LIVING-IN.EU

Work Package 1, Milestone 1: Needs assessment of the Capacity building programme

REPORT

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Introduction to this report

The *Living-in.EU[1]* "Join, Boost, Sustain" Declaration invites European decision-makers of EU cities and communities to bring the economic and social benefits of the digital transformation to all local communities and implement an inclusive digital Europe, with powerful digital services, technologies, infrastructures and skills.

The Go Li.EU project contributes to make Living-in.eu a platform for knowledge exchange, capacity building and mutual learning on the digital transformations of European cities, communities and regions.

As a first milestone, the project identifies the capacity-building needs of all actors engaged in the community. This report provides an analysis of the capacity building needs of Living-in.EU signatories and supporters. In particular, the results of a workshop held on 7 February 2023 are reported and analysed. During the workshop, ENoLL, leader of the capacity building activities in Go Li.EU, coordinated a structured collection of feedback and input from the participants, including various signatories and supporters, as well as other stakeholders belonging to the wider community. Based on these, Go Li.EU will put in place the next steps of the capacity building programme, as described in "Methodology".

Living-in.EU Capacity Building Programme in a nutshell

The starting point for Go Li.EU capacity building activities is to identify the needs of all actors engaged in the community. To match these needs, as a next step partners will detect and collect capacity building tools from existing projects and initiatives the consortium partners and their members are involved in (e.g. DT4REGIONS, AI Watch, DG DIGIT Interoperability Academy, CommuniCity, DS4SSCC, etc.) aligned to the Living-in.EU objectives and therefore contributing to the digital 'maturity' of our community. In addition, ad-hoc materials and activities will be developed to address those needs that are not yet addressed by other initiatives. All capacity-building materials will be made available through the Living-in.EU platform.

Specific objectives of the Capacity Building Programme:
- To ensure mutual learning through interactive learning sessions for Living-in.EU signatories.
- To enrich the community by sharing content related to good practices and use cases.
- To increase the uptake of cross-domain interoperable digital solutions (local data platforms, AI-powered local digital twins)
- To enhance the widespread uptake of easy-to-use digital assets.
- To develop and disseminate capacity building materials on digital technologies, potential use and best practices from successful digital transformation in cities.

Concrete outcomes of the Living-in.EU Capacity Building Programme:
- 4 video webinars on AI & big data technologies.
- 4 workshops sharing best practices (aligned to Open Living Lab Days ENoLL Flagship event).
- 2 interactive sessions for debating digital transformation within public administration.

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[1] http://living-in.eu/

- 4 open debates between the community of the Action-oriented Task Force on Social Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) of ENoLL, cities and regions on the future of AI & big data in public management.
- 2 training sessions on funding opportunities (e.g., access to the Digital Europe programme, optimisation of synergies between EU, national and local funds, and/or how to strengthen investment in local digital transformation from EU funds and programmes).

Methodology

Steps of the methodology for Capacity Building Needs Assessment

Step 1: Review the Needs Identified in Previous Projects and Workshops

The first step is to review the needs identified in the DT4Regions project and previous Living-in.EU workshops. This review involves taking stock of the results of these projects and workshops and compiling a list of the identified needs. These needs include skills gaps, lack of resources, inadequate infrastructure, or any other challenges that were identified.

Step 2: Create an Interactive Exercise to Validate Needs

The next step is to create an interactive exercise that helps to validate the needs identified in step one. This exercise took place during the Living-in.EU *Education & Capacity Building Workshop: Needs assessment of the Capacity building programme*, on the 7th of February (see following paragraphs). The goal of this exercise was to get feedback from stakeholders to ensure that the needs identified in step one are still accurate and relevant.

Step 3: Identify New Needs

The third step is to identify new needs that were not previously identified in step one. This involves brainstorming sessions with stakeholders and additional data collection activities. This exercise took place during the workshop on the 7th of February. The goal is to ensure that all relevant needs are identified so that the capacity building program can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the target population.

Step 4: Analyze Data and Prioritize Needs

The fourth step is to analyze the data collected in steps one and two, as well as any new data collected in step three. The goal is to identify the most pressing needs that must be addressed in the capacity building programme. Once these needs have been identified, they should be prioritized based on their importance and feasibility.

Step 5: Develop a Capacity Building Programme

The final step is to develop a capacity building programme that addresses the needs identified in steps one through four. This programme will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the target group of Go Li.EU and should be designed to address the most pressing needs first. The programme should include clear objectives, activities, timelines, and measures of success to ensure that progress can be tracked and evaluated. In particular, the capacity building programme will be structured as described in the next steps section (below).

Purpose and scope of the Education & Capacity Building Workshop

On 7 February 2023, the Living-in.EU[2] **Education & Capacity Building Workshop: Needs assessment of the Capacity building programme** took place online via Microsoft Teams.

The workshop was meant to present the *Work Plan of the Education & Capacity building sub-group* for 2023 and to scope the needs of the wider Living-in.EU community in terms of improving digital skills on digital transformation.
This workshop aimed to analyse the learning needs from Living-in.EU signatories and supporters and the broader Living-in.EU community.

The event was hosted via the online platform Microsoft Teams and gathered 41 participants from municipalities of European cities and regions, as well as policy makers, academia, and industries. Among those registered, there were 12 signatories and 15 supporters of the Living-In.EU declaration. Moreover, around 20 of the registrants represented cities, 7 regions and 3 countries. As part of the workshop, a 1-hour interactive session was held to enable the participants to exchange their needs in terms of trainings in the digital transformation field, focusing on 1) *Challenges, Fields and Barriers for deploying Digital Transformation*, 2) *Capacity Building Topics*, 3) *Connection with other initiatives*. The inputs of the participants were collected via a Miro board.

Review of the needs already identified: a summary of the results of the DT4Regions and Living-in.EU Capacity Building Workshop

On 31 March 2022, the DT4REGIONS and Living-in.eu joint Capacity Building Program held an interactive session to gather feedback and insights from participants on their learning offer. The event gathered 50 participants from municipalities of European cities and regions, as well as policy makers, academia, and industries. In the first exercise, participants identified four main challenges: digitizing internal administrative processes, enabling new digital government practices, developing and using data platforms in cities, and designing and delivering digital public services. Other important challenges were identified as the ethical use of data, open source versus vendor lock-in, public procurement processes, and the ability to carry out public management using and analyzing data for decision making. The most relevant fields of work identified were digital twins, cybersecurity, data spaces, and digital identity. The silo culture, budgetary issues, and access to a large amount of data were identified as the most significant barriers to deploying AI. The second exercise identified data ethics and privacy issues as the topics that should be prioritized for the Capacity Building Program, along with topics reflecting the main fields of work identified in the first exercise. The participants suggested various learning formats, including mastermind groups, demo days, competitions, and "fuck-up nights".

Interactive Session: Scoping the Capacity Building Needs of the Living-in.EU Community

Challenges, Fields of work and Barriers to deploying Digital Transformation

Block 1: Challenges

- Challenges related to the design and delivery of digital public services and the ethical use of data, but also to making local government more open and transparent.
- Main challenge to working with big data volumes is considered not to be at the technical level, but rather at the social level.
- Participants added financial issues, engaging citizenship, and training for local government employees as missing elements.
- Most voted challenges were training for local government employees and development and use of data platforms in cities.

Block 2: Fields of work (topics)

- Digital Twins, data spaces, and data ethics are essential for regions and cities.
- Participants added supporting capacities for groups out of the usage of Artificial Intelligence processes, interoperability, smart cities, and public procurement clauses.
- Most voted fields of work were data spaces and digital twins, sustainable approach for capacity building tools, urban platforms, data ethics, and public procurement clauses.

Block 3: Barriers to deploying digital transformation

- Silo culture, lack of data standards and quality, expertise in technical and procurement processes, prevented access to a large amount of data, and budgetary issues were the most relevant barriers.
- Participants added reluctance to change, language issues, bureaucracy, and security issues as missing elements.
- Most voted barriers were the silo culture, budgetary issues, and lack of a culture of open innovation processes in the public sector.

Capacity Building Topics:

- Participants suggested specific capacity building topics for legal, finance, and technical sub-groups:.
  - Legal: GDPR, intellectual property rights, and public procurement laws.
  - Finance: funding sources, public-private partnership, and innovative financing mechanisms.
  - Technical: Digital Twins, data spaces, and Minimum Interoperable Mechanisms (MIMs).

Other initiatives to link up with:

- DG DIGIT Interoperability Academy
- European DIGITAL SME Alliance (as representative of ICT European SMEs) to comply with co-creation provisions and requirements
- Pact for Skills (Network/WG)

- 5G smart communities - CSA platform and gathering good practices
- DEP newly funded projects
- Universities - RPO's in general
- Erasmus+ (Strategic) Partnerships
- Standardisation - https://www.etsi.org/; https://www.3gpp.org/about-us
- Universities - RPO's in general
- trebag.hu
- Erasmus+ (Strategic) Partnerships
- European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)
- 100CNC
- LORDIMAS Assessment tool
- Linked with M&M Subgroup

Implications

The workshop brought out crucial insights on the challenges, field of work, and barriers to be addressed for successful implementation of smart city initiatives. The participants have confirmed the significance of developing and utilizing data platforms, designing public digital services, engaging citizens, and ensuring ethical use of data. Additionally, the last workshop has highlighted the need for training local government employees, promoting innovative financial approaches, strategic and entrepreneurial mindsets, and thinking out of the box.

The field of work that emerged from the workshops indicates that **Digital Twins** and **Data spaces** are critical topics, followed by **procurement**, **digital identity**, and **data ethics**. The last workshop has added new fields of work such as developing **urban data platforms**, ensuring **interoperability**, **sustainability**, and **social inclusiveness**.

The most significant barrier identified by the participants was the silo culture, followed by lack of culture of open innovation processes, budgetary constraints, and lack of data standards. The last workshop has highlighted new barriers like citizens' acceptance and lack of awareness of existing digital solutions.

The last workshop has shown a clear continuity with the previous one, while also bringing new elements to be integrated into the capacity building programme and tools that will be put in place in the upcoming months.

Main takeaways

Overall, the interactive session was an insightful and productive way to identify the capacity building needs of the Living-in.EU Community in deploying digital transformation. It is important to address these challenges, fields of work, and barriers in order to achieve effective digital transformation and ensure that the community is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to keep up with the fast-changing digital landscape. Main takeaways are:

- Break up the silo culture and try to support municipalities not only to look at the technical perspective, but also at the skills and capacities, and the way they work.

- Translate the technical language and the technicalities into an approach that can be understood by everyone.
- Work with the citizen centric approach, focusing on the users and their needs in each phase of the design process.

Next steps

The workshop of the 7th of February 2023 was important to assess the needs to be further addressed and developed in the Living-In.EU movement. It is critical to address the identified barriers and leverage the identified fields of work to accelerate the transformation of cities into more efficient, resilient, and livable spaces.

Next steps will be structured at two levels. On the one hand, ENoLL will organise Capacity Building activities exclusively dedicated to the participants of the sub-group, i.e. the signatories who decide to take part in it. On the other hand, for those who do not want or cannot be part of the sub-group, various activities of the Capacity Building Programme powered by the Go Li.EU EU-funded project will be envisaged, as it follows (the structure might change during the drafting phase):

1. Identifying Stakeholders: The first section will provide an overview of all stakeholders engaged in the Living-in.EU community. This includes project partners, community members, in particular signatory cities, regions, member states, as well as supporting companies, research institutes, universities, associations, and any other relevant actors.
2. Reporting Needs Assessment: The next section will report the results of the needs assessment to determine the current level of digital maturity of the Living-in.EU community, and it will be linked to MS1 (*this document*).
3. Inventory of Relevant Materials: The project team will identify and make an inventory of all existing capacity building tools and materials that are aligned with the objectives of Living-in.EU, which are being used in other projects and initiatives, such as DT4REGIONS. The inventory will be used to identify materials that can be adapted for use in Living-in.EU (*November 2023*).
4. Matching Needs to Existing Materials: The project team will match the needs identified in the needs assessment to the inventory of relevant materials to determine which needs can be addressed by using existing materials (*Q1-Q2 of 2024*).
5. Development of Ad-Hoc Materials and Activities: Based on the needs identified in the needs assessment that cannot be met by existing materials, the project team will develop ad-hoc materials and activities. These ad-hoc materials and activities will be developed in alignment with Living-in.EU objectives and contribute to the digital maturity of the Living-in.EU community (*ongoing*).
6. Availability of Materials and Activities: All identified materials and activities will be made available on the Living-in.EU platform. The project team will ensure that the materials are accessible to all stakeholders in the Living-in.EU community (*ongoing*).