



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

MAY 2021

REMOWA

Remote working management skills for HR professionals

2020-1-PL01-KA202-082239

O1: Analysis of skills required and learning outcomes on
remote working EU workforce management

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1. Acronyms and abbreviations

REMOWA	Remote working management skills for HR professionals
VET	Vocational Education and Training
CVET	Continuous Vocational Education and Training
VETs	Virtual Environment techniques
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EU	European Union
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (SARS CoV-2)
RM	Remote management
IT	Information technologies
EQF Levels	European Qualifications Framework Levels

2. Introduction

Virtual environment techniques (VETs) involve sensory experiences that include computer-aided technologies. These technologies combine both the presence of the physical elements (i.e., someone presenting content) and the presence of subjective sensations of the digital environment. However, the effectiveness of VETs depends on the training design, perception of content usability, the trainer's communication skills, and the capacity to engage employees in the training process. Moreover, it is also important to align the training goals with trainees' outcomes to allow individuals to develop and transfer the required KSAs to the workplace. Therefore, while designing VETs, managers should consider the user's reaction and satisfaction toward the training process and content. Moreover, the VETs experience should provide solutions to the user's daily problems while performing their tasks. When compared the knowledge before and after the training, significant cognitive improvements should be identified. Trainees should demonstrate good-practice procedures and exhibit better job performance. When comparing the effectiveness between traditional training approaches and VETs, Sacks et al. (2013) found that trainees showed better behavioral outcomes when technology was used compared to more conventional approaches. In fact, other studies reinforced the effectiveness of VETs (when compared with lecture-based approaches) in terms of motivation self-report, locus of self-control, and long-term measures of self-efficacy (Neal et al., 2000).

Due to the confinement imposed by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic situation, companies adopted remote work with VETs methodologies more than ever. However, most companies were not ready to take the best advantages of the VETs approach (for employees, departments, and companies). This new (ab)normal created by the pandemic context introduced new routines and habits and therefore, new challenges to human resource managers. Essentially, the need to introduce more support mechanisms for employees' wellbeing. Employees faced profound shifts in their personal lives, interfering with the balance between work and family and the boundaries between the personal and work spheres of life. These changes introduced a huge social, economic, environmental, and political impact. Accordingly, it is important to actively seek to study and understand the lessons that the collective responses to the COVID-19 crisis have introduced and demanded for managers in general (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021) and human resource managers in particular.

The literature has shown *pros* and *cons* regarding the use of remote or distance work with the adoption of new technologies. For example, previous results have shown that working

from home was less correlated with family-work conflict and social isolation during the pandemic outbreak. Moreover, the productivity from those who worked from home was positively related to self-leadership and autonomy (Galanti et al., 2021). Another study revealed that effective supervision (i.e., increased efforts through communication and stronger ties with employees) explained the positive link between remote work activities and organizational performance (Kim, 2021). There is also evidence that the days when employees worked remotely, work was less likely to interfere with the family domain. Employees perceived less work-family conflict and exhaustion levels, and thus revealing higher levels of engagement the following morning (Darouei & Pluut, 2021).

Despite the positive benefits, where reduced carbon footprint can also be included, work from home also brought negative impact to employees. The literature has identified important antecedent risk factors of cardiovascular diseases due to remote work, such as more physical inactivity, social isolation, and loneliness (Sachdeva et al., 2021). Other studies have reinforced how these deleterious changes could have an impact on non-workday sedentary behavior, worse sleep quality, an increase in negative mood disturbance, reduced perceptions of quality of life and a significant decrease in **work**-related health (Barone Gibbs et al., 2021). Another recent study conducted with higher education academics revealed that the levels of stress was higher among those who worked remotely several times per week than once per month (Heiden et al., 2021). In fact, other empirical studies have suggested that when we combine both daily job demands and daily **home** demands during remote work, individuals may have the conditions for increased emotional exhaustion (Abdel Hadi et al., 2021). The solution seems to be related with flexibility, since workplace flextime use can decrease employees' cognitive failures at work and home because employees are able to increase their levels of perceived control regarding home and work duties more consistently (Hsu et al., 2021). In general, managers should reduce the positive detrimental relationship between job and **home** demands with emotional exhaustion.

These apparent inconsistencies between the disadvantages and advantages of working from home and remote work, has raised new challenges for HR professionals. Essentially, because HR managers faced new demands to struggle with the challenges of the pandemic confinement in unexpected new ways of work. Most individuals were not prepared to deal with the adversities of remote work and the dark side of working from home. Accordingly, understanding the hard and soft skills in professionals' remote working is something that concerns HR professionals. With this in mind, as a first goal of the current project, we aim to

analyze the required skills and learning outcomes on remote working EU workforce management.

3. Objectives

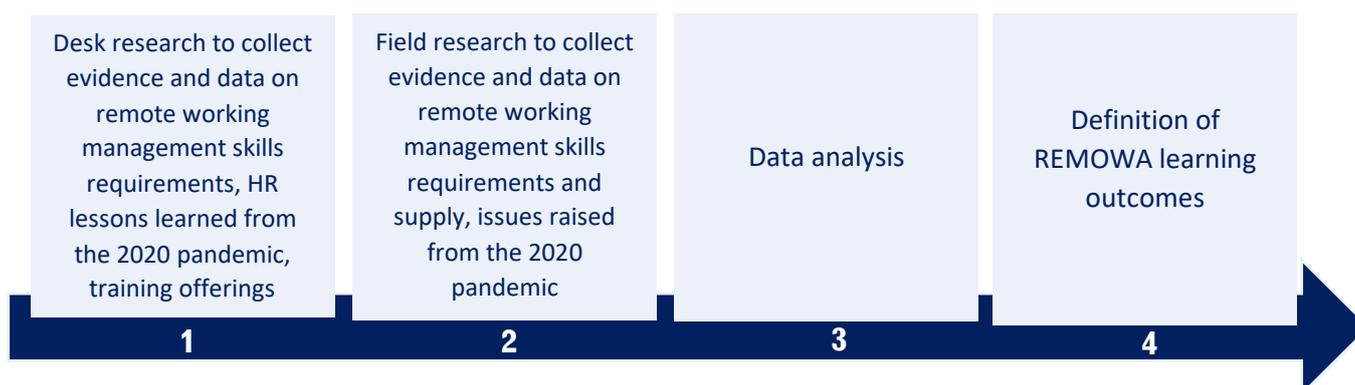
The increase in remote work due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak has been fuelled both by more flexible and decentralized management practices and more widely available technologies. HR managers and other relevant professionals need to be able to address these new challenges by redesigning processes and retraining/supporting their colleagues on how to manage an increased remote workforce.

The REMOWA project aims to document the emerging gap in skills for managing a remote workforce and to develop corresponding Open Educational Resources (OERs) and a training course for the continuous professional development of HR professionals, trainers, supervisor, consultants and managers of organizations and teams. The main purpose of O1 is to document the skills required for managing a remote workforce, and with the gathered information, define learning outcomes for a C-VET course for HR professionals on remote work management. This objective is essential for to develop a sector-validated online course for HR professionals and provide ready-to-use tools for workplace to support HR professionals as trainers and mentors.

The O1 report includes the definition of each stage of relevant information and data collection, which is divided into Desk Research and Field Research, and the description of its implementation. After the methodology, the main findings and conclusions of research are presented. These findings and conclusions are crucial to define learning outcomes in the next point. The learning outcomes show what individuals are expected to acquire in each of the following clusters in detail: communication skills, digital skills, work-life balance skills, organizational skills, leadership skills and human resources management skills. Subsequently, the EQF levels that correspond to each of the learning outcomes are presented according to learning outcomes complexity. The last section corresponds to suggestions of learning material to develop the training course for HR managers and that includes 5 steps which aim to provide a diagnosis, acquire knowledge, reflect and apply acquired knowledge, assess learning and validate the program.

4. Methodology

Information collection on “remote working” management skills and training requirements was a combination of desk and field research. After the collection of information, the data analysis was performed, which subsequently allowed the REMOWA learning outcomes to be defined.



4.1. Desk research

Desk research involved searching for information on different types of sources in order to obtain the following elements: a) remote management skills needs and workplace requirements, as evidenced by the EU Skills Panorama and relevant studies, b) contemporary remote management skills requirements as evidenced by online job vacancies, and c) remote management cases and relevant studies and experts’ opinion on the issue. Secondary data research was then also used to collect information on the formal and non-formal offer of remote management training.

4.1.1. HR Issues raised and lessons learned from COVID-19-induced remote working challenges

Objectives

The goal of this task is to code the new issues raised by the pandemic in order to assess the effectiveness of the required skills to address current HR professionals’ remote management. The rationale is that the analysis of novel HR issues raised will offer insights on

the appropriate skills that HR and other relevant professionals will need in the future to address such situations.

Activities

- Identify HR issues raised by the novel conditions brought about by the 2020 pandemic and draw conclusions for the efficient management of a remote workforce in similar scenarios. Evidence on HR issues/challenges and lessons learned were gathered as cases of reference.

Sources

This was carried out by collecting information from:

- Newspaper articles, official reports, newsletters, fora, lectures
- Existing HR related education & training provision in the consortium countries (where possible other EU countries).
- Reviewing literature and experts' opinions on the issue.

4.1.2. Existing remote work management training programs

Objectives

The purpose of this desk research point is to identify trends in skill supply with regards to remote working. This research can help define the current level of HR related skills and competences within the labour market and compare it with the sum of skills and attributes needed in typical remote management (skill demand,) so as to determine the skills' mismatch.

Activities

- Reviewing the availability and content of academic courses and assessing whether they have the potential to equip new recruits with the relevant skills to support remote management related projects and applications
- Reviewing commercial and training courses to evaluate their effectiveness in addressing existing professionals' skills needs with regards to remote management.

Sources

The data will be gathered from secondary sources of existing formal (HE, VET) and non-formal (online courses, seminars) Human Resources-related education and training provision such as:

- Academic and online course directories (e.g. academiccourses.com).

- Academic publications, study guides, learning material and university brochures.

4.1.3. Remote work management skills and workplace requirements

Objectives

The aim of this task was to identify knowledge, skills, competences and workplace requirements for managing a remote workforce. Remote management is a new kind of work practice and therefore, this project seeks to capture the latest developments in the field. It also proposes to design a comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum that will address not only current, but also future training and skills requirements.

Activities

Identifying skills and workplace requirements through desk research was mainly executed by:

- Gathering skill needs evidence from the EU Skills Panorama. The EU Skills Panorama is the European Commission's online central access point for data, information and intelligence on skills needs in countries, occupations and sectors across EU Member States. The EU Skills Panorama integrates data on skills needs and mismatches from several European and national sources and repositories in a single portal.
- Exploring EU funded projects under the Erasmus+ Programme but also other EU funding programmes that aim to tackle HR management skills gaps and provide training solutions in the field.
- Examining job vacancy descriptions, by means of which organisations and enterprises search for suitable candidates.
- Reviewing literature and experts' opinions on the issue.

Sources

This was carried out by collecting information from:

- The European Commission's sources, such as directories and European tools for skills and competences (e.g., EUSP, ESCO)
- Web portals of agencies and other institutions which are responsible for vocational education and training (e.g., CEDEFOP's EU Skills Panorama)
- EU funded projects.

4.2. Field research

Objectives

The objective of field research is to obtain a more precise picture on current skill demands and supply, and labour market realities. Field research was carried out to supplement the results drawn from desk research on skills needs, shortages and mismatches for remote work management skills in the labour market for HR and relevant professionals. This research activity has a threefold purpose; a) to determine the most valued and skills needed for remote work management b) to determine the current supply of relevant skills and knowledge, and c) to pinpoint future development trends and training realities.

Sample

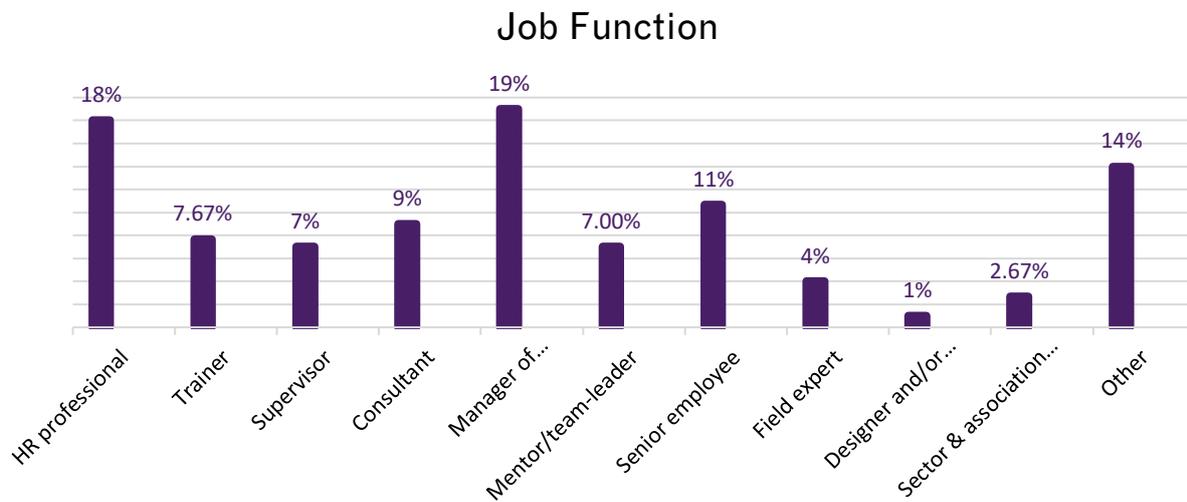
The REMOWA Application Form foresees that the sample is to be drawn from the countries represented in the project consortium: Poland, Portugal, Croatia, Slovenia, Greece and Belgium. According to the scope of the survey, the target respondents include individuals of the 6 countries that are partners and which are knowledgeable of the skills needs, shortages and mismatches for remote work management skills in the labour market for HR and relevant professionals. Thus, the target population of the survey focuses mainly on:

- Employers (executive staff) who have HR departments;
- Other HR professionals (e.g., HR managers etc.)

Apart from the above, the survey was also extended and addressed to other categories such as:

- Sector representatives & professional associations;
- HE and VET providers;
- Experienced HR trainers;
- Academics and Researchers;
- Consultants;
- Journalists and Field experts.

A total of 232 professionals participated in the survey, 19,8% from Poland, 38,4% from Portugal, 5,2% from Belgium, 20,3% from Croatia, 7,3% from Greece, and 9,1% from Slovenia. Most of the participants were HR managers and organization and team managers , as seen in the following graph:



1. The first is named “Working environment” section and aims to gather information regarding the respondents’ experience with remote work.
2. The second is dedicated to the main requirements needed to manage a working team remotely.
3. The third asks about the participants’ profile with the aim to better understand and categorize the feedback which helps assess the current supply of skills.
4. The fourth part aims to collect information on the latest development in the field while asking for the participant’s core details.
5. The last part asks about the respondent’s profile.

5. Skills demand and gaps

5.1. HR Issues raised and lessons learned from COVID-19-induced remote working challenges / Existing remote work management training programs

Most Important Skills

Psychological Skills	Skills needed for a manager to control and manage several different personalities while working remotely. Individuals handle novel situations in different ways. The required skills to understand, diagnose and manage those differences are closely related with the science of psychology.
Proper Supervision Skills	Skills are mainly focused on the way a manager supervises his/her team. Finding ways to control the team's development in general and individuals' performance is considered an asset for managing teams remotely.
Legal Skills	It is considered a strong asset for a manager to obtain legal knowledge. It can help him/her while setting up the remote working environment for his/her team members and cooperating with them daily. The legal procedures that define remote work must be known by managers in order to act accordingly and not risk breaching any laws.
IT Skills	During lockdown due to Covid19, it is essential for a manager who works remotely, to be able to use technological tools to develop and organize his/her work. IT tools can assist him/her not only in supervising his/her team members, but also in his/her communications and his/her organizational routine. An efficient manager will be able to use the latest IT tools and teach his/her subordinates how to use them as well.
Balancing work-life routine Skills	Skills related to self-management and time-management of everyday routine, the hours dedicated to work and those dedicated to personal life. For a manager to understand the team members' specific needs, he/she needs to balance these for him/herself firstly.

Other Important Skills

Organizational Skills	The way that the manager will organize and structure his/her remote working team and lead it. In other words, how the individual is asked to perform from home on a daily basis. This includes day-to-day meetings, achievements plan, assignment of tasks and obligations etc.
Culture building/ Communication Skills	It is considered important for a manager to be able to maintain and establish the company's culture among his/her team members, even via remote working conditions. Apart from this, it is also important to establish a team culture among those team members. To achieve this, the manager must have the necessary communication skills to clearly deliver the message he/she wants and to stimulate his team members to increase their productivity.

5.2. Remote work management skills and workplace requirements

The findings from the desk research of relevant European Commissions' sources show that among the most needed skills in today's labour market, there are 20% that highly depend on personal social interaction and 15% that are related to resilience in social distancing. According to this interpretation, an analysis of remote job advertisements was performed. The occupations with higher risk were those that had higher frequency of skills dependent on personal social interaction and low frequency of resilience in social distancing. Occupations were divided into 4 groups according to risk (very high risk, high risk, some risk and low or no risk) and HR profession was deemed to have some social distancing risk.

It is necessary to re-skill and up-skill employees to respond to the emerging and persisting new trends. This COVID-19 pandemic demands the development of skills that allow employees to overcome the challenges linked to social distancing in order to reduce the drawbacks of remote work. According to these sources, the main issues of remote work are related to adapting to the new ways of working via digital means, establishing adequate communication with workers, managing teamwork, reducing social isolation and maintaining trust, promoting knowledge sharing and adapting legal issues to this new way of working. Managers should develop some skills to deal with these challenges. The 8 most demanded skills according to the literature and job vacancies are as follows:

1 st	Interpersonal Skills	Communication / Conflict management / Empathy / Behavioural and Social Skills / Build relationships remotely / Emotional Intelligence
2 nd	Work-life Balance Skills	Time-management / Work life balance Skills/ Self-efficacy / Self-motivation / Self-discipline / Autonomy / Proactivity
3 rd	Digital Skills	Communication Systems / Online data sharing knowledge
4 th	Organizational Skills	Set clear goals and procedures / Develop strategies / Establish deadlines /Prioritization
5 th	Leadership Skills	Inspire / Motivation / Encourage collaboration / Delegation / Empowerment / Mentoring / Support
6 th	HR Management Skills	Management teamwork / Recruitment and Selection / HR Planning / Induction and Socialization / Training / Performance Appraisal and Career Opportunities Feedback
7 th	Technical Skills	Marketing and Sales skills via digital / Logistics and warehousing

8 th	Green Skills	Master green technologies / Develop green products, services and business models / Minimise the environmental footprint
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5.3. Field Research – Survey

Demands

The first section of the questionnaire gathered the questions with the purpose to understand what skills were required, namely, the skills that professionals need for efficient and effective management of remote work.

Challenges of Remote Work

The question was to understand the most challenging aspects of remote work, allowing the HR managers and other relevant professionals to identify the greatest difficulties. The difficulties presented below were those classified as more challenging and therefore, represent the needs that must be met through improvements in practices and processes.

Unplugging after work		Overlaps between work and personal life		Managing workload		Loneliness/Lack of human contact	
Average	4,02	Average	4,35	Average	4,00	Average	4,02
Median	4	Median	5	Median	4	Median	4

Scale: 1 – Do not know; 2 – Not at all challenging; 3 – Slightly challenging; 4 – Moderately challenging; 5 – Very challenging; 6 – Extremely challenging

Work-remote Burnout

This question aimed to understand how remote work negatively impacts the well-being and motivation of participants and their colleagues. The most frequent negative impacts are indicated below.

Are your colleagues tired of working remotely?		Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working remotely?	
Average	3,05	Average	2,97
Median	3	Median	3

Scale: 1 – Never/Almost never or to a very low degree; 2 – Seldom or to a low degree; 3 – Sometimes or somewhat; 4 – Often or to a high degree; 5 – Always or to a very high degree

Remote Work Skills Required

This item aimed to identify the skills that HR managers and other relevant professionals consider most important when managing remote workers/remote teams. The answers presented below were those that the participants classified as the most important.

Set clear expectations for employees' performance and targets	Foster employee engagement	Create an internal communication and collaboration strategy	Timely response to employees' messages and requests
Average 5,06 Median 5	Average 4,92 Median 5	Average 5,04 Median 5	Average 5,00 Median 5
	Effectively communicate new remote processes	Ensure employees have a balanced professional and personal life	
	Average 4,95 Median 5	Average 5,16 Median 5	

Scale: 1 – Do not know; 2 – Not important; 3 – Slightly important; 4 – Moderately important; 5 – Very important; 6 – Extremely important

Supply

This section aimed to identify the remote work skills that were less prevalent among managers, and which uncovered the gap between supply and demand.

The skills remote work HR managers and other relevant professionals revealed less

The main objective of this item was to understand which remote work skills HR managers and other relevant professionals reveal less and need skills to be developed

Set a productive and operational remote work schedule	Develop mechanisms/ processes to track employees' daily progress	Make time for casual conversations with workers	Support employees with technical troubleshooting
Average 3,07 Median 3	Average 3,01 Median 3	Average 2,88 Median 3	Average 3,05 Median 3

Create content with interactive material for virtual training		Deliver short bite-sized training sessions	
Average	3,01	Average	3,07
Median	3	Median	3

Scale: 1 – Very low; 2 – Low; 3 – Average; 4 – High; 5 – Very high

Future Challenges

This question seeks to understand the perception of participants regarding the fast-paced expansion of remote working, by identifying the greatest challenges for the future on remote working.

Better talent management practices are essential in companies		Upskilling and continuous training is required for both managers and employees	
Average	5,69	Average	5,92
Median	6	Median	6

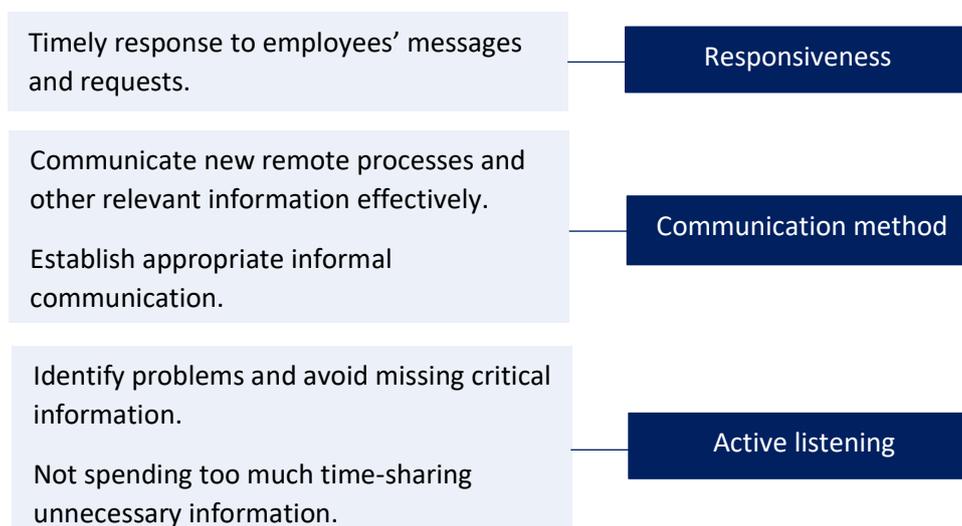
Scale: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Somewhat disagree; 4 – Neither agree or disagree; 5 – Somewhat agree; 6 – Agree; 7 – Strongly Agree

6. Learning Outcomes

6.1. Communication Skills

Communication skills are necessary to establish an effective communication. Effective communication includes language proficiency, reading and listening comprehension, expressing yourself through speech and writing, understanding what others are transmitting and anticipating the effect of what we say has on them. Communication skills and knowledge enable efficient communication to be achieved, which in turn benefits information sharing and interpersonal relationships.

In order to fill in the common communication gaps of the remote work identified in the research, the following learning objectives were defined:



SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Responsiveness	1.1.1. Distinguish between the complex and simple requests. 1.1.2. Adapt response time to request complexity. 1.1.3. Recognize different instant messaging and text tools. 1.1.4. Identify the best practices of using instant messaging .
Communication method	1.1.5. Recognise the importance of verbal communication in business. 1.1.6. Identify employees' characteristics to adapt the communication method. 1.1.7. Prepare communication based on the purpose and employees' characteristics. 1.1.8. Use formal or informal communication according to the content that is to be transmitted. 1.1.9. Identify communication tools and apply each one according to what the situation needs.

Communication method	<p>1.1.10. Recognise different types of language and use the right language to build clear communication without confusion and misunderstandings.</p> <p>1.1.11. Be able to create simple, clear, appealing, and accessible documents or presentations for all (use of images, charts, infographics, etc.).</p> <p>1.1.12. Analyse digital communication methods, list their components, and extract the benefits.</p> <p>1.1.13. Demonstrate the right way to make a speech.</p> <p>1.1.14. Identify possible gaps and obstacles in the communication process.</p> <p>1.1.15. Share with employees communication tools options and how to use them.</p>
Active listening	<p>1.3.1. Discuss the importance of active listening to build connections and trust with employees.</p> <p>1.3.2. Use active learning techniques such as paraphrase, ask open-ended questions and recall previously shared information.</p> <p>1.3.3. Ability to focus on interactive processes, understand the message and respond appropriately with verbal and non-verbal language.</p> <p>1.3.4. Use active listening techniques to moderate teamwork meetings and manage conversations.</p>

6.2. Digital Skills

Digital skills are a range of abilities which enable individuals to use digital devices, digital communication, collaboration tools, and digital platforms to share and manage information. There are different digital skills, with different purposes and different complexities. Some digital skills allow coding, others enable employees to communicate and perform teamwork and others to do business through online platforms. In relation to remote work, digital skills allow employees to communicate with their colleagues, share documents and information and maintain interpersonal relationships, albeit in a different way.

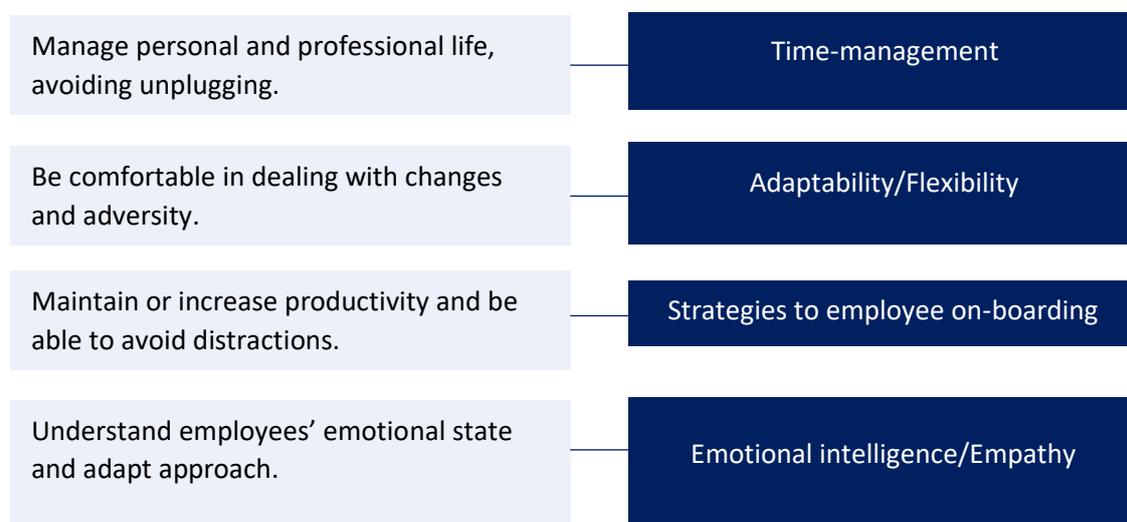
The main issues identified in the research were the lack of knowledge about some tools and how to use them, as well as the social isolation that can be reduced using these tools. According to these themes, the following objectives were defined:



SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Communication and collaboration tools	<p>2.1.1. Explore communication and collaboration multifaceted online platforms.</p> <p>2.1.2. Recognize the strengths and weaknesses of communication and collaboration tools.</p> <p>2.1.3. Choose the right communication and collaboration tools to meet the situation needs.</p> <p>2.1.4. Identify strategies to increase comprehension and reduce misunderstandings due to the flaws in communication and collaboration tools.</p> <p>2.1.5. Project management tools that include individual and team goals and scheduling.</p>
Online data sharing tools	2.2.1. Use online sharing tools to effectively share knowledge, information, and data.

6.3. Work-life Balance Skills

The work-life balance is the conception that workers have about the division of their time between work obligations and personal commitments. Thus, being able to balance these two aspects implies correct time management and the clear definition of limits for both work and personal life. Through this balance, individuals can avoid distractions, unplugging and stress. These soft skills can have a major impact on workers' lives, but also on their work, as they increase job satisfaction and productivity and reduce health problems, usually associated with work-life conflict. Work from home generally allows greater flexibility, however it places individuals in an environment where it is difficult to define limits between work and personal life. Therefore, it is important that individuals acquire skills to enable them to deal with the boundaries between work and family. Specifically, this requires setting the following objectives and developing skills:



Be able to perform a decision and problem-solving remotely or alone.

Decision-making & Problem-solving

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Have a balanced professional and personal life/ Time-management	<p>3.1.1. Identify the resources needed for a work-life balance.</p> <p>3.1.2. Define boundaries between work tasks and personal commitments.</p> <p>3.1.3. Organize and schedule personal commitments and work tasks in advance.</p> <p>3.1.4. Identify sources of an unbalanced life such as unplugging or excessive workload.</p>
Adaptability/Flexibility	<p>3.2.1. Deal with stress, reflect and learn from things that go wrong.</p> <p>3.2.2. Analyse development needs and constantly learn new skills.</p> <p>3.2.3. Identify strategies for dealing with challenges and change.</p>
Self-discipline/Autonomy	<p>3.3.1. Gather necessary information for decision-making.</p> <p>3.3.2. Seek feedback and be self-reflective.</p> <p>3.3.3. Establish individual routines.</p>
Emotional intelligence/Empathy	<p>3.4.1. Manage and adapt emotional behaviour that impacts leadership in workplace situations.</p> <p>3.4.2. Recognise and be aware of others' emotions.</p> <p>3.4.3. Develop self-awareness and self-regulation.</p> <p>3.4.4. Understand the consequences of behaviour on others and own performance.</p>
Decision-making and problem-solving	<p>3.5.1. Identify fake information and choose the relevant information.</p> <p>3.5.2. Identify obstacles to problem-solving and decision-making.</p> <p>3.5.3. Use techniques and methodologies to define problems and solutions – Mind mapping, brainstorming, etc.</p> <p>3.5.4. Select decision-making and problem-solving tools .</p>

6.4. Organizational Skills

Organizational skills are the abilities to manage resources, including human resources, as well as to achieve one or more goals effectively and efficiently. Planning, prioritizing, and organizing are some of the organizational skills that allow companies to align the available resources to strategic plans. Remote work brought some challenges at the organizational level, since it became more difficult to plan and schedule activities that meet the availability of all workers. Another problem was the balance between setting goals to motivate and the excess of guidelines and bureaucracy to control workers. In order to reduce the negative effects of these changes, the following learning objectives were defined:

Give direction and clear expectations to employees

Set productive and operational schedule

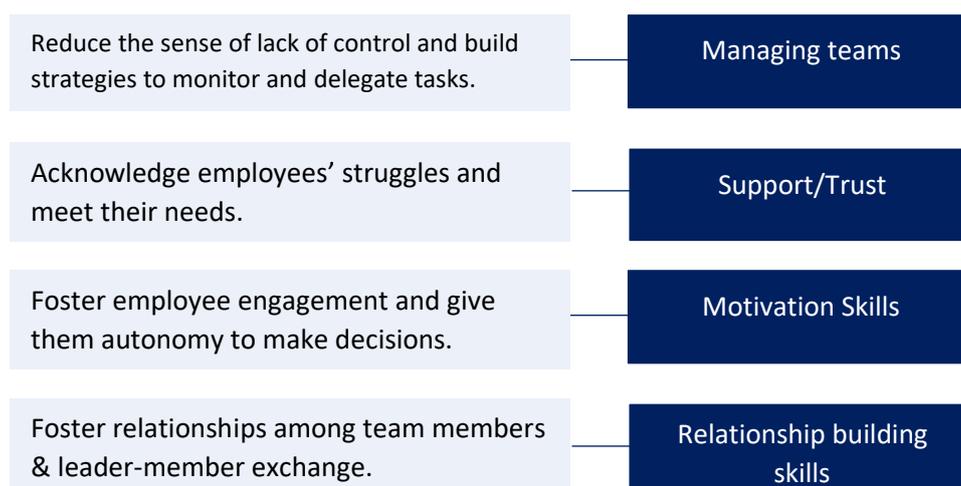
Align employees' tasks and create routines

Envisioning the future & Plan

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Set a productive and operational remote work schedule	<p>4.1.1. Define clear goals and expectations.</p> <p>4.1.2. Set deadlines, checkpoints, and milestones.</p> <p>4.1.3. Use schedule tools to guarantee that everyone is available at same time.</p> <p>4.1.4. Identify the appropriate way to schedule a meeting and use the right tools during as it occurs.</p>
Envision the future/Planning	<p>4.2.1. Ability to analyse internal present and future needs to be prepare for change.</p> <p>4.2.2. Prioritize tasks and goals (80/20 rule).</p> <p>4.2.3. Plan schedules and tasks distribution to align the work of employees and their availability.</p>

6.5. Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are the competencies that allow leaders to influence the behaviour, mental state, and performance of employees to improve well-being and performance. An efficient leader knows how to motivate, support, build teams, and build trust and relationships. Leading from home was a great challenge brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, since the role of leaders is compromised due to the impossibility to observe workers and their joint work. One of the main disadvantages of remote work identified by managers was the difficulty in supervising and controlling tasks. On the other hand, employees identify trust as one of the most affected factors in the relationship with their leader. In order to reduce the negative effects and enhance the positive effects of leadership in remote work, the following objectives have been defined:



SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Managing teams – supervision/monitoring/delegation	<p>5.1.1. Select common techniques of communication in teams.</p> <p>5.1.2. Distinguish team goals and accountability from individual goals and accountability.</p> <p>5.1.3. Design a balanced scorecard that includes metrics related to team goals and allows to monitor outcomes.</p> <p>5.1.4. Define a basic control process and recognise monitoring points.</p> <p>5.1.5. Execute techniques to manage group decision-making and recognise their advantages and disadvantages.</p> <p>5.1.6. Use digital tools to regular decision-making meetings.</p> <p>5.1.7. Identify the different types of teams and their elements to manage conflict of interpersonal communication.</p>
Support/Trust	<p>5.2.1. Provide emotional support and build reciprocal trust in intentions and behaviour.</p> <p>5.2.2. Identify employees’ needs and problems and create a secure sharing and support network.</p> <p>5.2.3. Create a safe environment.</p>
Motivation skills/Empowerment	<p>5.3.1. Distinguish between internal and external motivation and how to increase both</p> <p>5.3.2. The ability to increase employees’ self-esteem and confidence through reinforcement.</p> <p>5.3.3. Recognise Goal-setting theory and Reinforcement theory and when to use each of them.</p> <p>5.3.4. Demonstrate special attention to individual characteristics and needs to be able to establish suitable individualized motivation strategies.</p> <p>5.3.5. Define engagement rules based on establishing expectations, goals and ideal timing, for an increase in efficiency and satisfaction with remote work.</p>
Relationship building skills	<p>5.4.1. Establish space for remote social interactions between employees.</p> <p>5.4.2. Identify social media tools that help create affinity.</p> <p>5.4.3. Build united and cohesive teams that share common beliefs and team members who depend on each other to pursuit a common goal.</p> <p>5.4.4. Establish a professional relationship with a pair or a team enabling regular interactions, interdependence and commitment – foster trust, connection and respect.</p>

6.6. Human Resources Management Skills

Human resources management is a set of policies and practices that are aligned with the objectives of the organization and that establish the employee's relationship with the employer. According to this, skills related to human resources management are the abilities that allow managers to enhance the performance of the workforce and offer the appropriate conditions to the individual and organizational needs. Remote work implied the adaptation of several HRM

practices to the characteristics of the new reality. These changes require that managers should develop new competencies, and therefore we posit the following objectives:

Adapt communication to new environments and available resources.	Internal communication and collaboration remote strategy
Adapt recruitment and selection to remote environments and new organization needs.	Recruitment and selection emphasizing remote work abilities and environment
Define a way to carry out on-boarding remotely.	Strategies to employee on-boarding
Get information that cannot be observed & define goals taking in account employees' perspectives.	Management by objectives with mutual goal setting and developmental feedback
Prepare workforce for future transformation and challenges.	Training in continuous with on-job-experiences
Reduce weaknesses and enhance strengths when individuals are working alone.	Job design around employees individual skills and capabilities

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Internal communication and collaboration remote strategy	<p>6.1.1. Identify different communication channels and chose the appropriate one to communicate a specific message.</p> <p>6.1.2. Define new ways of communicating organization goals, achievements and impact on employees.</p>
Recruitment and selection emphasizing remote work abilities and environment	<p>6.2.1. Define a remote worker profile – identify suitable characteristics to perform work remotely.</p> <p>6.2.2. Establish appropriate strategies and tools to meet new needs of digital environment.</p>
Strategies for employee on-boarding remotely	<p>6.3.1. Establish an on-boarding plan with several meetings to meet colleagues and organization departments.</p> <p>6.3.2. Support in bureaucratic issues in adapting digital communication, collaboration, and information-sharing tools.</p>
Appraisals include management by objectives with mutual goal setting and developmental feedback	<p>6.4.1. Define regular appraisals that include joint goal setting and development feedback.</p> <p>6.4.2. Schedule meetings to discuss performance, needs and potential improvements, encouraging self-assessment.</p>
Training is continuous with on-job-experiences	<p>6.5.1. Anticipate the skills needed in the future to plan up-skilling and re-skilling of workforce.</p> <p>6.5.2. Adapt on-job-training to digital environment.</p>
Jobs are designed around their individual skills and capabilities	<p>6.6.1. Identify important factors that interfere job fitness and performance and therefore, influence work-life balance.</p> <p>6.6.2. Tailor job design around individual skills and capabilities.</p>

6.7. EQF Levels and Learning Outcomes

Findings suggest that HR management knowledge and skills, as well as the level of responsibility and autonomy, are mostly acquired in levels 5 and 6 of the EQF. In fact, and when we look in detail at the learning outcomes, we find that most of them require theoretical knowledge in broad or specific contexts within a field of work or study. For example, regarding skill 3.5 "Decision-making and problem-solving", learning outcomes refer to the ability of the trainee to define criteria and use specific theories and methodologies to define problems and generate solutions. On the other hand, there are other learning outcomes that involve a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study (EQF 4) as well as to develop creative solutions to abstract problems (EQF 5). Regarding the cognitive processes studied, we highlight that the need to analyze, evaluate or even create/define must be emphasized in HRM-based MOOC programs. For example, organizational, leadership and HRM skills clearly require “manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups” (EQF 6).

Finally, it should be noted that most learning outcomes involve a high degree of maturity and commitment for the actions that are taken, which demonstrates the complexity of some of the tasks required and therefore, suggest that they should be applied to higher EQF levels (5 and 6).

CLUSTER	SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE		EQF
Communication skills	1.1	Responsiveness	4 -5
	1.2	Communication method	4 -5
	1.3	Active listening	4 -5
Digital Skills	2.1.	Communication and collaboration tools	4 -5
	2.2.	Online data-sharing tools	4 -5
Work-life Balance Skills	3.1.	Have a balanced professional and personal life/ Time-management	5-6
	3.2.	Adaptability/Flexibility	5-6
	3.3.	Self-discipline/Autonomy	5-6
	3.4.	Emotional intelligence/Empathy	5-6
	3.5.	Decision-making and problem-solving	5-6
Organizational Skills	4.1.	Set a productive and operational remote work schedule	5-6
	4.2.	Envisioning the future/Planning	5-6
Leadership Skills	5.1.	Managing teams – supervision/monitoring/delegation	5-6
	5.2.	Support/Trust	5-6
	5.3.	Motivation skills/Empowerment	5-6

	5.4.	Relationship building skills	5-6
HRM Skills	6.1.	Internal communication and collaboration remote strategy	5-6
	6.2.	Recruitment and selection emphasizing remote work abilities and environment	5-6
	6.3	Strategies to employee on-boarding remotely	5-6
	6.4	Appraisals include management by objectives with mutual goal setting and developmental feedback	5-6
	6.5	Training is continuous with on-job-experiences	5-6
	6.6	Jobs are designed around their individual skills and capabilities	5-6

7. Learning Materials Guidelines

The training should be done through an online platform in an asynchronous way, allowing trainees to manage their learning pace. It is suggested that there should be a progress page so that HR professionals can check their progress, performance, and the assessment of their results. The following table shows a suggested structure for the modules, with flexibility at each point to adapt to the theme:

STEPS	LEARNING MATERIALS	OBJECTIVES
1 st	Diagnostic and barriers assessment	Identify gaps in knowledge and skills to be more attentive to details related to those gaps. Identify barriers of knowledge transfer: trainee readiness, motivation to transfer, personal capacity for transfer, social support, transfer design, content validity, perceived self-efficacy and opportunity to use acquired knowledge.
2 nd	Presentation of video trainer through the exhibition method. Use tables, schematics, and images to guide reasoning. Short duration (4 to 7 minutes).	Acquire knowledge - concepts, theories and how to apply them.
	Example of a company that has done something innovative in the theme.	Demonstrate a different way of applying theoretical content and encouraging innovation.
3 rd	Reflect & Apply Trainees should reflect on problems in their company related to the theme and content of the module and write them. After reflecting, the trainees should formulate possibilities for resolving the identified problems.	Understand what is wrong in trainees' reality and use the tools acquired in the module.
4 th	Final assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quiz - Video presentation - Situational challenge The choice of the evaluation material must be in accordance with the module and its content.	Apply what has been learned in order to retain knowledge and develop skills.
5 th	Program validation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment surveys - Pre and post comparisons, considering intervention measures of efficiency and efficacy. 	Program impact at: Level 1 – Individual Level 2 – Departmental Level 3 – Organizational / Results

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Annex A: Questionnaire

REMOWA remote working management skills

SURVEY ON “REMOTE WORKING MANAGEMENT” SKILLS AND HR LABOUR MARKET REALITIES

What is the purpose of this survey?

To determine: a) the most valued and needed remote working management skills for HR professionals, b) the current supply of remote working management skills, and) HR development trends and training realities.

Your input will help the partnership document identify the emerging skills gap for managing a remote workforce and to develop corresponding Open Educational Resources (OERs), as well as a training course for the continuous professional development of HR professionals, trainers, supervisors, consultants and managers of organizations and teams.

Who can participate?

HR professionals, Trainers, Supervisors, Consultants, Managers of organizations and teams, Mentors / team-leaders, Senior employees, Field experts (specialized in train the trainers programmes), Designers and/or providers of train-the-trainers programmes, Sector representatives & associations.

How long does it take?

Approximately 10-15 minutes.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation and valuable contribution!

All participants (providing their email) will have early access to REMOWA learning outcomes and the online course!

A. Working environment

1. How many employees does your company/organisation have?

- Just me
- 2-4 employees
- 5-9 employees
- 10-20 employees
- 21-49 employees
- 51-100 employees
- 101-500 employees
- More than 500 employees

2. What is your company's current policy/stance on remote work?

- Everyone works remotely
- We have a rotating schedule with part of the team working remotely and part of the team being in the office
- We can work from home as needed
- We can work remotely a certain number of days per week/month
- I am a freelancer

3. What percentage of your company/organisation work remotely?

- 1% to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 99%
- 100%
- Not applicable

4. What was the percentage of remote working employees last year?

percentage of employees/frequency of remote work in last year	Never	A few times per year	Once per month or less	A few times per month	Once per week or less	A few times per week	Every day
1% to 25%							
26-50%							
76 to 99%							
100%							

5. Which of the following communication and project management tools/platforms does your company use to support remote working? Select all that apply.

- Google Meet
- Microsoft Teams
- ZOOM
- Skype
- Slack
- Google Chat
- Other (please specify)

6. How often do you arrange meetings/calls with your team?

- Two times per day
- Daily
- Every three days
- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Other (please specify)

7. How challenging are the following aspects when working remotely?

	Extremely challenging	Very challenging	Moderately challenging	Slightly challenging	Not at all challenging	Do not know
Unplugging after work						
Collaboration and communication						
Staying motivated						
Overlaps between work and personal life						
Managing workload						
Distractions						
Loneliness / Lack of human interaction						
Low visibility / lack of recognition						
Equipment / Technology sufficiency						
Technical difficulties (e.g., network hiccups)						

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important	Do not know
Set a productive and operational remote work schedule						
Set clear expectations for employees' performance and targets.						
Foster Employee Engagement						
Create an internal communication and collaboration strategy						
Use different mediated communication and collaboration tools						
Timely respond to employees' messages and requests						
Develop mechanisms/processes to track employee's daily progress						
Make time for casual conversation with colleagues						
Support employees with technical troubleshooting (e.g., access to VPN, install new software, restore back-up files)						
Create suitable benchmarks						
Minimize the risk of potential leak of confidential company and personal data at a technological level (anti-virus, back-up)						
Create content interactive materials for virtual training						
Deliver short bite-sized training sessions online						

Facilitate inductions and employee on boarding remotely						
Effectively communicate new remote processes						
Ensure employees having a balanced professional and personal life						

8. Work-remote burnout:

	Never/almost never or to a very low degree	Seldom or to a low degree	Sometimes or somewhat	Often or to a high degree	Always or to a very high degree
Do you find it hard to work remotely?					
Does it drain your colleagues' energy when the work remotely?					
Do you find it frustrating to work remotely?					
Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work remotely?					
Are your colleagues tired of working remotely?					
Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working remotely?					

B. Skills Requirements

9. How important are the following skills for HR professionals when it comes to manage remote workers / remote teams?

10. In your experience, what additional skills/qualities (other than those discussed above) HR managers/professionals need to have/acquire to manage a team remotely?

11. In your experience, what are the most needed skills to work as an HR manager? Please select the three most important.

- Managing people
- Building relationships
- Decision-making and problem solving
- Digital innovation, entrepreneurship mind set
- Innovation and risk-taking
- Leadership
- Project management

C. Current supply of skills

12. In your experience, to what extent do HR managers and other relevant professionals actually have the following skills related to remote working management?

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
Set a productive and operational remote work schedule					
Set clear expectations for employees' performance and targets.					
Develop mechanisms/processes to track employee's daily progress					
Make time for casual conversation with workers					
Timely respond to employees' messages and requests					
Create an internal communication and collaboration strategy					
Use different mediated communication and collaboration tools					
Support employees with technical troubleshooting (e.g., access to VPN, install new software, restore back-up files)					
Foster Employee Engagement					
Create suitable benchmarks					
Minimize the risk of potential leak of confidential company and personal data at a technological level (anti-virus, back-up)					
Create content interactive materials for virtual training					
Deliver short bite-sized training sessions online					
Facilitate inductions and employee on boarding					

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
Ensure employees having a balanced professional and personal life					
Track and monitor workers' daily progress					
Make time for casual conversation with colleagues					
Timely respond to colleagues' messages					
Ensure employees' professional attitude and appearance					
Effectively communicate new remote processes					

13. In your opinion which of the following characteristics represent high-performance work-systems?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Jobs are designed around their individual skills and capabilities							
Selection emphasizes their ability to collaborate and work in teams							
Selection involves screening many job candidates							
Selection places priority on their potential to learn (e.g., aptitude)							
Training is continuous							

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The training programs emphasize on-the-job experiences							
Performance is based on objective, quantifiable results							
Performance appraisals include management by objective with mutual goal setting							
Performance appraisals include developmental feedback							
Incentives are based on team performance							
Our compensations include high wages							
The incentive system is tied to skill-based pay							

14. Related to remote working in your company: How often do you have problems with:

	Never	A few times per year	Once per month or less	A few times per month	Once per week or less	A few times per week	Every day
productivity?							
quality?							
JIT (just in time) philosophy?							
interpersonal cooperation?							
intercultural cooperation?							
safety of the working place?							

D. Key issues and development trends in the HR field

15. What are the main issues and challenges for the HR field in relation with the fast-paced expansion of remote working? What is your level of agreement with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
Better talent management practices are essential in companies, e.g. recruitment, staffing, training and development, retention management						
Upskilling and continuous training is required for both managers and employees.						
In the future there will be an increasing demand for HR						

professionals working on remote working environments.						
Regulations from national governments on remote working rules are fast changing.						
New training courses are required to meet the emerging working requirements for remote working management.						

E. Respondent profile

13. Country

14. Email **(Optional, provide in case you want to have early access to REMOWA learning materials and the online course)*

15. What is the type of your organisation?

16. What is your job function? *(you may mark more than one)*

- HR professional
- Trainer
- Supervisor
- Consultant
- Manager of organizations and teams
- Mentor / team-leader
- Senior employee
- Field expert (specialized in running the trainers' programmes)

- Designer and/or provider of train-the-trainers programmes
- Sector & associations representative
- Other (please specify).....

Annex B: Interview Guide

Instructions: Let the interviewee report and share their experiences in their remote working environment and the collaboration with their teams resulting on conclusions on the skillset required so that HR specialists and managers can effectively develop the needed new skills. They will also be asked to express their opinion on the factors hindering the effectiveness of running remote working schemes.

Questions (*skills gap to examine: confidentiality, critical-listening, mediation, persuasion, satisfaction, consistency/presence, building a response team, create an e-working environment to upskill workers, take the opportunity to increase your investment in learning.*)

17. What does your typical workday look like in your current role?
18. What are the obligations companies have to their employees in situations like the threat of COVID-19?
 - Probe: Intensify communication and hygiene?
 - Stay informed?
 - Consider restrictions on returning to work?
 - Protect privacy concerning employees' personal health data?
 - Educate employees about steps they can take to protect themselves at work and at home?
19. What are some of the ways you could help your employees to maintain a work life balance?
 - Probe: Hold regular virtual one-on-ones with employees?
 - Encourage employees to establish a new routine?
 - Manage worktime – recognise a shifting balance?
 - Focus on the results and outputs rather than the hours put in?
 - Prevent team burn-out?
20. How do you prevent your team from encountering distractions while working remotely?
 - Probe: Maintain a strict schedule?
 - Establish rules of engagement?
 - Use the right tools and resources?
 - Encourage your team to take breaks?
21. What are some of the means you could use to ensure that all members of the team stay focused and use their time constructively?
 - Probe: Encourage collaboration?
 - Be transparent?
 - Delegate tasks while staying in the loop?
 - Trust your team to do the job?
 - Retain an overview of team and project progress?

22. In your opinion, what could be improved to make remote working more appealing and at the same time efficient?

Probe: Modify performance evaluation?

Use multiple forms of communication?

Use digital mailroom solution?

Use multiple forms of communication?

23. Companies may have the right to decide which employees will work remotely and who will be physically present. In your opinion, what criteria should an HR manager use in order to make the above decision, reducing the risk of discrimination?
24. In your opinion, in what ways can remote work boost your team's productivity?
25. A fully remote working team can make project management slower and more difficult. What is your view on that?

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask of me?