



EAGLE
DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING

Covering the training Gap in digital skills for European SMEs manpower

T4.5 Project EAGLE Sustainability Plan

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Contributors	
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1. Executive Summary

The EAGLE project has successfully delivered a suite of digital skills training courses for SMEs as well as targeted stakeholders. Clear market demand for project results was observed. Building on these validated results, the Sustainability Plan sets out a practical approach to build prerequisites for the long-term use, visibility of the project's outputs, and continued partnerships beyond the funded period.

The plan prioritizes the consolidation and sustainment of the cooperation network established during the project, enabled by a flexible governance model and practical guidance on potential funding pathways that can sustain continued activity.

Systematic monitoring of training impact and stakeholder engagement will help us to ensure that offerings remain relevant and aligned with emerging needs of targeted stakeholders.

With these measures in place, the consortium of project EAGLE is well positioned to mature into a sustainable and scalable collaboration that continues to enhance digital capabilities and support long-term capacity building across those who seeking new career pathways, exploring business opportunities, or advancing their skills and competencies in emerging technologies.

2. Introduction

The survey results obtained following the execution of EAGLE trainings demonstrates that both SMEs and the targeted stakeholders highly value the training courses provided by the EAGLE consortium.

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, such skills are not only critical for individual and organizational growth, but also serve as strategic assets that enhance competitiveness, innovations exploitation, career path, and market share.

Throughout the project lifecycle, all KPIs have been successfully achieved, and project consistently exceeded expectations. The feedback collected from course evaluations and stakeholders' surveys provides valuable insights into the courses strengths and areas that could benefit from further improvement. This evidence-based assessment ensures that lessons learned are systematically captured and applied to optimize future initiatives.

To sustain the achievements and ensure continued progress, a forward-looking plan should be developed and approved by stakeholders, outlining practical steps for maintaining, strengthening, and further expanding the cooperation network established through the EAGLE project (**T4.5**).

In this regard we will focus on the following aspects:

- Sustaining and strengthening the **cooperation network** established during the project.
- Addressing both **organizational** and **financial dimensions** to ensure long-term viability.
- Outlining the **mechanisms** and strategic **pathways** through which the project's initiatives can be continued, scaled, and effectively supported beyond the formal project period.

3. Planning phase

As an initial step toward the development of a sustainability plan, it is essential to identify which aspects of the project partners value most, which outcomes they wish to sustain, and how these results can support future collaborative activities within the network. Understanding these priorities will ensure that the sustainability plan is both relevant and actionable, addressing the needs and expectations of all stakeholders involved.

To advance this process, a dedicated workshop was organized at the University of Limerick on **19th November 2025**. A dedicated session was specifically focused on the collaborative development of the EAGLE sustainability plan. This face-to-face meeting provided partners with a comfortable environment to exchange ideas, explore all options, including pros and cons, and collaboratively develop responses to the key questions that will underpin the EAGLE project's sustainability plan.

A set of questions was introduced to facilitate the discussions, resulting in a collection of ideas for creating a well-structured and actionable plan:

- What interests all EAGLE partners share, and which elements of the project are most valuable to sustain: the training content, the EAGLE brand, the partner network, the website and social media assets?
- Can the sustained EAGLE legacy network enhance the quality and impact of future projects?
- Which national or EU funding instruments should be targeted to support such initiatives?
- Which best practices can be leveraged to generate financial value from the EAGLE training programmes?
- Which existing partnerships should be further developed to strengthen the network?
- What governance structure and communication channels are most suitable for ensuring effective coordination and decision-making within the network going forward?

Further insights into sustainability priorities were shared during the Final Conference" themed "**Bridging the Digital Skills Gap: Empowering SMEs for the Future**", co-organized by Skillnet and University of Limerick on 20th November 2025. The conference and informal networking sessions provided a valuable opportunity to validate the project's achievements with external stakeholders, identify best practices, and gather new ideas for extending the benefits of project EAGLE. This approach helps ensure that the sustainability process is both practical and achievable.

4. Sustaining and strengthening the cooperation network

It is important to highlight that the EAGLE project consortium, led by the University of Burgos, has consistently demonstrated the value of collaborative partnerships. From the very first day of the project, all partners have been actively engaged in the project activities, contributing not only through their assigned responsibilities, but also through voluntary initiatives and additional efforts aimed at supporting one another. This collective commitment has played a critical role in advancing the project's objectives and ensuring its overall success.

However, operation of the partnership network during the financed project when partners operate under the contract and are funded is quite different from operation outside the project, when no funding and no external control is exercised.

To establish a truly sustainable network, several additional elements must be carefully assessed and incorporated to ensure long-term viability and continuity of network activities.

Therefore, as an initial phase, our plan will focus on the following steps:

4.1 Establish a post-project governance structure

- Establish a flexible governance model that operates on the rotational basis. For example, designate the “Lead” organization (e.g., project coordinator or most active partner) to act as the voluntary network facilitator for the one-year term. In the following year, a different organization might be elected as a “Lead” based on network consensus and partner commitment to assume the role. The yearly leadership approach would remain manageable while encouraging each leader to actively engage the network and focus on their specific, yet widely shared, interest.
- Define simple governance rules (e.g., quarterly online meetings, decision-making procedures, responsibilities), which would not overburden but provide sustainable structure for network functioning.

4.2 Formalize Collaboration Agreements

- Prepare Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with selected partners:
 - EU-level projects (e.g., CYSSME, CITADEL and etc.)
 - National Coordination Centres (e.g., NCC Ireland, NCC Lithuania)
 - National or Regional skills forums (e.g., Mid West Regional Skills Forum, Ireland)
 - Innovation agencies (e.g., Innovation Agency “Spiečius”, Lithuania)

The organizations that sign a MoU will commit to promoting EAGLE training courses, even after the conclusion of the project, in one form or another. This reflects a broader commitment by EAGLE stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the project’s activities and training initiatives.

4.3 Enhance EAGLE visibility by maintaining and expanding communication channels

During the implementation of the EAGLE project, maintaining and expanding communication channels has been critical to enhancing the network’s visibility and impact. Effective communication allows the us to reach broader audiences, promote training courses, strengthen project reputation, and attract new partners. Accordingly, it is essential to continue leveraging existing EAGLE communication channels while exploring strategies to further expand reach and engage a wider audience of stakeholders.

- Continue using project communication channels:
 - Partner newsletters
 - EAGLE web platform
 - Social media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube)
 - Use EAGLE professional video in the conferences and dissemination events.
 - Continue to use EAGLE project shared files repository.
- Encourage partners to disseminate EAGLE trainings through their own networks.

4.4 Expand the network

During the EAGLE project, we established strategic collaborations with both EU-level projects and national agencies, demonstrating strong synergies with the objectives of EAGLE project.

Notable partnerships include:

4.4.1 EAGLE – CYSSME

The collaboration with the CYSSME project will remain a central pillar of the EAGLE cooperation network. CYSSME's mission to strengthen the cyber resilience of EU SMEs directly complements EAGLE objectives. By transforming EAGLE training programmes into accessible webinar formats and leveraging the CYSSME matchmaking platform for advanced training referrals, this partnership ensures continuity, wider outreach, and long-term sustainability of training services across the EU.

4.4.2 EAGLE – CITADEL

Engagement with EU clusters through the CITADEL project extends the reach of the EAGLE results by providing access to a broad SME community. Dissemination of EAGLE training opportunities via CITADEL platforms will enhance our network visibility and helps embed EAGLE offerings into existing EU innovation ecosystems.

4.4.3 EAGLE – Mid West Regional Skills Forum (Ireland)

The partnership with the Mid West Regional Skills Forum Ireland supports sustained delivery of EAGLE training programmes to SMEs at regional level and integrating EAGLE trainings into ongoing workforce development initiatives. In this context, the Forum will identify and validate emerging skills needs, while EAGLE will ensure that its training programmes remain relevant and aligned with national priorities.

4.4.4 EAGLE – National Coordination Centres (NCC) – Lithuania, Ireland and Finland

The continued collaboration with NCC Lithuania, Ireland and Finland further strengthens the sustainability of the EAGLE network. All NCCs actively support SMEs in addressing cybersecurity challenges and recognize the pressing need to enhance skills and competencies in this area. Their involvement ensures that EAGLE training courses are promoted, adopted, and embedded within national cybersecurity support frameworks, enabling long-term impact and continuity.

4.4.5 EAGLE – National Innovation Agency – “Spiečius” (Lithuania)

The cooperation with the “Spiečius” network developed by National Innovation Agency (Lithuania) expands access to SMEs and provides an additional channel for sustaining EAGLE trainings delivery. As part of a national innovation ecosystem, “Spiečius” could enable the continued promotion and integration of EAGLE training courses into entrepreneurial skills development programs.

4.4.6 EAGLE – Cluster de Bienes de Equipo de Castilla y León – Spain

CEBECyL (Cluster of Capital Goods in Castilla y León) is a regional industrial cluster that brings together companies dedicated to manufacturing capital goods and industrial automation systems.

Its mission is to foster innovation, technological development, and collaboration among its members, positioning itself as a key player in advancing Industry 4.0 and strengthening competitiveness in the industrial sector.

The partnership between CEBECyL and the EAGLE project enhances the reach and impact of the specialized training courses developed under EAGLE. Through CEBECyL's extensive network of industrial companies, these courses can be disseminated to a broader audience, particularly SMEs, ensuring greater adoption of advanced digital skills. Additionally, CEBECyL's close connection to industry trends supports the continuous update of course content, guaranteeing that training remains relevant, practical, and aligned with the evolving needs of industrial digitalization.

4.4.7 EAGLE – Pleiades Incubator (Greece)

The cooperation with Pleiades a Greece based ecosystem which brings together an extensive network of start-ups, corporate entities, cities, research institutions, and investors, seeking to shape the future of innovation in Greece and beyond, has supported the adaptation of the project results to the needs of a large number of stakeholders and the dissemination of the project results beyond the geographical coverage of the consortium.

The cooperation was initiated from the onset of the project through a signed memorandum of understanding, which constituted Pleiades as an associated partner to the project.

4.4.8 EAGLE – Uni Systems (Greece)

The cooperation with Unisystems, an Information Technology consulting company, based in Greece with presence across Europe and beyond, has supported the adaptation of the project results to the needs of the technology industry and the dissemination of the project results across Europe, in the countries where Unisystems has presence.

The cooperation was initiated from the onset of the project through a signed memorandum of understanding, which constituted UniSystems an associated partner to the project.

4.4.9 EAGLE – Cyprus Project Management Society (Cyprus)

The cooperation with the Cyprus Project Management Society, a member driven non-profit professional association, based in Cyprus, supported the dissemination of the project results to professionals and organisations in Cyprus and will enhance the long-term visibility of the results to the stakeholders of the local industry.

4.5 Targeted Engagement of Unemployed Populations

Particular attention of EAGLE network will be given developing a targeted engagement strategy for unemployed individuals. This group can benefit from EAGLE training programs, which offer reskilling and upskilling opportunities to enhance their employability. Important to mention that the courses are designed to equip participants with the necessary skills to pursue new career paths and successfully enter the digital labour market.

The following strategic steps to stimulate interest among this target group:

4.5.1 Targeted Outreach and Communication:

- Partner with national and regional employment offices to identify unemployed individuals seeking to improve digital skills and employability.
- Partnering with local municipalities, especially smaller one which have a deep understanding of their communities and the specific needs of their residents. They can play a key role in supporting reskilling and upskilling initiatives for unemployed individuals by helping fund, promote, and facilitate training opportunities. Municipalities can assist in identifying eligible participants, guiding them to the most suitable courses, and spreading awareness about EAGLE trainings through local channels such as community centers, social media, and public notice boards. In addition, municipalities often have strong connections with local employers and public service institutions, which makes it easier to link training programs with real employment opportunities. By working closely with municipalities, EAGLE can ensure that courses meet local labor market needs, offer mentoring or internship opportunities, and increase the likelihood that participants successfully move into employment.
- Engage NGOs, vocational training centers, and local community organizations to disseminate information about the courses.

4.5.2 Incentives for Participation

- Offer formal certificates or micro-credentials recognized at the European level, which can enhance employability.
- Provide reduced-cost or fully sponsored course access for unemployed participants try to share the cost with local municipalities or employment agencies.
- Include career coaching sessions or workshops to show tangible benefits in finding employment or reskilling.

4.5.3 Course Design Adaptations

- Offer online, hybrid, and short modular courses to accommodate participants' schedules and varying levels of digital literacy.
- Develop introductory modules specifically tailored for unemployed individuals who may have limited prior exposure to digital resilience concepts.
- Focus on developing skills that are directly applicable in workplace digital environments. For example, training in cybersecurity would cover foundational principles, while courses on AI literacy, data management, and regulatory compliance would equip participants with practical knowledge to navigate real-world digital challenges.

4.5.4 Engagement and Motivation Strategies

- Showcase previous participants who improved employability or career prospects through EAGLE courses.
- Incorporate interactive exercises, quizzes, and challenges to make learning engaging and relevant.

- Create communities of learners, mentoring programs, and discussion forums to encourage interaction and peer motivation.

4.5.5 Monitoring and Feedback

- Track enrolment and completion rates among unemployed individuals.
- Collect participant feedback to adapt course content, delivery, and communication strategies to better meet their needs.
- Use data to refine outreach campaigns, course design, and support mechanisms to maintain and grow interest over time.

4.6 Network expansion steps

Expanding the EAGLE network increases visibility, strengthens the long-term sustainability of project results, and helps the outcomes reach more users across Europe. It brings new partners with fresh insights, supports the transfer of results to additional countries, and opens opportunities for future collaborations and funding. A larger network also boosts credibility and enhances the project's influence at professional and policy levels.

To successfully extend and strengthen the most beneficial collaborations the following steps must be considered:

- Identify and engage new partners, through professional networks, clusters and SMEs ecosystems both within and beyond the EU.
- Develop a simple and flexible new partners onboarding process, ensuring seamless integration into the network and active participation in its activities. Key elements of this process include:
 - Provide introductory briefing: organize overview of the EAGLE network.
 - Provide access to the training catalogue: ensure new members are familiar with the full portfolio of EAGLE training programmes and can leverage them for local SMEs.
 - Define minimum contributions, specifying expectations for participation e.g., promotion activities, webinar hosting, feedback provision, integration of new training courses into the EAGLE course catalogue.

5. Organizational and financial sustainability

5.1 Organizational sustainability measures

Our experience in other similar initiatives demonstrates that organizational sustainability depends on the commitment of partners, the quality and relevance of outputs, clear network governance, and effective management of resources. There is no difference between a virtual organization and a legal entity in this context, both rely on systematic knowledge transfer and the ability to adapt to changing needs and emerging trends.

However, to successfully transition and maintain momentum after the formal conclusion of the EAGLE project, it is essential to develop a Post-Project Roadmap outlining at least a 12-month vision for how the network will operate and sustain its activities.

The most important aspects must include:

- Development of a 12-month Post-Project Roadmap in which each partner details their specific plans and commitments to sustain the legacy of EAGLE beyond the formal conclusion of the project.
- Implement a train-the-trainer programme, so all partners can independently deliver EAGLE modules. Such initiative could be implemented through future collaborative projects, for e.g., under the framework of ERASMUS+ or other relevant funding opportunities.
- Develop a content update schedule (e.g., annual review of materials based on the needs of targeted groups of stakeholders). By aligning training delivery with market demand, partners can systematically consolidate insights and formally record them as joint results.
- Document processes such as:
 - Training delivery workflow
 - Target group engagement
 - Feedback collection
 - Quality assurance procedures

5.2 Financial sustainability measures

The sustained network is a loose network of the willing. We do not propose to neither establish legal entity, nor operate any shared funds. Such arrangement reduces complexity of organization, and its management.

But to ensure the long-term viability of the EAGLE project, it is essential to establish sustainable financial mechanisms that support ongoing activities and enable the network to grow. By identifying diverse funding streams and encouraging cost-sharing among partners, the project can maintain operations, expand its reach, and continue delivering high-quality trainings to SMEs across the EU.

Key actions include:

- Identify funding streams to support ongoing activities, such as:
 - Digital Europe Programme (e.g., DEPLOY-CYBER-09 and others)
 - Horizon Europe (Cluster 3 and Cluster 4 topics)
 - National digitalization grants
 - Regional SME development programmes
 - Cybersecurity innovation vouchers
- Encourage cost-sharing models:
 - Partners host webinars using their own resources

5.3 Revenue-generating options

To complement financial sustainability measures, exploring revenue-generating opportunities can help ensure financial motivation of EAGLE network partners. By introducing a hybrid approach that combines free foundational training with paid advanced offerings, the partners can generate income to support ongoing activities such as delivery of trainings, participation in dissemination events, and engagement in the new projects and initiatives.

Here, we present the most feasible potential monetization opportunities for the training courses:

- Deliver paid advanced training modules while keeping introductory modules free.
- Corporate training packages-generate income through high-demand employee upskilling, scalable group training, and premium fees for tailored programs.
- Certification-based courses-attract participants willing to pay for recognized credentials, allowing higher pricing and opportunities for follow-up training.

- Financial support by universities. The courses offered by UBU and UL have already been recognized as “Micro-Credentials” within their respective institutions, ensuring both the transferability and formal recognition of the training. This recognition also facilitates the delivery of future course editions, supported financially by the universities as part of their official training portfolio. Support includes integration into the universities’ websites, eligibility for official promotional activities, and inclusion within broader institutional communication and publicity channels.

6 Conclusions

The EAGLE project has built a solid foundation of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and high-quality training courses, which have been successfully tested and validated with over 700 participants.

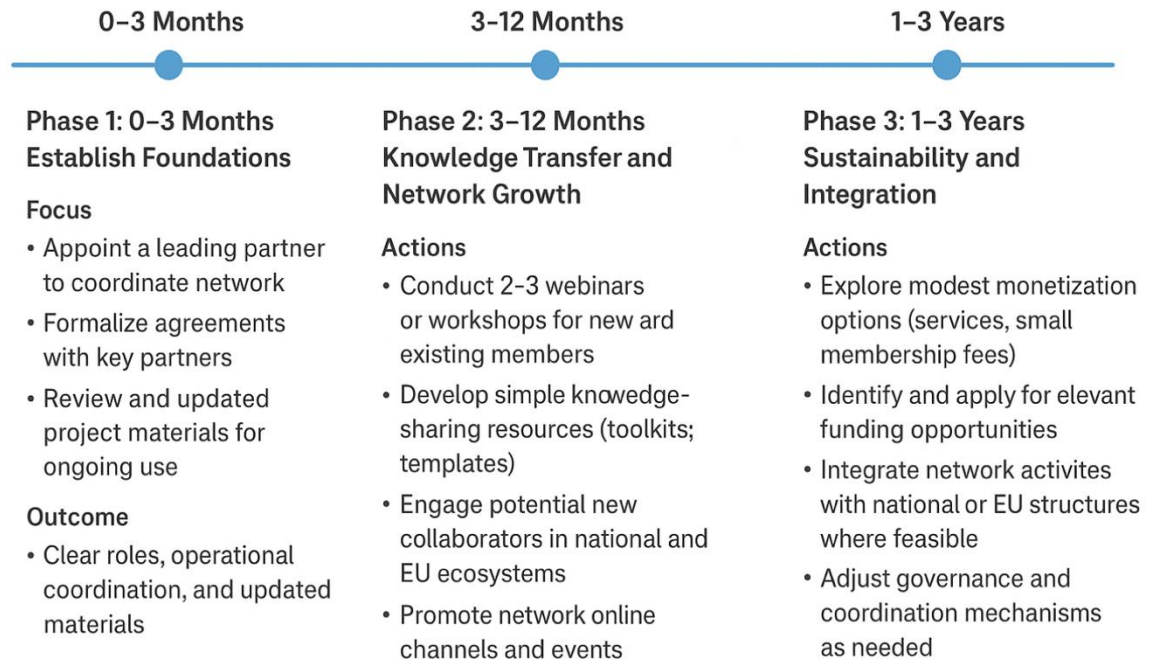
Building on these benefits the sustainability plan outlines mechanisms and strategic pathways to ensure that the project’s initiatives continue, scale effectively, and are supported beyond the formal project period. During the recent face-to-face meeting in Ireland, a strategic decision was reached: all partners acknowledged that the EAGLE network is well-positioned to evolve into a sustainable and scalable ecosystem.

To provide clear direction, the consortium has identified the “**5 Key Steps**” essential for initiating sustainable collaboration within the EAGLE network. To achieve this, we will need to:

1. Appoint a leading partner to coordinate and guide the network in the upcoming year.
2. Identify strategic collaborations and focus on partnerships that bring the most value and impact.
3. Establish governance mechanisms through implementing simple, flexible structures for decision-making and communication.
4. Promote the EAGLE network, increase visibility and integration within existing national and EU ecosystems, leverage the partnerships established during the EAGLE project and benefit from dissemination toolbox developed by EAGLE project.
5. Secure financial opportunities for 2026+ - identify KERs, evaluate the funding sources that align with EAGLE outcomes, initiate the development of Applications.

All these actions will be translated into a measurable a Post-Project Roadmap:

Post-Project Roadmap for EAGLE Network Sustainability



It is important to emphasize that this document represents the first draft of the EAGLE sustainability plan. It is grounded in our informed assumptions and the strong conviction, based on practical experience and insights from surveyed participants, that significant gaps still exist in the SME market. These “white spots” represent unmet needs and opportunities where EAGLE network can provide valuable solutions, helping to strengthen digital skills, address knowledge gaps, and support the growth and competitiveness of SMEs across the countries.