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Deliverable 3.1 - Report on Tool-Box Piloting

UCSC-Transcrime

Work Package 3

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1. Introduction

DATAACROS III is the third iteration of a longstanding initiative to develop a tool-box and platform with the aim of better equipping public authorities, law enforcement agencies, asset recovery offices, anti-corruption and competition authorities, as well as investigative journalists and civil society actors in their response to financial and organized crime (OC). The present action, DATAACROS III, builds on said past developments, with an added focus on ensuring the offered solutions are tailored for OC and financial crime's increasing transnational and complex profiles. This includes modules and integrations that account for public procurement data, crypto and virtual assets, satellite image processing, and new AI-powered tools.

These additions were carried out in work packages 1 and 2. With deliverables 1.5 and 2.1 reporting the architectural design and summarising the capacity of the innovations. This document's focus (i.e., deliverable 3.1) is, instead, the consultation and piloting of the developments by end-user partners participating in the project. This document is structured as follows: section 1.1 provides an overview of the DATAACROS platform and its workflow, section 2.1 summarises how the piloting was carried out (in methodological terms) and section 3 presents the feedback received and their compliance with the key performance indicators (KPI) established by the project's Grant Agreement (GA).

1.1. DATAACROS III Platform & Tool-box Overview

DATAACROS III's tool-box is utilised through a cloud-based platform and is currently at the disposal of the end-user partners within the consortium of the project. The typology of platform can be best described as a knowledge discovery platform, where end-users engage with the information through its technology, in a searching and insight-building process. In previous versions of the platform, this knowledge-building process occurred at the firm-level. The third iteration introduces several advances that also allow users to begin and carry out their analysis at the level of public tender contracts or crypto currency wallets - with risk profiles for said entities being independent of firms.

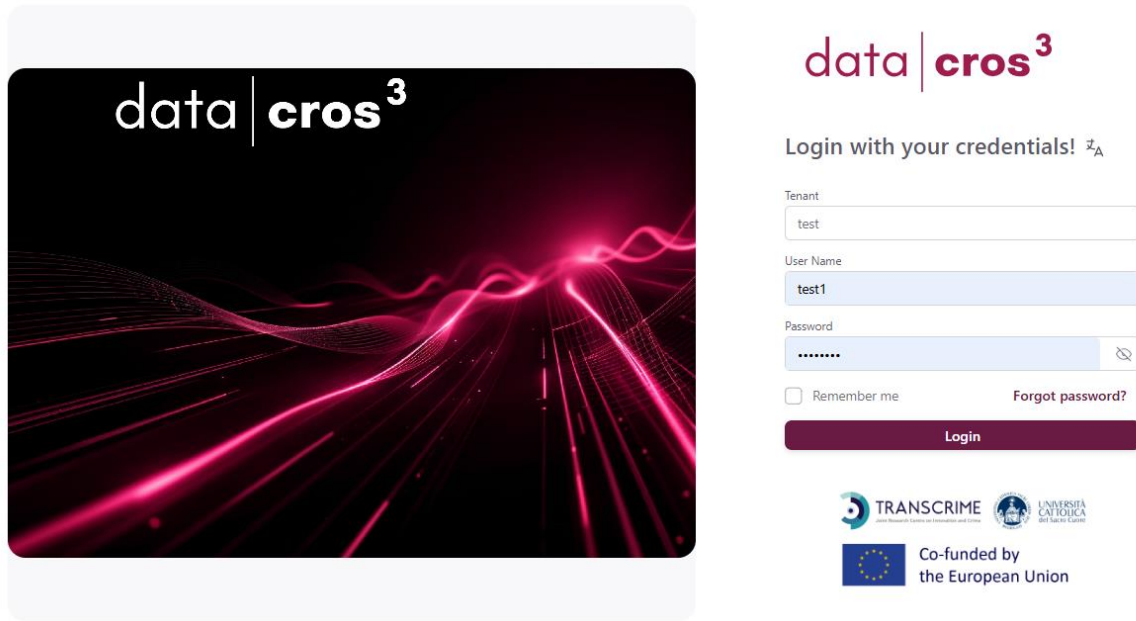


Figure 1. - DATA CROS III Alpha Version Log-in Page

At the time of authoring, the DATA CROS III platform is in its Beta version (with the Final version set to be released in M24 - that is, December 2026). The present workflow features the following modules:

- **Log-in procedure:** allowing the user to authenticate and have access to the account
- **Search:** identify firms through searching firms, persons, or assets
- **My Datasets:** load or modify stored datasets of selected firms;
- **Data Analysis:** analyse a dataset of firms:
 - *Summary:* see distribution of risks across the dataset;
 - *Risk Profiles:* details on risk (or lack thereof) of firms, assets, and tenders through risk indicators and anomaly red-flags;
 - *Maps:* assess the geographical distribution of entities in the dataset;
 - *Network View:* identify and visualise links among entities/individuals;
 - *List View:* view all entities within the dataset;
 - *Aggregation:* aggregate nodes pertaining to the same individual or entity;
 - *Evidence:* effectively manage the data related to an individual or entity;
- **AI - Screening:** open-source intelligence tool that allows the cross referencing of persons in open sources and processing of unstructured data
- **Report:** download reports pertaining to the information presented in other modules
- **Support & Feedback:** submit questions, and signal bugs;
- **Guides:** user-guides and methodology reporting;

- **Settings:** monitor the available API calls for a given account by data provider and manage account information.

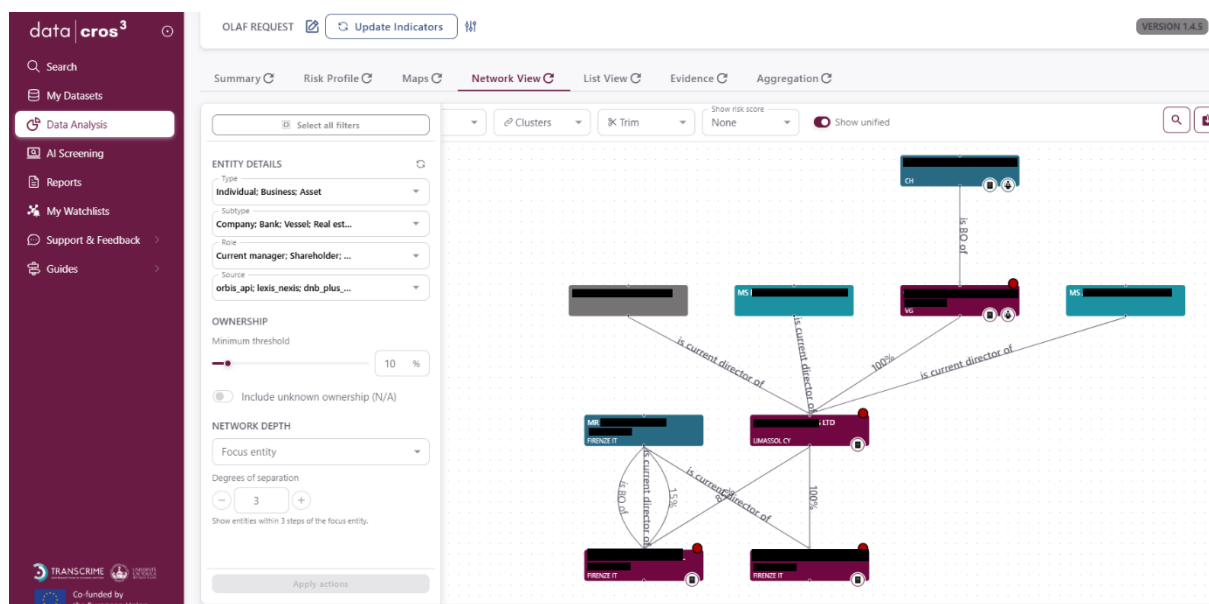


Figure 2. - DATA CROS III Platform's Network View

The Beta version of the platform is currently equipped with data from several sources, including data from the following categories: (1) corporate data; (2) real estate records; (3) anti-mafia whitelists and public administration clearances; (4) compliance data (such as, sanctions, adverse media, and past criminal events); (5) offshore leaks; (6) local administrators; (7) public procurement data, and (8) publicly indexed crypto currency wallets.

Table 1. - Data Sources Integrated in Beta Version

Data Sources Connected to Platform	
Moody's Orbis	Comprehensive global company databases, providing standardized financials, ownership structures, corporate hierarchies, and analytical tools to support research, compliance, benchmarking, and risk assessment.
Dun&Bradstreet	
GeniusProperty	GeniusProperty is a real estate intelligence platform, providing standardized property data, ownership structures, and asset portfolios for Italy.
Anti-Mafia Whitelist	The anti-mafia whitelist is an official registry in Italy that identifies companies free from mafia infiltration.
Rating di Legalità	An Italian official certification that evaluates and recognizes a company's commitment to lawful, transparent, and ethical business practices .
Lexis Nexis World Compliance	Global database for risk and compliance.

ICIJ's Offshore Leaks Database	Database of offshore leaks curated by journalists.
Local Administrators	Database of sub-national (regional/municipal) political actors curated by C&T.
OpenTender	Public procurement data (contracts, publications, suppliers, buyers, and - in several jurisdictions - bidders) from all European Member States.
Crystal Intelligence	Publicly indexed crypto currency wallets.

2. Piloting Method & Strategy

2.1. Piloting Method & Strategy

The piloting of the platform was targeted to test its applicability to, and functionality in, four specified use-cases, as described in Table 2.

Table 2. - DATACROS III Use-Cases

Pilot Use-Cases	
Use-Case 1	Tracing multiple assets in cross-border OC and financial crime cases.
Use-Case 2	Financial investigations of OC activities involving virtual currencies/assets
Use-Case 3	Early-detection of OC infiltration and collusion in public procurement.
Use-Case 4	Monitoring of investigative journalists of OC infiltration and frauds in EU funds.

With these applications in mind, a **multi-modal approach** was adopted. Importantly, end-users were placed at the centre of the testing method, which combined **asynchronous testing and facilitated in-person usability pilots** with feedback sessions.

The asynchronous and autonomous **piloting began by M9 of the project**, with the release of the Alpha version, a release that came in anticipation of the obligations specified in the GA. **This early access allowed partners to work with a base version of the tool-box**, and help shape the direction of developments leading up to the Beta version in M16. Following the

release of the Beta version, asynchronous engagement and piloting continued and remain ongoing. In M17 and M18, respectively, two in-person sessions were hosted. The first, a quadripartite piloting event, with partners IRPI, C&t, and DAC-SCO, and the second, featuring 10 partners.

2.2. Piloting Events

2.2.1. Quadripartite Pilot

On the 25th of March, 2026 (M15), UCSC-Transcrime, C&t, DAC-SCO, and IRPI convened in Milan, Italy to hold an initial one-day pilot meeting. The event's agenda featured a morning session dedicated to training and showcasing the Beta version of the platform, followed by an afternoon dedicated to first-hand use by the partners. Present in this pilot session were 6 representatives of DAC-SCO and 2 from IRPI media.

The first and fourth use-cases (first: tracing multiple assets in cross-border OC and financial crime cases; fourth: monitoring of investigative journalists of OC infiltration and frauds in EU funds) were the focus of the practical exercises and the starting point for the piloting. Specifically, IRPI media presented two example investigations - one pertaining to the tracing of ownership behind Recovery and Resilience Fund recipients and the other a cross-border investigation of organised crime actors holdings (tracing assets from Italy to Dubai). In both instances, IRPI showcased how they employed DATACROS III as a key tool. Then, end-users (including IRPI) were asked to utilise the platform directly to trace the ownership structure of a set of firms identified as being involved in a fraud scheme in Italy's Calabria region.

This initial pilot served to trial both the tool-box and the pilot format, lending to the eventual consortium wide pilot which occurred in M17. The session concluded with instruction to continue autonomous and asynchronous engagement with the platform by the involved partners for the duration of the project. To ensure privacy was maintained, the piloting session involved users made ad hoc and were deleted following the session, guaranteeing any data subjects searched by the partners was not traceable nor subjected to further processing.

2.2.2. Consortium Wide

The consortium wide piloting session, likewise hosted in Milan (M17), however with a hybrid format, featured 10 partners and 14 individual end-users. Table 3 presents the attendees by institution. The format was maintained from the initial pilot (in M15) - one-day, with the morning dedicated to training and showcasing whilst the afternoon had the end-user partners engage directly with the platform. In this second session, the third use-case - early-detection of OC infiltration and collusion in public procurement - was the primary focus of the training. A case-

study of a multinational corporate network heavily involved in public tenders and contracting (between Italy and Malta) was presented to partners, with them having the opportunity to interact with the platform, engaging with involved firms and public procurement data directly. Partners were likewise presented the integration with CRYSTAL Intelligence, and provided exhibition of its capabilities, lending to the eventual piloting of the second use-case: financial investigations of OC activities involving virtual currencies/assets.

Here as well, to ensure privacy was maintained, the piloting session involved users made ad hoc and were deleted following the session. In addition to the instruction for further autonomous and asynchronous testing, the partners completed an evaluation survey at the end of the pilot (results of which can be found in section 3 of this report).

Table 3. - Participants in Consortium Wide Piloting Event

Partner	N° of Attendees
FIU LV	1 in person
ANABI RO	1 in person); 1 online
HCC	1 in person; 1 online
IRPI	2 in person
NTA	1 in person
ANAC	3 in person
BFP	1 in person
OCCRP	1 in person
UOHS	1 in person
ESMIR	1 online

2.3. Asynchronous Piloting Activities

From M9 onward, project partners were given the ability to asynchronously pilot the tool-box. Feedback from the partners was received in several formats, including bi-lateral meetings, email exchanges, registered comments through the feedback portal of the platform, and in the form of written reports. Given the varying range of mandates⁷ possessed by the end-user partners, the full deck of use-cases were included in their piloting activities. The extent of the asynchronous testing and feedback received can be found in section 3.

3. Results & Feedback

Throughout the life-course of the project, continual feedback and evaluations were received from end-user partners, ensuring on-going developments aligned with end-user needs and under constant scrutiny to ensure user-experience was accessible and intuitive. With respect to the consortium wide piloting event, this feedback was made tangible through a survey distributed to participants at the end session - the results of which are reported in section 3.1.

Following the session, several partners provided written assessments of the platform based on their asynchronous and autonomous piloting. Specifically, HCC and FIU LV provided direct, written feedback regarding their experiences. Section 3.3 places these results in the context of the project's KPIs.

3.1. End-User Survey Consortium Wide Piloting

Regarding the participants present at the M17 pilot, all but 1 had already tested the platform in the past, prior to the session. Moreover, among those that responded, **all registered that they would use the tool-box in their current professional activities.**

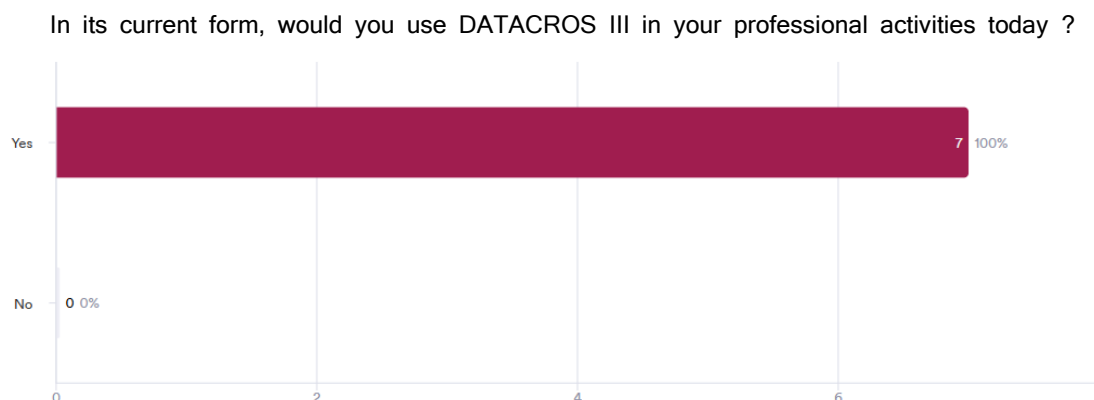


Figure 3. - End-user Preferences Regarding Tool-box Adoption

When asked if they believe the tool-box could decrease the time-required to conduct investigations, one-third believed DATACROS III **represents significant increases in efficiency: greater than 50% reduction in time required.** Another third felt the tool-box could decrease the needed time to carry out an investigation by over 30%. Both compared the utility of the tool-box to their current investigative practices and technologies.

Compared to your current practices, do you believe DATACROS III could decrease the time required to conduct investigations?

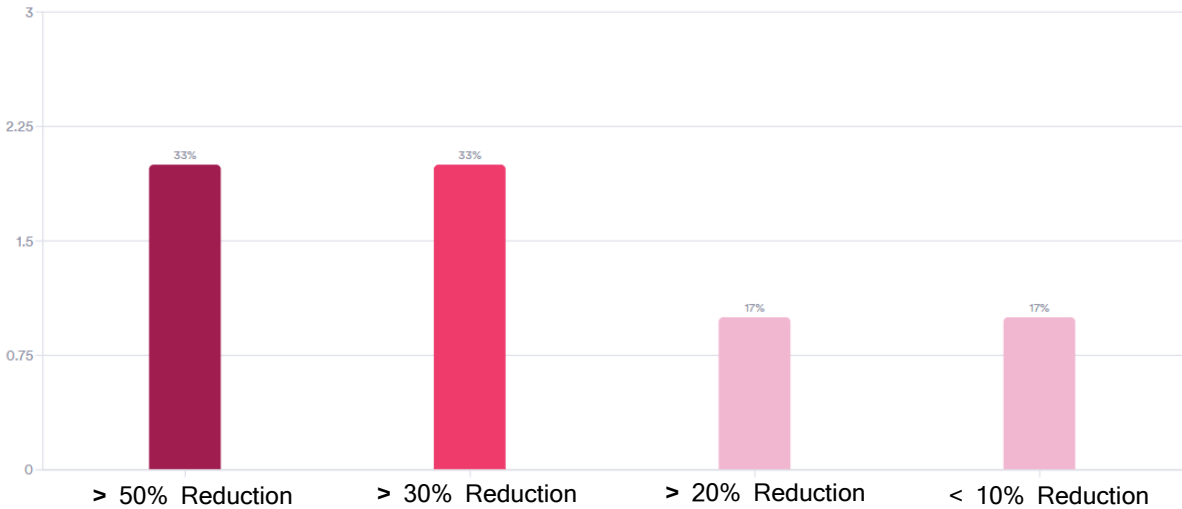


Figure 4. - End-user Responses Regarding Efficiency Gain from Tool-box

With respect to which features of the platform and tool-box were most applicable to the end-users professional activities, **the risk profiles for corporate entities and novel procurement integration combine for over 70% of the responses.** Representing the core of the tool-box (the risk assessment techniques) and the steps taken in this third iteration (the addition of public procurement data and indicators) are both vital to end-users contemporary needs.

Which modules of DATACROS III do you believe are most applicable to your professional activities?

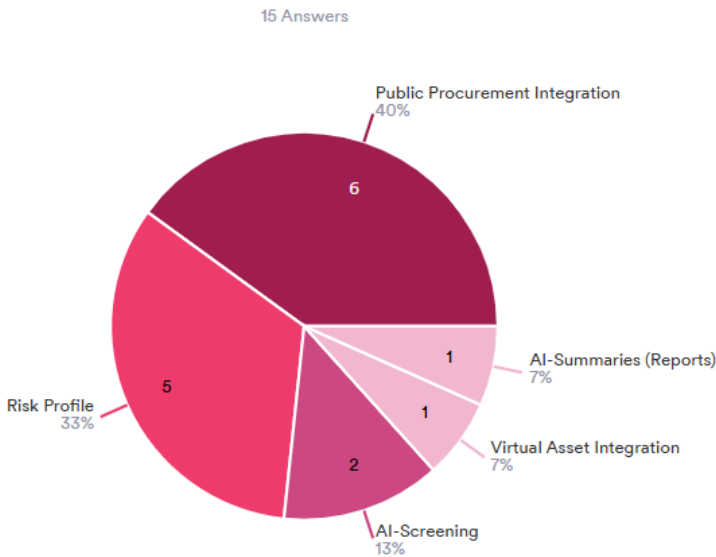


Figure 5. - End-user Responses to Applicability of Tool-box Modules to Professional Activities

3.2. Asynchronous Piloting Results

A total of 62 end-users were involved in the piloting of the tool-box - directly from end-user partners - whilst another 178¹ were involved in the piloting through cooperation with the European Education and Culture Executive Fund funded project Next-IJ.² **In total, the end-users of the project performed 4,042 searches in the tool-boxes corporate data providers and over 1,000 searches across the platforms asset, compliance, and negative evidence data sources.** On a per-user-level, the average piloting user traced 65 entities in corporate data and approximately 18 in the other aforementioned data sources. These high usage numbers reflect a thorough piloting carried out over the lifetime of the project. Several partners provided regular written feedback, in the form of reports - presented in Table 4 - providing insight as to where the tool-box succeeds and what opportunities to improve are present.

Table 4. - End-User Written Reports

Partner	Date of Report
FIU LV	07/10/2026
FIU LV	30/09/2026
FIU LV	30/09/2026
HCC	02/07/2026
FIU LV	28/05/2026
FIU LV	28/05/2026
FIU LV	01/05/2026
FIU LV	10/04/2025

3.3. Key Performance Indicators

The project's GA identifies three benchmarks for performance related to Work Package 3 - the corresponding set of activities to this deliverable. The first of which sets out the expectation of more than 50 end-users involved in the piloting activities (henceforth: KPI3.1); the second,

¹ 178 Next-IJ users at the time of authoring. In M11 of the project, an additional set of piloting will occur with Next-IJ users, expanding beyond this figure.

² [Next-level Data and Tools for Investigative Journalism - Next-IJ](#) Project No. 101180015

more than 10 pilot investigations (henceforth: KPI3.2), and the third, more than 100 OC-related assets identified and traced (henceforth: KPI3.3). Additionally, whilst a KPI corresponding to the activities of Work Package 2, the GA objective of an improvement in investigative efficiency of greater than 20% (henceforth, KPI3.4) was measured during the consortium wide pilot event.

KPI3.1's benchmark was sufficiently surpassed through the asynchronous piloting alone, with **62 end-users involved**. This was measured through the number of user-accounts active across all end-user partner organizations (**excluding the 178 piloting accounts created in collaboration with Next-IJ**). KPI3.2, likewise, was achieved through the asynchronous piloting, with each user being free to engage with the platform and perform mock investigations. Beyond this, however, the in-person piloting events also allowed for the present end-users to engage in more guided pilot investigations. At the quadripartite pilot of M15, 8 end-users were present. With each engaging in a pilot investigation on the use-case provided by UCSC-Transcrime. Subsequently, at the consortium wide pilot (held in M17), all present end-users (totalling 14) engaged with two pilot use-cases. **Considering that each end-user carried out a unique pilot investigation using the use-case, the two pilot events featured a total of 36 pilot investigations.**

KPI3.3 specified a total of more than 100 OC-related assets identified and traced. Given the user-privacy arrangement between end-user partners and the consortium as a whole (see, among other documentation, the DATACROS III Joint Controller Agreement, annexed to D5.1a) this documentation will not provide specific details regarding the data subjects searched by said end-users. That being said, taking for granted the appropriate usage of the platform by end-users, **the total number of calls performed by the body of end-users exceeded 5,000. Over 4,000 of which were searches for corporate entities.**

KPI3.4, pertaining to the increases in investigative efficiency the DATACROS III tool-box offers, was studied through the direct surveying of pilot-users at the end of the consortium wide piloting event. As presented in 3.1 (see figure 4), **83% of the end-users polled signalled an increase of efficiency greater than 20%**. Specifically, they indicated that the use of the tool-box could decrease time needed to conduct investigations - with one-third stating the decrease in required time would exceed 50%, one-third believing said decrease would exceed 30%, and 17% indicating the original benchmark, a greater than 20% decrease in time needed. Table 5 presents the KPIs and the metric by which they are classified as accomplished.

Table 5. - KPIs, Corresponding Metrics, and Status

KPI	Description	Corresponding Metric	Status
3.1	> 50 end-users involved in the piloting activities	62 end-user partner platform users created & distributed	Achieved
3.2	> 10 pilot investigations	36 pilot investigations (considered at a pilot-user level) carried out	Achieved
3.3	> 100 OC-related assets identified and traced	Over 5000 subjects (natural and legal persons; assets) traced during asynchronous piloting	Achieved
3.4	> 20% increase in efficiency of conducting investigations	Polling of end-users during pilot, indicating 83% believed time required for investigations could be reduced by > 20%.	Achieved

4. Conclusion

Deliverable 3.1 established the results of the piloting of the DATACROS III tool-box and platform. The product of the work carried out in the project's work packages 1 and 2, which aimed to further the longstanding initiative's (in its third iteration) applicability to the ever-evolving nature of OC and financial crime. The piloting occurred using two methods: in-person piloting events and asynchronous user-access. The former occurred on two occasions, a quadripartite pilot - hosted in M15 - and a consortium wide pilot - hosted in M17. Said in-person events involved 36 pilot-users and allowed for thorough engagement with the use-cases identified for the platform in the project's GA. The latter entailed an on-going effort starting in M9 and continuing through to M24, resulting in a high-level of engagement: over 5000 searches performed by 64 end-users and 8 written reports submitted (alongside several bi-lateral meetings and other feedback formats).

The KPIs in the GA - applicable to the piloting methods and experience - were addressed in section 3. Of note, all identified benchmarks were achieved, including 83% of pilot users (from the consortium wide event) indicating that they see a > 20% decrease in time required to conduct investigations, given the use of the DATACROS III platform.