



SME4DD

Training SMEs for the Digital Decade



Co-funded by the
European Union

Training SMEs for the Digital Decade¹

D3.1 Marketing and promotion activities: Communication and Dissemination Plan

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Executive Summary

The Training SMEs for the Digital Decade (SME4DD) project aims to deliver short-term training courses focused on three strategic digital technologies in Europe: 1) Artificial Intelligence, 2) Blockchain, and 3) Cybersecurity. These courses will be tailored to the needs of companies, particularly SMEs, with the goal of increasing the number of skilled individuals capable of designing, developing, and implementing digital solutions across sectors, thereby bridging the gap in advanced digital skills, and enhancing Europe's competitiveness.

As a deliverable of the Communication and Dissemination Work Package 3 (WP3), the communication and dissemination plan outline a strategy to maximise the project's impact, enhance its visibility, and ensure the broad dissemination of project outputs to relevant stakeholders.

With the SME4DD consortium comprising partners representing universities and organisations, there will be a strong focus on utilising the existing networks and communication channels the partners possess, such as their membership bases, newsletters, and social media reach. All partners will serve as ambassadors of the project and are expected to actively participate in communication and dissemination efforts to varying degrees. The plan will facilitate partner engagement throughout different project phases, coordinate joint promotional activities of short-term courses through diverse communication channels, and ensure alignment with the project's unique contexts.

Communication & dissemination strategy

The communication and dissemination plan, as outlined below, will encompass the following structural elements:

1. Purpose ("why?")
2. Messages ("what?")
3. Key audiences ("who?")
4. Methods ("how?")
5. Time ("when?")

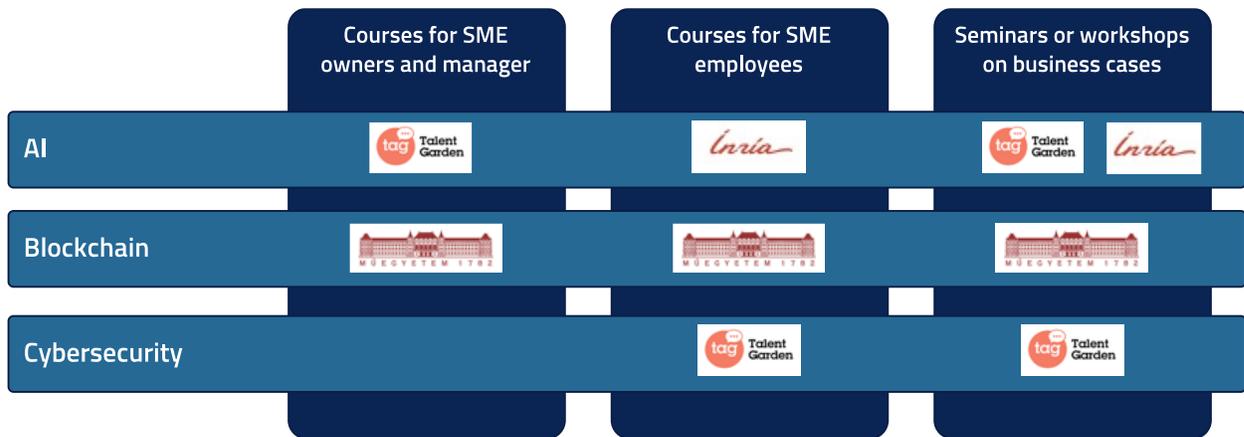
This comprehensive approach ensures effective information-sharing and outreach strategies, enabling the achievement of project goals.

1.1 Purpose ("why?")

The SME4DD project aims to enable the design of short-term training courses for upskilling SME professionals in Europe (owners, managers, employees) in 3 key digital technology areas: AI, Blockchain, and Cybersecurity to deliver specific digital upskilling training to the workforce in Europe. Each topic is owned by one of the project partners and delivered as per the below specificities:

- Improve SMEs' ability to extract, process and interpret complex data for decision-making
- Gain knowledge on the basics of these technologies and their profitability now and in the future
- Understand how to implement and develop technology-oriented investments to support business goals
- Contribute to promoting diverse applications of AI in various sectors, such as industry 4.0, e-Health, banking, environmental, and social sectors

Figure 1: Type of courses in topic areas. The logos indicate the training provider delivering the course



Effective communication and dissemination will play a vital role in achieving the project objectives. A clear and targeted communication strategy will foster a shared understanding of the short courses in their respective topical areas. It will raise awareness among the target SME audiences, ensuring they are informed about the courses and the opportunities they offer for skills development.

The communication and dissemination activities will focus on conveying the value and relevance of the courses, encouraging, and facilitating active participation. This will involve leveraging various communication channels, such as online platforms, social media, newsletters, and targeted outreach to relevant industry networks and associations.

1.2 Messages ("what?")

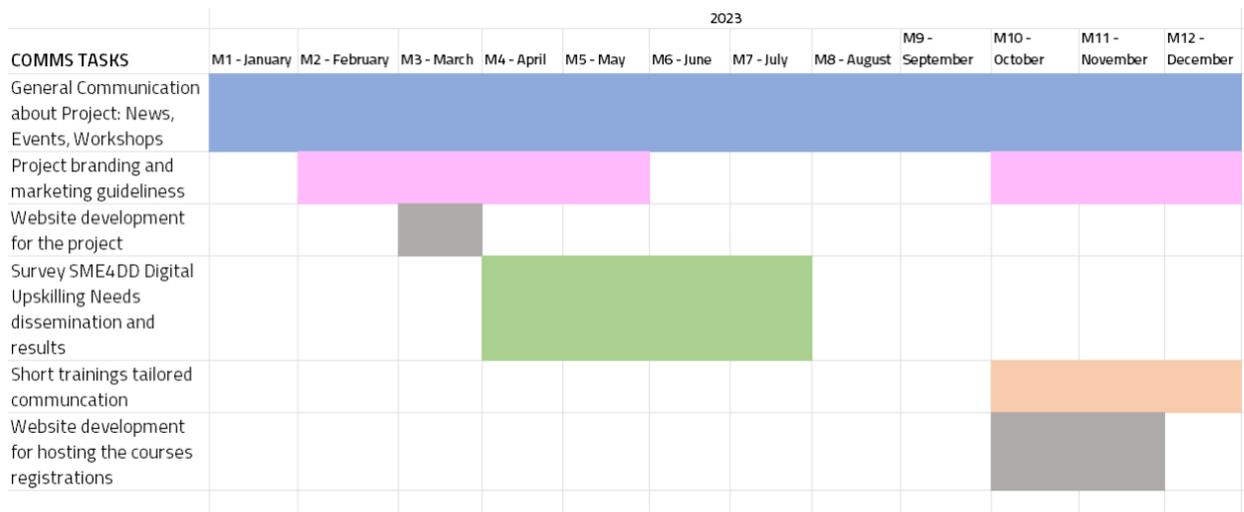
During the project's initial phase, the primary focus will be generating general awareness about the SME4DD project and disseminating information regarding its objectives to the target audience (Figure 2). Additionally, the survey aimed at collecting data on skills gaps for SMEs (WP1) will be widely disseminated to promote participation and gather valuable insights from the target audience.

The project will develop a comprehensive branding strategy to establish a strong and unified identity, including creating a logo, defining a colour scheme, identifying relevant hashtags, and designing a dedicated website. These branding elements will be consistently utilised across all visual communications, campaigns, and course materials. By integrating the branding elements into the design of course materials, the project aims to reinforce its identity and provide participants with a

consistent visual experience. This cohesive branding approach will enhance recognition, establish a professional image, and ensure consistency across all communication channels and course materials.

Partners will leverage their social media channels and internal contact databases to disseminate project information. They will actively pursue opportunities to participate in relevant events, showcase the project, and increase awareness.

Figure 2: Communication Timeline 2023



Towards the second year, when the short courses are developed and ready for implementation, specific messages will accompany the general messages. The aim is to promote the developed courses and attract the target audience to register and participate.

During this timeframe (Figure 3), paid advertisements will be strategically implemented through recurrent campaigns aimed at increasing registrations for each of the developed courses. Consistent with the project's goals and objectives, individual course promotions will be tailored to target audiences on relevant marketing channels. The campaigns will be scheduled to coincide with the courses' start dates, ensuring the timely attraction of the desired cohort of participants, with a focus on Italy, Sweden, France, and Hungary.

Figure 3: Communication Timeline 2024-2025



1.3 Key audiences ("who?")

As part of the key audience, the following groups have been identified, and all the dissemination campaigns will aim to reach out to established target groups at the local, regional, national, and European level:

- **Industry players:** SMEs start-ups, scale-ups, business associations and clusters (e.g., Chambers of Commerce and Industry, National clusters of companies, Sector-specific or technology-oriented alliances)
- **Research and Innovation centres:** Incubators, accelerators, and research staff members (e.g., European Innovation Council, European Digital Innovation Hubs, Hungarian National Blockchain Coalition)
- **Civil society organisations and professional associations:** representing members, and employees in the key focus areas of the project (e.g., IT Professionalism Europe)
- **Education and training providers:** (higher) education institutions, public/private training organisations,
- **Public/government bodies and initiatives:** policymakers and decision-makers in strategic areas such as employment, education, and digitisation (e.g., DG CNECT, DG EAC, JRC, EMPL, EP Cult Committee, Ministers for education)

Furthermore, each course to be developed under the SME4DD project targets a specific audience identified as beneficiaries/participants (Table 1).

COURSE	Job Title	Company Size	Company Sectors	Countries
Cybersecurity courses	SMEs owners and tech managers Senior managers Entrepreneurs Early tech adopters Tech-savvy technology enthusiasts	<250	Financial services Manufacturing and logistics Consumer products Information tech Energy F&B production Healthcare Automotive	Italy (& other EU countries)
AI courses	Engineers Researchers Senior managers Directors	<250	Health IT Energy Finance Energy Agriculture	Sweden France (& other EU countries)
Blockchain courses	CTO/CIO Product Owner Business Analyst Project Manager Product Owner Business Analyst Domain Expert Software Architect Software Engineer Software Developer DevOps, Test Leads Data Engineer, Data Analyst	<250	Financial services Consumer products Information tech Energy Healthcare Manufacturing Logistics	Hungary (& other EU countries)

Table 1: short courses intended audience

This target audience will be further adapted based on the groundwork conducted in the Upskilling Needs of SMEs Work Package (WP1) and fine-tuned later in the course development within the Short-Term Training Programmes Work Package (WP2).

In WP1, a thorough analysis will be carried out to gather data on SME digital skills, focusing on three technology areas. This analysis will involve surveying existing training gaps, identifying specific needs, and understanding challenges. Building upon the findings from WP1, WP2 will incorporate automated analysis and ESCO (European Skills, competencies, Qualifications, and Occupations) profiles to ensure alignment with European frameworks and identify the core competencies for effective digital upskilling. The results obtained from the analysis conducted in WP1 and WP2 will serve as the foundation for the subsequent stages of the project. Both work packages will inform the development

of tailored short-term training courses to address the identified skill gaps and meet the specific needs of SME professionals.

1.4 Methods ("how?")

The communication and dissemination strategy will include a set of dissemination actions and promotional campaigns implemented via the project communication channels and those of partners to maximise impact.

1.4.1 Dissemination Objectives

The Dissemination Objectives (DO) include the following:

- **DO1. Raise awareness.** Ensure the key results are disseminated (spread and understood) among the project's target audiences.
- **DO2. Engage key stakeholders.** Maintain the engagement of the involved stakeholders across related projects and further engage other actors vital to or benefiting the outreach.
- **DO3. Enhance sustainability long-term.** Maintain effective collaboration of key stakeholders during and beyond after the project lifetime. Develop an appropriate structure to coordinate the training implementation beyond the project closure.

1.4.2 Branding

As part of the branding process, the project's logo was established, along with the colour scheme and preferred font for the characters.

- The logo will always be featured with the "co-funded by European Union" emblem on a white or transparent background.
- Colour scheme
 - Main: blue hex #145da0; RGB: 20,93,120
 - Secondary: grey hex #565656; RGB: 86,86,86
- Character Font: Titilium



Regarding social media dissemination efforts, the following hashtags were identified as relevant for promoting the project and further promoting the developed courses: **#SME4DD #euprojects #smes**

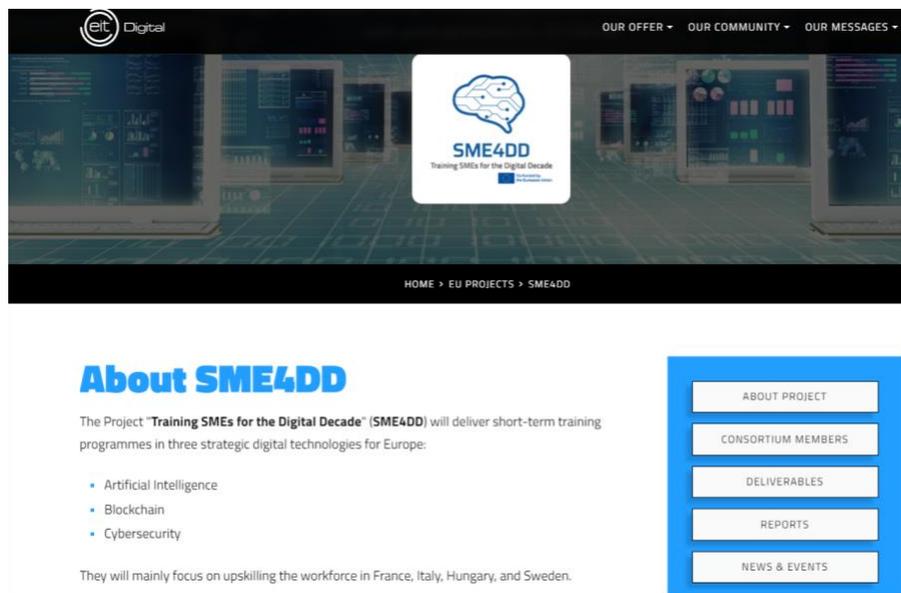
#training #ai #cybersecurity #blockchain. Ideally, these hashtags should be used whenever a new social media post about the project is shared across all partner channels.

1.4.3 SME4DD Website

As part of the recognisable project identity, digital file templates were created, and a website dedicated to the project was published on the EIT digital domain. The website can be accessed at <https://www.eitdigital.eu/eu-collaborations/sme4dd/>.

The website will serve as the main information resource for the project, hosting information about the project, the consortium, public deliverables, reports, as well as news and events in their respective sections.

Figure 4: SME4DD website print screen



In the further development of the project delivery, there are plans to develop dedicated landing pages for each course offered under the project. These landing pages will provide information about the course content and registration forms.

1.4.4 Dissemination Activities

While EIT Digital will coordinate the communication and dissemination activities, working closely with the project partners is important to ensure maximum outreach and impact. The partners' dissemination activities may include but are not limited to engaging with relevant national and local media, contributing to EIT Digital's social media inputs, proactively sharing information about the project's progress, listing their own communication activities in a shared file, providing translations of materials when needed, and participating in related local and international events.

The following is the proposed structure of the **communication and dissemination channels** intended to be utilised for the promotion of the project and the courses developed:

Organic Promotion

All partners are expected to actively participate in organic promotion through their own resources and channels.

The target audience will be as detailed in section 1.3, "Key audiences" ("who?"). The refinement of the target audience will be based on the output of the work within WP1. The following channels will be utilised as the primary means of dissemination:

- **Social Media Organic** posts: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter
- **Webinars / Workshops** on different topics with the Partners to attract leads
- **Email engagement** communication with generated leads, aiming to nurture and convert them into course registrations
- **Articles (thought leadership)** per topic
- **Events and conferences:** Relevant ones for education and professional development

Paid Promotion

The target audience will be as detailed in section 1.3, "Key audiences" ("who?"). The refinement of the target audience will consider the insights gained from the activities in WP1. The following channels will serve as the primary methods of dissemination:

Social Media Sponsored Campaigns: LinkedIn Paid Advertisement & Facebook Paid Ads

- **Google Search Paid Ads & Microsoft Paid Ads**
- **Specialised magazines or websites:** Promotional ads
- **Events and conferences:** Relevant ones for education and professional development

The success of the communication & dissemination efforts will be measured according to the established KPIs (Table 2).

1.4.5 Monitoring

Monitoring measures will be implemented to effectively track and evaluate the performance of communication and dissemination activities against the Plan, optimizing efforts and enhancing the promotion of short courses, aligned with the overarching objective of the SME4DD.

Monitoring of communication and dissemination activities will employ the following approaches:

Establishing a tracking system: Implementing a comprehensive system to monitor the different actions at various stages of the project, including the effectiveness of communication channels such as email and social media campaigns, outreach activities, and collect analytics.

Data analysis and insights: Regularly reviewing and analyzing data to gain valuable insights into the reach, engagement, and conversion rates of different communication efforts, particularly when targeting SME audiences with course promotion.

Gathering participant feedback: Employing feedback mechanisms to actively collect input on awareness, perception, and satisfaction levels regarding the promotion of short courses. This feedback will provide valuable information to improve future communication strategies.

Monitoring progress against the project proposal: Carefully compare the actual outcomes of communication activities with the defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) stated in the project proposal. This evaluation will help assess the impact and success of communication initiatives.

Continuous improvement: Utilizing the findings from the monitoring process and participant feedback to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to communication strategies and tactics. This iterative approach will ensure the continuous enhancement of short-course promotion efforts.

Table 2: SME4DD Communication Tool and Channels: Expected Impact and KPIs

Activity / Channel	Impact
CH1. SME4DD webpage	Visitors: 8,000/month
CH2. Social media	Impressions: 200,000/month No. posts using project-specific hashtags: 50/month No. projects mentions: 10/month
CH3. Paid advertisement on social media	Impressions: 300,000 No. of clicks 5,000/month
CH4. Paid search advertising on Google	Impressions: 300,000 No. of clicks 5,000/month
CH5. Event, conference, meetings	People reached through events: 3,000
CH6. Scouting and synergies with other	Successful partnership created: 5
CH7. Dissemination materials	Brochures, flyers, visuals:30 Videos: 10 Newsletters: 4/month Press releases: 8

1.4.6 Allocated resources per partners

The following table (Figure 7) summarises the planned purchases related to dissemination activities, as outlined in the project proposal. The assets have been split among the Partners as specified. This table provides a clear overview of the allocated resources and ensures equitable distribution of responsibilities.

Table 3: Purchases and equipment

Purchase costs (travel and subsistence, equipment and other goods works and services)			
Participant 1:	EITD		
Cost item name	Category	WP(s)	Explanations

Paid advertisement on social media	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Paid promotion on social media for a period of 3 years	
Paid Search Advertisement on Google	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Paid promotion on Google search for a period of 3 years	
Participant 3:	TAG			
Cost item name	Category	WP(s)	Explanations	
Online courses delivery platform	Other goods, works and services	WP2	Online service for the delivery of the online courses	
Video, photo and media services	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Services related to the production of media content (photos, videos, post-production) related to the events and communication activities	
Events costs	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Materials and consumables for the organisation of promotion and dissemination events	
Participant 4:	INRIA			
Cost item name	Category	WP(s)	Explanations	
Marketing and promotion	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Marketing and dissemination activities (online and physical)	
Participant 6:	DJN			
Cost item name	Category	WP(s)	Explanations	Cost (EUR)
Use of services required for marketing and	Other goods, works and services	WP3	Costs of scouting and channeling of potential SME participants into training, paid advertisements, creation of communication materials for reaching the	

dissemination activities			stakeholders/target groups. Dissemination of results at stakeholder events.
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1.5 Time ("when?")

EIT Digital will spearhead the coordination of the communication plan, utilising various channels such as the project's website, e-newsletters, and other online platforms. Content resulting from project outcomes and other activities will be published online as they become available.

Once the courses are launched and ready to be implemented, the organic and paid marketing efforts will follow a certain rhythm of dissemination. For the paid campaigns, a daily budget will be invested with the aim of generating awareness and leads interested in attending the courses. The campaigns will be activated at least five months before the start of the course, but the aim is to have a continuous course promotion, with campaigns visible throughout the project's lifetime.

The Gantt Chart for SME4DD Communication & Dissemination Tasks (Figure 6) presents a projected timeline and plan for effectively communicating and disseminating information related to the SME4DD project. It serves as a valuable guide for outlining the anticipated activities and milestones in promoting and raising awareness about the project and short courses, engaging with stakeholders, and collecting and sharing key updates and outcomes. However, it is important to note that this chart is a projection and should be adapted and adjusted as necessary to accommodate changes, unforeseen circumstances, and evolving project needs.

Figure 5: Gantt Chart SME4DD Communication & Dissemination Tasks 2023-2025

