

# TechConnect launches-Empowering the workforce through human-tech collaboration

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TechConnect officially kicks-off, strengthening human-tech skills in the digital decade

TechConnect, a European-funded initiative, has officially launched today, marking a significant step towards deepening our understanding of how advanced digital technologies impact human skills. A €3 million initiative funded by the European Union, under the Horizon Europe framework with a consortium of 9 partners, with SMEs, universities and hospitals among them. In an era of rapid technological advancements, the question of whether new technologies will displace or enhance human labour is more pertinent than ever. TechConnect aims to address this by integrating human skills with emerging technologies to ensure positive outcomes for workers and industries alike.

"We're thrilled to announce the launch of the TechConnect project! This initiative is a huge step forward in blending human talent with digital innovation. With €3 million in funding from Horizon Europe, it's a real testament to the incredible teamwork between top academics, hospitals, and tech experts. We can't wait to see how TechConnect will boost employment quality and develop our cross-European ecosystems to lead in digital growth and creativity."

Professor Laurent Muzellec, Dean of Trinity Business School, Over recent years, research has highlighted the need for comprehensive studies that explore the interaction between technology and human skills. TechConnect will undertake this crucial research, focusing on how human skills complement technology in real-world settings, rather than examining the two in isolation. Through mixed-method research, including cross-sectoral industry surveys, in-depth case studies in healthcare, and the validation of findings across various industries, TechConnect will generate practical knowledge on Human-Tech Skill Complementarity.

TechConnect's objectives

The project's primary aim is to develop a systemic framework that addresses the gap between the intended and actual use of technology in relation to human skills. To achieve this vision, TechConnect has defined five key objectives:

Develop a novel conceptual framework of Human-Tech Skill Complementarity, addressing the complexity of interactions between human skills and technology through an in-depth analysis of more than 100 articles in more than 3 disciplines, 3 annual cross-sectoral landscape surveys with 1200 respondents, in more than 4 countries and more than 10 industries, involving more than 16 expert stakeholders, and delivering 3 industry landscape reports.

Develop a valid Human-Tech Skill Complementarity Index that assesses how human and technological skills interact and complement each other to promote productivity and quality of work and jobs through 12 observational case studies including 4 locations, covering 3 occupational groups, 2 technology types implemented and mapping of 4+ organisational systems, as well as create more than 180 interviews and have

more than 960 hours of observation.

Strengthen Human-Tech Skill Complementarity via developing and establishing a predictive model to identify the critical factors for driving Human-Tech Skill Complementarity by studying 4 interventional case studies, creating more than 40 interviews with at least 12 hours of observation, developing 4 workshops with more than 60 participants and inviting more than 40 external contributors.

Drive changes across how technologies are designed, developed and integrated across industries and organisations to deliver on greater productivity, better work and resilient industries by defining 25 business cases, produce 5 flagship guidelines including 6 sectors and covering 3 ESCO professional occupation groups.

Scale the outcomes of TechConnect for continued development of the Human-Tech Skill Complementarities to become the foundation for future methods of upskilling, training and research that will result in significant reassessment of our approaches to technologies and human skills through the engagement of 40 policy makers, the contribution of 80 stakeholders and 60 tech developers, and the development of 4 workshops.

TechConnect will proceed in four sequential phases, beginning with desk research and multidisciplinary literature analysis. The project will then conduct observational case studies within healthcare organisations, focusing on 3 major occupational levels. Findings from these studies will inform interventions, and the results will be applied to other sectors.

#### Ground-breaking research for sustainable growth

TechConnect is set to deliver groundbreaking insights into the evolving relationship between technology and human labour. This research will not only enhance our understanding of Human-Tech Skill Complementarity but also provide tools and frameworks to ensure that future technologies are adopted productively. By focusing on quality employment and competitiveness, TechConnect aims to drive improvements across all sectors and occupations, benefitting tech adopters, developers, managers, educators, researchers, and policymakers.

"The debate over whether new technology will displace or enhance human labour has become increasingly urgent with the rapid advancement of digital tools. The TechConnect project seeks to address this by exploring the synergy between human skills and digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automation. At Trinity, we are excited to lead this initiative, which represents a significant step toward improving employment quality and promoting social equity. We look forward to generating transformative insights that will benefit our communities and inform inclusive growth policies across sectors."

- Professor Na Fu, Coordinator of TechConnect, Professor in Human Resource Management at Trinity College Dublin

#### Partners and collaboration

The success of TechConnect is made possible through collaboration with key partners.

Trinity College Dublin (TCD) with more than 400 years old, is the Ireland's highest ranked university. Mälardalen University (MDU) with 2 campus and more than 18 000 students,

Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM) the largest Spanish technical university and influential higher education institution.

Universiteit Utrecht (UU), one of the oldest universities in the Netherlands with more than 39000 students during 2023.

BluSpecs, a boutique consultancy leading the forefront of digital technology innovation, supporting a wide range of startup and SME support, with key clients including the European Commission, Enterprise Singapore, as well as leading European corporates and startups.

Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) in Dublin one of the largest public hospitals in Ireland. It employs almost 3,000 staff and treats over 410,000 patients per year.

Västerås Hospital (RV) in Västerås, responsible for the planning and delivering of specialised somatic health- and medical care in the region of Västmanland; a region with about 280,000 inhabitants.

Hospital Ramon y Cajal (FIBIRYCIS) in Madrid, one of the top 10 public hospitals in Spain. It has a team of almost 6000 direct professionals.

University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU) will have the Medical Technology & Clinical Physics (MTKF) department, responsible for most medical devices in the hospital, They handle everything from implementing, training and maintaining purchased medical devices to participating in research projects.

Impact and future outlook

TechConnect is poised to make a lasting impact by establishing Human-Tech Skill Complementarity as a foundation for future upskilling, training, and research. The project will provide a toolkit for large-scale assessments across industries, enhancing job quality and boosting Europe's competitiveness. By equipping professionals with the right skills, TechConnect will ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of digital and technological innovation.

Stay tuned for updates on this exciting journey via our website and social media channels, as TechConnect continues to pave the way for the future of human-tech collaboration.

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#### About TechConnect

The TechConnect project aims to deepen the understanding of how advanced digital technologies impact human skills by focusing on Human-Tech Skill Complementarity. Through desk research, industry surveys, and case studies in healthcare, TechConnect explores how human skills and technology interact in real-world contexts. The project develops a systemic framework to address the gap between intended and actual technology use, offering practical guidelines for technology procurement, development, and training. By providing tools to enhance human-tech integration, TechConnect aims to boost productivity and employment across industries, driving greater alignment between technology and human skills.

Learn more here: <https://horizontechconnect.eu/>

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For more information, images to accompany the press release, or to speak to someone from Trinity Business School, contact Jonny Stone at [jonny@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:jonny@bluesky-pr.com) or call 01582 790704.