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Transnational pilot – Final evaluation report



Deliverable overview

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI - Artificial Intelligence

CDR - Corporate Digital Responsibility

CE - Central Europe

COEUS - Corporate digital responsibility skills in central European Smart specialization

ESG - Environmental, Social, and Governance

SME – Small and medium Enterprise

A. Executive summary

This report presents the final evaluation of the transnational CDR pilot implemented within the COEUS project. It summarises the main findings from both pilot phases — Training of Trainers and Testing of CDR Training with SMEs — and documents the conclusions of the Monitoring Committee joint session held at Project Meeting 4 in Lublin.

The evaluation confirms the successful implementation of the pilot across partner territories and demonstrates measurable improvements in CDR-related competences among participating trainers and SMEs. Based on these findings, the report identifies key considerations to inform and support the next phase of project implementation.

B. Introduction

The COEUS project aims to strengthen Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) across Central Europe by enhancing the skills and awareness of SMEs and supporting responsible digital transformation. The transnational pilot represents a key step in this process, designed to test and refine the CDR upskilling and reskilling programme.

This document presents the final evaluation of the transnational pilot conducted under COEUS project. In line with the project Application Form, the deliverable provides a structured summary of the evaluation results and outlines recommendations to guide the subsequent phases of project implementation.

Building on the monitoring and evaluation framework established in Deliverable Transnational pilot monitoring, continuous improvement and evaluation system and on the interim results presented in Deliverable Transnational pilot Interim monitoring, evaluation and improvement report, this report consolidates the findings from both pilot phases - Training of Trainers and Testing of CDR Training with SMEs. It also formally documents the results of the joint monitoring session held at Project Meeting 4 in Lublin in December 2025, marking the conclusion of the partners' pilot actions, where project partners and stakeholders provided updates, comments, and feedback on the pilot results in each territory.

The purpose of this deliverable is to provide a structured summary of the interim and final evaluation results of the transnational pilot and to formulate recommendations for the subsequent phases of the project, in particular the development of the COEUS Strategy and the COEUS Action Plans.

The detailed quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey results are not reproduced in full within this main document. A comprehensive statistical and thematic analysis of:

- Impact Assessment conducted among SMEs, and
- Train the Trainer Evaluation and Implementation Outcomes assessment

is provided in **Annex 1 - Impact Assessment of the COEUS Corporate Digital Responsibility Training Programme for SME** and **Annex 2 - Train-the Trainer Evaluation and Implementation Outcomes Report - COEUS Corporate Digital Responsability Training Programme** to this deliverable. These annexed reports contain the full methodological description, data analysis, graphical representations, effect size calculations, and qualitative interpretation of open-ended responses.

This document therefore presents a consolidated overview of the key findings and conclusions emerging from those analyses, together with the outcomes of the monitoring joint session and their strategic implications.

Overall, the evaluation confirms that the transnational pilot was successfully implemented and achieved its core objectives across partner territories. The results demonstrate measurable improvements in CDR-related competences among trainers and SMEs and validate the relevance and applicability of the developed training framework. The evidence collected throughout both pilot phases provides a solid and reliable foundation for the preparation of the COEUS Strategy and the development of territorial Action Plans, ensuring informed, evidence-based and sustainable follow-up activities in the next phase of the project.

C. Overview of the Transnational Pilot

The transnational pilot was implemented and constituted the practical testing phase of the jointly developed CDR upskilling and reskilling programme for SMEs in Central Europe, as defined in the project.

The pilot was structured in two main components:

- **Training of Trainers**, aimed at establishing a transnational group of CDR trainers and strengthening their capacity to deliver the programme at territorial level;
- **Testing of the CDR Training with SMEs**, involving the implementation of training activities, workshops and one-to-one advisory support for selected SMEs in each partner territory.

The pilot was carried out in all participating regions in a coordinated manner, following a common methodological framework and monitoring system. Data collection and feedback mechanisms were integrated throughout the implementation phase in order to assess effectiveness, relevance and transferability.

The pilot corresponds to the jointly developed solution foreseen under the project outputs and serves as the tested basis for further strategic and territorial uptake

D. Consolidated Evaluation Results and Monitoring Committee Conclusions (PM4 – Lublin)

The evaluation of the transnational pilot followed the monitoring and evaluation framework developed for the project. Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to assess competence development, implementation experiences and the overall relevance of the training programme.

Quantitative data were gathered through entry and exit surveys completed by participating SMEs and trainers. These surveys allowed comparison of responses before and after the training programme in order to measure changes in CDR-related knowledge, awareness and practical readiness.

In addition, qualitative feedback was collected throughout the pilot implementation through discussions with trainers and SMEs, as well as through inputs gathered during local meetings with participating companies. The evaluation process was complemented by a joint Monitoring Committee session held at Project Meeting 4 in Lublin, where partners collectively reviewed the pilot results, exchanged experiences from different territories and validated the main conclusions of the evaluation.

Key Findings from the Evaluation

Following the completion of both pilot phases, the collected quantitative and qualitative data were consolidated and analysed in order to assess the overall impact, relevance and effectiveness of the transnational CDR training programme. The evaluation focused on measuring competence

development among SMEs, assessing trainer preparedness and implementation capacity, and identifying structural strengths and areas for improvement. The detailed analytical findings are presented in Annex 1 and Annex 2 while this document provides only a brief summary of the key conclusions emerging from the annexed analytical reports, while placing particular emphasis on the outcomes of the joint monitoring session held at Project Meeting 4 (M20) in Lublin. The session served as the formal platform for collective review, validation and strategic interpretation of the pilot results at partnership level.

Impact Assessment of the COEUS CDR for SME indicates measurable improvements in CDR competences among participating SMEs. Progress was particularly evident in cybersecurity awareness, regulatory understanding and digital governance practices. SMEs demonstrated an improved ability to identify digital risks, strengthen internal data protection procedures and better understand the strategic relevance of responsible digital transformation. Positive developments were also observed in sustainability-related knowledge, including increased awareness of energy efficiency and environmental aspects of digital technologies. While sustainability topics were initially perceived as less immediate compared to cybersecurity and compliance issues, post-training results indicate increased awareness of these dimensions.

Train-the Trainer Evaluation and Implementation Outcomes Report - COEUS CDR Training Programme assessment similarly reflects positive developments. Trainers reported strengthened confidence in delivering CDR content and improved ability to translate CDR principles into practical examples relevant for SMEs. The Training of Trainers phase strengthened the practical skills needed to work effectively with SMEs with different levels of digital maturity. Feedback collected during implementation further indicates that SMEs were engaged in the process and showed motivation to continue addressing CDR-related aspects beyond the pilot period.

Implementation Feedback and Areas for Improvement

At the same time, the evaluation process highlighted areas for further improvement. These include clearer prioritisation of key CDR messages within limited training time, stronger modularisation of content, additional practical tools such as templates and checklists, and enhanced sector-specific examples. Particular attention was drawn to the further development of Module 3 addressing digital sustainability, inclusion and accessibility, in order to ensure balanced coverage across all CDR dimensions. Improvements in accessibility and visual alignment between handbook content and presentation materials were also identified as relevant adjustments for future iterations.

Outcomes of the Monitoring Committee Joint Session (PM4 – Lublin)

During the Monitoring Committee joint session at Project Meeting 4 in Lublin, partners reviewed the progress of the Training of Trainers and the SME pilot implementation and exchanged country-specific experiences from both phases. The session focused on practical implementation aspects, lessons learned and feedback gathered throughout the pilot phase. This included inputs collected from trainers and SMEs, as well as qualitative insights obtained through local meetings with participating SMEs. These meetings had originally been planned for August 2025 but were rescheduled to November 2025 due to timeline adjustments during implementation.

The session provided an opportunity for collective reflection on the practical application of CDR principles within SME contexts. Partners confirmed strong interest of SMEs in cybersecurity, data protection and responsible AI topics, while also acknowledging the need to further strengthen awareness and practical guidance related to digital sustainability. Partners emphasised that SMEs differ in their level of digital maturity and that CDR content should be adapted to their specific needs. They also noted that training materials should remain practical, clear and flexible.

The discussions held during the Monitoring Committee joint session confirmed the overall positive outcomes of both pilot phases. Partners acknowledged that the training activities were successfully implemented across all participating territories and that the CDR framework proved relevant and applicable in different national and sectoral contexts. The feedback collected from trainers and SMEs

was consistent with the evaluation findings and reflected measurable progress in CDR-related competences, particularly in cybersecurity, regulatory awareness and digital governance.

The joint reflection further highlighted common patterns observed across countries, including strong SME interest in data protection and cybersecurity topics, as well as the need to strengthen practical guidance related to digital sustainability. Overall, the evaluation results and implementation feedback indicate that the transnational pilot achieved its intended objectives and provided a validated training framework tested in real SME environments.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations for the Next Phase

The final evaluation shows that the transnational CDR pilot was successfully implemented in all partner territories and that the developed training framework works in practice. The structured monitoring process enabled partners to assess the results consistently and to reflect jointly on the experiences gained during implementation.

The evaluation confirms measurable improvements in CDR-related competences among participating SMEs and increased confidence and preparedness among trainers. At the same time, the pilot identified several areas where the training approach can be further improved. These include clearer prioritisation of key messages within limited training time, a more modular and flexible structure of the content, and additional practical tools to support SMEs in applying CDR principles in their daily operations.

The more detailed findings from the pilot are particularly relevant for the preparation of territorial Action Plans, where concrete support measures and implementation formats will be defined. The results underline the importance of keeping the training practical, adaptable to SMEs with different levels of digital maturity, and supported by clear guidance on digital sustainability and responsible digital practices. **At the same time, the insights gathered during the pilot will support further improvement of the CDR upskilling and reskilling programme and the related handbook, ensuring that future implementation builds on the practical experiences and feedback collected during the pilot phase.**

At a broader level, the pilot confirms that CDR capacity building is relevant and applicable across different regional contexts. The tested training framework therefore provides a validated basis for the COEUS Strategy, ensuring that strategic directions are grounded in practical experience and real SME feedback. The results also support the preparation of territorial Action Plans, where concrete support measures will be further specified.