

CYRUS: your path to better cybersecurity

Lessons learned & recommendations

The CYRUS project raised awareness for the need for cybersecurity training and delivered large-scale training. During its implementation, the project partners have made experiences others can benefit from. This leaflet collects recommendations for different stakeholder groups involved in the design, funding and implementation of large-scale cybersecurity training initiatives.

For the European Commission and Programme Designers

1. Challenge: Consortium instability

In CYRUS, some partners faced financial or organisational constraints that made it difficult to sustain their participation over the full project duration. The 50% co-funding requirement increased these constraints. It contributed to partner and staff changes and led to instability in the consortium, continuous re-coordination and redistribution of tasks.

Recommendation: Low entry barriers

Low co-funding rates can help ensure consortium stability in future programmes. We recommend considering mechanisms to increase the funding rate and thus reduce the partners' own financial contribution.

2. Challenge: Training platform

In CYRUS, the pilot phase showed a need for a dedicated training platform. Setting this up in a way that fulfilled the reporting requirements as well as participant needs – while worth it! – proved time-consuming. To keep the trainings available after the project period ends, is an additional challenge.

Recommendation: One platform, consistent requirements

To enable project partners to work at their most efficient, it could be helpful to have a European learning platform which reflects universal reporting requirements. Harmonising KPI across projects and programmes would enable consortia to focus on the training content and delivery as well as increase sustainability – once on this platform, the trainings could remain accessible.

For training organisations and training providers

1. Challenge: Differing user preferences

Originally, the CYRUS project envisioned in-person trainings as a main training vehicle. The pilot phase revealed that companies strongly preferred flexible learning formats that allow participants to learn at their own pace. As a result, the project shifted from primarily in-person training to an e-learning model.

Recommendation: Test before invest

Training initiatives should include structured pilot phases and built-in flexibility to adapt training formats based on real user feedback.

2. Challenge: English as a training language

Originally, training delivery was foreseen in English only. The project revealed a user preference for local languages – even if people feel comfortable speaking English in the work environment, they prefer their native language when they take courses.

Recommendation: Develop in English, localise for Europe

Provide training materials, webinars and outreach activities in local languages. Communication in participants' native language significantly improves accessibility, trust and engagement.

For future EU projects

1. Challenge: Adjustments needed

During multi-year projects, external conditions and organisational priorities can evolve, and changes may become necessary as a result of the pilot phase. Consortium stability, outreach and participation levels may be affected.

Recommendation: Build in flexibility

Incorporate flexible implementation strategies already when submitting your proposal. Review outreach strategies and training delivery models regularly to ensure alignment with market demand and be prepared to make changes when they are needed.

2. Challenge: Meeting your KPIs

In CYRUS, the KPIs were based on the assumption that the project would count large organisations among their interested parties. When it became clear that onboarding large organisations would be difficult, the effort needed to reach the KPIs multiplied – addressing a lot of smaller organisations is more work than contacting a few larger ones.

Recommendation: Flexibility, outreach, promotion

Define scenarios for KPIs, invest in promotion and partner with other projects and initiatives from early on. Target and localise your outreach so people feel spoken to on eye level. Allocate resources for communication and targeted promotion campaigns, including paid digital advertising and collaboration with local networks, business associations and community organisations – all partners need to contribute.

3. Challenge: Dedicated e-learning platform

The CYRUS project developed its own e-learning platform based on LearnDash. While this allowed full control over training content and learner data, it also required significant technical setup, maintenance and budget allocation.

Recommendation: Consider existing platforms

In the proposal phase, evaluate whether developing a training platform is necessary. Leveraging existing learning management systems or established training platforms may reduce technical complexity, lower costs and improve sustainability, but you should be aware of how they perform and what you can expect from them for reporting purposes.

4. Challenge: Sustainability of training resources

Dedicated platforms and digital learning resources require continuous maintenance, updates and hosting after the project ends. This raises questions on budget and ownership of the task.

Recommendation: Define ownership

Define long-term ownership and sustainability plans, both for training materials and digital infrastructure. Ideally, this should happen early in the project lifecycle to ensure that training resources remain accessible beyond the project duration.

Project partners



About CYRUS

The CYRUS project focuses on strengthening cybersecurity in the transport and manufacturing sectors with a special focus on SMEs. Through innovative learning methods, CYRUS empowers employees of all levels to mitigate cyber threats.



Visit our website to explore our full training catalogue and register for the free cybersecurity courses:

<https://cyrus-project.eu/cybersecurity-trainings>

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