Skills, knowledge, and education needs - gaps and mismatches for the uptake of SSbD

Based on interviews conducted with representatives of seven value chains, D4.4 provides a first assessment of the relevance, as well as the knowledge and training gaps of the SSbD concept. This task is completed in two stages, resulting in the current Deliverable 4.4 in month 10, and an updated, second Deliverable (D4.10) in month 20.

In the current first stage, interviews have been conducted with the respective value chain representatives in the IRISS consortium. The second stage will involve a number of companies from each value chain for a more profound understanding and experience-based information regarding the training gaps and needs.

The general conclusion we can draw from the first interview round is that **safety** as a concept has been around for far longer than sustainability in all analysed sectors, therefore safety is much better established, embedded in regular procedures and is clearly and well regulated.

However, differences can be observed regarding the focus of safety in the supply chains. Safety often prioritizes human safety, but in various aspects (e.g., workers, end users, etc.), in other instances, environmental safety (e.g., raw material sourcing, byproducts polluting natural waters, end-of-life treatment) or sometimes even the safety of the product itself, from pollution generated by human presence (in the electronics sector).

Sustainability, being a less mature concept, is less regulated and therefore exhibits more ambiguously across various sectors. Currently, sustainability is often more prevalent at the strategic level than in day-to-day operations.

However, several value chains–mentioned a high demand from the customers' side to ensure more transparency regarding sustainability measures. Customers expect clear sustainability-data, the use of green energy, and other related initiatives. These demands certainly accelerate investment towards more sustainable practices.

We tried to identify **key roles and functions** within companies, which would **need (deep) SSbD knowledge**. Once again, several, sector-specific roles were mentioned, however some functions stood out, as these were mentioned in several interviews:

- Design professionals
- Product stewardship
- Quality managers
- Sustainability experts
- Technical sales professionals
- Research & Development experts
- Procurement
- Material engineers

Existing **training practices on safety or sustainability** proved to be difficult to identify and should be addressed again, in the second step of this process, where industry actors will be interviewed.

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