



CROSSING BOUNDARIES

50th International Symposium on Novelties in Textiles

Empowering the future workforce: Addressing skills gaps in Europe's textile, clothing, leather, and footwear industries

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29-30 May 2025 | Ljubljana, SLOVENIA



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PROJECT AEQUALIS4TCLF



29-30 May 2025 | Ljubljana, SLOVENIA

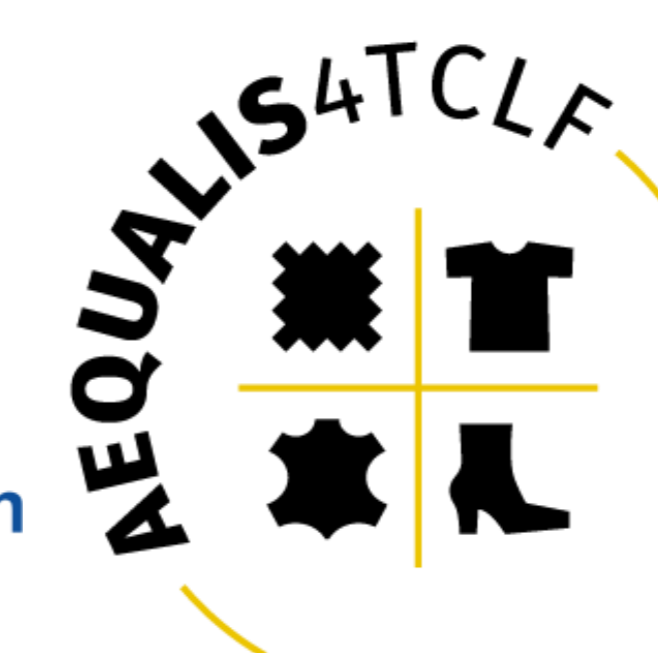


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AEQUALIS4TCL: *Addressing Skills Gaps in the European Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear Industries, emphasizing Equality, Innovation and Resilience.*



Project duration from 1. 2. 2024 to 31. 1. 2028, No: 101139988

WHO?

- ❖ AEQUALIS4TCLF is a mutual effort of educational institutions, industry representatives and Chambers of Commerce.
- ❖ Connects 19 partners from 8 countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic and Belgium.

WHAT?

- ❖ The project is focusing on sustainability, digital transformation, and innovation
- ❖ It addresses skill gaps in the textile, clothing, leather, and footwear (TCLF) sectors.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- ❖ The TCLF sector is at a critical point due to workforce ageing, skills gaps, and the green/digital transition.
- ❖ *Transition Pathway for the Textiles Ecosystem report** outlines that the ageing workforce is a significant challenge.
- ❖ *The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles*** , published in March 2022, aims to implement measures that ensure the EU meets the commitments established in the European Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan.

* Textiles Ecosystem Transition Pathway cocreation process

**Textiles strategy - European Commission

AEQUALIS4TCLF

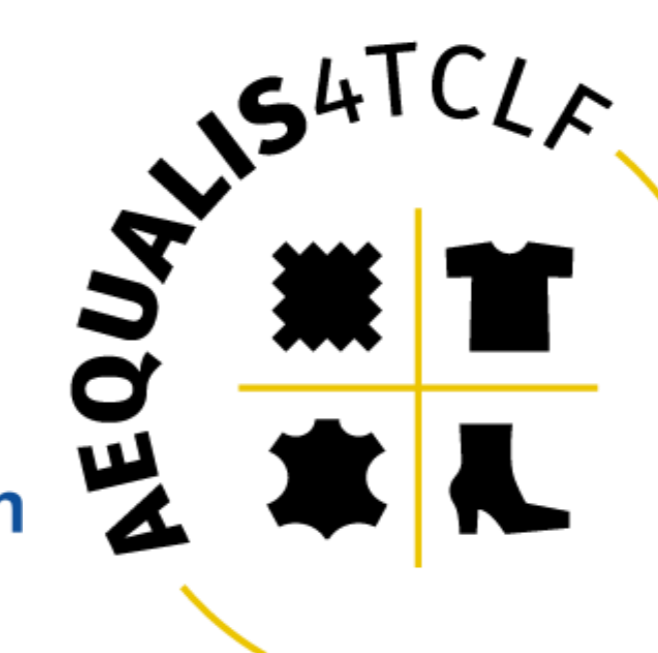


PROJECT VISION & OBJECTIVES

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VISION & OBJECTIVES



GOAL

❖ AEQUALIS4TCLF has a **TWIN** goal:

- 1 Broaden cooperation in skills development.
- 2 Bridge green, digital gaps through education and Innovation in learning

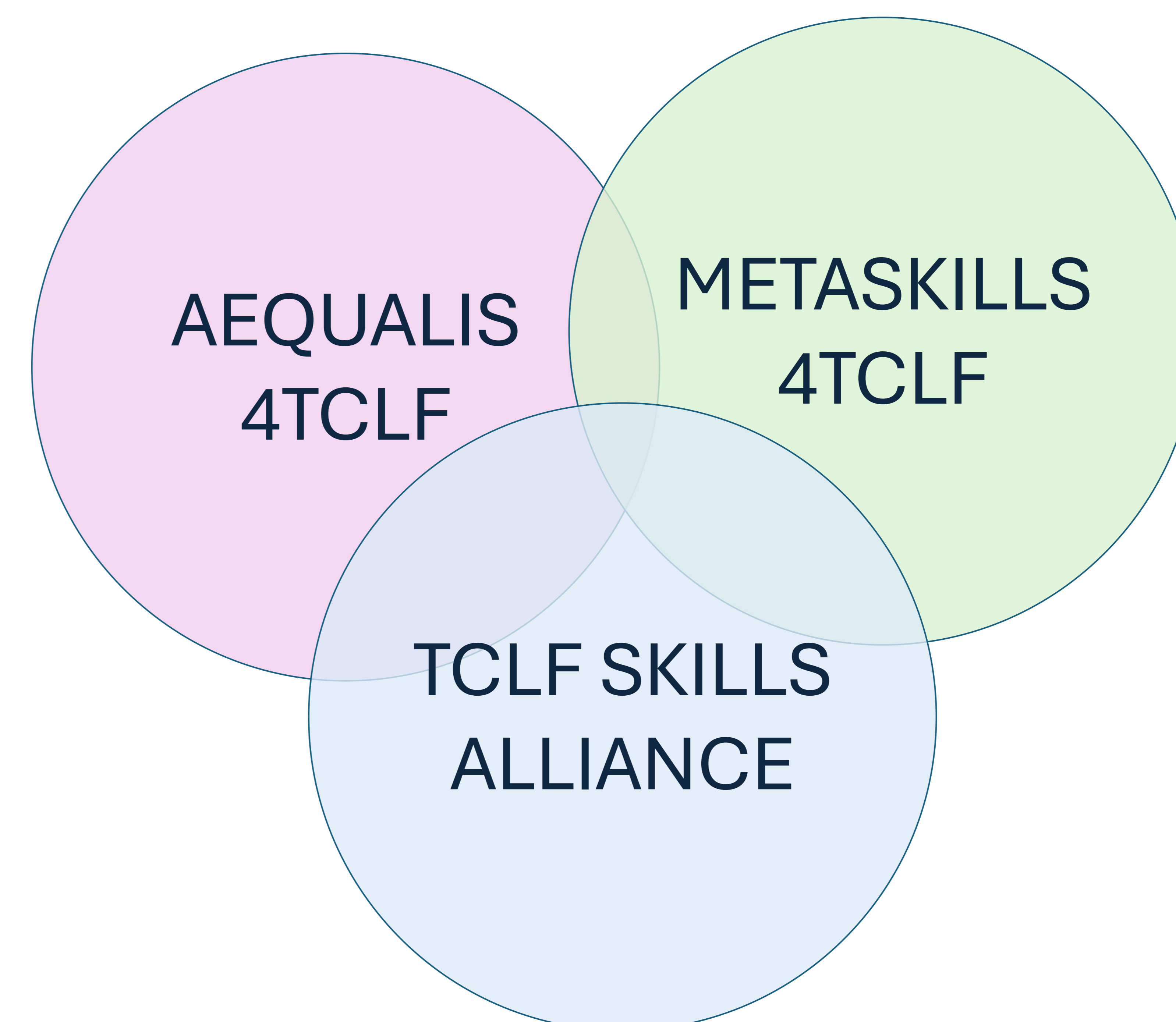


PILLARS

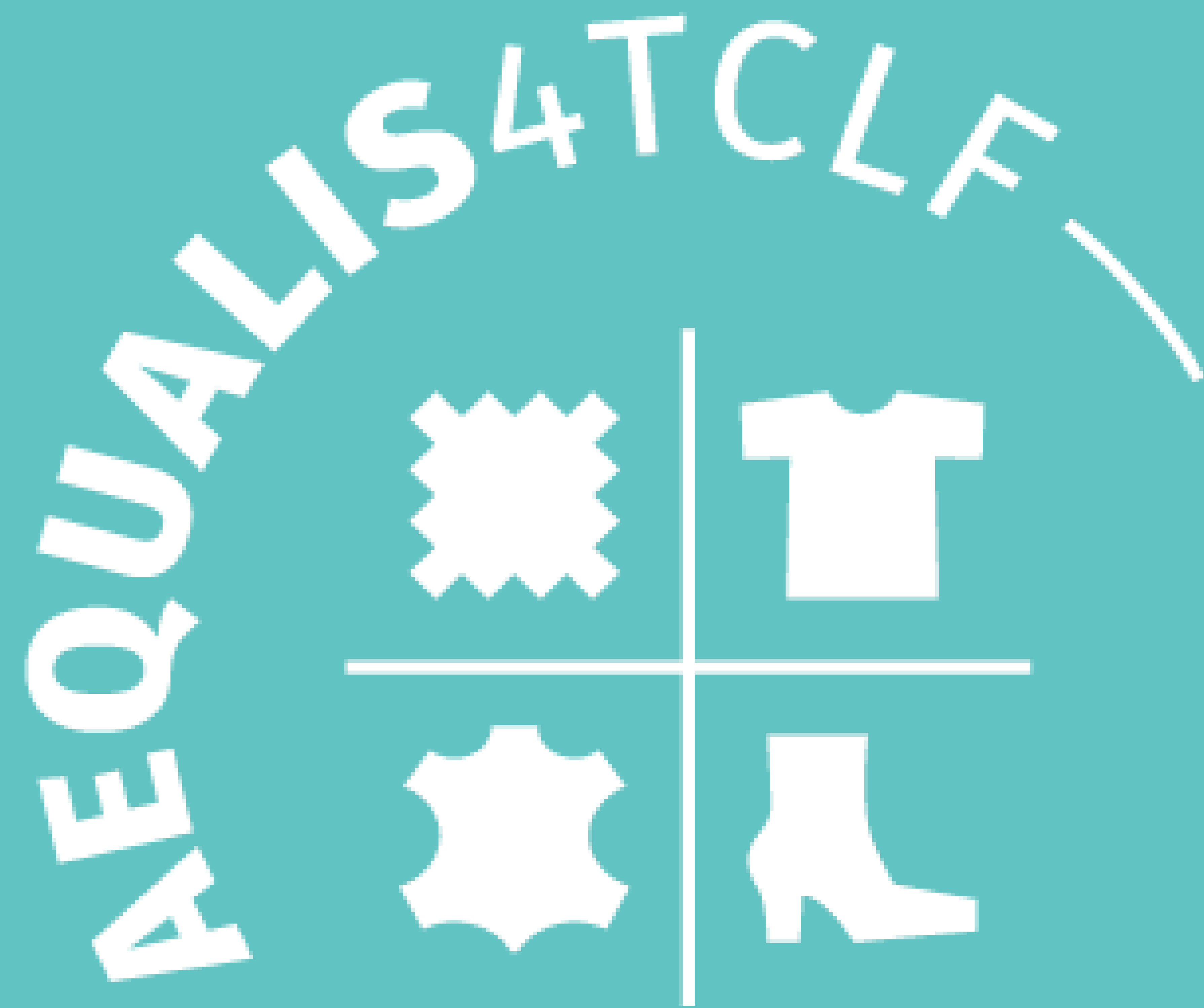
- 1 Skills
- 2 Sustainability
- 3 Inclusivity
- 4 Innovation

SYNERGIES

❖ AEQUALIS4TCLF forms a synergy between a Pact for Skills Alliance, the Metaskills project and creates a Blueprint for future EU actions.



STEPS FORWARD



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ZVEZA TEKSTILCEV SLOVENIJE

STEPS FORWARD



FIRST

- ❖ Available VET and HEI study programs in the TCLF sector within the partnering countries were reviewed.

SECOND

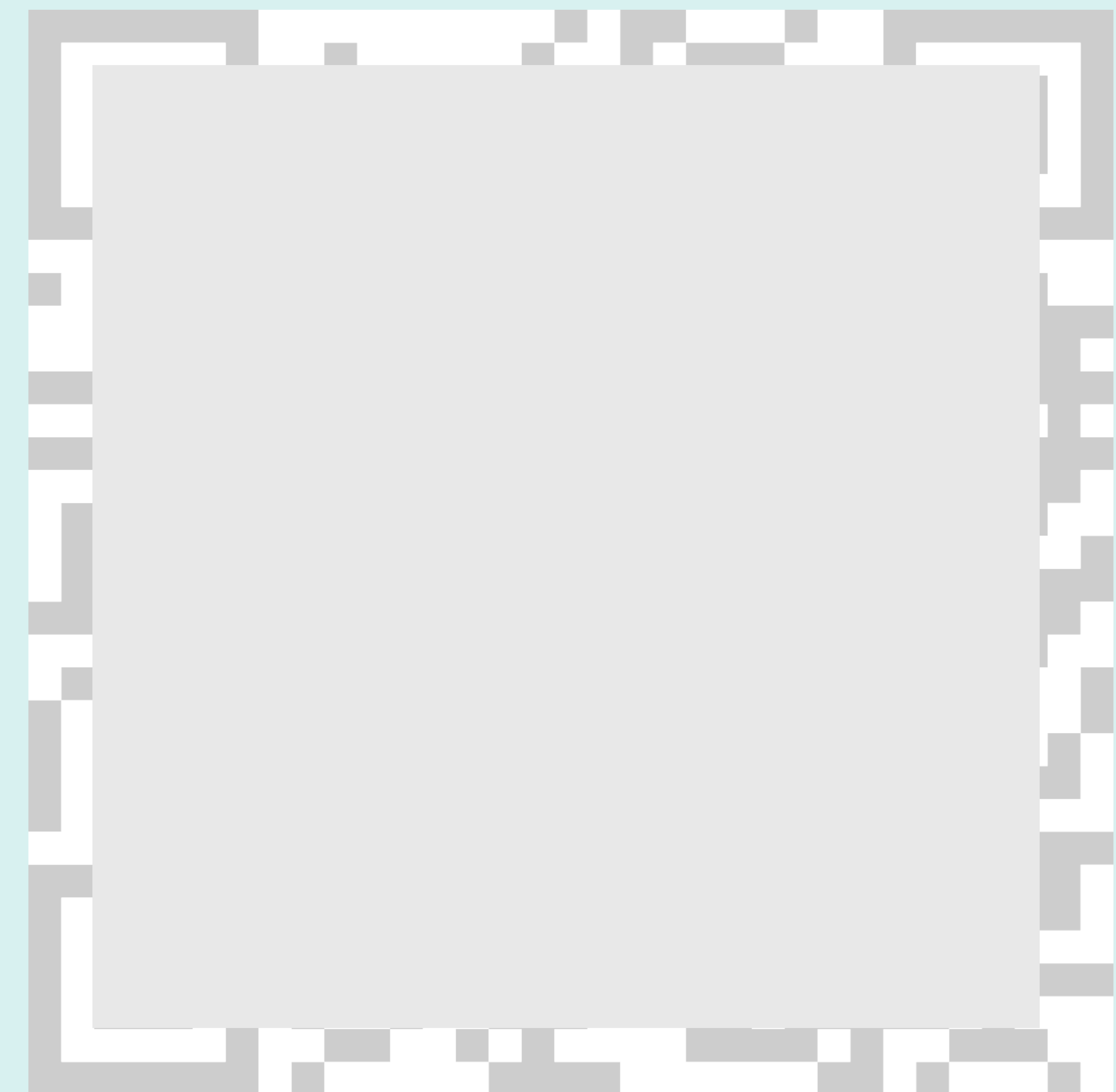
- ❖ An online survey was done afterwards, targeting companies, employee associations, chambers of commerce and educational institutions to identify:

- 🎯 Current and future need of the industry
- 🎯 Required technical, practical, and digital skills
- 🎯 Identify the need of green & digital knowledge in the future

THIRD

- ❖ National focus groups to further discuss the results from Online surveys and the reviewed educational offering.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



<https://www.mentimeter.com/>

STEPS FORWARD



RESULTS

Key Findings from Survey and Group Discussions

- ❖ Together, **over 260** identified active educational programs in the TCLF area in partner countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic)
- ❖ Companies emphasised the growing importance of **soft skills***.
- ❖ Likely, in the future, there will be a need to **recruit technical talent* from abroad**.
- ❖ Management positions in companies are still **male-dominated** despite a female-majority workforce.

Educational centres acknowledge limitations and work to overcome them*:

- ❖ Weak industry collaboration and weak industry presence during the education.
- ❖ Insufficient practical training opportunities for students.
- ❖ Educational centres see future development in interdisciplinary knowledge.

Key drivers of change in the TCLF sector in EU:

- ❖ EU regulations (DPP, EPR)
- ❖ Rising costs of raw materials, transport, and energy.
- ❖ Focus on **advanced manufacturing processes** and new materials.

*Soft skills being: Communication, teamwork, multi-cultural collaboration, critical thinking skills, responsibility and self-initiative

*Technical talent being linked to: Operation of advanced textile machinery, quality control and material testing, working with innovative processes and technologies.

Efforts recognised: Try to obtain internships in new companies, organise student excursions, push curricula to be aligned with market needs, emphasise on interdisciplinary training (design, business, tech).

STEPS FORWARD



ACTION

❖ Partners from educational institutions have drafted 8 Curricula based on the identified needs and gaps.

❖ Those are*:

- Circular economy approach within leather and footwear industry
- Sustainability Tools for Assessing Textile Products
- Strategic Leadership and Quality Management in TCLF sector
- Colour Management in Eco-Design
- Innovative and Sustainable Clothing Production System
- Creating new Products from old Clothes
- Fashionable Accessories
- Creative and Sustainable Fashion Design

- ❖ Digitalization and sustainability, reflecting emerging trends and regulatory requirements.
- ❖ Integrate digital tools and software applications relevant to design and production.
- ❖ Emphasise practical skill development paired with theoretical foundations.
- ❖ Promote critical thinking and skills development in line with future demands, such as: Eco-design principles, sustainable production practices, circular economy models.

*Those programs range from EQF 3 - 7

STEPS FORWARD



VALIDATION

- ❖ Programs have been validated in 8 countries by industrial and educational stakeholders.
- ❖ Suggestions and modifications were implemented to align programs with industry needs and educational capabilities.
- ❖ Those programs will be offered in a form of micro-credentials, positioning some partners as national leaders in recognition efforts.
- ❖ Programs will be pilot-tested through international mobility exchanges with diverse learners and trainers.

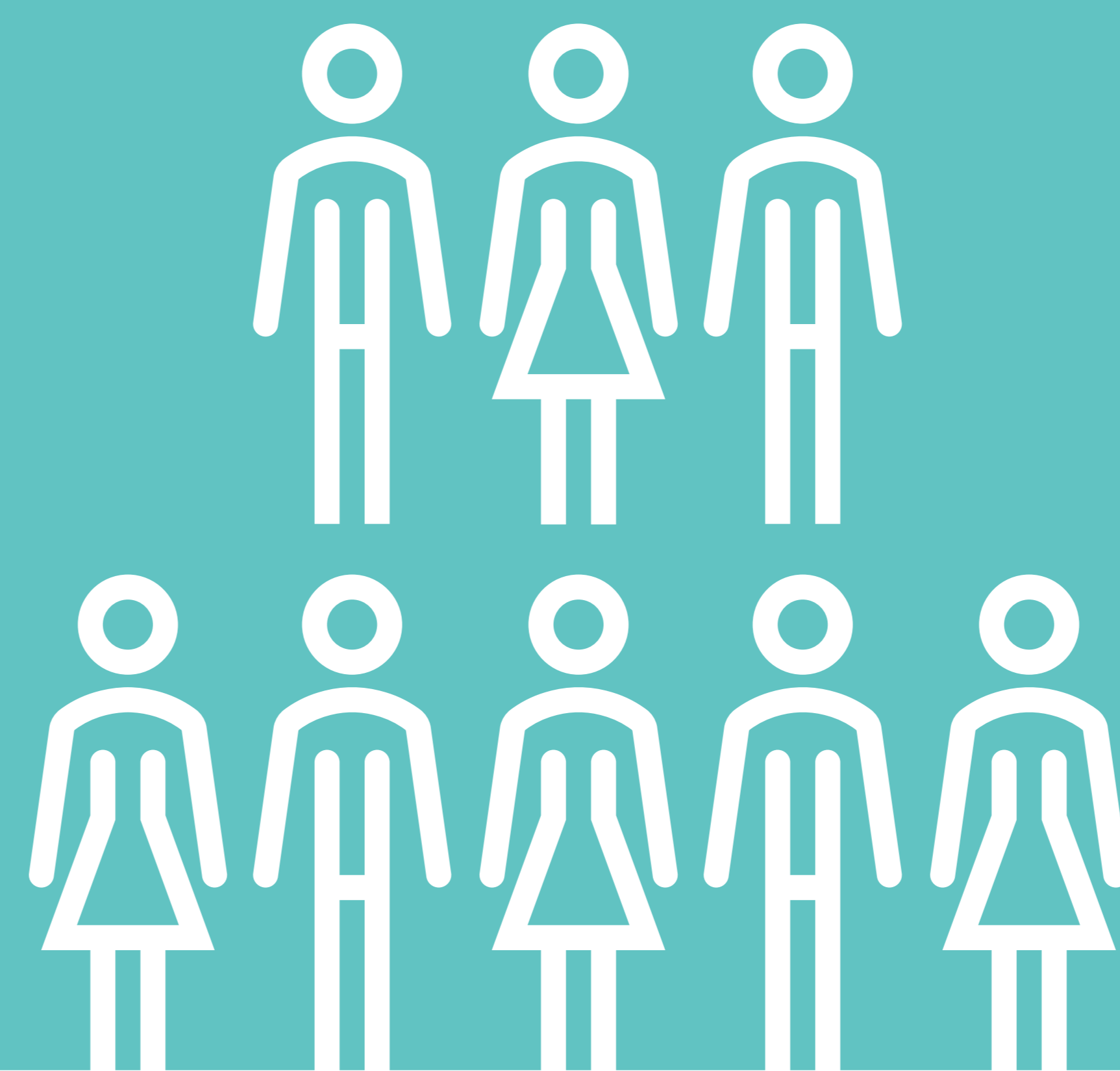
WHAT'S NEXT

- ❖ Preparation of study materials.
- ❖ Steps towards formal recognition of Curricula in each country.
- ❖ Multiple activities (National and International seminars and workshops)
- ❖ Exchange programs.
- ❖ Consortia meetings.





BE PART OF ACTIVITIES



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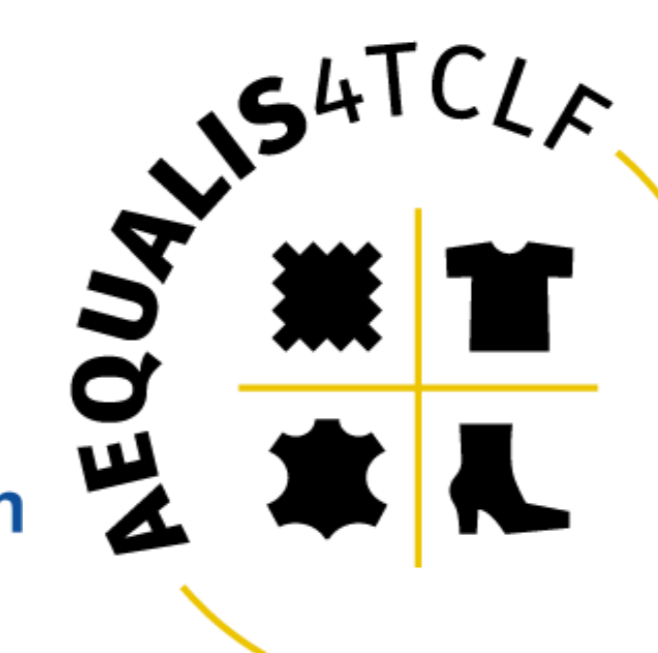


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BE PART OF ACTIVITIES



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GROUP OF PACT FOR SKILLS

- ❖ You can be active in AEQUALIS activities, give feedback on the development, and be part of change.
- ❖ Enrol in the European Pact for Skills Initiative and help drive change.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

- ❖ www.aequalis4tclf.eu
- ❖ https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en
- ❖ <https://www.zveza-tekstilcev.si/>





THANK YOU

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