EU4Digital ICT Innovation networking event
CONCEPT OUTLINE

When and where: 22nd April 2021, 10:00-13:00 (CET), online.

Concept: The EU4Digital Initiative will hold ICT Innovation networking event in form of virtual session.

Language: The event will be held in English.

Suggested topic: Networking with EU Digital Innovation Hubs[1] to enable the development of competence centres, platforms, tools and services supporting digital transformation of SMEs in the EaP region.

Goals:
1. Facilitate joining of experts from the relevant EaP organisations to an Online community of European DIHs Network that offers information exchange about DIHs-related initiatives and projects, joint submission of proposals; access to DIHs Academy including mentoring, training and learning materials from DIH networks as well as DIHNET Repository.
2. Increase knowledge of the EaP stakeholders about the DIH Catalogue[2] and its' market sectors and services provided. Present possibilities to identify the existing DIHs in Europe and its evolutionary stages, technical competences and technology readiness level for partnership and peer learning.
3. Present the services provided via EU initiative 'ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs' (I4MS), including experimentation and testing with new ICT technologies, funding, training, mentorships and access to physical and virtual technology platforms.
4. Present the experience of leading EU DIH(s) in order to assist the emerging DIHs in the EaP countries to develop their specialised services and a self-sustaining business model.

Potential strategic cooperation areas:
- Establishing an EaP community under an online community of DIHNET for peer learning from the EU DIHs and joint projects.
- Establishing a capacity building programme based on DIHs Academy, DIHNET Repository and EC's training programmes for new DIHs, in order to assist the emerging DIHs in EaP countries to establish their networks, develop their specialised services and a self-sustaining business model.
- Direct cooperation projects of EaP digital competence centres and business support organisations with EU DIHs (testing, experimentation and staff training).

Key EU participants:
- The European Commission (DG CONNECT).
- Digital Innovation Hubs Network (DIHNET.EU).
- Europe's largest deep tech funding ecosystems - FundingBox.
- EU initiative ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (I4MS).
- DIH of the EU member state - 2020 DIH Champions Challenge winners - am-LAB (Hungary).

Target audience in EaP countries:
- DIHs in the EaP region.
- Competence centres with digital technology infrastructure, including those at universities and other higher education institutions, research and technology organisations and tech parks.
- Business organisations, networks and associations, related to digital transformation;
- Regional development agencies with interest to support digitalisation of SMEs;
- Ministerial level representatives and agencies coordinating the development of innovation ecosystem with focus on digitalisation of SMEs.

Number of participants: around 30 – 60.

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[1] "Digital Innovation Hubs are one-stop-shops that help companies to become more competitive with regard to their business/production processes, products or services using digital technologies. They are based upon technology infrastructure (competence centre) and provide access to the latest knowledge, expertise and technology to support their customers with piloting, testing and experimenting with digital innovations. The DIHs also provide business and financing support to implement these innovations, if needed across the value chain. The DIH is a regional multi-partner cooperation (including organisations like RTOs, universities, industry associations, chambers of commerce, incubator/accelerators, regional development agencies and even governments) and can also have strong linkages with service providers outside of their region supporting companies with access to their services" (European Commission).

[2] European catalogue of DIHs is a repository, an online catalogue including more than 450 existing hubs across Europe. The purpose of the tool is to help companies get access to competences needed in order to digitise their products and services.

AGENDA

EU4Digital ICT Innovation networking event:
«Networking with EU Digital Innovation Hubs to enable the development of competence centres, platforms, tools and services supporting digital transformation of SMEs in the EaP region»

22 April 2021 – Thursday		
Time (CET)	**Topic**	**Participants / Speaker**
9:45 - 10:00	*Time for connection – the session will start at 10:00 sharp*	*EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team*
Session 1 – Introduction & keynote speech		
10:00 - 10:20	Opening notes. Networking event organisation – goals and objectives. Brief introduction of participants.	*EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team*
10:20 – 10:40	Keynote speech: Digitising European Industry initiative and European Digital Innovation Hubs	*Matthias Kuom, Seconded National Expert to the European Commission, DG CONNECT*
Session 2 – Networking, funding and capacity building programmes for DIHs		
10:40 - 11:00	Digital Innovation Hubs Network DIHNET.EU and DIHNET online community	*Maurits Butter, Project Leader at DIHNET.EU*
11:00 - 11:20	Q&A	*All participants*
11:20 – 11:35	FundingBox experience with key enable mechanisms for supporting SMEs in their digital transformation journey: DIHs and cascade funding	*Mayte Carracedo, Partner & Chief Business Development Officer at FundingBox*
11:35 – 11:45	Q&A	*All participants*
11:45 - 11:50	*Short break*	*All participants*
Session 3 – DIHs for digitising the manufacturing industry (Industry 4.0 and beyond)		
11:50 – 12:10	EU initiative 'ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs' (I4MS)	*María Roca, Project Manager at I4MS*
12:10 - 12:20	Q&A	*All participants*
12:20 - 12:40	Experience of leading DIHs of the EU member state: service specialisation and business model of operation	*Balázs Barta, Founder of am-LAB*
12:40 - 12:50	Q&A	*All participants*
12:50 - 13:00	Wrap up and closure of event	*EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team*