

DIGITopen – 1st Press Release

Celebrating One Year of the DIGITopen Erasmus+ Project!

A Look Back to December 2023: Launching DIGITopen

Bridging the Digital Skills Gap for Third-Sector and MSME Organizations

The DIGITopen project was launched in November 2023 with a mission to empower Europe's third-sector organizations and MSMEs by addressing their digital skills gap. These organizations, including volunteer groups, social enterprises, cooperatives, and small businesses, often face challenges in adopting digital technologies due to limited funding, low income, and a lack of technical expertise.

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, DIGITopen supports digital transformation through open-source tools, aligning with Europe's strategy for digital independence. By prioritizing accessible vocational education and training (VET), the project promotes continuous learning and equips organizations with essential digital skills.

DIGITopen provides training and access to innovative open-source tools, enabling third-sector organizations and MSMEs to remain competitive, efficient, and impactful within their communities. This initiative will be carried out until February 2026 and it represents a crucial step toward reducing the digital divide and fostering a sustainable, digitally integrated future across the EU.

Key Objectives:

- **Enhancing Digital Skills:** Equip staff with competencies in management, accounting, marketing, education, and internationalization through tailored open-source software.
- **Strengthening Capacity:** Build MSME and third-sector capabilities to meet digital demands while fostering collaboration with VET providers.
- **Expanding Educational Resources:** Enrich training materials for VET providers to develop future-proof digital skills in the workforce.

To achieve these goals, DIGITopen develops structured guidelines for organizations transitioning to open-source digital solutions while nurturing collaborative and autonomous learning communities. The project also strengthens the role of VET providers by offering targeted training that addresses the specific digital needs of third-sector organizations.

DIGITopen Joint Research Report: OSS Training Needs Across Europe

DIGITopen conducted an empirical study across six countries—France, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Poland—to evaluate the use and readiness of Open-Source Software (OSS) among MSMEs and third-sector organizations, along with their training needs.

Key Findings:

- Training needs vary by country:
 - **Italy:** Marketing, Communication, Management
 - **France:** Cybersecurity, Project Management
 - **Estonia:** Sales, Marketing
 - **Spain:** Marketing, CRM
 - **Greece:** HR, Digital Fundraising
 - **Poland:** Increased OSS interest despite reliance on proprietary software

Barriers Identified:

- Lack of awareness about OSS benefits
- Shortage of technical skills
- Difficulty aligning OSS solutions with organizational objectives

Preferred training methods include interactive tutorials, e-learning modules, and hands-on workshops, highlighting the need for flexible and engaging learning approaches.

The **DIGITopen Joint Research Report** is available for free download in English [here](#).

DIGITopen Toolkit

The DIGITopen Toolkit is an innovative resource designed to empower educators, trainers, and organizations by fostering digital and entrepreneurial skills for learners of all ages.

This comprehensive guide includes actionable strategies to enhance learning experiences and build essential competencies for the digital era using open-source software. Modules focus on tools like Tryton ERP, Odoo, NextCloud, Joomla, Omnisend, ProjectLibre, and Bitwarden, covering areas such as event management, marketing, communication, project management, sales, and digital security.

Features:

- Accessible training resources for VET providers
- Practical strategies for end-user education

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- Tools for MSMEs and TSOs to implement solutions with minimal technical expertise

The **DIGITopen Toolkit** is available for free download in English and national languages [here](#).

Next Steps

Launch of the DIGITopen MOOC

A free online course hosted on an open eLearning platform, the DIGITopen MOOC will equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to leverage open-source technologies for efficient management of third-sector and MSME organizations. VET providers across Europe will have the opportunity to test, adapt, and integrate these materials into their training programs, tailored to meet local and national needs.

Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)

A dedicated tool aligned with the DIGITopen Toolkit and the DigComp frameworks will be developed to help organizations and individuals assess their current digital competencies. This tool will support strategic planning for professional development, ensuring alignment with individual goals and organizational objectives.

Guidelines for VET Providers

Comprehensive guidelines will be created to help VET providers adapt their training programs to labor market needs. These guidelines will increase the flexibility and accessibility of vocational training for working-age adults, empowering them to manage the digital transition effectively. By fostering digital transformation, the guidelines will enable third-sector organizations and MSMEs to build a modern, professional, and dynamic workforce.

For more information about DIGITopen, please visit our [Website](#) or our [LinkedIn page](#).

