

Skills4Retail
Building sustainable growth

Pilot Training Programmes for Emerging Occupational Roles Delivered in 8 Countries

Deliverable D4.2

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About the Skills4Retail project

The Skills4Retail project focuses on fast-tracking the 'Triple Transition' of Green, Digital and Resilience in the Retail sector, helping retailers to embrace ecommerce and ensuring their new business models are sustainable from the start. The project's goal is to design a new Retail Skills Strategy and VET Training Programme that will address the urgent and emerging skills needs of retailers in the key areas of Digital, Green and Resilience. It will focus on training fresh new talent for the sector through training programmes in VET Schools and Higher Education Institutions, and the reskilling of the existing workforce via work-based learning and short-term modular courses.

Work Package 4 of the Skills4Retail project is designed to respond to the urgent and emerging skills needs in the retail sector, ensuring that the workforce is equipped to meet the demands of the Triple Transition (Green, Digital, and Resilience) and the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. The objectives of this work package are to:

- Create and deliver a reactive VET training programme aimed at addressing the urgent skills needs within the retail sector that have emerged as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the digital and green transitions. This programme focuses on providing rapid upskilling and reskilling opportunities to meet the immediate demands of the sector.
- Test and refine a VET training programme designed to address the emerging skills needs of the retail sector in the medium and long term. By focusing on the future of work in retail, this objective aims to prepare the workforce for the growing demand for highly skilled jobs that are crucial for achieving the Triple Transition and ensuring sustainable business practices in the industry.
- Maintain and develop sustained engagement between training providers and labour market stakeholders across the retail sector. This objective aims to create a collaborative environment for continuous feedback, enabling the progressive roll-out of VET training programmes throughout Europe. It will establish feedback loops that will allow the strategy to be iterated and improved, ensuring that the training programmes remain aligned with the evolving needs of the sector.

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The Skills4Retail Consortium

The Skills4Retail consortium is an Erasmus + Partnerships for Innovation Funded project, bringing together 30 partners.

1	Partner	Acronym	Country
2	Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Latvija	JA-YE Latvia	Latvia
3	Profesionalas Izglitibas Kompetences Centram Rigas Valsts Tehnikums	RSTS	Latvia
4	Matrix Internet Applications Limited	Matrix Internet	Ireland
5	Karlínská obchodní akademie	Karlínská	Czechia
6	Schuman Associates SCRL	Schuman	Belgium
7	Junior Achievement Austria – Unternehmerische Praxis- und Kompetenzbildung	JA Austria	Austria
8	Scoala Superioara Comerciala Nicolae Kretzulescu	SSCNK	Romania
9	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich	WKO	Austria
10	Universitatea din Bucuresti	UB	Romania
11	Digital Technology Skills Limited	DTSL	Ireland
12	Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde	EPVC, Vila do Conde	Portugal
13	Junior Achievement Magyarország Oktatási, Vállalkozásszervezési Alapítvány	JA Hungary	Hungary
14	Aprender a Empreender - Associação de Jovens Empreendedores de Portugal	JA Portugal	Portugal
15	Asociatia Junior Achievement of Romania	JA Romania	Romania
16	Skillnet Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee	Skillnet	Ireland
17	Vállalkozók és Munkáltatók Országos Szövetsége	VOSZ	Hungary
18	Szent Gyorgy Hang - Es Filmmuveszeti Technikum	SZGYF	Hungary
19	Junior Achievement, OPS	JA Czech	Czechia
20	Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation	JA Malta	Malta
21	Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Ireland	JA Ireland	Ireland
22	OTB Europe	OTB Europe	Portugal
23	Accenture SA	Accenture SA	Belgium

No	Associated Partner	Acronym	Country
1	Intel Technology Poland Spółka z ograniczoną odpowiedzialnością	INTEL Poland	Poland
2	JMH, SGPS, S.A.	JerónimoMartins	Portugal
3	EuroCommerce	EuroCommerce	Belgium
4	SPAR Österreichische Warenhandels AG	SPAR	Austria
5	Svaz obchodu a cestovního ruchu České republiky	SOCR CR	Czechia
6	Szegedi Tudományegyetem	USZ	Hungary
7	UNI Europa*	UNI Europa	Belgium

* joined as Associated Partner on Oct. 30th 2023

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Deliverable D4.2 – Pilot Training Programmes for Emerging Occupational Roles Delivered in 8 Countries

1. Introduction

This deliverable presents the implementation of the **Skills4Retail pilot training programmes across the eight participating countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Portugal and Romania.**

The objective of Deliverable D4.2 is to establish and **deliver pilot vocational education and training (VET) programmes addressing emerging occupational roles and skills needs within the European retail sector.** Building on the curricula and training materials developed under Work Package 3, the pilot phase focused on validating the training content through implementation across different national contexts, educational settings and learner groups.

The pilot programmes were designed to **equip both new entrants and existing retail professionals with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to respond to the sector's digital, green and organisational transformation.** Through the implementation phase, the consortium tested the effectiveness of the learning pathways, strengthened collaboration between education providers and employers, and gathered valuable feedback to further improve the programme and support its long-term sustainability.

More specifically, the pilot programmes aimed to:

- validate the Skills4Retail curricula and learning materials in real educational and workplace environments;
- assess the relevance of the training content for different target groups, including students, non-managerial employees, managers and people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs);
- test different delivery approaches across vocational education providers, universities, training organisations and workplace settings;
- strengthen collaboration between education providers and retail employers through work-based learning opportunities;
- gather feedback from learners, trainers, employers and education providers to support continuous improvement; and
- generate evidence to support the future scale-up and sustainability of the Skills4Retail training programme.

The pilot phase represents an important milestone in demonstrating that the Skills4Retail learning offer can be successfully implemented across different European contexts while responding to the evolving skills needs of the retail sector.

2. Development of the Pilot Programmes

2.1 Skills Analysis and Curriculum Design

The Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme was developed in response to the changing skills needs of the European retail sector, identified through the project's research and skills intelligence activities. The analysis highlighted increasing demand for competencies related to digitalisation, sustainability, customer experience, leadership, workforce management and the application of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (Refer to WP2 deliverables 2.1 and 2.2).

Based on these findings, the consortium developed two complementary learning pathways addressing different stages of the retail talent pipeline. Together, the pathways provide a flexible learning offer that supports both labour market entry and career progression while responding to the sector's evolving workforce needs.

2.2 Pathway 1 – Emerging Skills for New Entrants and Early-Career Professionals

Pathway 1 was designed to support students, NEETs and non-managerial employees preparing to enter or progress within the retail sector. The pathway focuses on developing the technical, digital and transversal skills required to succeed in an increasingly customer-centric, technology-driven and sustainability-focused retail environment.

Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical learning activities, the pathway aims to strengthen participants' employability, support career entry and prepare learners for emerging occupational roles across the retail ecosystem.

Pathway 1 consists of six modules:

- Retail Customer Experience
- Introduction to E-Commerce
- Digital Marketing
- Introduction to Sustainability in Retail
- Supply Chain Fundamentals
- AI in Retail

The modular structure allows education providers to integrate the content into existing curricula while providing learners with practical, industry-relevant skills that can be applied across a range of retail settings.

2.3 Pathway 2 – Workforce Development and Career Progression

Pathway 2 was designed to support the upskilling and career progression of existing retail employees and managers by strengthening leadership, workforce management and organisational capabilities.

The pathway responds to the growing need for managers who can successfully lead teams, embrace digital transformation and foster resilient, future-ready organisations. It supports participants in

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developing the competencies required to take on increased responsibilities, improve team performance and contribute to organisational growth.

The pathway consists of five modules:

- Retail Workforce Management
- Coaching, Mentoring and Performance Management
- Leadership in the Experience Economy
- Leading with Integrity
- AI in Retail

Together with Pathway 1, **the programme provides a comprehensive learning offer supporting both workforce entry and continuous professional development within the retail sector.**

The complete Skills4Retail training package includes:

- Trainer presentations (PowerPoint)
- Trainer Guides
- Learning activities and practical exercises
- Reading materials
- Assessment tools
- Supporting videos and additional learning resources

Overall, the programme comprises eleven modules across the two learning pathways. Training materials were translated and adapted by project partners to ensure relevance to national education systems, languages and labour market contexts, supporting consistent implementation across participating countries.

2.4 Train-the-Trainer Programme

To ensure consistent and high-quality delivery across all participating countries, an initial Train-the-Trainer (TTT) programme was organised in October 2025.

The programme familiarised trainers and delivery partners with:

- the Skills4Retail curricula;
- learning objectives and expected outcomes;
- delivery methodologies;
- assessment approaches; and
- participant monitoring and evaluation processes.

The initial Train-the-Trainer programme engaged **40 participants representing 15 organisations, including project partners and external VET providers.**

Country	Organisation	Number of Participants
Austria	HAK Weiz	1
	WKO-WIFI	3

	BHAK/S Eisenstadt	3
	BHAK Bludenz	1
Czech	Karlínská obchodní akademie	2
	JA Czech	1
Hungary	Szent György Hang- és Filmművészeti Technikum	2
Ireland	Junior Achievement Ireland	3
Latvia	Riga State Technical School	5
Malta	JA Malta	2
	KNIGHTS College	5
Portugal	JA Portugal	2
	Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde – EPVC	3
Romania	Economic College Nicolae Kretzulescu	4
	JA Romania	3
GRAND TOTAL		**40**

As implementation progressed, **additional Train-the-Trainer sessions were organised to onboard new trainers, schools and educational institutions joining the pilot.** These sessions ensured that newly engaged delivery partners were equipped with the knowledge, tools and methodologies required to deliver the Skills4Retail curricula consistently while maintaining the quality standards established across the project. Partners in Hungary, Portugal, Ireland and the Czech Republic have **trained and onboarded more than 30 trainers** through seven dedicated Train-the-Trainer sessions, representing more than 30 hours of training delivered in total**.** These trainers have already delivered Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 modules through both existing and newly onboarded educational provider partners, while additional trainers have been prepared to support the rollout of the programme with new educational partners from the next academic year onwards.

The continuous delivery of Train-the-Trainer sessions supported the successful expansion of the Skills4Retail delivery network beyond the original consortium partners. As additional VET providers and educational institutions joined the implementation, the programme created a growing community of qualified trainers capable of delivering the Emerging Training Programme, adapting the learning content to local contexts and supporting the long-term scalability and sustainability of the Skills4Retail learning offer.

3. Pilot Implementation Across Countries

The Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme was successfully implemented across **eight participating countries through a network of vocational education providers, higher education institutions and specialised training organisations,** with five participating countries exceeding the country-level KPI of 100 beneficiaries**.**

Delivery was adapted to national contexts while maintaining a common curriculum and quality standards across the partnership. During implementation, several countries expanded delivery beyond the original consortium partners by engaging additional schools and educational institutions, contributing towards Output 15 – Training and Support for VET Providers and demonstrating strong interest in the Skills4Retail learning offer.

To date, the Emerging Training Programme **has engaged 1,432 participants** through flexible learning pathways. In parallel, companies have actively supported the programme by providing **work-based learning opportunities to 117 participants** and offering **264 placements and internships,** strengthening the connection between training and employment.

Country	In-Education (Students & Non-Managerial Employees)	In-Employment (managers)	NEET	Total Participants	Modules Delivered	Educational Providers	WBL Participants	Placements
Austria	0	81	0	81	**Pathway 1**: Retail Customer Experience, AI in Retail I, Introduction to E-commerce **Pathway 2:** Leadership in the Experience Economy, Coaching, Mentoring & Performance Management, Retail Workforce Management, AI in Retail II, Leading with Integrity	WKO	0	0
Czech Republic	132	0	0	132	**Pathway 1:** Retail Customer Experience, Introduction to E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Intro to Sustainability in Retail, AI in Retail I **Pathway 2**: Coaching, Mentoring & Performance Management, Leading with Integrity, Retail	Karlínská obchodní akademie, Slezská univerzita	0	64

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					Workforce Management, Leadership in the Experience Economy, AI in Retail II			
Hungary	21	100	5	126	**Pathway 1**: Retail Customer Experience, Introduction to E-commerce, Digital Marketing, AI in Retail I	Szent György Hang- és Filmtechnium, Szegedi SZC Krúdy Gyula Szakképző iskola Szeged	20	1
Ireland	79	73	0	152	**Pathway 1**: Intro to Sustainability in Retail, Digital Marketing **Pathway 2:** Coaching, Mentoring & Performance Management	Youthreach, Cork Education and Training Board, Grange Community College, Junior Achievement Ireland, 20 FIFTY, Retail Ireland Skillnet	64	16
Latvia	421	0	0	421	**Pathway 1**: Retail Customer Experience, Introduction to E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Supply Chain Fundamentals, Intro to Sustainability in Retail, AI in Retail I	Riga State Technical School	33	183
Malta	3	101	0	104	**Pathway 1**: Retail Customer Experience **Pathway 2**: Retail Workforce Management	Knights College	0	0
Portugal	223	0	0	223	**Pathway 1**: Retail	Escola Profissional	0	0

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					Customer Experience, Introduction to E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Intro to Sustainability in Retail, AI in Retail I	de Vila do Conde, Escola Comércio do Porto, Escola de Comércio de Lisboa		
Romania	193	0	0	193	**Pathway 1**: Retail Customer Experience, Introduction to E-commerce, Digital Marketing	University of Bucharest, Commercial High School Nicolae Kretzulescu	0	0
TOTAL	**1072**	**355**	**5**	**1432**			**117**	**264**

- Austria

In Austria, the Emerging Training Programme was delivered by **WKO**, engaging **81 participants**, all of whom were managers participating under Pathway 2. Alongside the management pathway, participants were also introduced to selected Pathway 1 modules, creating a comprehensive learning experience that combined customer-focused, digital and leadership competencies. Delivery included **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, **AI in Retail I**, as well as the full Pathway 2 management curriculum, supporting workforce development and leadership within the Austrian retail sector.

- Czech Republic

The pilot in the Czech Republic was implemented by **Karlínská obchodní akademie** and **Slezská univerzita**, reaching **132 students,** exceeding the country target by 32%. Participants completed all five Pathway 1 modules, including **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, **Digital Marketing**, **Introduction to Sustainability in Retail**, and **AI in Retail I**. In addition, the complete Pathway 2 curriculum was made available, covering **Coaching, Mentoring and Performance Management**, **Leading with Integrity**, **Retail Workforce Management**, **Leadership in the Experience Economy**, and **AI in Retail II**. The pilot generated **660 module completions** and resulted in **64 internship placements**, demonstrating strong collaboration between education providers and employers.

- Hungary

In Hungary, the programme was delivered by **Szent György Hang- és Filmtechnikum** and **Szegedi SZC Krúdy Gyula Szakképző Iskola Szeged**, engaging **126 participants**, including **21 students**, **100 managers**, and **5 NEET participants,** achieving 126% of the country target. Delivery focused on **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, **Digital Marketing**, and **AI in Retail I**, while management participants also benefited from Pathway 2 activities. **20 participants** undertook work-based learning activities and **one placement** reported during the implementation period.

- Ireland

Implementation in Ireland involved a broad partnership comprising **Youthreach**, **Cork Education and Training Board**, **Grange Community College**, **Junior Achievement Ireland**, **20 FIFTY**, and **Retail Ireland Skillnet**. Together, these organisations outperformed its country target by 52%, engaging **152 participants**, including **79 students** and **73 managers**. Pathway 1 delivery included **Introduction to Sustainability in Retail** and **Digital Marketing**, while Pathway 2 focused on **Coaching, Mentoring and Performance Management**. The Irish pilot supported **64 work-based learning participants**, and secured **16 placement opportunities**, demonstrating strong employer engagement throughout implementation.

- Latvia

Latvia recorded the highest level of participation across the consortium, engaging **421 students** through **Riga State Technical School - 321% above the target.** The pilot delivered the most comprehensive implementation of Pathway 1, covering **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, **Digital Marketing**, **Supply Chain Fundamentals**, **Introduction to Sustainability in Retail**, and **AI in Retail I**. A total of **477 module completions** were achieved, reflecting the successful integration of the programme into the institution's curriculum. Additionally, **33 students** participated in WBL activities, including job shadows, while **183 participants undertook internships**. Latvia also became the first country to implement participant mobility activities, with **23 learners** participating in international mobility experiences during the pilot phase.

- Malta

The pilot in Malta was delivered by **Knights College**, reaching **104 participants**, including **101 managers** and **3 students**. Participants completed **Retail Customer Experience** under Pathway 1 and **Retail Workforce Management** under Pathway 2, supporting both workforce entry and management development. The pilot demonstrated a successful implementation of both learning pathways within a single educational provider.

- Portugal

In Portugal, the programme was implemented through **Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde**, **Escola de Comércio do Porto**, and **Escola de Comércio de Lisboa**, and piloted more than doubled the country target engaging **223 students**, making Portugal the second largest national pilot. Delivery covered **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, **Digital Marketing**, **Introduction to Sustainability in Retail**, and **AI in Retail I** under Pathway 1. The pilot highlighted the strong learner engagement and successful integration of the programme across multiple educational institutions.

- Romania

Romania implemented the Emerging Training Programme through the **University of Bucharest** and the **Commercial High School Nicolae Kretzulescu**, engaging **193 students,** surpassing the country target by 93%. Participants completed **Retail Customer Experience**, **Introduction to E-Commerce**, and **Digital Marketing**, supporting the development of key employability and digital competencies relevant to the evolving retail sector. The pilot contributed to strengthening collaboration between higher education and vocational education providers.

4. Expanding the Skills4Retail Delivery Network

The pilot implementation demonstrated **strong interest in the Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme beyond the original consortium partners**. As implementation progressed, participating countries **expanded the delivery network by engaging additional vocational education and training (VET) providers, higher education institutions, schools, employers and labour market stakeholders.** This collaborative approach strengthened the programme's reach, supported the delivery of work-based learning opportunities and created a solid foundation for the long-term sustainability and scalability of the Skills4Retail learning offer.

4.1 Expanding the Network of Educational Providers

A key achievement of the pilot **implementation was the successful engagement of educational providers beyond the original consortium partners.** While the project initially relied on partner institutions to pilot the Emerging Training Programme, **several countries expanded implementation by onboarding additional schools, colleges and training organisations earlier than anticipated.**

This expansion demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of the Skills4Retail curriculum across different educational settings and national contexts. The programme was successfully delivered through vocational schools, higher education institutions and specialised training providers, allowing partners to reach a broader range of learners while embedding the training within existing educational provision.

Overall, the pilot engaged **17 educational providers** across the eight participating countries, including vocational schools, universities, colleges and specialised training organisations:

Country	Consortium Delivery Partner(s)	Additional Educational Providers Engaged	Total Number of Trainers
Austria	WKO	–	12
Czech Republic	Karlínská obchodní akademie	Slezská univerzita	5
Hungary	Szent György Hang- és Filmtechnikum	Szegedi SZC Krúdy Gyula Szakképző Iskola	5
Ireland	1. Retail Ireland Skillnet 2. 20 FIFTY Parnters	1. Youthreach, Cork Education and Training Board 2. Grange Community College 3. JA Ireland	8
Latvia	Riga State Technical School	–	15
Malta	Knights College	–	2
Portugal	Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde	1.Escola de Comércio do Porto 2.Escola de Comércio de Lisboa	6

Romania	1. University of Bucharest 2. Commercial High School Nicolae Kretzulescu	–	10

The early engagement of additional educational providers represents an important milestone towards achieving the project's long-term objective of supporting at least 80 VET providers and schools by the end of Year 4, while also demonstrating the potential for wider replication of the Skills4Retail learning offer across Europe.

4.2 Strengthening Employer Engagement

Employer engagement formed a key component of the pilot implementation, ensuring that the Emerging Training Programme reflected current labour market needs while strengthening collaboration between education providers and the retail sector.

Throughout the implementation period, partners actively engaged retail companies and employers in the delivery of the programme, particularly under Pathway 2 – Workforce Development and Career Progression, where industry professionals participated in the training activities and contributed their expertise and experience. **Their involvement strengthened the practical relevance of the learning content and created valuable connections between participants and potential employers.**

Beyond supporting the delivery of the pilot, this engagement **enabled the project to establish a growing network of retail companies across the participating countries.** This network provides a strong foundation for the continued implementation of the Skills4Retail programme and creates opportunities to further expand work-based learning, internships, placements and future employment opportunities for participants.

Country	Companies / Employers Engaged	Companies offered Work-Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities	Companies offered Placements / Internships
Austria	58	-	-
Czech Republic	19	33	64
Hungary	64	20	1
Ireland	46	64	16
Latvia	151	28	124
Malta	17	-	-
Portugal	3	-	-
Romania	2	-	-

To further support national partners in engaging employers, JA Europe developed the **Skills4Retail Employer Engagement Guide**, providing practical guidance on identifying, approaching and collaborating with companies. The guide supports partners in building sustainable employer relationships and expanding opportunities for work-based learning and placements as the programme continues to scale.

To date, several companies have already provided work-based learning opportunities for **117 participants and supported 264 placements and internships across the eight participating countries, demonstrating the value of close collaboration between education providers and the retail sector.**

4.3 Building on the Skills4Retail Experience: The ARRIVE Programme

The experience gained through the implementation of the Skills4Retail project has informed the development of complementary initiatives that further strengthen retail skills development and employability across Europe. One such initiative is **ARRIVE – Advance Retail Readiness in Vocational Education**, implemented in Romania, Hungary, Portugal and Ireland, led by JA Romania

ARRIVE aims to enhance the employability of young people from underserved communities by combining retail-specific learning with soft skills development, career guidance and employer engagement. The programme provides participants with access to educational resources, digital learning modules, career development tools, paid internships and job shadowing opportunities, supporting their transition from education to employment.

Romania

In Romania, the experience gained through Skills4Retail has been instrumental in shaping the ARRIVE programme through the development of its educational framework and learning resources. Junior Achievement Romania led the cross-country needs assessment, engaging **215 students and teachers** across the four participating countries and facilitating focus groups to identify key skills gaps, learning needs and barriers to employment. Building on these findings, six retail education modules and a career guidance workbook were developed and digitalised for delivery through the **JA Learn™** platform. Romania also led the design and implementation of the participant assessment, providing evidence to support the continuous adaptation of the learning content to participants' needs. Beyond curriculum development, the programme has promoted collaboration between education providers, employers and Citi volunteers, laying the foundations for work-based learning and employer engagement activities that continue to be rolled out across the partner countries.

Portugal

In Portugal, the experience gained through Skills4Retail has supported the implementation of ARRIVE by strengthening collaboration between vocational schools, employers and Citi volunteers. Following the launch of the programme with Citi Portugal, Junior Achievement Portugal mapped vocational schools to identify suitable implementation partners and, despite challenges related to the limited number of retail-focused programmes and schools' annual planning cycles, successfully engaged **Escola de Comércio de Lisboa** and **Escola de Comércio do Porto**. The first Skills4Retail-based module, **Retail Customer Experience**, was translated, adapted and delivered to **65 students**, while the remaining modules were prepared for implementation during the 2026/27 academic year. In parallel, **50 students** participated in the cross-country assessment led by JA Romania, providing valuable insights to further adapt the learning experience to participants' needs. Beyond classroom learning, the programme created opportunities for practical engagement through **Job Shadow Days** with Brisa and Citi Portugal, an **Artificial Intelligence webinar** delivered by Citi volunteers that reached **489 students**, and an **Innovation Challenge** involving **51 students**, encouraging innovative thinking around digital retail. Internship activities are also underway, with participating students preparing to undertake placements later this year. Through these activities, ARRIVE demonstrates how the Skills4Retail approach can be adapted to national contexts while strengthening employer engagement and supporting young people's transition into employment.

Ireland

In Ireland, the ARRIVE programme builds on the experience gained through Skills4Retail by combining retail-focused learning with strong employer engagement to support students from Vocational Education and Training (VET) centres and schools in areas of economic disadvantage. To date, **408 students across nine schools** have participated in educational resources and practical learning activities delivered with the support of **19 business volunteers**. In addition, **86 students** participated in career guidance workshops facilitated by business volunteers and Junior Achievement Ireland staff, while **19 students** from VET centres and an inner-city school took part in a Citi Innovation Camp. The programme has also created valuable work-based learning opportunities, with **53 students** participating in job shadowing experiences across two businesses and **11 students** from four VET centres completing internships with **four Cork city centre businesses**. These activities demonstrate how the Skills4Retail approach can be successfully adapted to strengthen employer engagement while supporting young people's transition into employment.

The development of ARRIVE demonstrates how the knowledge, partnerships and implementation experience generated through Skills4Retail can be transferred to new initiatives, extending the impact of the project while supporting continued collaboration between education providers, employers and local communities to address emerging skills needs in the retail sector.

5. Key Achievements

The pilot implementation of the Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme **has demonstrated the project's ability to deliver high-quality retail training across diverse educational and labour market contexts while establishing a strong foundation for future scale-up.** Key achievements include:

- Successful implementation across eight countries

The Emerging Training Programme was successfully delivered in **Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Portugal and Romania, engaging 1,432 participants** through flexible learning pathways tailored to both new entrants to the retail sector and existing retail professionals, with five participating countries exceeding the country-level KPI of 100 beneficiaries.

- Expansion of the Skills4Retail delivery network

The **pilot successfully expanded beyond the original consortium by engaging additional vocational schools, higher education institutions, training providers and retail employers.** This growing delivery network strengthens the long-term sustainability and scalability of the Skills4Retail learning offer across Europe.

- Strong collaboration with the retail sector

The project **established a growing network of retail companies that actively participated in programme delivery and supported work-based learning opportunities, placements and internships,** strengthening collaboration between education providers and employers while improving participants' transition into employment.

- High learner engagement

Across the participating countries, learners completed **2,155 training modules, demonstrating strong engagement with the Emerging Training Programme and confirming the relevance of the curricula for both education and workforce development.**

- Foundation for scale-up and sustainability

The pilot demonstrated that the Skills4Retail curriculum can be successfully integrated into diverse educational settings and adapted to national contexts while maintaining consistent quality standards. The combination of the Train-the-Trainer programme, the Employer Engagement Guide, and the expanded network of educational providers and employers has established a strong foundation for the programme's long-term sustainability and future scale-up. In parallel, participant and trainer evaluation activities have been embedded into the implementation process to collect feedback on the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the training. The findings will be used to further refine the

curricula and learning resources, ensuring that the Skills4Retail learning offer continues to respond to evolving industry needs and learner expectations.

6. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The pilot implementation generated valuable insights that **will inform the continued roll-out and future scaling of the Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme.**

While the programme was successfully implemented across all participating countries, partners experienced varying timelines for participant recruitment, institutional approvals and the integration of the training into existing educational structures, requiring additional coordination and support throughout implementation. These differences highlighted the importance of maintaining a flexible implementation approach while providing ongoing support to delivery partners through regular coordination, monitoring and additional Train-the-Trainer activities.

Monitoring the longer-term outcomes of training delivered to existing retail employees also proved to be more challenging than for participants in formal education. While participation and training completion could be effectively tracked, collecting evidence on subsequent upskilling, career progression and the application of newly acquired skills in the workplace requires continued collaboration with employers beyond the duration of the training. This experience highlighted the importance of strengthening employer engagement and developing sustainable mechanisms for monitoring workforce development outcomes.

The pilot also demonstrated the need for **continued employer engagement to expand opportunities for work-based learning, placements and internships.** The development of the Employer Engagement Guide and the establishment of a growing network of retail companies provide a strong foundation for strengthening these collaborations during the next phase of implementation.

An important lesson learned was the **flexibility of the two learning pathways** in responding to different national contexts. While, for instance, Pathway 2 was originally designed to support workforce development for retail managers and supervisors, several partners successfully delivered selected modules to university students studying retail, marketing and related business disciplines. This demonstrated **that the leadership, workforce management and people management modules are also highly relevant for learners preparing to enter management roles, broadening the potential audience for the Skills4Retail learning offer.**

Finally, the pilot reinforced the importance of **continuous evaluation and feedback collection from learners, trainers and delivery partners.** The evaluation findings will inform the refinement of the curricula and learning resources, ensuring that the programme continues to meet the evolving needs of both the retail sector and education providers.

7. Next Steps

Building on the successful implementation of the pilot phase, the consortium will focus on **finalising the remaining project activities while preparing the Skills4Retail learning offer for long-term adoption and wider dissemination across Europe.**

Key priorities for the final phase of the project include:

- completion of the remaining pilot activities and consolidation of implementation results;
- Review and finalisation of the programme based on participant and trainer evaluation findings, followed by the rollout of the final programme and learning resources, as outlined in Deliverable D4.3;
- continued expansion of employer engagement to increase work-based learning, placement and internship opportunities;
- further strengthening of the Skills4Retail delivery network through collaboration with educational providers and retail employers;
- dissemination of project outcomes and good practices across the Retail Alliance and wider stakeholder community;
- development of recommendations to support the long-term sustainability, scalability and transferability of the Skills4Retail learning offer.

The experience gained through the pilot implementation has demonstrated **the relevance, flexibility and scalability of the Skills4Retail Emerging Training Programme across diverse educational and labour market contexts.** The final phase of the project will build on these achievements to further strengthen the programme and support its wider adoption by education providers and employers, contributing to addressing current and emerging skills needs within the European retail sector.

Document Control Information

Project	Skills4Retail
Project number	101111741
Document Title	Pilot Training Programmes for Emerging Occupational Roles Delivered in 8 Countries
Work Package Number	WP4
Deliverable Number	D4.2 – Pilot Training Programmes for Emerging Occupational Roles Delivered in 8 Countries
Lead Beneficiary	JA Europe
Project Coordinator:	JA Europe
Dissemination Level	Public - fully open
Authors	Teta Karampini, JA Europe
Reviewers	Sabrina Di Ruggiero, Schuman Associates
Description	Set up and run 8 pilot VET training programmes across different target groups in 8 partner countries. Course materials will be provided as outputs and published on the project website (incl. Selected PPTs, reading lists, videos).
Status	**Final for Submission**
Delivery Date	03.08.2026
Due date	14.08.2026

Document history

	Date	Modified by	Comments
1	22/07/2026	Teta Karampini, JA Europe	First full draft
2	30/07/2026	Sabrina Di Ruggiero, Schuman Associates	QA Review
3	03/08/2026	Teta Karampini, JA Europe	Final version
4	03/08/2026	Ana Lucia Ricaurte, JA Europe	Submission via EC portal

Quality Review Key deliverable

Rate	1	2	3	4	5
Quality Parameter	very low/strongly disagree	low/disagree	moderate/neither nor	high/ agree	very high/strongly agree
1. The work performed corresponds to the requirements and methodological standards of the project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
2. The drafting and structuring of each deliverable include the contribution of all relevant experts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
3. Deliverables use clear and easily understandable language in the text and the design is professional and in line with the project brand identity, guidelines, and document template.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
4. The output is in line with the standards adopted by the European Commission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Name of the WP Leader	Teta Karampini				
Due Date	14/08/2026				



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