

First-Year Highlights

Building the Future Workforce for the Chemical Industry

Introduction

The ChemSkills project, co-funded by the European Union, is designed to address the critical skills gaps in the chemical industry, helping to prepare the sector for a future shaped by digitalisation and sustainability. In response to the growing demand for green and digital competencies, ChemSkills brings together industry leaders, training providers, and academic experts to develop new training models and strategies that will ensure a skilled and adaptable workforce for the future. The project's scope spans several key sub-sectors of the chemical industry, including plastics, consumer chemicals, fertilisers, rubber, pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals, making it a comprehensive effort to future-proof the sector.

This document is a comprehensive recap of the project's first year, highlighting the progress made across multiple Work Packages (WPs) and capturing the collective efforts of our partners. Over the past year, our consortium of industry experts, training providers, and academic institutions has successfully laid the groundwork for identifying and addressing critical skills gaps. Through surveys, workshops, interviews, and collaborative research, we have gathered valuable insights that will inform the next steps of the project. We have also established a strong network of stakeholders across Europe, ensuring that the project's outcomes have a wide-reaching impact.

ChemSkills' first-year achievements reflect the collaborative nature of the project. By aligning the efforts of diverse partners and stakeholders across Europe, we have built a solid foundation for future growth. The insights gathered during this year will be crucial in developing targeted training programmes that will foster a more sustainable, innovative, and competitive chemical industry.

Despite the complexity and scale of the challenges faced, the project has made remarkable progress. This document not only reflects the milestones reached but also sets the stage for further development in the years ahead. Our goal remains clear: to equip the chemical industry with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in an evolving global landscape.



Work Package 1: Project Management, QA and Coordination



WP1 is responsible for **overseeing the overall coordination** of the ChemSkills project and its WPs, as well as **technical and logistical management**. This includes communications with the European Commission's project officer and liaising with representatives of relevant European institutions regarding the ongoing results of the project. WP1 **acts as an umbrella, ensuring coherence throughout the project structure, fostering collaboration between different WPs**, and maintaining regular and effective communication among project partners.

The **success of WP1 is rooted in the collaborative effort of all WPs**. In the first year of the project, WP1 was tasked with **establishing a well-functioning synergy across the network, overseeing the results, deliverables, and milestones** of each work package. Additionally, it was responsible for **organising or assisting with the organisation of project-related meetings** for the entire consortium, including the preparation of agendas and content development for these events.

Key activities undertaken during the first year of the project included:

1. Forming a Sustainable Working Model with a Large Consortium: The WP Leadership Structure

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The WP Leadership structure was established to manage effective collaboration within the large ChemSkills consortium. This leadership group **meets monthly to discuss ongoing developments and issues** within the project, coordinate activities, and address any emerging challenges. WP Leadership has become an integral part of project coordination, fostering a trusting atmosphere conducive to constructive discussions.

2. Developing a Sustainability Plan

As a project milestone, the **Sustainability and Cooperation Plan** is a living document outlining best practices for collaboration with both internal and external partners. It also describes strategies to ensure the **continuation of project objectives beyond the project's formal end**. This document will be regularly updated.

3. Organising Two Project Meetings

WP1 was responsible for organising **the project's kick-off meeting in Brussels in September 2023**, followed by the first **in-person meeting in April 2024**, also in Brussels. WP1 managed the agendas and ensured the smooth delivery of meeting content. Both meetings were successful, with representation from all participating organisations, facilitating face-to-face discussions, which are crucial for a consortium of this size. One year into the project, another in-person meeting and public conference is planned for mid-September 2024 in Novi Sad.



4. Hosting a Workshop on Green Skills

In June 2024, ECEG organised an online workshop focusing on green skills for the chemical industry. The workshop featured speakers from ECEG's network, including representatives from national organisations and companies.

Over the past year, **significant progress has been made under the coordination of WP1**. The project has evolved from a structured plan into a well-functioning network of enthusiastic teams. **WP1 intends to continue along this path, aiming to produce high-level results and outcomes.**



Brussels, Kick-off, September 2023



Brussels, meeting, April 2024



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Work Package 2: Impact and Dissemination



Dissemination, as a critical component of any project, ensures that the knowledge and outcomes generated reach the appropriate audiences and stakeholders. For our project, dissemination activities are essential in building visibility, driving engagement, and ensuring that our findings and innovations are accessible and beneficial to the wider public and relevant sectors.

In the first year of our project, the Dissemination WP was tasked with establishing a foundation for our communication efforts. This WP is a collaborative effort involving **all project partners**, recognising that effective dissemination is a shared responsibility and **that each partner's unique networks and expertise are crucial to maximising our outreach.**

Key activities undertaken this year included:

1. Creating Social Media Presence

We aimed to develop and launch official social media channels across major platforms such as X and LinkedIn. The objective was to **build a dynamic online presence where updates, events, and outcomes of the project could be shared** promptly and interactively with a broad audience.

2. Content Development and Propagation

Regular and engaging content was to be produced and disseminated across these platforms. This included news updates, infographics, and other multimedia content designed to highlight the project's progress and key milestones.

3. Newsletters

A quarterly newsletter was planned to provide a summary of the project's activities, achievements, and upcoming events. The newsletter would be **distributed to our stakeholders**, including academic institutions, industry partners, and other interested parties.

4. Website Development

Another task was the development of a project website that would serve as a central hub for all project-related information. The website was to be regularly updated with news, publications, and event details, ensuring that stakeholders had easy access to the latest project developments.

Over the past year, we have made significant strides in achieving these objectives, and in many respects, we have overreached our initial expectations. Our social media channels were successfully established and have begun to attract a growing number of followers. We have published over



40 posts across LinkedIn and X, **engaging with more than 260 followers** (225 on LinkedIn and 40 on X). **These platforms have proven to be effective tools for sharing updates and fostering engagement** with our audience.

In addition to our online presence, we have actively disseminated information about the project to over 5000 individuals through various channels, including conferences, meeting presentations, and newsletters. This broad outreach has been instrumental in raising awareness and generating interest in our work. Importantly, all partners have contributed to these dissemination efforts, leveraging their networks to amplify the project's reach.

We also produced and distributed three newsletters, each of which included the most important information and updates about the project. **These newsletters reached more than 130 stakeholders**, who have provided positive feedback on the content and presentation. **Our project website has become a central resource** for those seeking information about the project. **It is regularly updated and features a range of resources**, including news articles, and details of upcoming events. The website analytics indicate a steady increase in visitor numbers, suggesting that our **efforts in dissemination are successfully reaching our target audiences**.



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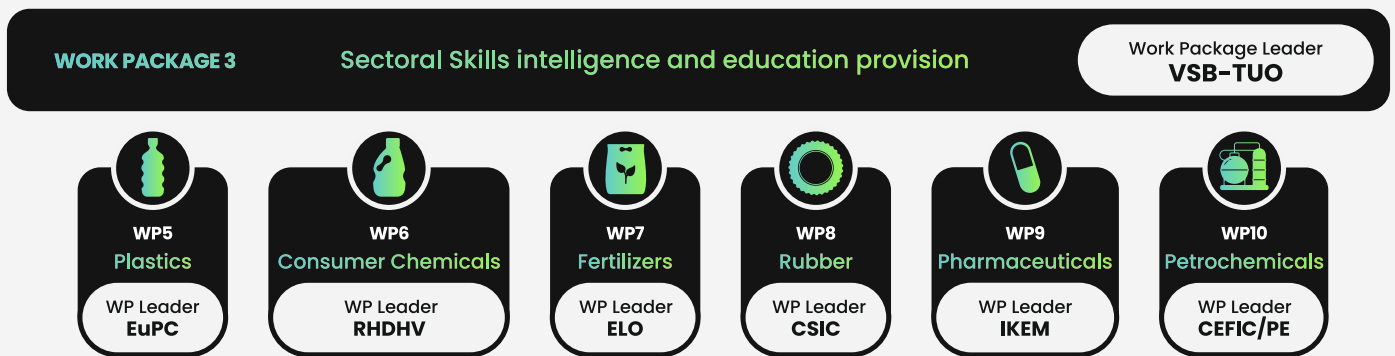


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Work Package 3: Sectoral Skills Intelligence and Education Provision

WP3 provides a comprehensive, horizontal overview of the skills landscape within the chemical sector. It serves as a cornerstone for **fostering synergy across sub-sectoral WPs**, establishing a gold standard with a clear and robust methodology that ensures seamless coordination and progress throughout the project. **WP3 empowers the teams within sub-sectoral WPs 5–10** to gather critical information on skills trends and job roles in the chemical sub-sectors, with a focus on **digital and green capabilities**. This work is set to **transform the chemical sector by consolidating and integrating essential digital and green skills**.



WP3 will **develop a comprehensive roadmap** that summarises and synthesises key outcomes from the sub-sectoral work packages. **By forecasting future trends and defining new occupational profiles**, WP3 will provide **strategies and scenarios that shape the future of the chemical sector** in Europe.

During the first year of the project, in collaboration with the sub-sectoral work packages, **several important activities were undertaken**. Key activities included:

1. Global Methodology for Successful Project Implementation

WP3 successfully delivered a comprehensive methodology to guide the sub-sectoral WPs 5–10, ensuring **consistency and excellence** in all activities. A robust approach to skills intelligence gathering was established, supported by well-defined templates and work processes to maximise efficiency.

2. Survey

WP3 released the first round of its survey on the EU Digital Platform, which runs until 27 October. As of August 2024, a **diverse range of participants have shared their insights**. The majority of respondents hail from the **plastics sector, which makes up 50%** of total submissions, followed by contributions from the petrochemical and fertiliser industries. In terms of company size, the survey shows that **over 56% of responses have come from large organisations** with over 250 employees, highlighting the **significant representation of established**



businesses in this research. On the other hand, **companies with fewer than 50 employees make up a smaller, yet still meaningful, portion of the dataset.** In geographical terms, **the most significant contribution comes from the Netherlands,**

representing 38% of responses, with Germany and Belgium following closely behind. While the focus remains on European Union countries, it is interesting to note that **about 30% of responses come from organisations outside the EU,** illustrating the global reach of the chemical sector.

Preliminary findings on skills requirements show a strong demand for re-skilling and up-skilling initiatives across various sectors. Additionally, over half of those surveyed stress the need for **education in critical areas** such as the **circular economy and cybersecurity.** Despite this, approximately **40% of respondents report that their organisation has yet to implement any training programmes** related to these skills, underscoring a gap between industry recognition and action.

In summary, the survey results thus far provide valuable insights into the state of skills in the chemical sector. **There is a clear interest in advancing workforce development,** particularly through targeted training in emerging areas. With further contributions and analysis, these findings will help guide the **future skills strategy for the industry.**

3. First View of Trends and Skills in the Sector

Based on snapshots of trends and skills provided by the sub-sectoral work packages, **WP3 delivered an initial overview of the skills required.** Key trends across the chemical sub-sectors have been identified, and some interesting conclusions have emerged. The findings highlight several key movements shaping the future of chemistry, particularly **in sustainability, digital transformation, and product innovation.** These trends reflect a convergence of **green chemistry, digital transformation, and product innovation.** The chemical industry is evolving to address **sustainability, efficiency, and customisation** challenges through advanced materials, AI-driven processes, and regulatory adaptations. This shift not only supports **climate goals, such as decarbonisation** but also responds to **consumer demands for safer, more personalised products and responsible industrial practices.**





Work Package 4: Training Delivered



WP4 is responsible for developing and delivering new training materials and courses to address skill gaps and **emerging needs within the chemical sector**. These training opportunities aim to provide **(re-)qualification pathways for employees** in the industry and can be offered in various formats, including online, offline, with trainers, or via self-study. A modular approach ensures that most developed skill training modules can be offered individually, allowing for customised training selections tailored to the specific needs of each trainee. The key focus areas for these professional development programmes are **green and digital skills**.

WP4 includes 15 partners, 10 of which are categorised as “training providers.” Each sub-sector represented by Work Packages 5 – 10 is covered by at least one designated training provider.

During the first year of the project, WP4 worked towards several milestones:

- **Establishing a list of requirements for training materials**
- **Identifying KPIs for the delivery and impact of the training materials**
- **Creating an overview of the project's impact and recognition at the European level**
- **Developing a suitable training platform**

The main task and deliverable for the first year was to **analyse and collect information about the existing training offers within the consortium**.

As of August 2024, a total of **32 different training offers had been identified**, with the majority found within the pharmaceutical sector. However, no consortium partner currently offers training in the petrochemical sector. Several of the identified training programmes are relevant to two or more sectors represented in this project. **These existing training programmes will be integrated into the Skills Hub course catalogue for piloting and dissemination where appropriate.**

These **existing training programmes will be considered in the next phases** of the project as mapping between the identified needs of the different sub-sectors and the available training offers. They will also serve as a **foundation for developing new training materials and courses** over the next three years.





Work Package 5: Plastics

WP5, consisting of five partners — European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), Croatian Employers' Association (CEA), European Plastics Converters (EuPC), the University of Maastricht, and the University of Novi Sad — is dedicated to **addressing the evolving skill requirements within the plastics subsector** of the chemical industry. Given the sector's **close connection to the broader chemical value chain**, WP5 focuses on key challenges such as **circular economy practices, recycling, emission mitigation, and sustainability**. The work package aims to align with **broader trends in the sector** while developing **educational and technical training pathways**.

1. During the first year of the project

WP5 conducted a **Future Skills Survey** to identify **current trends and future skill needs in the plastics sector**. The survey gathered insights from a diverse group of stakeholders, helping to pinpoint **critical skill gaps and the competencies needed for the future**.

2. In addition to the survey

WP5 carried out **in-depth desk research** to assess the sector's size, workforce impact, and emerging trends. This research also **identified key industry players and stakeholders**, analysed **current workforce development and technology trends**, and highlighted **essential skills and competencies, particularly in green and digital areas**. Building on these findings, WP5 **defined new occupational profiles specific to the plastics chemicals subsector** and provided a comprehensive gap analysis, as well as an overview of the most relevant training opportunities across Europe.

3. To engage stakeholders and achieve the project's objectives

WP5 organised two workshops. The first workshop, focusing on the **Building and Construction** sector, addressed the challenges posed by the lack of technical education for specific job roles. The discussions **highlighted the importance of collaboration** among businesses, educational institutions, and public authorities to **identify current skills gaps and develop targeted training programmes**. These efforts are particularly important to prevent a shortage of technical skills in the medium to long term, ensuring the sector meets the demands of a more sustainable and digital economy.

4. The second workshop

held during the **EuPC Annual Conference in collaboration with the University of Maastricht**, brought together key stakeholders from the plastics value chain. The workshop focused on **educational challenges and recruitment within the industry**, emphasising the need to adapt the education system to raise awareness and engage younger generations in the environmental and technological transition. Best practices in education were presented, showcas-



ing the role of educational service providers in delivering multi-level education and attracting young talent **by shifting the negative perception of plastics towards sustainability.**

In line with the project's milestones, WP5 has **laid a strong foundation** for addressing the skills challenges within the plastics sector and has **outlined a clear strategy for future development and training initiatives.** However, critical areas for improvement remain, including the need for a more structured approach to ongoing stakeholder engagement and a commitment to continually incorporating new developments and emerging trends into the project to ensure its ongoing relevance and impact.



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Work Package 6: Consumer Chemicals



WP6, involving several key partners including Royal HaskoningDHV, Comenius University Bratislava, European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN), European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries (FECCIA), and Federchimica, **is focused on addressing the evolving skill requirements within the consumer chemicals subsector**. This subsector includes industries such as **adhesives, sealants, printing inks, paints, varnishes, personal care, and cosmetics**. Given the subsector's **unique challenges** related to its place in the chemicals value chain, the work package aims to **close the skills gap related to the digital and green transformation by developing educational programs and training** focused on those specific challenges.

During the first year of the project, **WP6 partners conducted a series of workshops** and research efforts to **identify skills gaps and trends** in the consumer chemicals sector. These workshops **gathered insights from a diverse group of stakeholders**, helping to define **critical skills needs**.

In addition to the workshops, WP6 partners **carried out desk research** to assess the sector's **emerging trends, developments in the workforce, and key players**. This research led to the development of a **comprehensive analysis of the value chain** and the identification of relevant stakeholders. **Findings from this analysis** will inform the direction of future training programmes, particularly in **green and digital skill areas**.

WP6 organised three key workshops during the first year:

1. Talent Management Workshop (16 May 2024)

Led by AVISA/Federchimica, this workshop focused on **aligning company expectations with those of new hires** in the adhesives and sealants sector, addressing challenges in **talent retention and attraction**.

2. Career Event (27 August 2024)

Held during the **XXVIII National Congress of the Società Chimica Italiana**, this event brought together **industry representatives and aspiring chemists** to **bridge the gap between academia and industry**.

3. PFAS Restriction Roundtable (12 June 2024)

Organised by **ECRN**, this roundtable discussion focused on the **skills needed to comply with European regulatory standards** for phasing out hazardous substances, emphasising the importance of **scientific, technical, and regulatory skills**.



These workshops provided valuable insights into the **skills needed in the consumer chemicals subsector**, particularly in the areas of **scientific and technical skills, regulatory compliance, and interdisciplinary competencies**.

In line with the project's milestones, **WP6 has established a solid foundation** for identifying the **future skills needs** of the consumer chemicals industry. However, the next phase of the project will focus on **further refining the current survey**, finalising the desk study, and **developing a detailed work plan for 2024/2025**. WP6 will also continue **engaging with stakeholders** to ensure the project remains **aligned with the industry's evolving needs**, particularly in the areas of **sustainability and digitalisation**.



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Work Package 7: Fertilisers

WP7 is focused on addressing the skills needs and challenges associated with the use of mineral fertilisers in agriculture. The main objective of this work package is to tackle the specific knowledge and skills gaps related to the digital and green transformation within this sub-sector. This includes minimising the environmental impacts of mineral fertiliser use, preventing soil and water contamination, promoting sustainable practices, and enhancing the effectiveness of fertilisers in maintaining soil fertility.

WP7 is led by the Brussels-based European Landowners Organisation (ELO), in collaboration with key partners such as the Agricultural Union of the Czech Republic (ZSČR), the Association for Innovative Farming (AIF), and AgriLand Nord.

The primary focus during the first year was on achieving two key milestones:

- **Analysing Industry-Specific Needs**

Identifying and understanding the specific needs of the fertiliser sector.

- **Assessing Existing Offerings**

Evaluating the current offerings within the sector.

Since all WP7 partners represent the agricultural sector and are direct users of fertilisers, the initial priority was to **conduct a detailed analysis of the entire fertiliser value chain**, including its major producers. A significant achievement during this phase was the **establishment of a collaboration with a leading fertiliser company in the Czech Republic**, one of Europe's major producers.

The **first round of desk research in the fertiliser sector identified 49 job roles and associated skill sets** on the demand side (see table).

| Value chain | Job roles | Skills | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|--------|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | | Green | Digital | Safe&Sustainable fertilisers sesing | Transversal | Sector specific |
| R&D | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | | 2 |
| Production | 15 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 3 |
| Distribution | 10 | 2 | | | 1 | 2 |
| Utilisation | 19 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| Summ | 49 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 19 | 16 |



On the offer side, **10 training opportunities were identified**. Of these, **four were specific job role** training directly from fertiliser manufacturers, one was offered by a university, and **five came from education and innovation clusters and platforms**. The platforms provide access to a wide range of e-learning opportunities in agriculture, including fertiliser application and use.

The research is still in its early stages, and the data will be further refined and expanded. Our detailed desk research and interview findings have been distributed according to the project's KPIs, allowing other work packages (e.g., WP3) to measure progress.

Although our team members are not formal training providers, we aim to form complementary partnerships with organisations offering similar activities. As a result, we can act as a bridge between complementary activities of other partner institutions, platforms, and project outputs, particularly where we see overlaps or opportunities for mutual benefit—such as with AgriHub , Hub for Everybody and PoliRural.

Webinars/Focus Groups/Interviews for Information and Data Gathering

We decided to conduct **one-to-one interviews rather than open webinars** to ensure a more focused and in-depth understanding of the **specific needs and challenges faced by individual stakeholders** in the agricultural sector. This approach allowed us to gather detailed, tailored insights, foster open discussions, and address sensitive topics that participants may not have felt comfortable sharing in a public webinar. **By engaging directly with participants**, we were able to gather **higher-quality, in-depth data** that was more relevant to our objectives, ensuring a clearer understanding of the **emerging skills required for the sector's future transformation**.





Work Package 8: Rubber



The **rubber industry** is a key and diverse sector, producing a **wide range of products**, including **tyres, industrial goods, footwear, and medical supplies**. With rubber sourced both from **natural rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*)** and **synthetic rubber derived from petroleum**, the **recycling of rubber products** has become increasingly important to **reduce waste, conserve resources, and improve the sustainability** of the sector. Simultaneously, the digitalisation of the rubber industry is essential to establish Industry 4.0, taking advantage of opportunities for improved efficiency, flexibility, and sustainability.

For these reasons, **WP8 focused on addressing the challenges, needs and skills within the rubber sector**. The first year of the Chemskills project was essential to get a helicopter view of the current data regarding the rubber sector and to design instruments that **help identify and evaluate the needs** of the rubber industry. Part of WP8 are European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries (FEC-CIA), European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers' Association (ETRMA), ITS Technical College for New Life Technologies, Rubber Manufacturers' Association of Finland (RMAF), The Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC) and University of Twente.

Key activities undertaken this year included:

1. Gathering Up-to-Date Data on the Rubber Sector

This provided us with the ability to **account for the complexity and diversity** of the sector while planning the next steps in the project programme and developing a **detailed strategy for the industry**.

2. Starting Point

Comprehensive desk research was completed with the active participation of all WP members, offering an overview of the **current state of green and digital skills in the rubber sector**. This formed the foundation for subsequent milestones and created a roadmap for further development.

3. Learning from Various Companies

A comprehensive survey was developed for the rubber sector, designed to gather both general insights and more specific needs of respondents. The survey focused on the two primary aspects of the project: digitalisation and green skills.

4. Promoting the Survey

Two workshops were organised to introduce the ChemSkills project to companies in the tyre



and general rubber goods sectors and promote the survey. These workshops aimed to **gather more detailed information** through the survey while establishing personal contact with key stakeholders, which will be valuable for future project developments. Feedback from the survey will be shared with participants in the near future to update them on the project's progress and demonstrate the impact of their contributions.

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in achieving these objectives, often exceeding initial expectations. Our extensive experience in the rubber sector was instrumental in gathering up-to-date industry data, which enabled us to design an optimised survey tool that allows companies to share their specific needs. This survey was **first tested with WP8 members**, and we greatly appreciate the **positive feedback regarding the questions, length, and content**.

The next step involves collecting data from various rubber companies, who will share their experiences and needs through the survey. **This information will be provided anonymously** to protect the privacy of the respondents while delivering valuable data for the project.



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Work Package 9: Pharmaceuticals



Gathering and analysing the current and future skill needs of the chemistry industry in Europe is a cornerstone of the ChemSkills project. A key focus of this initiative is the **pharmaceutical industry, addressed as part of WP9**. This WP is led by IKEM, in collaboration with the following partners: AstraZeneca, Chemical Industry Federation of Finland, Croatian Employers' Association (CEA), European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG), European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries (FECCIA), Innovation and Chemical Industries in Sweden (IKEM) and Saxon Training Company for Chemical Professions (SBG).

As the **fifth-largest exporting sector in the EU**, the **pharmaceutical industry plays a crucial economic role** in many European countries. The industry's successful **transition towards a fossil-free future** heavily depends on the **availability of the right skills**. While it shares challenges with the broader chemical value chain, the **pharmaceutical sector faces additional regulatory hurdles and unique challenges** that necessitate specialised attention.

1. During the first year of the project

WP9 **gathered information from a wide range of published sources**, including insights from previous relevant projects. These findings were compiled into a **comprehensive report**.

2. Workshops

Two shorter reports summarising the results of two workshops—one online and one in person—were submitted. In the online workshop, WP9 project partners invited members from various companies to discuss topics such as current and future skill needs, the availability of training (including online training), and how these could be modernised and effectively implemented. The second workshop, held during a national hearing organised by IKEM, focused on skills and talent acquisition within the pharmaceutical sector.

3. Upcoming survey

The **development of targeted questions for an upcoming survey** has commenced. This survey will be crucial for gathering industry-specific data to guide future training and development initiatives.

While the first year has been productive, **several challenges have been identified**.

One significant challenge is the **wide variety of specialists employed in the pharmaceutical industry**, making it difficult to create comprehensive lists of skill requirements.

Additionally, a large portion of the industry consists of **multinational companies with in-house training capabilities**. However, **smaller companies—those most likely to benefit from the**



training developed through the ChemSkills project—are harder to engage. These companies often have **limited resources and time**, which makes it challenging for them to participate in surveys and provide the necessary inputs.



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Work Package 10: Petrochemicals



WP10 focuses specifically on the petrochemicals sector and is led by Petrochemicals Europe in collaboration with Chemical Industry Federation of Finland, European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries (FECCIA) and Federchimica.

1. The primary objective

is to **develop strategic recommendations** for the European Commission and Member States. These recommendations will address **skills policies, academic education curricula, reskilling programmes, and related funding initiatives**. They are based on the **skills gaps identified in the petrochemicals industry**, particularly in areas related to digitalisation and circularity, and are informed by a targeted survey and interviews with subject matter experts.

2. In 2024

WP10 undertook a series of key activities to assess and address skill needs within the petrochemicals industry, contributing significantly to the broader ChemSkills project.

3. Survey

WP10 developed and refined a set of survey questions specifically tailored to the petrochemicals sector. These questions played a crucial role in **shaping the broader ChemSkills survey**, encouraging company participation, and ensuring high-quality data collection. WP10 also identified follow-up actions to gather more in-depth insights and address any emerging issues within the industry.

By mid-2024 WP10 had gathered 22 survey responses from 15 Member States. The insights from these responses were summarised in a draft report, highlighting key skill needs and gaps within the industry. These findings were presented on **30 July 2024 to the board of Petrochemicals Europe**. This session helped validate the next steps, including the planning of a second workshop and the organisation of a breakout session on skills at the upcoming EEPC conference. Feedback from the board members provided valuable input, shaping the future direction of WP10's efforts.

4. Workshops

WP10 organised its first workshop, which served as an information session for focal points from Petrochemicals Europe. During this session, participants were introduced to the ChemSkills project, its objectives, tasks, and deliverables. The workshop encouraged the sharing of diverse ideas and the identification of any gaps in the project, while also marking the start of survey distribution within the petrochemicals sector.



5. On 17 October 2024

WP10 led a breakout session titled "People: Our Next Generation" at the EEPCC conference. This session focused on skill trends, gaps, and the essential **skills needed for ethylene production operations**. It offered an opportunity to gather valuable input from conference participants, further enriching the project's understanding of the industry's skill requirements.

6. Following the EEPCC conference

WP10 hosted a second workshop between October and November 2024. This session presented the survey results and key takeaways from the conference discussions. The team also began scheduling one-on-one interviews with subject matter experts to dive deeper into the industry's specific skill needs and challenges, building on the findings and feedback collected throughout the year.

Through these efforts, WP10 made significant progress in identifying and addressing skill gaps in the petrochemicals industry, setting the stage for further engagement and action within the ChemSkills project.

WP10 is on track with its objectives, successfully gathering evidence on the skills gaps and needs within the petrochemicals sector. The progress made in collecting survey responses and analysing them has provided granular, real-life examples of where the industry's skill requirements are most pressing.

The project has been extensively promoted across various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and the website. Moving forward, WP10 aims to combine the findings from both the survey responses and the interviews, with a view to developing concrete recommendations for EU and national policymakers by January 2025.





Conclusion

As we reflect on the achievements of the first year of the ChemSkills project, it is clear that each Work Package has made significant strides towards addressing the evolving skills needs within the chemical industry. Through collaborative efforts, detailed research, and stakeholder engagement, we have laid a solid foundation for the future of the industry. Each WP has not only analysed the current landscape but also looked forward, anticipating the skills that will be crucial for the future success of the sector.

Each Work Package has contributed valuable insights and progress towards the overarching goals of ChemSkills. From exploring new digital and green skill needs in sectors like petrochemicals, fertilisers, consumer chemicals, plastics, rubber, and pharmaceuticals, to organising workshops, surveys, and industry collaborations, this year has been one of exploration and groundwork. Every activity, whether developing new curricula, refining training platforms, or engaging directly with stakeholders, has been forward-looking, designed to ensure that the industry is prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

As we move into the next phases of the project, the knowledge gained from the first year will serve as a critical guide. The path ahead involves further refinement of our strategies, the development of targeted training programmes, and ongoing engagement with key industry stakeholders. The commitment of each partner remains unwavering as we continue to push forward, with a clear vision for a chemical industry that not only adapts to future trends but also leads in sustainability and innovation.

This is just the beginning. The journey that started with identifying skills gaps and industry needs will now shift towards implementation and further development. With the groundwork firmly in place, ChemSkills is poised to lead the charge in shaping a skilled and future-ready workforce for Europe's chemical industry.

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