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E-LEARNING PROGRAM ON AI FOR RETAIL: PILOT REPORT

Increasing the uptake of AI in Retail
Project ID: 101133847
ai4retail.eu

Version 1.0

lascò DELAB UNIWERSYTET WARSZAWSKI bsd STRATEGY BY DESIGN University of Cyprus CAMERA DI COMMERCIO ITALIANA PER LA GERMANIA ITALIENISCHE HANDELSKAMMER FÜR DEUTSCHLAND ITKAM TEAM 4 excellence

Document Control

Project Title	Increasing the uptake of AI in Retail (INAIR) Coordination and Support Action funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme - Grant Agreement No. 101133847
Deliverable Title	INAIR E-Learning Program on AI for Retail: Pilot Report
Deliverable Number	D6.3
Deliverable Version	1.0
Version Date	27.04.2026
Deliverable Lead	Lascò
Dissemination Level	Public
Authors	Miriam Lanzetta, Lascò; Gianluca Abbruzzese, Lascò.
Abstract	This report presents the results and evaluation of the pilot cycles of the INAIR E-Learning Program on AI for Retail. It details the evaluation methodology, participant profiles, and quantitative and qualitative feedback to assess the program's usability, relevance, and perceived value.

Disclaimer: This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme - Grant Agreement No. 101133847. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Document Control			
Version	Date	Authors	Remarks
1.0	27.04.2026	M. Lanzetta, G. Abbruzzese	First release.

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This report presents the results of the pilot cycles of the INAIR e-learning programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the retail sector. The pilot aimed to test the usability, relevance and perceived value of the e-learning environment, as well as to collect feedback from participants regarding the content, structure and applicability of the programme in real-world retail contexts.

The pilot was implemented through an open invitation to retail professionals and related stakeholders, who were asked to complete a structured learning pathway within the INAIR platform. The learning experience included an initial assessment, assignment to a personalised pathway, completion of modular educational content and a final assessment. Participants were also requested to complete an evaluation survey capturing both quantitative ratings and qualitative feedback.

By the time of the analysis (23 April 2026), a total of **242 participants registered for the pilot**, of which 69 completed the final assessment and 75 provided valid responses to the end-user evaluation survey. In addition, 61 external experts contributed to the expert evaluation survey. The participant sample included individuals primarily from the INAIR consortium countries (Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Poland and Romania), representing a range of retail functions, including management, sales, IT/technical support, marketing, human resources, e-commerce, customer service, finance and operations.

Based on survey responses, the programme content was generally rated as highly relevant to participants' professional needs. A proportion of **84% of respondents indicated that the educational resources reflected real-world retail scenarios**. Similarly, **87% of participants reported that the structure of the learning modules was clear and easy to follow**.

In terms of perceived learning outcomes, **88% of respondents indicated that the programme improved their understanding of AI in retail**, while **85% reported increased confidence in considering or adopting AI-based solutions** in their work context. A proportion of 72% stated that they intend to integrate AI-related tools or approaches as a result of their participation.

Qualitative feedback suggests that participants particularly valued the practical orientation of the content, including concrete examples, real-world applications, exercises, and case-based explanations linked to retail contexts, as well as the clarity and structured learning pathway. At the same time, several respondents identified areas for improvement, including the need for additional practical examples and interactive elements, refinements in module length and pacing, and improvements in navigation, mobile usability, and multimedia integration.

The findings presented in this report are based on self-reported data collected through the evaluation survey and platform participation metrics. As such, they reflect participant perceptions within the pilot sample and should be interpreted in that context.

Overall, the pilot results indicate that the INAIR e-learning programme was positively received by both participants and experts and is considered highly relevant to the needs of retail professionals. At the same time, the findings highlight specific areas where targeted refinements may further enhance its effectiveness, usability and applicability across different retail contexts.

1. Introduction

This report documents the implementation and outcomes of the pilot cycles of the e-learning programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the retail sector developed in the scope of the Increasing the uptake of AI in Retail (INAIR) project, a coordination and support action funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101133847. The report provides an overview of the pilot design, participant engagement and evaluation results, with the aim of informing further refinement and potential scaling of the programme.

The report is based on data collected through the e-learning platform and an evaluation survey completed by participants at the end of their learning experience. The analysis reflects both quantitative indicators and qualitative feedback, allowing for a structured assessment of participant perceptions regarding the relevance, usability and applicability of the programme.

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the pilot cycles in a structured and transparent manner, in line with the requirements of the project's monitoring and evaluation framework. Specifically, the report aims to:

- describe how the pilot was implemented, including participant recruitment, learning procedures and data collection methods;
- present the characteristics of the participants involved in the pilot;
- analyse participant feedback on the quality, relevance and usability of the e-learning programme;
- identify strengths and areas for improvement based on the evidence collected;
- provide input for the further development and potential transferability of the learning environment.

The report is intended for project partners, stakeholders in vocational education and training, and organisations interested in adopting or adapting the INAIR learning approach within retail contexts.

1.2 Scope of the Pilot Cycles

The pilot cycles were designed to test the INAIR e-learning environment under real-use conditions, involving participants from the retail sector and related fields. The pilot covered the full learner journey, from registration and initial assessment to completion of the learning pathway and final evaluation.

Participants engaged with the platform over a defined implementation period, from March to April 2026, during which they were expected to complete the assigned modules and assessments. The pilot was mainly conducted across the INAIR partner countries and involved participants representing different organisational roles and levels of prior experience with AI.

The scope of the pilot included both the technical performance of the platform and the pedagogical aspects of the programme. This encompassed the usability of the interface, the clarity and structure of the learning content, the functioning of personalised learning pathways and the effectiveness of the assessment approach.

The findings presented in this report are based on the subset of participants who completed the evaluation survey and therefore reflect the perceptions of this group. As participation in the pilot was voluntary, the results should be interpreted within the context of a self-selected sample.

1.3 Overview of the INAIR E-learning Programme

The INAIR e-learning programme is a digital learning environment developed to support the development of AI-related competences in the retail sector, particularly targeting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The platform provides access to a structured set of educational resources designed to address both foundational knowledge and applied use of AI in retail contexts.

The learning offer consists of sixteen modules organised across three proficiency levels: Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced. These modules combine different types of learning materials, including videos, readings, quizzes and reflection activities, and are designed to support progressive competence development .

A key feature of the programme is the use of personalised learning pathways. Upon registration, learners complete an initial assessment that captures both their professional role and their existing level of knowledge. Based on this information, the platform assigns a tailored set of modules aligned with the learner's profile, allowing for differentiated progression through the curriculum .

The programme follows a self-paced learning model, enabling participants to progress through the content according to their own schedule and learning needs. The structure of the learner journey includes an initial assessment, engagement with assigned modules and a final assessment leading to certification upon successful completion .

The e-learning environment is designed to be applicable across different retail contexts and organisational settings, with content that reflects real-world scenarios and operational challenges. The pilot cycles aimed to assess the extent to which these design features align with participant expectations and professional requirements.

2. Description of the E-learning Environment

This chapter provides an overview of the INAIR e-learning environment as implemented during the pilot cycles, including its technical features, pedagogical structure and assessment logic. The description is based on the platform design and supporting documentation, and reflects the functionalities made available to participants during the pilot phase.

2.1 Platform Overview and Functionalities

The INAIR e-learning environment is a multilingual digital platform designed to deliver AI-related training tailored to the retail sector. It provides access to structured educational content and supports different modes of participation, including fully self-paced learning and facilitated or blended formats .

The platform integrates several core functionalities that structure the learner experience. These include user registration and profile creation, automated assignment of personalised learning pathways, access to modular learning content and embedded assessment tools. The interface is organised to provide learners with a clear overview of their progression, including completed modules, remaining tasks and performance indicators.

A dedicated dashboard allows learners to monitor their activity and advancement over time. This includes visual indicators of completed lessons, earned badges and progression across proficiency levels. Such tracking features are intended to support learner self-regulation and provide transparency in the learning process .

The platform is designed with accessibility and usability considerations, offering intuitive navigation and structured content presentation. It supports multiple languages, enabling participation across different national contexts. The technical infrastructure allows for scalable access and consistent delivery of learning materials across user groups.

2.2 Learning Offer and Curriculum Structure

The learning offer available within the platform is based on the **AI Core Curriculum**[1] developed by the project consortium. This curriculum was informed by transnational research on AI skills needs in the retail sector[2] and is structured to address both conceptual understanding and practical application.

The programme consists of **sixteen modules** grouped into **three proficiency levels**: Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced. The Foundation level introduces key concepts, terminology and ethical considerations related to AI. The Intermediate level focuses on the application of AI tools and techniques in specific retail functions, while the Advanced level addresses strategic integration and organisational implications of AI adoption

The complete list of modules available on the platform is presented in the following table.

[1] Acomi, N., Lanzetta, M., ACOMI, O., Chervinskyi, M., Włoch, R., Śledziewska, K., Abbruzzese, G., Fotiadis, T., Andreotti, C., & Manchi, G. (2025). AI Core Curriculum for MSMEs in Retail. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14358284

[2] Włoch, R., Ślosarski, B., Paliński, M., Śledziewska, K., Teodorowicz, K., & Łebkowska, W. (2025). AI skills needs and gaps for MSMEs in the retail sector in Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Romania. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17661155

Table 1. INAIR Training Modules by Proficiency Level

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	MODULES	MAIN FOCUS
Foundation Literacy & Basic Concepts	1. Introduction to AI	Basic concepts and general terminology.
	2. Basic operational dynamics of AI	Basic operational functioning of AI.
	3. Applications of AI in Retail	Examples of AI usage in the retail sector.
	4. Data-driven decision making	Fundamental concepts on data management for decision making.
	5. Ethics	Introduction to ethical considerations in AI.
Intermediate Application & Integration	6. Machine Learning in Retail	Application of Machine Learning in retail.
	7. Natural Language Processing (NLP) in Retail	Use of NLP for specific tasks in retail.
	8. Driving Human-Centred Innovation with AI	How AI can support user-focused innovation.
	9. AI for Sustainability	Integration of AI into sustainability strategies.
	10. Regulations and Trustworthy AI	Regulations and principles for trustworthy AI.
Advanced Strategy & Reflection	11. AI-Enabled Value Chain	Strategic impact of AI on the value chain.
	12. AI for Knowledge and Insights Management	Use of AI to extract knowledge and insights.
	13. AI for Operations Optimization	Optimisation of operational processes through AI.
	14. AI-powered Customer Engagement	Advanced strategies for customer engagement based on AI.
	15. AI for Inventory Management	Advanced inventory management using AI solutions.
	16. AI-driven Business Intelligence	Use of AI for strategic business analysis and intelligence.

Each module follows a consistent structure, combining explanatory content with interactive elements such as quizzes, case-based exercises and reflection activities. These components are designed to reinforce learning and support the application of knowledge in realistic retail scenarios. The modular design allows content to be combined flexibly while maintaining conceptual coherence across the curriculum .

The learning materials are presented through a combination of formats, including videos, textual explanations and applied examples. This multimodal approach aims to accommodate different learning preferences and enhance engagement with the content.

2.3 Personalised Learning Pathways

A central feature of the INAIR e-learning environment is the implementation of personalised learning pathways. These pathways are automatically generated based on two inputs collected during the onboarding process: the learner's declared professional role and the results of the initial assessment.

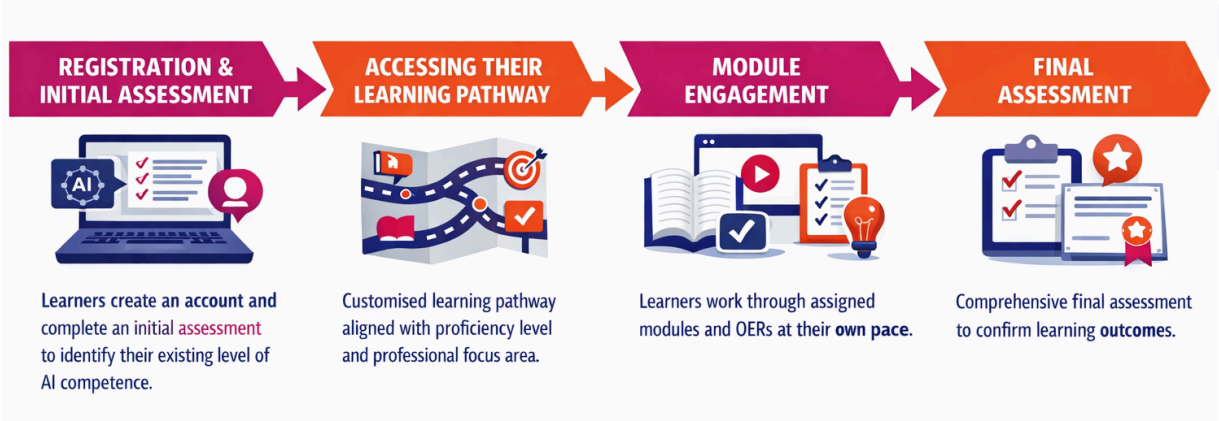
The system maps specific job functions within the retail sector to relevant modules within the curriculum. This allows the platform to assign a tailored set of modules that reflects the learner's operational context and level of competence. For example, learners in marketing roles may receive modules related to customer engagement and data-driven decision making, while those in operations or logistics may be directed toward modules on optimisation and inventory management .

This approach is intended to increase the relevance of the training by limiting exposure to content that is not directly applicable to the learner's role. At the same time, the structure allows for progression across proficiency levels, ensuring that learners build foundational knowledge before engaging with more advanced topics.

The personalised pathways include both mandatory and optional modules. Mandatory modules are required to complete the learning pathway, while optional modules provide opportunities for further exploration without affecting progression.

Therefore, the learner journey is characterised by four main phases, as summarised in the following figure.

Figure 1. Learner Journey in the INAIR E-Learning Environment



The following table delineates the modules incorporated within the training curriculum for each respective business function.

Table 2. Differentiated Learning Pathways

	FOUNDATION					INTERMEDIATE					ADVANCED					
BUSINESS FUNCTION	MODULE 1	MODULE 2	MODULE 3	MODULE 4	MODULE 5	MODULE 6	MODULE 7	MODULE 8	MODULE 9	MODULE 10	MODULE 11	MODULE 12	MODULE 13	MODULE 14	MODULE 15	MODULE 16
Sales	✓			✓		✓	✓							✓		✓
Marketing	✓		✓			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓		
Customer Servic	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓		
Operations	✓		✓			✓			✓		✓		✓			
Inventory / Stock Management	✓		✓			✓			✓				✓		✓	
Finance and Accounting	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓		✓				✓
Human Resources	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓		✓				
IT / Technical Support	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓					✓
E-commerce	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓				✓		✓
Management	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓					✓

2.4 Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms

The assessment system embedded in the INAIR platform is designed to evaluate learner competence at different stages of the learning journey. It includes an initial assessment, formative assessments integrated within modules and a final summative assessment.

The initial assessment combines a profiling component with a knowledge check. It captures information on the learner's professional role, prior experience and perceived confidence in using AI, and uses this information to determine the appropriate starting level and learning pathway. The knowledge check component includes scenario-based multiple-choice questions aligned with real-world retail situations .

Formative assessment is embedded throughout the modules in the form of knowledge checks, quizzes, decision-making scenarios and reflection prompts. These elements are designed to reinforce understanding and support incremental learning without imposing high-stakes evaluation. Feedback is provided automatically, allowing learners to identify and correct misunderstandings in real time.

The final assessment takes place upon completion of the assigned modules and consists of a comprehensive set of multiple-choice questions, many of which are scenario-based. A minimum score of 70% is required to successfully complete the programme and obtain certification .

Feedback within the platform is provided through both automated responses and, where applicable, facilitator input. Automated feedback supports immediate learning reinforcement, while facilitator-led feedback can provide additional interpretation and contextualisation, particularly in blended learning settings.

3. Pilot Design and Implementation

This chapter describes the design and execution of the pilot cycles of the INAIR e-learning programme, including the objectives, recruitment approach, implementation procedure and data collection methods. The pilot was structured to test both the technical and pedagogical components of the learning environment under real-use conditions.

3.1 Objectives of the Pilot Cycles

The pilot cycles were designed to assess the functionality, relevance and perceived usefulness of the INAIR e-learning programme in the context of retail professionals and related stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the pilot were to:

- collect feedback on the relevance of the learning content in relation to participants' professional needs;
- assess the clarity, structure and usability of the learning modules and platform interface;
- examine participant perceptions regarding the applicability of acquired knowledge to real-world retail contexts;
- capture self-reported changes in understanding of AI concepts and confidence in adopting AI-based solutions;
- identify strengths and areas for improvement in both content and delivery mechanisms;
- test the effectiveness of personalised learning pathways and the assessment framework in supporting competence development.

These objectives were operationalised through a combination of platform-based participation data and structured evaluation survey responses completed by participants at the end of the learning experience.

3.2 Participant Recruitment and Outreach Activities

Participants were recruited through a combination of targeted dissemination activities conducted by project partners across participating countries. These activities aimed to reach retail professionals, including business owners, employees and consultants, as well as other stakeholders with an interest in AI adoption in retail.

The primary recruitment channels included direct email invitations, dissemination through organisational networks and publication of promotional content on digital platforms. The invitation outlined the purpose of the pilot, the expected level of engagement and the requirement to complete an evaluation survey upon completion of the programme .

In addition, social media posts and website announcements were used to broaden outreach and facilitate voluntary participation. The pilot was open to individuals from different organisational contexts, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and did not impose strict eligibility criteria beyond an interest in the topic and willingness to complete the learning pathway.

Participation in the pilot was voluntary and based on self-selection. As a result, the participant sample reflects individuals who chose to engage with the programme and may therefore include a higher proportion of participants with prior interest in AI or digital innovation.

3.3 Pilot Procedure

The pilot implementation followed the structured learner journey defined within the INAIR e-learning environment. Participants accessed the platform via a dedicated registration link and created an individual account to begin the learning process.

The first step consisted of completing an initial assessment, which combined a profiling questionnaire with a knowledge check. The results of this assessment were used to assign each participant to a personalised learning pathway aligned with their professional role and assessed competence level.

Following this, participants were granted access to their customised set of modules. They progressed through the content at their own pace, engaging with multimedia learning materials and completing embedded formative assessments, including quizzes, reflection activities and scenario-based exercises. The self-paced structure allowed participants to adapt their learning schedule according to their availability and professional commitments.

Upon completion of the required modules, participants were invited to undertake the final assessment. This assessment evaluated their understanding of key concepts and their ability to apply AI principles within retail contexts. Successful completion of the assessment, defined by achieving the minimum required score, resulted in the issuance of a digital certificate.

The pilot procedure was designed to replicate a complete learning cycle, enabling the evaluation of all core components of the platform, including onboarding, content delivery, progression logic and assessment mechanisms.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data for the evaluation of the pilot cycles were collected through two main sources: platform-generated data and participant responses to the evaluation survey.

Platform data included information on registration, progression through modules, completion of assessments and overall participation patterns. These data provided an overview of engagement levels and allowed for the identification of key indicators such as completion rates and pathway progression.

The primary source of evaluation data was the end-of-programme survey completed by participants. The survey included both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to capture a range of information.

Closed-ended questions used Likert-scale formats to assess participant perceptions across several dimensions, including relevance of content, clarity of modules, applicability to work context, perceived improvement in understanding of AI and confidence in adopting AI solutions. Additional questions captured demographic and professional background information, such as age, gender, education level and geographic location.

Open-ended questions invited participants to provide qualitative feedback on the most useful aspects of the programme, areas for improvement and any additional comments or

recommendations. These responses provided contextual insight into participant experiences and supported a more nuanced interpretation of the quantitative results.

All data collected through the survey are based on self-reported responses and reflect participant perceptions at the time of completion. The analysis presented in subsequent sections is therefore limited to the available responses and should be interpreted within this context.

4. Participant Profile

This chapter presents the characteristics of the participants involved in the pilot cycles of the INAIR e-learning programme. Three participant groups were involved: (i) users who registered on the INAIR e-learning platform during the pilot period, (ii) retail workers and retail business owners who completed the participant evaluation survey, and (iii) external experts who completed the expert evaluation survey.

The first group provides the overall participation base of the pilot. The second group provides direct user feedback from the intended end-user population of the programme. The third group provides an external perspective on the relevance, structure and potential usability of the programme for the retail sector. Unless otherwise indicated, the feedback findings presented in later sections refer separately to the survey responses from retail participants and from experts.

4.1 Profile of Registered Participants

A total of **245 users registered on the INAIR e-learning platform** during the pilot period. These users represent the broadest participation group and include all individuals who created an account, regardless of whether they completed the learning pathway or submitted an evaluation survey.

Based on platform records, registered participants included individuals from different professional functions and organisational contexts relevant to the retail ecosystem. This group primarily consisted of retail workers and retail business representatives, but may also have included consultants, trainers or other interested stakeholders who accessed the platform during the pilot phase.

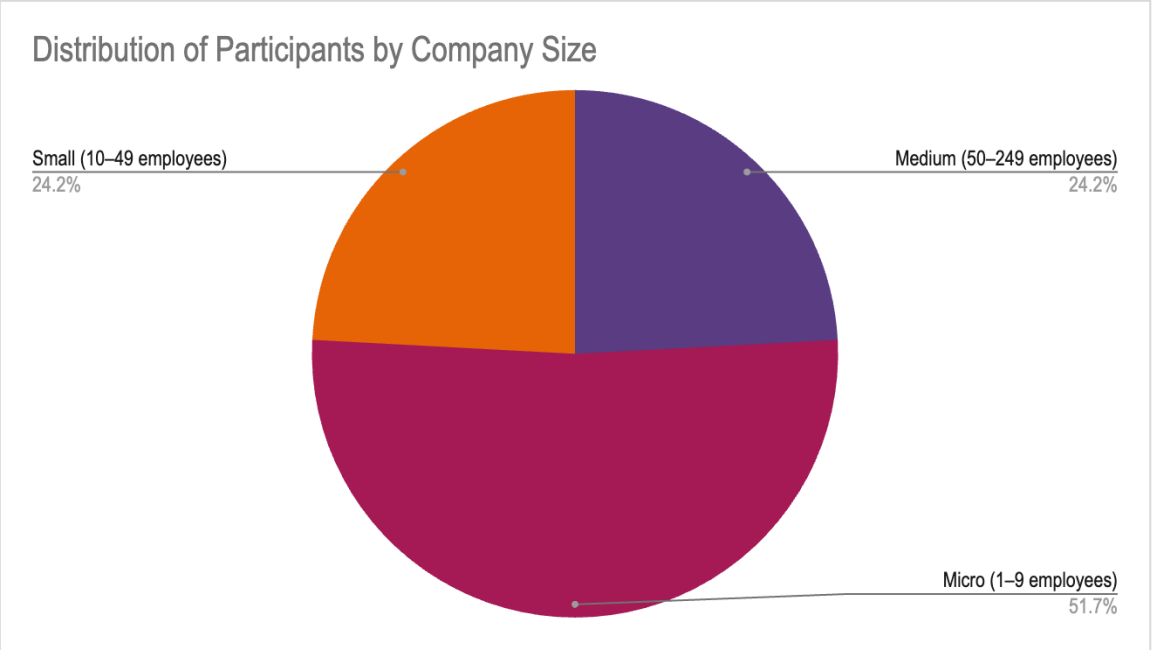
Geographically, registered users were mainly based in the INAIR consortium countries (Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Poland and Romania), with only three users from Albania, Croatia and Czech Republic. This distribution is consistent with the multilingual design of the platform, which was made available in English, German, Greek, Italian, Polish and Romanian, in order to support participation across multiple national contexts.

In terms of progression, platform data as of 23 April 2026 indicate that **178 registered users completed the initial assessment** (73% out of the total) and **69 completed the final assessment** (28% out of the total) undertook the final assessment.

Additional profiling data were collected through the initial assessment completed at the onboarding stage. These data are available only for the subset of users who completed the initial assessment and therefore do not cover the full population of registered participants.

With regard to **company size**, among those who completed the initial assessment, 52% reported working in micro enterprises (1–9 employees), 43% small enterprises (10–49 employees), and 43% in medium-sized enterprises (50–249 employees). This distribution provides an indication of the organisational contexts represented in the pilot and is consistent with the programme's focus on retail MSMEs.

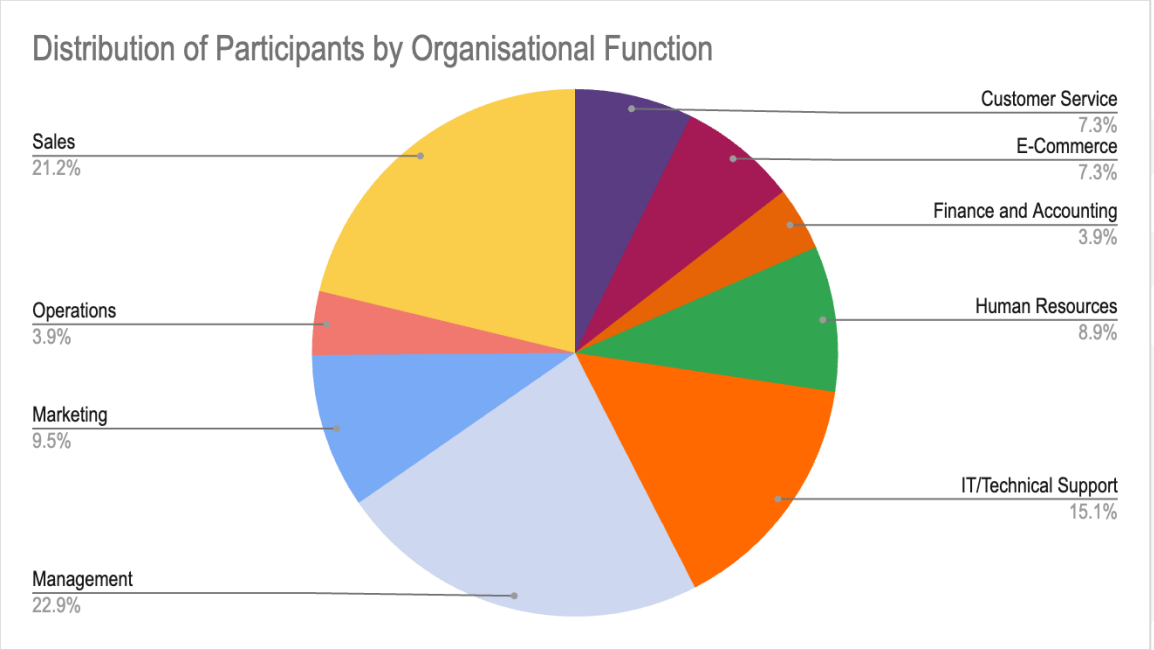
Figure 2. Distribution of Participants by Company Size



In terms of **role** within the company, **66%** of respondents identified themselves as **operational** staff, while **34%** indicated **managerial** roles, confirming the pilot engaged participants across different levels of organisational responsibility.

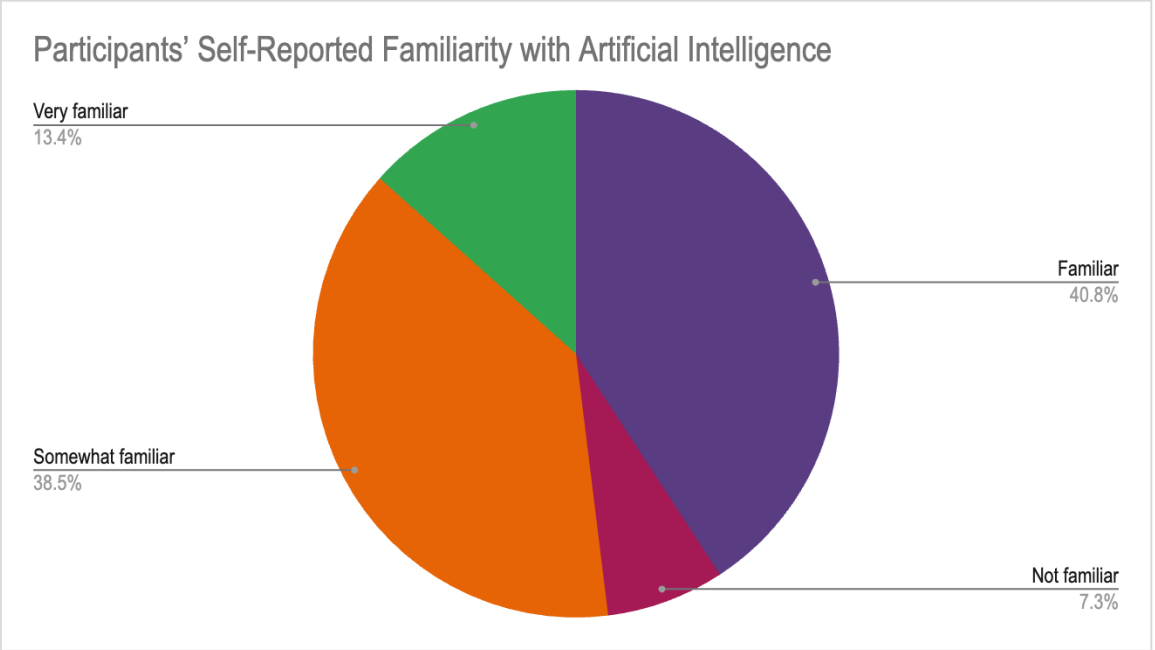
Participants were also asked to indicate the **organisational function** that best represents their role or area of interest. The distribution across functions was as follows: Management (23%), Sales (21%), IT/Technical Support (15%), Marketing (10%), Human Resources (9%), E-commerce (7%), Customer Service (7%), Finance and Accounting (4%), and Operations (4%). This information is directly linked to the assignment of personalised learning pathways within the platform.

Figure 3. Distribution of Participants by Organisational Function



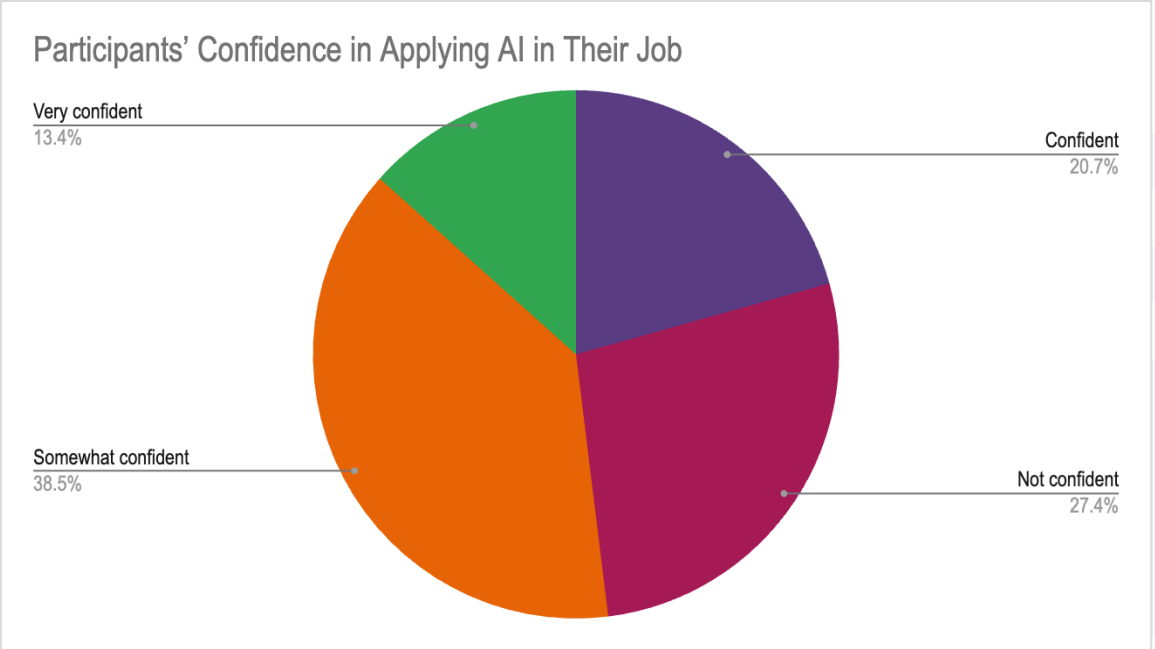
Regarding **familiarity with Artificial Intelligence**, 46% of respondents reported being "not familiar" or "somewhat familiar", while 54% indicated being "familiar" or "very familiar". Hence, the pilot included participants with **varying levels of prior exposure to AI concepts,** with a slight majority demonstrating at least a baseline level of familiarity.

Figure 4. Participants' Self-Reported Familiarity with Artificial Intelligence



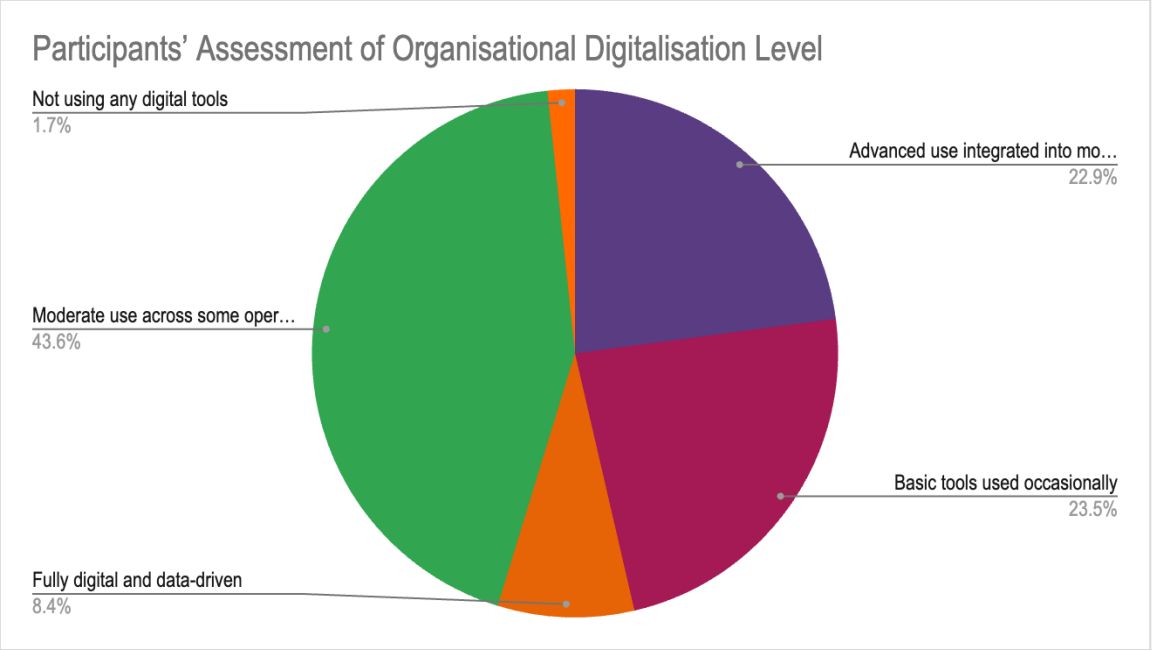
Similarly, when asked about confidence in applying AI in their job, 49% of respondents reported being "not confident" or "somewhat confident", while 34% indicated being "confident" or "very confident". This provides context for interpreting perceived learning outcomes reported in later sections, suggesting that a **substantial proportion of participants entered the pilot with limited confidence in applying AI** in a professional context.

Figure 5. Participants' Confidence in Applying AI in Their Job



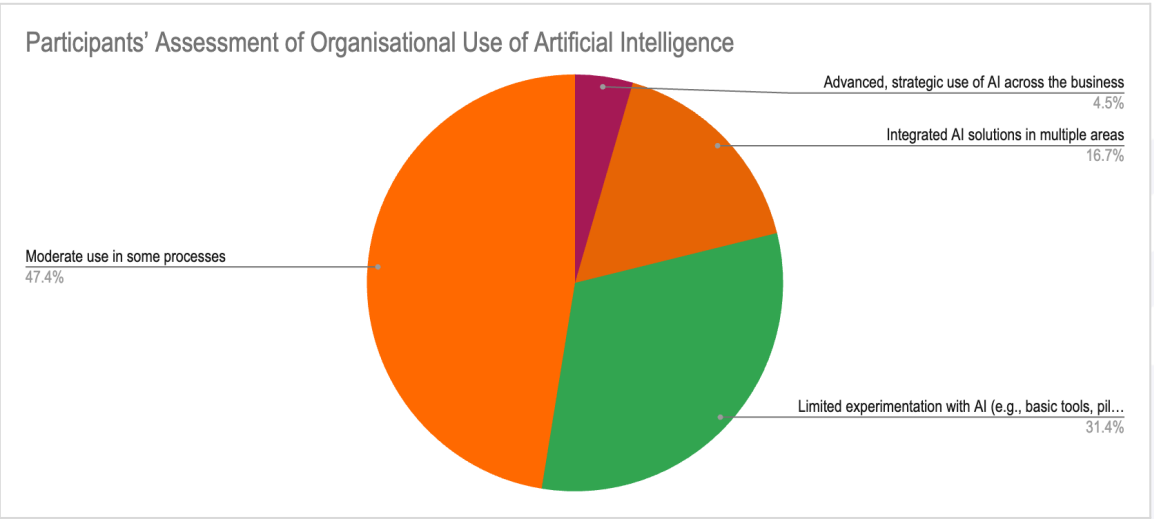
Participants also provided their perception of their **organisation's level of digitalisation**. A proportion of 25% reported limited or basic use of digital tools, while 75% indicated moderate or advanced integration of digital technologies across operations. This suggests that the pilot included **organisations at different stages of digital maturity**, with most respondents describing their organisations as having **at least a moderate level of digital adoption**.

Figure 6. Participants' Assessment of Organisational Digitalisation Level



Finally, respondents were asked about their **organisation's current use of AI**. A proportion of 31% reported no use or limited experimentation with AI, while 69% indicated moderate or more advanced integration of AI solutions. These responses indicate that, within the pilot sample, AI adoption levels varied significantly across organisations, with a **majority reporting at least some degree of operational use**.

Figure 7. Participants' Assessment of Organisational Use of Artificial Intelligence



These profiling data provide important contextual information for interpreting both participation patterns and evaluation results. However, as they are based on self-reported responses from users who completed the initial assessment, they should be considered indicative rather than representative of the entire population of registered participants.

4.2 Profile of Respondents to the Retailers Surveys

A total of **75 participants** completed the end-user evaluation survey. This survey targeted the main intended audience of the programme, involving **retail workers** (**91%**) and retail **business owners** (**9%**) participating directly in the e-learning experience.

The survey collected demographic and background information, including role, organisation, gender, age, education level and country of residence.

In terms of **gender**, 53% of respondents identified as male and 47% as female. The **age** distribution was as follows: 37% aged 18–24, 40% aged 25–34, 12% aged 35–44, 8% aged 45–54, and 3% aged 55+.

With regard to **educational attainment**, 11% of respondents reported lower secondary education or below (ISCED 2011 levels 0–2), 51% reported upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 3–4), and 39% reported tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 5–8).

4.3 Profile of Expert Respondents

A total of **61** experts completed the expert survey. This survey was addressed to external stakeholders able to review the programme from a sectoral, educational or institutional perspective.

The expert survey included respondents from several profile categories: **academics or trainers** in retail, AI or digital transformation (61%); **retail consultants** or **technology experts** (**28**%); representatives of **chambers of commerce** or trade unions (7%) representatives of **relevant EU or national initiatives** (5%).

The purpose of including this group was to capture informed external feedback on whether the programme content, structure and delivery model appeared relevant and usable for retailers, including across different business sizes and national contexts. Expert responses therefore complement the direct feedback provided by retail participants.

In terms of **gender**, 56% of expert respondents identified as female and 44% as male. The **age** distribution was 3% aged 18–24, 21% aged 25–34, 31% aged 35–44, 36% aged 45–54, and 8% aged 55+.

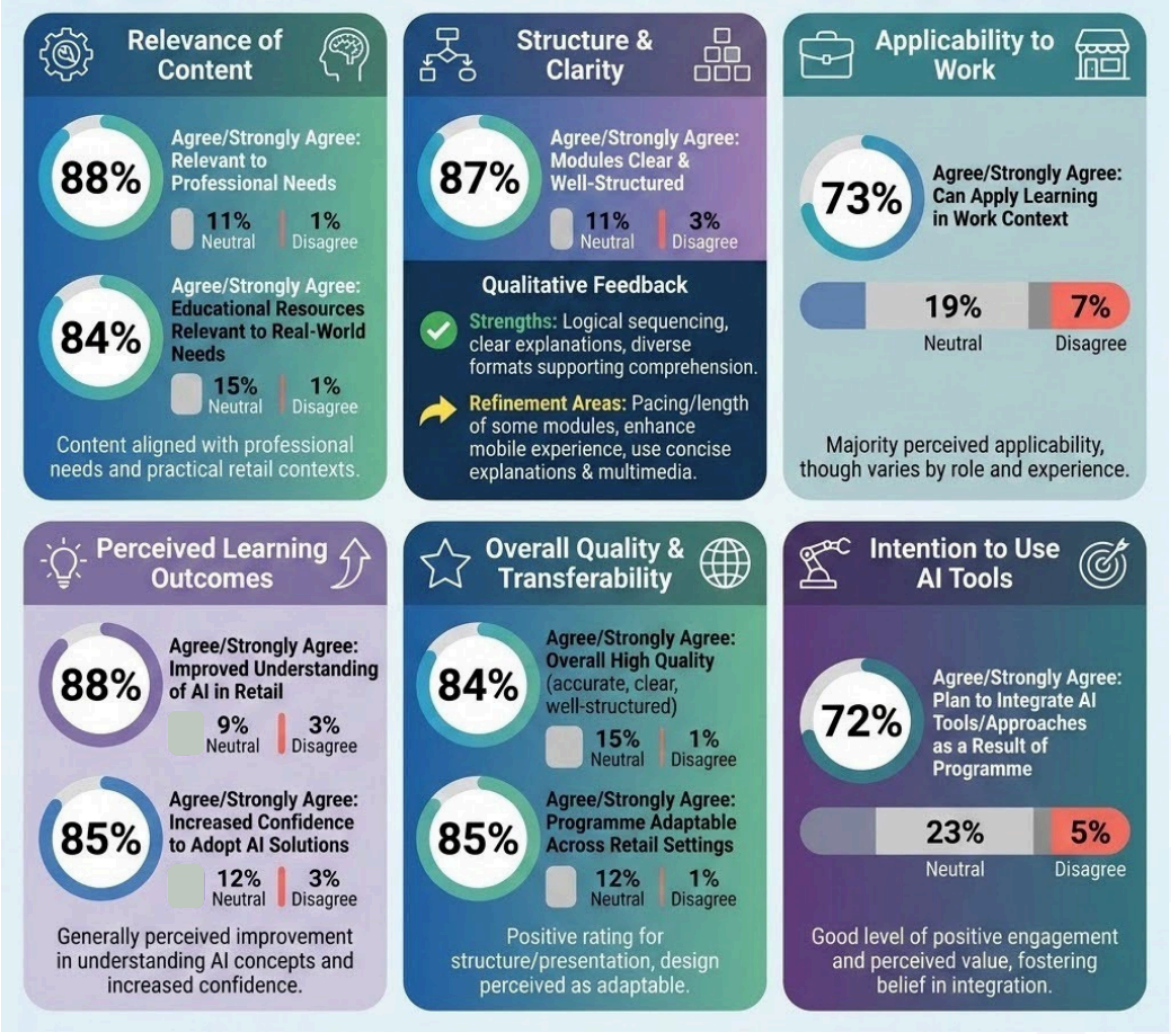
Regarding **education level**, the expert sample shows a high share of tertiary qualifications. Particularly, the reported distribution was 89% tertiary education, 10% upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, and 2% lower secondary or less.

5. Evaluation Results: Retailers

This chapter presents the findings from the evaluation survey completed by retail workers and business owners who participated in the pilot. The results are based on self-reported data and reflect participant perceptions of the programme's relevance and quality.

To provide an overview of the key findings, Figure X presents a consolidated summary of participants' responses across the main evaluation dimensions, including relevance, structure and clarity, applicability, perceived learning outcomes, overall quality, and intention to use AI tools. The figure highlights the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement, offering a high-level synthesis of the evaluation results prior to the detailed analysis presented in the following sections.

Figure 8. Summary of Key Evaluation Results from Retail Participants



Source: Authors' elaboration based on end-user evaluation survey data. Visualisation created by the authors using GenAI.

Relevance of the Programme Content

Participants were asked to assess the extent to which the programme content was relevant to their professional needs. Based on survey responses, **88% of respondents** selected "agree" or "strongly agree" for the statement "The program content was relevant to my needs", while 11% indicated a neutral position and 1% expressed disagreement.

Participants were also asked whether the educational resources were relevant to real-world needs in the retail sector. For this statement, **84% of respondents** selected "agree" or "strongly agree", while 15% indicated a neutral position and 1% expressed disagreement.

Therefore, the results suggest that, within the pilot sample, the **educational content was generally perceived as aligned with participants' professional needs** and **applicable to practical retail contexts.**

Structure and Clarity of the Learning Modules

Regarding the structure and clarity of the modules, **87% of participants agreed** or strongly agreed that the learning modules were clear and well-structured. A proportion of 11% provided neutral responses, and 3% (2 respondents) indicated disagreement.

Qualitative feedback indicates that participants generally appreciated the logical sequencing of content, the clarity of explanations, and the combination of different learning formats (e.g. videos, readings, quizzes, and practical examples), which supported comprehension and engagement across different levels of prior knowledge.

At the same time, some respondents identified areas for refinement. These primarily related to the pacing and length of certain modules, with suggestions to ensure a more balanced distribution of content. Additional comments pointed to opportunities to further enhance usability and accessibility, such as strengthening the mobile experience, and increasing the use of concise explanations, practical examples and multimedia elements.

Applicability to Work Context

Participants were asked whether they could apply what they learned in their work context. A proportion of **73% agreed** or strongly agreed with this statement, while 19% selected neutral and 7% disagreed.

These responses suggest that a majority of participants perceived a degree of applicability of the programme content to their professional activities, although this perception may vary depending on role, prior experience and organisational context.

Perceived Learning Outcomes

With regard to perceived learning outcomes, participants were asked whether the programme improved their understanding of AI in retail. **88% of respondents** selected "agree" or "strongly agree" for this statement, while 9% indicated a neutral position and 3% expressed disagreement. This suggests that, within the pilot sample, participants generally perceived an improvement in their understanding of AI-related concepts in the retail context.

Participants were also asked whether the programme increased their confidence to adopt AI solutions. For the statement "The program has increased my confidence to adopt AI solutions", **85%** selected "agree" or "strongly agree", while 12% selected neutral and 3% disagreed. This indicates that a proportion of respondents perceived an increase in confidence related to AI adoption, based on their participation in the programme.

Overall Quality and Transferability

Participants were asked to evaluate the overall quality of the programme. For the statement "Overall, the program is of high quality (e.g., accurate, clear, well-structured)", **84%** agreed or strongly agreed, while 15% selected neutral and 1% expressed disagreement. These responses suggest that the programme was positively rated in relation to its overall structure and presentation.

In relation to transferability, participants were asked whether the programme could be used or adapted in different retail contexts, including different countries, business sizes or sub-sectors. A proportion of **85%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 12% selected neutral and 1% disagreed. This suggests that the design of the programme was generally perceived as adaptable across retail settings.

Intention to Use AI Tools

A key outcome indicator relates to participants' intention to integrate AI-based tools or approaches into their work. For the statement "I plan to integrate AI-based tools or approaches into my work as a result of my participation in the program", **72%** of participants selected "agree" or "strongly agree", while 23% selected neutral and 5% expressed disagreement. This finding suggests a good level of positive engagement and perceived value in the training: the program was effective in fostering a belief in the relevance and applicability of AI to their professional lives. However, this metric represents a predisposition toward AI adoption, not actual, confirmed behavioral change or successful implementation. Further follow-up is required to assess the translation of this intention into concrete action and successful integration over time.

Qualitative Feedback

Open-ended responses provide additional insight into participant experiences.

When asked about the most useful aspects of the programme, participants most frequently referred to the practical orientation of the content, including concrete examples, real-world applications, exercises, and case-based explanations linked to retail contexts. Many respondents also highlighted the clarity and structure of the learning pathway, noting that the modules were well organised, easy to follow, and successful in making a complex topic more accessible. In addition, several participants valued the way the programme connected AI concepts to day-to-day professional practice, helping them reflect on applicability in their own work settings. These responses suggest that applied, clearly presented, and context-relevant elements were particularly valued.

In terms of areas for improvement, respondents most commonly highlighted the potential value of additional practical examples, exercises, and opportunities for interaction. Some participants also pointed to possible refinements in module length and pacing, including balancing the density of content across sections. Further comments referred to technical considerations, such as navigation, mobile usability and the inclusion of more video-based materials. A smaller number of respondents suggested that certain questions or explanations could be made simpler or more accessible, while others expressed interest in more advanced content.

Additional comments were generally positive, with many respondents indicating that the programme was comprehensive, relevant, and well designed in its current form. Overall, the qualitative feedback confirms a strong appreciation of the programme's structure and practical relevance, while also identifying a number of constructive suggestions that may help inform future refinement.

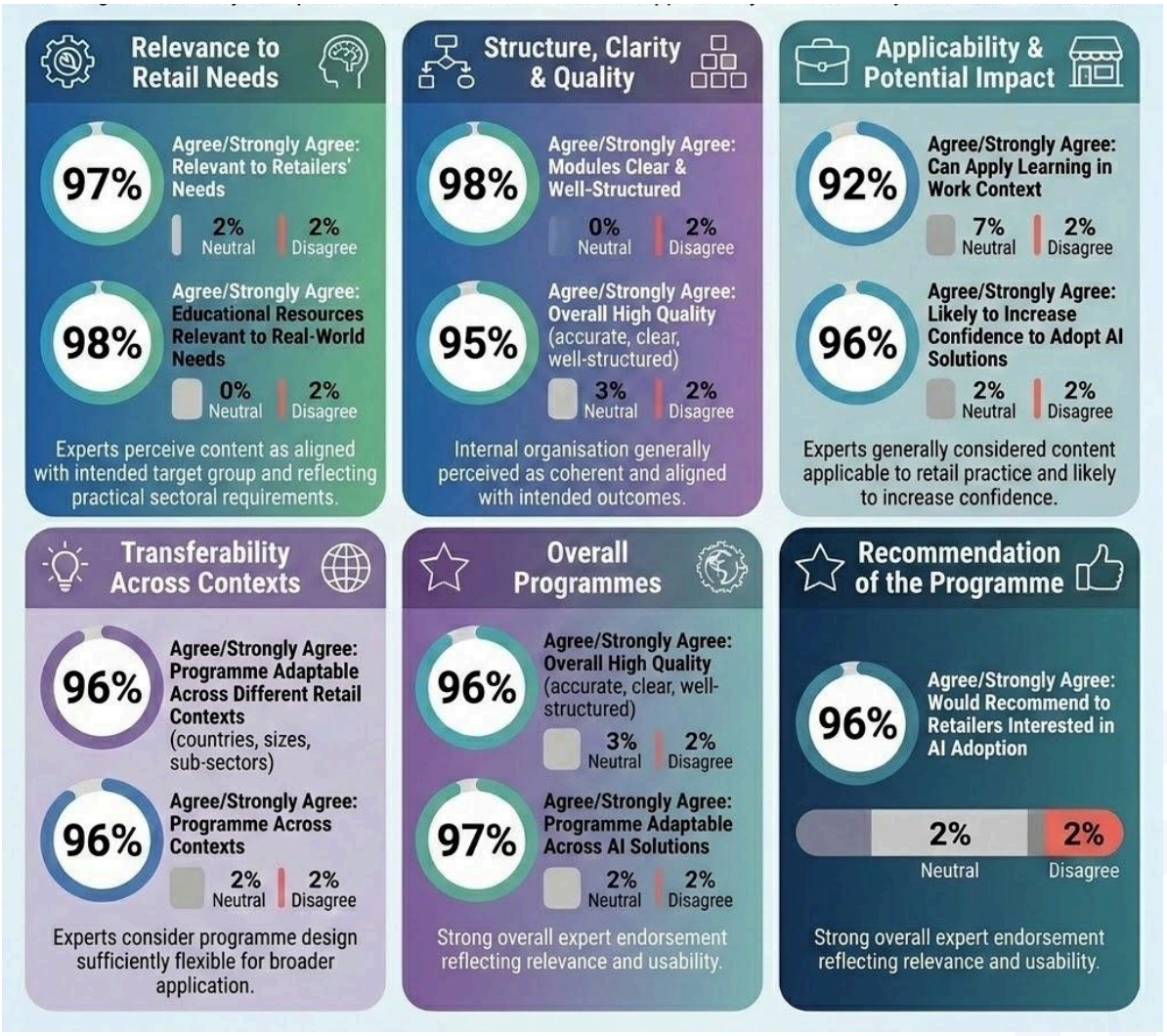
6. Evaluation Results: Experts

This chapter presents the findings from the evaluation survey completed by external experts, including consultants, trainers, institutional representatives and other stakeholders with expertise in retail, AI or digital transformation.

The expert survey aimed to capture an informed external perspective on the relevance, quality and potential applicability of the programme for the retail sector.

Figure 9 presents a synthesis of responses across the main assessment dimensions, including relevance, structure and clarity, applicability, perceived learning value, and overall quality. The figure highlights the proportion of experts who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement, offering a consolidated view of expert perceptions before the detailed results are discussed in the following sections.

Figure 9. Summary of Key Evaluation Results from Relevant Experts



Source: Authors' elaboration based on end-user evaluation survey data. Visualisation created by the authors using GenAI.

Relevance to Retail Needs

Experts were asked to evaluate whether the programme content is relevant to the needs of retailers. For the statement "The program content is relevant to retailers' needs", **97%** agreed or strongly agreed, while 2% selected neutral and 2% disagreed. These findings suggest that, from an expert perspective, the programme content is generally aligned with the needs of the intended target group.

Experts were also asked whether the educational resources are relevant to real-world needs in the retail sector. For this statement, **98%** selected "agree" or "strongly agree", while 2% disagreed. This suggests that the resources were generally perceived as reflecting practical sectoral requirements.

Structure, Clarity and Quality of the Programme

Regarding the structure and clarity of the modules, **98%** of experts agreed or strongly agreed that the modules are clear and well-structured, while 2% disagreed.

Experts also assessed the overall quality of the programme. For the statement "Overall, the program is of high quality (e.g., accurate, clear, well-structured)", **95%** selected "agree" or "strongly agree", while 3% selected neutral and 2% expressed disagreement.

These responses indicate that, within the expert sample, the internal organisation of the programme was generally perceived as coherent and aligned with the intended outcomes.

Applicability and Potential Impact

Experts were asked whether retailers can **apply** what is taught in the programme in their work context. For this statement, **92%** agreed or strongly agreed, while 7% selected neutral and 2% disagreed. This suggests that experts generally considered the content applicable to retail practice.

Experts were also asked whether the programme is likely to increase retailers' **confidence** to adopt AI solutions. A proportion of **96%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 2% selected neutral and 2% disagreed.

Transferability Across Contexts

A key question in the expert survey concerned the potential transferability of the programme across different retail contexts. For the statement "The program could be used or adapted in different retail contexts (e.g., different countries, business sizes, or sub-sectors)", **96%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 2% selected neutral and 2% expressed disagreement. This suggests that experts consider the programme design sufficiently flexible to support broader application, although this assessment is based on perceived potential rather than empirical validation across multiple contexts.

Recommendation of the Programme

Experts were also asked whether they would recommend this programme to retailers interested in AI adoption. A proportion of **96%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 2% expressed neutral and 2% disagreed. This indicator provides an overall measure of expert endorsement, reflecting their assessment of the programme's relevance and usability.

Observations from Expert Feedback

Qualitative feedback from experts indicates that the programme is perceived as well-structured, coherent, and aligned with the needs of the retail sector. Respondents frequently highlighted the clarity of the content, the logical sequencing of modules, and the

overall consistency of the learning pathway. The combination of structured learning design with practical, real-world examples was also positively noted, as it supports both understanding and applicability across different levels of prior knowledge. In addition, several experts emphasised the relevance of the programme to professional contexts, as well as its potential for broader use, including adaptation to other sectors or integration into formal education settings.

At the same time, some respondents identified areas for further enhancement. These included the potential for increased interactivity, for example through additional multimedia elements (e.g. videos, animations) or more hands-on exercises. Several experts also suggested expanding the range of practical and sector-specific examples, including more references to small retail businesses and different national contexts. Other comments pointed to possible refinements in module length and pacing, and improvements related to platform usability (e.g. navigation, interface, and flexibility in accessing content). A small number of responses also highlighted opportunities to strengthen follow-up mechanisms after course completion, such as tracking the longer-term application of acquired knowledge.

Overall, the expert feedback complements the quantitative findings by confirming a strong appreciation of the programme's structure, relevance, and practical orientation, while also identifying targeted and incremental improvements that could further enhance the learning experience.

7. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

This section provides an integrated interpretation of the findings from the pilot cycles, drawing together evidence from platform participation data, survey responses from retail participants, and feedback from external experts. The analysis aims to identify converging patterns across data sources and to highlight key observations relevant to the further development and potential future scaling of the INAIR e-learning programme.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the programme was perceived as relevant to the needs of the retail sector. Both retail participants and external experts reported consistently positive assessments of the alignment between the programme content and real-world retail contexts. This convergence across respondent groups provides a useful indication that the curriculum responds to sectoral expectations, particularly in relation to practical use cases, introductory AI literacy, and applied learning in professional settings.

The structure and organisation of the learning modules were also assessed positively. Retail participants generally described the modules as clear, logically sequenced, and easy to follow, while experts similarly emphasised the coherence of the learning pathway and its suitability for adult and professional learners. These findings suggest that the programme's modular and progression-based design functioned effectively for most users. At the same time, qualitative responses indicate that perceptions of clarity and pacing were not uniform across all respondents, pointing to some variation linked to prior knowledge, learning preferences, and familiarity with AI-related concepts.

With regard to applicability, a majority of retail respondents considered the content relevant to their work context, and expert respondents likewise viewed the programme as having practical value for retail settings. This is broadly consistent with the programme design, which combines sector-oriented content with role-based learning pathways. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that perceived applicability is shaped by contextual factors, including organisational digital maturity, access to resources, and the specific responsibilities of individual learners. In this sense, the programme appears to provide a useful foundation, while the extent of direct application may depend on conditions beyond the learning environment itself.

The results on perceived learning outcomes are similarly indicative of a positive experience. A substantial proportion of retail participants reported that the programme improved their understanding of AI in retail and increased their confidence in considering or adopting AI-based solutions. Expert feedback broadly reinforces this interpretation, particularly with regard to the programme's value at foundational and intermediate levels of competence development. However, these outcomes should be interpreted with appropriate caution, as they reflect self-reported perceptions rather than independently verified gains in knowledge or skills.

A related finding concerns participants' stated intention to use AI tools or approaches in their work. The responses suggest that the programme may have supported a more favourable orientation towards AI adoption and experimentation in professional contexts. This can be considered a relevant outcome in itself, particularly in settings where awareness and confidence represent important preconditions for uptake. At the same time, intention should not be equated with actual implementation. Further follow-up would be necessary to determine whether this reported predisposition translates into sustained behavioural change or concrete organisational practice.

Differences between respondent groups are also relevant for interpreting the results. Retail participants evaluated the programme on the basis of direct engagement with the platform and its content, whereas experts assessed it from a more external perspective, often informed by sectoral, pedagogical, or institutional considerations. While the two groups showed broad alignment in their assessments, their emphasis differed in predictable ways. Retail participants focused more strongly on usability, clarity, and immediate practical relevance, whereas experts more often referred to issues such as transferability, methodological coherence, and wider applicability across contexts. The consistency of the overall assessments across these distinct perspectives strengthens the credibility of the findings.

At the same time, both datasets point to a number of areas where refinement could further strengthen the programme. These include requests for additional practical examples, more interactive and multimedia elements, greater differentiation for advanced learners, and more contextualised references to specific retail sub-sectors or national settings. Some respondents also highlighted aspects of usability, such as navigation, pacing, and mobile accessibility. These observations do not undermine the overall positive assessment of the programme; rather, they indicate that the pilot has helped identify targeted improvements that may enhance the programme's accessibility, relevance, and responsiveness to different learner profiles.

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of the evidence base. The findings derive from a self-selected group of users who registered for the pilot and, in some cases, chose to complete the evaluation surveys. As such, the results should not be interpreted as representative of the wider population of retail professionals. In addition, the evaluation relies primarily on self-reported perceptions and satisfaction-related measures, which are inherently subject to individual interpretation and possible response bias. Platform progression data provide an additional source of information, but they do not in themselves explain the reasons for participation patterns or completion rates.

Overall, the pilot findings provide a reasonably strong indication that the INAIR e-learning programme is functioning as intended in several core respects. Across both participant and expert feedback, the programme was generally perceived as relevant, well-structured, and applicable to the retail context, with evidence of positive perceived learning effects and broad endorsement of its design. At the same time, the pilot has usefully identified a set of concrete and proportionate areas for improvement. These findings therefore provide a sound basis for further refinement of the programme and for informing future implementation, adaptation, and scaling activities.

8. Conclusions

This report has presented the results of the pilot cycles of the INAIR e-learning programme, based on platform participation data and evaluation survey responses from both retail participants and external experts.

The findings suggest that the programme is generally perceived as relevant to the needs of the retail sector. Participants reported that the content reflects real-world applications and aligns with their professional context, while expert respondents indicated that the programme addresses key areas related to AI adoption in retail. These observations are consistent with the curriculum design, which emphasises applied learning and role-based differentiation.

The structure and organisation of the learning modules were also positively evaluated. Respondents indicated that the modules are clear and logically structured, supporting progression through the learning pathway. The personalised pathway approach, based on initial assessment and professional role, appears to contribute to perceived relevance by limiting exposure to non-essential content and by supporting more targeted engagement with the curriculum.

In terms of perceived outcomes, a proportion of participants reported improvements in their understanding of AI concepts and increased confidence in considering AI solutions within their work context. While these findings are based on self-reported data, they suggest that the programme may contribute to awareness-building and initial competence development. In this respect, the programme appears particularly suitable for use as an entry-to-intermediate upskilling resource for retail workers, business owners and managers who require a structured introduction to AI and its possible applications in retail.

The pilot also provided indications regarding the potential transferability of the programme. Both retail participants and experts reported that the content could be adapted to different retail contexts, including across countries and business sizes. This suggests that the modular and multilingual design of the platform may support broader application, although further testing in different settings would be required to confirm this. For future implementation, the programme may therefore be used within different organisational learning strategies, including staff training, onboarding for digital transformation initiatives and role-specific professional development pathways.

The results also indicate that the programme should not be considered only as an individual learning resource, but also as a potential support tool for organisational reflection on AI adoption. Reported increases in confidence and intention to consider AI-based approaches suggest that retailers may use the programme to initiate internal discussions on practical use cases, digital readiness and priority areas for experimentation. Its value is likely to be higher when participation is linked to organisational objectives, supported by management and followed by opportunities to apply learning in concrete work contexts.

At the same time, the pilot identified several **recommendations for future use**.

(i) Leverage personalised learning pathways

Maintaining and actively embedding personalised learning pathways in training implementation is highly recommended. The positive assessment of relevance among the diverse retail participants suggests that the role- and proficiency-based structure supported alignment between programme content and learners' professional needs. To fully leverage the potential offered by personalised pathways, it is important to present the initial assessment as a diagnostic and orientation tool. Rather than perceiving it as a competitive evaluation,

participants should be encouraged to complete it with maximum accuracy. This allows the platform to assign a learning pathway appropriately aligned with their existing knowledge, professional role, and training needs. This approach to framing the assessment can assist learners in understanding the value of the personalised pathway and promote engagement with content pertinent to their daily tasks, responsibilities, and decision-making contexts.

(ii) Support self-paced learning with organisational guidance

The self-paced model provides flexibility and allows participants to progress according to their availability. At the same time, organisational support may strengthen its use. Measures such as dedicated learning time, internal facilitation, structured milestones or periodic check-ins may help learners make full use of the available pathway and sustain engagement through to completion. The Use Cases developed by the project consortium (accessible at https://www.ai4retail.eu/en/practical-guide-facilitators) can assist organisations and trainers in integrating training support.

(iii) Use the programme as a catalyst for organisational AI adoption discussions

The programme can serve not only as an individual learning resource, but also as a starting point for organisational reflection on AI adoption. The reported increase in participants' confidence in considering AI solutions, together with their stated intention to integrate AI-based tools or approaches into their work, suggests that the programme may help create favourable conditions for internal discussions on possible use cases, organisational readiness and priority areas for experimentation.

(iv) Integrate the programme into a broader learning ecosystem

Considering the programme as one component of a wider learning and implementation pathway is recommended. Its contribution to improving participants' understanding of AI in retail indicates that it can provide a useful basis for subsequent learning or applied activities. Its impact may be enhanced when complemented by advanced training, technical support, facilitated workshops or practical projects that allow learners to apply acquired knowledge in concrete organisational contexts. Practical suggestions for this type of implementation are included in the *Practical Guide for Facilitators* developed by the project consortium: https://www.ai4retail.eu/en/practical-guide-facilitators.

(v) Monitor outcomes beyond participation

Organisations are encouraged to monitor outcomes after course completion, including the application of knowledge, changes in work practices, development of AI-related initiatives and further training needs. The positive self-reported results on understanding, confidence and intention to use AI provide a useful starting point for such monitoring, while follow-up evidence would help assess how these perceived outcomes translate into longer-term behavioural or organisational change.

Overall, the pilot results indicate that the INAIR e-learning programme is considered a relevant and structured training resource for AI in retail, with potential for broader use in competence development and organisational preparation for AI adoption. The findings suggest that the programme can be most effectively used as part of a wider learning and implementation ecosystem, combining role-based training with organisational support, practical application and follow-up activities.

Appendix 1: Retail Participant Evaluation Survey Template

Section 1: Respondent Information

1. Full Name
2. Organisation (optional)
3. Profile
   ☐ Retail employee
   ☐ Retail business owner / manager
   ☐ Other (please specify): _____
4. Gender
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Prefer not to say
   ☐ Other (please specify): _____
5. Age
   ☐ 18–24
   ☐ 25–34
   ☐ 35–44
   ☐ 45–54
   ☐ 55+
6. Highest Level of Formal Education
   ☐ Lower secondary or below (ISCED 0–2)
   ☐ Upper secondary / post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 3–4)
   ☐ Tertiary education (ISCED 5–8)
7. Country of Residence

Section 2: Programme Evaluation

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

(Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly agree)

1. The programme content was relevant to my needs.
2. The educational resources are relevant to real-world needs in the retail sector.
3. The learning modules were clear and well-structured.
4. I can apply what I learned in my work context.
5. The programme improved my understanding of AI in retail.
6. The programme increased my confidence in adopting AI solutions.
7. Overall, the programme is of high quality (e.g., accurate, clear, well-structured).
8. The programme could be used or adapted in different retail contexts (e.g., countries, business sizes, sub-sectors).
9. I plan to integrate AI-based tools or approaches into my work as a result of participating in the programme.

Section 3: Qualitative Feedback

1. What aspects of the programme did you find most useful?

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2. What aspects of the programme could be improved?

3. Any additional comments or recommendations?

Appendix 2: Expert Evaluation Survey Template

Section 1: Respondent Information

1. Full Name
2. Organisation (optional)
3. Profile
   Please select the option that best describes your profile:
   ☐ Retail expert
   ☐ Academic / Researcher
   ☐ AI / Technology expert
   ☐ Trainer / Educator
   ☐ Other (please specify): _____
4. Gender
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Prefer not to say
   ☐ Other (please specify): _____
5. Age
   ☐ 18–24
   ☐ 25–34
   ☐ 35–44
   ☐ 45–54
   ☐ 55+
6. Highest Level of Formal Education
   ☐ Lower secondary or below (ISCED 0–2)
   ☐ Upper secondary / post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 3–4)
   ☐ Tertiary education (ISCED 5–8)
7. Country of Residence

Section 2: Programme Evaluation

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

(Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly agree)

1. The programme content is relevant to retailers' needs.
2. The educational resources are relevant to real-world needs in the retail sector.
3. The learning modules are clear and well-structured.
4. Retailers can apply what is taught in their work context.
5. The programme improves understanding of AI in retail.
6. The programme is likely to increase retailers' confidence in adopting AI solutions.
7. Overall, the programme is of high quality (e.g., accurate, clear, well-structured).
8. The programme could be used or adapted in different retail contexts (e.g., countries, business sizes, sub-sectors).
9. I would recommend this programme to retailers interested in AI adoption.

Section 3: Qualitative Feedback

1. What aspects of the programme did you find most useful?

2. What aspects of the programme could be improved?

3. Any additional comments or recommendations?