

Project Code:	DRP0200034	Document type:	Output O 2.4
Project start date:	1.1.2024	Project end date:	30.6.2026

Danube4SEecosystem

**Enhancing the development of Social Economy by
engaging Local Public Authorities in the Social Enterprises
supporting Ecosystem for a more inclusive Labor Market
in the Danube Region**

Output 2.4

**Co-designed D4SEE Capacity Building Programme for sustainable &
resilient SEs and LPAs, based on microlearning approach, tested
and improved into validation**

Due date of deliverable:	Actual submission date:
31. 12. 2025	9. 2. 2026

Document Control Sheet

Specific Objective number	SO2
Specific Objective title	Enhancing Resilience, Innovation Management Knowledge & Skills of SE Ecosystem in the Danube Region
Activity number	2.3
Activity title	Capacity-building activities for D4SEE entities
Output number	O 2.4
Output title	Co-designed D4SEE Capacity Building Programme for sustainable & resilient SEs and LPAs, based on microlearning approach, tested and improved into validation
Dissemination level	Public
Main author	Aneta Sulcova (PP-5 RERA)
Contributors	Iva Cerna (PP-5 RERA), Zdenek Hanzal (PP-5 RERA)
Quality Assurance	Ionela Postole (SMRDA)

Versioning and Contribution History

Version	Date	Author/Editor /Reviewer	Contributors	Description/Comments
_v01	28. 11. 2025	Zdenek Hanzal	Iva Cerna, Aneta Sulcova	First draft
_v02	14. 1. 2026	Aneta Sulcova	Iva Cerna	Second draft
_v03	27. 1. 2026	Aneta Sulcova		Third draft
_final	9. 2. 2026	Aneta Sulcova		Final

Document last saved on	9. 2. 2026
-------------------------------	------------

List of Abbreviations

AF	Application Form
AN	Activity Number
CBP	Capacity-Building Programme
DR	Danube region
D4SEE	Danube4SEecosystem
LPA	Local Public Authority
SE	Social Enterprises

Content

Document Control Sheet	1
Versioning and Contribution History	1
List of Abbreviations.....	2
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	6
Target Groups	9
Motivation and expectations of target groups	9
Intensity and patterns of engagement	10
Preferred activity formats	10
Thematic focus and learning content	11
Access pathways and engagement dynamics	11
Influence of institutional and legislative context	12
Implications for replication and programme refinement.....	13
Objectives of the CBP	14
Expected competencies for SEs.....	14
Expected competencies for LPAs	14
Expected competencies for mentors and ecosystem actors	14
Cross-cutting objectives.....	15
Reflection	16
What worked well in the pilot phase	17
What were the main challenges and limitations	18
Validated structure of the Capacity-Building Programme	20
Train-the-mentors	21
Role in the programme.....	21
What the pilot confirmed	21
Key design features.....	21
Mentoring sessions	22
Role in the programme.....	22
What the pilot confirmed	22
Key design features.....	23

Training sessions	24
Role in the programme.....	24
What the pilot confirmed	24
Key design features derived from the pilot phase.....	25
Individual micro-learning online trainings	25
Role in the programme.....	25
Function confirmed through the pilot phase	26
Key design features derived from the pilot phase.....	26
Networking	27
Role in the programme.....	27
Function confirmed through the pilot phase	27
Key design features derived from the pilot phase.....	27
Mechanisms of change	29
Mechanism 1: Shared orientation as a precondition for engagement	29
Mechanism 2: Facilitation translates learning into applied capacity.....	30
Mechanism 3: Differentiated learning pathways reflect real roles of actors	31
Mechanism 4: Mentors as an intermediary layer ensuring coherence	31
Mechanism 5: Modularity and selectivity support sustainability.....	32
Replicability and transferability	33
Conclusion and recommendations	35

Executive Summary

This output presents the validated D4SEE Capacity-Building Programme (CBP), co-designed and tested during the pilot phase to support sustainable and resilient SEs and LPAs. Building on a microlearning-based approach, the programme was developed and refined through practical implementation across participating countries, with the aim of strengthening cooperation, capacity development and context-sensitive engagement within local social economy ecosystems.

The pilot phase demonstrated that CBP in the field of social economy does not function effectively as a linear sequence of training activities. Instead, engagement and learning were strongest where facilitated training sessions, mentoring-related support and self-paced digital learning were combined flexibly and aligned with the roles, needs and capacities of different actors. SEs, LPAs and ecosystem intermediaries engaged with the programme in differentiated ways, reflecting distinct institutional positions, learning logics and constraints.

Based on these findings, the CBP was validated as a modular, multi-component framework designed to support flexible engagement rather than a fixed or linear model. Experience from the pilot phase showed that replicability depends less on transferring individual activities and more on preserving the underlying programme logic, particularly the combination of facilitation, mentoring and flexible learning pathways that allow participants to engage according to their roles and capacities.

The analysis further highlighted the central role of facilitation capacity and intermediary actors in enabling effective use of programme resources. Where mentoring and facilitation were actively embedded, programme components were more likely to function as a coherent offer rather than as parallel activities. In this context, the D4SEE digital learning platform emerged as a key transversal element of the programme, supporting continuity between activities, enabling participants to reconnect with learning content over time, and strengthening sustainability beyond individual events.

Overall, the validated D4SEE CBP offers a robust yet adaptable framework for supporting cooperation and capacity development within social economy ecosystems. Its replication requires attention to facilitation, contextual adaptation and the integrative use of digital infrastructure, rather than the replication of predefined activity sequences. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this output translate pilot findings into system-level implications relevant for future implementation, policy and ecosystem stakeholders, and longer-term sustainability beyond the project lifecycle. To support sustainability and long-term impact, the D4SEE digital training platform will remain available for an additional five years after project completion, ensuring continued access to the CBP resources.

Introduction

This output consolidates the design of the D4SEE CBP based on insights gained during the pilot phase. The programme addresses the capacity-building needs of SEs and LPAs, while recognising the enabling role of mentors, experts and other ecosystem actors in supporting learning, facilitation and cooperation.

It builds directly on the pilot implementation documented in Output 2.3, which tested the programme components across participating countries between May and December 2025. The programme was co-designed and iteratively refined during this phase, incorporating feedback from project partners, mentors and participants across different national and institutional contexts.

While Output 2.3 focused on describing and analysing how the pilot was implemented, this output shifts the focus towards validation. Its purpose is to synthesise pilot findings, consolidate the programme structure and articulate the design principles and mechanisms that were observed to support effective functioning, replication and longer-term use beyond the pilot phase.

The pilot experience showed that capacity building in the field of social economy does not function effectively as a series of isolated training activities. Instead, engagement and learning were strongest where different formats—facilitated training, mentoring-related support and self-paced digital learning—were combined flexibly and aligned with participants' roles, needs and capacities. These observations informed the validation of the programme as an integrated system rather than a fixed or linear learning pathway.

Based on this experience, the D4SEE CBP is presented in this output as a modular and multi-component framework designed to support differentiated engagement while maintaining a shared conceptual and methodological foundation. The validated design reflects how the programme was used in practice during the pilot phase and provides a reference structure for future adaptation and replication in diverse institutional and ecosystem contexts.

Based on the pilot experience, the programme is validated in this output as an integrated system that enables differentiated engagement, contextual adaptation and selective participation while maintaining a shared conceptual and methodological framework.

The validated D4SEE CBP consists of several interrelated components, each fulfilling a specific role within the overall learning and support logic:

- Train-the-mentors activities, which prepare mentors and experts to act as facilitators and multipliers within the programme and ensure coherence across mentoring practices.

- Mentoring sessions, which support mentors and experts in working with programme content and the digital learning platform within their own mentoring and support practices.
- Training sessions, which function as a key entry point to the CBP, providing orientation, awareness-raising and an initial framework for further learning for SEs and LPAs.
- Individual micro-learning online trainings, delivered through the D4SEE digital learning platform, which enable self-paced, modular learning aligned with differentiated learning pathways for SEs and LPAs.
- Networking and peer exchange, embedded across facilitated activities, supporting interaction, dialogue and relationship-building within social economy ecosystems.

These components are designed to be used in complementary combinations rather than as a linear or mandatory learning pathway. The pilot phase demonstrated that their value lies in their interaction and flexibility rather than in uniform participation across all elements.

The programme combines different delivery formats to balance accessibility, interaction and contextual relevance:

- Online formats are used to increase accessibility, reduce time and travel constraints and support participation across geographically dispersed contexts.
- On-site formats are applied where direct interaction, trust-building and peer exchange are particularly important, especially in practice-related learning activities
- Hybrid formats combine elements of both approaches and are used selectively where flexibility and interaction need to be balanced.

The pilot phase confirmed that no single format is universally optimal. The validated programme therefore retains format flexibility as a core design principle, allowing adaptation to national, institutional and target-group-specific conditions.

The D4SEE CBP is primarily developed to address the capacity-building needs of two main target groups:

- SEs, whose capacity-building needs are predominantly practice-oriented and linked to business development, management, financing, impact, digitalisation and cooperation with public authorities.
- LPAs, whose needs are primarily related to orientation in the field of social economy, understanding the role of SEs, clarification of institutional frameworks and identification of feasible forms of cooperation and support.

In addition to the main target groups, mentors, experts and ecosystem intermediaries are involved as enabling actors supporting facilitation, dissemination and sustainability of the programme rather than as primary beneficiaries.

The pilot phase confirmed that these target groups differ significantly in their roles, motivations and engagement patterns. The programme therefore addresses their needs through differentiated learning pathways, thematic focus and intensity of engagement, while also creating opportunities for interaction and mutual understanding where appropriate.

The analysis in this output draws on the data collection and monitoring framework applied during the pilot phase and documented in Output 2.3. Data sources included:

- monitoring sheets for training and mentoring activities,
- structured participant feedback from training and mentoring sessions,
- platform-generated analytics related to access and engagement with individual micro-learning online trainings,
- qualitative context sheets completed by project partners in relation to training sessions.

In addition, for the purposes of Output 2.4, project partners were invited to complete a separate, structured qualitative questionnaire focusing on the CBP as a whole. This additional data collection had an explicitly evaluative and reflective character and provided partner perspectives on the overall programme logic, the interaction of its components, observed mechanisms of change and implementation-related limitations, which informed the validation and refinement of the final programme design beyond activity-level findings.

Since indicators and analytical methods were already defined and applied during the pilot phase, they are not repeated in this output. Instead, the validated programme design presented here is grounded in the synthesis and interpretation of pilot findings, focusing on observed engagement patterns, implementation dynamics and enabling conditions that support effective replication and long-term use of the CBP.

Target Groups

The pilot phase confirmed the relevance of designing the CBP as a differentiated and ecosystem-oriented intervention rather than a uniform training offer. While the programme primarily addresses the capacity-building needs of SEs and representatives of LPAs, its effective functioning during the pilot phase relied on the active involvement of mentors, experts and other ecosystem actors who operated as facilitators, intermediaries and multipliers.

The pilot results indicate that SEs and LPAs represent two distinct primary target groups with substantially different roles, starting positions and capacity-building needs across participating countries. At the same time, the pilot confirmed that these needs cannot be addressed in isolation from the broader social economy ecosystem, as mentors and intermediary actors play a critical enabling role in facilitation, dissemination and sustainability of programme outcomes.

These differences require tailored combinations of learning formats, thematic focus and intensity of engagement in order to ensure relevance, effective uptake and long-term use of the programme across diverse contexts.

Motivation and expectations of target groups

The pilot phase revealed distinct motivational patterns among the primary target groups, shaped by their institutional roles and practical responsibilities.

Representatives of LPAs were primarily motivated by the need to gain an initial orientation in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship, to better understand the role of SEs, and to reduce uncertainty related to cooperation with them. Their participation was often linked to institutional priorities or strategic interests—such as local economic development, employment policies or social innovation agendas—rather than to individual initiative.

SEs, by contrast, entered the programme with more practical and application-oriented expectations. Their motivation was driven by concrete needs related to business development, access to know-how and opportunities for cooperation, particularly with public authorities. Participation of SEs was largely voluntary and closely linked to the perceived relevance of the offered activities to their immediate operational challenges.

Mentors, experts and ecosystem intermediaries engaged with the programme from a different motivational position. Their participation was primarily oriented towards understanding the programme structure and tools, aligning mentoring and support practices, and exploring opportunities to integrate the programme resources into their existing professional activities. These actors were not direct beneficiaries of capacity building in the same sense as SEs and LPAs, but functioned as enabling actors supporting implementation, dissemination and future uptake.

These differences in motivation underline the need for differentiated value propositions within the CBP, tailored both to primary beneficiaries and to enabling ecosystem actors.

Intensity and patterns of engagement

The pilot phase indicated differentiated patterns of engagement across target groups and programme components.

Engagement of LPAs tended to be selective and time-bound, focusing mainly on training sessions and introductory individual online learning modules. Their participation was primarily oriented towards gaining an overview of key concepts, institutional roles and cooperation frameworks. Sustained or repeated engagement was primarily observed in contexts where programme activities were embedded in broader institutional or strategic processes.

SEs showed more selective but often more intensive engagement patterns. They more frequently combined different activity types, including training sessions, facilitated activities linked to mentoring practices, and individual online learning. Where such combinations were available, engagement tended to be more application-oriented and closely connected to practical problem-solving.

Mentors and ecosystem actors demonstrated engagement patterns focused on coordination, facilitation and alignment rather than on continuous participation across all programme components. Their engagement was most visible in mentoring sessions, train-the-mentors activities and selected facilitated formats, reflecting their role as multipliers rather than end beneficiaries.

These observations highlight the importance of offering flexible learning pathways that allow different actors to engage at varying levels of depth and intensity, in line with their roles within the social economy ecosystem.

Preferred activity formats

The pilot phase suggests that different activity formats serve different functions for different target groups and should therefore be combined strategically within the programme.

For representatives of LPAs, facilitated and clearly structured training sessions proved particularly relevant as an entry point into the topic. Individual online learning on the D4SEE digital platform functioned mainly as a supplementary and orientational resource, especially through introductory modules.

For SEs, application-oriented training sessions were perceived as particularly relevant, especially where they focused on concrete operational challenges and practical examples. These sessions

supported discussion of real-life issues and linkage of learning content to day-to-day practice. Where available, training sessions were complemented by facilitated formats (e.g. guided work with programme materials or platform content) that helped connect training activities with other programme components. These facilitated formats supported continuity of learning pathways rather than functioning as direct, individual mentoring of SEs.

For mentors and ecosystem actors, mentoring sessions and train-the-mentors activities played a key supporting role by supporting familiarisation with the programme structure, learning content and digital tools, and by enabling alignment of facilitation and dissemination practices.

Thematic focus and learning content

The pilot indicated a consistent differentiation in thematic focus across target groups.

Representatives of LPAs primarily engaged with content related to:

- basic understanding of social economy and social entrepreneurship,
- institutional frameworks for cooperation,
- examples of good practice in supporting SEs,
- the role of local authorities in developing local social economy ecosystems.

SEs showed stronger engagement with applied topics, including:

- marketing and communication,
- cooperation with public authorities,
- digital tools and operational efficiency,
- entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

Platform analytics from the micro-learning component are broadly consistent with this differentiation, indicating higher engagement with SE-focused modules in several participating countries, while LPA engagement was more concentrated on introductory and overview-oriented content.

Mentors and ecosystem actors primarily engaged with content related to programme navigation, use of the digital platform, mentoring methodologies and certification mechanisms, reflecting their facilitative role within the programme.

Access pathways and engagement dynamics

The pilot phase highlighted differences in engagement dynamics between target groups, reflecting their institutional roles, motivations and practical constraints rather than clearly defined or uniform access channels.

Engagement of representatives of LPAs was linked to their institutional roles and strategic responsibilities. Participation appeared to be influenced by the relevance of programme topics to ongoing policy, administrative or development processes and by the perceived legitimacy of the programme within the public administration context.

SEs, by contrast, engaged with the programme primarily in response to concrete and immediate needs related to their operational and developmental challenges. Their engagement was influenced by the perceived practical relevance of individual activities and the applicability of learning content to day-to-day practice.

Mentors, experts and ecosystem actors accessed the programme through their existing professional roles and cooperation structures related to support of SEs and public authorities. Their engagement reflected their function as facilitators and multipliers rather than as primary beneficiaries.

These observations suggest that engagement with the CBP was shaped less by uniform recruitment pathways and more by role-specific motivations, relevance and contextual factors. This suggests that outreach and communication strategies benefit from adaptation to the characteristics, responsibilities and decision-making logics of different actor groups.

Influence of institutional and legislative context

The pilot phase revealed variation in how the CBP was implemented and engaged with across participating countries. Qualitative evidence from partner reports suggests that these differences were related, among other factors, to the broader institutional and legislative context in which programme activities were delivered.

Across contexts, differences were observed in the role that training sessions and other programme components played for different target groups. In some settings, activities were able to build on an existing level of familiarity with social entrepreneurship, allowing greater emphasis on applied topics, cooperation mechanisms and ecosystem development. In other settings, activities focused more strongly on introductory content, basic orientation and awareness-raising, supporting initial understanding and legitimacy of social entrepreneurship concepts.

Rather than pointing to fixed categories of countries, these observations highlight a spectrum of institutional maturity and baseline familiarity across contexts. The programme's flexibility allowed

it to respond to this variation by adjusting thematic focus, intensity and the role of individual activities.

These observations support the conclusion that replication of the CBP requires contextual sensitivity and adaptive implementation, rather than reliance on a uniform model.

Implications for replication and programme refinement

Overall, the pilot phase confirmed that a one-size-fits-all approach would not adequately address the needs of diverse actors within the social economy ecosystem. The validated CBP therefore requires:

- differentiated learning pathways for SEs and LPAs,
- a strategic combination of facilitated training, mentoring-related enabling formats and individual online learning,
- flexibility to adapt content and formats to national and institutional contexts,
- systematic integration of mentors and ecosystem actors as facilitators and multipliers.

These findings informed the refinement and consolidation of the CBP presented in this output and provide a robust basis for its replication in other contexts.

Objectives of the CBP

The objective of the D4SEE CBP is to support the development of competencies that enable key actors within local social economy ecosystems to engage more effectively, cooperatively and context-sensitively.

Based on the pilot phase, the objectives of the CBP are formulated as expected competencies, reflecting the programme's role as a capacity-building and enabling intervention rather than a mechanism for direct impact generation.

Expected competencies for SEs

The CBP supports SEs in developing competencies related to:

- strengthening operational and managerial capacities relevant to their dual social and economic mission;
- improving communication of social value and engagement with key stakeholders;
- navigating institutional environments and identifying feasible forms of cooperation with public authorities;
- selectively using learning resources and tools to inform and support their own developmental decisions.

Expected competencies for LPAs

For LPAs, the CBP supports competencies related to:

- understanding the role and potential of SEs within local development contexts;
- identifying realistic and proportionate forms of cooperation and support for SEs;
- applying available instruments and frameworks in a manner aligned with local capacities and priorities.

Expected competencies for mentors and ecosystem actors

For mentors and ecosystem actors, the CBP supports competencies related to:

- facilitating and contextualising learning processes for SEs and LPAs;
- aligning mentoring and support practices with the programme structure and tools;

- contributing to dissemination and potential longer-term use of programme resources

Cross-cutting objectives

Across all actor groups, the CBP aims to:

- support dialogue and mutual understanding within social economy ecosystems;
- enable flexible engagement adapted to roles, needs and capacities;
- strengthen the coherence of facilitated and self-paced learning formats.

Reflection

The pilot phase suggested that capacity building in the field of social economy functions more effectively as a process rather than as a sequence of isolated activities. Across participating countries, no single activity or format appeared sufficient on its own. Instead, the value of the programme emerged from the interaction between different components, levels of engagement and roles of participating actors within local ecosystems.

A key insight from the pilot phase is that differentiated and selective engagement should be understood as an inherent and functional feature of ecosystem-oriented CBPs rather than as a limitation. Participants engaged with programme components that were most relevant to their roles, needs and capacities, often combining activities in non-linear ways. This pattern reflects both the diversity of target groups and the practical constraints under which they operate.

The pilot further revealed clear differences in engagement between SEs and LPAs. SEs tended to prioritise applied, practice-oriented learning formats addressing concrete operational and organisational challenges. Their engagement was typically more selective but deeper, focusing on topics with immediate relevance for daily practice, particularly where training activities were complemented by facilitated formats and individual micro-learning opportunities.

LPAs, by contrast, primarily benefited from introductory and framework-oriented learning. Training sessions played an important role for LPAs by supporting awareness-raising, clarification of concepts related to social economy and SEs, and alignment of expectations regarding feasible forms of cooperation. Their engagement was often broader but less intensive, reflecting institutional constraints, time availability and their position as enablers rather than direct implementers of social economy activities.

The pilot phase also highlighted the importance of facilitation and guidance as a structural condition shaping engagement. Facilitated formats supported participants to contextualise learning content, clarify expectations and translate abstract concepts into practice. Mentors, trainers and facilitators played a connective role across programme components by linking training sessions, digital learning and mentoring activities, thereby contributing to greater continuity of learning pathways.

Finally, the pilot revealed the significance of context-sensitive implementation. Differences in ecosystem maturity, institutional settings and baseline familiarity were reflected in how programme components were used and valued. Activities primarily fulfilled an orientational and awareness-raising function, while in others they supported more applied learning and exploration of cooperation models. This variability highlighted the importance of programme flexibility combined with a shared conceptual framework.

What worked well in the pilot phase

Several elements of the CBP demonstrated clear added value during the pilot phase, particularly in terms of supporting engagement, orientation and practical use of programme resources.

Training sessions frequently functioned as an initial point of contact with the programme for participants. They supported basic orientation in the topic of social economy and familiarisation with the programme logic and available learning opportunities. In a number of cases, training sessions also facilitated further engagement with other programme components, such as mentoring-related activities or individual micro-learning on the digital platform. Their effectiveness was highest where structured input was combined with opportunities for interaction, discussion and peer exchange, allowing participants to relate learning content to their own contexts.

Mentoring-related activities proved effective as enabling formats supporting the practical use of programme resources rather than as standalone training interventions. During the pilot phase, mentoring activities supported mentors, experts and intermediary actors in working with the programme content and the digital learning platform within their existing mentoring and support practices. In this role, mentoring facilitated clarification of selected topics, exploration of concrete use cases and alignment between facilitated activities and self-paced digital learning.

The digital learning platform and individual micro-learning modules functioned well as flexible complementary tools. Participants valued the possibility to access learning content selectively and at their own pace, in line with their roles, needs and time constraints. The pilot experience confirmed that digital learning was rarely used in isolation. Instead, its uptake and continued use were strongest when embedded within facilitated activities, such as training sessions or mentoring-related formats, and when linked to concrete learning needs.

The modular structure of the programme supported adaptation to diverse national and institutional contexts without undermining overall coherence. Project partners were able to adjust the combination, sequencing and thematic focus of activities in response to local conditions, while remaining aligned with the shared programme framework. This flexibility proved important for maintaining relevance across different ecosystem settings.

Finally, the pilot phase highlighted the value of involving mentors, experts and intermediary actors as part of programme implementation. Their engagement supported facilitation, coordination and dissemination of programme resources and contributed to linking different programme components in practice. While the effects of ecosystem-level engagement could not be measured quantitatively within the pilot timeframe, qualitative feedback from partners suggests that this involvement supported continuity of activities and increased the perceived relevance of the programme in several contexts.

Across all programme components, the D4SEE digital learning platform functioned as a transversal element supporting coherence and continuity of the CBP. During the pilot phase, the platform was

not limited to individual micro-learning, but was actively used and referenced within training sessions, mentoring-related activities and train-the-mentors formats. This cross-cutting use supported a shared point of reference for learning content, tools and terminology across activities and target groups. It also enabled participants and facilitators to connect facilitated learning formats with self-paced learning resources and to revisit content beyond individual sessions.

The pilot phase confirmed that positioning the digital platform as an integrated programme resource—rather than as a standalone training tool—strengthened its relevance and uptake. Building on this validated role, the platform is designed as a durable digital infrastructure and will remain available for an additional five years after project completion, supporting continued use, adaptation and dissemination of programme resources beyond the project lifecycle.

What were the main challenges and limitations

The pilot phase also revealed a number of challenges and limitations that are important for interpreting the findings and for informing the further refinement and replication of the CBP.

A key limitation relates to the pilot nature and limited duration of implementation. The timeframe of the pilot phase allowed for testing individual programme components and their interaction, but did not enable systematic observation of longer-term outcomes, behavioural change or sustained cooperation effects. The findings presented in this output therefore primarily reflect short- to medium-term engagement patterns and perceived relevance, rather than longer-term impact.

A further challenge concerns uneven and selective engagement across programme components. Selective participation emerged as a consistent feature of the pilot phase and reflects the flexible and ecosystem-oriented design of the programme. At the same time, this limited the extent to which the full programme logic could be observed at the level of individual participants during the pilot phase. In some cases, engagement remained focused on single activities or formats, reducing opportunities to assess cumulative learning trajectories across components.

The pilot phase also highlighted the importance of facilitation capacity for activating and sustaining engagement. Facilitated activities played a central role in supporting orientation, contextualisation of learning content and effective use of digital resources. Variations in facilitation experience, availability of mentors and organisational resources among implementing partners influenced how consistently participants were supported in navigating and combining different programme components.

Differences in institutional settings and ecosystem maturity across participating countries further shaped engagement patterns and expectations. While the programme design allowed for contextual adaptation, these variations limited the comparability of experiences across contexts and constrained the extent to which uniform conclusions could be drawn from the pilot phase.

Challenges related to the uptake of digital learning were also observed. Although the digital learning platform and micro-learning modules provided flexible access to content, self-paced digital learning often required facilitation, guidance or a clear practical trigger to support sustained engagement. In addition, external contextual factors—such as competing institutional priorities, limited time availability of participants and broader socio-economic conditions—affected participation levels, continuity of engagement and sequencing of activities and could not be fully controlled within the scope of the pilot.

Taken together, these challenges and limitations do not undermine the relevance of the CBP. Rather, they delineate the boundary conditions under which the programme operates and highlight the importance of realistic expectations, adaptive implementation and sustained facilitation in future applications.

Validated structure of the Capacity-Building Programme

The D4SEE CBP was conceived as a comprehensive and durable capacity-building framework addressing clearly defined target groups, learning objectives and delivery formats, supported by measurable indicators and appropriate data collection and analysis methods. The pilot phase provided the empirical basis to validate this design and to refine the structure of the programme based on observed engagement patterns and implementation experience.

The validated structure reflects the ambition outlined in the AF to integrate training sessions, mentoring, train-the-mentors activities, digital micro-learning and networking into a coherent CBP. Pilot experience confirmed that this integrated approach is particularly relevant for supporting cooperation between SEs and LPAs across diverse institutional and ecosystem contexts. In practice, the programme did not operate as a linear sequence of activities. Instead, it supported flexible learning pathways, differentiated engagement and selective participation, while maintaining coherence through facilitation and shared learning objectives.

This chapter presents the validated structure of the CBP by systematically describing each core activity type:

- Train-the-mentors
- Mentoring sessions
- Training sessions
- Individual micro-learning
- Networking activities.

For each component, the chapter follows a consistent analytical logic, outlining:

1. Its role within the overall programme structure,
2. Function confirmed through the pilot phase
3. Key design features derived from the pilot phase

Together, these elements constitute a replicable and transferable programme model, in line with the AF's emphasis on sustainability and long-term availability of programme outputs beyond project finalisation. The validated structure is designed to support continued use through a combination of facilitated formats and a shared digital infrastructure, which will remain available

for an additional five years after project completion, providing a clear reference framework for future implementation, adaptation and replication of the CBP in other contexts.

Train-the-mentors

Role in the programme

Within the validated structure of the CBP, train-the-mentors activities constitute a dedicated structural component supporting quality, coherence and sustainability of programme delivery. Their primary role is to prepare mentors, trainers and experts for their facilitative function within the programme and to align their practices with the overall programme logic.

Train-the-mentors activities function as a preparatory phase preceding mentoring activities. This sequencing ensures that mentors are familiar with the programme structure, learning objectives and the specific role of mentoring within the broader capacity-building framework before engaging directly with programme participants.

What the pilot confirmed

The pilot phase confirmed the relevance of including a dedicated train-the-mentors component as an integral element of the programme structure. Pilot experience demonstrated that targeted preparatory activities strengthened mentors' ability to navigate the programme, contextualise learning content and operate consistently across different formats and contexts.

The pilot further confirmed that combining facilitated sessions with structured individual work on the digital learning platform represents a feasible and scalable approach to mentor preparation across participating countries. Exposure of mentors to learning modules, assessment mechanisms and certification pathways supported alignment between mentoring activities and the learning content available to programme participants.

In addition, the international character of the train-the-mentors activities enabled exchange of perspectives among mentors from different countries. This exchange increased awareness of diverse institutional and cultural contexts and informed adaptive use of mentoring practices at national and local levels.

Key design features

Based on the pilot phase, the train-the-mentors component is defined in this output to fulfil several interrelated functions:

- to provide a shared orientation regarding programme structure, content and learning pathways;

- to support consistent use of the digital platform and learning materials within mentoring activities;
- to enable mentors to operate as facilitators connecting different programme components, rather than as standalone content providers.

Train-the-mentors activities are delivered through facilitated sessions complemented by guided individual work on the digital learning platform. Formats may be implemented online, on-site or in hybrid settings, allowing adaptation to national and institutional contexts while maintaining a common methodological core.

By embedding a clearly defined train-the-mentors component within the programme structure, the CBP strengthens internal coherence, supports structured delivery of mentoring activities and enables more consistent use of shared methodological principles and programme tools across different contexts.

Mentoring sessions

Role in the programme

Within the validated CBP, mentoring sessions are positioned as an application-oriented and facilitative component supporting the application of programme content, tools and learning resources in relation to the needs of SEs and LPAs. Their primary role is not to deliver structured training content, but to support reflection, clarification and practical application of learning gained through training sessions and digital micro-learning.

Mentoring sessions function as an intermediate layer between structured training activities and individual self-paced learning on the D4SEE digital platform. They provide space for discussion of concrete questions, challenges and use cases related to cooperation, organisational development and institutional practice, while enabling participants to explore how programme resources can be meaningfully applied in their own contexts.

Mentors, experts and facilitators play a central role within mentoring sessions by guiding discussion, supporting contextualisation of learning content and linking participants' practical experiences with available programme tools. In this sense, mentoring sessions strengthen the usability and relevance of programme resources for end beneficiaries, rather than serving as a standalone content delivery format.

What the pilot confirmed

The pilot phase confirmed that mentoring sessions were not used uniformly across all participants or contexts; however, where implemented, they demonstrated a high added value in supporting application, contextualisation and continued engagement with programme resources. Overall, mentoring sessions proved to be a relevant and functional component of the CBP, particularly in supporting the application and contextual use of learning content in relation to the needs of SEs

and LPAs. Evidence from the pilot indicates that mentoring sessions were implemented primarily as facilitated, group-based or small-group formats, in some contexts involving mixed participation of SEs, LPAs and mentors or experts.

Rather than addressing predefined curricula, mentoring sessions focused on issues emerging from participants' own practice. These included clarification of programme concepts, discussion of concrete challenges related to cooperation or organisational development, and exploration of how selected learning modules, tools or micro-credentials could support participants' current needs.

The pilot further indicated that mentoring sessions contributed to continuity of engagement with the programme. Where mentoring sessions were linked to training activities or digital learning, participants were more likely to revisit learning content, reflect on its relevance and engage selectively with additional programme components. In this way, mentoring sessions supported deeper and more contextualised engagement without requiring uniform participation across all activities.

Key design features

In the validated programme structure, mentoring sessions are defined as facilitated, time-bound and practice-oriented interactions delivered primarily in group or small-group formats. Sessions may be organised on-site, online or in hybrid settings, depending on national and institutional conditions and the needs of participating actors.

Typical mentoring sessions combine:

- facilitated discussion of participants' concrete questions, challenges or experiences,
- guided reference to relevant learning content, tools or resources available through the D4SEE digital platform,
- peer exchange among participants from similar or complementary institutional backgrounds.

Mentors and experts participating in these sessions are positioned as facilitators of learning and reflection rather than as trainers or content providers. Their role is to support participants in navigating programme resources, interpreting learning content in relation to their specific contexts and identifying feasible next steps for application.

Mentoring sessions are explicitly linked to other programme components, particularly training sessions and individual micro-learning. This linkage supports coherence and continuity of learning pathways, while ensuring that mentoring does not duplicate training activities or replace self-paced digital learning. Instead, mentoring sessions operate as a flexible support mechanism that enhances the practical relevance and usability of programme resources in work with SEs and LPAs.

Training sessions

Role in the programme

Within the validated structure of the CBP, training sessions constituted a core facilitated component and served as a key structured entry point for SEs and LPAs (LPAs). Their primary role was to support initial orientation, awareness-raising and the development of a shared understanding of core concepts related to the social economy, cooperation frameworks and capacity-building themes.

Training sessions provided a structured space for collective learning and exchange, creating a common reference framework for participants with diverse roles, levels of experience and starting positions. Rather than functioning as comprehensive learning pathways, they were designed to lower entry barriers and enable participants to engage meaningfully with other programme components. In this sense, training sessions functioned as a gateway to further activities, including mentoring-related support and individual digital learning resources.

Within the overall programme structure, training sessions complemented self-paced digital learning by offering facilitated interaction, contextual explanation and opportunities for discussion. Their role was therefore not to replace individual learning or mentoring-based support, but to provide a shared starting point that anchored subsequent, selective engagement with programme resources.

What the pilot confirmed

The pilot phase confirmed the relevance of training sessions as an effective mechanism for initiating engagement with the CBP across diverse national and institutional contexts. In most participating countries, training sessions represented the first structured contact with the programme, supporting initial orientation and awareness-raising among participants.

Evidence from the pilot indicates that training sessions were particularly valuable in contexts characterised by limited prior exposure to social economy concepts or fragmented cooperation between SEs and public authorities. By offering facilitated and interactive formats, training sessions supported the development of a common language and helped reduce conceptual and institutional barriers that might otherwise have hindered participation in more specialised activities.

The pilot further demonstrated that selective and focused delivery was more effective than uniform or extended formats. Training sessions that were concise, thematically targeted and aligned with locally identified needs achieved higher engagement and practical relevance. Interactive elements, opportunities for discussion and peer exchange, and space for contextualisation were critical in ensuring relevance for participants from different institutional backgrounds.

Differences in engagement patterns observed during the pilot also confirmed that training sessions fulfilled distinct functions for different target groups. For SEs, training sessions primarily supported applied learning and problem-oriented reflection related to operational and market challenges. For LPAs, they served a more orientational and framework-setting function, focusing on awareness-raising, cooperation models and the creation of supportive enabling environments.

In a limited number of cases, joint training sessions involving both SEs and LPAs were implemented. These mixed formats did not aim to deliver specialised content, but rather to support mutual understanding, dialogue and initial relationship-building. While not suitable as a standard model, such joint sessions proved valuable in contexts where fostering trust and exploring cooperation opportunities was a primary objective.

Key design features derived from the pilot phase

Based on pilot experience, several key design features emerged as critical for the effective integration of training sessions within the CBP:

- Introductory and orientation-focused design: Training sessions prioritised awareness-raising, shared understanding and initial capacity development rather than exhaustive treatment of topics.
- Context-sensitive thematic selection: Content and learning modules were adapted to national and regional needs identified through assessments, stakeholder engagement and partner experience.
- Facilitated and interactive formats: Opportunities for discussion, peer exchange and contextualisation were central to ensuring relevance for diverse participant groups.
- Flexible delivery modes: Online, on-site and hybrid formats were used strategically to balance accessibility, interaction and practical engagement, taking into account participants' limited time and capacity.
- Differentiated audience focus: Depending on objectives and institutional context, training sessions addressed specific target groups or mixed audiences, without imposing a single standardised model.
- Clear linkage to other programme components: Training sessions explicitly introduced mentoring-related activities and digital learning resources, ensuring that they functioned as part of a coherent programme structure rather than as isolated events.

Individual micro-learning online trainings

Role in the programme

Individual micro-learning online trainings represented the self-paced learning component of the D4SEE CBP, providing participants with flexible access to structured learning content through the digital platform. Their primary role within the programme architecture was to enable selective, individualised and continuous learning, complementing time-bound and facilitated activities such as training sessions and mentoring.

While facilitated training sessions often constituted the first structured contact with the CBP, individual micro-learning modules allowed participants to deepen specific topics, revisit content as needed and engage with learning materials according to their own pace, availability and professional role. In this sense, micro-learning supported differentiated learning trajectories for SEs and LPAs without imposing uniform pathways or participation requirements.

Function confirmed through the pilot phase

The pilot phase confirmed that individual micro-learning online trainings functioned as a key enabler of flexibility and continuity within the CBP. Participants used the modules primarily to complement facilitated activities, either by preparing for training sessions, reinforcing knowledge acquired during live formats or selectively addressing specific thematic needs relevant to their institutional or organisational context.

Evidence from the pilot indicates that the self-paced nature of micro-learning was particularly relevant for participants with limited time availability or irregular engagement possibilities. Rather than serving as a stand-alone entry point to the programme, micro-learning most often supported ongoing engagement and allowed participants to remain connected to the programme beyond the duration of individual events.

The pilot suggested that individual micro-learning online trainings were more likely to support continued engagement with programme resources when combined with guidance or signposting through training sessions or mentoring activities, reinforcing their complementary role alongside facilitated learning formats.

Key design features derived from the pilot phase

Based on the pilot experience, several key design features emerged as central to the effective use of individual micro-learning online trainings within the CBP:

- Modular and selective structure: Learning content was organised into short, stand-alone modules, allowing participants to engage selectively with topics relevant to their needs rather than following predefined learning pathways.
- Self-paced accessibility: The online format enabled participants to progress at their own pace and revisit content as required, supporting learning despite time and capacity constraints.
- Differentiation by target group: Separate learning pathways and thematic emphases for SEs and LPAs supported role-specific learning without enforcing uniform curricula.
- Integration with facilitated formats: Micro-learning was most effective when explicitly linked to training sessions and mentoring activities, which helped contextualise content and guide participants towards relevant modules.

- Support for recognition and motivation: The inclusion of assessment elements and micro-credential options supported motivation and provided opportunities for formal recognition of learning outcomes without creating mandatory requirements.

Networking

Role in the programme

Networking activities functioned as a transversal and enabling component of the D4SEE CBP, supporting relationship-building, peer exchange and informal interaction across target groups and programme components. Rather than serving as a stand-alone capacity-building format, networking was embedded within or linked to other activities, including training sessions, mentoring formats and selected events.

Within the overall programme structure, networking activities contributed to the relational dimension of the capacity-building approach by creating spaces for dialogue, trust-building and mutual familiarisation among SEs, LPAs and intermediary actors. In this context, networking also enabled peer-learning through the exchange of experiences, practices and perspectives among participants facing similar challenges in different institutional or territorial settings. These interactions supported conditions for cooperation beyond formal learning formats.

Function confirmed through the pilot phase

The pilot phase confirmed that networking activities played a supportive but meaningful role in strengthening engagement with the programme and fostering interaction among participants from different institutional backgrounds. In several contexts, networking moments facilitated informal exchange, clarification of roles and exploration of potential cooperation opportunities, particularly where prior interaction between SEs and LPAs had been limited.

Evidence from the pilot indicates that networking was most effective when integrated into other activities rather than organised as isolated events. Informal networking elements embedded in training sessions, mentoring-related formats or peer-learning activities enabled participants to contextualise learning content, share experiences and build initial connections without requiring additional time commitments.

While networking alone did not lead to immediate or measurable outcomes, the pilot suggests that such activities contributed to creating a supportive environment for cooperation by lowering barriers to communication and increasing openness to dialogue among stakeholders.

Key design features derived from the pilot phase

Based on pilot experience, several design features emerged as important for the effective use of networking activities within the CBP:

- Embedded and complementary format: Networking activities were most effective when integrated into existing programme formats rather than delivered as separate stand-alone events.
- Focus on relationship-building: The primary value of networking lay in facilitating informal interaction, trust-building and mutual understanding rather than in the transfer of structured knowledge.
- Low-threshold participation: Flexible, informal settings supported participation of actors with limited time availability and reduced the risk of exclusion.
- Cross-sector interaction: Networking activities created opportunities for interaction between SEs, LPAs and intermediary actors, supporting awareness of different roles and perspectives.
- Context-sensitive implementation: The relevance and intensity of networking varied across countries, reflecting differences in ecosystem maturity and existing cooperation patterns.
- Support for peer-learning: Networking formats facilitated exchange of experiences and practices among participants, enabling peer-learning through informal interaction rather than structured instructional methods.

Mechanisms of change

This chapter describes the mechanisms through which the validated structure of the D4SEE CBP supported capacity development and cooperation between SEs, LPAs and other ecosystem actors during the pilot phase.

Rather than focusing on individual activities in isolation, the chapter explains how different programme components interacted in practice, how participants navigated between them, and under which conditions these interactions supported meaningful engagement and learning. The mechanisms are derived from recurring patterns observed across participating countries and reflect how the programme functioned as a flexible, ecosystem-oriented capacity-building intervention.

As such, the chapter provides an interpretative explanation of the programme logic and offers guidance for future adaptation, replication and further development of the CBP beyond the pilot phase.

Mechanism 1: Shared orientation as a precondition for engagement

In practice, initial engagement with the CBP depended strongly on whether participants were first supported in developing a basic orientation in the field of social economy. This was particularly evident among representatives of LPAs, for whom uncertainty regarding concepts, roles and practical relevance often limited willingness to engage beyond an initial contact.

Where introductory training sessions and selected digital learning content helped clarify what SEs are, how they operate and what forms of cooperation are realistically feasible, participants were better able to position themselves in relation to the programme. In these situations, orientation functioned less as a directive learning step and more as a structured entry point that allowed participants to assess relevance and decide independently how and to what extent they wished to engage further.

At the same time, the pilot experience showed that orientation alone was rarely sufficient to sustain engagement. Continued involvement depended on whether participants were supported in translating this initial understanding into their own institutional or organisational context. Where orientation was combined with facilitated discussion, concrete examples or explicit framing of available programme options, participants were more likely to move beyond initial participation and selectively engage with other programme components.

In this sense, orientation-oriented activities operated as a necessary but not sufficient condition for engagement, particularly for actors whose role in the ecosystem is primarily enabling rather than operational.

Mechanism 2: Facilitation translates learning into applied capacity

Across contexts, access to learning content alone did not automatically translate into changes in practice or decision-making. Both self-paced digital learning and training inputs proved most effective when participants were supported in interpreting, prioritising and contextualising available resources. In this sense, microlearning functioned not only as a digital format, but as a guiding design approach of the programme, enabling incremental learning, selective engagement and repeated return to content across facilitated and self-paced activities.

Mentoring-related activities played a central role in this process by connecting programme content with participants' concrete situations. Rather than introducing additional material, facilitation helped participants identify which elements of the programme were relevant to their immediate challenges and how these could be applied within existing organisational or institutional constraints. Where mentoring sessions were closely linked to participants' ongoing work, learning inputs were more likely to inform concrete decisions and next steps.

By contrast, where facilitation remained abstract or detached from participants' current challenges, digital micro-learning modules were often perceived as generally useful but remained disconnected from everyday practice. This limited their reuse and integration into organisational routines, particularly among SEs, for whom immediate applicability was a key condition for sustained engagement.

The pilot experience therefore suggests that facilitation should be understood as a core mechanism of the CBP rather than as a supplementary feature. Its effectiveness depended less on frequency or intensity than on its ability to connect learning content with real-world constraints, choices and responsibilities.

In this process, the D4SEE digital learning platform played an important enabling role. Rather than functioning solely as a repository of online learning content, the platform served as a shared reference point for facilitators and participants. It supported navigation between training sessions, mentoring-related activities and individual learning, and enabled facilitators to anchor discussion and reflection in concrete programme resources. This integrative function proved particularly relevant where mentoring and guidance helped participants translate learning inputs into applied use within their own organisational or institutional contexts.

Mechanism 3: Differentiated learning pathways reflect real roles of actors

Participants did not engage with the programme in a uniform or linear way. Instead, distinct patterns of engagement reflected the different roles, motivations and constraints of SEs, LPAs and intermediary ecosystem actors.

SEs tended to prioritise applied and practice-oriented topics with clear relevance for day-to-day operations. Their engagement was shaped by perceived usability and the potential for immediate application. LPAs, by contrast, more often approached the programme as an orientational resource supporting understanding of the social economy and feasible cooperation frameworks. Their participation was typically concentrated on introductory formats and selected learning inputs linked to specific institutional responsibilities.

Mentors and other ecosystem actors followed a different engagement logic linked to their intermediary role. Their participation focused primarily on understanding the programme structure, navigating the digital platform and aligning facilitation practices, rather than on acquiring content as end beneficiaries.

These differentiated pathways highlight the importance of flexibility within the programme design. Relevance across actor groups was achieved not through uniform participation or predefined learning trajectories, but through modular learning options combined with facilitation that supported coherence and shared learning objectives.

Mechanism 4: Mentors as an intermediary layer ensuring coherence

The pilot phase showed that mentors and other intermediary actors played a critical role in maintaining coherence within the CBP. Rather than engaging as end users, their contribution lay in supporting how other participants navigated and combined programme components.

Through mentoring sessions, mentors helped participants understand how training activities, digital learning resources and facilitation formats related to one another. They supported reflection on how learning content could be applied in practice and helped participants make informed choices about which programme elements were most relevant to their needs.

Train-the-mentors activities were central in enabling this intermediary role. They supported familiarisation with the digital platform, clarified mentoring responsibilities and aligned facilitation practices with the overall programme logic. Where mentors had a clear understanding of how

programme components were intended to complement each other, they were better positioned to help participants connect individual activities into meaningful learning pathways.

Where this intermediary role was weakly defined or insufficiently supported, programme components tended to operate in parallel rather than in interaction. In such cases, training sessions, mentoring activities and digital learning were perceived as separate opportunities, limiting continuity of engagement over time.

Mechanism 5: Modularity and selectivity support sustainability

Sustained engagement with the CBP was closely linked to the possibility for selective participation. Time constraints, institutional responsibilities and varying starting points meant that neither SEs nor LPAs engaged continuously across all programme components.

The digital learning platform further supported this modular and selective engagement by allowing participants to reconnect with programme content over time, even in cases of episodic or discontinuous participation.

The modular structure enabled participants to combine training sessions, mentoring-related activities and digital micro-learning in ways aligned with their immediate needs and capacities. Where participants could access relevant content without pressure to follow predefined or comprehensive pathways, engagement proved more realistic and sustainable over time. This was particularly important for SEs operating under strong capacity constraints and for public authorities whose participation was often episodic and linked to specific policy priorities.

By contrast, expectations of sustained or intensive engagement across multiple components were difficult to meet in practice. Where participation implicitly required progression through fixed sequences, engagement tended to decrease.

The pilot experience suggests that sustainability was supported not by increasing intensity, but by allowing flexible entry points, selective use of resources and discontinuous engagement without loss of coherence. In this sense, modularity and selectivity functioned not as compromises, but as enabling conditions for long-term relevance across diverse institutional and ecosystem contexts..

Replicability and transferability

The pilot phase demonstrated that the CBP did not operate as a fixed sequence of activities, but rather as a flexible combination of interconnected components used in different ways across national and institutional contexts. Differences in how the programme was implemented and engaged with across participating countries reflected contextual adaptation rather than inconsistency in design.

In practice, engagement and continuity were strongest in contexts where orientation, facilitation, mentoring and digital learning were combined in ways aligned with participants' roles, needs and capacities. Where these elements functioned in isolation, engagement tended to remain fragmented or time-limited. This suggests that the value of the programme lies not in individual components, but in how they are connected and activated through facilitation.

From a replication perspective, this means that the programme cannot be transferred effectively by copying individual activities, formats or timelines. What proved transferable across contexts was the underlying programme logic. This included the presence of a facilitated entry point supporting initial orientation, the possibility for selective engagement with learning content, mentoring as a connecting element between activities, and a modular structure that allowed participants to engage according to their institutional constraints and priorities.

The pilot experience further indicated that replication is strongly dependent on facilitation capacity. In contexts where mentoring and facilitation were actively embedded, programme components were more likely to function as a coherent offer rather than as parallel activities. Conversely, where facilitation capacity was limited, training sessions, digital learning and mentoring tended to operate independently, reducing opportunities for continuity and cumulative learning. The digital learning platform also represents a key enabling condition for replicability. By providing a stable infrastructure for learning content, tools and pathways, it supports continuity and adaptation of the programme across different institutional and national contexts without requiring uniform implementation.

Replication efforts that focus primarily on content delivery or digital learning resources, without sufficient attention to facilitation and intermediary roles, are therefore unlikely to achieve comparable outcomes. The pilot suggests that facilitation should be considered a structural requirement rather than an optional enhancement when transferring the programme to new contexts.

The pilot phase also highlighted the importance of context-sensitive adaptation. Differences in institutional settings, ecosystem maturity and baseline familiarity with social economy concepts

influenced which programme components were most relevant and how they were used. As a result, thematic priorities, the balance between joint and target-group-specific formats, and expectations regarding the intensity of participation need to be adapted to local conditions.

Attempts to standardise learning pathways or participation requirements across contexts would likely reduce relevance and engagement, particularly for SEs and LPAs operating under different institutional and capacity constraints. Flexibility in sequencing, format selection and depth of engagement therefore represents a key condition for successful transfer rather than a limitation of the programme model.

In practical terms, replicability of the CBP should be understood as the transfer of a facilitation-based and modular approach to capacity development, rather than the reproduction of a predefined model. The mechanisms of change identified through the pilot provide a reference framework for adapting the programme while maintaining coherence and relevance across diverse contexts.

Finally, the programme's durability supports its longer-term transferability beyond the project lifecycle. The validated programme structure, learning content and digital platform will remain accessible for five years after project finalisation, enabling continued use, adaptation and uptake by SEs, LPAs and intermediary actors beyond the pilot phase.

Conclusion and recommendations

The pilot phase and subsequent validation of the D4SEE CBP showed that capacity development in the field of social economy works most effectively when approached as a flexible, ecosystem-oriented process rather than as a linear sequence of training activities. Across participating countries, no single programme component proved sufficient on its own. Instead, value emerged from how different formats were combined and facilitated in ways that supported contextualisation, selective engagement and practical use by different actors.

Building on these observations, the following conclusions and recommendations reflect the conditions that supported engagement, coherence and practical use of the programme during the pilot phase and should inform future implementation and replication:

- **The importance of a facilitated entry point should be preserved.** Introductory and orientation-focused training sessions played a critical role in enabling initial engagement, particularly for LPAs. Where participants were supported in understanding how the programme related to their institutional or organisational roles, further and more selective engagement was more likely to follow.
- **Facilitation and mentoring need to be treated as structural elements of the programme.** The pilot consistently showed that mentoring and facilitation were central to translating learning content into applied capacity. In contexts where facilitation was weak or absent, programme components tended to remain fragmented and engagement decreased over time.
- **Differentiated learning pathways are essential for relevance.** SEs, LPAs and ecosystem intermediaries engaged with the programme in different ways, reflecting their distinct roles and constraints. Maintaining differentiated thematic focus, formats and levels of intensity proved more effective than uniform participation requirements.
- **Modularity and selective engagement support sustainability.** Allowing participants to engage selectively with programme components, without pressure to follow predefined learning trajectories, supported more realistic and sustained engagement. This was particularly important for actors operating under strong time and capacity constraints.
- **Context-sensitive adaptation should guide replication efforts.** Differences in institutional settings, ecosystem maturity and baseline familiarity with social economy concepts influenced how the programme was used and valued. Replication therefore requires adaptation of content, formats and sequencing rather than standardisation.

- **The digital learning platform should be positioned as a transversal and integrative element of the programme.** Across programme components, the D4SEE digital learning platform functioned as more than a repository of online learning content. During the pilot phase, it provided a shared reference point for concepts, tools and learning pathways and supported continuity between training sessions, mentoring-related activities and individual learning. Its role proved particularly important in contexts characterised by selective and discontinuous participation, enabling participants to reconnect with programme content over time and supporting sustainability beyond individual events.

By strengthening adaptive capacities, cooperation practices and the ability of actors to engage selectively and realistically over time, the validated programme contributes to building more sustainable and resilient SEs and LPAs within their respective ecosystems.

Taken together, the validated programme structure and accompanying resources provide a coherent reference framework for the D4SEE CBP, including modular learning content, facilitation and mentoring-related resources, and digital micro-learning materials. The conclusions and recommendations outlined above translate pilot findings into system-level implications relevant for future implementation, policy and ecosystem stakeholders, and longer-term sustainability beyond the project lifecycle.

The D4SEE CBP therefore offers an adaptable framework. Its effectiveness depends not on strict replication of activities, but on preserving the facilitation-based and digitally supported logic that enabled engagement and learning during the pilot phase.