Career Guidance Handbook for the Habitat Ecosystem

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Alliance of Centres of Excellence in Vocational Training for Sustainable Habitat

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Developed by:

Clúster de Habitat Eficiente AEICE – Spain

Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Castilla y León – Spain

Instituto para el Fomento del Desarrollo y la Formación SL INFODEF – Spain

Fundación Instituto de la Construcción de Castilla y León ICCL – Spain

Fundación Centro de Servicios y Promoción Forestal y de su Industria de Castilla y León CESEFOR – Spain

Fundación Laboral de la Construcción – Spain

Asociación Empresarial de Investigación Centro Tecnológico del Mueble y la Madera de la Región de Murcia CETEM – Spain

Associaçao Plataforma para a Construçao Sustentavel CENTRO HABITAT – Portugal

Centro Tecnologico da Ceramica e do Vidro – Portugal

Universidade de Aveiro – Portugal

Holzcluster Steiermark Gmbh – Austria

Fachhochschule Salzburg Gmbh – Austria

Cluster Viooikonomias Kai Perivallontos Dytikis Makedonias – Greece

Dimitra Ekpaiditiki Simvilitiki AE – Greece

Panepistimio Thessalias – Greece

Public Institution Centre of Excellence in Energy and Electronics – Moldova

Construction College «Construct2» – Georgia

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1. Introduction

The **HABITABLE — Alliance of Centres of Excellence in Vocational Training for Sustainable Habitat** project aims to respond to the skills shortages affecting the Habitat sector, especially those linked to the green and digital transitions.

This **Career Guidance Handbook for the Habitat Sector** supports guidance professionals in using HABITABLE tools and resources to help learners, workers and other users identify skills, explore occupations, choose training pathways and access opportunities for learning, certification, mobility and employment.

1.1 Target Users

This Handbook is designed for professionals involved in career guidance, education, training and lifelong learning, including:

- career counsellors;
- VET counsellors;
- employment advisors;
- VET teachers and trainers;
- lifelong learning professionals;
- staff from training providers;
- professionals supporting vulnerable groups or people with fewer opportunities.

1.2 How to Use the Handbook

The Handbook can be used as a practical guide during counselling sessions, career orientation activities, training pathway planning and referral processes.

Users may read the full Handbook to understand the Habitat ecosystem and its skills needs, or go directly to specific sections on HABITABLE tools, practical use cases or guidance templates, according to their needs.

2. The Habitat Ecosystem and Its Skills Needs

The Habitat value chain is a broad and dynamic ecosystem connected to the built environment and the way people live, work and interact with spaces. It includes different activities, occupations and skills related to construction, renovation, materials, energy, design, manufacturing and services. Career guidance in this ecosystem must consider both labour market needs and the impact of the green and digital transitions.

2.1 What is the Habitat ecosystem?

The Habitat ecosystem can be understood as a broad ecosystem of activities related to the built and living environment. It includes construction, sustainable building, renovation, wood and furniture industries, materials, energy efficiency, installations, home-related industries and other connected services.

It is not a single occupation or subsector, but a wider field that brings together different professional areas involved in creating, improving and maintaining sustainable living spaces.

2.2 Main subsectors and occupational areas

The Habitat ecosystem covers several professional areas, including:

- construction and renovation;
- timber, wood and furniture;
- ceramics and construction materials;
- energy systems and installations;
- sustainable design and building solutions;
- digital construction and technical services;
- circular economy and resource efficiency.

These areas include occupations at different qualification levels, from technical and operational roles to specialised, engineering, design, management and innovation-related profiles.

2.3 Main challenges affecting the area

The Habitat ecosystem faces important challenges that directly affect career guidance. These include labour shortages, skills mismatches, an ageing workforce, difficulties in attracting young people, and low participation of women in some technical occupations.

At the same time, digitalisation and decarbonisation are changing job profiles and creating new skills needs. This makes it necessary to offer more flexible training pathways, support upskilling and reskilling, and help users understand how existing skills can be adapted to new professional opportunities.

2.4 Green and digital skills in the Habitat ecosystem

The green transition requires skills related to energy efficiency, sustainable materials, circular economy, waste reduction, environmental performance and more sustainable construction and production processes.

The digital transition also requires new competences, including the use of BIM, digital tools, data, automation, XR technologies and other emerging technologies. Career guidance should help users understand these skills, identify gaps and choose suitable training pathways to remain employable and adaptable.

2.5 Inclusion, equality and diversity in career pathways

Career guidance in the Habitat ecosystem should promote equal access to learning and employment opportunities. This means challenging gender stereotypes, avoiding discriminatory assumptions and encouraging diverse users to consider careers in the related fields.

Guidance professionals should pay particular attention to people with fewer opportunities, migrants, adults needing reskilling, low-qualified workers, learners with special needs and users facing accessibility barriers. Inclusive guidance can help widen participation, improve employability and support fairer career pathways.

3. Career Guidance Approach for the Habitat Ecosystem

This section presents a simple guidance approach to help professionals use the Handbook in practice. It focuses on how to support users in connecting their profile, interests and skills with occupations, training opportunities, micro-credentials and career pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

3.1 Role of career guidance in the Habitat ecosystem

Career guidance helps users make informed decisions about learning and career pathways in the Habitat related fields. It supports them in understanding their current skills, identifying possible occupations, recognising skills gaps and choosing suitable training or certification options.

In this Handbook, career guidance is understood as a lifelong process that supports not only initial career choices, but also upskilling, reskilling, mobility and adaptation to labour market changes.

3.2 Guidance Target Groups

The Handbook can support guidance work with different user profiles, including:

- VET learners choosing an education or career pathway;
- adult learners looking for upskilling or reskilling;
- workers from SMEs adapting to new skills needs;
- unemployed people or people changing careers;
- users seeking recognition of prior learning;
- people with fewer opportunities who need accessible and flexible pathways.

3.3 Basic Guidance Process

Guidance professionals can follow a simple process:

1. **Identify the user profile**

Understand the user's background, experience, goals and possible barriers.

2. **Map interests and skills**

Identify current skills, interests, strengths and previous learning experiences.

3. Explore occupations and pathways

Use HABITABLE tools to explore relevant occupations, professional areas and career options.

4. Identify skills gaps

Compare the user's current profile with the skills required for the desired pathway.

5. Select learning and certification options

Identify suitable training, online courses, WBL, mobility opportunities or micro-credentials.

6. Define an action plan

Agree on concrete next steps, responsibilities, deadlines and follow-up.

3.4 Connecting Users with Opportunities

The guidance process should help users move from information to action. Depending on their profile and goals, counsellors may refer users to:

- IVET or CVET programmes;
- online training and MOOCs;
- work-based learning or apprenticeships;
- mobility opportunities;
- micro-credentials;
- further education or formal qualification pathways.

3.5 Guidance Principles

When using this Handbook, guidance professionals should:

- focus on the user's goals, skills and potential;
- avoid assumptions based on gender, age, background, disability, nationality or previous education;
- present diverse career and training options;
- use clear and accessible language;
- support flexible pathways for users with different needs;
- encourage users to see learning as a continuous process.

4. HABITABLE Tools and Resources for Career Guidance

The **HABITABLE — Alliance of Centres of Excellence in Vocational Training for Sustainable Habitat** provides a set of digital tools and resources designed to support skills development, certification and career guidance in the Habitat ecosystem. These tools help guidance professionals access information on labour market trends, occupations, skills, training offers, learning pathways, micro-credentials and career opportunities.

4.1 Overview of HABITABLE tools

The main HABITABLE tools supporting career guidance are:

SMART SIP — Skills Intelligence Platform

Provides information on labour market trends, skills needs and sector intelligence. It helps guidance professionals understand how the Habitat ecosystem is evolving and how skills demand is changing.

Sector Map of Jobs and Skills

Presents occupations, professional profiles and related skills in the Habitat areas. It helps users explore possible career options and understand the skills required for different pathways.

Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT

Provides information about available training offers, including course title, provider, country, level, language, duration, access requirements, accreditation and links. It helps counsellors identify suitable learning opportunities.

SKILLS HUB

Acts as a central space for training, certification and career guidance resources. It includes learning materials and training programmes for different target groups, such as VET trainers, learners, SMEs and professionals.

Micro-credentials Certification Centre — MIC

Supports the validation and certification of specific skills through micro-credentials. It helps users obtain portable and verifiable recognition of learning outcomes.

SMART Career Guidance Assistant

Supports users in identifying interests and skills, exploring occupations, finding training pathways and connecting with opportunities such as micro-credentials, WBL, mobility or further learning.
In practice, a counsellor may use these tools in sequence: first to understand labour market trends, then to explore occupations and skills, then to identify training options, and finally to support certification or recognition of learning.

Together, these tools support evidence-based guidance, flexible learning pathways, skills recognition, upskilling and reskilling in line with the green and digital transitions of the Habitat ecosystem.

4.2 SMART SIP - Skills Intelligence Platform

The **SMART Skills Intelligence Platform (SMART SIP)** is an online digital platform and monitoring system that provides information on skills, labour market trends and training needs in the Habitat value chain. It is available at: https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/.

It supports the shift towards a skills and competence-oriented approach by helping users understand how the ecosystem is evolving, what skills are in demand and how VET provision can better respond to labour market needs. The SMART SIP includes three main areas: SMART Info, Sector Map of Jobs and Skills, and HABITAT Training Offer Panel.

4.2.1 What is the SMART SIP?

The SMART SIP is relevant for career guidance because it helps counsellors base their guidance on updated information. It supports evidence-based decisions about occupations, skills needs, training pathways, upskilling, reskilling and mobility.

The SMART SIP landing page provides access to the main areas of the platform. It introduces the Skills Intelligence Platform and directs users to SMART Info, the Sector Map of Jobs and Skills, and the Training Offer Panel.

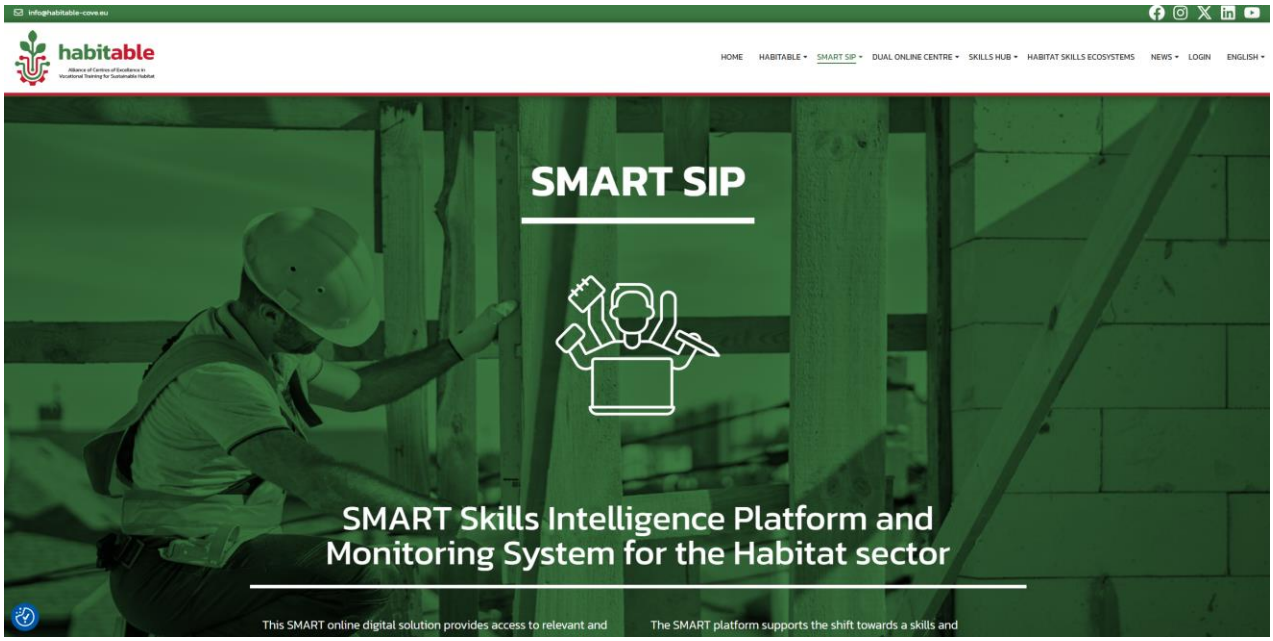

Figure 1. SMART SIP landing page — access point to skills intelligence tools for the Habitat ecosystem.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- understand the Habitat ecosystem and its labour market trends;
- explore occupations and related skills;
- identify current or future skills gaps;
- connect skills needs with VET programmes and learning pathways;
- understand the impact of the green and digital transitions;
- plan upskilling or reskilling pathways;
- prepare for mobility, further training or certification.

4.2.2 SMART INFO

SMART Info is the first operational area of the SMART SIP. It gives users access to information and guidance on European tools that support skills intelligence, including Skills-OVATE, ESCO and Europass, as well as the HABITABLE Skills Intelligence Monitoring System.

For career counsellors, SMART Info is useful as a starting point to understand professional trends, skills demand, European tools and monitoring information that can support career and learning decisions.

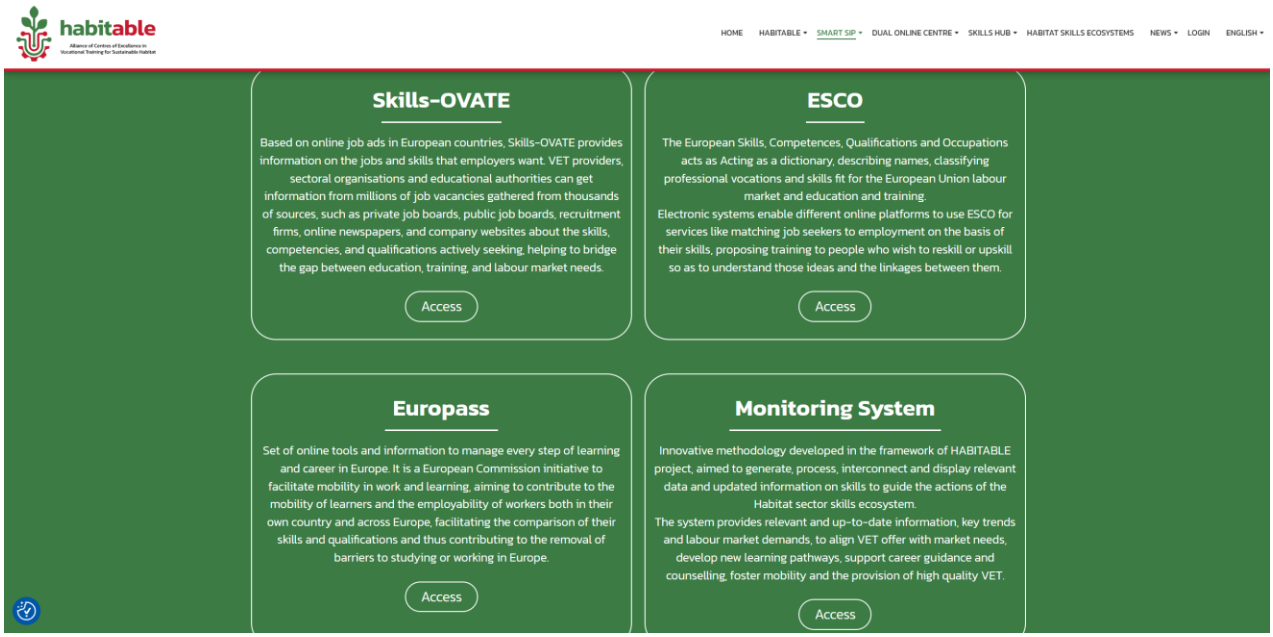

Figure 2. SMART INFO Page - Access to Skills-OVATE, ESCO, EUROPASS and Monitoring System.

Skills-OVATE

The Skills-OVATE section provides guidance on how to use information from online job advertisements to understand occupations, skills demand and labour market trends. This can help counsellors discuss current and emerging skills needs with users.

ESCO

The ESCO section supports the use of a common European classification of occupations, skills and competences. For career guidance, this helps counsellors explain job profiles and skills requirements in a structured and comparable way.

Europass

The Europass section helps users understand how to present skills, qualifications and learning experiences in a standardised European format. This is especially useful for mobility, job applications and further learning pathways.

Monitoring system

The HABITABLE Skills Intelligence Monitoring System provides information on the monitoring approach developed by the project to follow skills needs, training gaps and trends in the Habitat ecosystem.

Within SMART Info, the Monitoring System gives access to the project's annual reports on the Habitat skills ecosystem. These reports are intended to provide updated information throughout the project implementation and support the alignment between labour market needs and education and training provision.

For career counsellors, the Monitoring System is useful to understand how the Habitat ecosystem is changing over time and to support guidance decisions with updated evidence on skills demand, training needs and emerging priorities.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/smart-info/

4.2.3 What can users do in the SMART SIP?

Through the SMART SIP, users can:

- access information on skills intelligence tools;
- consult guidance on European tools such as Skills-OVATE, ESCO and Europass;
- understand labour market and skills trends in the Habitat ecosystem;
- access information on the HABITABLE Skills Intelligence Monitoring System;
- explore occupations and skills through the Sector Map of Jobs and Skills;
- search training offers through the Training Offer Panel;
- support decisions on training, mobility, micro-credentials and career pathways.

4.2.4 How counsellors can use the SMART SIP

Career counsellors can use the SMART SIP mainly at the beginning of the guidance process, when users need to understand the different areas, explore occupations or identify possible skills gaps.

A practical counselling flow may be:

1. **Understand the user's goal**

Identify whether the user wants to explore the ecosystem, choose a pathway, reskill, upskill or find training.

2. Use SMART Info

Access general information and European tools that support skills intelligence.

3. Explore labour market and skills trends

Identify relevant trends linked to green and digital transition, occupations and training needs.

4. Connect occupations and skills

Use the Sector Map of Jobs and Skills, when available, to explore professional profiles and required competences.

5. Identify training opportunities

Use the Training Offer Panel, when available, to find suitable IVET or CVET options.

6. Define next steps

Include training, micro-credentials, WBL, mobility or further guidance in the user's action plan.

4.2.5 When to use the SMART SIP

The SMART SIP may be used when the user:

- is unfamiliar with the Habitat ecosystem;
- needs to explore career options;
- wants to understand which skills are in demand;
- needs support to identify a skills gap;
- is choosing between different training pathways;
- is planning upskilling or reskilling;
- needs information linked to green or digital transition skills;
- is preparing for further training, certification, WBL or mobility.

4.2.6 Practical example

The SMART SIP can be used as the first step in a guidance process. It helps counsellors move from general information to more specific guidance on occupations, skills gaps, training opportunities and certification pathways.

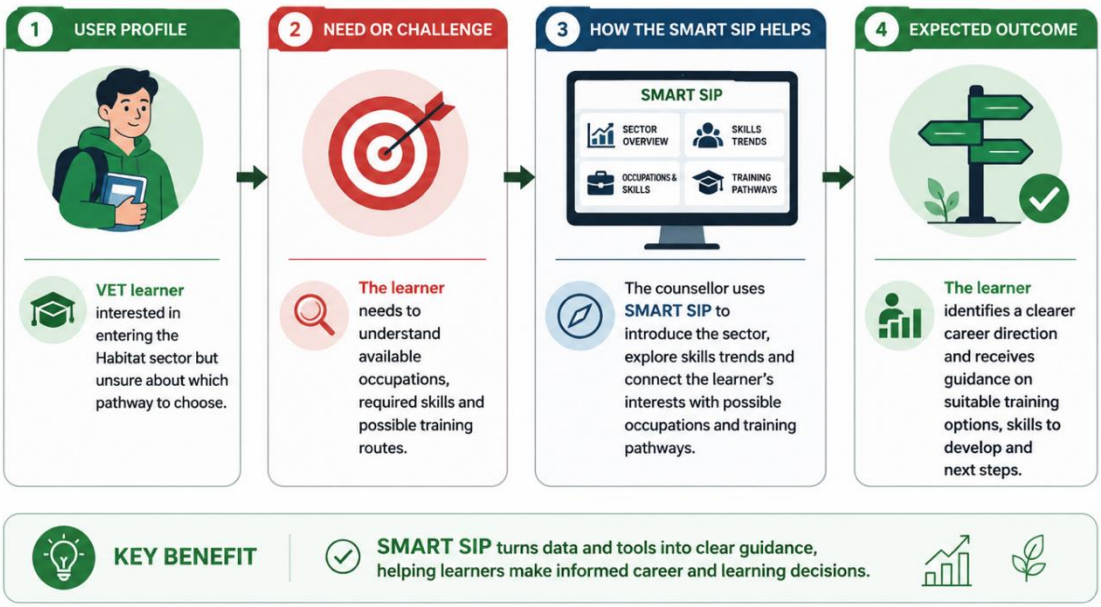

Figure 3. SMART SIP practical example — connecting learner interests, skills trends and training pathways.

4.2.7 Key message

The SMART SIP should be used as a starting point for evidence-based guidance. It helps counsellors connect labour market trends, occupations, skills and training pathways, supporting users in making informed career and learning decisions in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.3 Sector Map of Jobs and Skills

4.3.1 What is the Sector Map of Jobs and Skills?

The Sector Map of Jobs and Skills is an online digital tool designed to provide a reference framework for the occupational domain of the Habitat ecosystem.

It aims to present occupations, professional profiles and related skills, helping users understand how jobs are connected with VET programmes and learning pathways. The tool is part of the SMART SIP and is intended to support skills intelligence, career guidance, mobility and training planning.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/sector-map-of-jobs-and-skills/

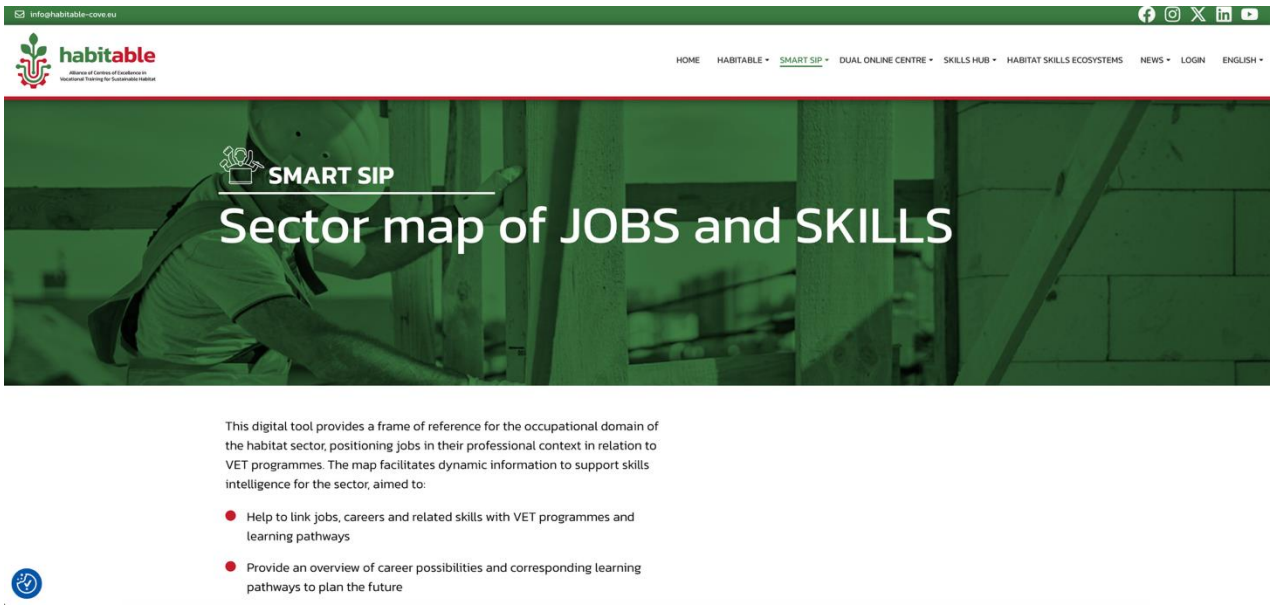

Figure 4. Sector Map of Jobs and Skills page — access to the tool linking jobs, skills, VET programmes and learning pathways.

The Sector Map helps connect jobs, careers, skills and VET programmes, making it easier for learners, workers and counsellors to explore career possibilities and identify suitable learning pathways.

4.3.2 Why is the Sector Map relevant for career guidance?

The Sector Map is relevant for career guidance because it helps counsellors explain the occupational structure of the Habitat ecosystem in a clear and organised way.

It can support users in moving from a general interest in the field to a better understanding of specific occupations, required skills and possible training routes.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- explore occupations in the Habitat ecosystem;
- understand skills required for specific professional profiles;
- compare different career pathways;
- identify skills gaps;
- connect occupations with VET programmes;
- plan upskilling or reskilling;
- explore career development or mobility opportunities;

- understand how green, digital and technical skills are linked to occupations.

4.3.3 What can users do with the Sector Map?

Through the Sector Map, users can:

- explore jobs and occupations in the Habitat ecosystem;
- identify professional profiles and related skills;
- understand links between occupations and VET programmes;
- visualise possible career pathways;
- compare current skills with required skills;
- identify potential training needs;
- support mobility and career development decisions;
- access information connected to inclusion, equality and people with fewer opportunities.

The Sector Map provides an overview of the habitable-relates fields as a whole, including types and levels of occupations, corresponding VET programmes, career development and mobility, and indicators related to social inclusion, people with fewer opportunities and gender equality.

4.3.4 How counsellors can use the Sector Map

Career counsellors can use the Sector Map when a user needs to explore possible occupations or understand the skills required for a chosen pathway.

A practical counselling flow may be:

1. **Identify the user's interest área**
   Clarify which Habitat subsector or professional area the user is interested in.
2. **Explore related occupations**
   Use the Sector Map to identify jobs and professional profiles connected to that interest area.
3. **Review required skills**
   Analyse the skills linked to the selected occupation or profile.
4. **Compare with the user's current skills**
   Identify strengths, gaps and possible areas for development.
5. **Connect with learning pathways**
   Link the occupation and skills gap with VET programmes, training options or micro-credentials.

6. **Define next steps**
   Include relevant training, certification, WBL, mobility or further guidance in the user's action plan.

4.3.5 When to use the Sector Map

The Sector Map may be recommended when the user:

- wants to explore occupations in the Habitat ecosystem;
- is unsure which career pathway to choose;
- needs to understand skills requirements;
- is considering upskilling or reskilling;
- wants to compare different professional profiles;
- needs support linking interests with occupations;
- is planning training, WBL, apprenticeship or mobility;
- needs to understand how green and digital skills apply to specific jobs.

4.3.6 Practical example

This example shows how the Sector Map of Jobs and Skills can support an adult learner considering a career change into the Habitat ecosystem. The counsellor uses the tool to explore occupations, compare existing and required skills, and identify suitable training or certification pathways.

Figure 5. Using the Sector Map to connect previous experience with career pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.3.7 Key message

The Sector Map should be used as a bridge between career exploration and skills planning. It helps counsellors connect users' interests and previous experience with concrete occupations, required skills and possible learning pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.4 Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT

4.4.1 What is the Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT?

The **Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT** is an online monitoring panel designed to provide updated information on **IVET and CVET training offers** available in the VET skills ecosystems participating in the HABITABLE project.

It is connected with the **Sector Map of Jobs and Skills** and aims to improve the matching between training provision and labour market needs in the Habitat ecosystem. The tool supports the identification of learning opportunities, training gaps and new training pathways, especially in areas linked to the green and digital transitions.

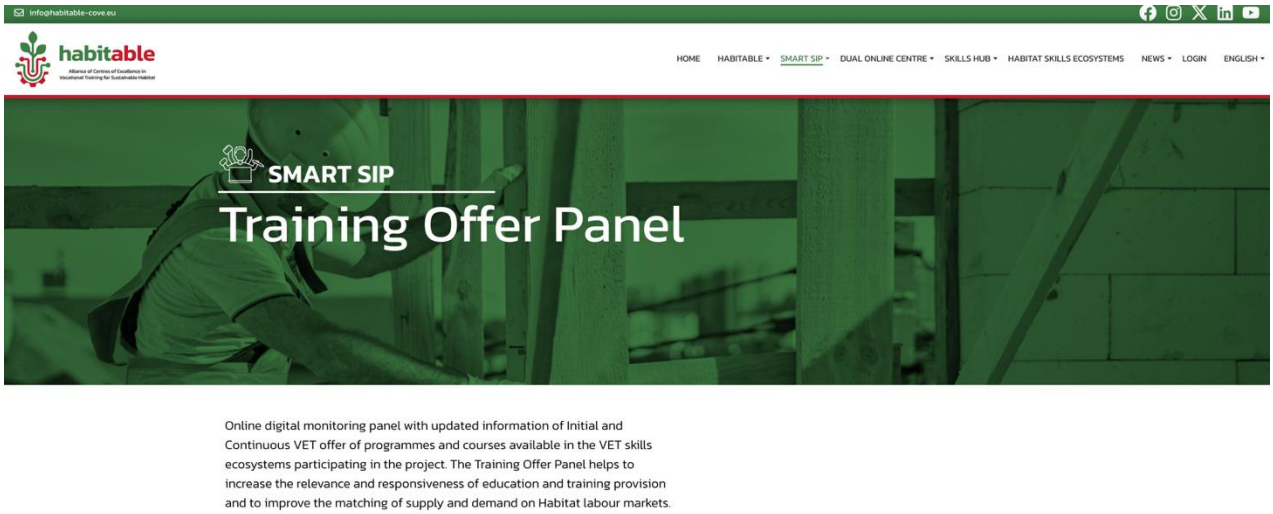

Figure 6. TOP HABITAT landing page — access point to IVET and CVET training offers in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.4.2 Why is TOP HABITAT relevant for career guidance?

TOP HABITAT is relevant for career guidance because it helps counsellors move from career exploration to concrete training recommendations.

After a user has identified an occupation, skills gap or career goal, counsellors can use the Training Offer Panel to find suitable education and training options. This supports more practical and informed guidance, especially for users who need upskilling, reskilling or a clear learning pathway into the Habitat ecosystem.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- find IVET or CVET programmes;
- compare training opportunities;
- identify courses linked to specific skills or occupations;
- understand training level, duration, language and access requirements;
- find accredited or certified training;
- prepare for upskilling or reskilling;
- connect training with micro-credentials, WBL, mobility or employment opportunities.

4.4.3 What can users do with TOP HABITAT?

Through TOP HABITAT, users can:

- search training offers related to the Habitat ecosystem;
- access information on IVET and CVET programmes;
- identify training providers and countries;
- check course level, duration, language and access requirements;
- consult information on accreditation or certification;
- connect training offers with occupations and skills;
- identify training options for green and digital skills;
- support decisions on learning pathways and career progression.

The Training Offer Panel supports the identification of gaps in the training offer, the design of new training solutions, innovation in course planning, development of new learning pathways, career guidance, mobility and micro-credentials.

4.4.4 How counsellors can use TOP HABITAT

Career counsellors can use TOP HABITAT when a user needs to identify concrete learning opportunities after exploring occupations and skills.

A practical counselling flow may be:

1. **Identify the user's career goal**
   Clarify the target occupation, sector area or skill to be developed.
2. **Identify the skills gap**
   Use previous guidance steps or the Sector Map to understand which skills need to be developed.
3. **Search training offers**
   Use TOP HABITAT to find relevant IVET or CVET programmes.
4. **Compare training Options**
   Review course title, provider, country, language, level, duration, access requirements and accreditation.
5. **Select the most suitable pathway**
   Choose the training option that best matches the user's goals, profile and constraints.
6. **Connect with next steps**
   Include the selected course in the user's action plan and, where relevant, connect it with micro-credentials, WBL, mobility or further guidance.

4.4.5 When to use TOP HABITAT

TOP HABITAT may be recommended when the user:

- needs to find a concrete training option;
- wants to compare IVET or CVET offers;
- has identified a skills gap;
- is preparing for upskilling or reskilling;
- needs training related to green or digital skills;
- wants to enter the Habitat ecosystem through a structured learning pathway;
- needs information on course access requirements, language, duration or accreditation;
- is planning WBL, mobility, certification or further learning.

4.4.6 Practical example

This example shows how TOP HABITAT can support a guidance process when a user needs to move from a career interest or skills gap to a concrete training option. The counsellor uses the tool to compare training offers and define the next steps for enrolment, certification or career progression.

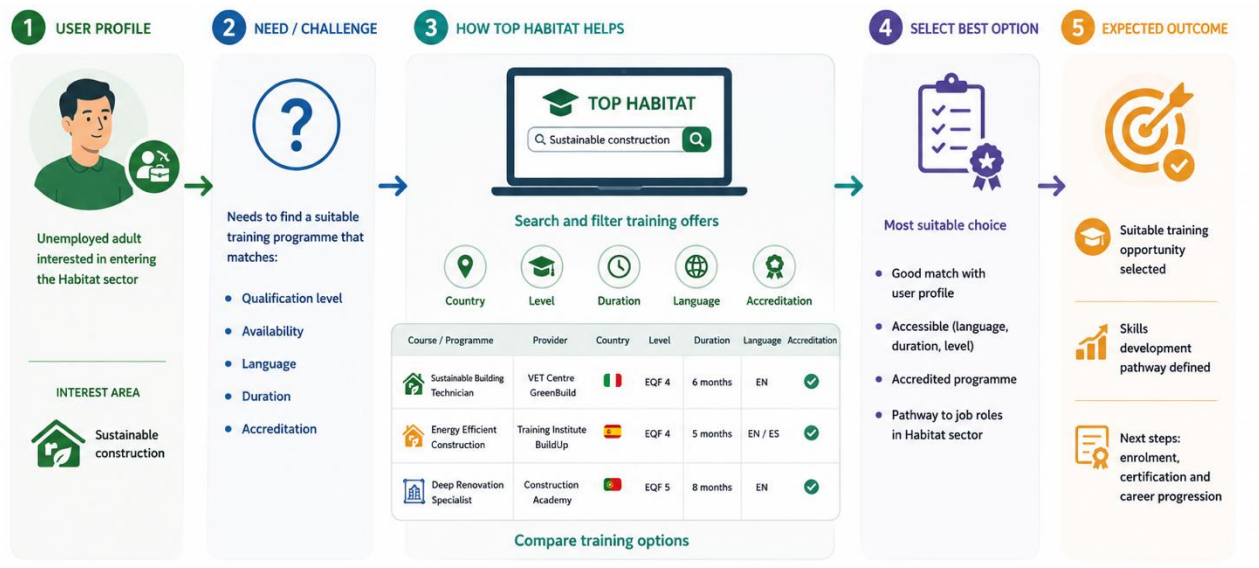

Figure 7. Practical example — using TOP HABITAT to connect skills gaps with training opportunities.

4.4.7 Key message

TOP HABITAT should be used as a bridge between skills needs and training opportunities. It helps counsellors transform identified career goals or skills gaps into concrete IVET and CVET learning pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.5 SKILLS HUB

4.5.1 What is the SKILLS HUB?

The HABITABLE SKILLS HUB is a multifunctional online platform for skills training, certification and career guidance in the Habitat ecosystem.

It supports the implementation of the Habitat ecosystem skills strategy by providing **VET teachers and trainers, VET learners and SME employees** with access to digital tools for training, skills recognition and career guidance.

The SKILLS HUB is designed to support the acquisition, recognition and guidance of labour market relevant skills, including those needed for the green and digital transitions.

The SKILLS HUB landing page provides access to the main tools developed within WP4. It works as a central entry point for users looking for training opportunities, certification resources, innovative curricula and career guidance support.

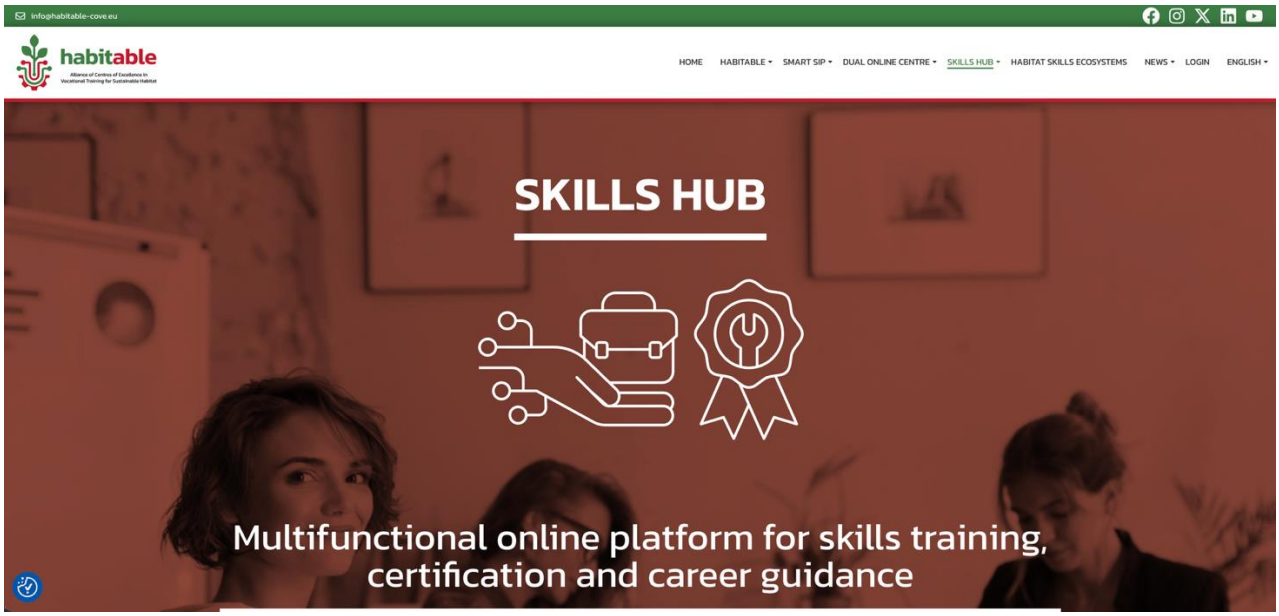

Figure 8. SKILLS HUB landing page — central access point for training, certification and career guidance resources.

4.5.2 Why is the SKILLS HUB relevant for career guidance?

The SKILLS HUB is relevant for career guidance because it connects users with practical tools that support learning, certification and career development.

For counsellors, it can be used to move from the identification of a user's skills needs to concrete opportunities for training, recognition and career planning. It helps guidance professionals recommend resources according to the user's profile, such as VET learner, trainer, SME employee or adult learner.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- access training opportunities in the Habitat ecosystem;
- develop green or digital skills;
- identify learning resources for upskilling or reskilling;
- connect training with micro-credentials;
- access career guidance tools;
- prepare for employment, mobility or further learning;

- strengthen employability and lifelong learning pathways.

4.5.3 Main components of the SKILLS HUB

The SKILLS HUB includes four main components: **Online Training Platform**, **Micro-credentials Certification Centre**, **Innovative Curricula Digital Database** and **Career Guidance Space**.

Online Training Platform

The Online Training Platform provides access to tailor-made training programmes and MOOCs designed to support upskilling, professional development and the updating of labour market relevant skills.

The training offer is organised for three main target groups:

- **VET teachers and trainers**, with training on digital skills for teaching VET, Extended Reality technologies, innovative pedagogies and work-readiness skills through XR;
- **SMEs**, with training on upskilling and reskilling staff for the green and digital transitions, and on preparing in-company trainers and tutors for green, digital and inclusive apprenticeships;
- **VET learners**, with training on work-readiness skills in quality and inclusive VET programmes supported by XR tools.

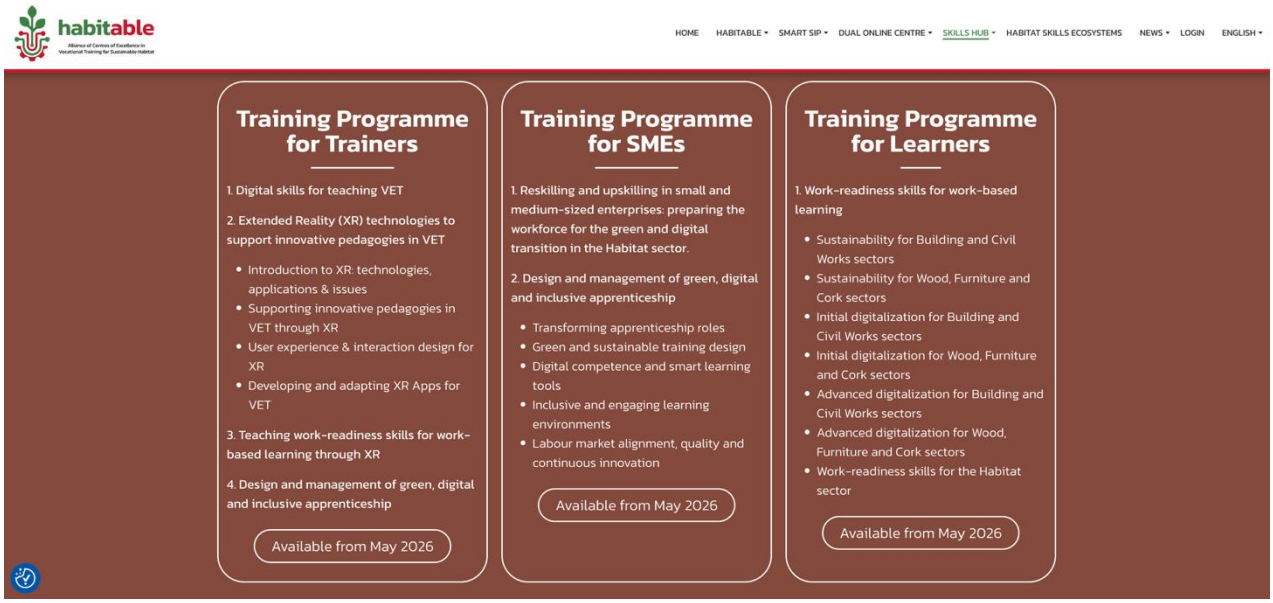

Figure 9. Online Training Platform — tailor-made training programmes and MOOCs for trainers, SMEs and VET learners.

The Online Training Platform is the training component of the SKILLS HUB. It helps users access structured learning opportunities linked to the needs of the Habitat-related fields and the green and digital transitions.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/online-training-platform/

Micro-credentials Certification Centre

The Micro-credentials Certification Centre supports the certification of learning outcomes acquired in short-term learning experiences and the validation of prior learning through micro-credentials.

It helps **users manage lifelong learning and career development** through portable credentials, supporting recognition of skills that are relevant to the labour market, especially in the context of the green and digital transitions.

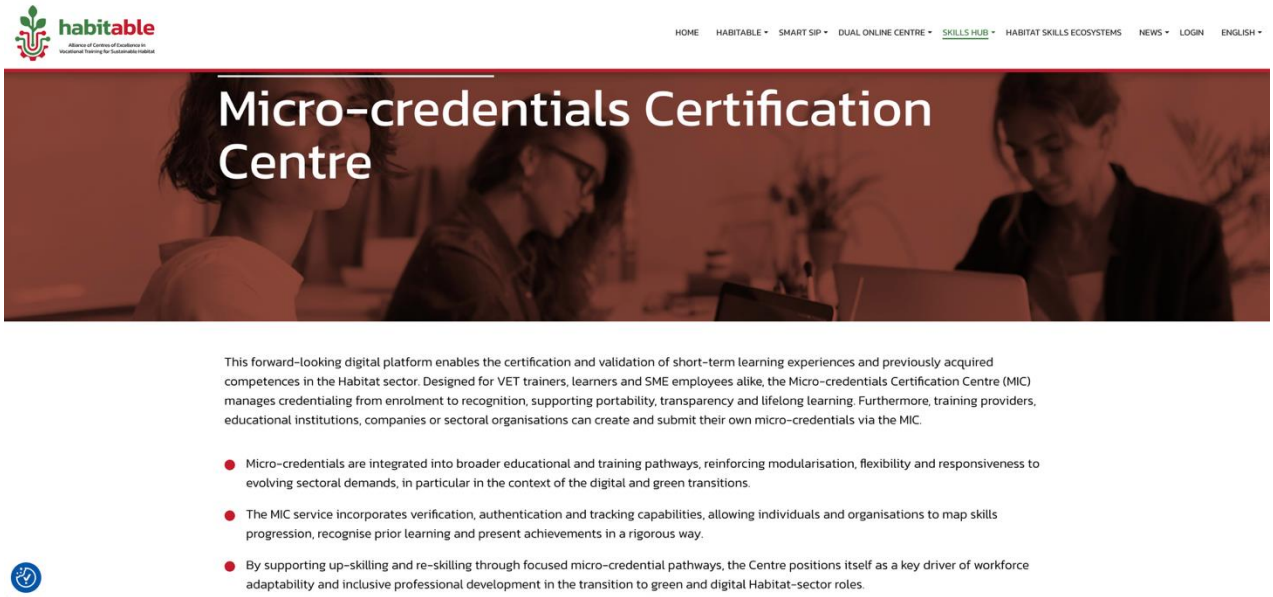

Figure 10. Micro-credentials Certification Centre – validation and certification of learning outcomes through micro-credentials.

The Micro-credentials Certification Centre connects learning with recognition. It allows users to certify specific skills and supports counsellors in recommending micro-credentials as part of a career or learning action plan.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/micro-credentials-certification-centre/

As the MIC is a key tool for connecting learning with skills recognition and career progression, it is explained in more detail in **Section 4.6. Micro-credentials Certification Centre**.

Innovative Curricula Digital Database

The Innovative Curricula Digital Database is designed to support VET teachers and trainers in the development of new training courses.

It provides access to curriculum resources in strategic areas for the Habitat skills ecosystem, including technical skills for new and emerging occupations, skills for the digital and green transitions, work-readiness skills, and innovative learner-centred teaching practices.

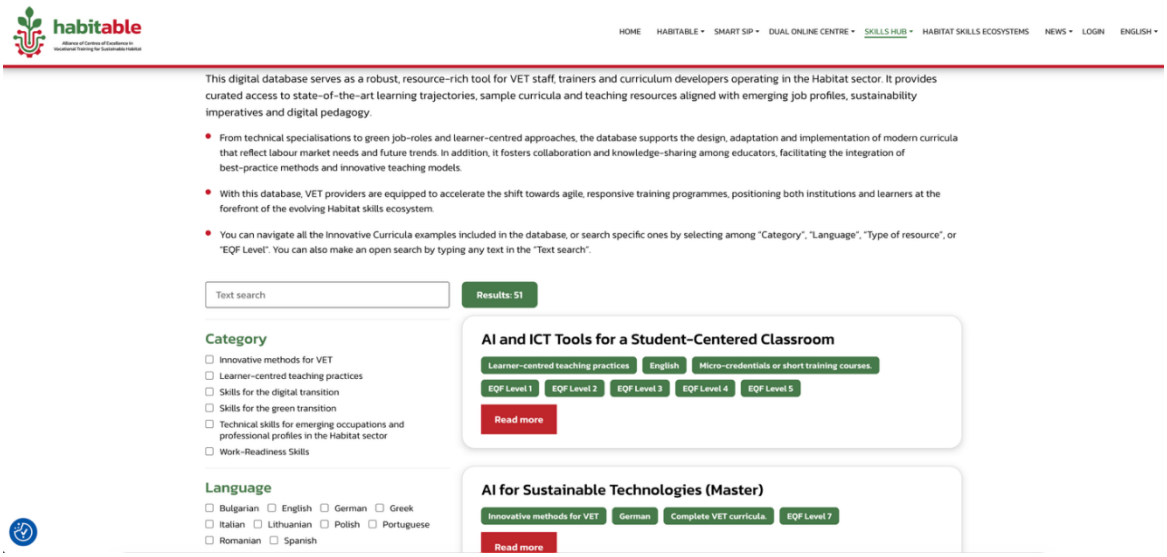

Figure 11. Innovative Curricula Digital Database — curriculum resources for new skills and emerging occupations.

The Innovative Curricula Digital Database helps trainers and training providers design or update courses according to emerging skills needs in the Habitat ecosystem.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/innovative-curricula-digital-database/

Career Guidance Space

The Career Guidance Space provides access to tools and resources for personalised career guidance in the Habitat ecosystem.

It includes the SMART Career Guidance Assistant, an AI-based tool that supports users in recognising their skills and interests, comparing them with current and future opportunities, identifying further training and connecting skills recognition with micro-credentials.

It also hosts the Career Guidance Handbook for the Habitat sector, aimed at supporting career counsellors in using HABITABLE tools and resources to provide inclusive guidance.

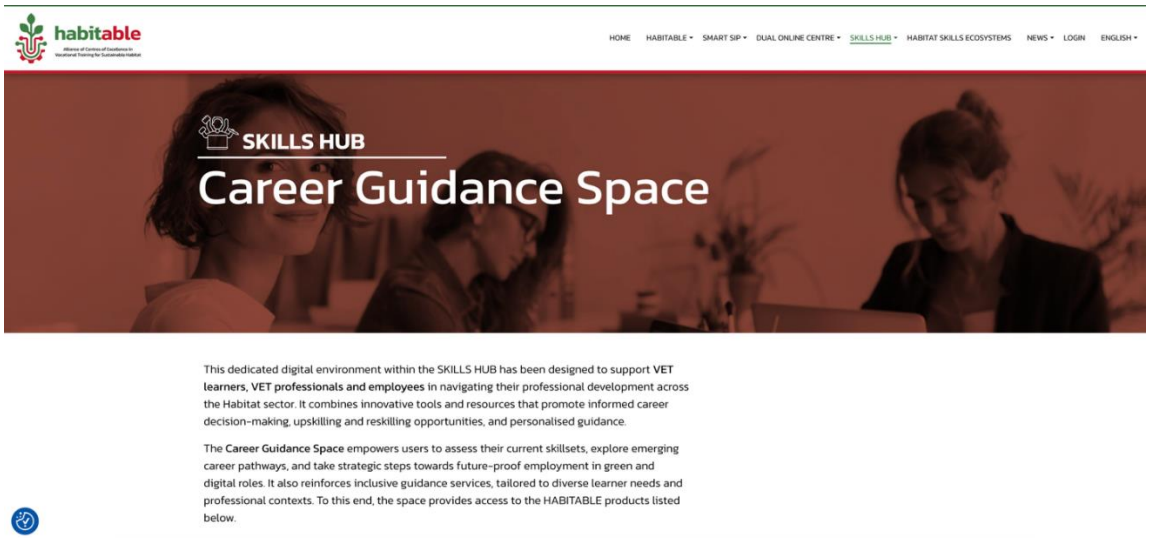

Figure 12. Career Guidance Space — access to personalised guidance tools, the SMART Career Guidance Assistant and the Career Guidance Handbook.

The Career Guidance Space is the guidance component of the SKILLS HUB. It supports both end users and guidance professionals by connecting skills identification, career exploration, training suggestions and micro-credentials.

Access: https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/career-guidance-space/

4.5.4 What can users do in the SKILLS HUB?

Through the SKILLS HUB, users can:

- access training programmes and MOOCs;
- explore resources for green, digital and inclusive skills;
- find training opportunities for VET teachers and trainers, SMEs and VET learners;
- access micro-credentials and certification tools;
- consult innovative curriculum resources;
- use career guidance tools;

- connect training, certification and career planning in one digital environment.

4.5.5 When to recommend the SKILLS HUB

The SKILLS HUB may be recommended when the user:

- needs training in the Habitat ecosystem;
- wants to develop green or digital skills;
- needs upskilling or reskilling;
- is looking for online or flexible learning;
- wants to certify specific learning outcomes;
- needs support to identify career or training options;
- is preparing for employment, mobility, WBL or further learning;
- needs resources for course design or training provision.

4.5.6 Practical example

This example shows how the SKILLS HUB can support a guidance process for an SME employee who needs to update skills for the green and digital transition. The counsellor uses the platform to identify flexible online training opportunities and, when relevant, connect the learning pathway with certification through the MIC.

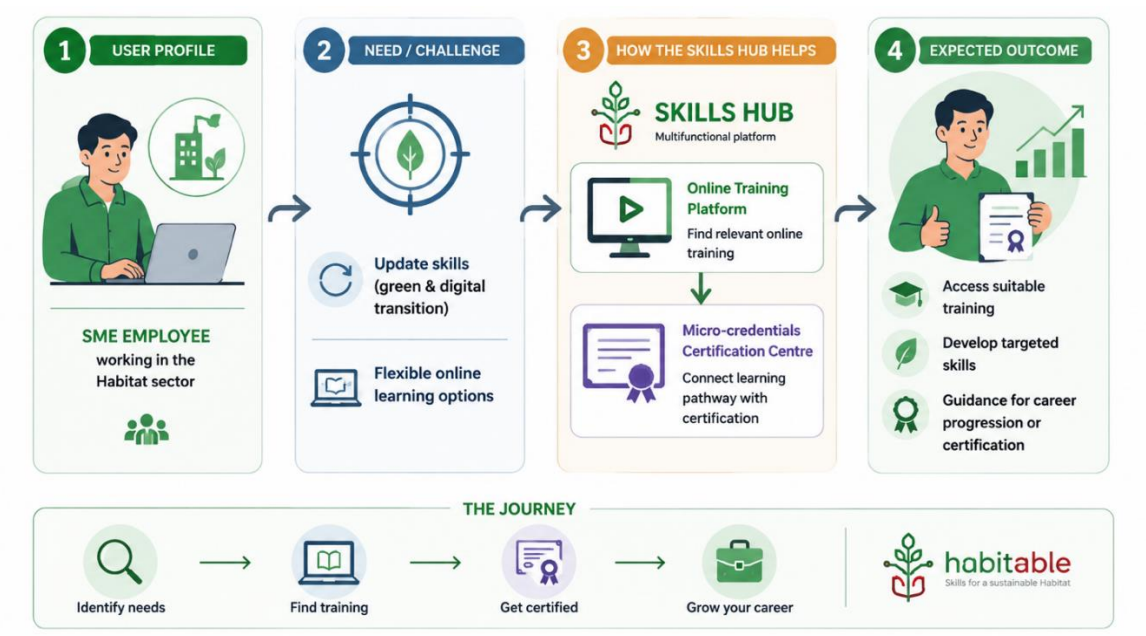

Figure 13. Practical example — using the SKILLS HUB to connect online training, certification and career progression.

4.5.7 Key message

The SKILLS HUB should be used as a central gateway to HABITABLE training, certification and career guidance resources. It helps counsellors transform identified skills needs into concrete learning, recognition and career development pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.6 Micro-credentials Certification Centre

4.6.1 What is the MIC?

The **Micro-credentials Certification Centre (MIC)** is the certification component of the HABITABLE SKILLS HUB. It is a multilingual online platform that supports the validation, certification and promotion of skills in the Habitat ecosystem. It is available at: https://mic.habitable-cove.eu/

The MIC allows users to explore available micro-credentials, validate competences through online assessment processes and obtain certifications linked to specific learning outcomes. It supports lifelong learning, employability and skills recognition, especially for users who need flexible and modular pathways for upskilling or reskilling.

The MIC landing page provides the first access point to the Micro-credentials Certification Centre. From this page, users can understand the purpose of the platform and access the main areas related to micro-credential exploration, validation and certification.

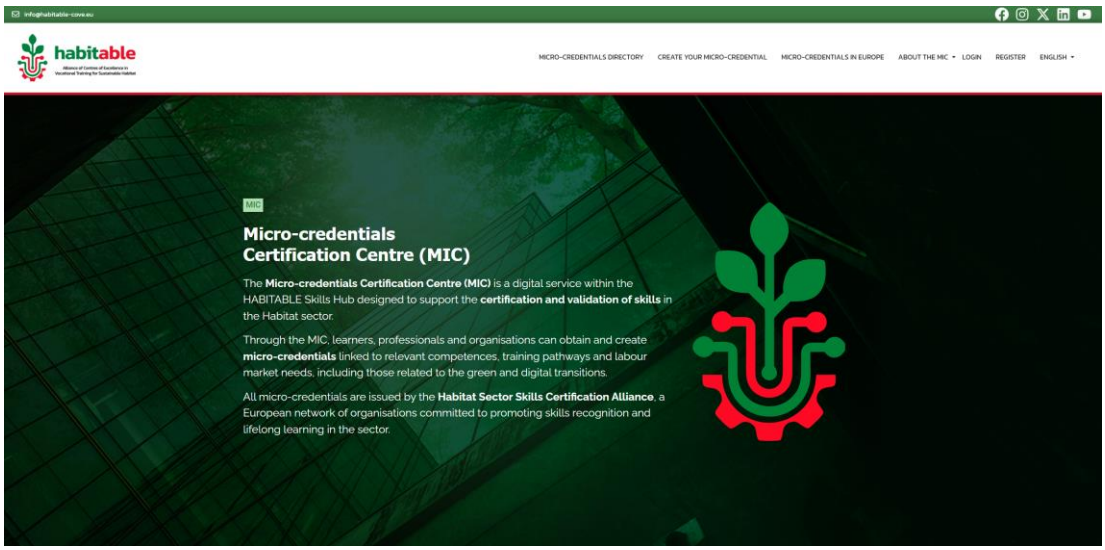

Figure 14. MIC landing page — access point to micro-credentials, validation and certification resources.

The platform is aligned with European frameworks and tools such as **EQF, ESCO, Europass and European Digital Credentials for Learning**, supporting transparency, portability and recognition of skills across different contexts. The MIC supports career guidance by connecting skills identification with concrete recognition opportunities. Its main benefits are related to recognising skills, supporting flexible learning pathways, improving employability, enabling mobility and providing verifiable certification.

Figure 15. MIC key benefits — recognition, flexible learning pathways and portable certification.

4.6.2 Why is the MIC relevant for career guidance?

The MIC is relevant for career guidance because it helps counsellors move from general advice to a concrete and certifiable action. After identifying a user's skills, interests or gaps, the counsellor can recommend a specific micro-credential as part of the user's career or learning plan.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- prove specific competences;
- update skills for the green or digital transition;
- validate non-formal or informal learning;
- improve employability;
- prepare for a new role;
- support mobility or career progression;
- build a flexible learning pathway instead of following only long training programmes.

4.6.3 What can users do in the MIC?

Through the MIC, users can:

- browse available micro-credentials;
- access detailed information about each micro-credential;
- check learning outcomes, target group, workload, EQF level, assessment method and related ESCO occupations;

- complete an online validation or assessment process;
- obtain a downloadable certificate;
- verify issued micro-credentials through a QR code, credential hash and verification URL;
- use the certificate as evidence of specific skills.

The MIC Directory introduces users to the available micro-credentials and explains what information can be found for each one. It also provides a simple overview of the steps needed to obtain a micro-credential, from browsing the offer to completing the assessment process.

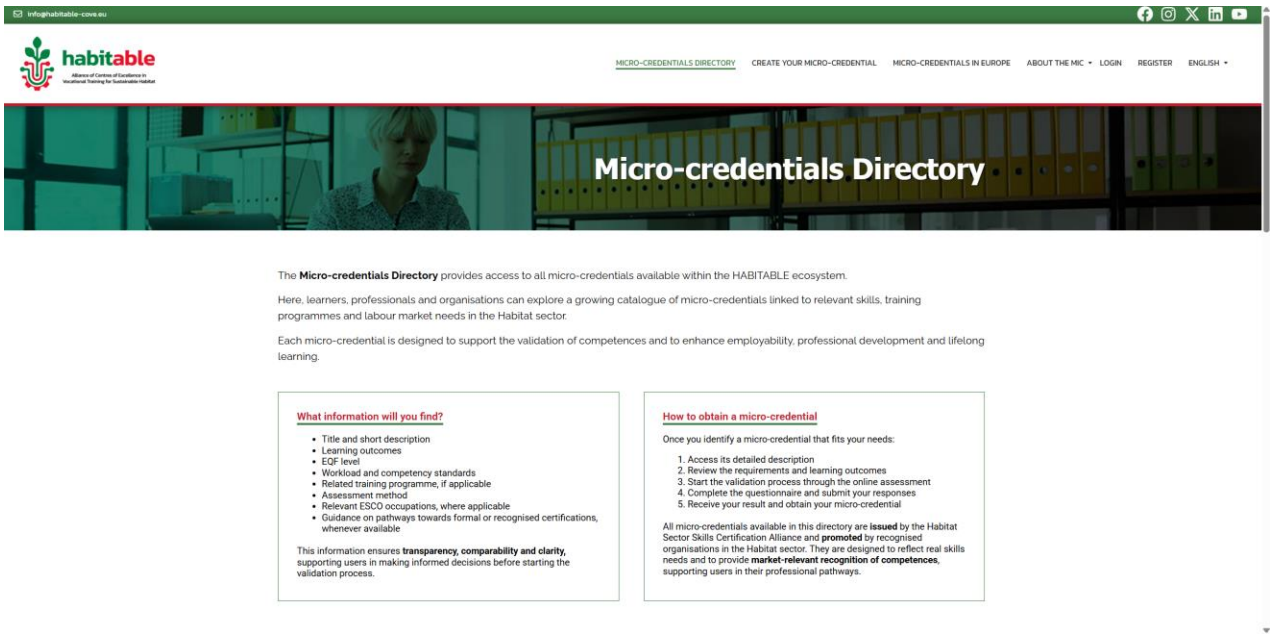

Figure 16. MIC Directory overview — information and steps to access micro-credentials.

Organisations can also use the MIC to propose, create and promote new micro-credentials, contributing to a growing ecosystem of skills recognition in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.6.4 How counsellors can use the MIC

Career guidance professionals can use the MIC mainly after the user's profile and skills needs have been identified.

Career counsellors can use the MIC as part of a structured guidance process. The following flow shows how the tool can be used after identifying the user's profile and skills needs, moving from skills diagnosis to micro-credential recommendation and follow-up.

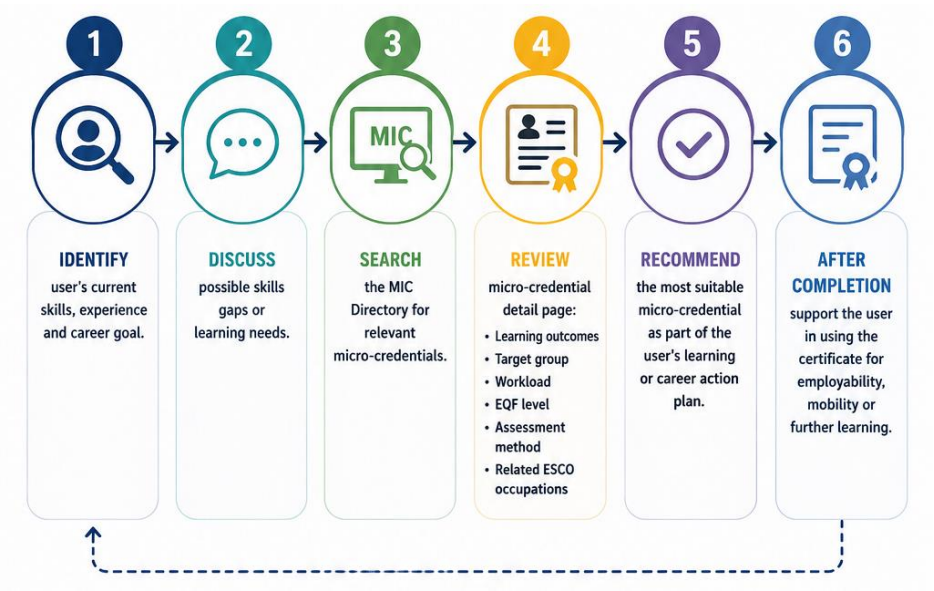

Figure 17. Practical counselling flow — suggested use of the MIC by career counsellors.

4.6.5 When to recommend a micro-credential

A micro-credential may be recommended when the user:

- has a specific skills gap;
- needs a short and focused learning opportunity;
- wants to demonstrate recently acquired competences;
- has professional experience but lacks formal recognition;
- is changing career pathway;
- needs to adapt to new green or digital requirements;
- wants to strengthen a CV, Europass profile or job application;
- is preparing for further training, WBL, apprenticeship or mobility.

4.6.6 Practical Example

The MIC can be used in practical guidance situations where users need to demonstrate or update specific competences. The example below shows how a counsellor can support an adult worker seeking upskilling for the green and digital transition.

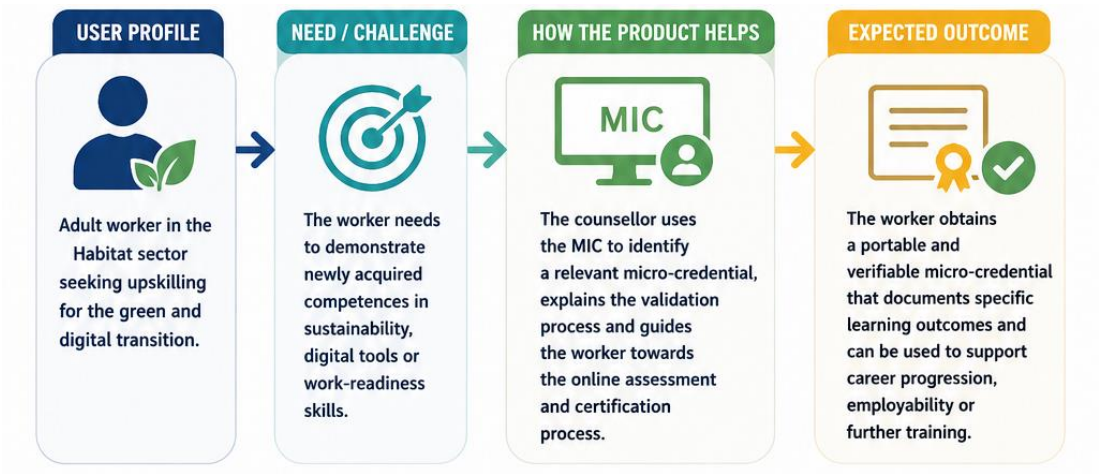

Figure 18. Practical example — using the MIC to support upskilling for the green and digital transition.

4.6.7 First set of micro-credentials

The first set of micro-credentials available in the MIC is linked to the HABITABLE Online Training Platform, available at: https://mic.habitable-cove.eu/micro-credentials-directory/, and includes topics such as digital skills for teaching VET, extended reality technologies, innovative pedagogies, work-readiness skills, SME upskilling and reskilling, and green, digital and inclusive apprenticeships.

The Micro-credentials Directory allows users and counsellors to browse the available micro-credentials and identify options aligned with specific learning needs, professional goals or skills gaps.

These micro-credentials are especially relevant for guidance related to:

- digital skills;
- green transition;
- VET innovation;
- work-based learning;
- SME workforce development;
- inclusive apprenticeship;
- XR technologies in education and training.

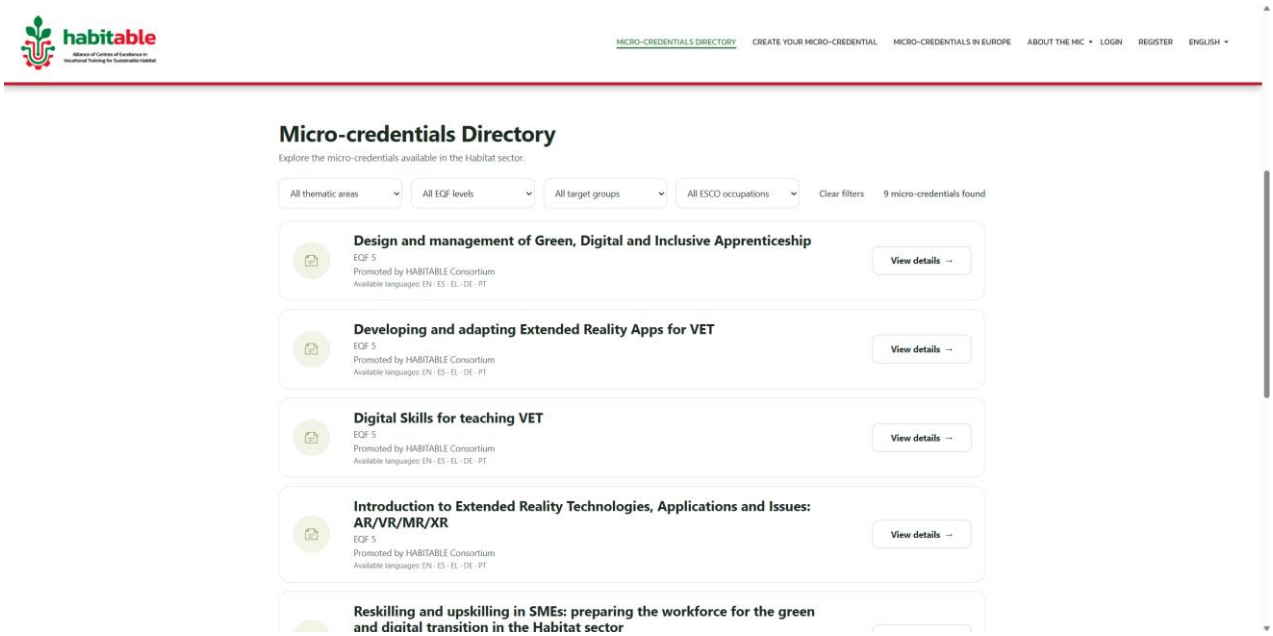

Figure 19. MIC Directory — search and browse available micro-credentials.

4.6.8 Key message for counsellors

The MIC should be used as a bridge between guidance and recognition. It helps transform identified skills needs into concrete certification opportunities, allowing users to document their learning and strengthen their career pathway in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.7 SMART Career Guidance Assistant

4.7.1 What is the SMART Career Guidance Assistant?

The **SMART Career Guidance Assistant** is a digital career guidance tool based on Artificial Intelligence technology. It is part of the **Career Guidance Space** within the HABITABLE SKILLS HUB.

The tool is designed to support personalised career guidance through a digital assessment process based on closed questions and predefined answers. It supports users in recognising their skills and interests, comparing them with current and future opportunities, identifying suggested further training, and connecting skills recognition with micro-credentials.

4.7.2 Why is the SMART Career Guidance Assistant relevant for career guidance?

The SMART Career Guidance Assistant is relevant for career guidance because it helps counsellors personalise the guidance process according to the user's profile, interests, skills and career goals.

It can support users in moving from a general interest or uncertainty to clearer career and learning options. For counsellors, it can work as a support tool to structure conversations, identify possible pathways and connect users with HABITABLE training and certification resources.

This is particularly useful when users need to:

- identify their interests and skills;
- explore possible occupations in the Habitat ecosystem;
- understand current and future opportunities;
- receive suggestions for further training;
- connect skills gaps with learning pathways;
- access micro-credentials for skills recognition;
- prepare for WBL, mobility or employment opportunities.

4.7.3 What can users do with the SMART Career Guidance Assistant?

Through the SMART Career Guidance Assistant, users can:

- reflect on their interests, skills and career goals;
- receive personalised guidance suggestions;
- explore career opportunities in the Habitat ecosystem;
- identify possible skills gaps;
- find suggested training pathways;
- connect learning needs with micro-credentials;
- support career planning and decision-making.

4.7.4 How counsellors can use the SMART Career Guidance Assistant

Career counsellors can use the SMART Career Guidance Assistant during or after the first guidance conversation, especially when the user needs support to clarify interests, identify skills or explore possible pathways.

A practical counselling flow may be:

1. **Identify the user profile**

Clarify the user's background, interests, experience and career goals.

2. **Complete the assessment questions on interests, skills and goals**

   Support the user in reflecting on existing competences and preferences.

3. **Review suggested career Options**

   Discuss possible occupations or pathways proposed by the tool.

4. **Identify training or skills gaps**

   Compare the user's current profile with the skills needed for the suggested pathway.

5. **Connect with HABITABLE resources**

   Refer the user to training opportunities, micro-credentials, WBL, mobility or other tools.

6. **Define an action plan**

   Agree on next steps and follow-up actions.

4.7.5 When to use the SMART Career Guidance Assistant

The SMART Career Guidance Assistant may be recommended when the user:

- is unsure about which career pathway to choose;
- needs help identifying interests and skills;
- wants personalised guidance in the Habitat ecosystem;
- needs to explore occupations and training options;
- wants to understand how their profile matches opportunities;
- is planning upskilling or reskilling;
- needs support connecting training, certification and career goals;
- is preparing for employment, WBL or mobility.

4.7.6 Practical example

This example shows how the SMART Career Guidance Assistant can support a young VET learner through an assessment-based process. The user provides information through closed questions and predefined answers, allowing the tool to generate guidance recommendations that can then be reviewed with a counsellor.

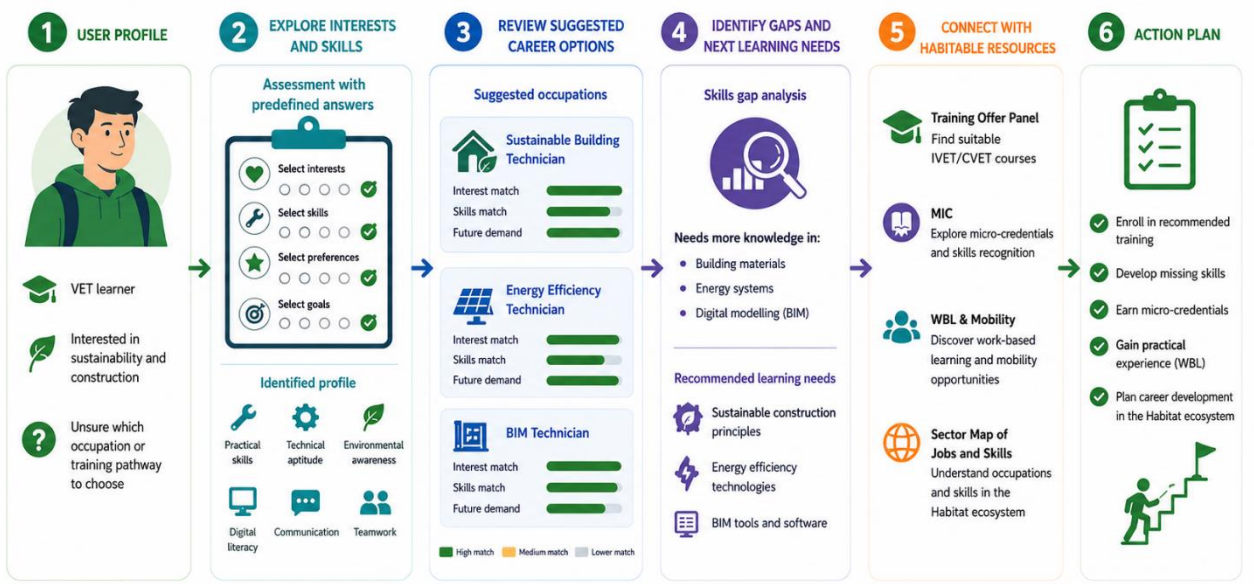

Figure 20. Practical example — using the SMART Career Guidance Assistant to connect interests, skills and career pathways.

4.7.7 Key message for counsellors

The SMART Career Guidance Assistant should be used as a support tool for personalised guidance. It helps counsellors connect users' interests, skills and goals with career opportunities, training pathways and skills recognition options in the Habitat ecosystem.

4.8 How to combine the tools in a guidance process

The HABITABLE tools can be used separately, according to the user's needs, but their strongest value comes from being combined in a coherent guidance process.

Together, they allow counsellors to move from **sector intelligence** to **career exploration**, then to **training selection**, **skills development**, **certification** and **personalised career planning**.
A practical integrated process may follow these steps:

Step 1 — Understand the ecosystem and skills trends
Counsellors may start with the **SMART SIP** to understand labour market trends, skills needs and the evolution of the Habitat-related value chain.
This helps the counsellor explain to users:

- which skills are in demand;
- how the green and digital transitions are changing the ecosystem;

- which occupations and training areas may offer future opportunities.

Recommended tool: SMART SIP

Step 2 — Explore occupations and skills

After identifying the user's interests or career goals, counsellors may use the **Sector Map of Jobs and Skills** to explore occupations, professional profiles and related skills.

This supports the user in understanding:

- possible occupations in the Habitat ecosystem;
- skills required for each profile;
- how current skills compare with required skills;
- which gaps may need to be addressed.

Recommended tool: Sector Map of Jobs and Skills

Step 3 — Identify training opportunities

Once the skills gap or learning need is clear, counsellors may use the **Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT** to search for suitable IVET or CVET opportunities.

This helps users compare training options according to:

- course or programme title;
- provider and country;
- level and duration;
- language;
- access requirements;
- accreditation or certification.

Recommended tool: Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT

Step 4 — Access learning resources

When users need online or flexible training, counsellors may refer them to the **SKILLS HUB**, especially the Online Training Platform and other learning resources.

This supports:

- upskilling and reskilling;
- green and digital skills development;
- work-readiness skills;
- training for VET learners, trainers and SME employees;

- access to structured MOOCs and resources.

Recommended tool: SKILLS HUB

Step 5 — Recognise and certify skills

After training or when prior learning needs recognition, counsellors may use the **Micro-credentials Certification Centre — MIC** to support validation and certification.

This helps users:

- validate specific competences;
- obtain portable and verifiable micro-credentials;
- document learning outcomes;
- strengthen employability, mobility or career progression.

Recommended tool: MIC

Step 6 — Personalise the career pathway

The **SMART Career Guidance Assistant** can be used to support personalised guidance by connecting the user's interests, skills and goals with career options, training pathways and recognition opportunities.

It can help counsellors:

- structure guidance conversations;
- review possible career options;
- identify further learning needs;
- connect users with HABITABLE resources;
- define concrete next steps.

Recommended tool: SMART Career Guidance Assistant

The HABITABLE tools should be used as an **integrated guidance ecosystem**. Each tool supports a different stage of the guidance process, from understanding labour market trends to identifying occupations, selecting training, recognising skills and planning career progression.

Used together, they help trainers and tutors transform user needs into concrete, personalised and evidence-based career pathways in the Habitat ecosystem.

The figure below summarises how the HABITABLE tools can be combined into an integrated guidance pathway, from skills intelligence to personalised career planning.

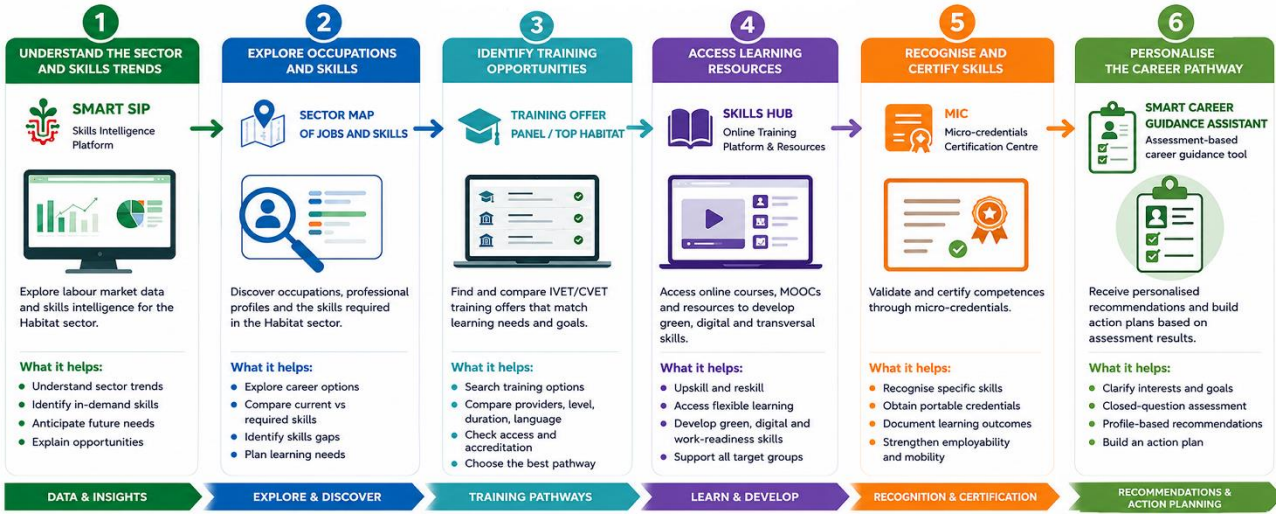

Figure 21. Integrated guidance process — combining HABITABLE tools from skills intelligence to training, certification and personalised career planning.

5. Final Resources

5.1 Glossary

Apprenticeship
A structured learning pathway that combines education or training with practical experience in a workplace.

Career guidance
A process that supports people in understanding their skills, interests and opportunities, helping them make informed decisions about learning, work and career development.

CVET — Continuing Vocational Education and Training
Vocational education and training aimed at adults, workers or professionals who want to update, improve or develop new skills.

Digital skills
Skills needed to use digital tools, technologies and data in learning, work and professional activities.

ESCO — European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
A European classification system that describes occupations, skills, competences and qualifications in a common language.

Europass
A European tool that helps users present their skills, qualifications and experience in a standardised way, supporting learning, employment and mobility.

EQF — European Qualifications Framework
A European framework that helps compare qualifications across countries and education systems.

Green skills
Skills that support more sustainable work practices, including energy efficiency, sustainable materials, circular economy, waste reduction and environmental performance.

Habitat ecosystem
A broad ecosystem connected to the built and living environment, including construction, renovation, wood, furniture, materials, energy efficiency, installations, home-related industries and related services.

IVET — Initial Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education and training usually aimed at learners entering a professional field for the first time.

Learning outcomes
Statements that describe what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do after a learning process.

Micro-credential
A certification of specific learning outcomes acquired through a short learning experience, training activity or validation process.

Mobility
The possibility of learning, training or working in another region or country, often supported by recognition of skills and qualifications.

MOOC — Massive Open Online Course
An online course that can be accessed by many learners, usually offering flexible and remote learning opportunities.

Reskilling
Learning new skills to move into a different role, occupation or professional area.

Skills gap
The difference between the skills a person currently has and the skills needed for a specific occupation, task or career goal.

Skills intelligence
Information and evidence about labour market trends, occupations, skills needs and training demands.

Skills mismatch
A situation where the skills available do not match the skills needed by employers, sectors or specific occupations.

Upskilling
Improving or updating existing skills to perform better in a current role or adapt to new requirements.

VET — Vocational Education and Training
Education and training that prepares people for specific occupations, professional roles or labour market needs.

WBL — Work-Based Learning

Learning that takes place in a real or simulated work environment, connecting training with practical professional experience.

XR — Extended Reality
An umbrella term for immersive technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality.

5.2 Useful HABITABLE links

HABITABLE project website
https://habitable-cove.eu/

SMART SIP — Skills Intelligence Platform
https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/

SMART Info
https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/smart-info/

Sector Map of Jobs and Skills
https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/sector-map-of-jobs-and-skills/

Training Offer Panel / TOP HABITAT
https://habitable-cove.eu/smart-sip/training-offer-panel/

SKILLS HUB
https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/

Online Training Platform
https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/online-training-platform/

Micro-credentials Certification Centre — MIC
https://mic.habitable-cove.eu/

MIC Directory
https://mic.habitable-cove.eu/micro-credentials-directory/

Innovative Curricula Digital Database
https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/innovative-curricula-digital-database/

Career Guidance Space
https://habitable-cove.eu/skills-hub/career-guidance-space/

DUAL Online Centre
https://habitable-cove.eu/dual-online-centre/

WBL for ALL Space

https://habitable-cove.eu/dual-online-centre/wbl-for-all-space/

HABITAT Skills Ecosystems
https://habitable-cove.eu/habitat-skills-ecosystems/

Contact
https://habitable-cove.eu/contact/