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Upskilling and reskilling in Greece: the foundations for a digital future in construction

Greece's construction industry is undergoing one of its most significant transformations in decades. After years of limited digital adoption, the sector is now embracing BIM as part of a drive to modernise the built environment. This shift is creating strong demand for upskilling and reskilling across the AECO ecosystem.

The Greek government has made BIM central to its digitalisation agenda. In 2024, the National BIM Strategy was formally approved, setting out a five-year roadmap to integrate BIM across public works and private developments. Supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (Greece 2.0)[15], the strategy aims to not only digitise project delivery but also build the workforce capabilities required to sustain it.

High-profile projects are acting as catalysts for wider industry adoption, stimulating demand for professionals with digital capabilities. The Ellinikon redevelopment – one of Europe's largest urban regeneration initiatives – has mandated BIM across all buildings and infrastructure. Similarly, public infrastructure works such as Athens Metro Line 4 now require BIM in both design and construction.

The state of play: digital capability on the rise

While Greece started from a relatively low baseline, BIM maturity is now accelerating. Until recently, BIM use was confined to a few flagship projects or international collaborations. Today, large Greek firms are building digital capability and integrating BIM processes into their operations. Professional associations such as The Technical Chamber in Greece (TEE), The Hellenic Association of Design Firms (SEGM) and The Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE) also play a pivotal role in promoting training, standards, and knowledge sharing.

Greek Autodesk Learning Partner, FACEtoFACE, supports organisations to transform their workforces through upskilling and reskilling training programmes. Each year around 150 people are upskilled and reskilled on BIM-related programmes, helping them to gain much-needed industry-relevant digital skills and associated certifications.

FACEtoFACE's general manager, and Autodesk Certified Instructor (ACI) Platinum, Exarchopoulos P. George notes*, *"Greece's AECO digital capabilities are rapidly evolving but we still lag behind some other countries. With support from national and European initiatives, we are catching up quickly. We're proud to play our part."*

There has been a notable mindset shift. Once viewed primarily as a 3D design tool, BIM is now recognised as a critical operational capability across the full project lifecycle – from design to construction, handover, and maintenance. Across the ecosystem, organisations increasingly value BIM for its potential to improve asset performance, efficiency, and sustainability.

"We see and hear from our clients that BIM's greatest benefits appear during the operations and maintenance phase," explains George. *"It's no longer about producing better drawings. It's about managing buildings and infrastructure more intelligently."*

* https://www.credly.com/users/george-p-exarchopoulos/badges#credly

Skills in demand across the AECO spectrum

The momentum around BIM has exposed significant digital skills gaps across the construction workforce. Demand spans the entire sector, but the greatest need lies among site engineers, project managers, and cost estimators – as these are roles traditionally less exposed to digital tools.

Field engineers now require BIM literacy to use models for coordination and supervision. Project managers must learn to lead multidisciplinary teams in digital environments, while cost estimators need 5D BIM skills for model-based budgeting. New roles such as BIM Coordinators, Information Managers and Digital Delivery Managers are also emerging to ensure data consistency and collaboration across project stakeholders.

Upskilling efforts are therefore essential. Not only to equip individuals with software proficiency but to foster a collaborative culture where teams work around shared digital information.

Upskilling as a national workforce strategy

Digital capability is at the heart of Greece's broader workforce development agenda. The National BIM Strategy includes dedicated actions to train all engineers in BIM, introduce certification schemes and embed BIM education in university curricula[16]. This holistic approach aligns with priorities for a green and digital economy, ensuring professionals remain competitive internationally.

As George explains, *"Ongoing training is treated as an investment to make Greek professionals leaders in the digital transformation of construction."*

BIM training is also proving a powerful tool for talent attraction and retention. Younger engineers see BIM knowledge as essential for career growth and international mobility. Employers who offer structured training – often through Autodesk-certified programmes – are gaining an edge in recruitment and staff engagement.

"BIM training acts as an employer branding tool," says George. *"It shows that a company is investing in its people and future. That's highly attractive to young professionals."*

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The current and future realities of upskilling and reskilling

The benefits of BIM training are becoming clear on the ground. At Athens Metro Line 4, teams trained in BIM have reported improved design coordination and reduced rework across structural and MEP disciplines. Similarly, at the Ellinikon, full BIM adoption has been crucial to managing complexity, reducing clashes, and keeping construction on schedule.

When teams are trained, George explains, *"there's less rework, better coordination, and more accurate budgeting through 5D models. BIM enables issues to be resolved digitally before they occur on site."*

Despite progress, barriers remain. Cost, time, and mindset continue to be obstacles, particularly for small and medium-sized firms. Software interoperability issues and, until recently, the absence of Greek BIM standards/libraries create technical difficulties. The government is addressing these through incentives, such as EU-funded training programmes, a national "BIM Communication Platform" and proposed tax or subsidy schemes to offset training costs.

Cultural change is critical. *"Construction has always been slow to adopt new practices," says George. "But with the right support, training and leadership, attitudes are changing."*

As digital delivery, data management and sustainability converge, BIM roles are evolving rapidly. Future professionals will need strong data literacy, collaboration, and simulation skills to design and manage sustainable, efficient assets.

For Greece, BIM is more than a technology. It offers an opportunity for the country to build a modern, competitive construction workforce. Investment in upskilling and reskilling pays off – in productivity, quality, and innovation.

As George concludes, *"BIM training is a win-win. Staff enrich their careers, companies deliver better outcomes, and the entire sector moves forward together."*

The benefits of upskilling: we now all speak the same language

For many, BIM training has been transformative. One trainee, a civil and architectural engineer working on the Ellinikon, describes the shift:

“Before BIM training, my role was limited to supervision using 2D drawings. Now, I use 3D models on site to coordinate crews, check details in real time, and detect clashes before work is executed. My daily routine became smarter – instead of reacting to problems, I prevent them digitally.”

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They note that BIM has improved accuracy, reduced stress, and enhanced collaboration across teams:

“In the past we faced delays and rework due to miscommunication between designers and the site - drawings didn’t always match, leading to onthespot changes. We needed a tool and methodology to unify all project information. With BIM training from Face-to-Face, I gained this capability – working in a single digital environment where architects, engineers and the site share the same model.

“We now all speak the same language by looking at the 3D model, rather than trying to coordinate with drawings and phone calls,” they add.

“BIM turned me from an execution-focused supervisor into an active coordinator with informational control. I am now more efficient and precise in my work.

“Projects run smoother, with fewer failures and better cost control.”

Autodesk Learning Partner, FACEtoFACE, operates learning laboratories in Athens, Daphne, Amarousi and Piraeus. Established in 1984, FACEtoFACE is a lifelong learning provider, licensed by EOPPEP and the Ministry of Education. With particular focus on upskilling and reskilling Greek professionals to meet the demands of the new digital economy, it aims to provide high quality educational services and support. Its qualified instructors offer training via in-classroom and online training.

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