

# European Skills for International Trade & Logistics

## Job profile

### Transport and Logistics Operational Manager

*Dissemination level*

*Public report*

*Project output*

*O2*

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*Date of deliverable*

*February 2022*

*Status (Final / Draft)*

*Final*



**ESITL**  
A Netinvet Project



Funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

## 1 Job definition

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager works in the logistics services sector and manages operations related to freight forwarding at national or international level.

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager organises, coordinates and monitors freight transport operations by road, rail, air, sea, inland waterways or using multimodal operations in local, regional, national, European (EU) and international markets. He/she may also be required to manage logistics services associated with transport. In a context of globalised trade, the transport and logistics sector is heavily impacted by rapid technological progress and more extensive environmental policies with higher requirements, and is in constant motion in search for innovation. The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager consequently needs to anticipate future evolutions and constantly seek to optimise transport operations using specialised professional software and considering sustainable development requirements to meet the raising demand for green and smart mobility. In view of this need for optimisation, he/she keeps abreast of technical progress regarding both the mobility (vehicles, handling equipment, etc.) and the IT equipment used by his/her organisation. To optimise the profitability of the operations, he/she should moreover demonstrate a good sense of purchasing and selling skills. He/she contributes to the identification of market opportunities and the definition of strategic goals, and implements the decisions taken by the management. Furthermore, he/she coordinates the operations between the different services of the company and/or external partners and clients. In this regard, he/she is responsible for both managing and leading teams.

To succeed in his/her job, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager is required to have strong transversal competences. He/she must be able to work in a team and under pressure. Regarding the commercial and managerial aspects of his/her position, he/she should be flexible, responsible, and autonomous, and demonstrate leadership skills. Concerning the use of languages, he/she must have a good command of the language(s) used in the working environment and of English. He/she also has a sound knowledge of the economic, legal and professional environment.

## 2 Types of organisations

The following types of organisations require the services of a Transport and Logistics Operational Manager:

- Freight forwarding companies
- Specialised transport (removal services, transportation under controlled temperatures, transportation of dangerous goods, ...)
- Rental of commercial vehicles
- Industry or distribution companies requiring a coordinator for their transport needs (own account transport or subcontracted transport services)
- Logistics service providers

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager concerns his/herself with all modes of freight transport: road, rail, air, sea, inland waterways, including multimodal and intermodal operations.

### 3 Position and role

The role of the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager is becoming increasingly important and key to respond to the growing economic, technological, social, and legal requirements.

His/her role varies significantly depending on the size and objectives of the company that employs him/her. Generally, he/she will have more responsibilities in a small company than in a big group.

In this respect, and depending on the work experience, the position held can range from office clerk to department head or warehouse manager. In general, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager has a leadership position and manages a team. In most cases, he/she is employed by the company, but as the owner of a VSE/SME, he/she may also have the status of a self-employed person.

Concerning hierarchy, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager will report directly to the head of the company or to the operations and/or logistics manager in an SME. In a larger company, he/she may report to the operations manager, the logistics manager, the head of transport (at national and international level) or a transport procurement manager, depending on the circumstances.

The roles and positions within the organisation can also vary significantly depending on the professional experience of the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager and the size of the company:

#### 3.1 Young graduates on a first professional experience:

- Transport operator / agent / clerk
- Transport and logistics operational manager / supervisor
- Air/sea/multimodal forwarding agent
- Administrative staff of transport services
- Transport administrator
- Transit coordinator / scheduler
- Charterer / freight forwarder
- Dispatcher
- Customs declaration assistant
- Commercial agent transport services
- After sales service technician
- Warehouse operating assistant
- Loading / unloading docks manager
- etc.

#### 3.2 After some years of work experience:

- Traffic manager
- Head of operations
- Head of transport
- Warehouse or storage facility manager
- Customs officer
- Freight transport operations manager
- Overseas/overland manager
- Transport agency manager / Transport branch manager
- Line manager
- Shipping manager

- Fleet manager
- Consignment manager
- Trade manager
- etc.

A transport and logistics operational manager (EQF level 5) is entitled to create or run a transport company. In this sense, the transport and logistics operational managers can hold the position of Director of a transport company. This is mainly the case in very small or family-run businesses when the younger generation gets access to management positions. However, this pathway doesn't concern most transport and logistics operational managers, which is why this job title is not listed above.

## **4 Economic, technological, and social environment and perspectives**

Technological innovations, changing lifestyles, an increasingly competitive environment as well as new regulations and environmental policies have transformed the transport and logistics (T&L) sector in recent years.

New technologies have a great impact on the transport sector. The integration of information technology and the use of digitalisation concepts (e.g., blockchain, artificial intelligence, automation or robotisation) and tools (e.g., tracking and tracing of operations and goods at any time during the shipment, mapping methods, digital technologies on board of vehicles or dematerialised procedures) are profoundly transforming the sector's jobs. In the coming years, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager will have to deal with more and more automated vehicles and new ways of transport organisation (e.g., platooning schemes, the movement of trucks in a convoy, connected via Wi-Fi, for a better fuel economy), which will not only influence the organisation of transport itself but also the way of managing the drivers' activity. This fast evolution and permanent flow of information heavily impact the job and require agile data management.

The logistics sector has significantly grown during the last years. Logistics take place in globalised markets and therefore require international strategies. At the same time, the trend towards more sustainable consumption increases the importance of local and inter-regional markets. New consumer trends and the rise of online trade (e-commerce) strongly influence the overall supply chain and transport activities. Clients' expectations are growing regarding delivery times, prices, tailor-made services, and environmentally friendly procedures. In addition, the competition in the sector is intensifying due to the arrival of new actors.

Therefore, transport companies need to adopt a forward-looking approach to adapt both to changing regulations and market expectations. The monitoring of transport news and innovations, the search for innovative B-to-B, B-to-C, and last mile delivery options, as well as the need to rethink transport organisations and schemes have a considerable impact on the conditions under which the profession is practised and will develop during the coming years. As a result, the creation of collaborative platforms and partnerships among transport companies can be considered with the aim to stay competitive, to propose client-oriented services and to reach quality expectations and certifications.

The growing awareness of the dangers of climate change among citizens and the economic world is leading to a greater attention for environmental matters. Global political agendas converge towards 2030 and beyond to decrease the environmental impact of the economy and industry (e.g., the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015). According to the European Commission (EU), transport causes almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and is the main cause of air pollution in cities. The EU identified three priority areas for action<sup>1</sup>:

1. Increasing the efficiency of the transport system by making the most of digital technologies, smart pricing and further encouraging the shift to lower emission transport modes.
2. Speeding up the deployment of low-emission alternative energy for transport (e.g., advanced biofuels, electricity, hydrogen and renewable synthetic fuels).
3. Moving towards zero-emission vehicles.

In this context, new legal and administrative regulations are being adopted (e.g., low-emission zones in city centres). Consequently, sustainable approaches must increasingly be integrated into the development model of T&L companies. The trend goes towards the development and implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, so as T&L companies seek to improve their image with their clients, eco-mobility becomes an element in their sales pitch.

The T&L sector has a substantial overall impact, as other economic sectors rely on its efficiency to develop. It is therefore more than a question of mobility: it is a factor of competitiveness for the economy at national and EU levels. Nonetheless, the sector has suffered from a lack of attractiveness for many years and struggles to attract new workforce, especially skilled drivers and logistics operators. The sector furthermore faces difficulties to recruit women, which is why gender equality measures are strongly needed. The problem is aggravated by the generational relief and the upcoming retirement of a significant part of the workforce in the sector. Consequently, there is a huge need to improve its overall image, to make more visible its essential economic role in the functioning of our society and to inform young people about career opportunities. Transport and logistics operational managers will have to deal with these recruitment difficulties and a growing turnover, and will need to exercise an increasingly sensitive and complex management to retain the drivers and logistics operators within the company.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, A European Strategy for low-emission mobility, [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/transport\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/transport_en)

## 5 Activities and tasks

### □ Activity 1: Implementation of freight transport operations

*A1T1 Evaluating the feasibility of transport operations*

*A1T2 Organising and conducting transport operations*

*A1T3 Monitoring of transport operations*

*A1T4 Assessing transport operations*

#### Working context and professional duties

Starting with a client request, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager is responsible for the feasibility assessment of the transport operation. Therefore, he/she makes sure to be in possession of all the information and human resources necessary. He/she organises ad hoc or scheduled operations taking into account economic, environmental, social and legal requirements, monitors their progress and assesses their results. He/she may be required to process customs formalities. Concerning the use of languages, he/she must have a good command of the language(s) used in the working environment and of English. He/she must be able to use office software suites and specific professional software to carry out this activity. The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager must continuously seek to optimise the transport operations to stay competitive and to respond to increasing clients' expectations and social requirements in compliance with rules, safety and security regulations and customs requirements. As an operational manager, he/she can foster the development of a sustainable economy and the overall greening process through his/her actions and decisions.

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager reports to the operations, branch, or department manager, who will decide on the level of autonomy for which he/she will be held accountable. Company size is an important factor in establishing the degree of responsibility.

Relevant information to work	Equipment needed for assignment	Professional contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional context</li> <li>- The client's enquiry</li> <li>- The types of goods</li> <li>- Request for quotation</li> <li>- The company's rates</li> <li>- Information about the client</li> <li>- Applicable regulations</li> <li>- Legal, economic, and commercial documentation</li> <li>- Technical documentation</li> <li>- Description of the constraints and the means of transport</li> <li>- Description of the load units</li> <li>- Documentation specific to international business</li> <li>- Documents necessary for customs operations</li> <li>- Internal procedures and operating instructions</li> <li>- Planning diagrams</li> <li>- Subcontracting conditions, documentation</li> <li>- Quality procedures</li> <li>- Safety protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maps of the area covered by the company's activity</li> <li>- Means of transport</li> <li>- Human resources</li> <li>- Information and communications technology (ICT)</li> <li>- Tools to ensure tracking and tracing</li> <li>- Transport Management Systems (TMS)</li> <li>- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools</li> <li>- Planning &amp; management software</li> <li>- Route optimisation software</li> <li>- Geolocalisation</li> <li>- Load optimisation software</li> <li>- In-vehicle technologies</li> <li>- Handling equipment</li> <li>- Packaging and consumables</li> <li>- Protection, chocking and securing material for packages/products</li> <li>- Cargo security tools</li> </ul>	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>He/she is in contact with the sales and accounting departments, the depot manager and the HSQE and/or CSR manager. He/she coordinates the operations staff, drivers and handling staff.</p> <p><u>External</u></p> <p>He/she is in direct contact with clients, sub-contractors and local or regional public authorities.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevant information for dealing with malfunctions and/or complaints</li> <li>- The company's KPIs and economic constraints</li> <li>- The company's sustainable development goals</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility approach (economic, environmental, social)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Load supports</li> <li>- One or more loading docks</li> <li>- Delivery and storage areas</li> <li>- Control and counting equipment</li> <li>- Recycling containers</li> </ul>	<p>He/she may need to establish international contacts.</p>
<p><u>Expected results</u></p> <p>A detailed and well-argued response to a client enquiry or request for quotation.</p> <p>Correctly calculated quotation.</p> <p>An operation or transport plan meeting the client's expectations, while having regard to the imperatives of safety, quality, social and environmental constraints, efficiency and profitability.</p> <p>Compliance with current regulations.</p> <p>Careful monitoring of the operation using available digital supporting tools.</p> <p>Accurate results indicators (information management).</p> <p>Optimised transport operations reducing negative externalities.</p> <p>Regular and accurate reports to his/her direct supervisor.</p> <p>Recommendations enabling possible improvements of procedures.</p>		

□ **Activity 2: Organisation and management of warehouse activities associated with transport**

A2T1 *Designing warehouse solutions associated with transport*

A2T2 *Coordinating warehouse operations*

A2T3 *Controlling warehouse processes*

Working context and professional duties

Within the framework of an identified (global) supply chain, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager is a contributor to an operation or a transport plan, whereby he/she is responsible to organise the required logistic means from receipt of the goods up until they are loaded, including storage and the preparation of orders. He/she uses available physical resources to ensure the efficient provision of the services. He/she may be led to suggest improvements and to participate in the design of the warehouse organisation. Concerning the use of languages, he/she must have a good command of the language(s) used in the working environment and of English.

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager reports to the operations, branch or department manager, who will decide on the level of autonomy for which he/she will be held accountable. Company size is an important factor in establishing the degree of responsibility.

Relevant information to work	Equipment needed for assignment	Professional contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional context</li> <li>- Specifications</li> <li>- The client's enquiry</li> <li>- Legal, economic, and commercial documentation</li> <li>- Types of goods</li> <li>- Warehouse organisation plan</li> <li>- Warehouse operating procedures</li> <li>- Quality procedures</li> <li>- Safety protocols</li> <li>- Technical documentation</li> <li>- Internal procedures and operating instructions</li> <li>- Planning diagrams</li> <li>- The company's KPIs and economic constraints</li> <li>- The company's sustainable development goals</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility approach (economic, environmental, social)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Handling and storage equipment</li> <li>- Packaging and consumables</li> <li>- Information and communications technology (ICT)</li> <li>- Protection, chocking and securing material for packages/products</li> <li>- Control and counting equipment</li> <li>- Recycling containers</li> <li>- Tools to ensure tracking and tracing</li> <li>- Warehouse Management Systems (WMS)</li> <li>- Planning &amp; management software</li> </ul>	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>He/she is in contact with all departments. He/she supervises handling staff and possibly drivers.</p> <p><u>External</u></p> <p>He/she may be in contact with other companies or sub-contractors as part of a national or international system.</p> <p>He/she may be in contact with local or regional public authorities.</p>

Expected results

A detailed and well-argued response to the specifications.

Correctly calculated quotation.

Logistics services that meet client expectations by paying attention to the imperatives of quality, safety, social and environmental constraints, efficiency and profitability.

Compliance with current regulations.

Accurate indicators for results and quality (information management).

Regular and accurate report to his/her direct supervisor.

Recommendations enabling possible improvements to procedures.

□ **Activity 3 Asset management associated with transport**

A3T1 *Managing physical resources*

A3T2 *Managing digital tools*

Working context and professional duties

To carry out activities 1 and 2, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager needs various physical resources, such as vehicles, handling, securing or storage equipment, etc. Therefore, he/she makes sure to be in possession of all the necessary equipment. In this context, he/she is also responsible for planning and organising the maintenance of the physical resources. The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager chooses the resources to be used with a view to reduce the environmental impact of the transport and/or warehousing activity.

In addition, he/she must be able to use office software suites and specific professional software to carry out this activity. The use of digital tools for the work of the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager will continue to increase in the coming years.

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager reports to the operations, branch or department manager, who will decide on the level of autonomy for which he/she will be held accountable. Company size is an important factor in establishing the degree of responsibility.

Relevant information to work	Equipment needed for assignment	Professional contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional context</li> <li>- Maintenance planning</li> <li>- Technical documentation</li> <li>- Applicable regulations</li> <li>- Types of goods</li> <li>- Description of the constraints and the means of transport</li> <li>- Description of the load units</li> <li>- Internal procedures and operating instructions</li> <li>- Relevant information for dealing with malfunctions</li> <li>- Quality procedures</li> <li>- Safety protocols</li> <li>- Planning diagrams</li> <li>- The company's KPIs and economic constraints</li> <li>- The company's sustainable development goals</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility approach (economic, environmental, social)</li> <li>- Security rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Means of transport</li> <li>- Handling, securing and storage equipment</li> <li>- Cargo security tools</li> <li>- Load supports</li> <li>- One or more loading docks</li> <li>- Delivery and storage areas</li> <li>- Control and counting equipment</li> <li>- Recycling containers</li> <li>- Information and communications technology (ICT)</li> <li>- Tools to ensure tracking and tracing</li> <li>- Transport Management Systems (TMS)</li> <li>- Warehouse Management Systems (WMS)</li> <li>- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools</li> <li>- Planning &amp; management software</li> <li>- Route optimisation software</li> <li>- Geolocalisation</li> <li>- Load optimisation software</li> <li>- In-vehicle technologies</li> </ul>	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>He/she is in contact with all departments, especially the maintenance department.</p> <p><u>External</u></p> <p>He/she may be in contact with other companies or sub-contractors as part of a national or international system.</p> <p>He/she may be in contact with public services, local or regional public authorities.</p>

Expected results

Compliance with maintenance planning of physical resources in accordance with applicable regulations.

Well-organised planning of the availability of physical resources.

Optimised use of digital tools to support the operational activities.

Regular and accurate reports to his/her direct supervisor.  
 Recommendations enabling possible improvements of procedures.

**Activity 4: Management of the service relationship**

- A4T1 *Communicating with partners and clients*
- A4T2 *Preparing the quotation*
- A4T3 *Negotiating and monitoring contractual commitments*
- A4T4 *Identifying new market opportunities*

Working context and professional duties

In direct contact with partners and clients, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager builds a lasting service relationship in a highly competitive environment. To do this, he/she develops an appropriate range of transport and logistics services and cooperates with other companies (e.g., through collaborative platforms, groupings, etc.) to meet the rising clients' expectations. He/she negotiates and monitors contracts, investigates complaints and deals with disputes in close contact with insurance experts and legal advisors.

He/she may do some prospecting with partner companies and should be able to identify new market opportunities, especially for smarter and more sustainable transport options. Concerning the use of languages, he/she must have a good command of the language(s) used in the working environment and of English. He/she must be able to call on available ICT to assure these activities

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager manages the department's relationships while reporting to his/her manager, who determines the level of autonomy for which he/she will be accountable. Company size is an important factor in defining his/her remit and the extent of his/her responsibility.

Relevant information to work	Equipment needed for assignment	Professional contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional context</li> <li>- Enquiries from clients and prospects</li> <li>- Information on clients and prospects</li> <li>- Information on suppliers and partners</li> <li>- Offers from suppliers and partners</li> <li>- Details of constraints</li> <li>- The company's rates</li> <li>- Payment conditions</li> <li>- Internal procedures and operating instructions</li> <li>- Subcontracting conditions</li> <li>- Model contracts, written agreements, specifications</li> <li>- Insurance contracts</li> <li>- Codes and regulations for the transport and logistics sector</li> <li>- Quality procedures</li> <li>- Company communication protocols</li> <li>- Relevant information for dealing with malfunctions and/or complaints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Client, supplier and sub-contractor databases</li> <li>- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools</li> <li>- Planning &amp; management software</li> <li>- System maps and descriptions of transport resources</li> <li>- Information and communications technology (ICT)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>He/she is in contact with all departments.</p> <p><u>External</u></p> <p>He/she is in direct contact with partners (prospects, suppliers, sub-contractors, insurers, etc.) and clients. He/she may need to establish international contacts.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commercial, legal and economic documentation</li> <li>- Technical documentation</li> <li>- Documentation specific to international business</li> <li>- The company's KPIs and economic constraints</li> <li>- The company's sustainable development goals</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility approach (economic, environmental, social)</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Expected results</u></p> <p>A sustainable service relationship.</p> <p>Appropriate responses.</p> <p>Good command of the language(s) used in the working environment and of English.</p> <p>Achieving clients' loyalty in an increasingly competitive environment.</p> <p>Contracts complying with current regulations and in line with the company policy and sustainable development/CSR requirements.</p> <p>Respect for commercial objectives.</p> <p>Proposals for dealing with complaints and disputes.</p> <p>The regular updating and improvement of databases/CRM tools.</p> <p>Regular and accurate report to his/her direct supervisor.</p>		

□ **Activity 5: Team management**

- A5T1 *Identifying personnel requirements*
- A5T2 *Participating in the recruitment process*
- A5T3 *Organising daily work activities*
- A5T4 *Managing conflicts*
- A5T5 *Assessing performances of team members*

Working context and professional duties

As part of his/her responsibilities, the Transport and Logistics Operational Manager is required to manage a team. He/she allocates the various tasks to be carried out in compliance with the company's procedures and according to everyone's competences. He/she ensures the staff's safety. He/she contributes to his/her area of responsibility's better organisation and identifies new personnel needs. In a VSE/SME, he/she may be involved in recruitment. He/she leads the team, and encourages involvement and collaborative working. He/she participates in skills development. He/she may be required to manage individual conflicts. He/she monitors the team's performance with different tools, including individual interviews.

The Transport and Logistics Operational Manager supervises a team according to his/her degree of authority. Company size is an important factor in establishing the degree of authority/responsibility.

Relevant information to work	Equipment needed for assignment	Professional contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional context</li> <li>- Labour regulations</li> <li>- National transport regulations</li> <li>- European transport regulations</li> <li>- Agreements between social partners</li> <li>- The definition of jobs and duties</li> <li>- Internal company procedures</li> <li>- Management methods</li> <li>- Assessment methods</li> <li>- Conflict resolution methods</li> <li>- The company's sustainable development goals</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility approach (economic, environmental, social)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information and communications technology (ICT)</li> <li>- Planning &amp; management software</li> </ul>	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>He/she is in contact with the human resources, administration, and accounting departments. He/she supervises staff.</p> <p><u>External</u></p> <p>He/she may have contact with government departments, local authorities and service suppliers.</p>

Expected results

- Compliance with current regulations.
- Accurate results indicators (information management).
- Regular and accurate report to his/her direct supervisor.
- Recommendations enabling possible improvements to the management of the team.
- The prevention and settling of individual conflicts.
- The anticipation of skills and training needs.
- Regular evaluation of performances.