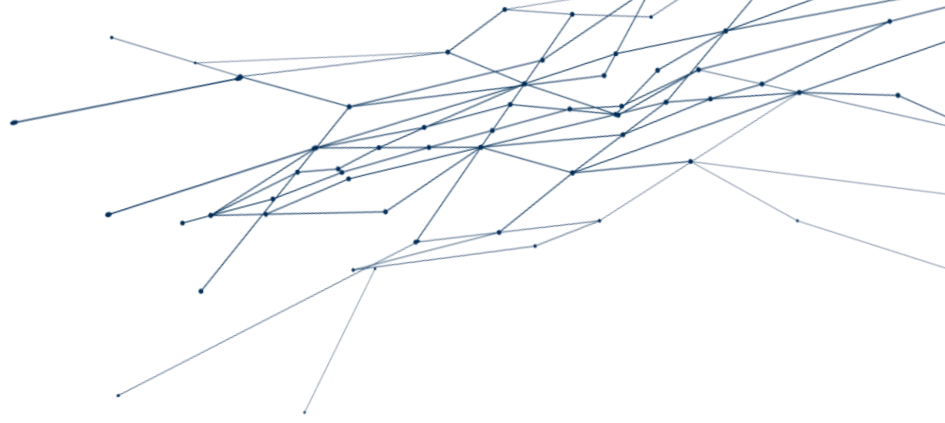




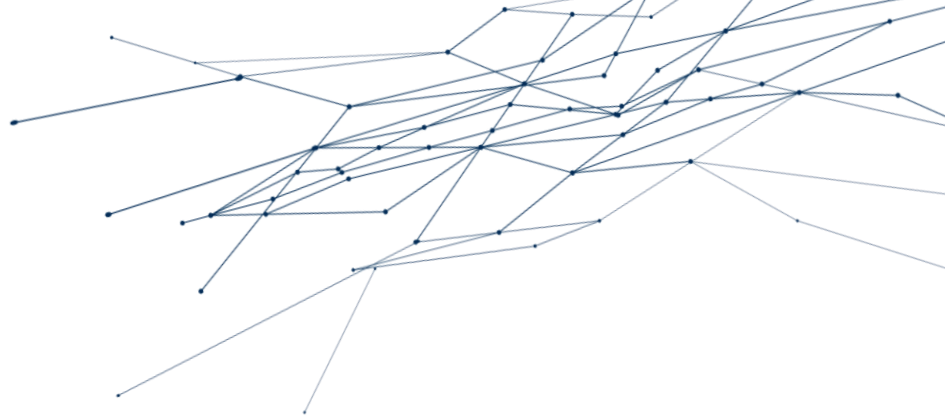
Digitalisation Working Group

REGIONAL BEST PRACTICES FOR THE DEFINITION
OF FOLLOW-UP FUNDING SCHEMES



General overview of the workshop

17 May 2022
Maribor, Slovenia



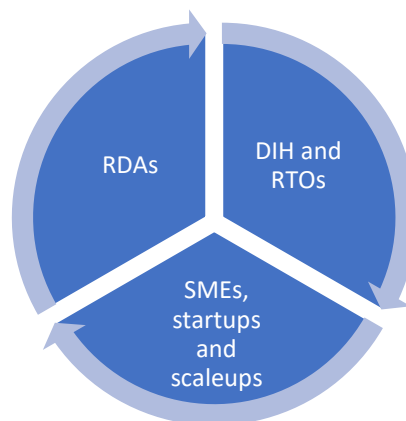
Defining priorities in regional funds and support instruments

The Digitalisation Working Group (WG) kicked off its activities for 2022 with the ambition to answer the following question: how can regions keep up to date with the necessities of their companies in terms of funding and other type of support programmes?

Continuous learning about the priorities of our companies is fundamental to increase the competitiveness of the economy in our territory and it is one of the key elements for the implementation of the regional smart specialisation strategies.

Regional stakeholder collaboration also remains at the core of the European Regional policy; it is considered a central element in the regulation of the European Structural funds for the programming period 2021-2027.

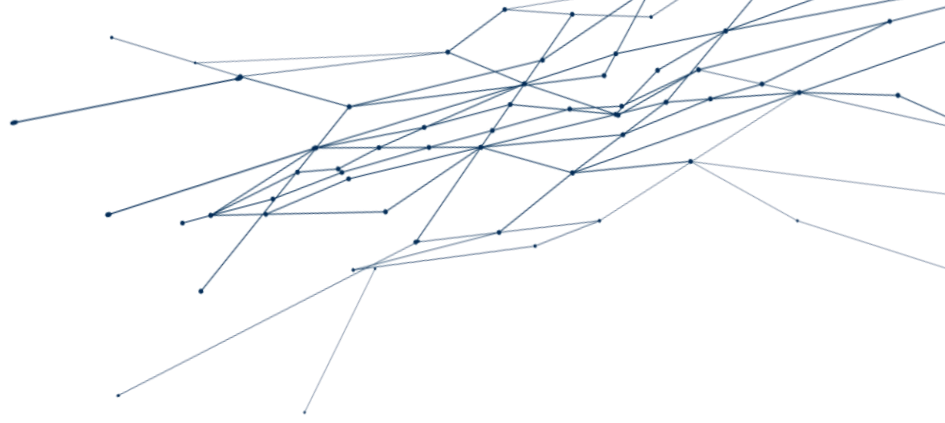
For the purpose of the Digitalisation WG, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) and Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) as well as regional companies have been mobilised and invited to discuss effective strategies to align their funding priorities and support programmes in the area of digitalisation.



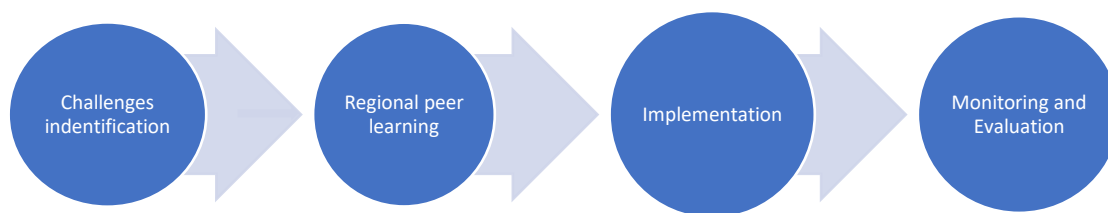
The Digitalisation WG has divided the discussion around this thematic in four main topics:

- 1^o. The identification of regional challenges in the definition of support instruments.
- 2^o. The exchange of best practices among European regions.
- 3^o. The implementation of regional strategies of follow-up funding.
- 4^o. The monitoring and evaluation of results of the implemented support programmes.

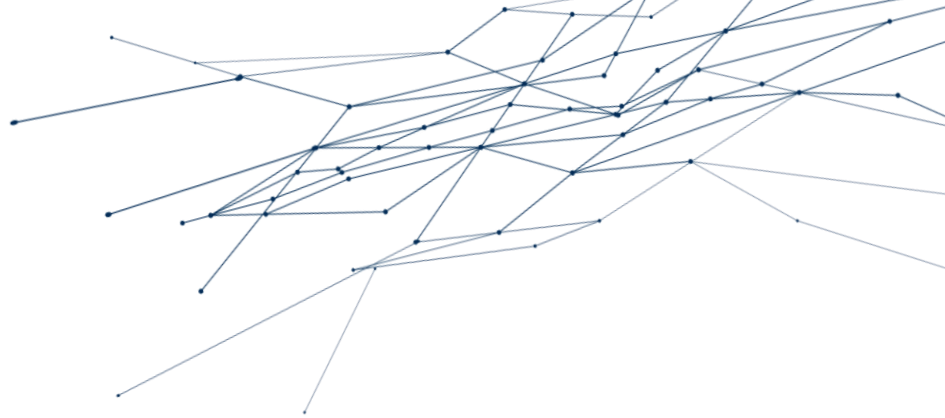




Each of the 4 workshops organised by the digitalisation WG in 2022 covers one of above-mentioned topics. Regional stakeholder are invited to share their regional experience and exchange their insights and good practices to inspire other European regions in the implementation of successful support programmes for their local companies.



The main outcome after this set of workshops will be a validated follow-up funding roadmap that other regions could replicate in order to define their support programmes for their regional digital strategy.



1st Digitalisation WG Workshop: Identification of challenges in regional funds and support instruments.

The first Digitalisation WG workshop, organised on March 31, 2022, focused on the identification of the main challenges in the implementation of the follow-up funding schemes. RDAs, DIH and RTOs were invited to present the most relevant barriers that they encounter in their respective territories.

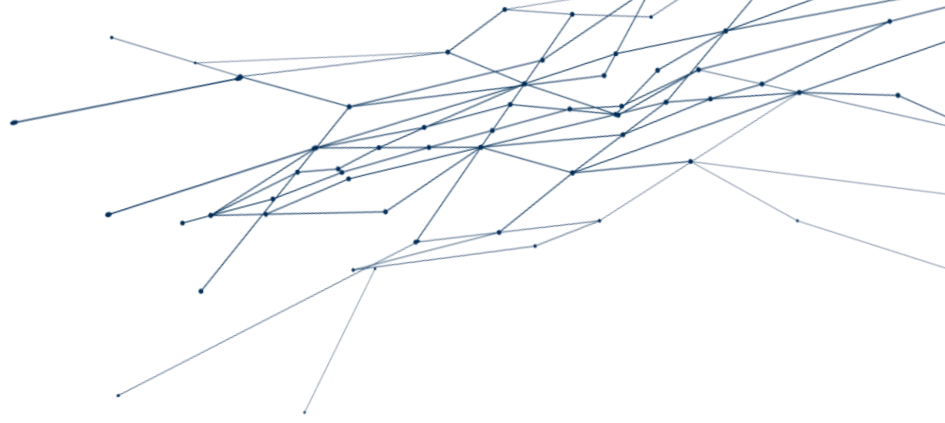
The evidences collected during this first workshop suggest that the way the dialogue is structured remains highly context-dependent. Existing institutions, the national and regional administrative structure, culture and historical trajectory of innovation policy influence the ways countries and regions organise their processes.

Despite the resulting heterogeneity, a set of findings influencing the success of the joint definition of regional support mechanism were brought forward during the discussion.

Challenge 1. Guidance for the implementation of regional funds

Regional funding schemes should be combined with appropriate tools that can guide the companies to navigate and choose the best technology to be implemented in their companies.

Considering that nowadays the tools, knowledge and technology available are very vast, a trusted brokerage service available for the regional companies has been proven to be a demanding and necessary mechanism that could help companies to allocate adequately the available funding by adopting the most suitable technology for them.



Challenge 2. **Organisation and coordination of the stakeholder dialogue**

An efficient organisation of the regional stakeholder collaboration requires an important role of the government as well as clear rules to ensure wide access, transparency and equal possibilities to influence the process by all relevant stakeholders.

Challenge 3. **Skills and knowledge**

Training activities for the regional companies designed to build capacity in identifying and managing European and regional funds has also been highlighted as a relevant practice to be implemented.

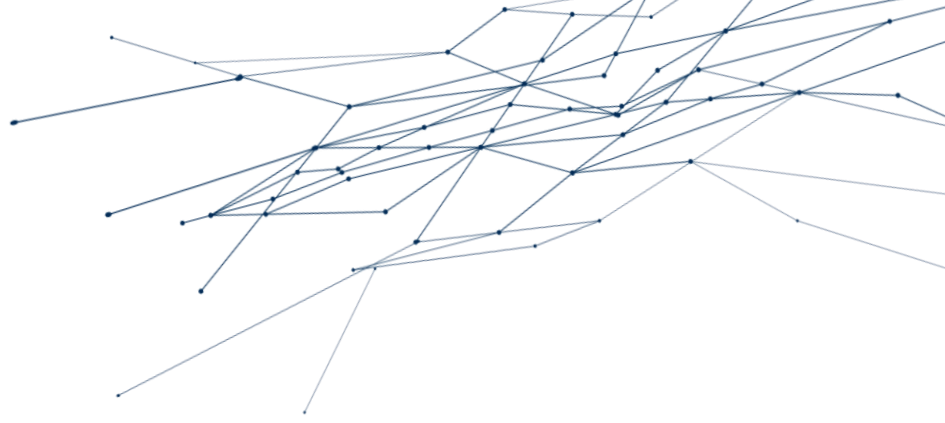
There is also a strong recognition of the importance for capacity building in RDAs, DIH and RTOs. In these cases, the dedicated training should go beyond internal processes and be oriented towards the regional stakeholder collaboration and ability to exchange knowledge and build support programmes arising from the conclusions of this learning process with the local companies.

Challenge 4. **Stable and predictive funding programme schemes**

Given the significant time resources implied, the companies should have access to fundings schemes that have clear rules, with a straight forward application procedure and which are predictable in time.

Funding schemes should also be designed for longer and predictable periods of time to allow companies to plan their digital transformation strategy and opt for the funds at the most suitable time for them.





Challenge 5. Alignment of regional and European funding schemes

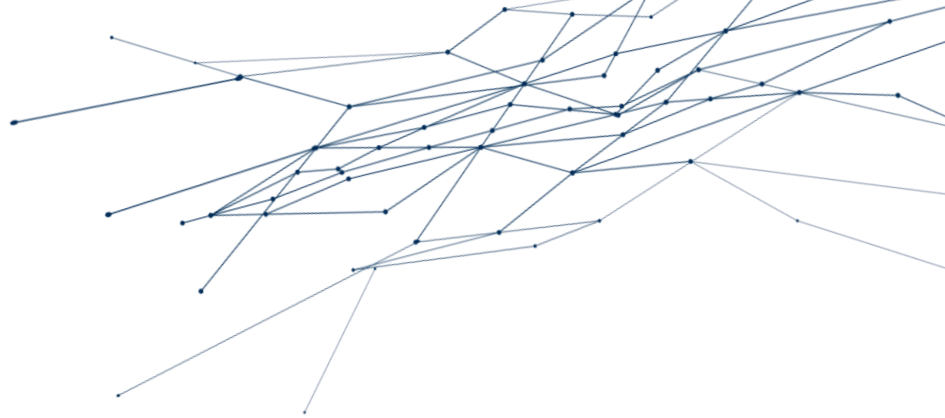
The available funding at European and regional level should be mutually reinforcing and complementary, this approach would guarantee to the companies a certain continuity in the funds allocated for their digital progression. For example, the European open calls should be complemented with additional regional support to guarantee a continuity in the digital transformation journey of the company.

The digital transformation of the company has to be understood as an ongoing process of integration of new technologies. The regional funding schemes should guarantee that a company can progressively increase its digital readiness level by providing the necessary funds for each of the steps in the digitalisation development of the company.

Challenge 6. Follow up schemes for European open calls

Funding calls can be used as a tool to collect stakeholder feedback and information in a dynamic process that can be key to connect policymakers with regional stakeholders. This is framed variously in terms of processes of consultation, engagement, influencing or co-design. As such, funding calls clearly provide an important mechanism to link the priority areas for funding with policy decision-making.

Regions should establish an organised collaboration with the European open calls to learn about the profile of the regional companies active in these calls. Most importantly, regions could learn the companies that are being beneficiaries of these calls to provide them with an appropriate regional follow up funding scheme that could guarantee a continuity in their digitalisation process.



2nd Digitalisation WG Workshop: Regional best practices for the definition of follow-up funding schemes

To explore possible solutions to the challenges identified in the previous workshop, different RDAs, DIH and RTOs will present their regional best practices and how they have jointly implemented successful strategies to design support schemes in their territory.

The event will be organized in three main sessions, starting with the presentation of good practices on follow-up funding strategies, followed by an animated discussion in two different round tables and ending with a brokerage session where all participants are invited to network.

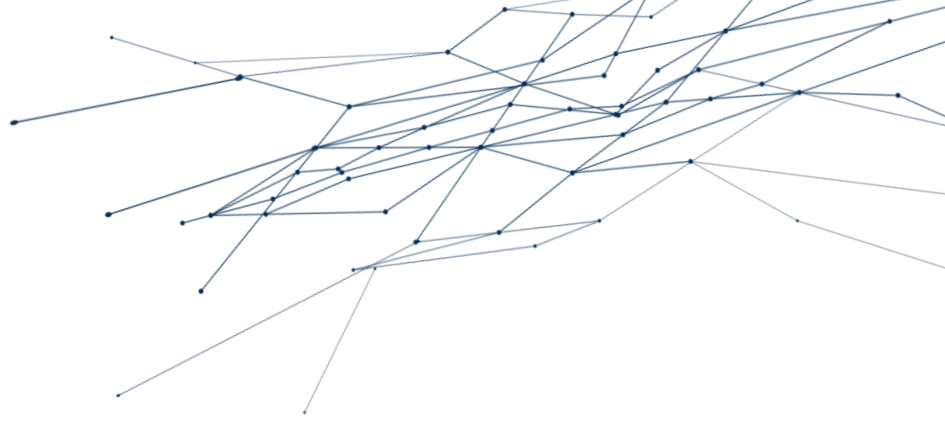
Presentation of best practices: get inspired

RDAs and DIH will present different initiatives that have been successfully implemented in their territory to design support programmes for their regional companies. In this session, you will learn from other regions and explore possible solutions to implement in your territory.

Round tables: join the discussion

Participants are invited take an active role in this session by joining one round table and share their regional approach in any of the two following topics:

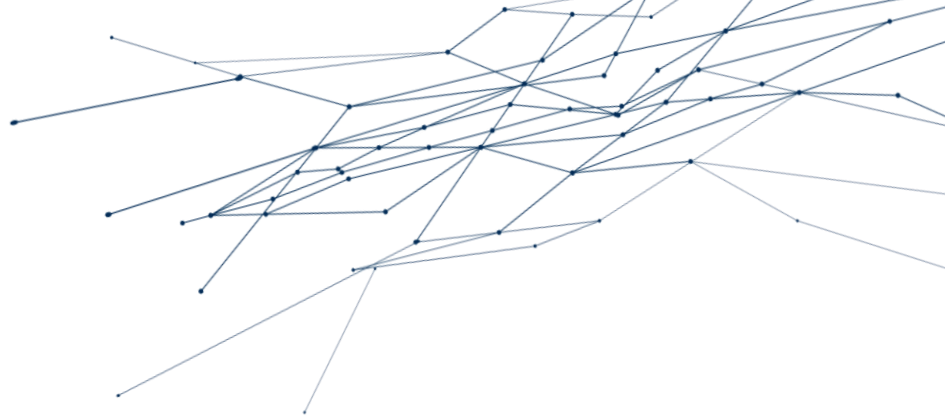
- Regional solutions for the implementation of follow-up funding schemes: discuss and share your experience about effective methods to involve your regional ecosystem to jointly define effective support programmes.
- Regional challenges for digitalisation of SMEs: exchange your views about the main barriers that hinder the integration of digital solution by your regional SMEs and identify potential best practices to implement in your territory.



Brokerage session: explore opportunities for your region

Are you looking for potential collaborations with other Regional Development Agencies and Digital Innovation Hubs? Take the opportunity to participate in the pitch session and share your profile with the audience.

Participants will also have the possibility to organise a 1-to-1 meetings to partner with other European regions and explore potential collaborations. Browse published participants profiles in the event's platform and send meeting requests to those you want to meet during the event.



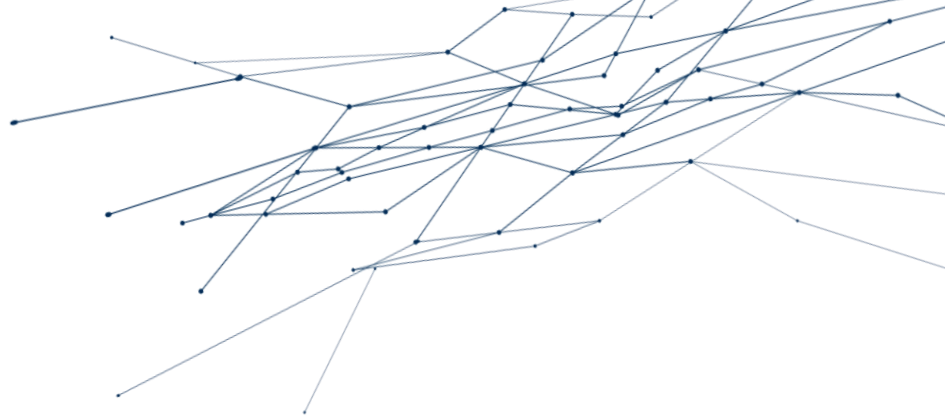
AGENDA

10:00	Welcome speech	Prof. Dr. Gorazd Štumberger <i>Dean of Feri</i> Tamas Gyulai, <i>President of DARINNO - Member of EURADA</i> Matjaž Fras M.Sc. <i>CEO of STP</i>
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PRESENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES OF DIH

10:15	Digital Innovation Hub at UM	Muhamed Turkanović, Ph.D <i>Head of Operations at the Digital Innovation Hub UM</i>
10:40	Public, Private, People Partnership Digital Innovation Hub	Emilija Stojmenova Duh, Ph.D Head of 4P DIH at University of Ljubljana
11:00	National Network of Digital Innovation Hubs with support by European projects	Tamas Gyulai, <i>President of DARINNO - Regional Innovation Agency of South Great Plain (Szeged, Hungary)</i>
11:20 -		Break
11:45		
11:45	DIH² NETWORK – Local Evangelist for Robotics D-Mould External call for DIH² NETWORK	Borut Zrim <i>Head of External Relations at Technology Park Pomurje</i>
12:10	Digitalization chain of SMEs	Matej Borko, M.Sc. <i>CEO of Komunikacije prihodnosti</i>

12:30 -		Break
14:00		



Round tables

- 14:00** 1st. Parallel session: Moderated by **Borut Zrim, DIH² NETWORK**
- Regional solutions for the implementation of follow-up funding schemes
- Representative from a Regional Development Agency:**
- **Tomislav Plesec, SIMORA (Croatia)**
- Representative from a Digital innovation Hub**
- 14:00** 2nd Parallel session: Moderated by **STP**
- Regional challenges for digitalisation of SMEs
- Uroš Rozman, CEO**
Regional Development Agency for Podravje – Maribor
- Emilija Stojmenova Duh Ph.D**
Head of 4P DIH at University of Ljubljana
- Muhamed Turkanović Ph.D**
Head of Operations at the Digital Innovation Hub UM
- 15:15** Round tables wrap up
- 15:30** **PITCHING SESSION**
- 16:30** **MATCHMAKING - B2B MEETINGS**
- 18:00** **END OF THE EVENT**