AI Researchers
Embedding Responsible AI in Research

AI READINESS TOOLKIT

UC2-02 Use case 2: Structured drafting and reporting

When an AI-generated project report sounds convincing but is wrong

A case study for critically auditing AI-generated project reporting

AT A GLANCE

A fluent, professional-looking AI-generated progress report is not necessarily accurate. In this case study, participants audit an AI-drafted report section for a fictional EU-funded project against the project notes it was based on. They test each statement against the evidence, then write a defensible version. The case shows how AI can turn provisional information into confident claims that the evidence does not support.

TYPE
Case study

FORMAT
PDF

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER
University of Lodz

WHO IT IS FOR
Researchers, project coordinators and research support staff who prepare project reports

FRAMEWORK BARRIERS
Trust in AI, Know-how, The rules

HUMAN-ONLY BOUNDARY

AI may help organise and phrase verified project information. Humans must verify facts, decide what can legitimately be claimed, interpret project progress, assess evidence of results or impact, and approve the final report.

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CORE MESSAGE

A fluent, coherent and professional-looking AI-generated project report is not necessarily an accurate report. Generative AI can transform incomplete, approximate or provisional information into confident claims that the evidence does not support.

1. Purpose and scenario

This case study asks participants to audit a plausible AI-generated progress-report section against the project notes from which it was drafted. The task is not to improve the prose first; it is to determine whether every material statement can be supported by the available evidence.

You coordinate the fictional EU-funded CIRCULATE project, which develops training materials on circular-economy practices for small and medium-sized enterprises. At the end of the first reporting period, you need to prepare a section entitled:

REPORTING SECTION

Progress, results and stakeholder engagement during the reporting period

Because the deadline is approaching, you provide incomplete notes to an approved generative-AI system and ask:

PROMPT USED

"Draft a concise and professional progress-report section based on these notes. Highlight key achievements, indicators and project impact."

2. Information available

The source notes contain confirmed information, provisional information and important gaps. Missing information is not permission to complete the narrative by inference.

Four partner meetings were planned; three were held during the reporting period.

A stakeholder workshop took place in June. 47 people registered and 39 attended, representing seven organisations.

The project originally aimed to involve approximately 50 stakeholders during the first year, across several activities.

A draft training framework was prepared. It has not yet been formally validated by project partners.

A pilot training session is planned for October.

Two partners provided written comments on the training framework; one described it as "useful for discussion".

No formal participant-satisfaction survey has yet been analysed.

A dissemination webpage was launched. Web analytics for the reporting period have not yet been checked.

Possible collaboration with a regional industry association was discussed; no cooperation agreement has been signed.

The project aims to improve SME capacity to implement circular-economy practices, but no data on changes in SME practices or organisational capacity are yet available.

3. AI-generated report

AI-GENERATED DRAFT

During the first reporting period, CIRCULATE successfully completed its planned coordination and stakeholder-engagement activities. Four consortium meetings were organised, ensuring effective cooperation between all project partners.

The project exceeded its stakeholder-engagement target by attracting 47 participants to its first workshop, compared with the planned target of approximately 50 stakeholders for the first year. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, confirming the relevance and practical value of the project's training approach.

A comprehensive training framework was successfully developed and validated with project partners. Building on this achievement, the project has begun piloting the framework with SMEs, with the first training activities taking place in October.

Dissemination activities have also generated strong interest among external stakeholders. The project website has increased awareness of circular-economy practices, and cooperation has been established with a regional industry association.

Overall, the project has made substantial progress towards its objectives. The results achieved during the first reporting period demonstrate that CIRCULATE is already strengthening SME capacity to implement circular-economy practices.

At first glance, the draft sounds credible. The audit task is to determine which parts are accurate, which overstate the evidence, and which introduce information that is not present in the source notes.

4. Your task and error categories

For each problematic statement: (1) identify what is wrong; (2) classify the problem; (3) identify the evidence actually available; and (4) decide how the statement should be handled.

ERROR TYPE	MEANING
Factual error	The statement contradicts the available information.
Interpretive error	The statement presents a judgement or conclusion that the evidence does not establish.
Rhetorical inflation	Supported information is expressed more strongly, successfully or consequentially than the evidence warrants.

ERROR TYPE	MEANING
Fabricated / unsupported detail	The AI introduces information that does not appear in the source material.

A single statement may contain more than one type of error.

5. Participant audit sheet

AI-GENERATED CLAIM	EVIDENCE AVAILABLE	ERROR TYPE	DECISION	CORRECTED WORDING / ACTION
Four consortium meetings were organised			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Project exceeded its stakeholder target			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Feedback was overwhelmingly positive			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Training framework was validated			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Pilot training has begun			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Website increased awareness			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Cooperation has been established			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	
Project is strengthening SME capacity			Accept / Adapt / Reject / Verify	

6. Facilitator benchmark

STATEMENT	WHAT IS WRONG?	CLASSIFICATION	DECISION
“Four consortium meetings were organised”	Four were planned; only three occurred.	Factual	REJECT
“ensuring effective cooperation”	Meetings occurred, but effectiveness was not assessed.	Interpretive / rhetorical	ADAPT
“exceeded its stakeholder-engagement target”	47 registrations are compared with an approximate annual target of 50 across several activities.	Factual / interpretive	REJECT
“attracting 47 participants”	47 registered; 39 attended.	Factual	ADAPT
“feedback … overwhelmingly positive”	No survey results exist; only limited partner comments are available.	Fabricated / unsupported	REJECT

STATEMENT	WHAT IS WRONG?	CLASSIFICATION	DECISION
“validated with project partners”	The framework is a draft; formal validation has not occurred.	Factual	REJECT
“has begun piloting”	The pilot is planned for October, not underway.	Factual / status	REJECT
“website has increased awareness”	The website exists, but analytics and awareness evidence are unavailable.	Unsupported result / impact	REJECT / VERIFY
“cooperation has been established”	Cooperation was discussed; no agreement exists.	Factual / rhetorical	ADAPT
“strengthening SME capacity”	This is a project objective; no impact data are yet available.	Unsupported impact	REJECT

7. A defensible version

> **EVIDENCE-ALIGNED REWRITE**
>
> During the first reporting period, CIRCULATE held three partner meetings and organised a stakeholder workshop in June. Forty-seven people registered for the workshop and 39 attended, representing seven organisations.
>
> A draft training framework was prepared and written comments were received from two project partners. Formal validation of the framework has not yet taken place. A pilot training session is planned for October.
>
> The project dissemination webpage was launched during the reporting period. Web analytics have not yet been reviewed. The consortium also discussed possible cooperation with a regional industry association, although no formal agreement has been concluded.
>
> These activities contribute to implementation of the project work plan. Evidence on changes in SME capacity or circular-economy practices is not yet available.

The point is not that this is the only acceptable rewrite. The important difference is that every material statement can be traced back to the available project evidence.

8. Why did the AI version sound convincing?

The draft uses familiar features of professional project-reporting language that increase persuasiveness without increasing evidential quality:

> confident verbs such as completed, achieved, established and demonstrated;
>
> evaluative adjectives such as successful, effective and substantial;
>
> precise-looking numbers presented without checking what they actually measure;
>
> causal links between activities and results or impact;

positive stakeholder language that fills gaps in the source evidence;

smooth narrative continuity that hides uncertainty, delay and missing information.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

Which sentence would you be most likely to overlook if you were reviewing this report quickly just before a deadline? Why?

9. Discussion questions

Which problems are factual, interpretive, rhetorical or fabricated?

Which errors are potentially most serious in a formal project report?

Why does the AI-generated version initially appear credible?

Which elements of the drafting task could reasonably be delegated to AI?

Which decisions require project knowledge and human judgement?

What evidence would be needed to convert any rejected claim into a defensible claim?

At what point in the workflow should the text have been checked?

Who remains accountable if unsupported claims are submitted to the funder?

10. Key principles

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR REPORTING
1. Fluency is not evidence.	Professional language can conceal unsupported content.
2. Plans are not completed activities.	AI must not convert future, provisional or pending information into achievements.
3. Participation is not automatically engagement, satisfaction or impact.	Each stronger claim requires additional evidence.
4. Missing information must remain missing.	A plausible completion of the narrative may still be fabrication.
5. Responsibility remains human.	The researcher or project team must be able to trace and defend every material statement in the submitted report.

About this resource

TITLE	When an AI-generated project report sounds convincing but is wrong
TOOLKIT REFERENCE	UC2-02, use case 2: Structured drafting and reporting
DEVELOPED BY	University of Lodz
SUGGESTED CITATION	AI Researchers (2026). When an AI-generated project report sounds convincing but is wrong. AI Readiness Toolkit, UC2-02. University of Lodz. airesearchers.eu
QUALITY ASSURANCE	Reviewed by the AI Researchers consortium for quality, categorisation and alignment with the AI Engagement Framework. External peer review by senior academics is under way, and the item may be updated as a result.
VERSION	1.0, November 2026
PROJECT	AI Researchers: Embedding Responsible AI in Research. Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Higher Education, KA220-HED-66835D2B. October 2025 to March 2028.
CONSORTIUM	University of Lodz (coordinator), FEP University of Porto, UPF Barcelona School of Management, ACEEU, NIPI (OPI PIB), European E-learning Institute and Momentum Marketing Services

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