

What We Do

European SMEs Not Yet Ready for AI: New Study Highlights Urgent Skills Gap for Industry 5.0

A new European study conducted in the framework of the [SMART project](#) reveals that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across Europe are not yet fully prepared to adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI), despite growing awareness of its potential. The research, carried out in Norway, Italy, Lithuania, Greece, and Spain, highlights a significant gap between the skills companies currently have and those required to succeed in the emerging Industry 5.0 era. [Learn More](#)

SMART Training Programme: Turning AI into Practical Value for SMEs

The [SMART training programme](#) is currently taking shape, with partners working closely together to develop a set of modules tailored to the real needs of SMEs. The focus is not just on understanding AI, but on making it useful, practical, and directly applicable in everyday business contexts. Blending clear explanations with hands-on activities, the programme is designed to help organisations move from curiosity to confidence - equipping managers with the skills they need to explore, test, and implement AI in a meaningful way. [Learn More](#)

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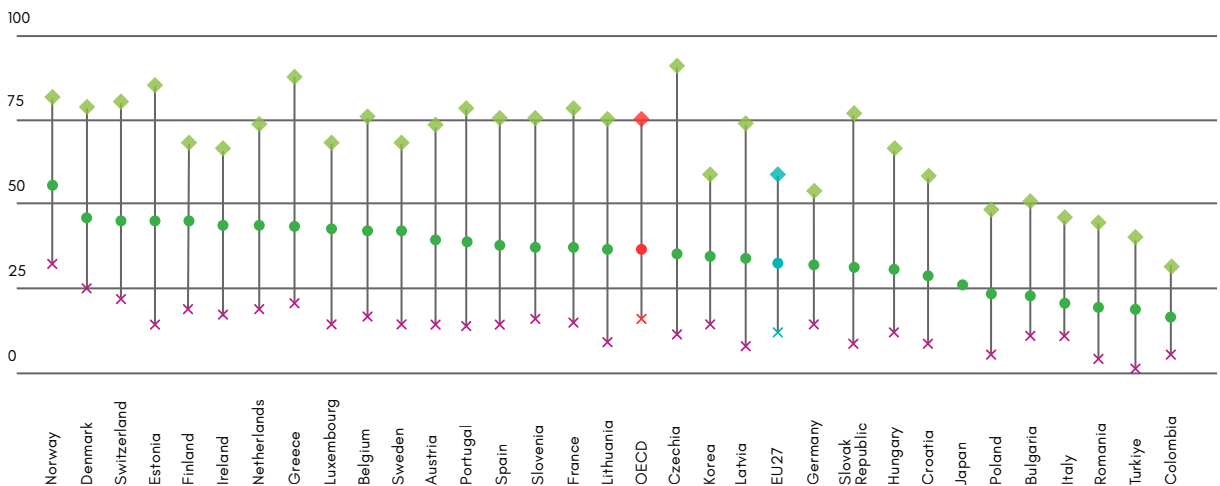
Recent data show that AI use is rapidly becoming part of daily life and work across OECD countries. In 2025, over one-third of individuals reported using generative AI tools, confirming how digital skills and technologies are reshaping learning, creativity, and productivity. However, uptake varies widely by age, education and economic status, pointing to ongoing digital inclusion challenges.

At the same time, business adoption is gaining traction but remains uneven. About 20% of firms reported using AI in 2025, more than doubling from 8.7 % in 2023. Organisations of all sizes explore automation, innovation and competitive edge, but the approach strongly differs in relation to enterprises size and sectors of application - in fact, growth is strongest in ICT, accommodation and service sectors, while smaller companies and traditional industries continue to expand their use of AI more gradually. [Learn More](#)

Individuals using generative AI tools in the last three months

% of individuals, 2025 or latest available data

◆ Individuals aged 16-24 ● Individuals aged 16-74 ✕ Individuals aged 55-74



Source: [OECD ICT Access and Usage Database](#), January 2026.

SMART CONSORTIUM



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