

DIGITRANS - Digital Transformation In The Danube Region

O 7.3 regional policy workshops and recommendations

VERSION 1

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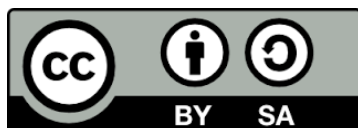


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1. Executive Summary

This document summarizes the results of the regional policy workshops implemented by partners from Germany, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Austria and Hungary. Within these workshops, the partners developed regional policy recommendations for regional authorities and public business support organizations together with actors of the “quadruple helix” (industry /companies, academia / R&I institutions, government, authorities and public institutions, users & civil society). Measures for policy programs were recommended for qualification and competence development programs for regional industries (SMEs) and the social sector. Main objective is to strengthen the economic power and social capacities in the regions in order to cope successfully with digital transformation.

2. Sustainability and transfer of DIGITRANS method

Sustainability and transfer activities like regional policy workshops will ensure the sustainability of the DIGITRANS project and the wide adoption of the measures to other regions beyond the project's lifetime. The sustainability and transfer strategy includes activities that ensure mid-term (during the project lifetime) and long-term (after the project ends) sustainability objectives. The strategy is expected to be further boosted by the identified stakeholders, dissemination activities and a communication strategy developed within the project, so that the digitalization process of EUs SMEs can be taken to the next level. The primary goal of the sustainability and transfer activities like regional policy workshops is to further extend the use of the DIGITRANS method, the incubation centres as well as the platform and trainings within the DIGITRANS partners regions and to transfer the DIGITRANS method to other EU regions, that are less advanced in their business digitalization processes.

Towards this, the main objectives of activities like regional stakeholder workshops are to:

1. be suitable to EU, national and regional digitalization strategies (mid-term).
2. ensure the implementation and lasting use of the DIGITRANS method in all partner regions (mid-term) as well as,
3. further disseminate the DIGITRANS method after the completion of the project (long-term). Therefore, suggestions for activities to implement the DIGITRANS method on a strategic level to other EU regions will be given.

Overall, sustainability of the DIGITRANS method means achieving and ensuring:

- an efficient and effective set of measures to keep the incubators and trainings in use and grow the platform community
- continuous improvement and extensions of the platform content, taking into consideration technological advancements and growing online offers
- intensified interest as well as induced motivation of the target groups to use, promote and further improve the DIGITRANS project results

The sustainability and transfer activities aim to attract and engage others to make use of the DIGITRANS method.

3. Regional policy workshops

Every participating region identified stakeholders of the "quadruple helix" by the corresponding regional partners. Stakeholders were invited to regional workshops for the development of regional policy recommendations. The workshops used different group moderation techniques for large groups like "World Café".

After a first introduction into the new developed DIGITRANS method, lessons learned and the status quo of the respective smart specialization strategy given by the project partner the participants were asked to develop concrete measures and recommendations for their region also respecting DIGITRANS lessons learned. The results from the different regional workshops were collected and summarized in one document outlining the different approaches and results.

3.1 Workshop design and procedure

- Introduction
- Significance of digitalization of SMEs in the EU context
- Sustainability and transfer strategy & measures
- DIGITRANS method – a short introduction

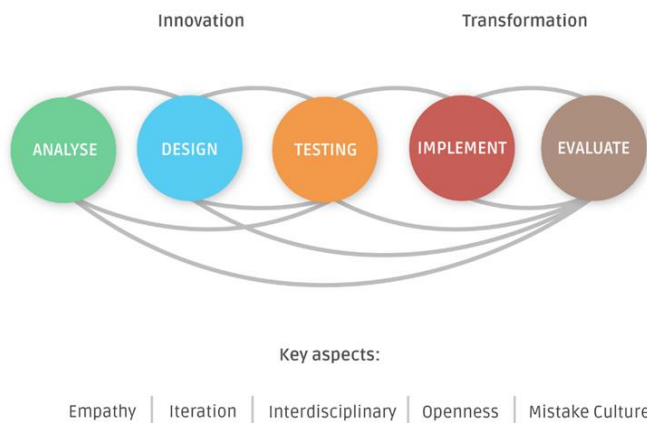
- **DIGITRANS Partnership**
 - 15 Partners from 7 countries
 - 2 associated partners



- **Aims**
 - Empowering SME with the relevant skills to handle the digital transformation process successfully and to strengthen their competitiveness in the digital age increasing SME's management capacities
 - ➔ developing a customized SME adequate innovation method & innovation development environment
 - ➔ improving overall knowledge and skills of responsible persons within the SMEs in relation to digital transformation and to the creation of digital business models

- DIGITRANS' offer

- **Method framework**



The validated DIGITRANS Method Framework is divided into three main elements that describe the two main phases – the innovation and the transformation phases - as well as the methods and tools accompanying the phases. The first phase is called “Innovation” and contains three main sub-phases:

- (1) The analysis, including the initial identification of the innovation potential of the respective company/of the concrete business case to be tackled during the workshop and the analysis of the stakeholders (targeted customers as well as potential partners).
- (2) The design, comprising ideation, selection of potential solutions and creation of prototypes. The cost-benefit analysis of these potential solutions is also assigned to this phase.
- (3) The testing, including the testing of the developed prototype and business model canvas.

The second phase is called “Transformation”. It contains all relevant processes for digital business model transformation like development and organizational implementation including the change management at its core. Each phase has specific methods and tools assigned to it, which are regarded as best suiting for the development of a digital business model. As a result of using this new developed DIGITRANS method framework, SMEs are capable of creating and further developing a new or enhanced idea for a digital business model as the starting point for the digital transformation.

- **Blended learning training**

Teach relevant skills to develop a digital business model

- ➔ Methodological competences
- ➔ Digital trends
- ➔ Strategic approaches
- ➔ Good Practices

The DIGITRANS training concept being described above is the framework on how to offer the blended learning training on the development of a new digital business model to interested SMEs.

The main aim of the blended learning training is to empower SMEs from the creative industries, health and advanced manufacturing sector with relevant knowledge and competences to deal with digital transformation and enable them to develop their own new digital business model. The blended learning training is a mixture of on- and offline training offer allowing SMEs to expand their knowledge in a flexible and attractive way.

- **Regional Incubators**

The DIGITRANS Incubation spaces are the creative hubs especially set up for SMEs to offer them an inspiring environment to develop new creative ideas.

The power of incubation spaces lies in the collaboration of heterogeneous groups of people from diverse sectors with different levels of expertise and experience – all working towards achieving some kind of goal. By taking them out of their everyday working contexts and forcing participants to take different perspectives when tackling a challenge, creativity and enthusiasm are fostered and their minds are opened.

In the context of DIGITRANS, the aim of the incubation centres is to a) provide space for workshops and 1-on-1 sessions, b) provide space for interactive and creative working, c) demonstrate to SMEs how creative spaces can be designed, and d) to present the advantages of such innovation incubators to relevant stakeholders like politicians.

- **E-Learning Platform**

The DIGITRANS platform is the digital hub where the DIGITRANS method, tools and guidelines are presented to SMEs, consultants, trainers, HE representatives

interested in using the content to develop new digital business model ideas or offer innovative trainings.

The platform contains all relevant state of the art training materials, research papers and information about the transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship with a particular focus on the emerging sustainable economic sectors (Creative Industries, Green Economy and Green ICT). It also serves as an online training tool for all stakeholders interested in digital transformation. In this way it will promote transnational synergy of excellent training methods and business ideas.

- **Relevant (regional) digital policy strategy**

- **Questions & answers**

- **Aim of today's workshop**

- DIGITRANS' overall aim: to increase business competences to cope with digital transformation. Therefore, the knowledge of the participants was needed! As a result the project partners created a guideline for the sustainable implementation of DIGITRANS method in your region.

- **Discussion (4 important questions)**

- ➔ How can DIGITRANS method be valuable for the regional digitalization strategy?

- ➔ What is needed to implement the DIGITRANS method? / How to overcome barriers?

- ➔ Which actors need to be involved to facilitate the success of DIGITRANS method, trainings and incubation centres? / What kind of support do these actors need?

- ➔ What shall business support organizations & public authorities do to support the implementation of DIGITRANS method?

- **Summary and conclusion**

3.2 Implementation of DIGITRANS regional policy workshops

- The following table contains information about the individual regional policy workshops:

PP	Place	Date	Number of participants (sum)	SMEs	Business support organisations	Higher education and research	Regional public authorities	Trainers and consultants	others
LP - MFG	Stuttgart	12 Feb. 19	15	3	6	2	4	0	0
PP2 - AUPM	Targu Mures	13 Mar. 19	27	9	7	5	2	4	0
PP4 - IRP	Maribor	22 May 19	21	0	11	0	2	4	4
PP6 - TICM	Čakovec	11 Mar. 19	25	2	9	7	5	2	0
PP8 - ITD	Sofia	11 April 19	17	2	7	3	3	2	0
PP10 - MAG	Debrecen	05 April 19	25	20	1	4	0	0	0
PP12 - ITG	Salzburg	8 April 19	13	2	4	1	5	1	0

4. Minutes: regional policy workshop

The results of the different regional workshops were collected and summarized with the following template to create one document outlining the different approaches and results.

Partner Information	
PP No.	
PP Name	
Date of implementation	

Participants (relevant actors from “quadruple helix”)	Number of participants
SMEs from creative industries, health and advanced manufacturing sector	
Business support organisations	
Higher Education and research	
Regional public authorities	
Trainers and consultants	
Others	
Total number of participants	

Workshop structure draft by ITG

- Welcome & introduction phase:
 - Explanation of the aim of the workshop
 - Short presentation by a DIGITRANS PP (Overview)
 - Questions and answers
- Work phase: Discussion round/ large group moderation techniques, like World café method
 - ...How can DIGITRANS method be valuable for our regional digitalization strategy?
 - ...What is needed to implement the DIGITRANS method?/How to overcome barriers?
 - ...How can I support the implementation in my region? Other players needed?
 - ...What shall business support organizations & public authorities do to support the implementation of DIGTRANS method?

Please provide your regional workshop agenda, if it differs from ITGs draft here:

Workshop structure as implemented by PP

Please note here, why you choose to change the workshop structure:

Summary of the discussion

Please give an overview about the main discussion results, which help to find answers to the four main questions.

The answers will be utilized to write the guideline for business support organizations and public authorities. The guideline will illustrate how DIGITRANS method and trainings can be implemented on a regional level.

Added value of DIGITRANS method for PPs regional digitalization strategy.
Practical tips to implement the DIGITRANS method.
Actors, that need to be involved to facilitate the success of DIGITRANS method and trainings.
What kind of support do these actors need?
Tasks of business support organizations & public authorities to a successful implementation of DIGITRANS method and trainings.
Additional outcome of workshops discussions

Please upload the minutes to basecamp at least two weeks after the implementation of your regional workshop. Thank you!

3. Added value of DIGITRANS method for regional digitalization strategies

Digital transformation is not possible without corresponding business model transformation. Therefore, DIGITRANS developed an SME appropriate innovation method enabling SME to create competitive digital business models. The project focused on the sectors Creative Industries, Health and Advanced Manufacturing, which are relevant to regional digitalization strategies. Furthermore, the project partners identified in collaboration with stakeholders various benefits of DIGITRANS method for regional digitalization strategies:

2.1 Benefits of DIGITRANS method:

- Easily accessible for companies
- Applicable across sectors
- Region-specific customizable
- Combining various tools and guidelines for practical application (direct access to methods for developing strategies)
- Benefit to established regional digital hubs (e.g. using materials / training concepts in own offer)
- Valuable for SMEs daily working processes

2.2 Chance for regional SMEs to ...

- Become aware of necessity for digital transformation and the topic's complexity (change of mindset; new thinking processes by using new methods; Sensitization of SME)
- Include different perspectives
- Follow digital trends on the part of customers and stakeholders
- Improve their abilities and qualifications in relation to digital transformation
- Exchange knowledge and experiences / network / interact
- Self-learning that allows SMEs to learn when and where they want by setting their own pace of learning
- Educate employees / development of new skills / reduce fears and mental blockade
- Experience advantages over other companies

3. Practical tips to implement the DIGITRANS method

In order to sustainably integrate the DIGITRANS method in the regional digitization strategies in the long term and to promote digital transformation of SMEs, the project partners developed practical tips in cooperation with stakeholders of the “quadruple helix”. To implement digital transformation processes, specific key-requirements must be fulfilled within SMEs:

- **Awareness** (of necessity for digital transformation)
- **Time** (to implement digital transformation processes)
- **Employees** (who understand the importance and the necessity for digital transformation / who are willing and able to adapt the essential skills)
- **Leader** (person responsible for digital transformation processes)
- **Financing** (different possibilities of financing)
- ...

Three key-factors to sustainably implement the DIGITRANS method successfully:

3.1 Promotion / Motivation

- Promotion of DIGITRANS method, trainings & platform
- Promotion through case study results (success stories) of digital transformation processes within companies SME (overview of best practice examples)
- Organisation of events like “Fuckup Nights” to learn from bad practice
- Ensuring courage and increase failure tolerance in companies
- Outlining the free access to DIGITRANS’ tools and demonstrate its added value to the SMEs
- Networking of the companies among each other to promote the DIGITRANS offer

3.2 Information

- Guidelines and tutorials for using DIGITRANS method, training, incubation centres, Platform and the embedded tools
- Educational programmes
- Funding opportunities

3.3 Cooperation

- Collaboration of actors of the “quadruple helix” (industry /companies, academia / R&I institutions, government, authorities and public institutions, users & civil society)
- Involving decision makers in the process of planning regional and national digital transformation initiatives
- Continuous communication and cooperation between different stakeholders (combination of personal speech and accompaniment) → SME must be further mentored after the Trainings (follow-up phase)
- Compatibility of national and regional digital transformation strategies
- Organisation of Networking events that bring together digital transformation “success stories” and SMEs that actively look for ways to innovate their business models and to succeed in digital transformation
- Teaming non-tech founders with tech experts

4. Actors, who need to be involved to facilitate the success of DIGITRANS method and trainings

In cooperation with stakeholders of the “quadruple helix” the project partners identified important actors, who need to be involved to facilitate the success of DIGITRANS method and trainings:

4.1 Industry / Companies

- **SMEs** must be open minded and evolve from only purchasing technology to develop strategies for digital transformation
- **Economy departments** including digital transformation (concrete action plans)
- **Professional economic journals, magazines and portals (social media)** can publish good practices, success stories and case studies connected to digital transformation
- **Chamber of Commerce and Industry**
- **Chamber of Crafts**
- **Industry associations**
- **Cluster Initiatives**

4.2 Academia / R&I institutions

- **Universities** must contribute to the regional authorities mind-set
- **Faculties and High Schools** including digital transformation elements in educational programmes as early as possible
- **Professional scientific journals, magazines and portals (social media)** can publish good practices, success stories and case studies connected to digital transformation

4.3 Government / authorities / public institutions

- **National and regional public authorities** can facilitate access to market for SMEs
- **Business support organisations** (workshops, education, networking and connecting the stakeholders, consultation) should ensure continuity in their work with entrepreneurs by
 - hiring external experts/consultants for transformation phase
 - establishing a department dedicated fully to support enterprises in their digital transformation process
- **Development departments** connecting and coordinating stakeholders
- **Funding organizations** (public programs, private funding schemes, crowdfunding and others) supporting the risk and working for successful realization of digital transformation project

4.4 Users /civil society

- **Civil society** must develop behaviour to follow the digital trends

4.5 Trainers and consultants

- **Trainers, consultants and experts** are important stakeholders to transfer the DIGITRANS outcomes
- **ICT experts** can support development and implementation of new digital solutions

4.6 Network of supporters

- "Who can be addressed to make the network bigger?" → agreement and better coordination between the different actors offering support to SMEs in the area of digital transformation

5. Tasks of business support organizations & public authorities for a successful implementation of DIGITRANS method and trainings

The different tasks of business support organizations and public authorities to successfully implement the DIGITRANS method and the trainings are divided into three main parts: raising awareness / encouraging SMEs, educating trainers / employees and networking / connecting

	Business Support Organizations	Public Authorities
Raising awareness / encouraging SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Promotion of DIGITRANS method and tools • Digital trends and technology • Highlighting best practice examples and successes • Publishing articles within various media channels (scientific & economic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of digital transformation in regional development strategies • Innovation fund (financing of regional innovation and digital transformation)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of initiatives for building digital infrastructure for digital transformation to authorities • Ensuring objective monitoring of achievements related to digital transformation • Demonstration of concrete benefits • Promotion of e.g. innovation vouchers (after participation in a workshop) • More transparency and overview of existing offers on regional and federal level to support SMEs in their digital transformation process 	
Educating trainers / employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital trends and technology • DIGITRANS method should be divided in a number of small packages of tools and materials for digital transformation • Guide on how to use the DIGITRANS offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and accessibility information and resources related to digital transformation • Set up bodies or organizational units responsible for

	<p>(developing informative marketing material to make DIGITRANS more public, visible)</p>	<p>offering practical support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of persons from DIGITRANS consortium in creation of digital transformation strategies (also involvement of experts and user experiences) • To update strategic documents (goals and objectives) taking current business and social situation into account
	<p>tackling regional development challenges and solutions (e.g. initiatives for overcoming digital divide for encouraging development of digital skills for elderly people)</p>	
<p>Networking / connecting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local platform for better collaboration and network between SMEs, Public Authorities and Business Support Organizations • Meet-UP social events for interdisciplinary teams including people decision makers in local region • Networking of Digital Hubs nationally and internationally, offering trainings about innovation methods using DIGITRANS method 	
	<p>Connection of all the stakeholders within digital transformation process</p>	

7. Conclusion

After all the project partners had implemented the regional policy workshops in cooperation with actors of the “quadruple helix”, it became apparent that similar policy recommendations were developed in each case. The project partners identified similar added values of the DIGITRANS method for regional digitalization strategies, they developed related practical tips to implement the DIGITRANS method in the particular regions and identified similar actors, who need to be involved to facilitate the success of DIGITRANS method and trainings. Also the identified tasks of business support organizations & public authorities for a successful implementation of DIGITRANS method and trainings approach each other and build on one another. That reflects the fact that not only less developed Danube regions but also strong regions are suffering from the digital revolution as they still do not have enough competencies to cope with digital transformation’s challenges. Cooperation and mutual support is necessary.