

S.M.A.R.T. - AI & Digital Power for Rural Entrepreneurs
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S.M.A.R.T.

Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum

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1. Introduction: Setting the Scene

This introductory chapter defines the foundation of the *SMART-AI Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum*. It explains who the curriculum is designed for, what it aims to achieve, where and when it will be implemented, why it matters for rural Europe, and how it will make an impact.

The curriculum is primarily created for trainers, mentors, and adult educators working in rural and small-town areas across Europe. These professionals are at the heart of lifelong learning and are best positioned to transfer digital and entrepreneurial knowledge to local communities.

It provides a structured pathway for competence development, enabling trainers to master key areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), digital marketing, and sustainable entrepreneurship. The programme is implemented jointly in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Germany during the 18-month SMART project period (2025–2027).

The purpose is clear: to narrow the digital and economic gap that continues to separate rural regions from urban innovation hubs. By empowering trainers with AI-based tools and methods, the project ensures that knowledge circulates locally instead of being lost through migration.

The curriculum relies on non-formal learning, mentorship, and a competence-based framework aligned with European educational and policy standards. In doing so, it equips adult educators not only with skills, but with the confidence to guide others in their own digital transformation journey. Rural innovation begins when educators themselves become innovators. Through this curriculum, trainers evolve into digital change-makers — capable of transforming local communities, inspiring sustainable business growth, and shaping a more inclusive European future.

1.1 About the SMART Project

Rural Europe still faces structural barriers: weak digital infrastructure, limited AI literacy, and migration of skilled workers. The SMART – AI & Digital Power for Rural Entrepreneurs project responds by combining AI-driven digital marketing, green business skills, and peer mentoring to strengthen entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. The table below presents how the consortium brings together complementary expertise for balanced implementation and cross-border knowledge transfer.

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brings together complementary expertise for balanced implementation and cross-border knowledge transfer.

Table 1.1. SMART Project Consortium and Roles

Partner Organisation	Country	Core Expertise	Key Role in SMART
Global Edu Hub	Bulgaria	Adult education and entrepreneurship	Coordination and national implementation
InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V.	Germany	AI-driven education and digital innovation	Lead expert for mentorship and ToT certification
Marketing Gate	North Macedonia	Digital entrepreneurship and rural innovation	Dissemination and local training delivery

Source: Authors, based on SMART Project Application (2025).

The three-partner structure ensures both quality and inclusiveness. Germany contributes digital know-how, Bulgaria coordinates educational processes, and North Macedonia grounds the project in real rural practice. This balance reflects the Erasmus+ emphasis on transnational complementarity (European Commission, 2023).

1.2 Purpose of the ToT Curriculum

The ToT Curriculum is designed as a pedagogical backbone of SMART. It translates the project's digital and sustainability goals into a structured learning pathway for trainers.

The table summarises how each training objective connects short-term learning results with long-term community impact.

Table 1.2. Objectives and Expected Impact of the ToT Curriculum

Objective	Expected Output	Long-Term Effect
Build trainer capacity in AI and digital marketing	20 ToT-certified trainers	Over 500 adult learners trained after project completion
Integrate SMART Toolkit into adult education	AI modules embedded in national courses	Enhanced digital readiness in rural centres
Promote green and inclusive entrepreneurship	Sustainability and gender modules in ToT	Environmentally responsible and inclusive business growth

Source: SMART Project Work Plan (2025).

The curriculum acts as both a multiplier and a sustainability mechanism. Certified trainers become local ambassadors of the SMART approach, ensuring continuity and scalability beyond the project (OECD, 2024).

1.3 Alignment with Erasmus+ and EU Policy

European policy strongly promotes digital transformation, inclusion, and sustainability. The ToT curriculum operationalises these goals within the adult-education field.

Table 1.3. EU Frameworks and SMART Contributions

EU Framework	SMART Contribution
Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025)	Advances digital readiness and inclusion through non-formal education
Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027)	Embeds AI and open educational resources (OERs) in training
EU Green Deal (2019)	Integrates low-carbon digital marketing and sustainable practices
European Skills Agenda (2025)	Reinforces lifelong-learning competences for the labour market
Digital Decade 2030	Contributes to EU target of 80 % of adults with basic digital skills

Source: European Commission policy documents (2020–2025).

This table connects relevant EU policies with concrete SMART deliverables to demonstrate policy coherence. By mapping SMART outputs to EU priorities, the curriculum shows measurable European Added Value — one of the highest-scoring Erasmus+ evaluation criteria (European Commission, 2024).

1.4 Target Groups and Learning Context

The curriculum primarily targets adult trainers, mentors, and educators who work directly with rural entrepreneurs, NGOs, and community learning centres. These professionals often face challenges such as limited access to digital resources, low AI literacy, and a lack of structured training opportunities. The SMART-AI ToT Curriculum addresses these needs by providing accessible, practice-oriented learning materials that can be applied both online and offline. It empowers trainers to deliver AI-based and sustainable entrepreneurship education in inclusive and context-sensitive ways. Ultimately, the curriculum aims to strengthen local learning ecosystems where knowledge, innovation, and social impact can thrive together.

The SMART-AI Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum recognises that adult learners and educators across Europe come from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and learning environments.

This diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity: it requires tailored approaches that respect different entry points while ensuring that everyone can achieve meaningful progress. The table outlining the main learner profiles provides a structured view of who participates in SMART and how the curriculum is designed to respond to their needs. It shows that the programme does not impose a one-size-fits-all model but instead adapts to the specific realities of trainers, mentors, entrepreneurs, and community educators working in rural and semi-urban regions.

The first target group, **adult trainers and facilitators**, often face the challenge of limited digital competence or a lack of confidence in using new technologies. Many are skilled in traditional teaching but are still learning to integrate AI tools, digital marketing concepts, or green entrepreneurship into their practice. The SMART curriculum supports them through a gradual and scaffolded learning process that combines theory with practical, step-by-step application. By introducing AI tools through simple, real-world examples and providing offline-ready resources, the programme ensures accessibility and builds long-term digital confidence.

Table 1.4. Target Groups and Curriculum Response

Target Group	Profile and Needs	Curriculum Response
Adult trainers and facilitators	Limited AI knowledge and pedagogical training	Step-by-step modules on AI, facilitation, and mentoring
Entrepreneurs turned trainers	Business experience but low didactic skills	Pedagogical models and interactive methods
Educators in rural areas	Poor digital infrastructure and few resources	Offline materials and peer-learning approach
NGO staff and community mentors	Need structured upskilling pathways	EQF-aligned modules and micro-credential recognition

Source: Authors, based on SMART Needs Analysis (2025).

The second group, **entrepreneurs turned trainers**, are typically individuals with strong business experience but little pedagogical training. They know how to run enterprises but need support in transferring their knowledge to others in an educational context. SMART responds to this by offering modules on andragogy, facilitation skills, and learner engagement techniques. Through case-based learning, participants practice designing interactive sessions, managing group dynamics, and communicating complex ideas to audiences with varied backgrounds. This helps them evolve from business practitioners into effective community mentors.

A third important learner profile includes **educators in rural or low-resource environments**. These participants often face structural barriers such as weak internet connectivity, outdated equipment, or limited institutional support. The curriculum addresses these challenges by offering flexible, low-bandwidth materials and options for blended and offline learning. Trainers are also encouraged to use peer-learning techniques and community-based mentorship to share resources locally. This approach not only empowers rural educators but also promotes equity in access to high-quality training regardless of geographical location.

The fourth group, **NGO staff and community mentors**, play a crucial bridging role between education, social innovation, and community development. Their main challenges are fragmented training opportunities and a lack of structured upskilling pathways. The SMART ToT Curriculum offers them a coherent framework aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), allowing their learning to be formally recognised and transferable across institutions. The inclusion of micro-credentials and Youthpass certification ensures that their newly gained competences are visible and portable within the broader European adult-learning ecosystem.

Beyond addressing the needs of these four groups individually, SMART also fosters **collective learning and cross-sector collaboration**. Trainers from different professional backgrounds work together on shared projects, exchanging expertise and co-creating solutions relevant to their local contexts. This peer-to-peer model mirrors real-world adult learning, where collaboration and experiential exchange are powerful drivers of competence development. It also ensures that digital and green innovation do not remain abstract concepts but are embedded in the day-to-day reality of community educators and entrepreneurs.

Finally, the SMART curriculum embodies the **Erasmus+ principles of inclusion, fairness, and lifelong learning** (UNESCO, 2022). By designing flexible, context-sensitive learning pathways, the programme ensures that no trainer or learner is excluded due to their prior experience, language, or access level. Instead of expecting learners to fit into a rigid system, SMART adapts the system to fit the learners. This approach represents a fundamental shift in adult education: one that values equity over uniformity, personal growth over standardisation, and cooperation over competition — shaping a truly inclusive model of digital and sustainable capacity building across Europe.

In conclusion, the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum transforms inclusion from a theoretical value into a tangible educational practice. By addressing learners' diverse profiles, challenges, and learning contexts, it builds a holistic and human-centred approach to digital and entrepreneurial training. The curriculum ensures that every participant—whether a rural educator, business mentor, or NGO facilitator—has the opportunity to develop new competences at their own pace and within their own reality. This adaptability is the cornerstone of its success: it allows learning to flourish even in environments with limited resources while promoting confidence, cooperation, and long-term social impact. Ultimately, SMART demonstrates that inclusion is not just about access to learning—it is about empowering every individual to contribute meaningfully to Europe's digital and green transformation.

2. Learning Outcomes and Competence Framework

This chapter explains what competences the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum develops, who benefits, and how these competences connect to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It defines what trainers will *know, understand, and be able to do* after completing the programme, and how these outcomes can be measured and recognised through micro-credentials and Youthpass.

- Who? Trainers and adult educators engaged in SMART national and transnational training sessions.
- What? Competence-based learning outcomes aligned with EQF levels 5–6.
- Where? In Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Germany, through hybrid and local delivery.
- When? Throughout the 18-month SMART implementation period (2025–2027).
- Why? To ensure that training outcomes are comparable, measurable, and recognised across Europe.
- How? By applying a competence-based framework that integrates digital, entrepreneurial, and sustainability skills.

Learning is not complete when knowledge is acquired—it is complete when it can be transferred, applied, and multiplied.

2.1 Defining the Learning Outcomes

The SMART-AI Training of Trainers Curriculum identifies eight core learning outcomes, structured around three competence domains: Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility & Autonomy. Each outcome connects to measurable indicators that ensure clarity and transparency in assessment. Before presenting them, it is important to note that all outcomes have been mapped against EQF levels 5–6, which correspond to the transition between advanced vocational expertise and higher professional competence.

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Table 2.1. Core Learning Outcomes of the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum

Domain	Learning Outcome	EQF Level	Assessment Indicator
Knowledge	Understands the key principles of AI and digital marketing relevant to adult learning.	5	Demonstrates understanding through written reflection.
	Knows how to apply sustainability and circular-economy concepts in entrepreneurship training.	5	Can explain and integrate sustainability modules.
Skills	Uses AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Canva, Meta Suite) for learning design and mentoring.	6	Designs a learning activity using at least two AI tools.
	Develops digital campaigns and mentoring plans for adult learners and entrepreneurs.	6	Submits a project-based assignment.
Responsibility & Autonomy	Leads ToT sessions independently and mentors new trainers.	6	Delivers a live or simulated ToT session.
	Ensures inclusion, accessibility, and gender equality in all learning activities.	5	Applies inclusive facilitation methods.
	Monitors learner progress using qualitative and quantitative indicators.	6	Collects and analyses feedback data.
	Reflects critically on personal practice and demonstrates continuous professional growth.	6	Maintains self-evaluation and learning portfolio.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Project Work Package 3 (ToT Development) and European Qualifications Framework (2020).

These outcomes ensure that every trainer who completes the programme achieves measurable growth across cognitive, practical, and ethical dimensions. They reflect Erasmus+ values of **quality, inclusion, and measurable impact**, while keeping the curriculum accessible and relevant to rural learning environments.

2.2 EQF Mapping and Competence Levels

To guarantee international comparability and recognition across European countries, the SMART-AI Training of Trainers Curriculum is fully aligned with the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**. The EQF provides a shared reference structure that defines learning outcomes in terms of Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility & Autonomy.

In the context of the SMART project, this means that every learning outcome is expressed through observable and measurable behaviours that demonstrate professional competence. **Knowledge** refers to the theoretical and factual understanding of AI, digital marketing, and sustainable entrepreneurship that trainers must acquire. **Skills** describe the practical ability to apply this knowledge—such as designing AI-supported lessons, mentoring entrepreneurs, or managing digital tools effectively. **Responsibility and Autonomy** capture the trainer’s capacity to plan, lead, and evaluate learning activities independently while ensuring inclusion, ethics, and quality standards.

This structured mapping approach not only clarifies what trainers are expected to achieve, but also ensures that their competences can be validated, compared, and recognised across different European education systems. By using the EQF as a foundation, the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum guarantees both transparency and transferability of results—allowing certified trainers to demonstrate their qualifications beyond national borders and within the broader European lifelong learning framework.

Table 2.2. EQF Alignment of the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum

EQF Dimension	SMART ToT Focus	Expected Competence Level
Knowledge	Theoretical understanding of AI, digital marketing, and sustainability in adult learning contexts.	Level 5 – comprehensive, factual, and theoretical understanding within a field of work or study.
Skills	Application of AI tools, mentoring techniques, and digital facilitation.	Level 6 – advanced skills demonstrating mastery and innovation.
Responsibility and Autonomy	Ability to plan, manage, and evaluate learning in unpredictable, complex environments.	Level 6 – manages professional activities independently and takes responsibility for performance of others.

Source: European Commission, European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (2020).

The EQF mapping situates SMART trainers as **intermediate-to-advanced professionals** who bridge digital literacy and educational innovation. This alignment also facilitates recognition of micro-credentials across EU Member States, supporting mobility and lifelong learning in line with the *Council Recommendation on Micro-Credentials (2022)*.

2.3 Competence Integration with Key European Frameworks

The SMART-AI Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum integrates competences from several **key European frameworks**, ensuring that its structure and content are coherent with broader EU

education and labour market policies. This alignment not only enhances the quality and credibility of the programme but also strengthens the employability and mobility of trainers across Europe. Specifically, the curriculum aligns with the **European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu)**, which defines how educators can effectively integrate digital technologies into teaching and learning. Within this context, SMART trainers are expected to go beyond basic digital literacy and demonstrate pedagogical innovation through AI-based tools, data-informed facilitation, and the ethical use of technology. They learn to design engaging digital lessons, support learners with fewer opportunities, and apply AI responsibly in blended and online learning environments.

In addition to DigCompEdu, the curriculum also draws on the **Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp)**, which focuses on creativity, innovation, and value creation. Through this integration, trainers develop the ability to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets among adult learners—helping them turn ideas into sustainable business opportunities using AI-driven solutions.

Furthermore, the SMART ToT integrates the **GreenComp Framework**, the EU reference for sustainability competences. This ensures that trainers not only understand digital and entrepreneurial skills but also promote environmentally conscious practices. By embedding sustainability across all modules, the curriculum links digital transformation with ecological responsibility and supports the goals of the European Green Deal.

Finally, elements from the **LifeComp Framework** are incorporated to develop trainers' personal and social competences, such as resilience, empathy, and reflective learning. These transversal skills are essential for effective mentoring, inclusive facilitation, and long-term professional growth.

Table 3.3. Integration of SMART ToT Competences with European Reference Frameworks

EU Framework	SMART ToT Integration	Practical Example
<i>DigCompEdu (2022)</i>	Digital pedagogy and AI-based learning design.	Trainers create a blended course using ChatGPT prompts.
<i>EntreComp (2021)</i>	Entrepreneurial mindset and business model development.	Participants guide learners in creating AI-driven marketing plans.
<i>GreenComp (2022)</i>	Environmental awareness and sustainable digital practices.	Trainers integrate low-carbon strategies into campaigns.
<i>LifeComp (2020)</i>	Personal and social learning competence.	Trainers apply reflective learning and ethical mentoring.

Source: European Commission, Joint Research Centre – EU Competence Frameworks (2020–2022).

By combining these frameworks, SMART positions itself within the European continuum of competence development — where **digital, green, and entrepreneurial skills** are viewed not as separate pillars but as interdependent dimensions of modern adult education.

3. SMART: Training Modules

This chapter explains how the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum is implemented in practice, outlining the five key training modules that guide trainers through progressive learning stages—from digital awareness to advanced facilitation and impact evaluation.

- Who? Trainers and adult educators participating in the SMART Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions.
- What? A sequence of five interconnected modules integrating digital, green, and entrepreneurial competences.
- Where? Conducted in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Germany, in both in-person and blended formats.
- When? Implemented between months 3 and 10 of the project timeline (2025–2026).
- Why? To ensure consistent, high-quality training outcomes aligned with EQF and Erasmus+ quality standards.
- How? Through hands-on learning, peer mentoring, and project-based assignments linked to the SMART-AI Toolkit.

Great trainers are not born—they are trained. This chapter equips educators with the mindset and methods to guide others toward AI-powered innovation, sustainability, and lifelong learning.

3.1 Module 1 – Foundations of AI and Digital Marketing

This first module serves as an essential entry point into the world of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and its transformative potential for both digital education and modern entrepreneurship. It establishes a conceptual and practical foundation that allows trainers to understand not only what AI is, but also how it is changing the way people learn, work, and innovate in the 21st century.

The module begins by unpacking the **basic principles of AI** in a way that is accessible to non-technical educators. It explains what algorithms, machine learning, and automation mean in everyday practice, using relatable examples from small businesses, online learning, and digital communication. Through real-world case studies and guided discussions, trainers explore how AI already influences sectors such as marketing, customer engagement, and adult education — even when users are not always aware of it.

In the context of adult learning, the module highlights how AI tools can help educators **personalise learning experiences**, reduce repetitive administrative work, and design more engaging and inclusive courses. For example, trainers learn how platforms like ChatGPT can generate learning materials or discussion prompts, how Canva’s AI design tools simplify content creation, and how

Google Analytics or Meta Business Suite can be used to track learner participation and feedback in online environments.

Beyond the technical dimension, the module also explores the **ethical and social implications** of AI in education. Trainers discuss responsible AI use, data protection, bias in algorithms, and the environmental footprint of digital technologies. This critical awareness ensures that AI is not used blindly, but consciously and purposefully — as a tool that supports inclusion, creativity, and sustainability.

By the end of the module, trainers are expected to gain **confidence and readiness to integrate AI tools** into their own teaching and mentoring practices. They learn to evaluate which technologies are most relevant to their learners' needs, how to embed AI-driven methods into lesson plans, and how to maintain a balance between digital innovation and human-centred education.

Ultimately, Module 1 equips trainers with the mindset of a digital pioneer — someone who understands AI not as a distant technical concept, but as a practical, ethical, and empowering force that can transform adult education, strengthen entrepreneurship, and bridge the digital divide in rural communities.

Table 3.1. Module 1 – Overview and Expected Outcomes

Learning Focus	Learning Objectives	Core Tools and Methods	Expected Outcomes
AI literacy and digital marketing basics	Understand key AI concepts, benefits, and limitations.	ChatGPT, Canva, Google Trends	Trainers explain AI principles and demonstrate at least one marketing-related AI tool.
Sustainable use of technology	Identify environmental and ethical dimensions of AI.	Group discussion, case studies	Trainers articulate principles of responsible AI use.
Digital readiness for adult learning	Recognise the role of AI in inclusive digital education.	SMART Toolkit, video tutorials	Participants integrate AI examples into their training plans.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Toolkit (2025) and WP3 – ToT Implementation Plan.

Module 1 serves as the foundation upon which all other modules build. It strengthens digital literacy, aligns trainers with sustainability and ethics, and prepares them to introduce AI in an accessible and inclusive way.

3.2 Module 2 – Designing Learning for Adults and Entrepreneurs

Module 2 – Designing Learning for Adults and Entrepreneurs builds upon the foundational understanding developed in Module 1 and introduces trainers to the practical and theoretical dimensions of **andragogy** — the science and art of adult learning — enriched with the entrepreneurial mindset promoted by the *SMART-AI ToT Curriculum*. While traditional pedagogy

focuses on instructing children, andragogy acknowledges that adults bring prior experiences, motivations, and goals into the learning process. This module helps trainers understand these dynamics and translate them into meaningful, engaging, and results-oriented learning design.

At its core, the module trains participants to **plan, design, and facilitate learning sessions** that are problem-oriented, experience-based, and relevant to real-life entrepreneurial contexts. Trainers begin by exploring **the key principles of adult learning**, as defined by Malcolm Knowles' andragogical model — autonomy, self-direction, problem-solving, and relevance. They learn to shift from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred facilitation, recognising adults as active partners in their own learning journey. Practical activities, such as role-plays, reflection circles, and case analysis, help trainers identify and adapt to different learner profiles — from unemployed adults seeking digital reskilling to small business owners in rural communities exploring AI marketing tools.

A significant part of the module is devoted to **learning design and structure**. Trainers are guided step by step through the process of creating training plans, defining learning outcomes, selecting appropriate methodologies, and developing inclusive materials. They work with SMART templates for lesson planning, which include columns for objectives, tools, time allocation, and expected outcomes. Emphasis is placed on aligning activities with EQF-based competence descriptors, ensuring that every session contributes to measurable skills and professional growth. Trainers are encouraged to use AI tools such as ChatGPT or Canva for content creation, developing visual and textual materials that are both professional and easy to adapt for different learner groups. The entrepreneurship component of this module introduces trainers to **the EntreComp Framework (European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework)**. They learn how to foster entrepreneurial competences such as creativity, initiative, planning, and risk management among adult learners. Trainers explore how entrepreneurship is not limited to business creation but is also a mindset that encourages adaptability, problem-solving, and value creation in every context. Through simulations, trainers design and facilitate activities where learners work on real or hypothetical projects — for instance, developing a business idea using AI marketing insights or crafting a sustainability-focused pitch for a rural enterprise.

In addition to the technical and methodological aspects, Module 2 pays strong attention to **inclusion, accessibility, and equity in adult education**. Trainers are introduced to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and inclusive facilitation strategies to ensure that each learner, regardless of background, has equal opportunities to participate and succeed. They examine common barriers faced by adults with fewer opportunities — such as digital skill gaps, limited confidence, or socio-economic constraints — and learn how to adapt learning environments accordingly. This includes simplifying materials, offering alternative access modes (offline or low-bandwidth formats), and using empathy-based facilitation to build trust and motivation.

Throughout the module, **collaboration and peer learning** are central. Trainers co-design learning activities in small groups, give each other feedback, and collectively improve their designs. They also analyse real-life examples from the SMART Toolkit and reflect on how to contextualise them

in different countries or local ecosystems. This exchange of practices reinforces the Erasmus+ principle of cross-border learning and ensures that ToT graduates can operate effectively in diverse educational settings.

Table 3.2. Module 2 – Overview and Expected Outcomes

Learning Focus	Learning Objectives	Core Tools and Methods	Expected Outcomes
Adult learning principles	Apply andragogical methods suitable for adult learners.	Case method, simulation, reflection cards	Trainers design one lesson plan using adult-learning principles.
Entrepreneurship education	Integrate business case analysis into ToT sessions.	SMART Toolkit templates, EntreComp framework	Trainers facilitate entrepreneurship-focused group activity.
Learning diversity and inclusion	Adapt materials for learners with fewer opportunities.	Peer-review, inclusion checklist	Trainers redesign one session to be more inclusive.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Toolkit (2025) and EntreComp Framework (2021).

By the end of Module 2, trainers are expected to:

- design a complete lesson plan or workshop integrating SMART digital and entrepreneurial tools;
- apply andragogical principles that make learning engaging, relevant, and impactful;
- integrate entrepreneurship competences into non-formal education programmes;
- adapt training content to the needs of learners with different levels of digital readiness; and
- evaluate and refine their own facilitation style based on participant feedback.

Ultimately, **Module 2 transforms trainers into learning architects** — professionals who understand how adults learn, how to align educational goals with real economic and social needs, and how to use creativity and structure to deliver meaningful learning experiences. Through the fusion of andragogy and entrepreneurship education, this module ensures that SMART trainers become capable of designing programmes that not only transfer knowledge but also inspire action, innovation, and long-term community impact.

3.3 Module 3 – AI Tools for Teaching, Mentoring, and Business Growth

Building upon the foundational knowledge developed in the first two modules, **Module 3** takes a distinctly practical and immersive approach. It moves from *understanding AI* to *applying AI*, giving trainers the opportunity to experiment with tools, design real-life exercises, and reflect on their experiences. In this stage, learning becomes dynamic, interactive, and transformative — bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and actual professional practice.

The module is structured around the principle of **learning by doing**, which lies at the core of adult education. Trainers actively engage in simulations, small projects, and guided workshops where they integrate AI tools into their daily teaching and mentoring routines. They are encouraged to explore diverse digital instruments such as **ChatGPT, Canva, Google Analytics, and Meta Business Suite**, using them to create educational materials, manage learner engagement, and analyse progress data. For example, a participant might design a mini training session supported by AI-generated prompts, automate follow-up communication with learners, or use analytics dashboards to measure learning outcomes.

Another crucial element of Module 3 is its focus on **peer learning and collaborative experimentation**. Trainers work in small teams, exchange feedback, and co-create resources. This cooperative approach mirrors real-world environments where educators and entrepreneurs must collaborate, adapt, and innovate collectively. It also helps participants to identify best practices, troubleshoot challenges, and gain new perspectives on how AI can enrich different types of learning settings — from community workshops to online mentoring networks.

Beyond the technical aspect, the module fosters **critical digital pedagogy** — understanding when, why, and how to use AI effectively. Trainers learn to evaluate the appropriateness of digital tools, avoid overreliance on automation, and ensure that technology serves educational goals rather than replacing human interaction. They also discuss the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that AI-powered resources remain understandable and useful for learners with varying digital skills and backgrounds.

Table 3.3. Module 3 – Overview and Expected Outcomes

Learning Focus	Learning Objectives	Core Tools and Methods	Expected Outcomes
AI for content creation	Generate educational and business content using AI.	ChatGPT, Canva	Trainers produce an AI-generated learning resource.
Data-driven mentoring	Use AI to analyse learner progress and performance.	Google Analytics, AI dashboards	Trainers create data reports for mentoring improvement.
Practical integration	Apply AI to improve communication and marketing.	SMART eToolkit, peer-learning labs	Trainers deliver a pilot session using AI-enhanced tools.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Toolkit (2025), Module 3 structure.

Finally, Module 3 culminates in the design and presentation of a **pilot activity or micro-project**. Each trainer applies at least two AI tools to develop an innovative learning or mentoring intervention and presents it to peers for evaluation. Through feedback sessions and reflection exercises, participants assess their progress and identify how these tools can be adapted for long-term use in their own institutions or local communities.

In essence, Module 3 transforms trainers into confident digital practitioners. It empowers them to harness AI not as a distant technological novelty, but as a practical, creative, and inclusive ally in the learning process — a tool that supports innovation, deepens mentorship, and fosters meaningful human connections in an increasingly digital world.

Module 3 transforms AI from a concept into a practical instrument for learning, mentoring, and growth. Trainers become confident facilitators of digital transformation within their organisations and communities.

3.4 Module 4 – Green Skills and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Module 4 brings a vital dimension to the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum by explicitly linking digital innovation with environmental responsibility. While previous modules focus on digital transformation and AI integration, this one ensures that trainers understand how sustainability principles can and must coexist with technological advancement. It helps educators, mentors, and adult trainers move beyond purely economic or efficiency-driven approaches, encouraging them to think about the long-term social and environmental consequences of digital entrepreneurship.

At its core, the module teaches trainers how to integrate sustainability into digital business models and classroom practices. Participants explore the principles of the *EU Green Deal (2019)* and the *Circular Economy Action Plan (2020)*, analysing how small businesses can adopt low-carbon strategies without compromising growth. Through real-life examples, trainers learn how digital marketing campaigns can promote responsible consumption, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly products or services. For instance, they study how using cloud-based tools instead of printed materials or optimising digital content to reduce data transfer can significantly lower carbon emissions — small, concrete actions that generate real environmental impact.

The module also introduces the concept of eco-conscious digital marketing, illustrating how entrepreneurs can build brand value through sustainability. Trainers examine successful European case studies where green messaging, ethical production, and transparent communication led to stronger customer loyalty and community trust. This analytical approach enables trainers to guide their learners — future entrepreneurs — in understanding that sustainability is not just a moral choice but also a strategic business advantage in the modern marketplace.

Another key objective of this module is to cultivate green leadership and systems thinking among trainers. Participants learn to see sustainability as an interconnected system involving environmental, social, and economic dimensions. They discuss how to foster an entrepreneurial mindset that prioritises resource efficiency, fair trade, and long-term value creation. Through reflection sessions and storytelling techniques, trainers develop the ability to inspire their learners to adopt sustainable habits and lead by example in their communities.

Practical exercises are also a central element of Module 4. Trainers participate in workshops where they design a “green business challenge” — a short, project-based task that integrates AI tools with environmental goals. For example, they might create a marketing plan for a local eco-startup,

use AI to track the environmental footprint of digital campaigns, or develop an awareness-raising initiative about sustainable consumption. These exercises combine creativity, data-driven insight, and ethical awareness, showing that technology can serve as a powerful ally in promoting sustainability.

Finally, the module emphasises the role of education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Trainers learn to align their teaching with these global priorities, ensuring that every ToT session contributes not only to digital upskilling but also to environmental consciousness and community resilience.

Table 3.4. Module 4 – Overview and Expected Outcomes

Learning Focus	Learning Objectives	Core Tools and Methods	Expected Outcomes
Green marketing	Promote eco-friendly digital campaigns.	Circular Economy Action Plan (EU, 2020), case studies	Trainers analyse one green campaign and design a sustainable version.
Resource efficiency	Identify low-cost ways to reduce environmental impact.	SMART Toolkit Chapter 4, checklist	Trainers propose three actionable steps for SMEs.
Sustainable leadership	Inspire responsible entrepreneurship among learners.	Reflection exercises, storytelling	Trainers design a motivational session on green leadership.

Source: Authors, based on EU Green Deal (2019) and SMART Toolkit (2025).

In summary, Module 4 redefines what it means to be a modern digital educator or entrepreneur. It demonstrates that green skills are not an optional add-on but a fundamental component of digital competence. By completing this module, trainers gain the ability to teach and model sustainable entrepreneurship — empowering their learners to innovate responsibly, act ethically, and drive positive change for both the economy and the planet.

3.5 Module 5 – Facilitation, Assessment, and Impact Measurement

Module 5 – Facilitation, Assessment, and Impact Measurement serves as the capstone of the *SMART-AI Training of Trainers Curriculum*, where all previous learning elements come together into a cohesive and practice-oriented framework. This module transforms the acquired knowledge, skills, and values into tangible facilitation competence — ensuring that trainers are not only knowledgeable and digitally capable but also reflective practitioners who can guide others effectively, evaluate learning results, and demonstrate measurable social and economic impact.

At its essence, Module 5 focuses on the art and science of facilitation. Trainers learn how to manage group dynamics, create psychologically safe learning spaces, and adapt their facilitation

style to the needs of diverse adult learners. They explore different facilitation models — including participatory, dialogical, and problem-based approaches — and apply them to digital and hybrid environments. Through guided simulations and role-plays, participants practice leading ToT sessions, giving constructive feedback, and maintaining engagement through a mix of discussion, storytelling, and collaborative reflection. Special attention is given to inclusive facilitation, ensuring that learners with fewer opportunities or limited digital access are equally involved and empowered.

A key component of this module is assessment and evaluation methodology. Trainers learn to apply both formative (continuous) and summative (final) assessment techniques tailored to adult education. They explore how to set measurable learning indicators, design evaluation tools, and use digital platforms for data collection and analysis. The module introduces practical tools such as *evaluation matrices*, *peer review templates*, *self-assessment forms*, and *feedback circles* to help trainers gauge participant progress transparently and fairly. Trainers are also introduced to Youthpass and the concept of *micro-credentials*, learning how to document learning outcomes and competencies in ways that are recognised across Europe under the EQF system.

Table 3.5. Module 5 – Overview and Expected Outcomes

Learning Focus	Learning Objectives	Core Tools and Methods	Expected Outcomes
Facilitation and mentoring	Master group facilitation and peer mentoring techniques.	Role-play, feedback circles	Trainers conduct one ToT session with peer feedback.
Evaluation and assessment	Apply formative and summative evaluation tools.	Evaluation matrix, Youthpass, self-assessment forms	Trainers develop and use an evaluation framework.
Impact measurement	Track and interpret short- and long-term learning impact.	SMART KPIs, follow-up survey templates	Trainers report and present measured impact data.

Source: Authors, based on SMART WP4 (Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, 2025).

Building on this, participants dive deeper into impact measurement, one of the most innovative aspects of the SMART approach. Trainers examine how their sessions contribute not only to individual competence development but also to wider community and policy goals — such as digital inclusion, green entrepreneurship, and rural revitalisation. They learn to distinguish between *outputs* (e.g., number of trained learners), *outcomes* (e.g., improved digital competence and employability), and *impact* (e.g., new businesses created, reduced migration, increased environmental awareness). Using the SMART Monitoring Framework, participants practice collecting quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and follow-ups at six and twelve months after training completion.

The module also emphasises reflection and continuous improvement as core professional habits. Trainers maintain personal learning journals, analyse their facilitation experiences, and identify growth areas. Peer-evaluation sessions encourage open dialogue and mutual support, reinforcing the non-formal learning principle that trainers are both facilitators and lifelong learners. Participants are guided to develop an individual *Facilitation Improvement Plan* that outlines concrete actions for maintaining quality and innovation in their future teaching practice.

To consolidate learning, each trainer completes a final practical assignment — designing, implementing, and evaluating a short ToT session that integrates all previous modules: AI tools (Module 3), green practices (Module 4), and adult-learning design (Module 2). They present their results to peers and mentors, demonstrating competence in facilitation, assessment, and impact measurement. This exercise not only validates their professional readiness but also serves as a showcase of their contribution to the SMART digital and green education ecosystem.

Ultimately, Module 5 represents the transition from training to mastery. Trainers emerge as confident facilitators, capable of managing complex learning environments, evaluating results with evidence-based methods, and understanding how their educational work contributes to social transformation. They become ambassadors of quality and accountability within the SMART community — educators who not only teach others but also *measure, improve, and multiply* the positive effects of their work in alignment with Erasmus+ quality standards and the European vision for inclusive, sustainable, and digitally competent lifelong learning.

By completing this final stage, trainers move beyond the role of participants and become active contributors to the broader learning ecosystem. Their final assignments, reflections, and facilitation plans are collected within the SMART digital platform, where they serve as open educational examples for future cohorts and partner institutions. This repository becomes a living library of real-world teaching innovations—documenting how different trainers have adapted AI tools, sustainability concepts, and mentoring strategies to diverse educational contexts. The shared experiences strengthen the SMART Alumni and Mentorship Network, ensuring that each generation of trainers learns not only from formal instruction but also from the creative practices of their peers.

In the long run, Module 5 establishes a culture of **excellence, accountability, and collaboration** that extends far beyond the boundaries of the project itself. The trainers who complete this module are not just skilled facilitators but **agents of change**—educators who continuously refine their practice, inspire others, and contribute to building a resilient, inclusive, and innovation-driven Europe. Through their commitment to reflection, quality, and impact, they embody the ultimate goal of the SMART-AI Curriculum: transforming education into a force that empowers communities, nurtures sustainability, and drives collective progress across generations.

4. Methodology and Pedagogical Approach

This chapter explains how the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum is delivered, focusing on its methodological principles, learning philosophy, and pedagogical design. It describes who the approach serves, why it was chosen, and how it enables measurable transformation among trainers and learners alike.

- Who? Adult trainers, mentors, and educators across partner countries who facilitate SMART learning activities.
- What? A learner-centred, competence-based, and inclusive pedagogical model built on non-formal education principles.
- Where? Delivered in blended (online and in-person) settings across Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Germany.
- When? Applied throughout all training stages — from ToT workshops to mentoring and follow-up evaluation.
- Why? To ensure learning experiences that are participatory, reflective, and transformative rather than lecture-based or prescriptive.
- How? Through active learning, peer-to-peer exchange, project-based tasks, and continuous reflection supported by AI-driven learning tools.

The strength of a trainer lies not in what they teach, but in what they enable others to discover. The SMART approach turns every training session into a laboratory of curiosity, collaboration, and creativity.

4.1 Principles of Non-Formal Learning

The SMART-AI ToT Curriculum is rooted in the **non-formal education (NFE)** tradition, which values learning through participation, dialogue, and reflection rather than rote instruction. Trainers act as facilitators who create environments where adults can explore, test, and apply new knowledge in real contexts.

The curriculum integrates five key principles of NFE:

1. **Learner-centredness:** Every participant's experience, motivation, and learning style are respected. Trainers adapt methods and pace to the group's needs.
2. **Learning by doing:** Practical exercises, simulations, and projects replace theoretical lectures, enabling direct application of knowledge.

3. **Participation and ownership:** Learners co-create their learning process through peer work, group discussions, and project presentations.
4. **Reflection and feedback:** Every session includes debriefing moments, allowing participants to reflect, analyse, and connect learning to their professional context.
5. **Voluntary engagement and inclusion:** Learning is based on intrinsic motivation, equality, and mutual respect — the foundation of adult education ethics.

These principles align with Erasmus+ priorities for *learner-centred design* and *empowerment through participation* (European Commission, 2024).

4.2 Peer-to-Peer Learning and Mentoring

Peer learning and mentoring form the **social core** of the SMART methodology. Trainers are not isolated instructors but part of a living learning community where knowledge flows in multiple directions.

Table 4.1. Peer Learning Methods Used in SMART-AI ToT Sessions

Method	Purpose	Practical Example
Peer feedback circles	Encourage constructive exchange and mutual improvement.	Trainers observe each other's sessions and provide structured feedback.
Co-facilitation	Build collaboration and trust among trainers.	Two trainers jointly lead a session on AI tools, alternating roles.
Reflective dialogue	Deepen understanding through collective insight.	Group discussions after case studies on ethical AI use.
Mentorship chains	Ensure continuity and long-term support.	Experienced ToT graduates mentor new trainers online.

Source: Authors, based on SMART WP3 – ToT Implementation Plan (2025).

This system reinforces the principle that learning happens *with others and through others*. It creates a sustainable mentorship cycle that continues after the project, contributing to the *Digital Business Support Network (DBSN)* envisioned in the SMART Toolkit.

4.3 Pedagogical Models and Methods

The pedagogical framework of SMART combines traditional adult learning theories with innovative, AI-enhanced techniques. It blends **andragogy (Knowles, 1984)** and **transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997)** with modern digital methodologies.

Key pedagogical models include:

- **Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984):** Learners cycle through experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation.
- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** Real-world cases drive analysis, creativity, and teamwork.
- **Blended Learning:** Integrates online AI-supported tasks with face-to-face facilitation.

- **Collaborative Learning:** Participants share roles, responsibilities, and ownership of outcomes.
- **Microlearning:** Short, modular sessions for quick, focused competence building.

Table 4.2. Pedagogical Methods in SMART-AI ToT Implementation

Approach	Application	Added Value
Project-based learning	Learners develop a business or educational project using AI tools.	Encourages creativity, autonomy, and teamwork.
Case method	Trainers analyse success stories from rural entrepreneurship.	Connects theory with practical problem-solving.
Simulation and role-play	Participants simulate mentoring or business coaching sessions.	Builds facilitation and communication skills.
Digital co-creation	Use of online whiteboards, AI tools, and shared drives.	Encourages collaboration across countries.

Source: Authors, based on Erasmus+ Adult Education Best Practices (EPALE, 2023).

The SMART pedagogical model ensures that training sessions remain interactive, relevant, and empowering. It replaces passive instruction with active engagement, ensuring that trainers experience the same learner-centred approach they are expected to replicate.

4.4 Inclusion, Gender Equality, and Accessibility

In line with the *Erasmus+ Horizontal Priorities* (2025), the SMART methodology embeds inclusion, gender balance, and accessibility as cross-cutting principles in all learning activities.

Table 4.3. Inclusion and Equality Measures within SMART ToT Implementation

Dimension	Measure	Expected Result
Language and accessibility	Multilingual versions and simplified visuals.	Wider participation and comprehension.
Gender equality	Balanced representation in materials and activities.	Equal visibility and empowerment of women trainers.
Socio-economic inclusion	Fee-free participation and low-tech delivery options.	Inclusion of rural and low-income educators.
Learners with fewer opportunities	Tailored mentoring and adaptive scheduling.	Reduced dropout rates and higher engagement.

Source: Authors, based on Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2023).

This means that:

- Materials are available in **multiple languages (EN, BG, MK)** and accessible formats (print-ready, offline PDFs).
- Gender-sensitive examples and case studies are used in all modules.

- Participants with disabilities or limited digital access receive alternative instructions and personalised mentoring.
- Trainers are encouraged to apply the **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** principles to ensure flexible access for diverse learners.

Inclusion is not an optional element but a precondition for impact. By designing an open and accessible learning environment, SMART ensures that all participants, regardless of background, have equal opportunities to learn, contribute, and succeed.

4.5 Continuous Reflection and Quality Assurance

Quality is embedded throughout the SMART pedagogical process. Each training phase includes structured reflection and evaluation steps to ensure coherence, effectiveness, and alignment with project objectives.

Trainers complete learning diaries after each module, noting what worked well, what could improve, and how to apply new insights. Feedback is collected through online surveys and peer evaluations. Project partners conduct regular quality review meetings using SMART indicators such as completion rate, satisfaction level, and skill transfer rate.

These mechanisms contribute to a loop of continuous improvement, where trainers, partners, and learners collaborate to refine the ToT model over time. This reflective culture guarantees that SMART remains adaptable to emerging needs and technological advances.

To further enhance transparency and accountability, the SMART consortium applies a **multi-level quality assurance system** that includes internal and external evaluation. Internal reviews are conducted by project partners after each training phase, while external experts periodically assess the programme's pedagogical design, relevance, and long-term impact. This dual approach ensures that the ToT curriculum is both scientifically grounded and practically effective. Key findings from evaluations are integrated into subsequent modules, turning quality assurance into a dynamic, forward-looking process rather than a formal obligation.

Moreover, SMART treats quality not as a static benchmark but as a **culture of shared responsibility** among all stakeholders. Trainers, learners, and partner institutions are encouraged to view feedback as a developmental tool, not as a judgment. This mindset fosters openness, creativity, and continuous innovation within the training environment. As a result, every ToT cycle becomes slightly more refined, inclusive, and impactful than the previous one — demonstrating the project's living commitment to excellence, collaboration, and lifelong learning values embedded in the Erasmus+ vision.

5. Assessment and Micro-Credential System

This chapter explains how trainers' learning progress and competences are evaluated within the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum. It defines the assessment methods, recognition tools, and validation mechanisms that ensure transparency, credibility, and portability of the acquired skills across Europe.

- Who? Adult trainers and educators who complete the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum.
- What? A structured, evidence-based assessment process linked to EQF levels 5–6.
- Where? Conducted in blended learning environments across partner countries.
- When? Throughout and at the end of the training cycle.
- Why? To guarantee fair, consistent, and measurable recognition of competences.
- How? By combining formative and summative assessment, peer feedback, digital portfolios, and verified micro-credentials.

Recognition turns learning into empowerment. Through transparent and portable validation, SMART ensures that every trainer's effort translates into lasting professional value across Europe.

5.1 Assessment Philosophy and Objectives

Assessment in the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum goes beyond testing knowledge — it measures *growth, transformation, and practical application*. The goal is to document what trainers know, can do, and are able to take responsibility for after completing the programme.

The assessment philosophy rests on four principles:

1. Authenticity – Evaluation focuses on real-world tasks and outputs rather than abstract theory.
2. Transparency – Criteria and indicators are communicated at the start of each module.
3. Constructive feedback – Assessment functions as learning support, not as punishment.
4. Recognition and comparability – Outcomes are linked to EQF and compatible with other EU frameworks (Youthpass, Europass).

This approach transforms evaluation into a learning moment itself — an opportunity for trainers to reflect, improve, and plan their professional development.

5.2 Formative and Summative Assessment Methods

The curriculum employs both **formative (ongoing)** and **summative (final)** assessment to ensure that learning is continuously supported, monitored, and meaningfully evaluated. This dual system

reflects the Erasmus+ quality principle that assessment should not only measure achievement but also enhance learning itself.

The **formative assessment** component runs throughout the entire SMART-AI ToT learning journey. It focuses on providing trainers with regular, constructive feedback that helps them understand their progress and identify areas for improvement in real time. Formative methods include reflective journals, peer feedback sessions, learning diaries, online quizzes, and short self-evaluation tasks. These tools are designed to promote self-awareness, encourage dialogue between trainers and mentors, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. For instance, after each module, participants complete a structured reflection form in which they document what they learned, how they applied new concepts, and what challenges they encountered. This process not only develops critical thinking but also strengthens the trainers' ability to self-regulate their learning — an essential skill for adult educators.

Table 5.1. Assessment Methods Used in the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum

Type	Method	Purpose	Example of Application
Formative	Peer feedback and reflection diaries	Encourage continuous self-assessment and peer learning.	Trainers exchange written reflections after each session.
Formative	AI-based self-evaluation quizzes	Provide immediate feedback on digital competences.	SMART Toolkit quizzes generate personalised learning tips.
Summative	Practical demonstration	Measure ability to plan and deliver ToT sessions.	Trainers facilitate a final micro-training and receive evaluation.
Summative	Portfolio and presentation	Validate overall learning progress.	Trainers submit their final project and discuss outcomes.

Source: Authors, based on SMART WP4 – Monitoring & Evaluation Framework (2025).

In contrast, **summative assessment** takes place at the end of the training cycle and aims to validate the competences acquired during the entire curriculum. It focuses on the integration and demonstration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes through authentic, performance-based tasks. Trainers are required to design and facilitate a short ToT session, submit a comprehensive learning portfolio, and participate in a final peer-review presentation. These activities assess their ability to apply AI tools, design inclusive learning experiences, and evaluate their own impact as educators. The summative evaluation is conducted jointly by mentors and partner representatives to ensure transparency and consistency across all countries.

Together, the formative and summative elements create a **balanced assessment ecosystem** that values both process and outcome. Trainers receive continuous guidance while also being held to measurable standards of excellence. This approach reinforces the SMART project's vision of

competence-based education — where assessment is not an endpoint, but an ongoing dialogue between learners, mentors, and the wider community of practice.

5.3 Learning Portfolio and Evidence Collection

Each participant develops a Digital Learning Portfolio, which serves as the main repository of evidence. It includes:

- a short biography and learning goals;
- module reflections and practical assignments;
- evidence of AI-based learning design (screenshots, templates, videos);
- peer feedback summaries; and
- a self-evaluation mapped to EQF descriptors.

The portfolio is reviewed by the trainer's mentor and validated by the lead partner (InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V.) to ensure cross-national comparability. Trainers are encouraged to update it beyond the project, turning it into a lifelong learning record compatible with *Europass e-Portfolio*.

5.4 Micro-Credentials and Youthpass Recognition

Upon successful completion of the curriculum, trainers receive a SMART-AI Micro-Credential Certificate and a Youthpass.

The micro-credential is issued under the *Council Recommendation on a European Approach to Micro-Credentials (2022)* and follows EQF level 5–6 standards. It provides verifiable evidence of:

- achieved learning outcomes and related competences,
- workload (approx. 60 learning hours),
- assessment criteria,
- issuing body and signature, and
- digital verification code.

Table 5.2. Structure of the SMART-AI Micro-Credential

Component	Description
Title	SMART-AI Training of Trainers Micro-Credential
EQF Level	5–6
Workload	60 hours (blended)
Learning Outcomes	AI integration, green entrepreneurship, facilitation, evaluation
Assessment Methods	Portfolio, peer feedback, final ToT session
Issuer	SMART Consortium – Erasmus+ KA210-ADU 2025
Verification	Digital signature and QR code linked to project website

Source: Authors, based on Council Recommendation on Micro-Credentials (2022).

Youthpass complements the micro-credential by documenting transversal competences such as teamwork, digital creativity, and civic engagement. Both instruments ensure formal recognition of the trainers' achievements across Europe.

This transparent, modular certification model supports mobility, employability, and recognition across education sectors — fulfilling Erasmus+ objectives for lifelong learning pathways.

5.5 Feedback, Validation, and Follow-Up

Assessment within the SMART-AI Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum extends far beyond certification. Completion of the programme marks the beginning of an ongoing cycle of professional growth, reflection, and impact measurement. After graduation, trainers join the SMART Alumni and Mentorship Network, a cross-border community that keeps them connected, engaged, and continuously learning. Within this network, trainers exchange experiences, mentor new participants, and update their digital portfolios with new projects, achievements, and community initiatives. In this way, portfolios evolve into living documents that reflect real professional progress and lifelong learning.

The Alumni Network functions as a sustainable ecosystem that supports trainers' professional development through peer mentoring, online meetups, and collaborative workshops. Outstanding alumni are invited to co-facilitate future ToT cycles, ensuring intergenerational exchange and long-term programme continuity. This creates a growing community of practice where educators and mentors co-create new ideas, share AI-based learning innovations, and strengthen the overall impact of SMART across partner countries.

To ensure measurable and verifiable impact, follow-up evaluations take place six and twelve months after certification. These assessments gather both quantitative and qualitative data — such as the number of AI-based workshops conducted, SMEs supported, or partnerships formed — along with reflections on teaching quality, innovation, and inclusion. The results are collectively analysed by project partners and integrated into the next training cycle, forming part of the SMART Quality Loop described in Chapter 4.

Through this continuous feedback and adaptation process, SMART transforms assessment from a one-time measurement into a living mechanism for growth and innovation. Trainers remain part of an evolving professional community that values reflection, peer learning, and shared accountability. In doing so, SMART ensures that learning outcomes are not only validated but also expanded over time — turning every graduate into an active contributor to Europe's digital, green, and inclusive education ecosystem.

6. Impact, Sustainability, and European Added Value

This chapter presents how the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum generates measurable change, ensures sustainability of results, and contributes to the European policy agenda on digital transformation, green growth, and inclusion. It also explains the mechanisms through which impact is monitored, transferred, and scaled beyond the project's lifetime.

- Who? Trainers, adult educators, rural entrepreneurs, and organisations benefiting directly or indirectly from the SMART approach.
- What? The long-term effects of capacity building in AI, green skills, and digital entrepreneurship.
- Where? Across Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Germany, and through open-access dissemination at the European level.
- When? During and after project implementation (2025–2028 and beyond).
- Why? To ensure that SMART's innovations continue creating social, economic, and environmental value after EU funding ends.
- How? Through replication, digital platforms, alumni mentoring, and policy-level integration into adult education systems.

True impact is not measured by what ends with a project, but by what continues to grow because of it. SMART turns every trained educator into a catalyst for long-term transformation in their community.

6.1 Short- and Long-Term Impact

The SMART-AI ToT Curriculum creates a multi-layered impact at individual, organisational, and systemic levels.

In the short term, trainers improve their digital competence, AI literacy, and facilitation skills, enabling them to design and deliver more effective and inclusive learning experiences. This directly enhances the quality of adult education in rural areas, where innovation and access to digital tools are often limited.

In the medium and long term, the project contributes to sustainable economic development by empowering trainers who, in turn, mentor entrepreneurs and small businesses. These trainers become multipliers of knowledge, passing on AI-based digital marketing and green entrepreneurship methods to hundreds of adult learners. As a result, new business ideas emerge, digital readiness improves, and communities become more resilient to technological and social change.

At a systemic level, SMART strengthens the European ecosystem of adult learning by connecting educators across borders through the Alumni and Mentorship Network (see Chapter 5). This ensures that the competences developed within the project continue to circulate within the wider Erasmus+ and EPALE community.

6.2 Sustainability and Continuity of Results

Sustainability in SMART is both strategic and structural. The project ensures that results remain useful and replicable through three main mechanisms:

1. **Open Educational Resources (OER):** All curriculum materials, toolkits, and templates are published under a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license, allowing free adaptation and reuse across Europe.
2. **Capacity-building and mentoring system:** The SMART Alumni Network provides a framework for continuous professional development, where trained educators become mentors for new trainers and learners.
3. **Integration into institutional practice:** Partner organisations commit to embedding the SMART ToT model into their national adult education programmes and local community initiatives, ensuring continuity beyond project funding.

Table 6.1. Sustainability Measures and Expected Effects

Sustainability Mechanism	Description	Long-Term Effect
OER publication	SMART Toolkit and ToT Curriculum shared via EPALE and Erasmus Results Platform.	Continuous access and reuse by educators.
Alumni and Mentorship Network	Peer-to-peer mentoring and annual alumni meetups.	Knowledge retention and replication.
Institutional integration	Inclusion of ToT modules in national training programmes.	Structural sustainability within adult education.
Policy outreach	Dissemination to ministries and education agencies.	Uptake and alignment with EU frameworks.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Dissemination & Exploitation Plan (2025).

By turning training materials into open resources and embedding learning structures in partner institutions, SMART ensures that its effects continue to multiply long after the project ends.

6.3 Contribution to EU Priorities and Added Value

The SMART-AI ToT Curriculum directly contributes to the European Union's key policy agendas:

- **Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027):** Enhances digital literacy and promotes innovative AI-based learning in adult education.

- European Green Deal (2019): Integrates sustainability principles and circular economy thinking into entrepreneurship training.
- European Skills Agenda (2025): Strengthens lifelong learning and employability through competence-based upskilling.
- Digital Decade 2030: Supports the EU target that 80% of adults possess basic digital skills.
- Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2023): Ensures participation of learners with fewer opportunities and promotes gender balance.

Table 6.2. SMART's Contribution to EU Policy Priorities

EU Framework	SMART Contribution	Resulting Added Value
Digital Education Action Plan	Application of AI tools and blended learning models.	Modernisation of adult education practices.
Green Deal and Circular Economy	Integration of green digital marketing.	Reduction of environmental footprint in entrepreneurship.
Skills Agenda	Competence-based training aligned with EQF.	Recognition and mobility of trainers.
Digital Decade 2030	Training of rural educators in digital competence.	Closing the urban-rural digital gap.
Inclusion Strategy	Tailored mentoring and multilingual accessibility.	Greater equality and representation.

Source: European Commission (2020–2024) and SMART Project Documentation.

SMART's European Added Value lies in its integrated approach, connecting the digital and green transitions through inclusive education. It exemplifies Erasmus+ principles by building bridges between technology, sustainability, and human development.

6.4 Policy Uptake and Transferability

The SMART ToT model is designed to be scalable and transferable across countries and sectors. It uses a modular, adaptable structure that can fit different institutional and policy contexts — from vocational training centres to NGOs and universities.

Project partners plan targeted policy roundtables and dissemination events with education ministries, chambers of commerce, and adult learning associations. These events will share the SMART methodology and encourage its adoption within national qualification systems. The open-access micro-credential model (see Chapter 5) allows for easy replication by other Erasmus+ projects and training providers.

By doing so, SMART creates a transferable European framework that connects AI innovation, lifelong learning, and sustainability — offering a tested model for future policy and practice.

6.5 Long-Term Vision

SMART's long-term vision reaches far beyond the administrative closure of the project. It aspires to build a self-sustaining European ecosystem of AI and green entrepreneurship trainers—a vibrant, cross-border network of professionals who continue to learn, collaborate, and innovate long after EU funding concludes. This vision transforms SMART from a time-bound Erasmus+ initiative into a dynamic European community of practice that grows organically through shared knowledge, peer mentoring, and digital collaboration.

At the centre of this vision lies the establishment of the SMART European Network of Trainers, a permanent online and offline structure that connects graduates of the ToT programme with educators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and researchers. The network will operate as both a professional platform and a learning laboratory, where members can exchange resources, co-develop materials, and respond collectively to emerging challenges in digitalisation and sustainability. Regular alumni meetings, webinars, and mentorship programmes will enable continuous professional development and ensure that trainers remain up to date with the latest AI tools, pedagogical innovations, and EU policy frameworks.

To support this collaboration, SMART partners are developing an interactive digital platform—an open-access online hub hosting the Toolkit, the ToT Curriculum, templates, best practices, and case studies contributed by alumni. This platform will also integrate feedback mechanisms, discussion spaces, and a repository for new AI-based learning materials. By allowing trainers to share their lessons learned and adapt content for new contexts, the platform turns SMART into a living, evolving resource, capable of adjusting to technological shifts, policy changes, and social transformations.

Sustainability also relies on institutional and policy integration. Partner organisations in Bulgaria, Germany, and North Macedonia have committed to embedding SMART's methods into their ongoing adult education programmes, national qualification frameworks, and community entrepreneurship initiatives. This ensures that the curriculum and its results are not temporary outputs but embedded practices that influence how adult learning is organised and delivered. Moreover, the SMART Alumni and Mentorship Network will serve as a consultation body for future Erasmus+ projects, providing evidence-based recommendations on green digital pedagogy and competence development.

In essence, SMART's long-term vision is transformative rather than transactional. It is not limited to producing trained professionals but aims to cultivate *leaders of change*—trainers who embody the principles of ethical innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility. These professionals become multipliers of impact, transferring knowledge to new learners, organisations, and communities across Europe.

Ultimately, SMART evolves into a movement for smarter, greener, and more inclusive adult education, guided by the European Union's broader agenda for a sustainable digital future. Its legacy lies not only in the resources it creates but in the culture of cooperation, curiosity, and continuous improvement it inspires—a culture where learning never ends and innovation is shared as a common European value.

7. Dissemination, Communication, and Visibility

This chapter presents the **strategic approach to communicating, disseminating, and promoting** the SMART-AI ToT Curriculum and its results. It explains how visibility is ensured at the local, national, and European levels, and how communication supports sustainability, engagement, and policy impact.

- **Who?** SMART consortium partners, trained educators, alumni, local stakeholders, and European networks in adult education.
- **What?** Dissemination and communication actions that ensure wide visibility, use, and impact of the SMART results.
- **Where?** Across Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Germany, and online through the SMART digital platform and EU channels.
- **When?** During all project phases and beyond the project lifetime (2025–2028).
- **Why?** To ensure that project outputs are shared, reused, and recognised by wider educational and policy communities.
- **How?** Through a structured dissemination plan combining events, digital media, publications, and EU-level visibility actions.

Knowledge has impact only when it is shared. SMART’s communication strategy ensures that innovation travels beyond partners—reaching every educator, policymaker, and learner who can make change happen.

7.1 Dissemination Strategy and Objectives

The dissemination strategy of SMART is built on **three interlinked objectives**:

- **Visibility:** to make the project and its results known among educators, adult-learning institutions, and policy stakeholders;
- **Engagement:** to actively involve trainers, alumni, and local actors in knowledge-sharing activities;
- **Sustainability:** to ensure that the project’s intellectual outputs (Toolkit, ToT Curriculum, Micro-Credential model) remain accessible and usable after project completion.

The dissemination process follows a **“4P approach”** — *People, Platforms, Publications, and Policy*:

1. **People:** engaging educators, learners, and stakeholders through workshops, alumni events, and mentoring.

2. **Platforms:** ensuring open access to results through the SMART website, Erasmus+ Results Platform, and EPALE.
3. **Publications:** producing high-quality OERs, policy briefs, and newsletters.
4. **Policy:** aligning communication with European education and digitalisation agendas to influence systemic change.

7.2 Communication Channels and Tools

The communication plan uses a combination of **digital, visual, and face-to-face tools** to maximise reach and accessibility.

Table 7.1. SMART Communication Channels and Tools

Channel / Tool	Purpose	Examples of Actions
SMART Website & Platform	Central hub for resources, updates, and alumni interaction.	Publication of Toolkit, ToT Curriculum, and micro-credential model.
Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, X)	Outreach to educators, entrepreneurs, and the public.	Weekly posts, live updates from training sessions, success stories.
EPALE and Erasmus+ Results Platform	European-level dissemination.	Upload of all OERs and best practices with CC BY 4.0 license.
Press Releases and Newsletters	Local and partner-level visibility.	Quarterly newsletters in EN, BG, and MK.
Multiplier Events and Alumni Meetups	Direct engagement and knowledge exchange.	Regional dissemination events with demonstrations of SMART tools.

Source: Authors, based on SMART Dissemination Plan (2025).

By combining professional online presence with local-level interaction, SMART ensures that its results are both accessible to the public and relevant to the professional community.

7.3. Visual Identity and EU Visibility Requirements

All dissemination and communication activities fully comply with **Erasmus+ visibility rules** and EU communication standards.

This includes:

- Displaying the **Erasmus+ logo** and standard funding disclaimer on all materials;
- Using the **Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license** for open educational content;
- Maintaining a consistent **visual identity** (fonts, colours, and layout) across all materials;
- Providing multilingual versions (EN, BG, MK) for inclusiveness;
- Ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities through alternative text, subtitles, and printable versions.

Table 7.2. EU Visibility and Branding Measures

Requirement	SMART Implementation
Erasmus+ logo and disclaimer	Visible on every digital and printed output.
CC BY 4.0 license	Applied to Toolkit, ToT Curriculum, and media materials.
Language accessibility	All core outputs translated into BG and MK.
Inclusive design	Subtitles, alt-text, and accessible layouts integrated.
Visual coherence	Unified templates for presentations and reports.

Source: European Commission – *Erasmus+ Communication Guidelines* (2024).

These measures ensure transparency, professionalism, and accessibility — essential conditions for long-term reuse and recognition of SMART materials within the Erasmus+ ecosystem.

7.4. European-Level Dissemination and Policy Outreach

SMART’s dissemination extends beyond project partners to the **wider European education and policy community**.

Key actions include:

- Presentation of results through the *EPALE Thematic Week on Digital Transformation and Erasmus+ Adult Education Conference*;
- Submissions to the *Erasmus+ Good Practice Database* and the *GreenComp and EntreComp communities of practice*;
- Development of a **policy brief** summarising the SMART methodology and recommendations for integrating AI and green skills into adult learning policies;
- Collaboration with national Erasmus+ agencies and European networks such as EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults).

These efforts aim to transform SMART from a successful small-scale project into a **policy-influencing reference model**, demonstrating how competence-based and sustainability-oriented ToT programmes can support the EU’s twin transition goals — digital and green.

7.5. Long-Term Communication Legacy

After the official end of the project, all materials remain publicly accessible through:

- the **SMART Digital Platform** (maintained by InnovEdu Nexus Institut for at least 5 years),
- the **EPALE resource library**,
- and the **Erasmus+ Results Platform**.

The SMART Alumni and Mentorship Network (see Chapter 5 and 6) continues to promote the project brand, share new learning practices, and publish annual updates. In this way, communication becomes an integral part of sustainability — keeping the SMART identity visible and evolving across Europe.

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Consortium Partners:

1. Global Edu Hub (Bulgaria) – Coordinator, adult education and entrepreneurship.
2. InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V. (Germany) – Digital innovation, mentorship, quality assurance.
3. Marketing Gate (North Macedonia) – Dissemination, localisation, and business support.

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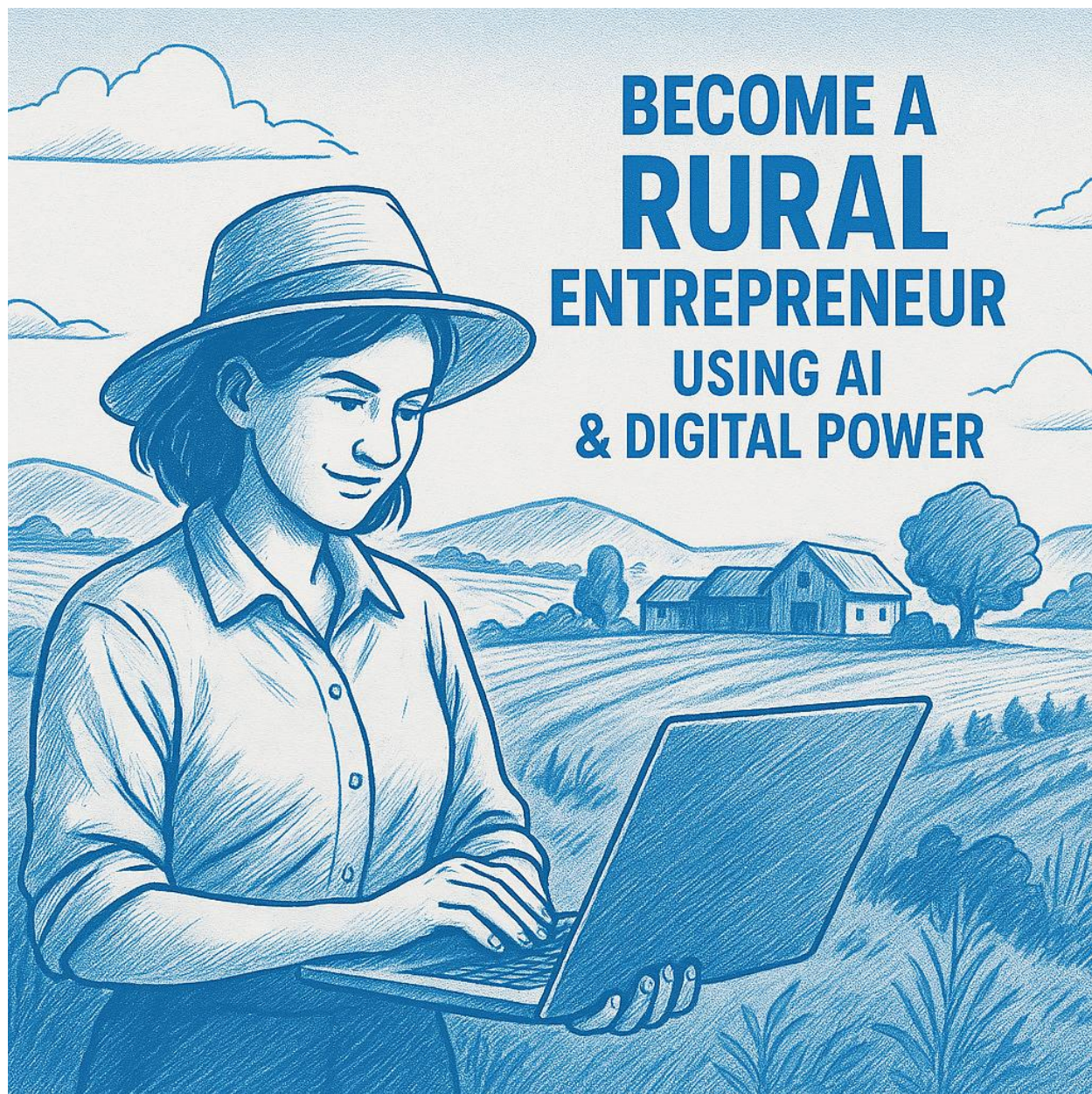
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