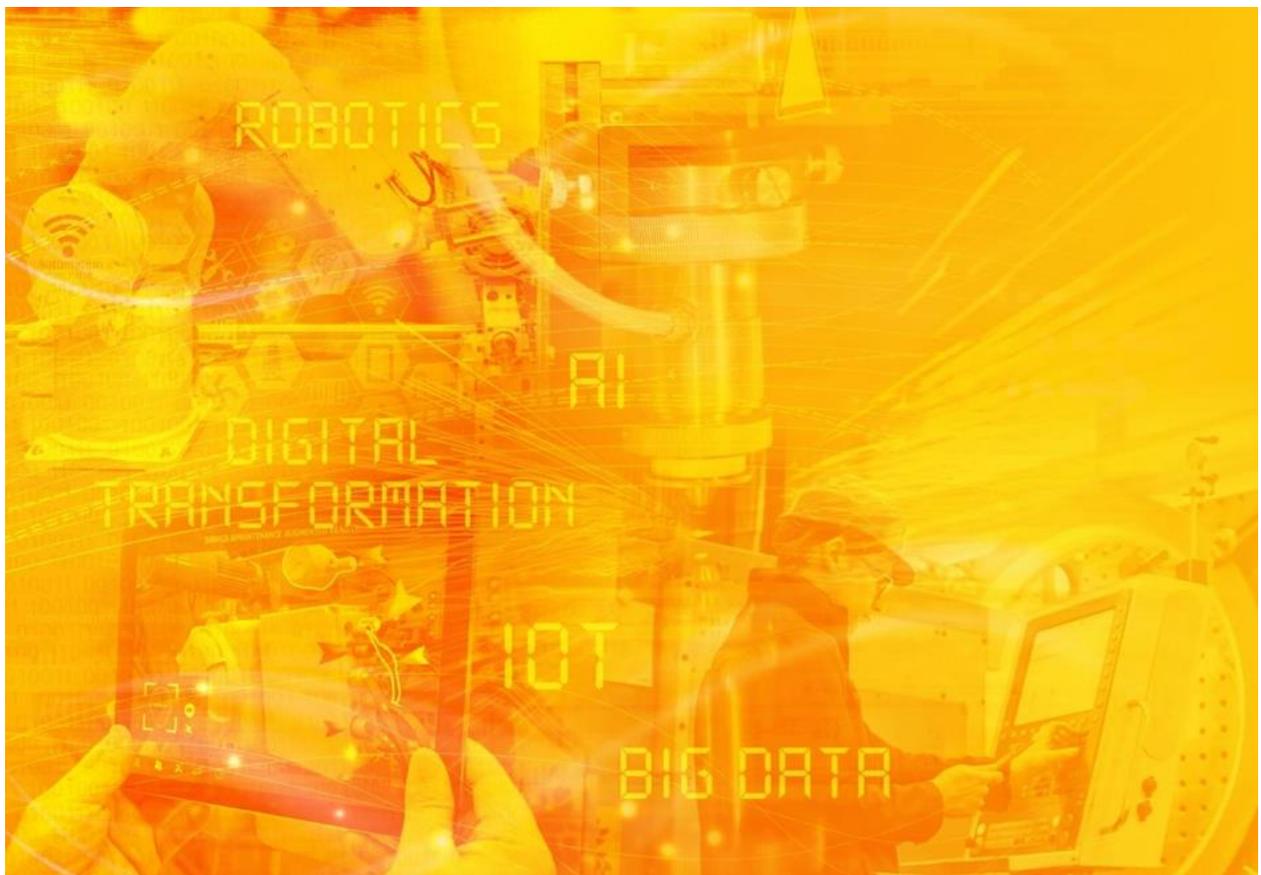


DIGITAL REGIONS

Action Plan template

Partner: University of Ljubljana



May 2022

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Executive Summary

For project partners producing their Action Plan in their own language please produce the sections highlighted in yellow in English, in addition to a short executive summary (you can of course produce a complete English version if you wish).

Based on the knowledge and experience gained from examples of good practices of the Digital Regions project: Portugal i4.0, Co-learning Lab (Germany), Workshop: Industry 4.0 and Open Platform for Adoption from Digital Innovation (Switzerland) we will develop concepts and apply the methodologies and approaches used in the above examples of good practice to develop EDIH consortium that will consist of the key players in Slovenia when it comes to digital transformation of the industry. All potential partners are well recognized at home and abroad, have rich experience and already established local and international networks of partners and stakeholders.

EDIH will be organized sectoral and managerially, as well as linking both, the public and the private sector, to fully underpin vision of the EU digital ecosystem.

The planned partnership structure covers all topic areas of the DEP and demonstrates exceptional international and national cohesion. As such, the partnership can address digital transformation in a structured and holistic way, embodied by consortium's unique interdisciplinary orientation which will importantly contribute to EU's vision to become a world leader in human-centric digital transformation.

The vision is therefore to provide technological knowledge (with a special focus on AI), expertise, and experimentation facilities to successfully strengthen the local economy with innovative digital technologies in the industry and public administration.

PART I - General information

- **Project:** DIGITAL REGIONS
- **Partner organizations:** University of Ljubljana
- **Other partner organizations involved (if relevant):** Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technological Development Ministry of Slovenia
- **Country:** Slovenia
- **NUTS2 region:** Zahodna Slovenija
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About the partner

Faculty of Electrotechnics Engineering (University of Ljubljana) offers opportunities to participate in European projects, in which you can co-create digitization policies, learn about examples of good practice and participate in competitions and tenders to finance various processes and areas of digitization.

Digital competences and skills

UL provides, connects and support knowledge, business and technology expertise, technologies, experimental and pilot environments, best practices, methodologies, and other activities necessary to fully enable the Slovenian industry in building digital competencies, innovation models and processes, and to support their digital transformation.

Awareness and promotion of digitalization

The aim of is to foster awareness and provide services to grow digital competencies, share digital experience and case studies locally, regionally, and internationally, and support the government to adapt regulation and open its data to foster entrepreneurship.

Part II - Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name and reference of the policy instrument addressed in the Action plan:

DIGITAL SLOVENIA 2030

Prior to the expiry of the Digital Slovenia 2020 Strategy, the Ministry of Public Administration began preparing a new development strategy for the information society, i.e. the Digital Slovenia 2030 Strategy, which will set out in greater detail the strategic directions in the digitalisation of society for the coming period. The main objective of the Digital Slovenia 2030 Strategy is to improve Slovenia's ranking according to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

The Digital Slovenia 2030 Strategy is expected to focus on the following priority areas:

- digital inclusion
- digital public services
- gigabyte connectivity
- smart digital transformation to achieve Society 5.0 (data, artificial intelligence, IoT, etc.); and
- cybersecurity.

Based on the knowledge and experience gained from examples of good practices of the Digital Regions project: Portugal i4.0, Co-learning Lab (Germany), Workshop: Industry 4.0 and Open Platform for Adoption from Digital Innovation (Switzerland) are representatives of the partner (Dr. Emilija Stojmenova Duh - member of the expert council) recommended and co-created the Digital Slovenia 2030 program. The information obtained from good practices represented the professional basis for creating a key document in the field of digitalization of Slovenia in the coming years.

The document and the resulting activities are in further planning and will be actively implemented in the coming period (until the summer of 2023). Representatives of the project partner will participate in the implementation, both at the strategic and implementation level.

“REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA: OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU COHESION POLICY IN THE PERIOD 2021-2027”

The document is being drafted and coordinated with the European Commission.

https://evropskasredstva.si/app/uploads/2021/11/Sporazum-med-SLO-in-EK_2021-2027.pdf

During the first phase of Digital Regions project performance, we presented the service proposed on various occasions to the responsible policy, namely Ministry of Public Affairs and Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, as well as to other policy making authorities (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, SPIRIT Slovenia Business Development Agency and other stakeholders). Based on the examples of good practices of the Digital Regions project, we proposed improvements and upgrades to the program.

THE DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME

The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) is a new EU funding programme focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations. The Digital Europe Programme will also contribute to the achievement of the digital targets, as outlined in the communication: "2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade". Indeed, the Digital Europe work strands will provide key support to the digital transformation of the economy in the next decade, as well as to achieve a European digital sovereignty by deploying key technological capabilities. The Digital Europe Programme will also contribute to the achievement of the goals highlighted in the Commission proposal for a Regulation on a Single Market For Digital Services (the Digital Services Act - DSA) and a Regulation on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector (the Digital Markets Act - DMA) through actions aiming to create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected and through actions that aim to establish a level playing field to foster innovation, growth, and competitiveness.

<https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/opportunities/funding/dg-cnect-digital-transformation-accelerator-network-edih>

The planned activities for the implementation of the identified good practices will be (in case of a positive decision) financed by the new EU funding program focused on digitization - The Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL).

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

Note: List all services that are planned to be developed in the Action Plan and also any planned changes to Policy Instrument governance and content (such as new processes for selecting PI priorities or official indicator selection)

DIGITAL SLOVENIA – EDIH (E DIGITAL INNOVATION HUB)

1.1. BACKGROUND

Advanced digital technologies enable changes to existing business models and the creation of new ones, the development of new products and services, and thus increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the economy in general and contribute to the broader socio-economic development.

Recording to Digital Slovenia Strategy 2030, the strategy envisages actions aimed at eliminating the greatest development gaps to accelerate the digital transformation in all areas, increase the competitiveness of the country and the ICT industry, achieve the digitalisation of society, develop and build the digital infrastructure, improve cybersecurity, and promote the development of an inclusive information society.

The Digital Slovenia Strategy is one of three key strategies in this area (in addition to the RISS – Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia and the SIP – Slovenian Industrial Policy) that provide guidelines for the establishment of an innovative knowledge-based society and are united under the S4 – Smart Specialisation Strategy, which serves as a platform for focused investment in priority areas.

As the field of the information society and ICT is horizontally incorporated in the S4 across vertical content areas, the Development Strategy for the Information Society until 2030 specifies strategic directions in the digitalisation of society and entrepreneurship, thus forming the foundations for development projects by the priority content areas of the S4. It envisages actions to harness the social and economic potential of ICT and the internet for digital growth, focusing on digital infrastructure, the intensive use of ICT and the internet, cyber security, and an inclusive information society.

Prior to the expiry of the Digital Slovenia 2020 Strategy, the Ministry of Public Administration began preparing a new development strategy for the information society, i.e. the Digital Slovenia 2030 Strategy, which will set out in greater detail the strategic directions in the digitalisation of society for the coming period. The main objective of the Digital Slovenia 2030 Strategy is to improve Slovenia's ranking according to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

EDIH will represent one of the possible mechanisms to overcome challenges and issues described above as well as to use the potential of digitalization for the future development of industry/companies. Its aim is to empower companies in digital

domains. This service was co-designed by existing entrepreneur supporting initiatives companies, educational institutions, and national policy makers.

EDIH will aggregate important stakeholders that act as providers, enablers, supporters, or potential users of digital transformation of SMEs across Slovenia. EDIH is defined as any virtual / physical space with arbitrary equipment and personnel, providing innovation, services and networking and other services, eg. FabLabs, Makerspaces or Coworking spaces. EDIH will act as a hub, that will provide different services to companies, such as sharing of the equipment or mentors (personnel, experts) to industry / companies. It will also be one of the means to represent ideas, positions, proposals and remarks towards the policy makers and governmental bodies, influencing policies and regulatory framework. Finally, it is also a mechanism to develop national strategies and future actions related to domain described above.

Regarding the establishment and operation of the EDIH as well as related to its vision and activities, there was no need to change or amend selected Policy Instrument governance or its content. Partner UL is / will influence and support future Policy Instruments that will address topics of its operation.

1.2. KNOWLEDGE APPLIED FROM DIGITAL REGIONS

Describe in this section how you are applying the knowledge acquired and lessons learnt from the exchange activities in Digital Regions, in the development of your action plan.

Partner good practice/experience (please, detail: good practice name, short description and location)	How this good practice/experience has contributed to the actions developed in your Action Plan (detail any transfers, full or partial of good practice)
<p>Portugal i4.0 (Portugal); is the Portuguese strategy to develop industry in the digital area. The aim is to put Portugal at the forefront of the 4th Industrial Revolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support & services provided • how the local administration was engaged, • connection with the local educational institutions;
<p>Co-Learning Lab (Germany); using various methods, tools and workshops, North Bavarian companies are offered an uncomplicated introduction to the world of digitisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational • approach to motivating participants • structure of workshops • promotion
<p>Workshop: Industry 4.0 - A region is on its way (Germany); project ideas regarding the digital transformation of SMEs with a focus on industry 4.0 are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational • approach to motivating participants • approach to digital transformation for SMEs

<p>developed through one workshop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structure of workshop
<p>Open Platform for the Adoption of Digital Innovation (Switzerland); An open platform for technology adoption coordinates the collaboration between technology / service providers and technology end-users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support & services provided • structure of a platform • approach to motivating participants

1.3. ACTION DESCRIPTION

Main objectives	Value brought by this action into the region	Players involved and role in the implementation and collaboration between them
<p>Form a partnership for the implementation of EDIH activities</p> <p>Develop the concept of the EDIH consortium</p> <p>Designing EDIH services for the companies</p> <p>Providing of support and services for the company</p> <p>Knowledge transfer</p> <p>Promotion and dissemination</p>	<p>Establishment of a comprehensive support environment in the field of digitalization</p> <p>Synergistic effects in providing support in the field of entrepreneurship as well as in the field of digitalization</p> <p>In-depth development of the technological and economic potential of digitization, networking, and the application of new technologies.</p> <p>Raising the level of knowledge transfer between the academic and entrepreneurial spheres</p> <p>Raising awareness and recognition of possibilities/tools in the field of digitalization of companies</p>	<p>Universities – R&D partners:</p> <p>University of Ljubljana (4 faculties)</p> <p>Telekom Slovenia</p> <p>Iskraemeco</p> <p>Envirodual</p> <p>Primorski tehnološki park</p> <p>Štajerski tehnološki park</p> <p>Primorski tehnološki park</p> <p>Skupnost Občin Slovenije</p> <p>Pomurski tehnološki park</p> <p>Tekos</p> <p>Sfera IT</p>

1.4. TIMEFRAME AND FUNDING

Include here the timeframe for the project funding application and set-up/implementation Process. Note: this chart will be key for the reporting procedure on the indicators given in the Application Form (Number of Projects and Investments relating to your PI and other Policy Instruments)

Project/Action Investment Line/Funding Source + Amount (please state each source of funding)	Submitted For Funding	Funding Decision	Project Start Date / Finish date	Other milestones	key
European Digital Innovation Hubs (DIGITAL-2021-EDIH-01)	22.2.2022	September 2022	1.1.2023 / 31.12.2025		

1.5. WORKPLAN

Include an outline of the Work-plan for each project. A suggestion could be to breakdown the Work-plan in work packages and tasks as below:

WP	Tasks
WP1 – Management	T1.1 Organizational structure
	T1.2 Establishing partnership
	T1.3 Operation of the EDIH
	T1.4 Administrative, Technical and Financial Coordination
	T1.5 Project meetings
	T1.6 Quality Impact and communication assessment
WP2 - Innovation ecosystem and networking	T2.1 Creation and scale a functioning sustainable digital innovation ecosystem
	T2.2 Implementation of EDIH supportive information system (sharing of equipment, human resources, reservation system, promotion, presentation)
WP 4 – Services	T4.1 Test before Invest
	T4.2 Skills and training
	T4.3 Access to Finance and Funding
WP5 - Dissemination, promotion, engagement	T4.1 Dissemination planning and events
	T4.2 Web and social networks presence
	T4.3 Media presence

1.6. BUDGET BREAKDOWN FOR THE ACTIONS

Budget breakdown is prepared for the following five years.

It is envisaged that the service would include 15 collaborators (coordination and management, equipment coordination, dissemination, technical experts to develop and offering the services)

External expertise category will be used for advisory and knowledge transfer activities of experts.

Category of funding	Expenditure Amount
Salaries	1.500.000,00
Overheads (i.e. calculated at x % of staff costs)	225.000,00
Travel & Subsistence	140.000,00
External expertise	150.000,00
Building/renovation / refurbishment	120.000,00
Equipment	650.000,00
TOTAL	2.785.000,00

1.7. VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Section to outline, for example:

- *how the services will be delivered and maintained in the in the medium term, i.e. next 3 to 5 years (following the end of Phase 2).*
- *You could include a business plan that might include cash flows and financial projections*

The needs for operational delivery of the EDIH services to identified target groups of users are imminent. Three services were identified as essential: test before invest, Skills and training and Access to Finance. This means that all the necessary steps to upgrade EDIH will continue in parallel with establishment of the mentioned services.

The first smaller scale financing was already approved within the Digital Regions Interreg project and is support essential steps to start identifying services, providers of services and potential partners for companies. This will be sufficient to establish initial system of expertise exchange among existing services providers.

It is expected that funding from the Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL) will start in 2023, enabling EDIH to establish all envisaged services and to perform them. It is presumed that the funding will continue three years after the end of the second phase, with gradual annual decline. After the completion of the public funding, the EDIH will start to collect member fees from its users. The fees will differ, depending on the services provided to companies.

The cash flows and projections are still under preparation, as stated in the previous section, by one of the working groups of the EDIH.

1.8. IMPACT EXPECTED

Activities foreseen by the EDIH consortium in the initial 3-year period are multifaceted, interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and cross-border where applicable. The activities will be co- designed with all the stakeholders involved. According to the identified needs, the themes will be adapted to the target audience and implemented at all levels (local and international), with particular reference to the thematic areas (test before invest, skills and training, access to funding).

IMPACT 1: Increased innovation activity

Test before invest: EDIH will exploit existing environments for innovation, prototyping and experimentation (FabLab Network Slovenia, SIO, Industry 4.0 test environments) and expand to new ones (local partners, other EDIHs). EDIH will explore new use cases in AI and data processing technologies with new and existing capacities, together with the EDIHs network to help local partners to take advantage of the European innovation ecosystem, better understand needs and opportunities, and to stimulate local economies, thus benefiting the SMEs and midcaps.

IMPACT 2: Increased digital competences in targeted verticals

Skills and training: a wide range of workshops and training (interactive workshops, thematic bootcamps, courses, support to the implementation of activities under the "DEP Advanced Digital Skills" pillar) will be delivered. The trainings' contents will be tailored to each target group's needs and iteratively upgraded according to identified emerging needs and opportunities. Impact 2 will be achieved through activities in WP3 and targets several target groups, expressed in corresponding objectives.

IMPACT 3: Increased funding for innovative solutions

Access to funding and investor search support: EDIH will empower investment seekers and advise them on how to access appropriate funding mechanisms according to their capacity and needs. The imperative is to achieve financial support the private sector stakeholder group (Objective 1) in decisive TRL levels of their digital solution, typically the stages before the product market entry (TRL 5-8) and raising it by 1-2 levels.

IMPACT 4: Increased collaboration and innovation ecosystem expansion

Innovation ecosystem and networking: the EDIH consortium already demonstrates a strong engagement and coverage of the innovation ecosystems and acts as a broker of knowledge, innovation, and transfer of practices. EDIH existing partnership is the basis to extend the collaboration and innovation activities to other networks and initiatives, EDIHs, international, and macro-region (Western Balkans) entities. EDIH will further seek complementary national, European and other international entities and actions to grow the network.

1.9. MONITORING ACTIVITIES IN PHASE 2

Monitoring activities will be embedded into the EDIH management procedures. The EDIH will measure indicators (most important are described above) on the quarterly basis. It is expected that the indicators will start showing results in the second year of the operation.

Based on the experience of all project partners, the planning, implementation, and control of activities will be approached with the help of various tools. Quality Planning Tools and Techniques will include Cost-Benefit Analysis, Cost of Quality and Additional Planning Tools as Brainstorming, Force field analysis (FFA), Nominal group technique. For Quality control we plan to use PMBOK Guide. Within Project management we will use tools such as: Cause and Effect Diagrams, Flowcharts, Check Sheets, Control Charts, Process Decision Program Charts (PDPC), Activity Network Diagrams and Benchmarking.

To facilitate communication, assignment of tasks, exchange of information and control of implementation, we will use a project tool – Asana.

The EDIH governance model will consider the expectations and needs of all partners. The principle of proportionality will apply to governance, as regards operational costs. The main principles of the DIH Partnership Management are as follows:

- 1) Common values and understanding
- 2) Responsibility
- 3) Decision making
- 4) Corporate governance processes; and
- 5) Code of Conduct

EDIH will perform constant assessment and evaluation of the members satisfaction with the services provided. This will be performed via interviews or common meetings with members. It is expected that since the members themselves participate in establishment as well as in the performance of services the level of satisfaction will be sufficient and possible actions to improve the services will be quickly identified and implemented.



Prof. dr. Gregor Majdič agrees to implement the Action Plan for the University of Ljubljana responsible with the elaboration and implementation of regional development policy for of University of Ljubljana, agreed of implementation the Action plan for the Digital Regions project detailed above. I confirm that I have the required authorisation of to do so and that the required authorisation process of has been duly carried out.

On behalf of: **University of Ljubljana**

Signed: _____

Name: **prof.dr. Gregor Majdič**

(prof. dr. Ksenija Vidmar Horvat under authority
delegated by the rector)
**KSENIJA VIDMAR
HORVAT**

Digitalno podpisal KSENIJA VIDMAR
HORVAT
Datum: 2022.07.25 15:14:14 +02'00'

Position in Organisation: **Rector of University of Ljubljana**

Date: **17.7.2022**

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - LIST OF MAIN ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS WITH THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Activity/meeting	Date	Stakeholders involved
1# stakeholders meeting	17 th February 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
2# stakeholders meeting	15 th June 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
3# stakeholders meeting	19 th of September 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
4# stakeholder meeting	7 th of October 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
5# stakeholders meeting	4 th of November 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
6# stakeholders meeting	24 th of November 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
7# stakeholders meeting	2 nd of December 2021	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties
8# stakeholders meeting	20 th of January 2022	Industry / companies, policy makers, incubators, technology parks, faculties