



# LEAD-AI

Empowering Adult Learners and Educators through AI:  
A Capacity-Building Initiative

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## Main objectives: what to expect from the LEAD-AI project?



**LEAD-AI (Empowering Adult Learners and Educators through AI: A Capacity-Building Initiative)** is a 30-month Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Adult Education bringing together organisations from France, Sweden, Germany, and Bulgaria.

The project responds to a growing European need: equipping adult learners and educators with practical, responsible, and inclusive **Artificial Intelligence (AI) competences** in the field of Generative AI (GenAI).

As digital transformation accelerates across sectors, AI literacy is becoming an essential skill for professionals, entrepreneurs, managers, and educators. LEAD-AI aims to bridge the gap between technological innovation and accessible adult learning opportunities.

## What does this mean in practice?



The LEAD-AI project will design and implement a structured, flexible, and practice-oriented capacity-building programme focused on the effective and responsible use of Generative AI in professional contexts.

The project is built on strong collaboration between higher education institutions, digital learning experts, and innovation consultants, combining academic excellence with real-world applicability.

Using blended learning approaches and AI-enhanced digital tools, LEAD-AI will deliver:

- A **methodological framework** for AI-based capacity building in adult education
- A **Train-of-Trainers (ToT) methodology and toolkit** to strengthen educators' competences
- A structured **6-module training programme** covering AI literacy, hands-on applications, ethical considerations, and responsible AI use
- Practical **case studies and real-world scenarios** tailored to entrepreneurs, managers, and adult learners
- An **AI-enhanced multilingual e-learning platform** supporting interactive, gamified, and self-paced learning.

## The first steps of the project



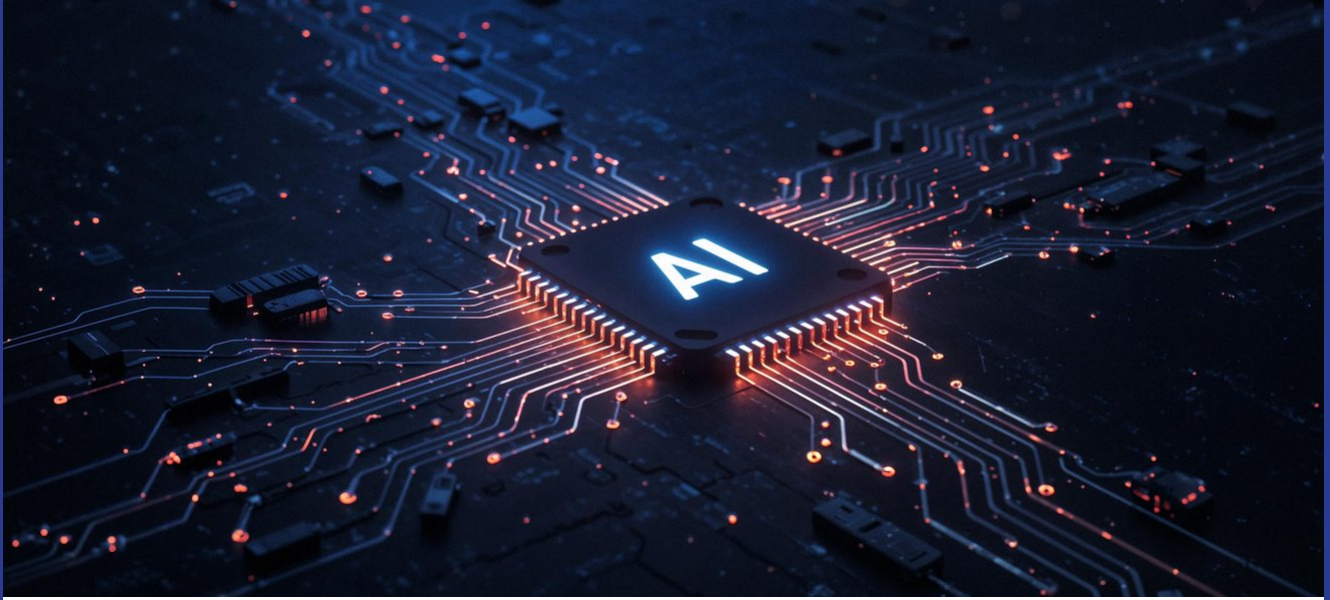
LEAD-AI has already taken its first concrete step: **a user needs survey** was conducted to better understand the expectations, experience levels, and training priorities of adult learners, educators, entrepreneurs, and professionals.

With more than **90 responses**, it provided valuable insights into:

- Current levels of AI familiarity and confidence
- Practical tasks where professionals want AI support
- Learning barriers such as time constraints and a lack of structured guidance
- Strong interest in hands-on, applied AI training
- A clear knowledge gap regarding legal and regulatory aspects (including the EU AI Act).

These results are now directly feeding into the design of the pedagogical framework and training modules. A dedicated article in this newsletter presents a deeper analysis of the survey findings.

## What to Expect in the Coming Months?



Building on this evidence-based starting point, the first phase of LEAD-AI will focus on:

**Finalising the Pedagogical Framework** that will define learning outcomes, competence levels, assessment strategies, and blended learning pathways tailored to different target groups.

**Designing the Train-of-Trainers Methodology** to develop a structured toolkit that helps educators integrate Generative AI responsibly and effectively into adult learning environments.

**Developing the First Training Modules** that will include practical, hands-on content covering:

- AI literacy foundations
- Applied Generative AI use cases
- Ethical and responsible AI use
- Trust, acceptance, and governance considerations.

**Beginning Development of the AI-Enhanced Learning Platform** by confirming the technical specifications and user experience design, and paying special attention to ensuring accessibility, interactivity, and usability for diverse adult learners.

## What's Next?



Within the first year, you can expect:

- Pilot testing opportunities
- Early previews of training modules
- Online platform prototype.

**LEAD-AI** is dedicated to progressively opening opportunities for participation, feedback, and collaboration as development advances.

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## Curious but Not Confident:

### What European Professionals Told Us About Their Real Relationship with AI



Everyone talks about AI. But who is actually using it, how are they learning, and what is holding them back? A new cross-European survey by the LEAD-AI project went beyond the headlines to ask 70 working professionals (educators, cybersecurity experts, entrepreneurs, managers, and administrative staff across Germany, Denmark, France, and beyond) about their lived experience with artificial intelligence. The results reveal a workforce that is enthusiastic, self-driven, and largely unsupported.

## Most People Are Curious - But Confidence Lags Behind

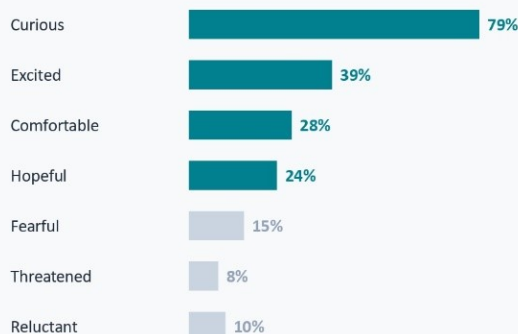
The dominant emotion professionals associate with AI is not fear - it is curiosity. A striking **79%** described themselves as **curious**, while 39% said they feel excited. Over half (51%) already use AI tools daily, and another 23% do so weekly. Yet when asked to rate their confidence, the average score landed at just 3.26 out of 5. Nearly one in four respondents (23%) said they feel only slightly confident or not confident at all. In other words: people are jumping in, but many are swimming without a lifeguard.

## Curious but Not Confident



High interest, moderate confidence, daily usage

### How do you feel about AI?



### Average Confidence

3.26 / 5

**23%**

slightly or not  
confident at all

### Professional AI Interest

**81%**

already using AI or  
eager to learn deeply

**51%** use AI daily **23%** weekly

# The DIY AI Generation

Perhaps the most striking finding is how people learned to use AI in the first place: **91% said they taught themselves by experimenting on their own**. Only one in five (20%) received any training from their employer. Just 14% learned from colleagues, and 31% turned to online courses and tutorials. The message is clear: professionals are not waiting for their organisations to catch up. They are figuring it out alone: trial and error, YouTube videos, late nights with ChatGPT. This is remarkable initiative, but it also means many are building habits without structured guidance on accuracy, ethics, or best practices.

## The Self-Taught Generation



How professionals learned (or are learning) to use AI



### Other Learning Paths

- 31%** Online courses & tutorials
- 20%** Employer-provided training
- 14%** Learned from colleagues
- 4%** No training / rarely use

*Organisations are leaving professionals to figure AI out on their own.*

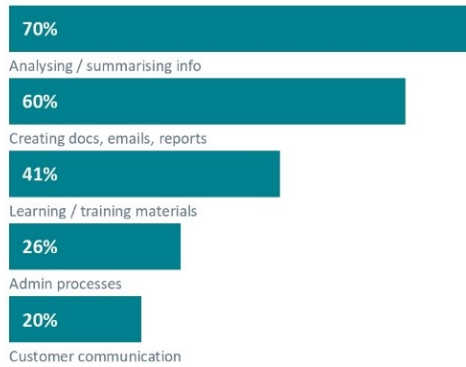
## What People Actually Use AI For - And Want to Learn

Respondents are not using AI for exotic, cutting-edge applications. The most common tasks are thoroughly practical: analysing and summarising information (cited by 70% of respondents), creating documents, emails, or reports (60%), and building learning or training materials (41%). When asked which skills they most want to develop, the top three were AI for productivity and automation (53%), prompt engineering (47%), and evaluating AI accuracy and reliability (40%). These are professionals who want to work smarter, not just differently.

# What People Use AI For & Want to Learn

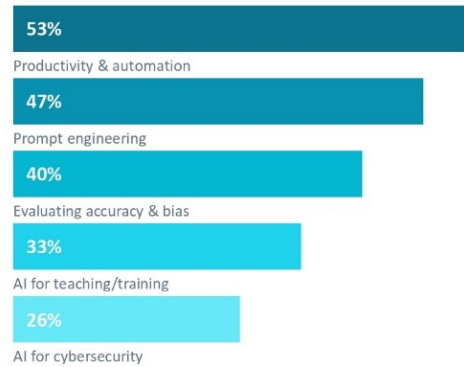
## Top tasks for AI support

(select up to 3)



## Skills people want to develop

(select up to 3)



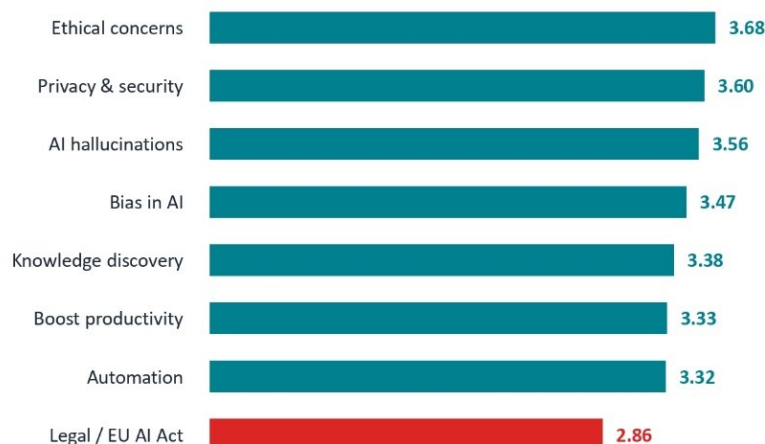
Professionals want practical, immediately applicable skills, not abstract theory.

## The Regulatory Blind Spot

Self-assessed knowledge across AI topics was moderate overall, averaging between 3.3 and 3.7 out of 5. But one area stood out as a clear weak point: **legal and regulatory knowledge (including the EU AI Act) scored just 2.86 out of 5**, the lowest of any topic tested. With significant AI regulation now being enforced across Europe, this gap is both timely and concerning. Professionals know about hallucinations and bias in the abstract, but many have little understanding of the rules that will govern how AI can be used in their workplaces.

## Where the Knowledge Gaps Are

Self-assessed awareness across AI topics (1–5 scale)



⚠ Biggest gap: Legal / regulatory knowledge (EU AI Act) — avg. 2.86/5

## Trust Is the Real Barrier

When asked the open-ended question "What is the single biggest thing you need to feel confident using AI?" the answers were candid and often personal. Some wanted technical reassurance: "A reliable way to detect hallucinations." Others needed institutional clarity: "My employer must establish a policy so I know which tools I am allowed to use." Several were concerned about data: "Knowing where the input data is stored and how it's used." And some spoke to a deeper aspiration: "That it's helping me improve my own skills or cognition, not replacing them."

For managers and entrepreneurs specifically, 60% named a lack of skills as the biggest organisational obstacle to AI adoption, followed by resistance to change and legal uncertainty (both 30%). Cybersecurity professionals flagged the reliability of AI outputs (60%) and concerns about legal admissibility (53%), understandable in a field where wrong answers can have serious consequences.

## What Kind of Training Do People Want?

When it comes to learning, professionals showed a strong preference for **interactive online courses** (chosen by half of respondents), followed by extra time for hands-on practice (30%) and face-to-face training (29%). Access to specific tools and templates also ranked highly. While formal accreditation was not the primary driver for most respondents, certificates still hold value as a way to recognize participation and achievement. Overall, participants were more strongly motivated by gaining practical skills they can apply immediately than by earning credentials alone. The takeaway? People are looking first and foremost for relevant, hands-on learning, with certification serving as a meaningful complement to that experience.

## What People Need to Feel Confident



Five themes from open-ended responses + top organisational barriers



Top barriers for managers & entrepreneurs:

**60%** lack of skills **30%** resistance to change **30%** legal uncertainty

Preferred learning format: **Interactive online course (50%)** | Practice time (30%) | Face-to-face (29%) | Certificates: mostly not important

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## What This Means for Europe's AI Skills Gap

This survey paints a picture of a motivated but under-served workforce. Professionals across very different sectors (from classrooms to forensics labs to small business offices) are actively engaging with AI. But they are doing so largely without formal training, clear workplace policies, or structured support. The opportunity is enormous: with the right programme (hands-on, modular, and role-specific) these professionals can move from curious experimenters to confident, responsible AI users.



- 01** Professionals are curious and actively using AI, but confidence lags behind enthusiasm — average 3.26/5.
- 02** 91% are self-taught. Organisations are not providing the structured training people need and want.
- 03** The biggest knowledge gap is around AI regulation (EU AI Act) — just as new laws take effect across Europe.
- 04** Trust, privacy, and practical use cases are what professionals need. They want hands-on, interactive learning.

**LEAD-AI** is building a blended, modular AI training programme for adult learners across Europe, informed directly by these findings.

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The LEAD-AI project is building exactly that. Using these survey results as a foundation, the consortium is developing a blended AI training programme covering fundamentals, prompt engineering, ethical use, and sector-specific applications, all hosted on an open-access e-learning platform. Because the real question is no longer whether professionals want to use AI.

***They already do. The question is whether we'll help them do it well.***

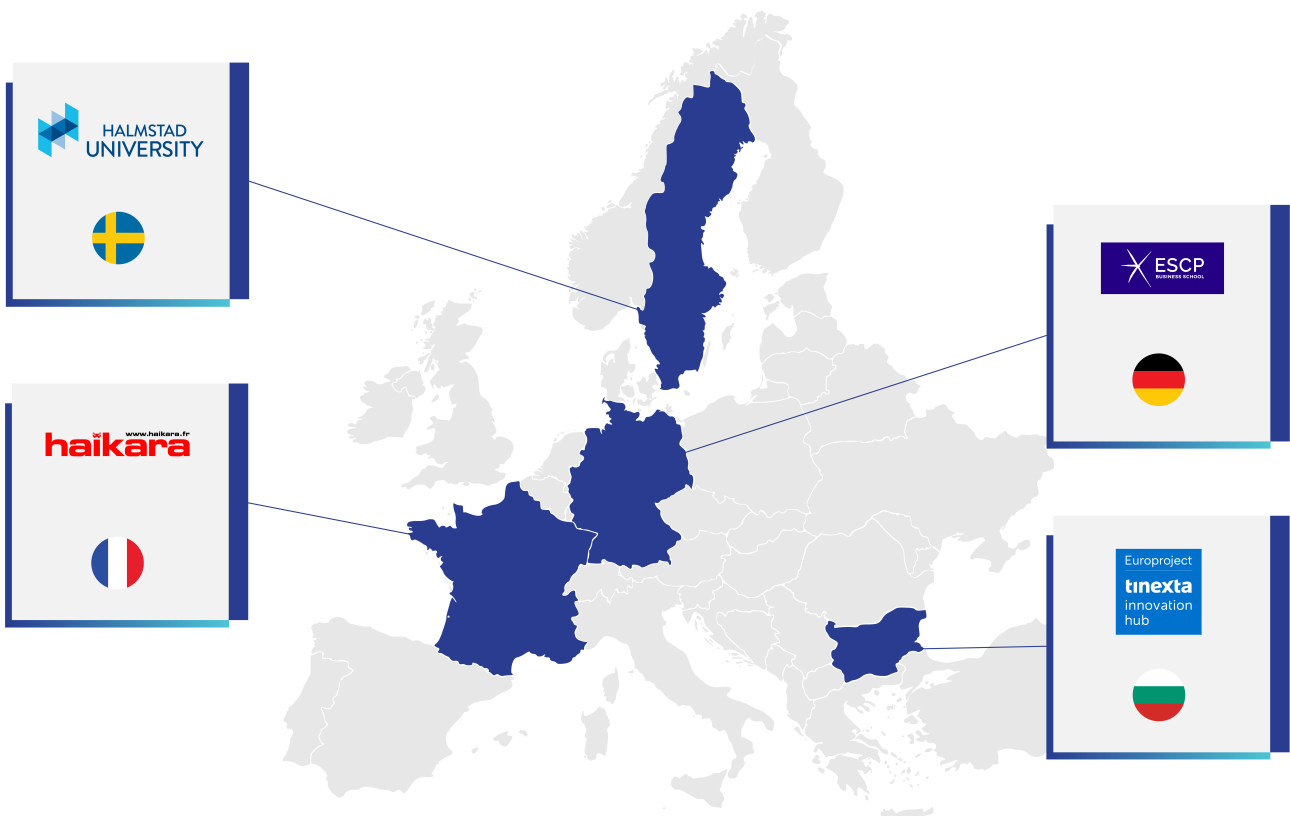
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## The LEAD-AI Consortium

**LEAD-AI** brings together 4 complementary organisations from across Europe, uniting expertise in AI research, adult education, business and executive training, digital innovation, and project dissemination. This cross-sector collaboration ensures that the project combines academic excellence, practical application, and inclusive digital learning design.

**Discover more about the consortium on our website:**

[Website](#)



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## The Kick-off meeting in Paris



The Kick-off meeting of the LEAD-AI was organised on 20–21 November 2025 in Paris, France, and hosted by the project coordinator Haikara. It was an important opportunity for all partners to discuss their future work and expectations for the project implementation. The meeting was dedicated to presenting in detail the project objectives, planned activities and the roles of each partner organisation. Particular attention was given to the coordination of the work packages, covering project management, the development of the pedagogical framework and methodology, the design of the Generative AI training programme, and the creation of an AI-enhanced online learning platform tailored to adult education and professional development contexts.



Workshops and thematic discussions were organised for each work package to enable in-depth exchanges on the project goals and the ways to achieve them. Partners aligned on the implementation timeline, agreed on internal communication tools and documentation procedures, and initiated work on needs analysis, target group validation and performance indicators. The exchanges also allowed participants to reflect on existing AI training practices, identify current gaps in adult education provision, and explore learner-centred approaches adapted to diverse professional backgrounds.

The richness of these discussions laid strong foundations for smooth coordination and intensive collaboration in the months and years to come.

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## LEAD-AI is now online

The active engagement of stakeholders, adult learners, educators and professionals is essential for the success of the LEAD-AI project. For this reason, the consortium is ensuring strong and continuous online visibility from the very beginning of the project.

The official LEAD-AI website has been launched to provide up-to-date information on the project objectives, partnership, work progress and upcoming activities. The platform will progressively host publicly accessible resources, project news, event announcements and key results developed throughout the 30-month implementation period.

In parallel, LEAD-AI social media channels are active to share insights on AI in adult education, project milestones, opportunities for participation and highlights from consortium activities. These channels aim to build a growing European community interested in AI literacy, digital skills development and innovative adult learning practices.

Through regular updates, newsletters and interactive communication, LEAD-AI will ensure transparent dissemination of its activities and open access to its outcomes.

**Follow us to stay informed and be part of the LEAD-AI community.**



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