KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

Digital Transformation Hub of Rural Europe (DigiTrans Hub)

Feedback Evaluation of Pilot Testing and Focus Groups

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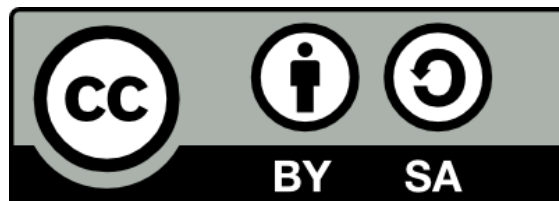Erasmus Plus KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

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1. Focus Groups Methdological Set-Up

The DigiTrans partners used their existing networks of digital/smart experts to test and evaluate the first development of the platform. Experts with the following profiles were chosen for participation:

- Business consultants
- Digital innovation specialists (e-heatth, agriculture, smart work etc.)
- Researchers & academics on the fields
- Project managers (or pax) of similar/ relevant projects
- Educators/ Trainers/ Digital education specialists
- Regional companies
- Public sector institutions (representatives)
- Local authorities (representatives)

Each partner was tasked with involving at least 10 experts in focus groups. Their main objective was to investigate the experiences, attitudes, feelings, opinions, and reactions of the participants towards the DigiTrans Hub's methodology, functionalities, and contents by means of the following list of questions:

User-friendliness (send out link to hub in advance)

- Question 1: Overall, how did you find your experience with the hub?
- Question 2: Which feature(s) of the hub stands out for you? Why?
- Question 3: Which feature(s) of the hub was less attractive to you? Why?

Usefulness of features / content (learning corner, networking & collaboration)

- Question 4: Which elements of the hub did you find more useful for your own purposes? Why?
- Question 5: Would you continue to use the learning nuggets/ content?
- Question 6: What would prevent you from using the hub in the future?

Attractiveness / sustainability

- Question 7: How likely are you to recommend this tool? Why?
- Question 8: What needs to change for you to use it in the future or recommend it to others?

2.   Focus Groups Distribution

The DigiTrans partners conducted a total of 7 focus groups with a total of 44 involved experts and thus meet the application's requirement of 40 targeted stakeholders in total. The distribution per partner looks as follows:

Italy

- Focus group I on November 4th with 5 particpants
- Focus group II on November 7th with 5 participants

France

- Focus group I on September 29th with 6 participants
- Focus group II on December 22nd with 5 participants

Greece

- Focus group I on November 21st with 13 participants

Germany

- Focus group I on August 7th with 6 participants
- Focus group II on September 30th with 4 participants

3.   Feedback Evaluation Focus Group

The focus groups evaluated the platform in terms of usability, functionality, design, and content. Below is a summary of the feedback categorized by key themes.

Overall Experience

- Germany Group 1: Positive experiences with the platform's design and user-friendliness. Participants appreciated the clear structure, easy navigation, and diverse content delivery (quotes, text, videos). However, there were suggestions to improve the interactivity of the platform with more engaging elements like quizzes.

- Germany Group 2: Found the hub easy to navigate and user-friendly, though some tools lacked clear instructions. The overall structure was seen as clear, but improvements could be made in user guidance, especially for collaborative tools.

- France Group 1: The interface was considered friendly and easy to navigate, though more graphical elements and gamification features were suggested for better engagement.

- Italy Group 1: Generally positive experience, especially the clear progression through modules, though concerns were raised about GDPR compliance and the lack of color variety on the interface.

- Italy Group 2: Found the platform complex and not always user-friendly, but appreciated the repository of good practices and content related to strategy.

- Greece Single Group: Experts viewed the DigiTrans Hub as a valuable resource, particularly for organizations in the early stages of digital transformation, with a focus on educational content and collaboration tools. However, concerns were raised about the outdated user interface, which some found difficult to navigate, impacting the experience for more advanced users seeking quicker access to features.

Attractive Features

- Germany Group 1: The progress bar, modular design, and interactive tools were highly appreciated. The integration of various resources and learning tools (e.g., collaboration options) were seen as beneficial for personal and group work.

- Germany Group 2: The organization of resources, including practical tools and examples, stood out. Clear pathways to return to the main learning area also enhanced the user experience.

- France Group 1: Tools for human animation empowerment and the customizable nature of resources were highly valued, along with the option to access help during various project stages.

- Italy Group 1: The modular learning path and thematic structure of the content were particularly appealing.

- Italy Group 2: Features like the "Defining a Common Strategy" and good practice repository were highlighted as most useful for personal and organizational application.

- Greece Single Group: Participants highlighted several key features of the DigiTrans Hub, including the Collaborative Map, which facilitated connections with stakeholders, and the Digital Maturity Assessment, helping organizations evaluate their digital readiness. The e-learning modules, especially on Industry 4.0 and digital marketing, were also praised for their clarity and practical value in supporting businesses' digital transformation.

Less Attractive Features

- Germany Group 1: Some navigational elements, such as the ability to return to modules or expand certain resources, could be improved. More interactive content was also suggested.

- Germany Group 2: The design was criticized for being overwhelming in places, and navigation back to the main module was not always clear.

- France Group 1: The theoretical, text-heavy content was seen as less engaging. There was also a call for more graphical elements to track progress.

- Italy Group 1: The press corner was found graphically monotonous, and some sections, like the "Digitrans Blog," lacked complete language localization.

- Italy Group 2: The "Regional Challenges" section was viewed as outdated, which affected user interest.
- Greece Single Group: While the platform was generally well-received, improvements were suggested in several areas, including a more intuitive and modern user interface, better navigation, and enhanced community engagement, particularly in the Collaborative Corner. Additionally, participants recommended improved search functionality for quicker and more efficient content discovery.

Usefulness of the Hub

- Germany Group 1: Collaborative tools and methodology-focused modules were seen as highly useful, particularly for integrating learning into real-world applications.
- Germany Group 2: The collaborative tools and practical examples stood out. The instructional content, combined with theory, made the tools more likely to be applied correctly.
- France Group 1: Tools for animation and brainstorming were particularly useful for project management and team facilitation.
- Italy Group 1: Both the learning content and networking features were seen as valuable, though further exploration was needed.
- Italy Group 2: Modules focused on strategy were deemed the most applicable, particularly in various EU contexts.
- Greece Single Group: Participants confirmed they would continue using the hub, especially for its short, focused learning modules, which were convenient for busy schedules. However, they emphasized the need for regular updates to keep the platform relevant, particularly in rapidly changing areas like digital transformation and Industry 4.0.

Future Use and Recommendations

- Germany Group 1: Participants were willing to continue using the hub, especially for organizing workshops or team activities. They suggested offering the platform in multiple languages to expand its accessibility.

- Germany Group 2: Continued usage would depend on updates and the inclusion of additional resources. The potential for more engaging and visually stimulating content was also emphasized.

- France Group 1: Participants were likely to continue using the hub, especially if additional resources and gamification were added. They recommended refining the platform's integration with project-sharing features.

- Italy Group 1: While the platform was found useful, participants would need assurance of updates and improvements in usability before recommending it in the long term.

- Italy Group 2: Recommendations included the need for continuous updates and a more dynamic, humanized digital experience.

- Greece Single Group: Most participants would recommend the DigiTrans Hub, particularly for organizations in the early stages of digital transformation. However, they suggested improvements to the user interface and the addition of more advanced content for businesses further along in their digital journey.

Barriers to Future Use

- Germany Group 1: No major barriers identified, although suggestions were made to allow for tool downloads in more flexible formats (e.g., .docx templates).

- Germany Group 2: The absence of feedback mechanisms was noted as a potential barrier, along with a desire for more interactive tools and content.

- France Group 1: Theoretical content could be improved with more direct approaches, and gamification features would encourage continued engagement.

- Italy Group 1: The main concern was the platform becoming a paid service without clear benefits for certain users.

- Italy Group 2: Lack of updates, particularly in specific sections, was a key deterrent to future use.

- Greece Single Group: Experts suggested several improvements for the DigiTrans Hub, including modernizing the user interface for better navigation, enhancing search functionality, and fostering more active community participation.

Likely Recommendations

- Germany Group 1: Likely to recommend to institutions, especially for student use, though the hosting of the platform remains a question.

- Germany Group 2: Likely to recommend for knowledge acquisition and collaborative tools, though more improvements were suggested.

- France Group 1: Recommendations would be targeted at project leaders and students. The platform's success would depend on finding appropriate user groups.

- Italy Group 1: Likely to recommend due to its potential benefits for businesses and organizations, especially in expanding knowledge.

- Italy Group 2: Likely to recommend, though updates and improvements are needed for sustained usefulness.

- Greece Single Group: Experts felt that the networking potential of the Collaborative Corner was not fully realized. By encouraging more participation from users and fostering a stronger online community, the hub could become a more powerful tool for collaboration. They also recommended localizing content for broader accessibility, adding interactive support features like live Q&A, and offering region-specific resources to address local challenges.

Suggested Changes

- Germany Group 1: No major changes were suggested, though language options and improved interactivity were highlighted.

- Germany Group 2: Design improvements, clearer navigation, and the addition of more practical resources were recommended.

- France Group 1: Gamification, search bar enhancements, and more interactive co-creation features were suggested.

- Italy Group 1: Accessibility issues should be addressed, and localization should be completed across the platform.

- Italy Group 2: Updates, particularly in certain sections, and the use of AI to enhance user experience were suggested.

- Greece Single Group: Improvements of the DigiTrans Hub platform, a more user-friendly, modern interface with smoother navigation and faster loading

times for the Collaborative Map. Community engagement, live webinars, language support and advanced content. Additionally, the addition of a mobile version was suggested.

Outcome

Overall, participants from the different countries expressed positive feedback regarding the DigiTrans Hub's structure, usability, and content, with particular emphasis on its collaborative tools and educational resources. However, there were several suggestions for improvement, including more interactive elements, design updates, language localization, and a greater focus on user guidance and updates. These insights will be valuable for enhancing the platform's user experience in future iterations.

Executive Summary - General Experience with the Hub

In general, users expressed a positive experience with the DigiTrans Hub. The platform was described as easy to navigate, well-structured, and user-friendly, with a modern and attractive visual design. Many users appreciated the modular structure of the content, which made it easy to access and understand the material. However, there were some common suggestions for improvement, including clearer instructions for new users and more engaging, interactive elements.

Strengths:

- Clear, logical structure
- Easy to navigate and use
- Modern and visually appealing design
- Modular content that facilitates targeted learning
- Comprehensive range of tools and resources for collaboration

Areas for Improvement:

- Need for additional support for first-time users (e.g., tutorial or guidance on navigating the platform)
- More interactive elements (videos, quizzes, gamification)
- Multilingual support to increase accessibility across Europe

Executive Summary - Key Features of the Hub

Several features stood out to the users as particularly useful:

- Modular Learning Structure: The clear division of content into defined modules made the learning process more manageable, especially for users seeking specific information.
- Collaborative Tools: Users valued tools that supported teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving, such as collaborative platforms and brainstorming resources.
- Resource Library: The extensive library of resources, including best practices, methodologies, and case studies, was frequently highlighted as beneficial, especially for users involved in project management and team coordination.
- Interactive Features: Users found the progress bar and other interactive elements (such as task-based modules) appealing, as they encouraged engagement and made the experience feel more like a "game."
- Learning Nuggets: Bite-sized learning resources were appreciated, especially those that offered practical tools and real-life examples.

However, some users noted that more interactive elements, such as videos or interactive exercises, would enhance the learning experience. The lack of a completion tracker or gamification elements was also mentioned, suggesting that the experience could be more engaging if there were ways to track progress or earn rewards.

Less Attractive Features

Certain aspects of the DigiTrans Hub received less favorable feedback:

- Navigation: Some users found it unclear how to return to the main hub or move between modules. Suggestions included adding more prominent navigation options or a "home" button.
- Textual Approach: A few users mentioned that the theoretical content could be more concise or presented in a more engaging, visually-driven way, rather than relying heavily on text.

- Aesthetic Concerns: Some users felt that the design could be more vibrant, with suggestions for adding more colors or visual elements to make the interface feel more dynamic and engaging.
- Localization Issues: The lack of full localization, such as in the Italian language version of the platform, where certain sections remained in English, was identified as an issue for non-English speakers.

Usefulness of Features and Content

Users found the following elements particularly useful:

- Learning Modules: The clear structure of the learning modules, especially those focused on practical methodologies and tools, was seen as valuable.
- Collaborative Tools: Users valued the collaborative tools for fostering creativity and teamwork, with particular mention of the "Ideation of Solutions" module.
- Practical Tools: Users appreciated tools that could be directly applied to their work, especially in team settings, such as digital whiteboards and collaborative document editing.
- However, some users noted that the learning nuggets, while useful, could be further expanded with more visual and interactive content, as well as more practical applications for real-world scenarios.

Future Usage and Recommendations

- Most users expressed a willingness to continue using the DigiTrans Hub, especially if the content continues to evolve and improve. They saw value in using the platform for inspiration, as a resource for future workshops, and as a tool to support ongoing learning.
- Likelihood of Future Use: Users were generally open to using the platform for future projects, especially if it continued to offer practical tools and resources that could be adapted to different contexts.
- Barriers to Continued Use: Concerns about potential costs (if the platform becomes a paid service) and the need for regular updates were highlighted as potential barriers to continued use. There were also requests for more

personalized content and tools that address specific regional challenges or contexts.

- Recommendations for Improvement:

  o Increased Interactivity: Adding more videos, gamified elements, quizzes, and interactive exercises could improve user engagement.
  o Multilingual Support: Expanding the language options and ensuring full localization would make the platform more accessible to a wider European audience.
  o Search Functionality: A search bar and clearer categorization of content could make it easier for users to find specific tools or resources quickly.
  o Feedback and Evaluation Mechanisms: Users suggested the addition of tools for self-assessment and feedback, enabling users to track their progress and improve their learning experience.

Recommendations for the Future

- To enhance the DigiTrans Hub's appeal and usability, several features and improvements were suggested:
- Gamification: Incorporating elements like progress bars, rewards, or certificates could motivate users to engage with the platform more regularly.
- Customization and Personalization: Users recommended creating content and tools tailored to specific user groups (e.g., project managers, students, local authorities) with customized language and examples.
- Expanded Content: Adding more practical materials, videos, and interactive content would improve the experience, as would expanding the content library with more real-world case studies and tools.
- Community Engagement: Encouraging a co-creation process where users can contribute content or suggestions could make the platform more dynamic and responsive to user needs.
- Integration with Other Platforms: Linking the DigiTrans Hub to collaborative platforms (such as LinkedIn or professional networks) could facilitate sharing and increase its visibility.

Final Remarks/Conclusions

The DigiTrans Hub received positive feedback overall, with users appreciating its clear structure, practical resources, and collaborative tools. On the other hand, there is room for improvement in areas like interactivity, gamification, multilingual support, and design. By addressing these areas and continuing to update and expand the content, the DigiTrans Hub has the potential to become a more engaging and valuable tool for users navigating digital transformation in various professional contexts.

4. Pilot Testing Survey Distribution

The Pilot Testing survey was distributed to a total of over 160 stakeholders across multiple countries. The distribution was carefully planned to gather diverse feedback from various sectors involved in digital transformation. Below is the breakdown by country and stakeholder group:

1. Germany (100 stakeholders)

- 10 partners of the Erasmus+ project 'VISKI Visible Skills'
- 15 partners of the Interreg North Sea project 'SIRR'
- 10 members of the TrENDi start-up service at the University of Vechta
- 10 members of the Vechta Institute of Sustainability Transformation in Rural Areas (VISTRA)
- 15 partners of the Erasmus+ project 'Symbiosis'
- 40 participants of the Final Project Exhibition 'Digital Transformation Day'

2. France (30 stakeholders)

- Pole Images et Reseaux
- Pole Valorial
- Association BRUDED
- 7TB network
- Fondation de France
- Megalis Bretagne

3. Greece (20 stakeholders)

- Civil society alliacne of Greece (40NGOs)
- SALTO resource center (more than 50.000 trainers, educators, youth workers, NGO representatives etc.)
- TEDxPatras
- Vongrid
- Diavazo gia tous allous
- Sparti TeachLab

- Social Hackers Academy
- eNVy
- MPDO

4. Italy (30 stakeholders)

- Abinsula team
- Agreetech srl team
- Astarte association team
- Sardinsula srl team
- Researchers Agricultural Department Uniss
- Visiting Students and Professors Universidad del Azuay
- Teachers Istituto Comprensivo Cinque Giornate Milano
- Employees Cooperativa Sociale Solidarietà e Sviluppo
- Teachers University of Milano
- Students University Guglielmo Marconi

The survey was distributed to these various stakeholders in order to obtain valuable feedback on the usability and effectiveness of the Digitrans Hub platform. Each group represented a key sector in digital transformation and rural development, ensuring a diverse range of insights for the pilot testing phase.

However, despite multiple reminders and encouragements within each partner's respective networks the response rate remained low. That is why the aim of collecting feedback from at least 25 users per partner was missed. After careful deliberation within the consortium, partners agreed that the quality of the 52 received responses was sufficient for a meaningful analysis. In total, the reponse rates per partner are the following: France: 7 responses, Germany: 10 responses, Greece: 25 responses, Italy: 10 responses.

5. Pilot Testing Methodological Set-Up

The following chapter provides you with a comprehensive overview of all key competencies of a digital pioneer that were derived from analyzing 20 expert interviews with leading figures in proccesses of digital transformation within rural areas. We argue that digital skills need to be underpinned by social and transformative competencies to enable rural actors to fully (and successfully) embrace the role of digital pioneer.

This pilot testing answers collected on user expertise in digital transformation and their experience with the Digitrans Hub platform, allowed gathering feedback from users across several European countries (Italy, France, Germany, and Greece). The results reveal a varied range of expertise levels and platform familiarity, with some interesting correlations emerging. Exploring usability, content relevance, missing topics, evaluation tool usage, and future vision, the surveys paint a picture of a platform with potential, yet one that has received a mixed reception, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses.

The following report is based on the questions included in the Pilot Testing, grouped into thematic blocks for analysis:

Usability and Expertise

This block evaluates the user's digital transformation expertise and their experience with the usability of the Digitrans Hub platform.

- How would you rate your expertise in digital transformation? (Scale: 1-5)
- Have you used the Digitrans Hub platform before?
- How would you rate the overall usability of the Digitrans Hub? (Scale: 1-5)
- Do you find the platform user-friendly? (Scale: 1-5)

Content Relevance, Usability, and Missing Topics

This block focuses on the platform's content in terms of its relevance, quality, and the identification of any missing topics. It also assesses the usability of evaluation tools provided by the platform.

- Do you find the platform difficult/challenging to use? (Scale: 1-5, with 5 being extremely difficult)
- How would you rate the relevance and quality of the content available on the Digitrans Hub? (Scale: 1-5, with 5 being highly relevant and high quality)
- Are there any specific types of content or topics that you believe to be missing or should be added to the platform? (open question)
- Have you used any evaluation methodologies or tools provided by the Digitrans Hub? (open question)

Evaluation Methods, Additional Features, and Suggestions

This section explores feedback on evaluation tools and additional features users would like to see. It also invites suggestions for improving the platform's performance.

- If yes, please provide feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of these methodologies and tools. (open question)
- If no, what barriers or challenges prevented you from utilizing these evaluation methodologies and tools? (open question)
- What additional features or functionalities would you like to see on the Digitrans Hub? (open question)
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the overall user experience or performance of the platform? (open question)

Digitrans Hub Future Vision and Feedback

This final block gathers insights about how users envision the future evolution of the Digitrans Hub platform and any general feedback they may have.

- How do you envision the Digitrans Hub platform evolving in the future to better serve the needs of digital pioneers in rural Europe?
- Please share any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you may have regarding the Digitrans Hub platform.

6. Survey Summary: Digitrans Hub Usability and Added Value

The pilot testing survey collected data on the DigiTrans Hub's usability and added value for its users. The results show a varied range of expertise levels and platform familiarity, with some interesting correlations emerging.

ITALY - Digitrans Hub Usability and Expertise

- Expertise in Digital Transformation: Respondents were spread across all expertise levels, from Novice to Visionary. The largest groups were Intermediate and Advanced.

- Platform Experience: A significant majority (9 out of 10) of respondents had not used the Digitrans Hub platform before. This suggests the survey may have reached a broad audience, including those unfamiliar with the platform.

- Usability Ratings: Usability ratings for the Digitrans Hub were generally positive, with a strong tendency towards higher scores (4 or 5 out of 5). However, there were also some lower ratings (2 and 3), indicating potential areas for improvement in the platform's user-friendliness.

- Correlation Between Expertise and Usability: There's no clear direct correlation between expertise level and usability rating. For example, some Novice users gave high usability scores, while some Advanced users gave lower scores. This suggests that usability may not be solely dependent on prior digital transformation expertise.

- Impact of Prior Use: The one respondent who had previously used the platform gave it a top usability rating (5/5), indicating possible benefits from prior experience.

ITALY - Digitrans Hub Content Relevance, Usability, and Missing Topics

- Content Relevance and Quality: Opinions on content relevance and quality varied. Some respondents found the content highly relevant and of high quality (rating it 5/5), while others gave lower ratings (2/5 and 3/5), indicating potential areas for improvement in content relevance and quality.

- Platform Usability: Usability ratings were generally positive, with a tendency towards higher scores (4/5 and 5/5). However, there were also some lower ratings (1/5, 2/5, and 3/5), suggesting that the platform may be challenging for some users.

- Missing Content/Topics: Several respondents suggested missing topics or content types, including:

  - "nothing": This response suggests that some users found the platform comprehensive and didn't identify any missing content.
  - "Most of the topics have been addressed": This indicates that the platform covers a wide range of topics, but there might still be gaps.
  - "Relationship with eTwinning": This suggests a potential interest in integrating the platform with eTwinning or providing content related to eTwinning activities.
  - "Nothing else": Similar to "nothing", this indicates satisfaction with the current content.
  - " Exercises, more practical ": This suggests a desire for more practical exercises and hands-on activities.

- Use of Evaluation Methodologies/Tools: Only one respondent reported using evaluation methodologies or tools provided by the Digitrans Hub. This suggests that these resources may not be widely used or that respondents may be unaware of them.

ITALY - Evaluation Methods, Additional Features, and Suggestions for Digitrans Hub

- Effectiveness and Usefulness of Evaluation Methodologies and Tools: Most participants did not provide direct feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of these tools, likely due to lack of use or awareness.

- Barriers to Use: The main barriers to using the evaluation methodologies and tools include:

  - Lack of Information: Many participants stated they were unaware of the existence or use of such tools.

- Lack of Access: One participant reported being unable to create a user account, effectively preventing them from using the tools.
- No Barriers: Some participants did not identify any specific barriers.

- Desired Additional Features: The main requests for additional features include:

  - Integration with Associations: One participant expressed the desire to be able to see and suggest associations within the platform.
  - Language Versions: One participant suggested adding different language versions for non-English speakers. (different language versions were available at the time of the pilot testing; indicating that the user was not able to find them)

ITALY - Digitrans Hub Future Vision and Feedback

- Envisioning the Future of Digitrans Hub: Participants envisioned the Digitrans Hub platform evolving in various ways to better serve the needs of digital pioneers in rural Europe. Some envisioned the platform with different geographical areas, various projects, and useful advice. Others suggested including data about those operating in the area and ensuring that all stakeholders are familiar with one another.
- Additional Comments, Suggestions, and Feedback: Participants provided additional comments, suggestions, and feedback regarding the Digitrans Hub platform. Some suggested including data about those operating in the area and ensuring that all stakeholders are familiar with one another. Others suggested including different geographical areas, various projects, and useful advice.

FRANCE - Digitrans Hub Usability and Expertise

- Experience Level: Respondents identified themselves as either Intermediate, Expert, or Advanced. The majority of respondents in this sample were at an Intermediate level.
- Platform Experience: All respondents in this sample indicated they had not previously used the platform. This suggests the survey focuses on first impressions or potential users.

- Usability Ratings: Usability ratings for the platform were collected on a scale of 1 to 5. The ratings in this sample ranged from 3 to 5, with a tendency towards the middle range (3 and 4). This indicates a perception of moderate usability, neither exceptionally easy nor difficult.

- Correlation Between Experience and Usability: In this small sample, there's no clear correlation between self-assessed experience level and usability rating. Intermediate, Expert, and Advanced users all provided similar ratings within the 3-5 range. This suggests that usability may not be strongly tied to prior digital transformation expertise (if that's how the experience levels are defined, as it's not explicitly stated).

- Impact of Prior Use: Since all respondents in this sample had not used the platform before, this point is not applicable to the provided data.

- Overall, the survey provides valuable insights into user perceptions of the Digitrans Hub platform. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, the platform can better meet the needs of its users and provide a more comprehensive and user-friendly experience.

FRANCE - Digitrans Hub Content Relevance, Usability, and Missing Topics

- Content Relevance and Quality: Ratings for content relevance and quality show a range of opinions. Some respondents found the content highly relevant and of high quality (rating it 4/5 and 5/5), while others gave lower ratings (2/5 and 3/5), indicating potential areas for improvement.

- Platform Usability: Usability ratings also vary. While some respondents found the platform easy to use (rating it 3/5 - likely indicating neutral or slightly positive), others experienced challenges, giving lower ratings (1/5, 2/5). This suggests the platform's usability could be inconsistent or have areas that need improvement.

- Missing Content/Topics: Respondents provided specific suggestions for missing content or topics:

  o Examples of successful digital transformations were requested.
  o Guidance on pathways to digitalization was suggested.

- One respondent mentioned "UX/UI", likely indicating a need for better user experience and interface design.
- One respondent simply put "d," which is unclear without further context.
- Other responses included "no important missing," "no," and "no else," suggesting some users did not identify missing content. One respondent stated they hadn't explored the platform enough to answer the question.

FRANCE - Evaluation Tools Effectiveness, Additional Features, and Suggestions for Digitrans Hub

- Effectiveness and Usefulness of Evaluation Methodologies and Tools: Most respondents did not provide direct feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the evaluation methodologies and tools. This is primarily attributed to a lack of use or awareness, with many respondents stating they had not had the opportunity to use them or were unaware of the platform's existence.

- Barriers to Use: The primary barriers preventing respondents from utilizing the evaluation methodologies and tools include:

  - Lack of Awareness/Opportunity: The dominant reason was not having the occasion yet or not knowing about the platform.
  - Lack of Relevance: One respondent indicated it wasn't their core business at the moment, and some modules seemed very theoretical, implying a lack of perceived relevance or practical application to their current needs.

- Desired Additional Features: Respondents suggested several additional features:

  - Gamification: A suggestion was made to make the platform more playful.
  - More Practical Examples: A request was made for more examples and better formatting of presentations (avoiding text crammed into four columns).
  - Improved Navigation: A specific navigation issue was raised regarding the lack of a back button or easy way to navigate between modules.

- o French Version: A respondent suggested a French version to share with local companies. (different language versions were available at the time of the pilot testing; indicating that the user was not able to find them)

- Suggestions for Improvement: Suggestions for improving the user experience and performance of the platform include:

  - o UX/UI Review: A respondent explicitly stated that the UX/UI should be reviewed.
  - o Address Theoretical Modules: The comment about modules seeming very theoretical suggests a need to make them more practical or demonstrate their real-world applications.

FRANCE - Digitrans Hub Future Vision and User Feedback

- Envisioning the Future of Digitrans Hub: Respondents shared their vision for the future evolution of the Digitrans Hub platform, focusing on enhancing its utility for digital pioneers in rural Europe. Common themes emerged:

  - o Expanded Scope: Many envisioned the platform encompassing different geographical areas to broaden its reach.
  - o Project Diversity: Respondents suggested incorporating a wider variety of projects to showcase diverse initiatives.
  - o Practical Guidance: The inclusion of useful advice and resources was a recurring suggestion, emphasizing the need for practical support.
  - o Networking and Collaboration: A key vision involved facilitating connections by including data about individuals and organizations active in the area and fostering familiarity among stakeholders.

- Additional Comments, Suggestions, and Feedback: The additional comments, suggestions, and feedback echoed the themes in the future visioning. Specifically:

  - o Data on Local Actors: Including data about those operating in the area was emphasized as crucial for platform utility.

o Stakeholder Familiarity: Ensuring that all stakeholders are familiar with one another was highlighted as a key component for fostering collaboration.

o Geographical and Project Expansion: The suggestions to include different geographical areas and various projects were reiterated, reinforcing their importance for the platform's growth.

o Provision of Advice: The need for the platform to provide useful advice and resources was again mentioned, underscoring its role in supporting users.

GERMANY - Digitrans Hub Usability and Expertise

- Expertise in Digital Transformation: Respondents were primarily at the Advanced and Intermediate levels of expertise in digital transformation.

- Platform Experience: The majority of respondents (all but two) had not used the Digitrans Hub platform before. This indicates that the survey captured feedback primarily from first-time users or potential users.

- Usability Ratings: Usability ratings for the Digitrans Hub platform varied. While some respondents gave relatively high ratings (4 out of 5), others gave lower ratings (2 and 3), indicating a mixed perception of the platform's usability.

- Correlation Between Expertise and Usability: There is no discernible correlation between the level of digital transformation expertise and usability ratings in this small sample. Both Advanced and Intermediate users provided a range of ratings.

- Impact of Prior Use: The two respondents who had previously used the platform gave it ratings of 4, suggesting that prior experience may positively influence perceived usability, though more data is needed to confirm this.

GERMANY - Digitrans Hub Content Relevance, Usability, and Missing Topics

- Content Relevance and Quality: Opinions on content relevance and quality are varied. Some respondents found the content highly relevant and of high quality (rating it 5/5), while others gave significantly lower ratings (1/5, 2/5, and 3/5), indicating potential areas for improvement in content relevance and quality.

- Platform Usability: Usability ratings are also inconsistent. While some respondents found the platform easy to use (rating it 4/5), others reported it as challenging (1/5, 2/5, and 3/5). This suggests that the platform's usability could be improved for a more consistent user experience.

- Missing Content/Topics: Respondents suggested several missing topics or content types:

  - Interactive Features in Collaborative Corner: A suggestion was made to add more interactive features for direct exchanges in the collaborative corner, rather than just contact information.
  - Targeted Content: A respondent suggested adding content targeted at specific groups (e.g., companies, public administration, schools, and other educational institutions).
  - Business Model Canvas: A suggestion was made to include a Business Model Canvas for understanding opportunities in business model innovation driven by digitalization.

- Use of Evaluation Methodologies/Tools: Two respondents reported using evaluation methodologies or tools provided by the Digitrans Hub. This suggests that these resources may not be widely used or that respondents may be unaware of them. The data suggests that the majority of respondents have not used these tools.

GERMANY - Evaluation Tools Effectiveness, Additional Features, and Suggestions for Digitrans Hub

- Effectiveness and Usefulness of Evaluation Methodologies and Tools: Most participants did not provide direct feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the evaluation methodologies and tools. One respondent noted they were testing general usability, not specific tools yet. Another mentioned a "good selection of tools, presented in a user-friendly way," but didn't comment on effectiveness.

- Barriers to Use: The main barriers to using the evaluation methodologies and tools include:

- Lack of Opportunity/Time: Several participants stated they had "no chances yet" or "no time" to use the tools.
- Lack of Platform Use: One participant explicitly stated they are "not using the platform."

- Desired Additional Features: The main requests for additional features include:

  - More Extensive Module 3: One suggestion was to make Module 3 "a bit more extensive."
  - Collaborative Functions: A participant suggested adding "more collaborative functions enabling exchange in the hub itself."
  - Method Overview: A suggestion was made for a "method overview with information such as time required, added value, group size for collaborative work with the method (tools summarized on one overview page)."
  - Business Model Canvas: A suggestion was made for "a Business Model Canvas as an evaluation module."

- Suggestions for Improvement: Suggestions for improving the user experience and performance of the platform include:

  - More Examples: One participant suggested that "more examples could be beneficial."
  - Focus on Communication with the Rural Area: A suggestion was made for "more focus on communication with the rural area."
  - Stakeholder Mapping Clarification: A participant noted "Stakeholder Mapping and complexity vs. complicated," suggesting a need for clarity on this topic.

GERMANY - Digitrans Hub Future Vision and User Feedback

- Envisioning the Future of Digitrans Hub: Participants envisioned the Digitrans Hub platform evolving in several ways to better serve digital pioneers in rural Europe:

- o Integration with Existing Structures: Integrating the platform with other European projects and programs was a key vision.
- o Learning Environment Support: Participants saw the platform as a support for learning environments.
- o Accessibility for Ordinary Citizens: A vision was expressed for using the material on ordinary citizens in local areas.
- o Individualized Solutions: Developing more individual solutions as an adaptation of the existing content was suggested.
- o Expanded Testing: More tests in different organizations were envisioned.
- o New Approaches to Collaboration: Participants suggested exploring new approaches to collaborative work.

- Additional Comments, Suggestions, and Feedback: Additional feedback included:

  - o Looking at Local Initiatives: One suggestion was to "look at 15" (likely referring to a specific local initiative or project).
  - o Consultancy Provision: A suggestion was made to provide consultancy.
  - o Key Challenge - Partner Acquisition: A participant identified a key challenge: "The main challenge is probably to gain a critical mass of partner organizations with broad geographical distribution."

GREECE I - Digitrans Hub Usability and Expertise

- Expertise in Digital Transformation: The provided data does not include information about the respondents' expertise in digital transformation. Therefore, this point cannot be summarized from the given data.
- Platform Experience: A significant portion of respondents (3 out of 5) had not used the Digitrans Hub platform before. However, a notable portion (2 out of 5) had used the platform. This suggests the survey reached a mixed audience, including those both familiar and unfamiliar with the platform.
- Usability Ratings: Usability ratings for the Digitrans Hub are generally positive, with a tendency towards higher scores. The ratings for "overall usability" are

mostly 4 or 5 out of 5. The ratings for "user-friendliness" are also high, with most respondents rating it 5 out of 5. However, there are some lower ratings for overall usability (3 out of 5), indicating potential areas for improvement.

- Correlation Between Expertise and Usability: Since the data does not include information on the respondents' expertise in digital transformation, it is impossible to analyze the correlation between expertise and usability.

- Impact of Prior Use: The data suggests that prior use may positively influence usability ratings. Both respondents who had used the platform before gave high ratings (4 for overall usability and 5 for user-friendliness). However, more data is needed to draw a definitive conclusion.

GREECE I - Digitrans Hub Content Relevance, Usability, and Missing Topics

- Content Relevance and Quality: Opinions on the content's relevance and quality are generally positive, with ratings of 4/5 and 5/5. However, one respondent rated it lower (3/5), indicating some potential areas for improvement.

- Platform Usability: The data suggests that the platform is generally usable, as indicated by the high ratings for content relevance and quality. However, there is no direct question in this data about platform usability.

- Missing Content/Topics: Respondents suggested some missing content or topics:

  - More Specific Sections: One respondent suggested "a more specific section for each topic."
  - Guide for Group Work: Another suggested a "useful guide for starting a group work."

- Use of Evaluation Methodologies/Tools: Two respondents indicated they had used evaluation methodologies or tools provided by Digitrans Hub. One respondent provided feedback, saying it was a "useful guide for starting a group work." This suggests that at least some respondents are aware of and using these resources, but it's not possible to determine the overall usage rate from this limited data.

GREECE I - Evaluation Tools Effectiveness, Additional Features, and Suggestions for Digitrans Hub

- Effectiveness and Usefulness of Evaluation Methodologies and Tools: Most participants did not provide direct feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the evaluation methodologies and tools. One participant indicated they hadn't needed them yet. Another was just getting used to the website.

- Barriers to Use: The main barriers to using the evaluation methodologies and tools include:

  o Lack of Familiarity/Use: Participants indicated they were just getting used to the website or hadn't needed the tools yet.

- Desired Additional Features: The main requests for additional features include:

  o Tool for First Steps: A suggestion was made for a "tool for the first steps."
  o More HR Skills Content: A participant suggested including "more about HR skills."

- Suggestions for Improvement: Suggestions for improving the user experience and performance of the platform include:

  o Content Fit: A suggestion was made to "fit in a page" (likely referring to content layout or design).
  o Positive Source for Digital Future: One participant commented that it "will offer a positive source for a better and effective digital future." While not a specific suggestion, it expresses optimism about the platform's potential.

GREECE I - Digitrans Hub Future Vision and User Feedback

- Envisioning the Future of Digitrans Hub: The provided text does not contain any information about how participants envision the future of the Digitrans Hub platform. Therefore, no summary can be provided for this point.

- Additional Comments, Suggestions, and Feedback: The provided text includes a section for additional comments, suggestions, and feedback regarding the Digitrans Hub platform. However, the field is left blank in all three instances shown. Therefore, no actual comments, suggestions, or feedback were provided in this excerpt.
- It's important to note that the "Agree" checkboxes in the image relate to data privacy consent and are not related to platform feedback. They indicate agreement to data collection and processing for the DIGITRANS project.

In addition, the Greek partner distributed a second survey, which focused on a different set of aspects compared to the previous block:

1. User Experience and Impressions

- Overall, how did you find your experience with the hub?
- Which feature(s) of the hub stands out for you? Why?
- Which feature(s) of the hub was less attractive to you? Why?
- Which elements of the hub did you find more useful for your own purposes? Why?

2. Future Usage and Recommendations

- Would you use the learning nuggets/content?
- What would prevent you from using the hub in the future?
- How likely are you to recommend this tool? Why?
- What needs to change for you to use it in the future or recommend it to others?

3. General Feedback and Improvements

- Is there anything that we didn't cover?
- Please fill in any other observations that you made during the focus group that might provide an added value to the DigiTrans Hub's further development.

GREECE II - User Experience and Impressions

The feedback regarding the user experience on the Digitrans Hub is mixed. While many users appreciated the visual appeal, customization options, and interactive features, others struggled with usability and technical issues.

Positive Highlights:

- Users frequently described the hub as "nice," "pleasant," and "easy on the eyes."
- The ability to customize text and colors, especially for accessibility purposes, was highly valued. One user commented, "The best part for me is that you can change the features of the letters and the interface, so it's more accessible to people with visual problems."
- Features like threads and icons were generally well-received.
- The business plan section was highlighted as particularly useful for users interested in business planning and development.

Negative Feedback:

- Several users found the site's navigation and structure confusing, making it difficult to know what to do upon entering the platform. One user mentioned, "It's a little hard to understand what you are supposed to do once you are inside the website. There's a lot of information, and it's hard to follow."
- The use of icons in place of real images was criticized for making the site feel impersonal. Users suggested incorporating pictures of real people and rural areas to make the website feel more humanized.
- Technical issues were noted, such as losing progress after a refresh. One user also pointed out inconsistencies in the fonts used on blog posts, which contributed to the site feeling disjointed.

GREECE II - Future Usage and Recommendations

Users showed varied opinions on whether they would use the platform in the future and recommend it to others.

Positive Feedback:

- Many users expressed a strong likelihood of recommending the hub due to its interactive nature and comprehensive content, describing it as "straightforward and complete."
- The "Ideation of Solutions" module was particularly praised for its relevance to brainstorming and business planning.

Concerns:

- Some users expressed hesitation, citing language barriers and the complexity of certain sections. One user noted, "Right now with the information I have, I don't think I'd recommend it."

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Users requested the ability to retry incorrect questions and suggested adding a digital certificate upon completing the modules. "It would be great to be able to get a digital certificate after completion."
- Faster content loading and reducing animation to improve user experience was also recommended.
- More engaging and catchy content, such as a newsletter or a "story of the day/week," was suggested to increase the hub's appeal.

GREECE II - General Feedback and Improvements

Language and Accessibility:

- Many users found the language complex and suggested simplifying the terminology. One user said, "The terminology used is not easy for... It depends on the target group. For me, as a person who uses everyday English, it was difficult and time-consuming."
- Multilingual support or simpler language would greatly improve accessibility for non-native English speakers.

Website Design:

- Some users found the reliance on icons impersonal and requested more human-centric images. "I would prefer to see pictures of real people and rural areas, so the website feels more up-to-date and attractive."

Navigation:

- A few users faced latency issues and were frustrated by having to scroll through multiple sections. It was suggested that all content be presented in one window for easier navigation.

Evaluation Tools and Additional Features:

- A significant portion of users was unaware of the platform's evaluation tools or had not used them. Many suggested that these tools be better integrated into the platform and promoted more effectively. Some users reported that they did not receive enough guidance on how to use them.

Suggested Features:

- More interactive tools, such as financial calculators and website checks, were requested. "Interactive tool for... would be interesting."
- Users also suggested more practical exercises and guidance on pathways to digitalization to help users engage more effectively with the content.
- Users envisioned the Digitrans Hub evolving into a more comprehensive and inclusive platform for digital pioneers, especially in rural Europe.

Suggestions for Growth:

- Users expressed a desire for a broader geographical reach and the inclusion of more specific projects.
- More practical guidance and case studies were requested to supplement the theoretical content.

- The platform could benefit from fostering more networking opportunities between stakeholders in the digital transformation space.

Overall Evaluation of the Pilot Testing Feedback

The feedback highlights that the Digitrans Hub has a solid foundation with its interactive and customizable features. However, significant improvements are needed in terms of usability, content clarity, and language accessibility. Simplifying the language, improving navigation, and ensuring a more personalized experience would help the platform better meet user needs. The platform shows potential, but further refinement is essential to make it a more effective and widely recommended tool for digital transformation, especially in rural areas.

7.   Annexes