SMART UA Self-employment course programme for Ukrainians

Course name: *Entrepreneurship in Slovakia for Ukrainians: Adaptation of Experience, Tools and AI*

Programme overview

The programme "Entrepreneurship in Slovakia for Ukrainians: Adaptation of Experience, Tools and AI" was implemented by Lifestarter within the SMART UA project, funded by the European Union.

The programme was developed in response to the growing need for practical entrepreneurial education among Ukrainians living in Slovakia, other European countries and Ukraine. The objective was to support participants in building entrepreneurial skills, understanding the Slovak business environment, identifying economic opportunities and developing the confidence necessary to establish and grow sustainable businesses.

The programme combined practical business knowledge with digital innovation, introducing participants to modern Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools that can support entrepreneurship, marketing, customer acquisition, business planning and operational efficiency.

The course was delivered through a combination of online webinars and in-person activities, led by experienced practitioners, entrepreneurs, lawyers, accountants, marketers and fundraising professionals.

Programme objectives

The programme aimed to:

- Strengthen entrepreneurial competences among Ukrainians living abroad and in Ukraine.
- Increase understanding of legal, tax and administrative requirements for doing business in Slovakia.
- Support participants in evaluating and developing business ideas.
- Introduce practical tools for business planning, customer development and market validation.
- Improve access to information about funding opportunities and business support mechanisms.
- Develop participants' digital competences through practical AI applications.
- Create opportunities for networking, peer learning and community building.

Curriculum and learning content

The programme was designed as a step-by-step entrepreneurial journey, guiding participants from understanding the legal environment to developing and presenting their own business ideas.

Module 1: Legal foundations of entrepreneurship in Slovakia

Participants were introduced to the Slovak legal framework for entrepreneurship, including available business structures, registration requirements, residence permits, obligations of foreign entrepreneurs and common legal risks.

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding differences between sole proprietorships and companies.
- Awareness of residence permit requirements.
- Understanding legal obligations and compliance requirements.

Module 2: Accounting and taxation for entrepreneurs

This module focused on financial administration and accounting fundamentals for entrepreneurs operating in Slovakia.

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding taxation and VAT obligations.
- Managing business documentation.
- Financial organisation and cooperation with accountants.
- Avoiding common accounting mistakes.

Module 3: AI Self-Assessment for work and business

This session focused on helping participants assess their current use of Artificial Intelligence in their professional and business activities. Participants were introduced to a self-assessment framework that enabled them to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for integrating AI into their daily workflows.

Learning outcomes:

- Assessing current levels of AI adoption.
- Identifying areas where AI can improve productivity.
- Understanding opportunities and limitations of AI tools.
- Developing an individual roadmap for further AI integration.

Module 4: AI-Powered marketing for small businesses

Participants explored how AI can support marketing activities traditionally carried out by larger teams.

Learning outcomes:

- Market and competitor analysis using AI.
- Customer research and segmentation.
- Content creation and marketing automation.
- Development of AI-supported marketing strategies.

Module 5: International sales and e-commerce

Participants learned practical strategies for entering international markets through online platforms such as Etsy.

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding international e-commerce opportunities.
- Product and niche selection.
- Competitor analysis.
- AI-supported optimisation of online sales.

Module 6: AI for entrepreneurs in practice – experience sharing and business idea in-person workshop

This in-person workshop provided participants with an opportunity to discuss real business challenges, exchange experiences and explore practical applications of AI tools in entrepreneurship.

Learning outcomes:

- Identifying opportunities for AI integration in business processes.
- Evaluating practical AI tools and use cases.
- Learning from peer experiences.
- Applying AI solutions to participants ’own business ideas.

Module 7: Access to finance and business funding

This module introduced participants to available funding opportunities and financial instruments.

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding grants, loans, investors and crowdfunding.
- Assessing financing options for different business models.
- Using AI to identify opportunities and prepare applications.

Module 8–10: Business Development and Validation (Planned)

Additional sessions are scheduled to further support participants in developing and validating business ideas, understanding customers and strengthening entrepreneurial skills.
Detailed content and speakers will be confirmed closer to the implementation dates.

Learning outcomes:

- Opportunity identification.
- Idea validation techniques.
- Early-stage market testing.

Participant engagement

The programme attracted aspiring entrepreneurs, freelancers, consultants, self-employed professionals, small business owners and members of the Ukrainian community interested in entrepreneurship and economic integration.

Programme schedule

Date	Topic	Speaker
28 May 2026	Legal Foundations of Doing Business in Slovakia: Foreign Entrepreneurship and Residence Permits	Marina Kapustina
2 June 2026	Accounting in Slovakia for Beginner Entrepreneurs: What You Need to Know from Day One	Yuliia Taranenko
4 June 2026	AI Self-Assessment for Work and Business	Vilena Ostapenko
9 June 2026	Create Your Marketing Department with 7 AI Assistants in One Evening	Vilena Ostapenko
11 June 2026	Running a business on Etsy for Ukrainians living abroad	Vyacheslav Nedbailo
13 June 2026 (in person)	AI for entrepreneurs in practice – experience sharing and business-idea review	Svitlana Samoilovych

16 June 2026	Where to Find Money for Your Business: Loans, Grants, Investors, Crowdfunding and AI Tools	Svitlana Samoilovych
25 June 2026	Financial opportunities in Slovakia	Svitlana Samoilovych
30 June 2026	Should you take advantage of the simplified procedure for obtaining a residence permit? A conversation with an accountant	Svitlana Samoilovych/ Lifestarter Team
2 July 2026	How to find your business idea and check whether it will work	Svitlana Samoilovych/ Lifestarter Team

Recordings

To ensure accessibility and long-term impact, some recordings and supporting materials were shared with all registered participants.

Webinar #	Recording	Views
Webinar 1 – Legal Foundations of Entrepreneurship in Slovakia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sImb6q8lLto	218
Webinar 2 – Accounting in Slovakia for Beginner Entrepreneurs	Zoom Recording https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/RBD8I_s_TUe86QS1Cneq1U4OZJXv6YEX7wK054lbRvQe6CqmQxWterQciVVo2CM.DRgnwrHqPc3EEBq6 (Passcode: aP2mk&56)	N/a
Webinar 3 – AI Self-Assessment for work and business	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QFX5WVhuiRy0jxSP1SDCs-LbtQYaEVBk/view	N/a
Webinar 4 – Create Your Marketing Department with 7 AI Assistants	https://youtu.be/Liy1i-DEgP8?si=ndUNpBv6u0mb6Hp1	108
Webinar 5 – International Markets through Etsy and AI	https://youtu.be/VkEzw8i54sk	225
Webinar 7 – Business Funding Opportunities	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poGtGyrJh7Y	N/a

Outcomes and impact

The programme provided practical entrepreneurial education tailored to the needs of Ukrainians navigating new economic environments and seeking self-employment opportunities.

Participants gained knowledge in legal compliance, accounting, taxation, funding, marketing, international sales, customer development and AI applications. Beyond theoretical understanding, the programme emphasised practical implementation through case studies, templates, tools, resources and peer learning.

A particularly valuable aspect of the programme was the integration of AI across multiple modules, helping participants understand how emerging technologies can support business development, improve productivity and reduce barriers to entrepreneurship.

The combination of online learning and in-person activities contributed to both skills development and community building among participants.