

Early and continuous engagement with local stakeholders has proven fundamental for building ownership, encouraging data sharing, and fostering mutual trust. Regular interaction through workshops, training sessions, and feedback activities has strengthened collaboration and ensured that the tools developed respond to real user needs. Iterative feedback loops, supported by digital platforms such as ODK and Mentimeter, have facilitated structured usability assessments and the collection of real-time insights, allowing for continuous improvement of the Toolbox.

Hands-on training and AU–EU exchange activities have provided opportunities for participants to test the tools with their own datasets and explore diverse input scenarios. This practical approach enhanced technical capacities, encouraged institutional uptake, and promoted knowledge transfer among participating organisations. At the same time, context-specific challenges, including language barriers and data quality limitations, underscored the need for tailored support mechanisms and adaptive design.

Continuous monitoring of participation rates, satisfaction levels, and usability metrics has offered valuable evidence for refining both the tools and the engagement process. The overall experience has demonstrated that combining technical development with participatory learning is key to ensuring the relevance, accessibility, and long-term adoption of decision-support tools across diverse regional contexts.

The activities carried out so far have provided valuable insights into how to strengthen the relevance, usability, and long-term impact of the EMERGE Toolbox. The following key points summarise the main directions identified during this stage of the project:

- **Sustain and expand the Data Repository.** Reliable, standardised, and easily accessible data remain essential for effective modelling and analysis. Continued collaboration with local partners is crucial to enrich and validate this shared data foundation, ensuring that future users can confidently apply the tools in their contexts.
- **Continue co-creation and validation activities.** Workshops, training sessions, and cross-regional exchanges have proven highly effective for testing functionalities, refining tools, and promoting collaboration between African institutions and European partners. Maintaining these participatory spaces will help ensure that the Toolbox continues to evolve in line with real user needs.
- **Systematically document pilot results.** As the demonstrations progress, it is important to capture both quantitative indicators—such as usability metrics and participation rates—and qualitative insights on policy relevance and technical performance. This evidence will strengthen confidence among potential adopters and guide further improvements.
- **Enhance usability and user support.** Simplified interfaces, clearer documentation, and practical guidance will reduce entry barriers and make the Toolbox more adaptable to diverse data realities and policy contexts. Providing accessible training materials and tutorials can further encourage independent, long-term use by local institutions.

Overall, these lessons highlight the importance of maintaining an open, iterative, and user-centred approach.