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D.T1.3.1.

Benchmarking Report

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Deliverable History

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003	19.04.2017	Draft03	Finalizing implementation of new WP Leader and LP feedback
0040	19.04.2017	Final01	Finalizing the deliverable D.T1.3.1 Benchmarking Reports

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Executive Summary

A total of 32 examples of EU, national and regional practices and success cases concerning the assistance provided by Intermediary organizations to support SMEs digitisation have been collected by all PPs.

Considering the different examples provided we can see a rather broad variety of measures offered and success cases recorded. Nevertheless there are quite similar structures and qualities of measures in all of the PPs' regions. Awareness-raising is as important as providing a platform for SMEs that need to network and exchange information. But also many measures that give even more profound knowledge support to SMEs are already in action.

Many PPs stated that new tools and measures are right now being developed and will be applied within the year. The success cases presented in this report could be of great value not only in this developing process and will therefore be shared among the PPs.

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1. Introduction

The task aims at the involvement of the intermediary organization (public and private organizations in charge to assist SMEs: Clusters, Chambers of Commerce, Technological Parks, Sectoral Agencies, R&TT agencies, etc.) to analyse their competence and attitude towards smart technologies, to identify a list of competence ("digital support operator" profile) required and to be provided with training actions and to set up of local networks of intermediaries for the project activities. P6 resp; All PPs involved

2. Objective of investigation/objective of the deliverable

The ultimate objective of this delivery (D.T1.3.1), which is part of the activity on "Intermediaries to strengthen the digitization of AS SMEs" (A.T1.3) is to gain valuable intel on national as well as regional practices and methods used by EU project partners and summarize them for future usage. These aspects are being demonstrated by a variety of success cases and stories documented by the respective PP (Intermediary organization) which show their support for SME's digitization. Specific examples of successful applications of such practices as well as present and future services provided by the Intermediaries, which are aiming to support SMEs, are discussed and summarized.

3. Applied approach/methodology adopted

First, the responsible PP (PP6 - Innovation and Technology Transfer Salzburg GmbH) sent out instructions and a template to all PPs. The PPs were invited to provide PP6 with a variety of crucial information about the respective organization and their operation methods.

In order to be able to provide standardized results suitable for proper comparison an Excel template was created. This template required the following information

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from the PPs: Project Partner NO; Project Partner Name; Intermediary Name; Intermediary Description; Name of Service; Description of Service/Assistance; Description of user case and benefits for the SME; Applied improvement measures; The template did provide a filled out example for better understanding.

After their completion the templates were sent back to PP6 who collected and categorized the results. The categorization aims at grouping all the different services provided based on how these services support and add value for SMEs. The categories are the following:

- Provides information, education and or consultation
- Provides a platform for information exchange and networking
- Provides legal and or political support
- Provides financial support
- Provides IT and/or cyber security support.

4. Results

The results are categorized and sorted by PPs. PPs provided 1-5 different cases from individual intermediary organizations acting in their region. The measures and success cases of the different intermediary organizations are summed up in the results of their respective region.

The provided information demonstrates a focus in the information sector. The categories “Provides information, education and or consultation” and “Provides a platform for information exchange and networking” are by far the most represented ones among the presented success cases. All around the Alpine Space intermediary organizations already provide general information about digitization to companies. We can see a very good practice of all PPs in the field of educating SMEs about general digitalization trends and technologies. There are different methods available to achieve a mutual goal. In many cases assessments are made to determine the company’s progress in the area of digitalization.

One example would be the “Readiness Model for Industry 4.0” which is provided by PP6 (Innovation and Technology Transfer Salzburg GmbH – Austria) in co-operation with their neighbour region Upper Austria (Business Upper Austria – BizUp): “Determination of Industry 4.0 level, educating SMEs on I4.0, providing benchmark data bases for comparison Educating SME’s on Industry 4.0”.

Other services offered by intermediary organizations have a strong focus on start-ups and are assisting them in their early development. E.g. “EASYTECH”(PP10 - ARDI Rhône-Alpes) or “RocketCUBE”: “a competition Start up co-financed by Veneto Region with a view to identifying and to support the opening of new enterprises.” (PP1 – CCIAADL)

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Another approach in educating SME's has been used by "The Alsace Chamber of Commerce". They launched a serious game "intended for the leaders of industrial companies" that "allows the user to interactively discover the domains and technologies that make up the industry of the future". In the end, the player receives corresponding results and suggestions on how to incorporate new solutions into his/her company. (PP2 – Alsace Innovation)

The creation of platforms for information exchange and networking possibilities is equally popular among the PPs. These platforms generally allow representatives of different SMEs as well as other interested parties such as investors, the science sector and the government, to exchange information and establish connections.

All PPs presented success cases in the categories "Provides information, education and or consultation" and "Provides a platform for information exchange and networking". Each PP presented at least 1 intermediary organization which provides some sort of platform for SMEs.

The total of examples provided less "more specific" or "in depth" measures of assistance such as legal or IT support. It cannot be concluded, though, that these measures are not yet as widely distributed among the intermediates. Mainly chambers of commerce and similar organizations seem to be responsible for providing services of that kind.

According to the results described in the templates 5 out of 12 PPs provide offers in the category "Provides legal and or political support". Services provided by intermediary organizations such as consultations for patent law, NDA's, trademark law and copyright fall under that category.

E. g. the "Digital Law Support" service provided by the "Industrie und Handelskammer Oberbayern (IHK)": "LAW Support especially focused on Questions in the field of Digital services such as E-Commerce, 3D Printing, fiscal law and Digital

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possibilities, as well as legal requirements for online marketing” (PP8 - University of Applied Science Rosenheim)

2 out of these 5 PPs also establish partnerships between their regional administration and the industry.

E. g. “DigitAgenda”: “Establish a partnership between the state and the ICT industry in order to develop reference digital products such as demonstration projects for subsequent marketing in the global market.” (PP4 - Technology Park Ljubljana Ltd.)

The category “Provides financial support” is also represented by best practice examples from 4 out of 8 PPs. The intermediary organizations offer support for SMEs by establishing connections to private and/or public investors. In a few cases tax advantages for SMEs are created by bringing politics and the industry closer together.

E. g. “The Italian national tax regulation for 2017 has been linked with the National Plan Industry 4.0 and can be considered a relevant initiative to facilitate the digitalization of SMEs”. “One of these tax advantages, called ‘Iperammortamento’ (hyper-depreciation), gives companies investing in new tools with high technological contents the chance of a depreciation increased by 250% on the cost of purchased device.” (PP9 - CSP ICT INNOVATION)

Finally the category “Provides IT Support” sees success cases by 3 out of 8PPs where 1 out of those 3 PPs presents a program or measure for direct support for SMEs. This service provides a check up of the current IT-infrastructure’s efficiency and security. 2 out of those 3 PPs reported that they are planning to establish more widely accessible and faster internet for SMEs.

E.g. “IT Check”: “IT Check is a standardized method to give the CEOs of SMEs an overview of the situation with special regard to the IT system. Is the IT designed in an optimal way? Does the IT work safely and reliably? Does the IT work economically? Does the IT provide the necessary support? With the aid of a check

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list a systematic, general and not detailed detection of the current status is made.”
(PP8 - University of Applied Sciences Rosenheim)

E.g. “Digitalization Offensive 2017!”: “If certain locations will become more attractive through installing a cluster or through expanding the access to high-speed internet you will attract more companies to stay in or to even move to your location.” (PP11 - Austria Wirtschaftsservice)

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Detailed case discussion based on specific examples provided by the PP:

PP3 – *ARII*:

The “Centre Technique des Industries Mécaniques – CETIM” which provides SMEs with assistance in the area of robotics wrote about their involvement with the company “MF Bougie”. The service provided is named “Robot Start PME” and “consists of conducting an opportunity and feasibility study, helping to write the specifications and assisting the choice and participating to the investment for a production robot.”

“The company MF Bougie, specialized in manufacturing "design candle" bought a new robot to increase the quality of the product. This robot places with high precision the cord in the centre of the candle.”

PP7 – *AFIL*:

“An IPR analysis has been done for a company producing hospital food trolleys characterized by Semi-Automatic Guide. The activities carried out were: Analysis of possible implementation of the used technologies in other industries; Analysis of the implementation of other Industries’ technologies for the food trolleys; Analysis of production process technologies; Identification of the suitable research centers that would support the company in further improvements of the product”

“The company has improved the efficiency of the production process and the performance of the trolley in terms of maintaining a constant food temperature. Finally, the company has applied for the product patent.”

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PP8 - *University of Applied Sciences Rosenheim:*

ROSIK e.V., a branch specific platform for IT businesses in the region of Rosenheim, Germany, works as a centre for profiling information and communication technology. They provide the earlier mentioned “IT Check” service.

“A small heating installer made use of the IT Check. The business had to rely increasingly on EDP-solutions to remain competitive. Because of lacking knowledge of an adequate IT infrastructure, systems did not run smoothly and opened security gaps to existing sensitive data.” “The performed IT Check included a free, professional analysis and an advice on subsequent steps. These were implemented completely. The implementation of the recommendations resulted in a stable IT infrastructure of the small company. Additionally, the company was able to separate the publicly accessible network from the business network and therefore to close security gaps. Existing hard- and software was examined and replaced, whereby the new solutions were suited to the requirements of the customer. This way high costs could be avoided and it’s made easier to design the business more economic.”

5. Evaluation transnational added value

It can be considered of extraordinary value for all intermediary organizations in the Alpine Space to get an impression and a general overview of 32 outstanding examples of already applied measures in the PPs regions in the field of raising awareness and supporting SMEs in their digitalization evolvement.

Often regions tend to develop their own measures of support without knowing what even their partner regions are planning or already applying. Even more rarely regions are able to get an impression of other provinces in foreign countries due to language barriers and due to the lack of knowledge in terms of economic facts and figures. This way a lot of knowledge and experience is idle.

The provided success cases give us a good impression of how similar SMEs' needs in the field of digitalization are.

Considering the fact that definitions like digitalization or Industry 4.0 are rather new, we also need to keep in mind that intermediary organizations have been offering support for similar activities under different definitions in the past.

It is therefore very interesting and useful to have this benchmark as a lighthouse to get a good orientation and overview of successful measures which can be adapted for each other region in Alpine Space.

6. Outlook and sustainability

Many PPs let us know that new tools and in depth support measures are being designed and will be implemented within 2017.

Although most of the PPs have been working in the field of digitalization for at least 1-2 years they will continue their awareness raising offers as they know that constant information is key. For SMEs that are close or ready to apply first measures it is necessary to provide incentives and high quality support.

7. Annexes

All success cases are available in Excel files for detailed consideration.