCFL Industry

CHAPTER

03

Social Impact Assessment Toolkit



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Purpose and Scope of the Toolkit

Introduction

The TCLF sector is an important part of the European economy, combining craft heritage, regional identity and employment, but it also faces significant social challenges during the green transition. Across GreenLift partner countries, the sector is largely made up of SMEs, family businesses and artisan enterprises that must respond to new sustainability requirements despite limited financial, institutional and HR capacity. This creates pressure on smaller subcontractors, while workers such as women, older employees, migrants and those in precarious roles may face greater barriers to training and career progression. The **GreenLift Needs Assessment** showed that **60%** of surveyed **workers had not attended sustainability-related training**, while employers rated sustainability as highly important for future competitiveness, highlighting a clear gap between business needs and worker support.

Scope of the Toolkit

The Toolkit assesses social impact across four dimensions: Job Quality, Worker Well-being, Inclusion and Equality, and Community and Stakeholder Engagement. These dimensions are based on the Grant Agreement, the GreenLift Needs Assessment and the Eurofound Job Quality Framework. The Toolkit includes data collection instruments, a scoring and interpretation framework, and GDPR-compliant ethical guidelines.

What This Toolkit Is

This Toolkit is a **practical measurement instrument** for assessing the social outcomes of green reskilling. It is grounded in the GreenLift Needs Assessment, designed for SMEs and partner institutions, applicable across the four partner countries, and aligned with EU Just Transition principles and ESG reporting frameworks.

It is not a training programme, legal audit tool or replacement for dialogue with workers and stakeholders. It is also not a one-time exercise, but a tool designed for repeated use at baseline, mid-point and follow-up stages.

Social Impact Dimensions Addressed

Dimension 1: Job Quality

Job quality refers to employment security, safe working conditions, fair remuneration and the long-term sustainability of roles. In the TCLF sector, these elements are under pressure during the green transition, especially for SMEs that must comply with new environmental standards while managing limited resources and strong competition. The Needs Assessment shows that ethical labour standards and safe working conditions are recognised as important sustainability practices. However, community members rated the sector's social impact at only 3.35/5, indicating a gap between intention and reality. Workers across partner countries also identified health and safety in sustainable workplaces as a critical competence. In addition, SMEs and subcontractors often face disproportionate transition costs, while ageing workforces and limited knowledge transfer increase the risk of skills gaps.

Dimension 2: Worker Well-being

Worker well-being includes not only physical safety, but also psychosocial health, motivation, control and support at work. The green transition can create uncertainty, stress and pressure when workers are expected to adapt to new practices without enough time, guidance or support. According to the Needs Assessment, lack of time is the most common barrier to training participation across all partner countries. Although employers see sustainability as highly important for future competitiveness, 60% of surveyed workers had not participated in sustainability-related training. This shows that limited participation is linked more to capacity constraints than to lack of interest. Well-being should therefore be treated as a core objective of workforce transition, alongside productivity and skills development.

Dimension 3: Inclusion and Equality

The Needs Assessment identified vulnerable groups as priorities across partner countries. Formal certification in green and digital skills was seen as particularly important for low-skilled workers, as it helps make new competences visible and valuable. Stakeholders also highlighted the need for gender-responsive approaches, targeted support for migrant and subcontracted workers, and stronger involvement of NGOs, women's organisations and social enterprises. The green transition must therefore avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.

Social Impact Dimensions Addressed

Dimension 4: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The green transition cannot be achieved by individual companies alone. It requires cooperation between industry, education providers, public authorities, civil society and local communities. The GreenLift Needs Assessment highlights the need for networks, clusters, partnerships and governance structures that support knowledge exchange, shared investment and collective accountability.

Across the four partner countries, 64 stakeholders were mapped, 41 are actively engaged and 13 Memoranda of Cooperation have been signed. However, industry and business actors represent the majority of stakeholders, while civil society and community actors remain less represented. A stronger “triple helix” model involving industry, education and government is needed, together with better access for SMEs to peer learning, joint pilots and shared resources.

Indicator Framework

The Toolkit includes 19 social impact indicators developed to address a gap identified in the GreenLift Needs Assessment: the lack of practical, ready-to-use social impact metrics for the TCLF sector. While existing frameworks such as ESG reporting, Life Cycle Assessment and Digital Product Passport requirements provide important regulatory direction, they do not offer simple tools that SMEs can apply without specialist expertise.

The indicators were selected based on the Needs Assessment evidence, relevance to the GreenLift project timelines, applicability to SMEs with limited HR capacity, and alignment with Eurofound job quality dimensions and EU Just Transition principles. Each indicator is designed to support practical measurement of social outcomes during green reskilling and workforce transition.

How to Apply the Social Impact Assessment Toolkit

The Social Impact Assessment Toolkit uses three practical tools to monitor the social effects of the GreenLift intervention. **Tool 1** gathers anonymous feedback from workers, **Tool 2** supports HR managers, SME owners or senior staff in reviewing organisational practices, and Tool 3 helps partner teams document stakeholder engagement and implementation evidence. A light version of **Tool 3** may also be shared with external actors, such as NGOs, Chambers of Commerce and regional stakeholders.

STEP 1

Prepare the process: Ensure that the tools are available in the appropriate language and that participants are informed about voluntary participation, anonymity, data use and storage.

STEP 2

Collect baseline data: At the beginning, workers complete Tool 1 anonymously, employers or HR staff complete Tool 2, and partner teams complete Tool 3.

STEP 3

Analyse the results: Score the responses at the indicator, dimension and overall Toolkit level, focusing mainly on changes over time.

STEP 4

Act on the findings: Use the results to adjust support, such as mentoring, counselling, training access, outreach, scheduling or stakeholder engagement.

STEP 5

Repeat and report: Repeat the assessment at mid-point, follow-up and final evaluation

Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

Core Data Protection Principles

All data collection under this Toolkit must comply with the GDPR (Regulation EU 2016/679) and relevant national legislation in each partner country, such as Greek Law 4624/2019 in Greece. Each implementing partner is responsible for ensuring compliance within its own jurisdiction.

The Toolkit follows key data protection principles: participation must be voluntary, respondents must receive clear information and provide informed consent, and no unnecessary personal data should be collected. Tool 1 does not collect names or individual identifiers, while demographic information is used only for group-level analysis. Data must be used only for GreenLift monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes and must not be shared outside the consortium without additional consent.

All data should be stored securely in password-protected project systems, with access limited to authorised team members. Respondents have the right to access, correct or request deletion of their data in line with GDPR Articles 15–17.

Special Safeguards for Vulnerable Groups

Special attention is required when collecting data from vulnerable groups, including precarious workers, migrants, temporary workers, NEETs and subcontracted workers. In contexts where undeclared work may exist, partners must apply additional safeguards to protect anonymity, avoid identification risks and ensure that participation does not create fear of negative consequences.

CLOSING NOTE

Conclusion

In conclusion, the GreenLift Framework underlines that a successful green transition in the TCLF sector depends not only on new technical skills and environmental action, but also on the ability of organisations to support their workforce through change.

By bringing together career guidance, mentoring, well-being support and organisational capacity-building, the Framework offers a practical and inclusive pathway for SMEs and other TCLF organisations. It places workers' real needs at the centre, with particular attention to vulnerable groups who may face greater risks during the transition.

Moving forward, the value of the Framework will depend on its practical use, adaptation and promotion across different organisational and regional contexts. Together with the Social Impact Assessment Toolkit, it can help organisations take concrete steps towards a greener, fairer and more resilient TCLF sector.



Complete GreenLift Framework

For the full methodological background, evidence base, tools and references, readers may consult the complete GreenLift Framework, [here](#).

Project Coordinator



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