National Piloting Experience Report

«GREECE »

EUROTRAINING:

www.smeraldproject.eu

Contents

Introduction

- **Background:** *A brief summary of the context for your pilots (in relation to Digital Data and Artificial Intelligence competences in the context of SMEs/VET providers in your country)*

The pilot activity was carried out in Athens, Greece and targeted professionals from EUROTRAINING. The goal was to develop digital data and AI skills among professionals working in EU projects and VET. In recent years, there has been a rising requirement for Greek VET providers and SMEs to comprehend and efficiently employ AI tools and data analytic approaches. This is especially critical for improving educational quality, project implementation, and aligning VET curricula with digital transformation goals.

Although this pilot activity was part of the SMERALD project, it mainly responded to EUROTRAINING's own ongoing need for continuous professional development (CPD). Even without the project's official requirements, it would have been carried out. The knowledge gained from this pilot has been shared widely with staff across many departments, highlighting how important AI integration is for everyday work and strengthening the organisation's dedication to digital transformation.

Although EUROTRAINING does not primarily provide training courses to SMEs, its professionals, particularly project managers, networking experts, and IT developers, are in constant contact with them through EU-funded projects, stakeholder consultations, and collaborative course development. Strengthening their expertise of AI and data analysis enables more informed conversations with SMEs, more accurate needs assessments, and more inventive training content targeted to developing digital skill demands.

- **The Purpose and Objectives of the Pilots:** *why you did it – the reasons for piloting and what you set out to test*

The pilot activity aimed to improve the digital data and AI skills of EUROTRAINING employees, particularly those involved in EU project management, networking, proposal creation, and IT programming. The primary aim for undertaking this pilot was to meet the growing demand for VET providers and their staff to comprehend and apply AI technologies and data analysis methodologies in their everyday work, project activities, and course creation.

Specifically, the pilot aimed at:

- Introduce participants to the SMERALD e-learning platform and walk them through its modules to gain a basic understanding of AI, digital data, and prompt engineering.

- Give participants hands-on experience with AI technologies such as video quizzes, interactive worksheets, and podcast production to help them use AI more effectively in education and projects.

- Explain the ideas of open data, data portals, data cleaning, and fundamental data analysis tools so that employees may manage real-world data difficulties related to their projects.

- Facilitate open discussion about the ethical and environmental challenges associated with AI use, fostering introspection and problem-solving thinking.

- Improve participants' prompt writing skills so that they can get the most out of AI technologies at work.

- Use practical tasks with Flourish, such as crowdmapping and data visualisation, to reinforce learning and show how data can be sorted and presented in meaningful ways.

- Support the integration of AI and data analytic competencies into EUROTRAINING staff's daily work, increasing their ability to engage with SMEs and other stakeholders, meeting future demands for digital transformation, and contributing to the development of novel VET courses.

- **The Target Groups: Pilot Participants and Beneficiaries**: *who was involved in the piloting - information about them: how many, their occupation, gender, age range, SMEs managers/employees or VET professionals etc)*

A total of 12 participants took part in the pilot activity. Participants included experts involved in EU project management, networking, proposal creation, and IT development. The staff members' ages ranged from 24 to 35, and they comprised both men and women. (9 female, 3 male) While they are not SME workers, they frequently interact with SMEs through project activities, training design, and consultancy. As a result, the pilot aimed to improve its ability to serve SMEs in areas like as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and data analysis.

Section 1: Methodology of the pilot(s)

Describe how the piloting was carried out, what the format was and what activities it involved. How many pilots did you organise and why did you do it this way?

Pilot -28.04.2025

- *Description of the pilot ie.* ***why****,* ***where, when*** *(the timeline),* ***by whom*** *(the facilitator/s)****, to whom*** *(the beneficiaries) and numbers involved*
- *Process/ methods used ie* ***how*** *it was conducted and* ***what*** *did you do? (eg learning projects (no.), face-to-face sessions, cascading the learning through the full blended learning course etc?)*

The piloting session was held online on April 28, 2025, and was organised by EUROTRAINING. The pilot targeted 12 employees, including six EU Project Managers, four Networking and Proposal Development Officers, and two IT Developers/Programmers. The goal was to introduce and reinforce critical digital competencies, with an emphasis on AI, rapid engineering, and data analysis, in line with the SMERALD project objectives.

Prior to the session, all participants had registered on the SMERALD e-learning platform. They received written instructions describing how to access and finish the online modules. During the piloting session, these processes were also reviewed in real time to establish familiarity with the platform.

The workshop, which lasted around two hours, began with an overview of the SMERALD project and a demonstration of the e-learning platform. The spider questionnaire feature was highlighted as a way to enable self-assessment of

digital competencies. This technique was critical in directing learners to the most relevant modules depending on their current knowledge levels.

The first half of the piloting concentrated on AI awareness and practical application.

- A brief debate was held about environmental problems and the ethical challenges of AI use.
- The EU's AI Factories initiative was introduced to help contextualise policy developments.
- Participants were taught how to keep AI-generated information personalised, traceable, and used ethically in their professional responsibilities.
- A hands-on session followed, with a focus on effective prompt writing, in which participants experienced creating optimised prompts.

This was followed by an overview of important AI tools and additional hands-on exploration.

- AI-generated video quizzes have been created.
- Introduction to interactive worksheets.
- A demonstration of podcast creation tools.

The second half of the pilot focused on data analysis, under the title "Understanding Data Analysis". The key themes covered were:

- Definition and classification of data (qualitative versus quantitative).
- Open data principles and how to access them through data portals (national, EU, and worldwide).
- Use FOIA requests, crowdsourced data, and practical tool examples (for example, the USHAHIDI crowdmapping platform).

Participants completed a practical data analysis job with real project data from EUROTRAINING's portfolio:

- Thematic themes were used to group the projects (for example, Green Transition, Digital Transformation, AI, Youth Inclusion, and Entrepreneurship). Excel was used to perform basic data cleaning procedures such as duplicate removal and filtering.

The data was then visualised using Flourish, which allows for interactive categorisation (for example, choosing "Digital Skills" displays all relevant initiatives). The piloting process concluded with a demonstration of how to use these tools independently. Participants gained hands-on experience in both AI-supported creation of content and data-driven storytelling, which strengthened their capacity to apply these abilities in project work and VET services.

Micro-Credentials in the Pilot

How were participants evaluated and guided through Micro-Credentials? Explain how learners were evaluated with technologies such as Competence Spider and LEVEL5. What strategies were implemented to monitor progress and validate competencies? How does tailoring the learning experience and dividing the course into micro-modules affect learners' progress and engagement?

How did breaking down the entire course into micro-modules and tailoring teaching to individual requirements affect the overall learning experience?

Prior to the piloting session, all participants were enrolled in the SMERALD e-learning platform, which separated the course content into micro-modules. To personalise the learning process to individual needs and efficiently track progress, two key evaluation instruments were used: the Competence Spider Questionnaire and the LEVEL5 assessment system.

Participants filled out the Spider Questionnaire at the start and end of the piloting, which helped them identify their existing knowledge and opportunities for improvement. Based on these findings, users were encouraged to follow specific learning routes inside the platform, focusing primarily on the micro-modules that addressed their inadequacies. This technique not only avoided information overload, but it also increased engagement by providing personalised learning experiences.

The LEVEL5 approach, which is noted for its capacity to evaluate competence growth across cognitive, practical, and affective dimensions, was utilised to assess learning outcomes in a more comprehensive manner. It confirmed whether the knowledge gained from the micro-modules was actually absorbed and internalised by the learners. The LEVEL5 and Spider Questionnaire tools provided unambiguous before-and-after comparisons, allowing facilitators and learners to track progress in a transparent and structured manner.

Thanks to the SMERALD platform developed by BLINC and its integration with the LEVEL5 assessment model, the piloting made it possible to break down complex subjects into targeted micro-credentials. This focused methodology shows the potential for such personalised, skills-based methods to be useful across diverse SMEs and institutions. The spider-based self-evaluation, in particular, proved to be an effective foundation for leading learners towards certain competencies, which makes the learning process more efficient and relevant.

Section 2: Results of the pilot(s)

Describe the outcomes/results achieved (quantitative and qualitatitve)

2.1 Pilot – 28.04.2025

- *Achievements and successes*

A piloting session was held online on April 28, 2025, in Athens, Greece, with 12 EUROTRAINING employees present. Six EU project managers, four networking and proposal development officials, and two IT developers/programmers attended the meeting. The age range was between 24 and 35 years old.

Quantitatively, the workshop met its entire participant target, and all trainees completed their tasks within the 2-hour timeframe. All participants had already enrolled in the SMERALD e-learning platform, where they were guided through content organised into micro-modules. Their progress and competencies were monitored with two main evaluation tools: the Competence Spider Questionnaire and the LEVEL5 assessment method.

Qualitatively, participants displayed a strong awareness of how to use AI tools appropriately in professional settings. The programme covered both conceptual presentations and hands-on activities centred on AI tools (e.g., interactive video quizzes, podcast generation, worksheet creation), open data principles, data visualisation utilising platforms such as Flourish and Ushahidi, and data cleaning exercises in Excel.

Furthermore, the integration of LEVEL5 enabled both trainers and learners to identify competence increases between initial and final evaluations, hence verifying the learning process's usefulness. Participants learned how to employ AI ethically and successfully in their daily project work.

The micro-credential-based method, which was supported by the SMERALD platform, enabled participants in focusing their learning paths by picking suitable courses based on the results of their spider questionnaires. This technique improved engagement and self-directed learning.

- *Challenges*

While the piloting session met its objectives, numerous observations surfaced that can inform future improvements in comparable implementations:

1. While the 2-hour period was adequate for a general introduction and preliminary hands-on work, it hampered the depth of group discussions, particularly on complicated topics such as the ethical use of AI and sustainability challenges. However, this concise structure was necessary to maintain focus and accommodate participants' busy schedules, ensuring active engagement throughout.

2. Conducting the session online had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the lack of physical interaction slowed spontaneous exchange among participants, which could have happened more naturally in a face-to-face situation. On the other hand, the digital environment proved extremely useful for showcasing online capabilities in real time. Participants were able to directly apply what they learned by screen-sharing their work, testing platforms live, and receiving quick feedback, which enhanced the learning process and helped bridge the gap between theory and practice.

3. Participants were unfamiliar with the LEVEL5 assessment and Competence Spider tools, which led to some ambiguity in interpreting their results. However, this provided a valuable learning opportunity for participants, who had firsthand experience with unique competency validation technologies that are not yet frequently used in traditional training programmes. They quickly adapted and liked the clarity and personalised feedback provided by these methods.

- *Identification of any refinements/improvements needed in the SMERALD methodology*

While the methodology proved beneficial, streamlining the introduction to LEVEL5 and Competence Spider tools will facilitate a smoother onboarding. Furthermore, creating an open-access library containing AI and open data analysis tools might supplement the current e-learning platform and provide further support to learners and trainers.

Section 3: Conclusions

What key findings/conclusions can you draw from the the piloting process? Please identify the highlights with regard to the SMERALD approach.

The piloting process revealed some significant insights into the effectiveness of the SMERALD method in promoting customised, competence-based learning. One of the most notable effects was the widespread acceptance of the modular, micro-credential structure. Participants felt empowered to choose individual learning routes based on their needs and past knowledge, which enhanced motivation and engagement throughout the course.

The integration of the Competence Spider and LEVEL5 assessment tools created a clear framework for self-evaluation and progress tracking. By comparing the findings of the pre- and post-assessment, learners were able to visualise their progress in specific competency areas and reflect constructively on their development. This procedure not only confirmed their learning results, but also assisted them in picking the most relevant courses based on their needs.

Furthermore, the piloting showed that combining flexibility with structure can produce a more inclusive and learner-centered experience. The strategy promoted autonomy while maintaining guiding quality, making it adaptable to various target groups and sectors.

The SMERALD technique, which is supported by BLINC' E-Learning platform, demonstrated the potential for further evolution not just as a competence recognition tool, but also as a centre for sharing AI powered self-assessment and competence analysis tools. This could open the way for greater recognition and application of micro-credentials in both formal and informal learning settings.

Section 4: Recommendations

Taking into account your conclusions, what needs to be done to improve/adapt the SMERALD methodology and approach.

Several recommendations for improving and adapting the SMERALD approach can be made based on the results of the piloting process. While the approach's flexibility was one of its main strengths, some learners, particularly those with little experience with digital or self-directed learning, would benefit from clearer onboarding instructions and short tutorial content explaining how to use tools like Competence Spider and interpret LEVEL5 outcomes. More formative feedback components, such as reflective prompts or optional check-ins, could help learners stay motivated and focused throughout the journey.

Furthermore, the platform has the potential to expand into a more comprehensive open-access area where AI-based competence analysis tools and self-assessment instruments are collected and publicly shared, allowing for greater adoption and fostering user collaboration. While the piloting results showed the benefits of the SMERALD approach, these enhancements would make it even more effective and scalable in a variety of learning settings.

Section 5: Pilot snapshots

What is your biggest highlight from the piloting phase? It can be a good practice, interesting case study, positive success story or a touching quote/feedback you received from your learners. It can be in the form of a text or video or photo collage etc. Be creative, so we can use it for a post in the project social media.

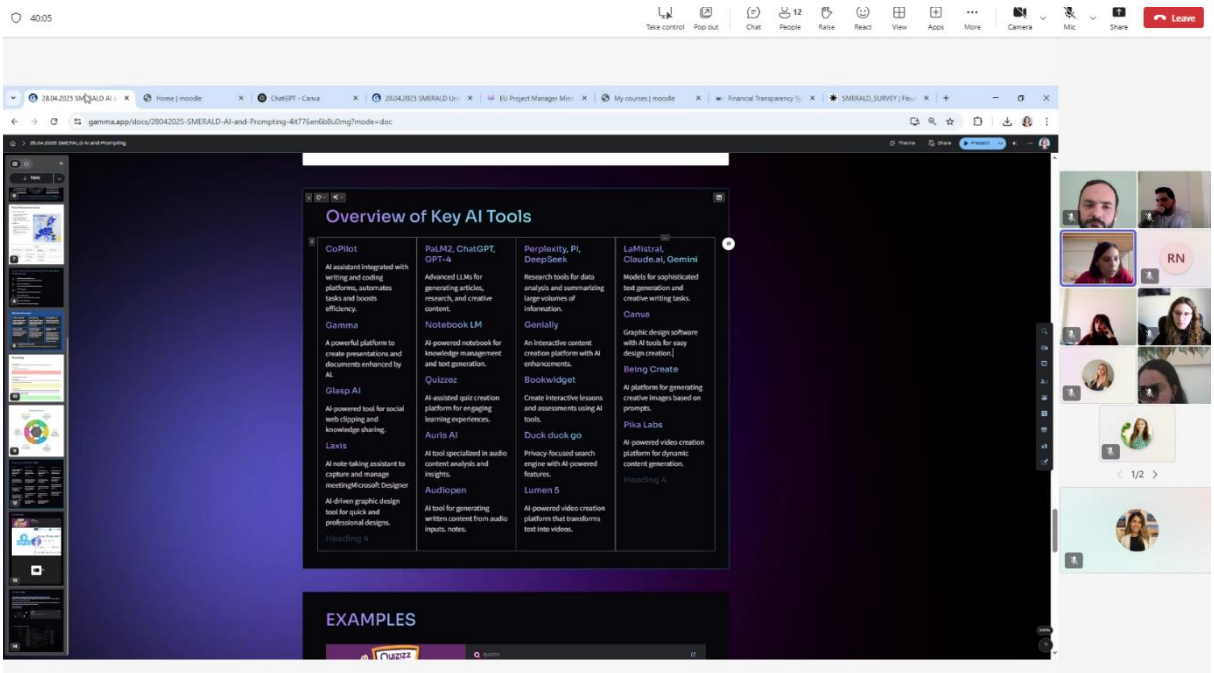
During the piloting phase, we received a lot of favourable comments on the sharing of presentations and practical demonstrations of products. Participants found these sessions quite beneficial, and they suggested that the training be repeated on a regular basis when the tools were updated. They emphasised the need of incorporating these training sessions into their professional development on a regular basis in order to keep up with new AI and data analysis technology. They also welcomed the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities and urged that such sessions be held on a regular basis to enable continuous learning and skill enhancement.

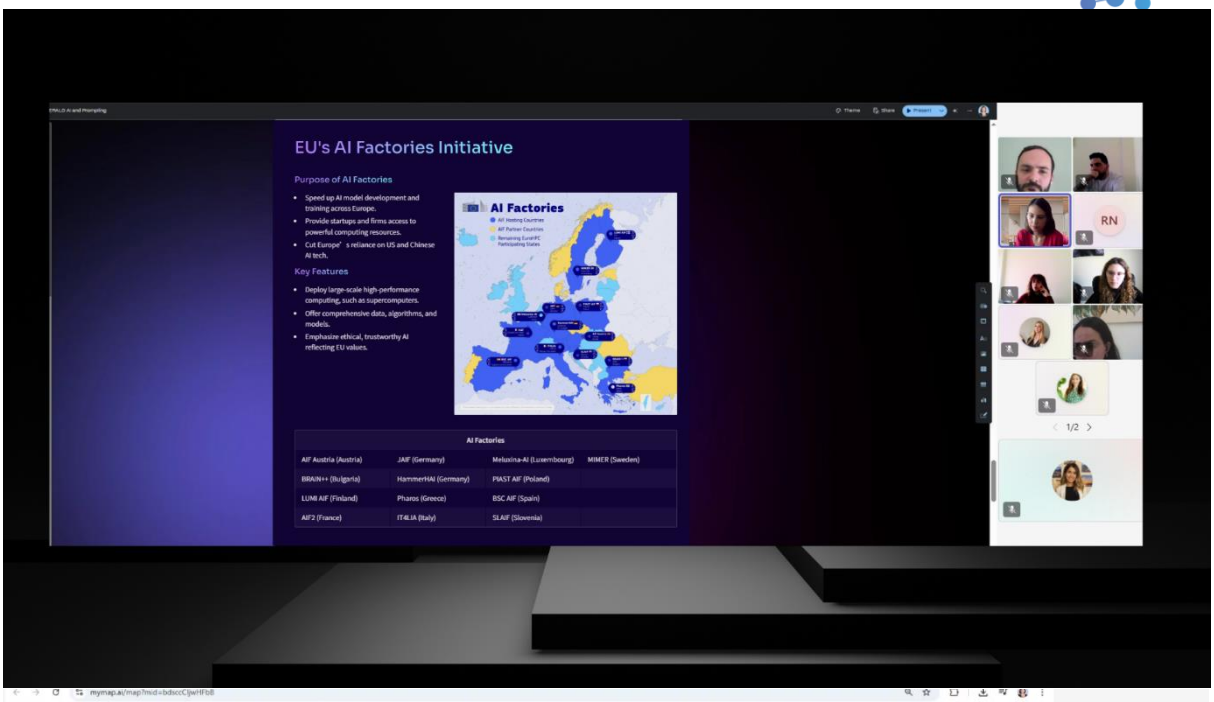
SMERALD AI and Prompting Presentation:

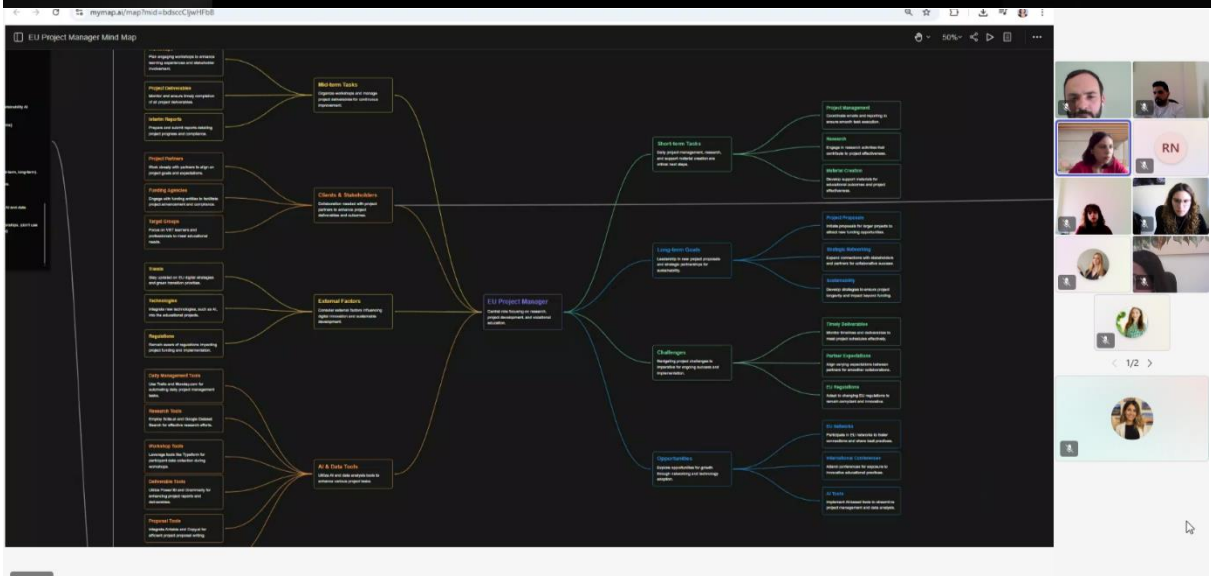
https://gamma.app/docs/4it776en6b8u0mg

Understanding Data Analysis

https://gamma.app/docs/ttwapz6t4wmstn4




EU's AI Factories Initiative
Purpose of AI Factories
Speed up AI model development and training across Europe.
Provide startups and firms access to powerful computing resources.
Cut Europe's reliance on US and Chinese AI tech.
Key Features
Deploy large-scale high-performance computing, such as supercomputers.
Offer comprehensive data, algorithms, and models.
Emphasize ethical, trustworthy AI reflecting EU values.
AI Factories
AI Factories
AIF Austria (Austria)
JAIF (Germany)
Meluxina-AI (Luxembourg)
MIMER (Sweden)
BRAIN++ (Bulgaria)
HammerHAI (Germany)
PIAST AIF (Poland)
LUMI AIF (Finland)
Pharos (Greece)
RSC AIF (Spain)
AIF2 (France)
IT4LIA (Italy)
SLAIF (Slovenia)
RN
1/2


EU Project Manager Mind Map
EU Project Manager
RN
1/2