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PAITool



SCDI
SLOVAK CENTRE FOR
DIGITAL INNOVATION



acrosslimits

PAITool

Practical AI Training Tool for Digital Transformation of SMEs

Project evaluation

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
1. Purpose of this document	4
2. Evaluation by SCDI and AcrossLimits on Activities 1-4	4
2.1 Dissemination and Communication of the project (Activity 1)	4
2.2 Stakeholder engagement and needs analysis (Activity 2)	6
2.2.1 Comments by SCDI	6
2.2.2 Comments by AcrossLimits	7
2.2.3 Results of the surveys	8
2.3 Course Development (Activity 3)	9
2.4 Course Deployment (Activity 4)	10
2.4.1 Comments by the consortium	10
2.4.2 Suggestions for improvement of the PAITool course	11
3. Feedback gathered during the Train-the-Trainers sessions	12
3.1 Slovakia	12
3.1.1 Background to the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Slovakia	12
3.1.2 Summary of feedback from participants	15
3.1.3 Positive aspects of the Train-the-Trainers workshop - Analysis by SCDI	18
3.1.4 Negative aspects of the Train-the-Trainers workshop - Analysis by SCDI	18
3.1.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Train-the-Trainers workshops	18
3.2 Malta	20
3.2.1 Background to the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Malta	20
3.2.2 Summary of feedback from participants	21
3.2.3 Positive aspects of the workshop - Analysis by AcrossLimits	25
3.2.4 Negative aspects of the workshop - Analysis by AcrossLimits	26
3.2.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Train-the-Trainers workshops	26
4. Feedback gathered during the upskilling workshops	29
4.1 Slovakia	29
4.1.1 Background to the Upskilling workshops in Slovakia	29

4.1.2 Summary of feedback from participants	30
4.1.3 Positive aspects of the workshops - Analysis by SCDI	33
4.1.4 Negative aspects of the workshops - Analysis by SCDI	34
4.1.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Upskilling workshops	34
4.2 Malta	35
4.2.1 Background to the Upskilling workshops in Malta	35
4.2.2 Summary of feedback from participants	36
4.2.3 Positive aspects of the workshops - Analysis by AcrossLimits	42
4.2.4 Negative aspects of the workshops - Analysis by AcrossLimits	43
4.2.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Upskilling workshops	43
5. Compilation of feedback on the PAITool course	45
6. Final comments by the PAITool consortium	47
6.1 Achievement of project objectives	47
6.2 Achievement of KPIs	49
6.3 Addressing the feedback from the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)	53
6.3.1 Relevance of the project	53
6.3.2 Quality of project design and implementation	54
6.3.3 Impact	56
6.4 Next steps	57
6.5 Final recommendations for future projects	58

1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to compile and analyse all the feedback gathered throughout the PAITool project by the different participants.

This will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the PAITool outputs, particularly the PAITool course and the workshops, in meeting the objectives of the project, in line with project priorities, as well as any room for improvement in future similar projects.

The feedback requested relates to the impact of the PAITool outputs on the project participants, both in their improved understanding of what AI can contribute to their business processes as well as the cultivation of digital skills and competences in participants, gauging their improved ability to meet labour market needs and enact digital transformation.

This document also includes an evaluation of the project by SCDI and AcrossLimits.

2. Evaluation by SCDI and AcrossLimits on Activities 1-4

2.1 Dissemination and Communication of the project (Activity 1)

This activity, which spanned the whole project, was relatively successful since a good level of dissemination and communication of the PAITool project was carried out.

The main quantitative KPIs set for the dissemination tasks in the project proposal were reached, namely:

- 2 Online Webinars to be hosted - 1 Webinar in Slovak, 1 Webinar in English
 - 4 digital brochures to be created (available on the website and distributed in events).
 - Average of at least 1 post a week on each social media channel - 134 posts in total (92 posts promised)
 - 3 project newsletters
-

The project outputs were disseminated mainly via the following channels:

- Facebook pages (PAITool project page, AcrossLimits company page)
- LinkedIn pages (PAITool project page, AcrossLimits company page)
- The project website
- Emails sent out to stakeholders, which included 3 Newsletters at key points during the project.
- 2 webinars, one in Slovak and in English
- One whole day event consisting of 4 upskilling workshops in Slovakia (organised together with partners).
- 4 YouTube videos from the upskilling workshops in Slovak language.
- 4 AcrossLimits webinars for their Expert and Business Partner network
- 2 articles in the mainstream media (Hospodárske noviny)
- 2 newsletters sent out to support the upskilling workshops provided by the partners (AISlovakIA, Hospodárske noviny)
- 13 AcrossLimits company newsletters for experts, business partners and clients.

However, the following KPIs proved difficult to reach:

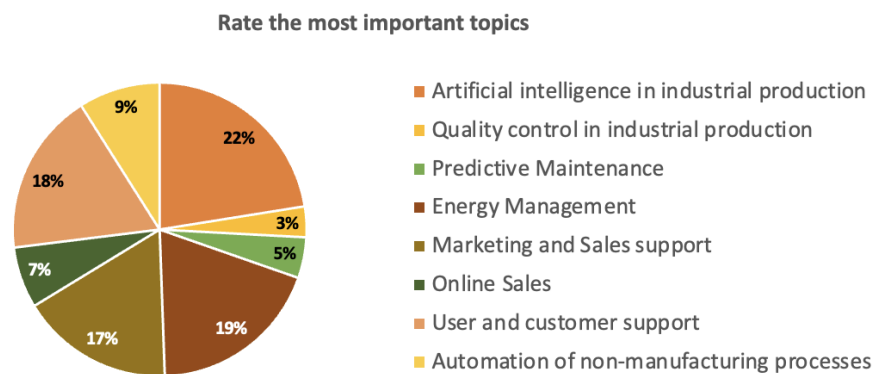
- 1000 physical copies of the brochures to be distributed as leaflets at events - Although a number of brochures were distributed in English during the Train-the-Trainers workshop and the Upskilling workshops in Malta, we did not manage to reach the target of 1000. The brochures are, however, available on the website and can be downloaded for free.
- At least 500 likes/follows at the end of the project achieved on social media channels - Although a number of people were reached by our posts on social media (LinkedIn and Facebook), not all of them liked or followed our pages. At the time of writing, the PAITool project page has 23 likes and 72 followers on Facebook, and 109 followers on LinkedIn.

Based on the above, although the project was disseminated using a variety of channels, the number of people reached could have been more impactful

through exploration of other channels, such as more presence by the project partners in events in Malta, Slovakia and the rest of the EU.

Webinars

Besides serving as the dissemination and communication channel, the webinars fulfilled one more purpose. We asked the participants in the Slovak webinar which were for them personally the most important AI scenarios. The preferences of the participants are in the following chart:



The answers helped us to eventually choose the right content of the upskilling workshops in Activity 6.

2.2 Stakeholder engagement and needs analysis (Activity 2)

2.2.1 Comments by SCDI

In this activity we took advantage of SCDI being one of the European digital innovation hubs. SCDI is broadly networked with the SMEs and has plenty of clients among them. We have a mailing list which allowed us to make a proper selection of the target group.

Engagement was mostly oriented to ensure the participation of the SMEs in the workshops and SMEs needs surveys.

We approached 495 preselected companies to involve them in the PAITool activities. The conversion ratio was therefore better than ratios generally achieved by the marketing campaigns.

The process of approaching the companies was the following:

In the beginning we approached 400 pre-selected companies. During the project additional 95 companies actively asked for the participation on the project activities, or they were invited additionally, when we recognized they would be eventually interested in the AI workshops and other activities.

As there were more people interested in several companies, at the end we had a mailing list of 529 people in those companies. We achieved the following conversion rate:

- 46 people participated in webinars,
- 112 people participated in upskilling workshops,
- 26 people gave us feedback from the upskilling workshops,
- 100 companies/people participated in the SME needs survey.

We overachieved the KPIs planned for the engagement of the stakeholders.

The SMEs needs analysis was done with involvement of the SCDI consultants. The collection of the data could therefore be done in a very complex way. For the analysis we used the large data sets available at SCDI.

The analysis itself was made from the perspective of the PAITool project. We produced a document which is based on a reliable database. The analysis confirmed some of our expectations but also brought some new insights. Sometimes even a bit surprising, as can be read in the SME Digitisation Needs Report available on the PAITool website.

2.2.2 Comments by AcrossLimits

This activity, which spanned the whole project, involved engaging SMEs and stakeholders to take part in the project. An online survey was carried out to identify needs and knowledge gaps of SMEs, so as to better shape the PAITool course.

A number of emails were sent to SMEs and stakeholders in Malta and Slovakia to share the surveys, as well as communication of the surveys through word of mouth and on social media. Nevertheless, there wasn't a large number of respondents, especially from Malta. Indeed, SMEs in Slovakia were more responsive to the survey. This could indicate that SMEs in Malta are i) further along the digitisation and AI deployment journey and did not feel the need to

participate in surveys; ii) too busy to carry out surveys, given that a large number of surveys are circulated online every week for different topics.

2.2.3 Results of the surveys

In processing the **SMEs needs analysis** in both countries, we identified both similarities and differences. On the basis of the data and the differences identified, we were able to suggest measures that would be appropriate to put into practice in each country.

The results of the SME needs surveys showed major similarities in the area of artificial intelligence, confirming that the development of AI is a truly global phenomenon that knows no borders. Individual technologies are maturing to the stage of usability regardless of current local developments. Frameworks, libraries, and pre-trained models are generally available and are affordable to developers and users alike.

One of the reasons for the differences between the survey results in Slovakia and Malta is the different economic structure. While there is no major difference between the countries in basic digital technologies such as connectivity, internet, websites, or administrative tools, on the contrary, when we talk about tools that are directly addressed to the production process or to the service sector, we see different preferences and needs.

The surveys were conducted in an environment of companies that understand the importance of digitalization and know what it can bring them. This awareness needs to start to be built also in companies that do not yet have this awareness. We therefore recommend intensive education among companies that have not yet reached even a fundamental level of digital skills or have not yet started to deploy advanced digital technologies.

The Digitisation Needs Analysis is available on the PAITool project website.

Another task in Activity 2 involved conducting a **qualitative assessment** to identify obstacles to learning faced by unemployed people. This task was successful since we managed to secure interviews with approximately 8 people from Slovakia and Malta who are experts in the topic and could contribute to the report. The Qualitative Assessment of Employment Barriers is available on the PAITool project website.

This activity was successful since both reports were delivered of a high quality and more than 400 SMEs were reached by this activity. What could have been

improved was face-to-face interaction with SMEs, instead of only interacting by emails, especially in Malta.

2.3 Course Development (Activity 3)

There were no problems with this Activity since the course, made up of 8 modules was developed to a high standard by SCDI in the early stages of the project, with the aim of then fine-tuning it based on feedback gathered from participants in the Train-the-Trainers workshops, the Upskilling workshops, as well as other feedback that might be sent to us on the website, by email, or face-to-face when consulting with stakeholders.

The course is based on the texts and documentation existing internally in SCDI. The pre-existing texts were further improved and developed. The course modules are in the form of interactive HTML5 presentations and consist of text on the screen, active elements like buttons and icons, images and animations, spoken word and background music. We have prepared the following digital educational content for SMEs:

1. Artificial intelligence in industrial production
2. Quality control in industrial production
3. Predictive Maintenance
4. Energy Management
5. Marketing and Sales support
6. Online Sales
7. User and customer support
8. Automation of non-manufacturing processes

The methodology of the course is structured in a way that will support SMEs in undertaking digital transformation.

The course was developed in Slovak and English and placed on the website by the technical team at AcrossLimits, in order to be able to move on to the next few activities of the project: the Course Deployment (Activity 4), the Train-the-Trainers workshops (Activity 5), and the Upskilling workshops (Activity 6).

The course is originally developed for self-education using the learning platform available on the project website. It is available for the wider audience either from SMEs or from educational institutions.

For the upskilling workshops there are additionally created supporting materials for the lecturers, available on the PAITool website, which allow the lecturers to work with the interactive courses in a flexible way and optimise the course according to their preferences.

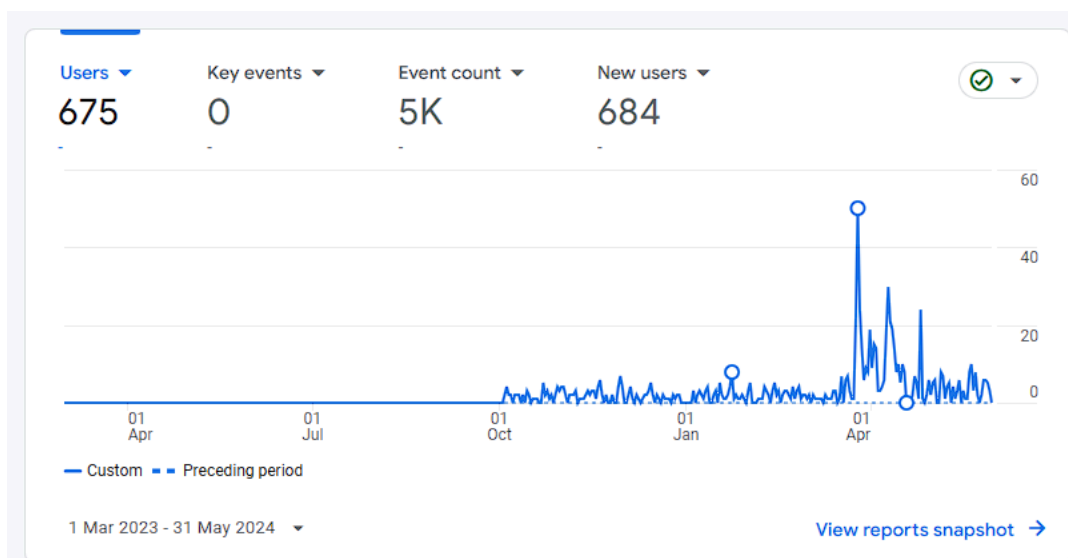
These were created based on the recommendations from the evaluation results (Application evaluation results - Evaluators' notes to the applicant).

Suggested improvements to the course are indicated in the Compilation of feedback on the PAITool course Section (Chapter 5).

2.4 Course Deployment (Activity 4)

2.4.1 Comments by the consortium

The KPI for this activity was to deliver the training to at least 60 staff members. By the end of the project the platform had 1944 views and 675 unique visitors. The most visited element of the digital education content was **Artificial Intelligence in Industrial Production**. The second most visited element was **User and Customer Support**. The visits were accumulated in the last eight months of the project (October 2023-May 2024).



We have the following comments to the numbers in the previous paragraph:

The users were not registered. To make the platform more accessible, we decided not to use any authentication mechanism. Therefore, it is hard to say

what was the share of the visitors reacting to our dissemination and communication activities and the exact impact of our engagement activities.

The number of the unique visitors clearly shows that there were more platform visitors than the companies directly approached in our engagement activities. This indicates that our wide dissemination activities were successful. We estimate that the ratio between visitors coming thanks to our engagement activities and the visitors gained by the dissemination and communication activities was 1 : 3.

We were not supposed to track the visitors' behaviour in detail, since such analytics are expensive. Therefore, we do not know the share of the visitors running the whole lectures. The average times provided by Google Analytics indicate that between 10% - 20% took at least one digital lecture, which means that from 67 to 135 visitors took the lectures.

One point which could have affected the deployment of the course was the fact that no certificate, online badge, or any other recognition of course completion was given to people who finished the course. Since online courses are intended to boost a person's CV, having tangible proof of completion of such a course would be helpful, as explained in the Compilation of feedback on the PAITool course section above.

But the most important impact on the course deployment was caused by the massive acceleration of AI use after November 2022. The PAITool project proposal was designed and submitted prior to this date. The sudden popularity of the Chat GPT changed the landscape entirely. On one hand, it was easier for us to say that AI is important and ready to use. On the other hand, the appearance of the plenty of different training programmes and eLearning tools raised enormous competition to our project, very often by large corporations and government institutions.

2.4.2 Suggestions for improvement of the PAITool course

These are a few suggestions for improvement that were brought to our attention by people who carried out the course.

- 1. Add an introduction to the PAITool course within the e-Learning platform.**

At the moment, when you press "Access the e-Learning Platform" on the homepage of the PAITool website, it takes you to the first module of the course - Artificial intelligence in industrial production - without any introduction to how you can use the course. This could make the

learner experience a bit confusing. Therefore, it could be helpful to add an introduction to the course before the first module to explain i) what each module is about and ii) that the modules can be completed separately.

2. Add a Certificate of Completion at the end of each module.

At the moment, participants who finish a module do not get any proof that they completed it. This makes it difficult to prove that they indeed finished the module, so they might not be able to mention the course on their CV. Therefore, it could be beneficial to add some kind of recognition of having finished each individual module, perhaps through a Certificate of Completion (whereby participants input their name), or through an online badge that would be generated automatically upon finishing a module.

3. Consider other scenarios which could be added to the course.

One participant suggested that it would be useful to explain how to write a resume using artificial intelligence. While this may be out of scope in the present course, other scenarios could be explored which would make the course appealing to other sectors.

3. Feedback gathered during the Train-the-Trainers sessions

The following sections provide an overview of the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Malta and in Slovakia, held as part of Activity 5 of the PAITool project. We will begin by a **background to the event**, followed by a **summary of all the feedback gathered**. AcrossLimits will then provide an analysis of the **positive and negative aspects of the workshop**, followed by **suggestions for improvement** in future Train-the-Trainers workshops.

3.1 Slovakia

3.1.1 Background to the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Slovakia

The training of trainers took place on three different dates - 05/12/2023, 06/12/2023 and 08/12/2023 -i.e. in the course of one week. It took place at the SCDI premises in the Nivy Tower, Mlynské Nivy 5, 821 05, Bratislava.

The organisation of the training was quite complicated. The potential trainers approached by us are mostly people who are extremely busy in their jobs.

Based on telephone conversations, it turned out to be impossible to organise a meeting with a larger attendance in the morning. We therefore scheduled the meetings for later in the afternoon (3:00 pm). Even so, we were forced to spread the training sessions over three days.

First we had to decide who are the most suitable candidates for the position of coaches. As our audience is primarily SME workers, we did not consider it appropriate to engage teachers from secondary schools or colleges as trainers. People from companies have a lot of practical questions that go beyond the topic being presented. Therefore, we decided to invite experts from IT, automation or consulting services. The prerequisite was that the person in question should have already worked on several AI deployment projects in companies.

In order to be able to define at all what we would require from the trainers, we did two introductory webinars. We tested how an expert practitioner is able to handle explaining a complex topic in a unified way with the help of a rewritten training course. There we tested the trainers' ability to stick to the prescribed curriculum and supplement it with their own in-practice experience.

This experience gave us insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the trainers.

Unlike teachers in high schools or colleges, the experts we worked with do not have a teaching background. This was the first thing that needed to be bridged. We had to make clear to the coaches the principles of the didactically correct interpretation.

Working with digital learning content that includes texts, graphs and diagrams, animations, spoken word and interactive elements is not easy. To find the optimal way, we engaged three experienced secondary school teachers from the Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering, Fajnorovo nábrežie 52/5, 811 02 Bratislava.

We expected the experts to be able to accompany their explanations with examples from practice, i.e., from projects that they themselves have implemented. This expectation was justified. The trainers were able to cite concrete cases that were very interesting. However, the layout of these examples in the course, the different weight that was given to different practical aspects made the upskilling workshop itself seem unbalanced, losing the pace of the explanation and going into detail. We were forced to take this into account in the rewritten syllabus for the presentation.

Final training plan for trainers

The final plan for the training of trainers is based on the following pillars.

Each training will have its motivation, exposure and fixation phase. We have adopted and slightly modified this didactic practice, based on the audience, which were entrepreneurs, managers, and experts from companies. Obviously, the fixation phase could not be done in the form of reviewing the mastered material and writing tests or homework assignments - unlike, for example, in secondary schools. The motivation phase must be built on the fact that practitioners are most interested in real examples from other companies, or in successful or unsuccessful projects.

The expository or even exposure phase of the training is based on a structure that corresponds to the course structure itself. The trainer must put himself in the role of a manager of a company. Therefore, in the first part of the explanation, the trainer deals with data, applications and infrastructure, i.e. the technological aspects of implementing AI. However, in the second phase of the explanation, the trainer must address the issue of company processes, personnel, and organisational aspects. It is also important for the participant to learn more about the benefits of deploying AI, but also about the project risks.

Both previous principles have already been considered in the development of the digital learning content for all 8 scenarios of AI deployment in companies. When training the trainers, we figured out that we need to repeatedly emphasise this concept and verify that trainers fully understand it. To support this, we created a piece of material outside of the mandatory project deliverables. It is called Instructions for Trainers. In it, these principles are briefly summarised and made available to trainers as part of their preparation for the workshop.

The most complicated part was getting the course right. The courses are primarily designed for self-study. They contain texts, charts and diagrams, animations, spoken word and interactive elements. Spoken word can be switched on and off. The presentation can be paused for any length of time. This allows the lecturer to come up with their own comments or examples. This is desirable. If the entire workshop consisted of just starting the presentation and the lecturer occasionally clicking on the active element, the audience would be in a passive mode and their attention would degrade.

We have therefore prepared detailed instructions for each of the eight scenarios. They guide the lecturer to alternate phases where the whole

presentation is provided by the machine with phases where the sound is turned off and the lecturer does the interpretation in his own words. When the presentation is completely paused, a discussion with the participants or even with invited experts is also possible. Detailed tutorials (manuals) are an additional output of the project and are produced in both Slovak and English. All eight manuals in both languages are available free of charge on the website <https://paitool.eu/>.

The last outstanding issue we had to resolve was the management of the discussion and the inclusion of the trainer's own input. On the one hand, it is desirable to enliven workshops with discussion with the audience or with invited experts, but on the other hand, this should not be done at the cost of losing the pace, damaging the logic of the lecture, or overwhelming the audience.

We have included three blocks in the above-mentioned optional outcomes of the project, when it is possible to stop the interpretation and lead the discussion. Discussing with invited experts seems to be the most effective. The second option is to trigger a discussion with the audience. The third option is to allow the lecturer to give their own experience of practice. For all three blocks we have compiled a list of recommended questions and discussion topics. They are designed to be complementary to the digital learning content. The trainer can use some or all of the questions or can omit the discussion altogether. If the trainer sticks to them, there will be no duplication within the explanation and its logic will be followed.

3.1.2 Summary of feedback from participants

We gathered the following feedback from the trainers.

Time aspect

The toughest part was to get trainers on board. We were clearly informed that the trainers are busy in their regular occupations.

The preparation for the presentation or for the lecture requires several hours. The trainers from the companies do not have time to prepare for the lectures. The employer wants them on the job or by the customer. They cannot prepare during the working hours. That's why the training of the trainers should be organised in the hours close to the end of business day.

Digital educational content

The trainers see the concept of training companies about AI as very useful. At the end they will face more educated customers and a more mature market.

The trainers appreciate the fixed structure of the lecture. They also need to know how much time to spend on each face of the lecture and each topic.

Sharing practical information

The trainers were very careful about sharing information about their customers, for example, names of the customers, technical details about the project, values, prices etc. This information needed to be anonymized.

Name of module	Satisfaction level (1=best)	Comments
Artificial intelligence in industrial production	3	The topic is too broad to fit into one lecture. It should be divided into more topics e. g. shop floor automation, single production cell automation, single machine automation, robotics, logistics ...
Quality control in industrial production	1	Well explained. Potential extension on the quality control of the raw material input should be considered.
Predictive maintenance	2	More detailed information about the role of the Internet of Things was recommended.
Energy management	1	Very comprehensive. There was a recommendation to present this topic together with non AI topics on presentations, conferences and workshops about energy savings, renewable energy sources, and smart energy communities.
Marketing and sales support	1	The mix of theoretical knowledge and practical examples was highly appreciated, especially by the marketing experts.
Online sales	1	Very practical approach and complex presentation of the available tools and methods.

User and customer support	1	Useful content hitting the market at the right time. The integration with the large language models should be in the core of the next version.
Automation of non-manufacturing processes	3	The example chosen (RPA in the maintenance) was a bit confusing. Processes like invoicing, orders management or travel expenses management should be chosen instead.

The graphical layer of the interactive courses was seen as mediocre at best. The interactiveness itself is a good way to keep the users active. Some trainers would switch off the background music if there was an option to do it. The text to speech option is considered to be not up to date. There are more natural voices already available on the market.

Usefulness of a workshop for trainers/employees within SMEs

For most of the SMEs it is not so important to have their own trainer. The teams in SMEs are small. An approach to first train the trainer and then have the information to other employees is a bit complicated.

Among other things, the thread of losing some content is present in this approach.

The trainers which have experience from more companies and more projects can bring higher edit value to the teams interested in AI implementation.

Easy transfer and use of the PAITool training course in various educational contexts (individual online learning, in-company training, etc.)

The variability of the course was seen as an advantage. Though the course was originally meant for self-education purposes, it can also be used in groups, workshops, and classes.

Nevertheless, the use of the digital education content in this context requires much more preparation on the side of the trainer. The trainer must also be multidisciplinary and a good presenter at the same time. It is not so easy to find people like this on the labour market.

The biggest advantage of the group formats of the training (mainly upskilling workshops) is that you have an audience which is willing to learn something. You can have them in one room, discuss with them, and react to these questions and comments immediately.

Documentation

The trainers need and appreciate any documentation which can help them prepare for the presentation.

3.1.3 Positive aspects of the Train-the-Trainers workshop - Analysis by SCDI

The idea to provide AI courses for SMEs for free is good and the follow up of the project would be useful.

Also, the concept of interactive presentations available on the Internet and handled in the common browsers is proven to be good.

The most positive aspect of the courses is the possibility to mix theory and practical examples.

Most of the trainers were keen to lead the upskilling workshops and share their knowledge and expertise. There is a big opportunity to keep them on board and cooperate with them in future events instantly.

The content itself is well constructed and understandable. Even the technically minded trainers were able to stick to the content and present it in a professional way.

3.1.4 Negative aspects of the Train-the-Trainers workshop - Analysis by SCDI

As mentioned above, the time and availability of the trainers was an issue. We had to adjust the times of the meetings and we had more trouble organising them.

Several trainers suggested using their own materials (slides, demos). As we insisted on using the PAITool digital educational content we had some disputes. At the end the trainers agreed to use our content and to present their knowledge in the time slots which were suggested by the PAITool project team in the tutorials for the trainers.

3.1.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Train-the-Trainers workshops

Based on the feedback gathered during the Train-the-Trainers workshops as well as observations by SCDI, the following suggestions for improvement can be made, in relation to the workshop and to the PAITool course.

The workshop

1. Choose consultants and salespeople as trainers.

There were big differences between the quality and educational skills of different trainers. Consultants and salespeople are proven to be better trainers and lecturers than the technical staff. In the future we will choose among this particular group of people from the companies.

2. Have lower ambitions regarding the number of trainers needed to carry out the workshops

For the future it is recommended to have lower ambitions regarding the number of the trainers. On one hand, it is a problem to find a qualified expert who can do training besides his regular occupation. On the other hand, it is better to handle the training with a lower number of high quality trainers than with a larger group of mediocre speakers.

3. Trainers should be treated individually.

Since they are from different environments and have different experiences with presentations, teaching and speaking to the audience, what is natural for one of them can be a brand-new issue for another one. For the least experienced trainers it is suitable to run through the whole lecture, discuss each phase of the presentation and give them advice or immediate feedback.

4. Find a suitable balance when it comes to disclosing data about the trainers' companies.

Sometimes the trainers are from companies which are in competitive relations with each other. That's why we shouldn't push them to share the sensitive data. For each trainer we must find a balance between presenting practical knowledge from the AI projects and disclosing the information which can threaten their business or the business of their customers. We must make the trainers feel comfortable.

The PAITool course

1. Allow for more flexibility in the use of the digital educational content.

The digital educational content itself is quite complicated as a tool for supporting the lecturers. Therefore, future versions of the digital

educational content should be more flexible and should also allow the trainer to change the sequence of the information provided, instead of having to stick to a defined sequence.

2. Upgrade the graphical layer of the content.

The graphical layer of the content was found to be mediocre by the trainers. Therefore, it was suggested to update it so that it would be more appealing.

3. Create a more natural text-to-speech conversion.

The text-to-speech conversion was found to be unnatural. Therefore, it was suggested to upgrade it using more natural AI voices available on the market.

4. Allow potential integration with other educational sources

Potential integration with other educational sources such as links to other websites, and integration of large language models like ChatGPT or Copilot would make the course easier to use.

3.2 Malta

3.2.1 Background to the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Malta

The purpose of the Train-the-Trainers workshop was to present the course developed during the PAITool project as well as some practical tips on how to deploy artificial intelligence in a company.

The Train-the-Trainers workshop in Malta was held in Sliema on Thursday 18th April 2024. AcrossLimits hosted the event and took care of logistics, while the training was provided by Juraj Polák from SCDI.

Over 20 people registered for the workshop using an online registration form. In the registration form, the participants were asked to specify which of the modules from the course they would prefer to be featured during the workshop. However, on the day, only 10 people attended, which could be due to various factors, as outlined in Section 3.2.4 below.

The attendees had varied backgrounds, including teachers, education officers, consultants, and IT experts. There was also mixed attendance from the public and private sectors.

All workshop attendees were sent a Certificate of Participation following the event.

3.2.2 Summary of feedback from participants

Satisfaction with the 8 modules of the PAITool course

The table below shows the feedback received from the participants regarding the satisfaction with the 8 course modules. The participants did not give feedback on all the modules since they only marked the ones which they plan to use. This explains why the sum of the feedback does not always reach 10. However, what is positive about the figures is that none of the participants chose “Dissatisfied” or “Very dissatisfied”.

Name of module	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Artificial intelligence in industrial production	2	3	2	0	0
Quality control in industrial production	2	3	2	0	0
Predictive maintenance	3	1	3	0	0
Energy management	3	2	2	0	0
Marketing and sales support	4	3	2	0	0
Online sales	3	4	1	0	0
User and customer support	4	2	2	0	0
Automation of non-manufacturing processes	3	0	4	0	0

Usefulness of the PAITool training course in SMEs and other organisations

For this question, 7 out of 10 participants marked “Yes”, while 2 marked “For the most part” and 1 marked “Partly”. No one stated that it would not be useful.

One participant commented that the course is useful because it uses clear language, while another participant mentioned that it is very detailed and informative, as well as easy to follow by non-technical persons.

The person who marked “Partly” commented that the course is useful to raise awareness and for practical case studies, but not to solve the problems and needs of SMEs.

This last comment is an interesting observation and is good to keep in mind when working on improvements to the current course, since we need to make sure that the course doesn’t only stop at awareness-raising but also fulfils the needs of SMEs.

Easy transfer and use of the PAITool training course in various educational contexts (individual online learning, in-company training, etc.)

For this question, 5 out of 10 participants marked “Yes”, while 4 marked “For the most part”, and 1 person marked “Partly”.

This result is positive since it shows that the course does have potential to be used in various educational contexts. What could help is the creation of accompanying materials (similar to lesson plans/ lesson notes) to be used by trainers or individual participants as they are going through the course. This is indeed what SCDI has worked on, following feedback, in order to make the course more effective in different educational contexts. The supporting materials are available on the PAITool website in English and Slovak.

Recommending the PAITool training course to others

7 participants marked that they would recommend the course to others. 2 others marked “for the most part”, suggesting that they might not recommend all of the course or that they might not recommend it to everyone. One person did not reply to this question.

Some comments were also made:

2 participants commented that the course is simple to utilise and that it is very convenient and straightforward. Another participant mentioned that it is important for people to be trained in this course.

Suggested improvements to the PAITool training course

The participants were asked to suggest any improvements to the PAITool training course, for future reference.

One participant commented that there should be better sound in the course, so that the audio is heard more clearly.

Another participant suggested the inclusion of another scenario in the course - Fine Arts.

A final suggestion was to provide contact information at the beginning/end of the course on who to contact with questions about the course. Of course, given that the course is part of the PAITool website’s e-learning platform, the contact information should be accessible through the website itself. Nevertheless, it is a good suggestion to keep in mind.

Satisfaction with the Train-the-Trainers workshop

The participants were asked about their satisfaction with the workshop, particularly the aspects in the table below. The level of satisfaction is also outlined in the table.

Aspect of workshop	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Information received before the workshop	4	4	2	0	0
Duration of the workshop	4	4	2	0	0
Venue of the workshop	2	6	1	1	0
Quality of presentations	3	5	2	0	0
Quality of group activities and/or discussions	3	5	1	1	0

The figures above suggest that on the whole, the workshop was a success. However, it is to be noted that the **discussions/group activities** during the workshop were lacking. This means that in future workshops, a greater effort on the part of the trainer and the organisers needs to be made to increase the audience participation and engagement in the discussion.

This could be done in different ways:

- Creating breakout sessions where every group focuses, for instance, on a different scenario and creating a short presentation. This would, however, require all the participants to have gone through the scenario in detail beforehand.
- Asking questions directly to the audience during each session during the workshop. This was done to an extent in the workshop in Malta, but engagement was limited at times.
- Asking different participants to introduce themselves at the beginning of the session and asking them why they are at the workshop and what problems they may have with AI deployment. This could have helped to break the ice at the beginning and encourage discussions.

One participant marked “Dissatisfied” with regards to the **venue**, explaining that it was difficult to find parking and that the conference room was not satisfactory. This comment is tackled in Section 3.2.4 below. However, in short, since Sliema is a busy area, it is indeed problematic to park. This is an aspect to be kept in mind for future workshops, especially when the target audience i) doesn’t live close to the venue ii) is not a guest at the hotel (in the case of this particular venue).

The conference room itself was good, but unfortunately some sound problems cropped up during the session, which delayed some of the presentations and interrupted the flow of the training. The organisers (AcrossLimits) and the trainer had checked the sound before the session and everything was working properly, but as happens in any event, some technical issues can occur.

Other than the 2 “Dissatisfied” comments, the majority of the participants marked that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the different aspects of the workshop.

Usefulness of a workshop like this for trainers/employees within SMEs to attend if they want to embark on a digitisation journey

Participants were asked whether they think workshops like these are useful for trainers/employees within SMEs to attend if they want to embark on a digitisation journey.

6 out of 10 participants replied, all in the affirmative.

One participant commented that these workshops are needed since our digitisation journey is a long and complicated one and ever-changing. Another participant mentioned that these workshops provide the opportunity to ask questions when there is something unclear.

These workshops are also good to build common understanding about digitisation and AI, and they are important for the upskilling of digital society.

One participant then suggested that it would be useful for SMEs to understand which service providers/tools they can tap into to digitise their processes.

This last comment is especially useful since it is something that we had not thought of when preparing the course and the workshops. Providing country-specific/region-specific/sector-specific information could indeed be helpful for SMEs to tangibly start working on deploying AI and embarking on their digitisation journey.

Final comments by the participants about the workshop

Participants were given the opportunity to leave any further comments about the workshop.

One participant remarked on the need for a better location with parking, as well as a better conference room, as discussed in one of the above sections.

Two other participants also commented that there was little interaction between the trainer and the audience. One of these participants also suggested that speakers could have asked for the background of each participant to understand their needs/tailor the presentation accordingly to increase interaction.

[3.2.3 Positive aspects of the workshop - Analysis by AcrossLimits](#)

On the whole, the Train-the-Trainers workshop went well and the participants were interested in the project outputs, agreeing with the aims of the project.

The event also allowed participants to engage in networking with other organisations who were present as well as to discuss collaboration with the trainer from SCDI in Slovakia. Some further meetings were in fact set up between the trainer and organisations such as the Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA).

Some of the participants, mainly from the MDIA, also discussed some initiatives that the Maltese government has in place for energy management.

3.2.4 Negative aspects of the workshop - Analysis by AcrossLimits

Although 21 participants signed up for the workshop, only 10 people turned up on the day. 3 of the registered participants had sent an email the day before that they were no longer able to participate. However, the others did not send any notification at all.

One problem with the venue was its location in a busy area in Malta, which created parking difficulties. This could have accounted for the lower turnout.

There were also some difficulties with the sound system during part of the workshop, which slightly disturbed the flow of the event.

There could also have been a bit more interaction during the individual workshops, since participants did not ask a lot of questions, even when invited to. It could be that having the chairs and tables set up in a U-shaped fashion hindered communication and interaction, since some of the participants were far away from the trainer.

3.2.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Train-the-Trainers workshops

Based on the feedback gathered during the Train-the-Trainers workshop and the ensuing analysis, the following suggestions for improvement can be made, in relation to the PAITool course, but also to the workshop itself.

The PAITool course

1. Tailor the course more to fulfilling the actual needs of SMEs.

At the moment, the course is effective in raising awareness about how one could deploy AI in SMEs, but more can be done when it comes to practicalities. One example is to actually provide a list of service providers or tools. However, this list would need to be updated frequently since products on the market are constantly changing.

2. Provide accompanying materials for training.

Although the course can be accessed and used by everyone, for training purposes and for use in different educational contexts, it would be helpful to create materials to accompany the course. These could take the form, for instance, of lesson plans, or lesson notes.

3. Improve the sound quality of the course.

Although the sound isn't bad, it was pointed out that sometimes the voice wasn't completely understandable. This could, of course, be due to the fact that the voice is AI-generated, so certain turns of phrase would sound artificial.

4. Add a few other scenarios for AI deployment.

One suggestion from the workshop was to add how AI can be used in Fine Arts, but there are other sectors which could be considered as well. This would involve expanding the course.

5. Add the contact information to the PAITool course.

Although anyone who accesses the course can do so from the website, and would thus be able to contact the PAITool consortium by pressing on the Contact Us tab, it is not a bad idea to also add the email address of the project (or the address of the administrator of the website after the project ends) somewhere on the e-learning platform.

The workshop**1. Follow up via email with the participants as soon as they register, as well as a few days before the event takes place.**

This will help to gauge whether the participants were indeed intending to attend the event, or whether they just registered as a whim. It will also help to understand why they wanted to attend the event, to be able to tailor the session accordingly. AcrossLimits did send out an email a day before the workshop to ask for confirmation of attendance, as well as to explain how to get to the venue. However, this could have been improved by sending the email a few days earlier to give the participants time to see the email and respond.

2. Consider choosing a venue which is easily accessible by car and with ample parking.

If the target audience of the workshop will not be staying at/near the venue on the day of the workshop, it is important to keep in mind parking restrictions. Participants may be disincentivised to attend the workshop if they see that the venue requires them to i) park somewhere far away or ii) get a taxi. Even if they do intend to come, they may give up on the day if they don't find parking. Therefore, where possible, parking availability should be given priority.

3. Include more discussions and interactions with the participants.

As explained in Section 3.2.2, this can be done in different ways. One way could be to create breakout sessions so that the trainer(s) can work with more than one group on different topics. This is especially important if the participants are not all interested in the same topic. Another way is to ask participants questions every few minutes to check that they are understanding or to see if they have anything to contribute to the discussion. This was done to a certain extent during the workshop in Malta, but the participants only started to be engaged towards the end (after the coffee break).

4. As an introduction, ask each participant about their purpose for attending the workshop.

Although in the registration form, each participant indicated their sector and preferred modules in the course, on the day, there was little interaction when these modules were presented. One way of counteracting this is to ask each participant (or whoever is willing) to introduce themselves at the beginning of the workshop and to ask them why they are at the workshop. They could also be asked what problems they have encountered when trying to deploy AI in their company. Most of this process was actually carried out during the coffee break, after a number of the workshop sessions were finished.

4. Feedback gathered during the upskilling workshops

The following sections provide an overview of the Upskilling workshops in Malta and Slovakia, held as part of Activity 6 of the PAITool project. We will begin by a **background to the workshops**, followed by a **summary of all the feedback gathered**. AcrossLimits will then provide an analysis of the **positive and negative aspects of the workshops**, followed by **suggestions for improvement** in future Upskilling workshops.

4.1 Slovakia

4.1.1 Background to the Upskilling workshops in Slovakia

Activity 6 of the project foresaw the retraining of 40 people in the course of 2 workshops.

As mentioned above, when preparing the workshops we had to take into account the preferences of the participants in terms of content and scope of topics, as well as in terms of place and time.

The preliminary survey we conducted in the framework of Activity 1 dissemination and communication identified 4 topics of greatest interest among Slovak SMEs.

These are: Artificial intelligence in industrial production, Smart energy, Client and user service, and Artificial intelligence in marketing. During the project we found that the number of employees interested in the topic of artificial intelligence is limited in SMEs. In many cases it is only the company owner, director, or the person responsible for innovation. The preferences of this person are not narrowed down to one topic, but rather the person is concerned with the deployment of AI in a cross-cutting manner.

At the same time we took into account that the vast majority of those interested are based and work in Bratislava.

As a result of our considerations, we did four upskilling workshops in one day on December 14, 2023. This meant that we could save the travel time of the participants and we also had the chance to prepare an event which was more professional and in better premises. Thanks to our Partner AISlovakia, we could afford to have an event in the Park Inn hotel, Rybné námestie 1, 811 02 Bratislava.

Some participants came only for selected workshops, but a large group

decided to stay for the full day programme. This decision was ultimately beneficial for participants outside of Bratislava. The total attendance was 112 people, thereof 83 registered and 29 came without formal registration. This exceeded the required KPI almost three times.

We were able to achieve this participation thanks to the involvement of our partners, which were the Centre for Artificial Intelligence AISlovakia and the Ministry of Investment Regional Development and Informatization.

The day-long meeting was opened by SCDI director Emil Fitoš together with another important personality in Slovakia, Gabriel Galóci, president of the Slovak Centre for Artificial Intelligence (AISlovakIA).

For the opening of the event, we managed to get high-ranking representatives of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Investment of Regional Development and Informatization, State secretaries Kamil Šaško and Ivan Ivančin, who supported the idea of education in the field of artificial intelligence.

We involved a total of 13 trainers in the training sessions, who progressively went through the digital training content launched directly from the PAITool portal in four panels.

4.1.2 Summary of feedback from participants

Out of 112 participants, 26 gave us feedback. We collected feedback through the Slido platform, i.e. using participants' mobile phones.

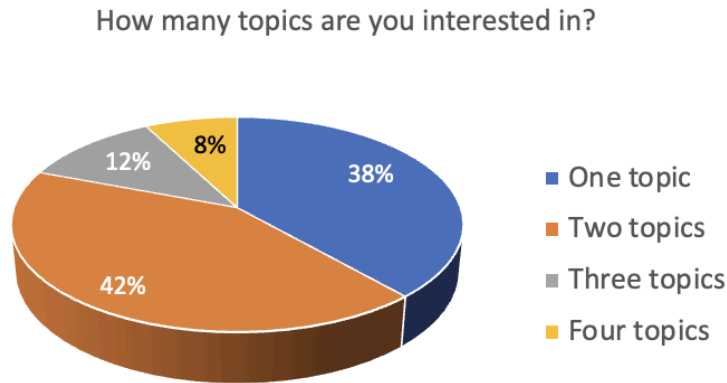
Participants rated the usefulness of the workshop as follows.

As many as 77% of the participants were of the opinion that the workshop was extraordinary in both content and quality

For 11% of the participants the workshop satisfactorily met their expectations. Nominally 1 participant rated the workshop as average and two participants were dissatisfied with the workshop.

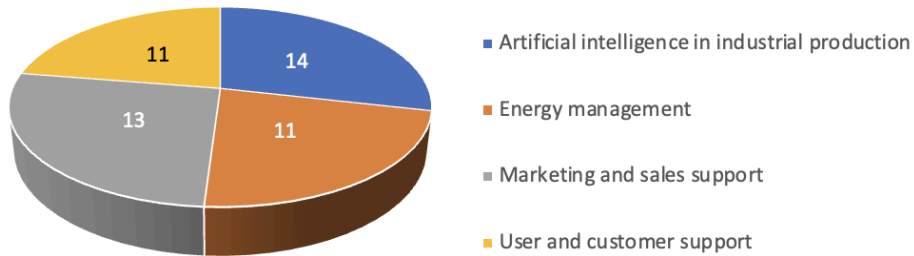


All workshop participants indicated that they wanted to use artificial intelligence with their employer or in their own company. Thus, unlike in Malta, we did not have participants who wanted to use the workshop to improve their qualifications and increase their chances in the labour market. Up to 62% of participants were interested in more than one topic.



The distribution of interest in all four topics offered was roughly even. See the following chart.

What are your prioritized topics?



Participants were asked questions focused on their future intentions or needs. Among other things, we were interested in whether participants were interested in further education, professional services, or practical examples and demonstrations. Responses to the structured questionnaire were as follows.

12	We are interested in services of the Slovak Centre of Digital Innovations
4	We are interested in tailor-made training for our company
3	We are interested in consultations with supplier companies that have experience with such projects
3	We are interested in a reference visit in a company, with which we do not compete on the market
1	We are interested in the preparation of an introductory study directly for our company

Alongside this, we received a number of free-form responses. Given their number, we list them all below:

- The conference was well-themed, it should be continued next year;
- We are interested in cooperation;
- Possible cooperation;
- We are already cooperating;
- I am not in the position of a client partner, but the topics are interesting for

me and I will promote the contact info in my area. Thank you;

- I'm happy to pass on information about services for companies;
- We are active in research and AI and can provide consulting services to the field of digitalization;
- We want to follow the activities of the actors involved;
- We cannot claim state aid, we have more than 499 employees;
- None of the above;
- Thank you for now;

4.1.3 Positive aspects of the workshops - Analysis by SCDI

There were several positive aspects of the skills development workshops.

First of all, the topic of artificial intelligence has proven to be of interest to companies and their employees. In the run-up to Christmas when there is a lot of competitive activity, business and private obligations, we were able to organise a workshop with more than 100 participants.

Our approach combining online digital education content and free discussion of experts was well accepted and was considered to be innovative.

The four topics chosen for the upskilling workshops were the right choice. Also, the details of the presentations and the time amount dedicated to each topic were correctly designed. The practical showcases provided during the course and discussions about the experiences of the trainers from the particular projects made the upskilling workshops more dynamic. The interruptions in the lectures didn't spoil the consistency of the workshops.

The trainers proved to be prepared for the training activities with other groups and teams. They are now ready to take part in the workshops and training organised by third parties or by themselves. Some of them exchanged their contacts with the participants of the workshops and they will continue with their activities with SMEs.

There were representatives of the Ministries which cover the topics of digitization. They now take it for granted that AI is an important topic for education at different levels as well as for lifelong learning. They see both interest on the side of the audience as well as the group of trainers which can bring new ideas and solutions to the businesses.

4.1.4 Negative aspects of the workshops - Analysis by SCDI

Though we were quite successful in inviting people to the event and we encouraged them to visit the project website and take the lectures by themselves, there was no significant change in traffic. This means we either did not approach the target group which typically takes the online courses, or this target group takes advantage of the various programmes and courses which appeared on the Internet during the year 2023.

We didn't notice an interest from the representatives of the educational system. Though we passed the invitation to VET schools, there was no attendance from the teachers and students. To find out how to approach this group, we started bilateral discussions with the association of vocational schools. More details can be found in the next steps part of this evaluation report.

4.1.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Upskilling workshops

Based on the feedback gathered during the Upskilling workshops and the ensuing analysis, the following suggestions for improvement can be made, in relation to the workshop.

- 1. The workshop should concentrate on the innovators in the companies.**

The process of inviting participants to the workshops showed that in typical SMEs there are only a few people who are responsible for innovation management including AI implementation. Sometimes it is only one person in the company. In other words, in an SME it's hard to find one person responsible for innovation in sales, another person responsible for innovation in production and the third one doing the same in energy management.

- 2. The organisation and the content of the workshops needs to take into consideration the value of the clients' time and travel costs.**

When dealing with the workshops which are at least partly interconnected or have similar topics, they should be concentrated into reasonable sequences for half a day or for one day. The participants will appreciate the chance to obtain information at one place during one business trip. This is especially true when there is only one person in the company caring for the innovations or digitization strategy.

3. Properly select not only the lecture topics but also the target groups.

When inviting participants to the upskilling workshops it is good to select them either by sector or by profession. We can address target groups by different sectors (machinery/chemistry/medicine etc.) or by their profiles (ex. HR managers or accountants from different sectors). The content can be adjusted more properly and the trainers can prepare themselves much better.

4. Having experts with practical experience is a must.

The digital educational content itself is good for giving people new information and providing them with a systematic approach to AI projects. But if we want to have an active audience asking the questions, we need to have trainers who have experience from the market and show their deep and practical expertise. This is the situation in which the audience doesn't hesitate to raise their questions and concerns.

5. Collect the feedback during the workshops or immediately after it.

Though it was possible to fill in the feedback questionnaire several days after the event in Google forms, only a few of the participants did this. It is always better to ask for the feedback in the shortest possible time. The Slido platform appears to be suitable for this, as it can be used on a smartphone, easily downloaded and it's easy to use. If the organiser cannot handle a platform like this, then it is recommended to distribute paper-based feedback forms instead.

4.2 Malta

4.2.1 Background to the Upskilling workshops in Malta

The focus of the upskilling sessions was to give guidance to people who were unemployed/looking to find a better job, by providing them with practical tips and examples on how to create an effective CV. Moreover, they were also presented with some general guidelines on how to prepare for online and in-person interviews. The sessions also included an introduction to the PAITool course and how this could help increase their chances to find a better job in the increasingly digital and AI-oriented age we are living in.

The Upskilling workshops were originally scheduled to take place with students from 3 different courses at MCAST (<https://mcast.edu.mt/>), Malta's leading VET institution - Cybersecurity & Software, Multimedia, and Software. However, on the day of the workshop (Tuesday 7th May), an MEP debate had been planned, so one of the sessions had to be cancelled.

Moreover, a number of students did not turn up for the session because they went home after the debate. This resulted in a very low turnout of 5 people for the first session, which took place with the Multimedia group.

As a result, we decided to organise another workshop the following week (Tuesday 14th May) with another 3 groups. Unfortunately, the Malta Union of Teachers (<https://mut.org.mt/>) issued a directive starting on Monday 13th May that no lectures or other sessions could be held at MCAST until the educational collective agreement with the government was signed. Therefore, the 2nd batch of workshops with MCAST had to be cancelled as well.

In light of this obstacle, we at AcrossLimits decided to reach out to a number of different voluntary organisations to see if we could hold some upskilling sessions.

This resulted in:

- 1 Upskilling session with Hal Far Outreach (<https://halfaroutreach.org/>), an organisation which seeks to empower migrants and third-party nationals through a range of services and activities. The session was held with a small group of 9 students following an English course.
- 1 Upskilling session with Fgura Youth Centre (<https://www.facebook.com/FguraYouthCentre/>), a voluntary youth organisation which organises events and gatherings for youths between 12-19 years old. The session was held with 13 youths from the 12-15 years old cohort, since the other cohort were doing their Ordinary Level and Advanced Level exams.

4.2.2 Summary of feedback from participants

The feedback from the upskilling workshops was gathered using Google Forms instead of a physical feedback form. While this has its advantages, namely that i) less paper was used ii) less time was taken up distributing feedback forms, the drawback to relying on online feedback forms is that it is

harder to gauge how many people have indeed filled it in at the end of the session.

When using physical feedback forms, one can keep track of who has filled it in by asking them to return the paper to you before they leave the event. However, with an online form, it is easier for people to just not fill it in at all.

This was the case with all three workshops. At the MCAST workshop, 2 out of 5 people filled it in. At Hal Far Outreach, 2 out of 9, and at Fgura Youth Centre, 6 out of 13. This means that we received a total of 10 feedback forms.

Sector(s) which the participants are interested in working in

The participants were asked which sectors they are interested in working in. The results are presented according to their popularity.

2	Software
2	Multimedia
2	ICT
2	Game Development
1	Engineering
1	Construction
1	Office Administration
1	Statistics
1	Psychology
1	Aviation
1	Hospitality
1	Programming

Part-time or full-time job

The participants were asked if they had a part-time and/or a full-time job, to gauge how many of them actually have work experience already. The results are presented according to popularity.

The high number of people who stated that they do not have a job can be attributed to the fact that the participants in the Fgura Youth Centre workshop are not yet of working age, although a few of them might still have volunteering experience.

8	No, I do not currently have a job
1	Yes, I have a part-time job
1	Yes, I have a full-time job
0	Yes, I have a part-time and a full-time job

Sectors which the participants are working in

Those who marked that they have a part-time/full-time job were also asked about the sector which they are currently working in. This helps to gauge how useful the PAITool course could be for their current job.

These are the sectors:

- ICT
- Civil Engineering
- Psychology/ volunteer with Caritas Malta

Feedback about the PAITool Upskilling workshop content

The participants were asked:

- 1) How helpful they found the presentation about job opportunities in the EU
- 2) How helpful they found the guidelines on writing CVs
- 3) How helpful they found the guidelines on how to approach face-to-face and virtual job interviews

These are the results:

Presentation about job opportunities in the EU	6 found it very helpful; 2 found it helpful; 2 were neutral
Guidelines on writing CVs	5 found it very helpful; 4 found it helpful; 1 was neutral
Guidelines on how to approach face-to-face and virtual job interviews	6 found it very helpful; 3 found it helpful; 1 was neutral

These results are positive since no one marked that they did not find any of the presentation topics unhelpful. This shows that the upskilling workshop content was successful in achieving its aims.

Usefulness of the PAITool course modules in the participants’ line of work

The participants were asked which modules in the PAITool course they think would be most useful in their line of work (currently or in the future).

These are the results, according to popularity:

6	Artificial intelligence in industrial production
4	Not sure
3	User and customer support
2	Quality control in industrial production
1	Predictive maintenance
1	Energy management

1	Marketing and sales support
1	Online sales
0	Automation of non-manufacturing processes

These results suggest that Artificial Intelligence in Industrial Production is the most useful module in the PAITool course. However, this would depend on the type of work that the participants are interested in pursuing. Four of the participants were unsure about which modules to choose, mainly because they are still young and are not sure which career they would like to pursue.

Usefulness of the PAITool course to help boost the participants’ CV and increase their knowledge of AI

The participants were asked if they think the PAITool course will be useful to help boost their CV as well as increase their knowledge of AI.

6 marked “Yes”, 3 marked “For the most part”, while 1 person marked “No”.

The participants were also asked to give reasons for their answer.

Positive responses:

- It can increase my changes and helps me feel less stressed to get a job
- It could help provide some basic general knowledge before starting out, to get yourself familiar with the job application process
- It will enhance my skill set
- I will be more confident in interviews and able to write a good CV for HR
- The PAITool course teaches us
- Yes, because it will teach me new things

Negative/Neutral responses:

- Partly, because I can ask my parents to help me
- Not applicable to what I want to do

The above comments indicate an 80% positive response, which is a good sign.

Recommending the PAITool course to other students/ other people they know/ other people their age

The participants were asked whether they would recommend the PAITool course to other students, other people they know, or to other people their age.

The responses were divided: 5 said “Yes”, while the other 5 said “Maybe”.

Suggestions on how to improve the PAITool course

One participant mentioned that he had problems with starting the course on the website, and had trouble contacting the PAITool team through the Contact Us form. AcrossLimits contacted the participant after the workshop (after having read the comment) and explained in more detail how the course works. They also tested the Contact Us form to ensure that it was working.

The same participant also commented, after the workshop, that it would be good to include a Certificate of Completion after the course. This is a suggestion to keep in mind since it would make the course easier to show on a CV.

Another participant mentioned that it would be good to include a section in the course on how to write a resume using artificial intelligence. Given the increasing use of AI in resume generation, this would be an interesting avenue to pursue in the course, or at least in future workshops.

Satisfaction with the PAITool Upskilling session

The participants were asked about their satisfaction with the workshop, particularly the aspects in the table below. The level of satisfaction is also outlined in the table.

Aspect of workshop	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Information received before the session	4	3	3	0	0
Duration of the session	4	6	0	0	0
Quality of the content	3	6	1	0	0

The results suggest that the Upskilling sessions were successful, since the majority of the participants noted that they are either very satisfied or satisfied with the information received before the session, the duration of the session, and more importantly, the quality of the content.

Helpfulness of sessions like these to prepare students for employment / to help people find a job / to prepare youths for employment

The participants were also asked whether sessions like these are helpful to prepare students for employment / to help people find a job / to prepare youths for employment.

This is a summary of the responses:

- Sessions like these can help prepare students for a chance to be employed
- Yes (x8)
- Yes, of course!

This indicates a 100% success of the Upskilling sessions in meeting the aim of preparing its participants for employment.

Final comments by the participants about the session

Only one participant made a comment in the Google form, thanking us for the free opportunity to participate in the upskilling workshop.

Some other participants approached us at the end of the sessions to ask further questions on how they can help prepare for a job and to get more information on the PAITool project.

[4.2.3 Positive aspects of the workshops - Analysis by AcrossLimits](#)

On the whole, in spite of the logistical and organisational difficulties surrounding the workshops, as explained above, the upskilling sessions went well.

Most of the participants in the upskilling sessions were very engaged and approached us with questions at the end about the PAITool course and the CV and interview guidelines.

Hosting upskilling workshops with different target groups (youths, students and migrants/third country nationals) also provided us with a good

opportunity to spread the word about the PAITool project to a large group of people. It also helped us to make contacts with organisations who could benefit from the course, and who could also be participants in future Erasmus+ projects.

4.2.4 Negative aspects of the workshops - Analysis by AcrossLimits

The low turn-out, especially at MCAST, was not ideal, because it meant that we had to host a number of different sessions to reach our target number of attendees. However, in the end, as explained above, it did provide us with an opportunity to reach out to different target groups and organisations to spread the word about our course.

The upskilling session with youths was perhaps the least fruitful, since a number of them seemed uninterested in learning about how to increase their employability skills. This can be attributed to the fact that they were still quite young and could not see the immediate need for sessions like these. Nevertheless, the youth leader was very interested in the session and asked us questions at the end since he was also having trouble finding a better job. Therefore, the session was not in vain.

4.2.5 Suggestions for improvement in future Upskilling workshops

Based on the feedback gathered during the Upskilling workshops and the ensuing analysis, the following suggestions for improvement can be made, in relation to the PAITool course, but also to the workshop itself.

The PAITool course

1. Add an introduction to the PAITool course within the e-Learning platform.

At the moment, when you press “Access the e-Learning Platform” on the homepage of the PAITool website, it takes you to the first module of the course - Artificial intelligence in industrial production - without any introduction to how you can use the course. This could make the learner experience a bit confusing. Therefore, it could be helpful to add an introduction to the course before the first module to explain i) what each module is about and ii) that the modules can be completed separately.

2. Add a Certificate of Completion at the end of each module.

At the moment, participants who finish a module do not get any proof that they completed it. This makes it difficult to prove that they indeed finished the module, so they might not be able to mention the course on their CV. Therefore, it could be beneficial to add some kind of recognition of having finished each individual module, perhaps through a Certificate of Completion (whereby participants input their name), or through an online badge that would be generated automatically upon finishing a module.

3. Consider other scenarios which could be added to the course.

One participant suggested that it would be useful to explain how to write a resume using artificial intelligence. While this may be out of scope in the present course, other scenarios could be explored which would make the course appealing to other sectors.

The workshop

1. Have slightly longer workshops which include a Question and Answer session.

Given the obstacles and time constraints faced when organising the workshops with different target groups, we had to fit in with preexisting timetables. This meant that the sessions had to be quite short - 30-45 minutes each. Although the people attending the workshops were free to ask questions at the end, since they had to rush off to other previously scheduled lessons or activities afterwards, they could not spend a lot of time discussing with us any questions they may have had.

2. Use paper-based feedback forms or monitor better how many people have filled it in.

In the case of the 3 upskilling workshops, we opted for Google forms because they are easier to fill in. However, the drawback was that most of the participants did not bother to fill them in. Therefore, what could have been done instead was either i) to distribute paper-based feedback forms instead and make sure to collect them all before the participants leave the session or ii) to provide a Google forms feedback form but to actually go around the room to make sure that everyone (or at least the majority) fill it in.

3. Have a slightly longer section of the presentation dedicated to the PAITool course.

Given the time constraints, we decided to opt for a condensed presentation about creating a CV, preparing for an interview and an introduction to the EURES portal, with a short explanation of the PAITool course offering at the end. However, some more time could have been dedicated to an explanation of the course to ensure that participants understood what the course is about and how it can help them to upskill and find better jobs.

5. Compilation of feedback on the PAITool course

Below is a compilation of the feedback gathered from the workshops in Malta and Slovakia, with suggestions for improvements.

1. Tailor the course more to fulfilling the actual needs of SMEs.

At the moment, the course is effective in raising awareness about how one could deploy AI in SMEs, but more can be done when it comes to practicalities. One example is to actually provide a list of service providers or tools. However, this list would need to be updated frequently since products on the market are constantly changing.

2. Provide accompanying materials for training.

Although the course can be accessed and used by everyone, for training purposes and for use in different educational contexts, it would be helpful to create materials to accompany the course. These could take the form, for instance, of lesson plans, or lesson notes. This suggestion was taken on board by SCDI and accompanying materials for lecturers and trainers are now also available on the PAITool website.

3. Improve the sound quality of the course.

Although the sound isn't bad, it was pointed out that sometimes the voice wasn't completely understandable. This could, of course, be due to the fact that the voice is AI-generated, so certain turns of phrase would sound artificial. It has in fact been suggested to update the AI voice to a more natural sounding voice, as is already available on the market. Moreover, the background music cannot be switched off, so it can be distracting to the person carrying out the course.

4. Allow for more flexibility in the use of the digital educational content.

The digital educational content itself is quite complicated as a tool for supporting the lecturers. Therefore, future versions of the digital educational content should be more flexible and should also allow the trainer to change the sequence of the information provided, instead of having to stick to a defined sequence.

5. Upgrade the graphical layer of the content.

The graphical layer of the content was found to be mediocre by the trainers. Therefore, it was suggested to update it so that it would be more appealing.

6. Allow potential integration with other educational sources

Potential integration with other educational sources such as links to other websites, and integration of large language models like ChatGPT or Copilot would make the course easier to use.

7. Add a few other scenarios for AI deployment.

One suggestion from the workshop was to add how AI can be used in Fine Arts, but there are other sectors which could be considered as well. This would involve expanding the course. One participant suggested that it would be useful to explain how to write a resume using artificial intelligence. While this may be out of scope in the present course, other scenarios could be explored which would make the course appealing to other sectors.

8. Add the contact information to the PAITool course.

Although anyone who accesses the course can do so from the website, and would thus be able to contact the PAITool consortium by pressing on the Contact Us tab, it is not a bad idea to also add the email address of the project (or the address of the administrator of the website after the project ends) somewhere on the e-learning platform.

9. Add an introduction to the PAITool course within the e-Learning platform.

At the moment, when you press “Access the e-Learning Platform” on the homepage of the PAITool website, it takes you to the first module of

the course - Artificial intelligence in industrial production - without any introduction to how you can use the course. This could make the learner experience a bit confusing. Therefore, it could be helpful to add an introduction to the course before the first module to explain i) what each module is about and ii) that the modules can be completed separately.

10. Add a Certificate of Completion at the end of each module.

At the moment, participants who finish a module do not get any proof that they completed it. This makes it difficult to prove that they indeed finished the module, so they might not be able to mention the course on their CV. Therefore, it could be beneficial to add some kind of recognition of having finished each individual module, perhaps through a Certificate of Completion (whereby participants input their name), or through an online badge that would be generated automatically upon finishing a module.

6. Final comments by the PAITool consortium

6.1 Achievement of project objectives

Specific Objective 1 (SO1): Identifying the needs, limitations and knowledge gaps SMEs face in relation to AI and its potential for their business

SMEs in Slovakia and Malta were engaged through outreach activities and communication via various channels (online and face-to-face) in order to identify the needs, limitations and knowledge gaps SMEs face in relation to AI and its potential for their business.

An online survey was conducted among SMEs in order to gather data on their digitisation needs. The aim of the survey was also to assess the state of SMEs' readiness, resilience, and capacity to undertake digital transformation through incorporating AI in their business practices. The results were then compiled and analysed in an SME Digitisation Needs Report available on the PAITool website: <https://paitool.eu/reports/>

The survey, along with the Qualitative Assessment of Employment Barriers (available on the PAITool website - <https://paitool.eu/reports/>), helped us to determine how the training content developed during the project can best address the knowledge gaps needed to increase staff confidence in AI and digital competence relevant to modern labour market needs.

Specific Objective 2 (SO2): Developing new AI training course in both English and Slovak

The AI training material was developed in English and Slovak, consisting of 8 modules:

1. Artificial intelligence in industrial production
2. Quality control in industrial production
3. Predictive maintenance
4. Energy management
5. Marketing and sales support
6. Online sales
7. User and customer support

These modules are all available on an e-learning platform on the PAITool website.

Aside from the modules, supporting documents for teachers and on-the-job trainers were created to provide guidance on how to teach the course in a training environment. This was not envisaged in the original proposal but was felt to be a need during project implementation.

Specific Objective 3 (SO3): Deploying the course and delivering training to over 60 SME staff

The course was put online in Q2 2023 so that it would be available before the training delivery during the Train-the-Trainer workshops and the Upskilling workshops. The course was also promoted using various communication channels in order to increase visitors on the website.

A total of over 100 people attended the Train-the-Trainers workshops and the Upskilling workshops held in Slovakia and Malta, as well as the conference held in Slovakia in December 2023. This meant that the course could be presented to a wider audience and breakout sessions were held to delve deeper into certain modules in the course.

In this regard, the 60 SME staff target was achieved. The supporting documents for teachers and trainers will also help to ensure that the course can be deployed after project completion, and independently of the project partners' involvement.

Specific Objective 4 (SO4): Gathering feedback and evaluating the success of the course and its ability to meet project objectives

This document contributes to the achievement of this objective since it compiles all the feedback gathered during project implementation to evaluate the success of the course and its ability to meet project objectives.

The feedback was gathered mainly from the people who attended the Train-the-Trainers workshops and the Upskilling workshops in Slovakia and Malta.

The course was met positively by the project participants, although there were a few suggestions for improvement, which are discussed in greater detail in previous sections.

Feedback was also compiled in this document on the project activities since they were all essential for the success of the course.

6.2 Achievement of KPIs

The following were the KPIs envisaged at the beginning of the project.

Quantitative KPIs:

- 400 SMEs reached through the project - This KPI was achieved since SCDI and AcrossLimits reached out to more than 400 SMEs through various communication channels and received positive responses. This was also aided by the promotion of the survey and the Train-the-Trainers workshops.
- 40 needs analysis survey responses - This KPI was achieved mainly by SCDI since they received more than 40 responses from Slovakia. AcrossLimits received 10 responses, from different countries.

- 60 SME employees trained - This KPI was achieved through the various activities held throughout the project, namely the Train-the-Trainers workshops, the Upskilling workshops, and the conference held in Slovakia in December 2023.
- 3 Train-the-Trainer workshops held with 20 participants each - This KPI was achieved to a certain extent since a number of smaller workshops were held in Slovakia because of the limitations of organising large gatherings of trainers at one go. In Malta, although 21 people registered for the workshop, only 10 people attended.
- 3 Upskilling workshops held with 20 participants each - This KPI was achieved, through a larger number of workshops with a smaller number of attendees for each workshop.
- 1500 visits on website - This KPI was achieved since Google Analytics documents 1944 website views between 1st March 2023 (approximately when the website was created) and 31st May 2024 (when the project ended)
- 70% positive responses on training and workshop feedback - This KPI was achieved since the vast majority of responses to the feedback forms were positive, with only a few critical remarks or suggestions for improvement.

The achievement of the dissemination KPIs are discussed in Section 2.1 and are being reproduced below.

Most of the quantitative KPIs set for the dissemination tasks in the project proposal were reached, namely:

- 2 Online Webinars to be hosted
- 4 digital brochures to be created (available on the website and distributed in events)
- Average of at least 1 post a week on each social media channel
- 3 project newsletters

However, the following KPIs proved difficult to reach:

- 1000 physical copies of the brochures to be distributed as leaflets at events - Although a number of brochures were distributed in English during the Train-the-Trainers workshop and the Upskilling workshops in

Malta, we did not manage to reach the target of 1000. The brochures are, however, available on the website for free and can be downloaded.

- At least 500 likes/follows at the end of the project achieved on social media channels - Although a number of people were reached by our posts on social media (LinkedIn and Facebook), not all of them liked or followed our pages. At the time of writing, the PAITool project page has 23 likes and 72 followers on Facebook, and 109 followers on LinkedIn.

Below you will find a summary table of KPIs for the PAITool project.

Expected results of the activity	Target KPI	Achieved KPI	Malta	Slovakia
Dissemination and Communication				
Dissemination and Communication Plan	To be created	Done	Joint activity	
Online Portal	To be created	Done	Joint activity	
Visits on Website	1500	1944	Joint activity	
Social Media Engagement - number of posts	92 (by end of May 2024)	134	Joint activity	
Likes/follows	500	204	Joint activity	
Webinars - number of webinars	2	2	1	1
Promotional Materials - Digital newsletter	3	3	Joint activity	
Promotional Materials - Brochures	4	4	Joint activity	
Promotional Materials - Printed brochure copies	1500	75	Joint activity	
Stakeholder Engagement & Needs Analysis				
List of SME Contacts - companies	400	845	350	495
SME Digitisation Needs Survey	40 responses	110 responses	10	100

Digitisation Needs Analysis Report	To be created	Done	Joint activity	
Qualitative Assessment of Employment Barriers	To be created	Done	Joint activity	
Course Development				
Training content (8 modules)	To be created	Done		8 modules
Course Deployment				
Delivery of the training	60	67	Joint activity	
Train-the-Trainers Workshops				
Train-the-Trainers - number of workshops	3	4	1	3
Train-the-Trainers - number of participants	60	28	10	18
Upskilling Workshops				
Upskilling Workshops - number of workshops	3	7	3	4
Upskilling Workshops - number of participants	60	110	27	83
Feedback-Evaluation				
Positive responses on training and workshop feedback	70%	Circa 85%	Joint activity	
Evaluation report	To be created	Done	Joint activity	

6.3 Addressing the feedback from the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)

Based on the feedback we received in the Evaluation Summary Report upon being granted funding, we have tried to address certain issues and adapt the project implementation accordingly.

6.3.1 Relevance of the project

Link to VET institutions

We have sought to create more of an impact on the VET system by contacting our network of VET education institutions.

Based on the recommendations from the evaluation report we decided to introduce our project to the VET system representatives.

In Slovakia, we did this on two levels.

1. We opened the communication with a particular secondary vocational school and consulted the project with three teachers at this school as well as with the director of this school.
2. SCDI has started cooperation with the Association of Secondary Vocational Schools of Slovakia.

For more details see Chapter 6.4.

In Malta, AcrossLimits has reached out to the leading VET institution in Malta, MCAST (The Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology) in order to inform them about the project and the resources we have created. We had also planned to hold Upskilling sessions with some of the students, but, as described in the Upskilling sessions section of this report, due to a directive by the Malta Union of Teachers, we had to cancel them. Nevertheless, we have sent them the materials relating to the project so that they can be used by the college if they are interested in doing so.

We also reached out to other training institutions in Malta when we were promoting the Train-the-Trainers session, in order to explain what the project is about and how they can benefit from the materials.

Beyond Maltese shores, AcrossLimits has also promoted the course with its network of experts and business partners, who are spread out in more than 30 different countries, some of which are VET institutions or work closely with them. A number of them have requested to use the course in their work life, which is a positive sign that the course is being considered helpful in educational and training circles.

Aside from this, SCDI has also created supporting documents for teachers and for on-the-job trainers to help them implement the course in different educational/work environments. These were not envisaged at proposal stage

but were felt to be necessary to ensure more effective implementation of the PAITool course. They are available on the website in Slovak and English in the Resources and Reports section.

6.3.2 Quality of project design and implementation

Work plan

Following feedback that the Maltese partner organisation, AcrossLimits, is not sufficiently involved in the work plan, the PAITool partners addressed this issue in the kick-off meeting held in October 2022 and discussed how the work could be more balanced between both organisations.

Therefore, most of the workload of Dissemination and Communication (Activity 1) was taken on by AcrossLimits, including the development of the branding kit for the project, the creation and publication of posts on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), and the creation of the project newsletters to be sent to stakeholders and potential project participants. AcrossLimits was also in charge of creating the Dissemination and Communication plan and of the Dissemination and Communication reports.

Apart from this, AcrossLimits was in charge of creating the PAITool website and maintaining it throughout the whole project. During the partner meetings, discussions were held on how the website would look and visual and technical updates were carried out as needed.

SCDI provided content for around 40 social media posts, in order to contribute to the Dissemination and Communication activity. They also took care to communicate with stakeholders in Slovakia about the PAITool project.

Within Activity 2, both partners worked together to create the questions for the SME Digitisation Needs survey and to disseminate it with SMEs and multiplier organisations. SCDI compiled all the data from the surveys into a report, with some writing contributions from AcrossLimits.

Moreover, both SCDI and AcrossLimits conducted interviews on the topic of unemployment barriers and compiled all the information into a report.

SCDI and AcrossLimits also reached out to more than 400 SMEs in order to inform them about the project and how they can participate.

SCDI was in charge of the creation of the PAITool course in Slovak and English, while AcrossLimits created the eLearning platform on the website to host the course. The deployment of the course was aided mainly by the dissemination and communication activities carried out.

The Train-the-Trainers workshops (Activity 5) were organised in Slovakia and Malta. The content was delivered by SCDI in all workshops, since they are the experts on the topic. AcrossLimits took care of the logistics, the introductory presentation, and the registration for the workshop in Malta.

Activity 6 involved hosting Upskilling workshops to introduce the PAITool course to different target groups (such as migrants). AcrossLimits held 3 different workshops in collaboration with MCAST (A VET institution), Hal Far Outreach (an NGO which provides educational opportunities for migrants and third country nationals), and Fgura Youth Centre (a youth organisation). The sessions served to introduce the PAITool course as well as to give practical tips on how to prepare for interviews and write more effective CVs, in order to better their chances for employment. SCDI also carried out 4 upskilling workshops in December 2023 during their conference, attended by more than 80 people.

The final activity of the project, the Feedback-Evaluation activity, was undertaken by both partners. AcrossLimits was in charge of preparing the feedback forms, which could then be adapted as needed to the different workshops being held. AcrossLimits also coordinated the writing of this evaluation report.

During the general meetings of the project, held every 1-2 months, Meeting Agendas and Reports were prepared by AcrossLimits, to ease the workload of SCDI, as suggested in the Evaluation Summary Report. Agendas and reports were amended as needed by SCDI. AcrossLimits was also in charge of creating and maintaining the shared Google Drive to facilitate efficient implementation of the project.

The above summary of the workload of each partner demonstrates the efforts of the PAITool consortium to use the expertise of SCDI and AcrossLimits in order to effectively implement the project.

Cost effectiveness, elements of inclusiveness and environmental/eco-approaches

The Evaluation Summary Report mentioned the issues of cost effectiveness, lack of inclusiveness and environmental/eco-approaches planned for the project.

During project implementation we sought to mitigate this issue by carrying out the following actions:

- Although in the proposal we stated that we would distribute 1,000 printed brochure copies during events, during the project both SCDI and AcrossLimits felt that this would not be feasible cost-wise, since it cost AcrossLimits approximately 180 Euro just to print 75 brochures, meaning that it would have cost approximately 2340 Euro to print 1000 copies, more than 1500 Euro, the amount proposed in the project proposal. Moreover, printing so many brochures would have a negative impact on the environment. Therefore, the 4 different brochures were all made available on the website in Slovak and English, and only a small amount of brochures were printed for the Train-the-Trainers and the Upskilling workshops.
- We also sought to be more inclusive by not limiting the workshops in Malta and Slovakia just to trainers, but by also inviting anyone interested in learning about AI and how it can help their day-to-day processes. For the upskilling workshops in Malta, AcrossLimits collaborated with 1 VET institution, 1 NGO for migrants and third country nationals, and 1 youth NGO.

6.3.3 Impact

One of the tasks within the dissemination and communication activity (Activity 1) was to create the project website which would host all project materials, including the PAITool course. The website and its materials were all disseminated and communicated through the project page on Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as through the company pages and websites. Dissemination and communication also took place through other channels such as newsletters and webinars, both within the project and through company channels. Administration of the project website will be taken over by SCDI after the project ends and the materials will remain available for at least 5 years. Project materials can be downloaded and used offline, with the exception of the PAITool course.

We also reached out to various stakeholders and multiplier organisations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of SMEs, IT organisations and VET organisations to promote the course, and other project activities, such as the workshops.

6.4 Next steps

The main problem perceived by teachers of professional subjects is the lack of didactic procedures and methodological materials for teaching about Artificial Intelligence.

For a better understanding of the problem, SCDI got in contact with a selected industrial secondary school - the Secondary Industrial School of Mechanical Engineering, Fajnorovo nábr. 5 in Bratislava. The presentation for 20 teachers of this school took place on July 2nd 2024 (after the end of the PAITool project, but before submitting this report).

We got into contact with the Association of Secondary Vocational Schools of Slovakia on the level of the chairman of the board. The Association of Secondary Vocational Schools of Slovakia (ASOSS), has 109 member schools (<https://www.asoss.sk>).

We have an agreement about the memorandum of understanding which will be signed on September 25th 2024 at a meeting of the ASOSS Committee in the presence of the State Institute for Vocational Education. This memorandum will establish a framework for further cooperation between SCDI and the Association of vocational schools of Slovakia in the field of artificial intelligence for the companies. This will include access to the digital educational content and website created within the PAITool project. The training materials suitable for vocational education will be freely available to the teachers. The PAITool project results will be presented during the meeting.

The next step will then be a presentation at the ASOSS General Assembly on 4-6 November 2024.

Based on the results of these events, it will be possible to determine the form and content of the partners' cooperation in the future, and whether there will be a possibility of public support for this cooperation. Further events and cooperation with particular schools are also envisaged.

On the basis of discussion with the school staff SCDI decided to apply didactic procedures for the education of professional subjects to the methodologies for lecturers. In addition, SCDI has prepared a set of methodologies for the whole educational set, which will allow the use of digital educational content in a simplified way also in secondary vocational schools. This is a first draft at the prototype stage of the methodology and it would deserve qualified

opposition and testing in pedagogical practice and secondary vocational schools.

AcrossLimits, like SCDI, is also planning more cooperation with educational institutions to promote the PAITool course and other project outputs after the project ends. It has also reached out to MCAST, one of the leading VET institutions, to see how the course can be used to help students be more prepared for the increasingly AI-oriented world we are living in. Moreover, AcrossLimits has had positive responses from its network of experts and business partners on the course, some of which have already started to use the course in their work and/or educational practices.

AcrossLimits is also envisaging future collaboration with trainers within SCDI to provide training in Malta on AI, including material from the PAITool course, so that the collaboration built during the project will not end abruptly after project completion.

6.5 Final recommendations for future projects

Based on the compilation of the feedback from the project participants as well as the ensuing evaluation by SCDI and AcrossLimits, we are proposing the following recommendations for future projects in the sector, apart from the recommendation mentioned in previous sections.

1. Any project on AI deployment will need to consider how fast the sector is changing. Therefore, courses will need to be updated every few months or years to make sure that the material is not outdated.
2. Awareness about AI should start as early as possible in the educational system. Therefore, it is essential to have projects targeted at primary and secondary education, not just limited to the labour market and higher education.
3. AI is a multidisciplinary and complex way to solve practical problems. It has also become essential to include AI concepts when teaching basic digital skills. Therefore, it should become the subject of vocational education not just in the technical courses, but also in courses in other sectors.
4. Managers and professionals in various sectors have to learn about the possibilities of artificial intelligence and ways to implement AI solutions. Therefore, tertiary education should include not only IT concepts, but also an introduction to data science and machine learning.