E-book on the state of the art

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This monograph is the result of the collaborative efforts of editors and authors as part of the**Apollo territoriAl corPOrate weLfare through digitaLization and cOoperation** project, co-funded by the European Union under Interegg Alpine Space program.

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Summary

1 Introduction to Apollo project

The APOLLO Project (territoriAl corPOrate weLfare through digitaLization and cOoperation) is a transnational initiative funded under the Interreg Alpine Space Programme. It responds to pressing challenges in Alpine regions, including depopulation, limited access to welfare services, digital divides, and demographic shifts . The project's main ambition is to stabilize and innovate territorial corporate welfare by leveraging the opportunities of digitalization and social innovation.

Alpine territories, often characterized by rurality, remoteness, and demographic ageing, are particularly vulnerable to depopulation trends and the lack of accessible welfare services . These dynamics are exacerbated by transformations in the labor market—such as remote working, flexible employment arrangements, and the growing demand for work-life balance policies. In this context, APOLLO aims to provide systemic solutions that not only improve the well-being of workers and their families, but also strengthen the competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability of Alpine communities.

The project brings together 10 partners from Italy, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia, representing public administrations, research organizations, SMEs, and adult education providers . This diversity ensures that policies and practices developed under APOLLO are co-created, tested, and adapted in real contexts, combining theoretical knowledge with practical experimentation.

Ultimately, APOLLO seeks to:

- foster transnational cooperation in developing innovative welfare solutions,
- address the digital transition's impact on work and society,
- and create long-lasting networks that will extend beyond the project's lifetime .

By introducing pilot actions, policy recommendations, and the GearingUP Toolkit, the project contributes not only to the Alpine region but also to wider European

strategies such as the European Green Deal, the EU Work-Life Balance Directive, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, and 17) .

1.1 General Objectives of the Apollo project

The general objective of APOLLO is to stabilize territorial corporate welfare in Alpine regions by exploiting the positive impacts of digitalization . This overarching aim reflects the ambition to create sustainable welfare ecosystems that improve quality of life, counteract depopulation, and strengthen regional cohesion.

This goal is pursued through four strategic directions:

1. Deepened knowledge on territorial corporate welfare and digitalization
   APOLLO promotes systematic analysis of best practices, needs assessments, and research on digital solutions for welfare provision. This evidence base provides the foundation for designing innovative measures adapted to diverse Alpine contexts.
2. Testing and piloting welfare innovations
   Pilot actions in partner regions will trial different welfare solutions, from digital literacy programs in Slovenia to e-health services in Germany, digital facilitators in Italy, and remote-work support in Austria .
3. Building stakeholder networks
   By fostering collaboration between public administrations, SMEs, research institutions, and civil society, APOLLO supports the creation of resilient welfare ecosystems. These networks ensure that welfare provision extends beyond individual organizations to entire territories .
4. Influencing transnational policies
   The project's outputs—particularly its policy recommendations—are designed to shape regional and national frameworks, contributing to EUSALP, the EU Green Deal, and other European strategies

1.2 Specific objectives of the Apollo Project

In addition to the overarching aim, APOLLO defines three specific objectives (SOs).

1. SO1: Increase knowledge and exchange of good practices
    - Focus on territorial welfare policies and digitalization for social innovation.
    - Promote mutual learning among Alpine regions, ensuring that knowledge is both scientifically sound and practically relevant .
2. SO2: Improve cooperation between stakeholders
    - Strengthen collaboration among public administrations, SMEs, research centers, workers, and service providers.
    - Foster public-private partnerships that deliver innovative welfare solutions in both centralized and decentralized Alpine areas .
3. SO3: Improve working conditions and access to services in Alpine areas
    - Develop and test measures that enhance work-life balance, improve access to digital and social services, and respond to demographic transformations.
    - Ensure these improvements particularly target SMEs and remote communities, where welfare provision is often limited .

These specific objectives are measurable and realistic within the project's three-year implementation timeline. They address both the systemic level (policy and governance) and the practical level (services and tools for workers and companies).

1.3 Activities – Work Package 1: Operational Framework Definition

The first work package of the APOLLO project, titled *Operational Framework Definition*, represents the intellectual backbone of the initiative. Its purpose is to establish a solid and evidence-based foundation for all subsequent phases, ensuring that the pilot actions and policy recommendations are informed by real needs, existing practices, and robust analysis. Unlike later stages that focus on implementation and advocacy, Work Package 1 is primarily concerned with understanding: it maps the terrain of territorial corporate welfare in Alpine regions, identifies both challenges and opportunities, and prepares stakeholders for meaningful participation.

One of the central activities within WP1 is the **mapping and analysis of best practices**. The project consortium undertakes a systematic review of at least ten cases drawn from three levels: the European dimension, the Alpine Space Programme area, and the national or regional contexts of the participating countries. This multi-scalar approach ensures that APOLLO captures not only internationally recognized innovations but also more localized experiences that may hold valuable lessons. The analysis goes beyond surface-level description. It evaluates the impact of existing welfare and digitalization measures on workers, SMEs, and communities, seeking to understand under which conditions certain practices succeed or fail. This exercise is crucial because Alpine territories are highly diverse: what works in an urbanized valley in Austria may not be directly transferable to a remote Slovenian municipality. By identifying transferable elements, the mapping activity lays the groundwork for designing pilots that are both innovative and realistic.

Alongside the best practice review, WP1 invests heavily in a **needs analysis**, which is conducted through surveys and focus groups across the partner regions. This activity ensures that the project does not simply impose solutions from the top down but instead responds to the lived experiences of workers, employers, and local authorities. The needs analysis involves at least 200 workers and 40 SMEs, capturing voices from sectors and areas that are often underrepresented in policy-making. These consultations shed light on concrete challenges such as digital skill gaps, access to welfare services in decentralized areas, and the difficulties SMEs face in providing employee support. By comparing these findings across different Alpine countries, the project can identify both commonalities and unique regional needs, strengthening the transnational dimension of APOLLO.

Another key element of WP1 is the **capacity-building of stakeholders**. The consortium recognizes that public administrations, SMEs, and even workers themselves may not have the necessary expertise to design or engage with innovative welfare solutions, particularly when digital tools are involved. For this reason, WP1 organizes training sessions, workshops, and interactive learning opportunities. These are designed not only to transfer knowledge but also to foster a shift in attitudes. For example, employers are encouraged to see territorial corporate welfare not as a cost but as an investment in productivity, sustainability, and employee satisfaction. Public administrations, meanwhile, are guided to adopt more collaborative approaches that involve businesses and civil society in

co-creating welfare solutions. Such capacity-building ensures that when the pilots are rolled out in WP2, stakeholders are prepared to participate actively and effectively.

Finally, WP1 culminates in the **development of guidelines for pilot actions**. Drawing on the insights from best practice analysis, needs assessments, and training activities, these guidelines establish a common methodological framework that all partners can use. This step is particularly important in a transnational project, where different countries may have diverse regulatory, social, and cultural contexts. The guidelines provide a shared reference point, ensuring coherence and comparability between the pilots implemented in Italy, Slovenia, Austria, and Germany. They specify not only the practical steps for implementation but also indicators for monitoring and evaluation, thereby linking WP1 directly to the assessment of outcomes later in the project.

1.4 Summary

This Deliverable compounds four separate contributions: **Mapping and analysis of best practices** at European, national, and regional levels penned by dr. Lejla I. Lerić from Faculty f organisation studies in Novo mesto, plus additional contributions from each partner, Needs analysis through surveys and focus groups (200+ workers and 40 SMEs) acontributions from each partner, Capacity-building workshops for public administrations and SMEs by all partners , Call for service providers by FHV and Guidelines for pilot actions to ensure methodological consistency across countries by LINKS.

Each of these contributions is the culmination of the partners' activities in Work Package 1.They can be read as a balanced combination of theoretical knowledge and practical instructions derived from hands-on experience.

2 Mapping and analysis of existing best practices

One of the cornerstone activities of the APOLLO Project is the mapping and analysis of existing best practices in the field of territorial corporate welfare and digitalization. This activity serves as a critical first step in establishing the operational framework of the project, as it ensures that future interventions are informed by evidence, guided by successful experiences, and adapted to the specific challenges of Alpine regions. In essence, it bridges the gap between theory and practice: by understanding what has already been tried, what has worked, and what obstacles have been encountered, APOLLO creates a foundation for innovation that is grounded in reality rather than speculation.

The mapping process involves a systematic collection of best practices from three levels: the **European** level, the **Alpine Space Programme area**, and the **national or regional contexts** of the participating countries (Italy, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia). By adopting this multilevel approach, the project avoids the trap of "one-size-fits-all" solutions and instead acknowledges the diversity of welfare systems and digital infrastructures across Europe. For example, digital welfare tools successfully implemented in urbanized areas of Germany may need to be adapted to address connectivity challenges in remote Slovenian villages. Conversely, community-based welfare initiatives from small Alpine municipalities could provide inspiration for larger regions seeking to strengthen social cohesion.

Once identified, the best practices are subjected to a structured **analysis of their impacts and transferability**. The consortium does not simply collect descriptive examples but evaluates how these practices affect workers, SMEs, and local communities. Key questions guide this analysis: Did the practice improve work-life balance? Did it reduce inequality of access to welfare services? Was it cost-effective and sustainable in the long term? And perhaps most importantly, under what conditions could the practice be successfully transferred to other Alpine contexts? This evaluative dimension transforms the mapping exercise into a decision-making tool, enabling partners to prioritize which practices to adapt and replicate in their pilot actions.

The importance of this activity lies not only in its academic or comparative value but also in its practical implications. Alpine regions face common challenges such as depopulation, an ageing population, and the limited ability of SMEs to provide

comprehensive welfare services to their employees. By analyzing how other regions and projects have responded to similar challenges—whether through digital platforms for welfare access, innovative models of remote working, or public-private partnerships in service provision—APOLLO generates a menu of tested solutions. These examples provide inspiration while also highlighting pitfalls to avoid, helping to save time, resources, and effort in the pilot implementation stage.

Another key benefit of the mapping and analysis process is the way it fosters mutual learning among partners. The ten organizations involved in APOLLO represent a wide range of expertise, from public administrations and universities to SMEs and adult education providers. The best practice mapping becomes a collective exercise, where each partner contributes experiences and insights from its own sector and country. This exchange creates a richer pool of knowledge and ensures that the practices identified are not viewed in isolation but as part of a broader ecosystem of innovation. Furthermore, by documenting these practices in a systematic way, APOLLO ensures that the knowledge generated can be shared with stakeholders beyond the project consortium, multiplying its impact.The results of the mapping and analysis feed directly into other project activities. They inform the design of pilot actions (WP2) by providing evidence of what works and what should be adapted to local conditions. They also underpin the development of policy recommendations (WP3), ensuring that proposals to decision-makers are based not only on theoretical arguments but on demonstrated examples of success. In this way, the activity ensures coherence across the entire project lifecycle, from the initial analysis to long-term sustainability.

2.1 Italy

INDEX:

Interegg- Alpine Space level

Good practice general information: INTESI		
TOPIC: Integrated Delivery of Services of General Interest (SGI) in the Alpine Space		
Objective of the practice:	*Increase options for low carbon mobility and transport; analyze and implement an integrated, territorial approach for the delivery of SGI across ten test areas in five Alpine countries.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Accessibility, Quality of Services, Territorial Integration, Digitalization, Sustainability*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine Region*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland, France*
	Region	*Alpine Region*
	City	*Various (including specific test areas like Valchiavenna, Pays di Maurienne, Idrija, Lieser-/Maltatal, and Cerkno)*

1. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*INTESI promotes an integrated approach to delivering SGI (Services of General Interests) in the Alpine region, enhancing accessibility and quality of services through collaboration across sectors.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of INTESI is to analyze the feasibility of delivering SGI via an integrated approach across ten test areas in five Alpine countries, focusing on sectors such as telecommunications, transport, health, and education. The idea originated from the need to address fragmented service delivery and enhance cooperation among different service providers. Success is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as service accessibility, quality ratings from users, and comparative GIS mapping. Achievements include improved accessibility metrics, with preliminary results indicating significant disparities in service access, particularly in remote areas. The practice fosters long-term sustainability by emphasizing digital solutions and efficient resource allocation. Its unique aspect lies in its collaborative model involving multiple stakeholders across different regions.*
Resources needed:	*Total eligible costs: 1.938.639 EUR. ERDF grants: 1.501.473 EUR*
Results achieved:	*INTESI is considered a good practice due to measurable outcomes, including enhanced accessibility of SGI for over 70% of residents in several test areas. GIS maps and statistical analyses illustrate improvements in service availability, with benchmarks indicating a 30% increase in service access over three years.*
Potential for learning:	*INTESI offers valuable lessons for other regions, particularly in how to effectively integrate service delivery across sectors and enhance accessibility in remote areas, making them more attractive to live in. Its collaborative framework can inspire similar projects globally, emphasizing stakeholder engagement and data-driven decision-making. The use of qualitative interviews has provided insights into community needs, highlighting the importance of local input in service design. This approach can be adapted to different contexts, making it relevant for various regions facing similar challenges in service provision.*
Further information:	*INTESI – Integrated Territorial Strategies for Services of General Interest (eurac.edu)* and *INTESI - Alpine Space Programme (alpine-space.eu)*
Keywords	*Services of General Interest, Integrated Approach, Accessibility, Alpine Region, Digitalization, Territorial Cohesion, Health and social services, ICT and digital society, Rural and peripheral development, Transport and mobility.*

Good practice general information: Smart Villages		
TOPIC: *Smart Villages Initiative in the Alpine Space*		
Objective of the practice:	*To enhance the attractiveness of rural and mountainous areas through a Smart Village (SV) approach that fosters innovation and community engagement.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digitalization, Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Development, Innovation Framework, Public Services*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine Region*	
Location of the practice	Country	Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France
	Region	Alpine Region
	City	Various (including municipalities like Kungota)

2. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Smart Villages project leverages digitalization to improve rural living conditions, fostering stakeholder collaboration to enhance services and innovation.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of the Smart Villages initiative is to improve the framework for innovation in Alpine rural areas through a participatory approach involving policy makers, businesses, academia, and civil society. The idea emerged from recognizing the digital divide and the need for better service provision in these regions. Success is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as the maturity level of innovation frameworks, stakeholder engagement levels, and the effectiveness of the Digital Exchange Platform (DEP). Specific outcomes include the establishment of Regional Stakeholder Groups (RSGs), implementation of free public WLAN in Kungota benefiting 5,000 citizens, and the development of a transnational toolbox for innovation. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by empowering local actors and improving digital infrastructure, recommendations are formulated to facilitate the transformation of project results into policies. Its uniqueness lies in the quadruple helix model that integrates various sectors for holistic development.*
Resources needed:	*Total budget/expenditure: EUR 2 685 380.80. Total EU funding (amount): EUR 2 061 998.68. Co-financing sources: ERDF: Amount, EUR 2 061 998.68.*
Results achieved:	*The Smart Villages initiative is regarded as a good practice due to measurable improvements in innovation frameworks, increased stakeholder collaboration, and enhanced access to digital tools. For example, in the municipality of Kungota (SI) 5,000 citizens benefit from free public WLAN/WiFi points to promote their services online and advertise local products through a dedicated mobile application.*
Potential for learning:	*This practice offers valuable insights for other regions facing similar challenges in rural development. The integration of various stakeholders through RSGs exemplifies effective collaboration, and the development of a Digital Exchange Platform (DEP) can serve as a model for knowledge sharing. Additionally, the focus on tailoring solutions to local contexts and fostering community ownership can inspire similar initiatives elsewhere. The emphasis on policy transfer ensures that project results influence broader political frameworks, making it a replicable model for enhancing digital innovation in rural areas globally.*
Further information:	*Project - Smart digital transformation of villages in the Alpine Space (keep.eu)*
Keywords	*Smart Villages, Digitalization, Rural Innovation, Alpine Space, Stakeholder Engagement, Community Development*

Good practice general information: CARE4TECH		
TOPIC: Cross-sectoral Alliances for Smart Living		
Objective of the practice:	*Improve the framework conditions for innovation in the Alpine Space*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digitalization, stakeholder engagement, smart living technologies, tech research, policy support*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine space*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, France*
	Region	*Alpine Region*
	City	*Graz, Milano, Bolzano, Oyonnax Cedex, Zürich, Nürnberg, Ljubljana, Freiburg, Kempten, Murska Sobota, Spittal an der Drau*

3. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*CARE4TECH transforms available but spread AS research, tech & innovation scene into stable EU leading knowledge development arena leading to better cooperation between all quadruple helix actors (public institutions, academia, business and civil society.)*
Detailed information on the practice:	*CARE4TECH aims to transform the fragmented research and innovation (R&I) landscape in the Alpine Space (AS) into a cohesive hub for Smart Living technologies by fostering collaboration among public institutions, academia, businesses, and civil society.The initiative originated from recognizing weaknesses in AS, such as limited inter-alpine R&I cooperation and a lack of awareness about existing results. EUSALP highlighted the need for better coordination and leveraging of research capacities.* *Success is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) like the number of collaborative projects, cross-border partnerships, and the integration of knowledge into practical applications, alongside effective policy engagement metrics.* *Key outputs include the AS Knowledge Atlas, AS Alliances for cooperation, AS Task Forces promoting joint learning, and the AS Think Tank for ongoing policy engagement linked to EU initiatives.* *By pooling regional knowledge, CARE4TECH enhances the AS innovation landscape, promoting sustainable practices that ensure ongoing competitiveness in Smart Living technologies.* *The initiative's innovative combination of thematic-oriented practices with a transnational policy support structure sets it apart, driving technological advancements while fostering a lasting collaborative framework among diverse stakeholders.*
Resources needed:	*Total budget/expenditure: EUR 1 847 819.89. Total EU funding (amount): EUR 1 425 919.45. Co-financing sources: ERDF: Amount, EUR 1 425 919.45.*
Results achieved:	*CARE4TECH is effective due to its focus on enhancing collaboration among quadruple helix actors, significantly improving knowledge transfer capacity. Key measurable outputs include formalized cooperation processes that increase business and technology innovation potential across the Alpine Space.*
Potential for learning:	*CARE4TECH offers valuable lessons for other regions due to its holistic approach to innovation through collaboration among public institutions, academia, businesses, and civil society. The project effectively addresses fragmentation by promoting transnational partnerships, demonstrating how collective efforts can drive significant advancements in Smart Living technologies.* *Additionally, CARE4TECH's success in mapping existing resources and leveraging regional strengths serves as a model for regions facing similar challenges. The measurable outputs, such as improved innovation potential and proven collaborative processes, provide a blueprint for enhancing regional competitiveness. By showcasing effective strategies for integrating R&I capacities, CARE4TECH presents an inspiring example for regions aiming to transform their innovation landscapes and achieve long-term sustainability.*
Further information:	Project - Cross-sectoral Alliances for Smart Living (keep.eu)
Keywords	*Digitalization, Smart innovation, Tech, Rural Innovation, Alpine Space, Stakeholder Engagement, Community Development*

Good practice general information: SmartCommUnity		
TOPIC: Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps		
Objective of the practice:	*Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Smart Transition, Community Engagement, Digital Tools Development, Networking and Capacity Building, Policy Integration*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine region, focusing on 18 Test Areas.*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia, Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland*
	Region	*Alpine Region*
	City	/
4. Good practice detailed information		

Short summary of the practice:	*SmartCommUnity enhances smart transitions in Alpine rural areas through innovative digital tools and community engagement, building on the Smart Villages concept.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of SmartCommUnity is to drive sustainable development in Alpine rural communities by facilitating smart transitions through digital innovation and community collaboration. This idea originated from the success of the Smart Villages project, which established a common understanding of smart transitions in rural areas. Success is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as community engagement levels, the number of implemented digital solutions, and stakeholder participation rates. Since its launch, the project has achieved significant outcomes, including the creation of a digital toolkit, the establishment of the Smart Alps network, and active policy integration efforts. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by fostering digital literacy and enhancing community resilience. Its innovative aspect lies in the integration of gamification and civic technology to engage local populations in the transition process.*
Resources needed:	*Total budget/expenditure: EUR 2 960 287.61. Total EU funding (amount): EUR 1 883 351.05. Total EU funding (co-financing rate): 63.62%. Co-financing sources: ERDF: Amount, EUR 1 883 351.05. Co-financing rate, 63.62%.*
Results achieved:	*The SmartCommUnity project has established 18 Test Areas, conducted over 20 workshops, and engaged more than 500 stakeholders. Measurable outputs include a digital toolkit with positive feedback from 80% of pilot participants, demonstrating effective community involvement and capacity building.*
Potential for learning:	*SmartCommUnity serves as an exemplary model for other regions seeking to enhance rural development through digital innovation. Its approach of linking advanced "lighthouse" areas with "follower" regions fosters knowledge exchange and capacity building. The project emphasizes community participation, demonstrating how technology can address local needs and promote sustainable practices. The documented outcomes and feedback mechanisms provide valuable insights for stakeholders interested in implementing similar initiatives. By focusing on resilience and empowerment, other regions can adapt these strategies to their unique contexts, ultimately enhancing their smart transition efforts.*
Further information:	*Project - Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps (keep.eu)*
Keywords	*Smart Villages, Digital Innovation, Community Engagement, Sustainable Development, Alpine Region.*

Good practice general information: A-RING		
TOPIC: Alpine Research and INnovation Capacity Governance		
Objective of the practice:	*Increase the application of multilevel and transnational governance in the Alpine Space*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digital Divide, Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Smart Specialisation Strategies.*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Region	
Location of the practice	Country	*Austria, Italy, Slovenia, France, Germany*
	Region	*Alps*
	City	*Various cities in participating countries.*

5. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*A-RING aligns R&I strategies across the Alpine Region, addressing challenges like climate change and digitalisation through a collaborative, transnational framework.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of the practice is to create a transnational collaborative framework to address critical issues in the Alpine Region while enhancing the effectiveness of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). This idea originated from identifying gaps in existing collaborative efforts among public authorities, academia, and businesses in tackling key challenges. Success is measured by the level of multilevel governance application and stakeholder collaboration, with key performance indicators (KPIs) reflecting the number of joint initiatives and policy briefs developed. Specific outcomes include strengthened governance structures, improved R&I collaboration, and a shared Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) that promotes joint S3 strategies. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by ensuring that R&I efforts are responsive to societal needs and environmental challenges. Its unique and innovative aspect lies in its bottom-up approach, which actively engages stakeholders across sectors, addressing citizen needs and fostering innovation through collaboration.*
Resources needed:	*Total budget/expenditure: EUR 1 404 421.46. Total EU funding (amount): EUR 1 147 996.37. Total EU funding (co-financing rate): 85.00%. Co-financing sources: ERDF Amount, EUR 1 147 996.37.*
Results achieved:	*The practice has led to enhanced transnational governance and R&I collaboration. Outputs include policy briefs, a SRIA, and increased engagement among public authorities, academia, and business sectors. Measurable outputs show improved alignment and joint initiatives, contributing to addressing societal challenges.*
Potential for learning :	*A-RING serves as a model for addressing complex transnational issues through collaborative governance. Other regions can learn from its bottom-up approach to align diverse stakeholders, integrate citizen needs into R&I processes, and create effective policy frameworks. The experience gained in the Alpine Region can inform similar initiatives elsewhere, enhancing collective responses to shared challenges like climate change, digitalisation, and biodiversity conservation. By fostering transnational collaboration, regions can leverage each other's strengths and resources, ultimately leading to more sustainable and innovative solutions.*
Further information:	*Project - Alpine Research and INnovation Capacity Governance (keep.eu)*
Keywords	*Transnational collaboration, R&I strategies, Alpine Region, societal challenges, Smart Specialisation Strategies, digitalisation, climate change, biodiversity conservation.*

EUROPEAN LEVEL

Good practice general information: BETTER		
TOPIC: BETTER helps Public Authorities to stimulate regional innovation chains using eGovernment solutions.		
Objective of the practice:	The project's objective is to stimulate regional innovation chains through developing or improving e-Government services provided by local and regional authorities.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Virtual infrastructures, digitalisation, innovation, business models, public authorities, research*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Europe*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy, UK, Sweden, Estonia, Hungary*
	Region	*Europe*
	City	*Genoa, Birmingham, Gävle, Tartu and Nyíregyháza*
6. Good practice detailed information		

Short summary of the practice:	*BETTER offers an innovative approach to a crucial priority for the EU: encourage Public Authorities (PA) to develop Regional Innovation Strategies in which eGovernment solutions can stimulate Regional Innovation chains (as well as improving their services).*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of BETTER is to enhance regional innovation chains by integrating eGovernment solutions within PA. This aims to improve public services while fostering local innovation. The idea originated from the need for PA in the EU to develop Regional Innovation Strategies that leverage eGovernment to address challenges in service delivery and cost efficiency. Success is measured through the number of innovative eGovernment instruments developed, improvements in governance, increased societal impact from innovation outcomes, and the effective implementation of regional action plans. Tracking participation in thematic events and workshops also contributes to assessing progress. Since its implementation, BETTER has achieved significant outcomes, including the development of at least three innovative eGovernment tools, enhanced capacity building among PA, and the identification of best practices through collaborative workshops. These initiatives have strengthened local innovation capabilities. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by embedding innovative eGovernment solutions into PA, ensuring ongoing service improvement and cost savings. This fosters a culture of innovation that can adapt to future challenges. BETTER has a unique holistic approach, linking eGovernment with regional innovation chains, and emphasizing collaboration across public, private, and community sectors. This integrated model encourages a win-win situation where improved public services drive local innovation.*
Resources needed:	*€1,285,000.00*
Results achieved:	*The project developed 5 Regional Action Plans containing regional policy instruments oriented at innovation in public administration. Moreover, it developed innovative eGovernment instruments through a concerted effort. They elaborated different digital services and processes, integrating local initiatives with smart regional strategy.*
Potential for learning:	*The BETTER initiative offers several valuable aspects for other regions to consider. By linking eGovernment with regional innovation chains, BETTER enhances public services while driving local economic growth, serving as a model for modernization.* *Additionally, BETTER focuses on capacity building within public authorities, ensuring sustainable implementation of innovative solutions, which is beneficial for regions enhancing administrative capabilities. The development of innovative eGovernment instruments and best practices provides concrete examples that other regions can adapt. Furthermore, BETTER's commitment to embedding innovations in public administration ensures lasting improvements. By prioritizing community benefits, it aligns with trends toward socially responsible governance, making it a relevant model for enhancing civic engagement. Overall, BETTER serves as a compelling framework for regional innovation that other areas can learn from.*
Further information:	BETTER | Interreg Europe
Keywords	*Research and innovation, public authorities, digitalisation, public services, regional plans*

Good practice general information: DISTANCE Lab		
TOPIC: remote service hub for SME's and public sector		
Objective of the practice:	*To enhance remote work practices, promote innovation, and improve sustainability in organizations across the Baltic Sea Region.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Remote work efficiency, team communication, hybrid team management, AI integration, sustainability.*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Baltic sea region*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Finland, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden*
	Region	*Baltic sea region*
	City	*various*
7. **Good practice detailed information**		

Short summary of the practice:	*The project Distance LAB equips public and private organisations with intercultural skills and business support to help them work remotely in an efficient way.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of DistanceLAB is to empower organizations to fully leverage remote work, enhancing communication, innovation, and sustainability. The idea originated from recognizing the growing need for resilience and adaptability in the workforce, especially during challenging times. Success is measured through user engagement, tool usability feedback, and the effectiveness of implemented strategies in improving remote work experiences. Since its implementation, the project has achieved a notable increase in employee satisfaction, improved communication, and collaboration across teams. DistanceLAB contributes to long-term sustainability by fostering a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement in remote work practices. What makes this practice unique is its multidisciplinary approach and collaboration across the Baltic Sea Region, incorporating AI discussions to enhance workplace efficiency.*
Resources needed:	*Total budget: €2.82 million. ERDF funding: €2.02 million. Norwegian funding: €0.15 million*
Results achieved:	*DistanceLAB is considered a good practice due to its measurable outcomes, including a 30% increase in team collaboration scores and a 25% improvement in employee satisfaction ratings. Positive feedback from pilot users highlights the tools' usability, with a significant number of organizations reporting enhanced remote work effectiveness. (ongoing project)*
Potential for learning:	*DistanceLAB is a potentially interesting practice for other regions due to its holistic approach to remote work. The integration of practical tools and AI discussions can serve as a model for organizations seeking to enhance their remote work environments. The project emphasizes collaboration, adaptability, and continuous feedback, which can help other regions navigate the complexities of hybrid work models. Furthermore, the shared experiences and tools developed can foster a network of best practices that can be adapted to various organizational contexts, encouraging global learning and innovation.*
Further information:	Distance LAB - Interreg Baltic Sea Region (interreg-baltic.eu)
Keywords	*Business support, Digital transformation, Internationalisation, Non-technological innovation, Resilient economies and communities*

Good practice general information: CORA		
TOPIC: digital infrastructure, services and skills in rural areas		
Objective of the practice:	*The aim of CORA is to bridge digital divide, improve public services delivery and create an environment stimulating digital innovation in rural areas.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digitalisation, digital infrastructures, smart skills, rural areas, public authorities*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*North Sea Region*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, UK*
	Region	*North Sea Region*
	City	*Various*

8. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*CORA works to close the digital divide across rural areas that is limiting their attractiveness for families and businesses. CORA emphasizes the main components of digital divide, namely lack of digital infrastructure, services and skills.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*CORA's aim is the creation of a digital ecosystem that is set to improve and empower rural areas to enhance the use of digital services towards improving the living and working qualities. In the project's framework, this digital ecosystem is composed of digital transformation, namely digital infrastructure, digital services and digital skills and competences.* *This idea arises from the common challenge and needs in the region, that is characterised by a consistent number of rural areas. CORA concept comprises of three main steps namely identifying the common local challenges, testing solutions to overcome the challenges and streamlining and knowledge transfer.* *The main output, the CORA Model, has been developed comprising on guiding measures, good examples as well as selective training materials for the main target groups, namely local communities, authorities and enterprises in the aforementioned three main dimensions.* *The diversification of the actions of the project is what makes it both innovative and sustainable in the future. Among the three different dimensions, CORA targets the access to digital services through their availability and promotion. The infrastructure dimension revolves around the development of superfast broadband infrastructure and its quality. It includes an effort around technology, regulation and incentives, funding and finance. Digital skills are directed at a broad audience that goes beyond the main target groups.*
Resources needed:	*3.845.736€ from which 50% are co-financed by the Interreg North Sea Region Programme.*
Results achieved:	*The CORA partners developed the SSE (Systematic Synergy Enhancement) model to provide a comprehensive set of guiding measures towards digitalization in rural areas. Moreover, the digital hub guide concept was developed to gather knowledge on planning and operation of fixed and mobile digital hubs. Built on the idea of "train the trainer", the CORA partners developed the conventional and online training concepts and materials. The project implemented some pilot actions upon which different policy briefings were elaborated.*
Potential for learning:	*The CORA project is interesting because it provides with a broad spectrum of actions that can be easily spread and replicable. CORA partners tested how their model can enhance digital skills. The results are utilised to formulate digital strategies for rural areas to be streamlined to the regional, national and European authorities and influence EU digital inclusion policy. The training courses, that are available for everyone, focus on introducing the benefits of high-capacity networks as well as financial and technical solutions for an effective and cost-efficient rollout of digital infrastructure in rural areas. Finally, the results and findings from research and pilot activities are integrated into a set of strategic recommendations to be communicated to the national and European decision-making authorities. The policy briefings, specifically, are fed into the EU directives and guidelines on digital divide and digital innovation in rural areas, and widely spread throughout the rural areas in the North Sea Region and Europe.*
Further information:	CORA, Interreg VB North Sea Region Programme, Model | ruraldigital.eu
Keywords	*Rural areas, digitalisation, local authorities, infrastructures, policy*

Good practice general information: AlpJobs		
TOPIC: Anticipate Future Jobs on Alpine Remote Area		
Objective of the practice:	*To enhance employment opportunities and skills alignment in the Alpine region by promoting sustainable innovations and cross-border cooperation.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Labor market adaptation, skills development, entrepreneurial engagement, sustainable innovation, anticipatory governance.*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine Macroregion*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland*
	Region	*Alpine region*
	City	*Trento, Bolzano, Poschiavo, Brusio (CH), LAG "Holzweltleader" (AT), LAG "TOTI LAS" (SI)*

9. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*ALPJOBS aims to enhance skills and employment in the Alpine region through sustainable innovation, stakeholder engagement, and anticipatory governance by 2030.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of ALPJOBS is to improve labour market outcomes and skill alignment in the Alpine region by 2030. The idea originated from the need to adapt to local opportunities while fostering cross-border cooperation under the EU Macroregional Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). The number of stakeholders engaged, reports produced, and job opportunities created are some of the indicators of success included in the project. Since its implementation, ALPJOBS has achieved tangible results including comprehensive reports on labour market scenarios, guidelines for training methodologies, and recommendations for aligning skills with regional demand. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by fostering a culture of anticipatory governance and resilience among local communities. Its uniqueness lies in its collaborative approach, leveraging Futures Studies methods to address future labour market challenges.*
Resources needed:	*/ funded by ARPAF*
Results achieved:	*ALPJOBS is considered a good practice due to its measurable outcomes, including the development of reports on labour market scenarios and strategies that align skills with local economic needs. Recommendations have been made for maintaining current jobs and creating new ones, contributing to a balanced labour market.*
Potential for learning:	*ALPJOBS offers valuable lessons for other regions by demonstrating how to effectively engage diverse stakeholders in addressing local labour market challenges. The focus on anticipatory governance and long-term strategies fosters resilience in communities facing economic uncertainties. Other regions can learn from the methodologies developed, particularly in aligning educational programs with future labour demands and promoting local entrepreneurship. The project emphasizes the importance of involving young people in local development strategies, which is critical for sustainable economic growth. By sharing its findings and tools, ALPJOBS can inspire similar initiatives in different contexts, enhancing regional collaboration and innovation.*
Further information:	ALPJOBS project (google.com)
Keywords	*Labour market, skills development, sustainability, Alpine region, cross-border cooperation, anticipatory governance.*

Good practice general information: Work-Life Balance Directive		
TOPIC: balance paid work and private life		
Objective of the practice:	*Set some standards to make it easier for people working in the EU to balance paid work and private life, including caring responsibilities.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Minimum life standards, working arrangements, caregiving, safeguarding*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*European*	
Location of the practice	Country	//
	Region	*European Union*
	City	//

10. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Work-Life Balance Directive is an EU law which aims to make it easier for people working in the EU to balance paid work and private life, including caring responsibilities. The directive was formally adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council of the European Union in June 2019.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The Work-Life Balance Directive is an EU law which aims to work in a concerted effort towards the balance between paid work and private life, including caring responsibilities. It has the potential to improve the situations of family members of people with intellectual disabilities, and people with intellectual disabilities themselves, to better combine their work with their parental and/or caring responsibilities. The Work-Life Balance Directive introduces, amongst other things, minimum standards for parental leave including paternity leave, carer's leave, the right to flexible working arrangements for parents and carers, and safeguards against unfair dismissals. Its target is composed of all workers, and it benefits both men and women with caring responsibilities in the labour market and allows for a better share of caring responsibilities between them. The gender balance is thoroughly analysed in the directive and is deeply considered. This initiative takes into account the developments in society over the past decade in order to enable parents and people with caring responsibilities to better balance their work and family lives. The initiative aims at modernising the existing EU legal framework in the area of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements. The Directive comprises both legislative and non-legislative measures to ease the process of support by Member State for the common goal.*
Resources needed:	*//*
Results achieved:	*The Work-Life balance directive provides some very useful standards and practices for employees with caring responsibilities to better combine these with their work. It does so by creating minimum standards for carer's leave and by providing flexible working arrangements for carers and parents. Moreover, the Directive applies to all workers, men and women, who have an employment contract or employment relationship as defined by the law. This gives it a broad coverage over categories of workers that might be in a situation of vulnerability.*
Potential for learning:	*The Directive gathers in a law several important points regarding work-life balance. This Directive lays down minimum requirements designed to achieve equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work, by facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life for workers who are parents, or carers. Those requirements can become a great starting point for the elaboration of other measures or projects on the same topic, with an additional opportunity of advocating for ulterior steps. Its broad vision can also help researcher to better understand all the layers that impact and are involved in the topic of work-life balance, granting a holistic view. Moreover, the Directive is a great source of the needs at the European level concerning the topic. This initiative benefits individuals, companies and the wider society.*
Further information:	Work-Life balance directive - Inclusion Europe (inclusion-europe.eu) DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/ 1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL - of 20 June 2019 - on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/ 18/ EU (europa.eu)
Keywords	*Minimum life standards, working arrangements, caregiving, safeguarding, balance, public-private life*

NATIONAL LEVEL

Good practice general information: Family Audit		
TOPIC: work-family balance		
Objective of the practice:	The primary objective of the Family Audit standard is to promote and support family well-being in the workplace through the promotion of work-family balance.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Work life, work-family balance, public polices, family policies*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*National*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy*
	Region	*//*

	City	//
11. **Good practice detailed information**		
Short summary of the practice:	*Family Audit standard is a certification tool elaborated in the Provincia Autonoma di Trento to establish the level of attention that a workplace gives to the work-life balance of its employees.*	
Detailed information on the practice:	*The "Family Audit" standard aims at certificating the attention given to work-family balance. The "Family Audit" certified organisations are therefore oriented towards the corporate well-being of their employees, in line with specific parameters indicated in the standard's guidelines. The Guidelines describe and regulate the Family Audit process, the roles and tasks of the organizations that apply to the Family Audit and the various actors that act within the process. Certification requirements are also defined in the Guidelines. To obtain this certification, an organization, from companies to municipalities and non-profit organizations, undergoes an auditing process that involves variable costs based on the size of the organization. The idea originates from the German standard "Familie und Beruf". The first testing happened from 2005 to 2008. Throughout its implementation, the two parameters considered for the monitoring were the number of organisations and employees involved. Family Audit conceives the balance measures as a useful instrument to improve the well-being of workers' families as an objective of public interest, in a worldview linked to territorial welfare. Investing in the reconciliation of work and life is a medium-long term strategy that the Department for family policies pursues in the belief that it constitutes an effective driving force for the growth of companies, for the increase of productivity, the participation of women in the labour market and birth rates.*	
Resources needed:	*//*	
Results achieved:	*Data collected in May 2018 by the provincial agency for the family, birth rate and youth policies indicate that the organizations involved to date are 213 and involve more than 100 thousand employees. About a third of the organizations (77 out of 213) are public. Certified enterprises concentrate in the North of the country, especially between Trentino and Lombardy.*	
Potential for learning:	*The standard Family Audit is easily replicable. Its guidelines and processes are known, and its model of governance is thoroughly analysed. Family Audit traces a good example for a concerted effort and collaboration of different political entities at the national level towards the goal of family well-being. Work-family policies are a strategic field to put effort into in order to foster the culture of wellbeing in general. Moreover, the Family Audit covers a broad panorama of themes, that can be useful for other programmes and measures, such as work organisation; corporate culture; diversity & inclusion management; internal communication; corporate welfare and people caring; territorial welfare; new technologies.*	
Further information:	Dipartimento per le politiche della famiglia - Family Audit (governo.it) report-MASP.pdf	
Keywords	*Work life, work-family balance, public polices, family policies, local level*	

Good practice general information: Bacheca digitale Municipality of LODI		
TOPIC: territorial welfare		
Objective of the practice:	*Easing the access of the citizens to the local services and opportunities.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Community, public services, health, accessibility, participation, digitalisation*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Local*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy*
	Region	*Lombardy*
	City	*Lodi*
12. **Good practice detailed information**		

Short summary of the practice:	*It is a web platform where citizens, operators and companies can learn about the network of services and opportunities in the territory of Lodigiano. Inside you can find information about services, job offers, training courses and leisure opportunities.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of the Bacheca Digitale is to create an accessible digital platform that connects citizens with essential welfare services across 61 municipalities in the Lodi areas. It aims to streamline communication between public entities and the Third Sector, fostering a cohesive local welfare system.* *The idea originated from the urgent need to enhance communication among diverse municipalities, which often faced challenges in sharing resources and information. The Ufficio di Piano, responsible for analysing local needs, identified this gap, particularly evident during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and initiated the project as part of a broader strategy to improve social welfare.* *Success is measured through indicators such as the number of visits to the platform and user engagement metrics. The platform has facilitated direct access to crucial services related to housing, employment, food, and training, significantly impacting community engagement. Its unique feature lies in its user-friendly design, allowing citizens to easily navigate through resources using keywords and geolocation.* *In terms of long-term sustainability, Bacheca Digitale fosters ongoing collaboration between public entities and local organizations, ensuring that the platform remains relevant and continuously updated. Its innovative approach lies in transforming traditional community bulletin boards into a dynamic, digital resource that enhances accessibility and information sharing across a fragmented region.*
Resources needed:	*//*
Results achieved:	*33.000 visualisations of the Lodi Office website between January and June 2023; 2000 accesses to the platform itself at the same time frame; around 60 different organisations' contributions; 61 municipalities involved.*
Potential for learning:	*The digital noticeboard is an extremely simple tool to develop and spread among the citizens. It allows public bodies and the Third Sector to build together a strategy of territorial welfare. This example can be useful to build a database for welfare services because it's easy to replicate and to find for the users. Moreover, it is very intuitive: there is a map nut also the list of the different services and opportunities available so you can double filter by place and type of activity. It covers a broad scope of services that are not only focused on basic needs, but also leisure and free time. This makes it a great tool also for the strengthening of the social networks at the local level, as well as useful for the individual citizen.*
Further information:	Ufficio di Piano Lodi A Lodi il welfare va in bacheca, digitale • Secondo Welfare
Keywords	*Accessibility, digitalisation, territorial welfare, public services*

Good practice general information: WIN		
TOPIC: What I NEED		
Objective of the practice:	*To identify and address the actual needs of employees through a digital tool.*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Employee well-being, welfare analysis, data-driven decision-making.*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Italy*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy*
	Region	*//*
	City	*//*

13. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*WIN is a digital tool that helps organizations understand employee needs for effective welfare planning.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of WIN (What I Need) is to gather and analyze the real needs of employees to create effective welfare programs. The idea originated from recognizing the gap in understanding employee needs, prompting the creation of a flexible questionnaire that adapts to individual responses. Success is measured through key performance indicators such as employee engagement levels, satisfaction scores, and the effectiveness of welfare initiatives based on survey results. Since its implementation, organizations have reported improved employee morale and better-targeted welfare solutions. WIN promotes long-term sustainability by aligning welfare investments with employees' actual needs, contributing to a socially responsible organizational culture in line with ESG criteria (Environmental, Social, Governance). Its uniqueness lies in its adaptive nature: it identifies individual and family needs, not limited to those that can be addressed by existing welfare services (both corporate and non-corporate); it considers both the objective dimension (e.g., number of children) and the subjective dimension (perceived intensity of caregiving burden) of the need; it identifies and develops areas of need where greater vulnerability is detected, which can be translated into realistic choices for welfare actions. It covers six areas of needs:* • *Family caregiving responsibilities* • *Economic and financial vulnerability* • *Health and psychological well-being* • *Training-related needs* • *Mobility* • *Leisure time*
Resources needed:	*//*
Results achieved:	*Percorsi di Secondo Welfare developed the structure of the WIN questionnaire and defined the logic that connects the questions to the identification of needs. Drawing from the study of the literature, they established criteria for processing the data collected through the questionnaire to highlight the specificities of the pathways and achieve an effective analysis.* *The aim of this methodology is to prevent potential "distracting effects" that may influence the respondent's selective attention.*
Potential for learning:	*This practice is a potential model for other regions due to its comprehensive approach to welfare analysis. By leveraging data-driven insights, organizations can tailor their welfare programs to meet specific employee needs effectively. The adaptability of WIN's questionnaire allows for customization in various contexts, making it applicable across different industries and cultural settings. Additionally, the emphasis on understanding employee needs fosters a sense of responsibility and care within organizations, leading to enhanced workplace environments. Through its attention to the context of the answers, the questionnaire tool respects the individual's freedom of choice, focusing exclusively on their real, expressed, and/or unexpressed needs, avoiding situations where workers identify welfare services that only partially address their actual needs. Sharing this model could inspire similar initiatives globally, promoting employee well-being as a cornerstone of organizational success.*
Further information:	WIN - What I Need • Secondo Welfare, WIN - Wala (walawelfare.com)
Keywords	*Employee welfare, needs assessment, ESG criteria, workplace well-being, adaptive survey tool.*

Good practice general information: WE.CA.RE. strategy (WElfare CAntiere REgionale - Welfare Regional Workshop)	
TOPIC: Integrated Welfare and Social Innovation Strategy	
Objective of the practice:	*The WE.CA.RE. strategy (WElfare CAntiere REgionale - Welfare Regional Workshop) introduces a new welfare model that goes beyond the traditional assistance-based approach to become a driver of territorial development.*
Subtopics of the practice:	*Social Innovation, Social Cohesion, Territorial Development, Corporate Welfare, Community Engagement, Public-Private Partnership*

Geographical scope of the practice:	*Italy*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy*
	Region	*Piemonte*
	City	*//*
14. **Good practice detailed information**		
Short summary of the practice:	*WE.CA.RE. is a strategy implemented by Piedmont Region (Italy) that integrates social, labor, and economic development policies to promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities. The initiative transforms traditional welfare into a driver for territorial development by combining two main approaches: territorial welfare (developing social innovation projects at the community level) and corporate welfare (improving workers' quality of life through company-based initiatives). The strategy is funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)*	
Detailed information on the practice:	*WE.CA.RE. is based on three innovative elements:* • *Transforms beneficiaries from passive subjects to active agents of change;* • *Integrates social, economic, and labour policies to create new development opportunities;* • *Coordinates public bodies, businesses, third sector organizations, and citizens to develop innovative solutions to social needs* *This approach aims to simultaneously generate both social and economic positive impacts, promoting the sustainability of interventions through active community participation. The strategy operates through two main pillars:* *<u>Territorial Welfare</u>* *Creation of Social Cohesion Districts,* *Development of innovative social services,* *Support for social impact entrepreneurship,* *Implementation of proximity services.* *<u>Corporate Welfare</u>* *Implementation of company welfare plans,* *Inter-company collaborations,* *Health prevention programs,* *Sustainable mobility projects.* *The strategy involves public authorities, private companies, and third sector organizations, promoting a bottom-up approach through co-planning and integration of social and economic policies.*	
Resources needed:	*20 million*	
Results achieved:	*The strategy has stimulated the experimentation of social innovations in the territories, demonstrating sustainability and replicability.*	
Potential for learning:	*The WE.CA.RE. strategy offers a replicable model of social innovation that can be adopted in other regions to promote social cohesion and territorial development.*	
Further information:	https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/fondi-progetti-europei/fondo-sociale-europeo-fse/programmazione-2014-2020-fse/wecare-strategia-regionale-per-linnovazione-sociale-0	
Keywords	*Social innovation, territorial development, corporate welfare, employee well-being, health and safety at work, training and professional development, work-life balance, social cohesion, community development, proximity services, sustainable development, social infrastructure, caregiving support, smart working*	

Good practice general information: TERRES MONVISO		
TOPIC: Territorial animators in peripheral mountain areas		
Objective of the practice:	*TERRITORIAL ANIMATION AND FACILITATION*	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Accessibility, Quality of Services, Territorial Integration, Sustainability*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine Region-ITALY-TERRES MONVISO TERRITORY*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Italy,*
	Region	*Alpine Region*
	City	*Various (including specific test areas like SALUZZO, VAL VARAITA, VAL PO, VALLE MAIRA, STURA, GRANA, INFERNOTTO)*

15. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*TERRES Monviso promotes the development of active territorial animators focused on the dissemination of information and the involvement of the community on the topics of territorial sustainable development, tourism, and socio-cultural development.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of TERRES MONVISO is to develop a territorial joint work of animation and dissemination of information through the Valleys. This action is carried on thank to the development of territorial animators fostering the facilitation of the information flow.* *Its unique aspect lies in its collaborative model involving multiple stakeholders, public and private on the territory and different target groups: local population including the youth, tourists, touristic local facilities*
Resources needed:	*Total eligible costs:* *PITER TERRES MONVISO+ALCOTRA VELOPLUF: 140.000,00* *ERDF € 112.000,00*
Results achieved:	*PITER TERRES MONVISO is considered a good practice due to measurable outcomes, including a better development of the communication flow through the territory and the implementation of work skills and work opportunities, especially for the youth, in the territories involved in this practice. Also, the project involves local touristic facilities and improves the sustainability of the touristic sector of the area by fostering the reduction of the distance between production and commercialization (or transformation).* *Created a sense of community within the territory, strengthening connections and relations in the community.*
Potential for learning:	*TERRES MONVISO offers valuable lessons for other regions, particularly in* *- how to effectively integrate information delivery across local population and touristic facilities* *- enhance accessibility in remote areas,* *- making territories more attractive to live in thank to the development of new working possibilities and services* *This approach can be adapted to different contexts, making it relevant for various regions facing similar challenges.*
Further information:	*https://visit.terresmonviso.eu/*
Keywords	*Services of General Interest, Information, Integrated Approach, Accessibility, Alpine Region, Territorial Cohesion, Rural and peripheral development, Local development, Youth, Work Opportunities*

2.2 Slovenia

Index:

- **Interegg Alpine Space level**
- **European level**
- **National level**

Interegg Alpine Space level

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: SmartCommUnity		
Objective of the practice:	The SmartCommUnity project aims to support rural Alpine regions in their digital transformation by fostering smart governance, digital innovation, and cross-border collaboration. The objective is to bridge the digital divide, enhance socio-economic resilience, and create a network of smart rural communities across the Alpine region.	
Subtopics of the practice:	✓*Smart Governance & Digital Public Services – Implementing digital tools to enhance decision-making, transparency, and citizen participation.* ✓*Rural Digitalization & Smart Villages – Enabling rural areas to adopt smart solutions for economic growth and better quality of life.* ✓*Sustainability & Green Innovation – Promoting energy efficiency, smart mobility, and environmentally friendly digital infrastructure.* ✓*Community Engagement & Stakeholder Cooperation – Strengthening participation through Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) and transnational collaboration.* ✓*Data-Driven Solutions & AI Integration – Using real-time data and AI for policy-making and service optimization.*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*The SmartCommUnity project operates across the Alpine Space, covering:* *Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Slovenia, and Switzerland.* *It focuses on rural and mountainous areas, integrating local governments, businesses, research institutions, and civil society to create a sustainable digital future for the Alpine region*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Slovenia, and Switzerland.*
	Region	*Alpine*
	City	/

***1.*Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*This project aims to foster smart transition in Alpine and mountain regions by experimenting with innovative solutions in designated Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs). It encourages cross-border collaboration and knowledge sharing, providing a collection of good practices to inspire and guide other regions in implementing technologies that improve services and support local economies. A key component of SmartCommUnity is the establishment of Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs), which serve as innovation hubs where digital tools and smart governance strategies are piloted. These LTAs work closely with selected Follower Test Areas to inspire and guide additional regions in adopting smart solutions. The project emphasizes the development of interactive and user-friendly digital tools to facilitate transnational matchmaking and community engagement, thereby empowering new areas to emulate more advanced regions/source:AlpinespaceEU)*

Detailed information on the practice:	*1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the practice?* *The SmartCommUnity project aims to promote the smart transition of Alpine and mountain regions by developing and implementing digital, social, and sustainable solutions that enhance local governance, economy, and quality of life. The project focuses on creating Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) that serve as innovation hubs where digital tools and smart governance strategies are tested and refined.* *2. How did the idea for this practice originate?* *The project originated from the need to counteract depopulation, economic stagnation, and limited public services in Alpine and mountain areas. Many rural and mountainous regions face challenges such as lack of digital infrastructure, declining local economies, and social isolation. Recognizing the potential of digitalization and community-driven initiatives, the Alpine Space Programme initiated SmartCommUnity to develop scalable smart solutions tailored to these regions.* *3. How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* *SmartCommUnity measures success through several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including:* • *Number of Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) established to pilot smart solutions.* • *Engagement levels of local communities and stakeholders (measured through participation in workshops and initiatives).* • *Implementation rate of digital tools and smart governance strategies across partner regions.* • *Increase in public and private investments in digital infrastructure.* • *Improvement in local services and economic activities facilitated by smart solutions.* • *Reduction in digital divide by tracking accessibility and usage of digital services.* *4. What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* *Since its implementation, SmartCommUnity has:* *Established multiple Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) in different Alpine regions to experiment with smart governance models, digital tools, and participatory decision-making.* *Facilitated collaborations between municipalities, businesses, and academic institutions to drive innovation.* *Developed and shared a collection of best practices and policy recommendations to guide other Alpine regions in their smart transition.* *Improved digital literacy and technology adoption among residents and local businesses.* *Enhanced cross-border cooperation within the Alpine region, leading to a more connected and resilient socio-economic framework.* *5. How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* *By promoting digital entrepreneurship, remote work, and smart local industries, the project helps retain jobs and attract new economic opportunities to Alpine regions.* *: Encouraging community engagement and digital inclusion fosters stronger local governance and social cohesion.* *By reducing travel needs, promoting smart mobility solutions, and optimizing resource use, the project helps minimize the environmental impact of local communities.* *The Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) serve as replicable models that can be adapted and expanded to other rural and mountainous areas beyond the Alpine region.* *6. What makes this practice unique or innovative?* *Unlike many smart city initiatives, SmartCommUnity specifically focuses on rural and mountainous areas, addressing their unique challenges and needs.* *: These pilot areas act as real-world laboratories where smart solutions are tested before broader implementation.* *: The project emphasizes community involvement and co-creation, ensuring that local stakeholders play an active role in shaping smart solutions.* *By connecting different Alpine regions, SmartCommUnity fosters knowledge exchange, policy harmonization, and joint innovation efforts.* *The project integrates environmental, social, and economic sustainability into its digital transformation efforts, ensuring long-term benefits.*
Resources needed:	*The SmartCommUnity project is financed by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 and is scheduled to run for a period of three years.*

	ALPINE-SPACE.EU *€2,960,288*
Results achieved:	*1. Measurable Outputs* *a. Establishment of Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs)* *5 LTAs were established across Alpine regions to pilot smart solutions, focusing on areas such as smart governance, digital tools, and sustainable practices.* *These LTAs serve as replicable models for other regions facing similar challenges.* *b. Community Participation* *Over 1,500 residents and stakeholders participated in workshops and co-creation sessions, leading to higher engagement and community-driven solutions.* *Participation rates grew by 35% compared to earlier regional initiatives.* *c. Digitalization Indicators* *50% increase in digital tool adoption among local businesses and administrations.* *Reduction of the digital divide by expanding access to digital services in remote areas.* *d. Economic Impact* *Growth in local economies through 20+ new digital enterprises established in Lighthouse Test Areas.* *Reduction in administrative costs for local governments by 25% due to digital transformation.*
Potential for learning :	*The SmartCommUnity project serves as an excellent model for other regions, particularly those with rural or mountainous landscapes, facing similar socio-economic and digitalization challenges.* *Several aspects make this practice highly transferable and beneficial to other regions.* **1. Addressing Digital and Social Gaps in Rural Areas** Many remote or less developed regions struggle with **limited digital infrastructure, declining populations, and economic stagnation**. SmartCommUnity effectively tackles these issues by: ✓ **Promoting digital inclusion** – ensuring that local businesses, administrations, and residents have access to modern digital tools. ✓ **Providing smart governance models** – enabling more efficient and transparent decision-making. ✓ **Boosting local economies** – fostering **digital entrepreneurship** and reducing administrative burdens for businesses. 💡 **Why it's relevant for other regions**: This approach **bridges the digital divide** and **revitalizes rural economies**, making it applicable to **any region facing depopulation or low digitalization levels**.
	2. Replicable Lighthouse Test Areas (LTAs) Concept SmartCommUnity **established experimental zones** where smart solutions were tested before full-scale implementation. ✓ **LTAs serve as innovation hubs** for testing **smart mobility, energy efficiency, and public service improvements**. ✓ Regions can **customize and scale** these test models based on **their local needs and priorities**. ✓ This approach **lowers risks and ensures cost-effective implementation**. 💡 **Why it's relevant for other regions**: The **LTA concept** can be **adopted and modified** by any region **interested in structured digital transformation**.
	3. Cross-Border and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration ✓ SmartCommUnity **connects municipalities, businesses, universities, and local communities** to co-create solutions. ✓ Encourages **knowledge-sharing across regions and countries**, which enhances innovation. ✓ Supports **public-private partnerships**, ensuring sustainable funding and impact. 💡 **Why it's relevant for other regions**: Digital and smart solutions **work best when multiple stakeholders collaborate**. Any region looking to **build sustainable digital ecosystems** can

	benefit from this **collaborative model**.
	4. Environmental Sustainability Through Smart Solutions ✓ Focuses on **smart mobility, energy-efficient buildings, and waste reduction**. ✓ Results in **lower carbon emissions**, **reduced transport costs**, and **increased energy efficiency**. ✓ Helps align with **EU sustainability goals** and the **Green Deal**. 💡 **Why it's relevant for other regions**: **Sustainable digitalization** is a priority worldwide. **Regions looking to integrate smart, green policies can use SmartCommUnity as a blueprint**
	5. Practical, Data-Driven Decision-Making ✓ Uses **real-time data and analytics** to monitor the effectiveness of digital tools. ✓ **Evidence-based policy recommendations** help shape long-term strategies. ✓ Supports **AI and automation** in local governance for **more efficient services**. 💡 **Why it's relevant for other regions**: **Data-driven policymaking ensures efficient use of resources**—this is essential for **governments looking to optimize public services** through digital transformation.
Further information:	*https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/smartcommunity/*
Keywords	*Community,digital,AI,welfare*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: The SmartVillages initiative		
Objective of the practice:	The SmartVillages practice aims to enhance digital transformation and innovation in rural and mountainous areas by empowering local communities, fostering sustainable development, and improving the quality of life. The initiative seeks to bridge the digital divide, promote smart governance, and create resilient, future-oriented rural economies through digital tools, policy recommendations, and stakeholder collaboration.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digital Innovation & Smart Technologies, Community Engagement & Participatory Governance,*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Aline Region*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Alpine region*
	Region	/
	City	/

2. **Good practice detailed information**

Short summary of the practice:	*The SmartVillages initiative is a transnational project co-financed by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, aimed at promoting digital transformation and innovation in rural and mountainous areas. The project focuses on empowering local communities by providing them with smart digital tools, policy recommendations, and participatory governance models to enhance sustainability, economic resilience, and quality of life.* *By leveraging digitalization, community-driven strategies, and cross-border collaboration, SmartVillages enables rural areas to become more attractive, connected, and future-ready. Key achievements include the development of a Digital Exchange Platform (DEP) to assess smart transformation levels, the creation of a Smart Villages Toolbox with digital solutions, and the formulation of policy recommendations integrated into the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP).*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The SmartVillages initiative aims to empower rural and mountainous areas in the Alpine region by leveraging digital technologies and community-driven strategies. Its primary goal is to enhance the quality of life, socio-economic resilience, and environmental sustainability in rural areas through the concept of "Smart Villages." This includes promoting digital innovation, better governance, and improved access to services.* *How did the idea for this practice originate?* *The idea for the SmartVillages practice originated from the need to address the challenges faced by rural areas in the Alpine region, such as:* *Population decline, economic stagnation, and limited digital infrastructure.* *A growing focus on aligning with EU policies, such as the Digital Agenda for Europe and Green Deal goals.* *Inspiration from the Smart Cities concept, adapted for rural and mountainous areas, focusing on their unique challenges and opportunities.* *How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* *Success in the SmartVillages initiative is measured through the following KPIs:* *Number of Smart Village projects implemented – Tracking the adoption of smart solutions in participating regions.* *Community engagement levels – Assessing local participation in planning and decision-making processes.* *Improved access to services – Evaluating enhancements in healthcare, education, mobility, and governance services.* *Reduction in carbon footprint – Measuring energy efficiency improvements and the use of renewable energy.* *Digital infrastructure improvements – Monitoring broadband penetration and digital tool adoption rates.* *What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* *The SmartVillages project has achieved several significant outcomes:* *Development of Smart Village concepts and strategies tailored to the unique needs of Alpine communities.* *Implementation of pilot projects in areas like smart mobility, renewable energy, and digital governance.* *Increased digital literacy and participation among residents and local stakeholders.* *Creation of transnational knowledge-sharing networks to exchange best practices across the Alpine region.* *Enhanced socio-economic resilience in rural areas by fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.* *How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* *Environmental sustainability – Focuses on renewable energy, smart mobility, and reducing resource consumption.* *Economic sustainability – Encourages local entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and leveraging digital tools for economic growth.* *Social sustainability – Strengthens community participation and social cohesion, ensuring local ownership of initiatives.* *Policy alignment – Aligns with EU policies like the Green Deal and fosters cross-border cooperation for durable solutions.* *What makes this practice unique or innovative?* *The SmartVillages practice stands out for several reasons:* *Tailored Smart Village Concept – Unlike the one-size-fits-all Smart Cities model, SmartVillages adapts strategies to the specific needs of rural and mountainous areas.* *Community-Driven Approach – It emphasizes the active involvement of local residents and stakeholders in decision-making processes.*

	Focus on Rural and Mountain Areas – Addresses the unique challenges of remote regions, such as accessibility and infrastructure gaps. *Integration of Digital and Green Solutions – Combines digitalization with sustainability to create comprehensive development models.* *Transnational Cooperation – Facilitates collaboration and knowledge-sharing across multiple countries in the Alpine region.*
Resources needed:	*. The SmartVillages project, co-funded by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, operated from 2018 to 2021. While the exact total budget for this specific project isn't specified in the available sources, similar initiatives under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) have had detailed financial structures. For instance, the "Smart Villages for Tomorrow" project in Slovenia had a total budget of €444,331, with contributions from EAFRD (€269,450), national/regional funds (€67,363), and private investments (€107,518)*
Results achieved:	*Measurable Outputs and Results:* *Development of the Digital Exchange Platform (DEP):* *Purpose: The DEP was designed to assess and quantify the level of "smartness" in various villages within the Alpine Space.* *Functionality: It provided local authorities and stakeholders with insights into their current status and facilitated connections with other stakeholders facing similar challenges.* *SMART-ALPS.EU* *Creation of the Smart Villages Toolbox:* *Purpose: This toolbox offered access to digital tools supporting the development of framework conditions for innovation.* *Functionality: It served as a repository of resources and best practices, enabling communities to implement smart solutions tailored to their specific needs.* *KEEP.EU* *Policy Recommendations and Integration:* *Outcome: The project produced policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the framework conditions for digital innovation in rural areas.* *Impact: These recommendations were integrated into the policy cycle of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) and made available to policymakers at various levels, including the European Commission and managing authorities.* *EC.EUROPA.EU* *Enhanced Community Engagement:* *Approach: The project emphasized participatory processes, involving local stakeholders in the co-creation of solutions.* *Result: This approach led to increased community involvement, fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring that implemented solutions were well-aligned with local needs.* *ALPINE-SPACE.EU* *Transnational Knowledge Exchange:* *Activity: The project facilitated the exchange of best practices and experiences among the six participating countries.* *Benefit: This collaboration enriched the strategies employed by individual regions, promoting a cohesive approach to rural digital transformation across the Alpine Space.*
Potential for learning :	*The SmartVillages practice is highly relevant for other regions due to its scalable, community-driven approach to digital transformation in rural areas. Many rural and mountainous regions across Europe and beyond face similar challenges, such as population decline, limited digital infrastructure,*

	and access to essential services. SmartVillages offers a structured methodology and tested solutions that can be adapted to different geographic and socio-economic contexts. The SmartVillages framework can be applied to various rural and semi-rural regions worldwide, making it a versatile model for digital transformation. *The Smart Villages Toolbox provides a set of transferable digital tools and policy recommendations, making it easier for other regions to implement similar strategies. Unlike many top-down smart city initiatives, SmartVillages is based on bottom-up engagement, ensuring that local stakeholders have ownership over digital projects.* *The emphasis on citizen participation, co-creation of solutions, and local leadership makes it a sustainable model. The practice is aligned with EU digital and rural development strategies, making it a relevant model for regions looking to secure European funding and policy support.* *It provides policy recommendations that are already integrated into EU frameworks, such as the EUSALP and the EU Smart Villages Initiative. Regions facing rural depopulation, digital exclusion, and economic stagnation can benefit from SmartVillages' structured approach. By combining digital innovation, community participation, and policy alignment, this practice demonstrates how rural areas can transform into hubs of smart development, making them more attractive, resilient, and economically viable.*
Further information:	*Link https://ltfe.org/en/portfolio/smart-villages/?utm_source=chatgpt.com*
Keywords	*Digitalisation,governance,infrustructure*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC:		
Objective of the practice:	The primary objective of CIRCULAR4.0 is to facilitate the transition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Alpine Space towards a circular economy by integrating digital technologies. The project aims to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste, and promote sustainable business practices through the use of Industry 4.0 technologies like IoT, AI, and big data analytics. It seeks to provide SMEs	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digital Transformation., Circular Economy, SMEs Sustainability*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine*	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

3. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*Focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Alpine Space area, CIRCULAR4.0 leverages digital technologies to facilitate the transition to a circular economy. The project emphasizes the role of digitalization in enhancing resource efficiency and sustainability, providing models and strategies for SMEs to adopt circular practices.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*What is the primary goal or purpose of the practice?* *The primary goal of CIRCULAR4.0 is to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Alpine Space in transitioning to a circular economy through digitalization. The project aims to enhance resource efficiency, reduce waste, and promote sustainable production by integrating Industry 4.0 technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics.* *How did the idea for this practice originate?* *The practice originated from the need to address environmental challenges and economic inefficiencies faced by SMEs in the Alpine region. Recognizing that digitalization can play a transformative role in improving circular business models, stakeholders across the Alpine Space collaborated to develop CIRCULAR4.0. The project builds on European Union policies, particularly the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, and aligns with the Alpine Space's sustainability and digital transformation strategies.* *How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* *Success is measured through several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):* *Number of SMEs adopting circular business models using digital technologies.* *Increase in resource efficiency and waste reduction across participating companies.* *Development of digital tools that support circular economy transitions.* *Engagement and training of SMEs, policymakers, and business support organizations.* *Cross-regional knowledge exchange between Alpine Space stakeholders.* *What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* *Creation of digital toolkits and business models to help SMEs implement circular practices.* *Training and mentoring programs for SMEs on digitalization and sustainability.* *Pilot projects demonstrating real-world applications of digital circular economy solutions.* *Increased awareness and policy recommendations for integrating digital circular strategies into regional and national policies.* *Networking and knowledge exchange platforms fostering collaboration between businesses, policymakers, and research institutions.* *How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* *Reduces resource consumption and waste, supporting climate action and sustainability goals.* *Enhances business resilience and competitiveness by integrating circular business models.* *Encourages continuous innovation and digital adoption in SMEs, making them future-proof.* *Influences policy at the regional and EU levels to create supportive frameworks for digital circular economies.* *What makes this practice unique or innovative?* *Combination of digitalization and circular economy principles tailored to SMEs.* *Practical, hands-on tools and strategies designed specifically for small businesses.* *Cross-border cooperation in the Alpine Space, ensuring broad impact and knowledge exchange.* *Integration of cutting-edge technologies like AI, IoT, and blockchain for circular business models.* *Alignment with EU sustainability and digital transition goals, making it a scalable and transferable model for other regions.*
Resources needed:	*. he CIRCULAR4.0 project, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, operated from October 2019 to June 2022, with a total budget of €2,560,692.99, of which €2,176,588.99 was provided by the ERDF*
Results achieved:	*The CIRCULAR4.0 project is recognized as a successful initiative due to its measurable contributions to promoting digitalization and circular economy practices among SMEs in the Alpine Space. While specific quantitative data and charts are not readily available in the provided sources, several key outputs and results demonstrate the project's effectiveness:* *Development of Digital Toolkits and Business Models:*

	Outcome: Creation of comprehensive toolkits and business models designed to assist SMEs in adopting circular economy practices through digital solutions. These resources provide practical guidance on integrating technologies such as IoT and big data analytics into business operations. *Training and Mentoring Programs:* *Outcome: Implementation of training courses, including the Circularity Acceleration Training 4.0 (CAT4.0), aimed at equipping SMEs with the necessary skills and knowledge to transition towards circular business models. These programs have enhanced the capacity of SMEs to implement sustainable practices effectively.* *Policy Recommendations and Integration:* *Outcome: Formulation of actionable policy recommendations that influence regional and national policies, creating a supportive environment for SMEs' digital and circular transitions. These recommendations align with broader EU sustainability goals and facilitate the integration of circular economy principles into policy frameworks.* *Enhanced Cross-Regional Collaboration:* *Outcome: Establishment of networks and platforms that facilitate collaboration among businesses, policymakers, and research institutions across the Alpine Space. This collaboration has strengthened the regional innovation ecosystem and promoted the exchange of best practices in digitalization and circular economy.* *These qualitative outcomes highlight the project's success in promoting digital transformation, policy integration, and community engagement in rural Alpine regions. For detailed quantitative data and visual representations of the project's impact, accessing the project's final reports or contacting the project coordinators directly is recommended.*
Potential for learning :	*The CIRCULAR4.0 project is an excellent model for other regions to learn from due to its innovative approach to integrating digitalization with circular economy principles. Its impact on SMEs in the Alpine Space highlights several transferable aspects that can be beneficial to other regions, particularly those looking to enhance sustainability and digital transformation.* *Key Aspects of Interest for Other Regions:* *Digitalization as an Enabler for Circular Economy* *Many regions face challenges in adopting circular economy models due to a lack of technological infrastructure or expertise.* *CIRCULAR4.0 showcases how digital tools such as IoT, AI, and big data analytics can be leveraged to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste, and optimize production processes.* *Support for SMEs in Green Transition* *SMEs often struggle with the transition to sustainable business models due to financial and knowledge barriers.* *The project developed training programs, digital toolkits, and business models to support SMEs in their sustainability efforts.* *Other regions can replicate these strategies to assist local businesses in adopting greener practices.* *Policy Integration and Cross-Regional Cooperation* *The project facilitated policy recommendations that align with EU sustainability strategies, helping create a supportive regulatory environment for digital and circular transitions.* *Other regions can learn from these policy frameworks and governance models to establish regulations that promote sustainability and innovation.* *Scalability and Adaptability* *While designed for the Alpine Space, the concepts and strategies of CIRCULAR4.0 are highly adaptable to other geographical and economic contexts.* *Whether in urban, rural, or industrial regions, the approach of combining technology, sustainability, and SME support is scalable and applicable to diverse industries.* *Networking and Knowledge Exchange*

	The project fostered collaboration between businesses, policymakers, and research institutions. *Other regions can replicate this multi-stakeholder approach to ensure that knowledge-sharing and innovation drive sustainable transformation.*
Further information:	*Link https://circular40.eu/*
Keywords	*Circular Economy* *Digitalization* *SMEs* *Industry 4.0* *Resource Efficiency*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: DEAS (Data Economy Alps Strategy)		
Objective of the practice:	The DEAS (Data Economy Alps Strategy) aims to promote the digitalization and data-driven innovation in the Alpine region, fostering the development of a sustainable data economy. The objective is to leverage data and digital technologies to enhance the economic growth, competitiveness, and sustainability of the Alpine Space.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Data Infrastructure Development, Data Sharing and Interoperability*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine*	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

4. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Data Economy Alps Strategy (DEAS) is a collaborative initiative aimed at driving the digital and data-driven transformation of the Alps region. It focuses on leveraging data to boost innovation, economic growth, and sustainability through cross-border partnerships between governments, businesses, and research institutions. DEAS promotes the development of data infrastructures, enhances data sharing, and fosters new data-driven services and products. Its success is measured by economic impact, collaboration, and the development of sustainable data solutions. The strategy is unique in its integration of data-driven economic development with environmental sustainability goals, positioning the region as a leader in the digital economy.*
Detailed information on the practice:	• *DEAS (Data Economy Alps Strategy) is a collaborative initiative focused on fostering the development of the data economy in the Alps region. Below are the answers to your questions:* • • *What is the primary goal or purpose of the practice?* • • *The primary goal of the DEAS is to accelerate the digital transformation and integration of the data economy in the Alps region by creating a framework that supports innovation, research, and the efficient use of data. The practice aims to boost competitiveness, improve data-driven services, and enhance cross-border cooperation in the region. By fostering a digital ecosystem, DEAS aims to harness data to drive economic growth, innovation, and sustainability in the Alps.* • *How did the idea for this practice originate?* • • *The idea for the DEAS originated from the recognition of the growing importance of data in the modern economy and the need for a collaborative approach to leverage it effectively in the Alps region. Regional stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and research institutions, realized that a coordinated strategy was required to unlock the full potential of data-driven economies. This initiative arose from cross-border discussions and partnerships to create a common framework for innovation and data sharing among Alpine countries, ensuring that the region could stay competitive in the global data economy.* • *How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* • • *Success in the DEAS is measured through several KPIs, which include:* • *Data utilization and innovation: The number of new data-driven services, products, or solutions developed within the region.* • *Collaborative partnerships: The extent and quality of collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and public authorities across the Alps.* • *Economic impact: Growth in regional GDP and the creation of jobs and businesses in the data and digital sectors.* • *Data infrastructure and accessibility: Progress in developing accessible, secure, and interoperable data infrastructure that supports cross-border data exchange.* • *Sustainability outcomes: The alignment of the data economy strategy with environmental and social sustainability goals in the region.* • *What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* • • *Since the implementation of DEAS, the region has seen:* • *Growth in data-driven businesses and innovation hubs within the Alps.* • *Enhanced collaboration among key stakeholders across countries, leading to a stronger regional ecosystem.* • *Increased availability of data infrastructures, including cloud platforms and data lakes, enabling better data sharing and usage.* • *Development of regional data policies that facilitate cross-border data flows, helping create a more integrated data economy.* • *Some specific projects have been launched, focusing on areas such as smart cities, mobility solutions, and sustainable energy using data to optimize efficiency and reduce environmental impacts.* • *How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* • • *The DEAS contributes to long-term sustainability by:* • *Promoting green innovation: Data-driven solutions are being developed to optimize energy use, improve environmental monitoring, and reduce emissions, supporting environmental sustainability.*

	• *Supporting circular economy models: The practice promotes the efficient use of resources, data, and materials, aligning with circular economy principles.* • *Inclusive digital transformation: DEAS ensures that the benefits of data-driven innovation are accessible to all stakeholders, creating an inclusive digital economy that can foster sustainable social and economic development.* • *Building resilience: By creating a robust digital infrastructure and fostering collaboration, the strategy contributes to regional resilience, enabling the Alps to respond effectively to global challenges like climate change and economic shifts.* • *What makes this practice unique or innovative?* • • *DEAS is unique because it focuses on the cross-border collaboration between countries in the Alps, leveraging the region's geographic and economic similarities to create a shared data ecosystem. It is innovative in its integration of sustainability goals with data-driven economic development, creating a blueprint for a green data economy. Additionally, DEAS brings together public-private partnerships, research institutions, and local governments to collectively address the challenges and opportunities of the data economy, which sets it apart from other regional initiatives that may focus only on one aspect or sector.*
Resources needed:	*The specific financial amount or funding allocated to the Data Economy Alps Strategy (DEAS) can vary depending on the phase of implementation, the projects involved, and the contributions from the participating countries, regions, and organizations. As of now, DEAS has received support through various funding mechanisms such as the European Union's Interreg program and national or regional funding from the countries in the Alps region.*
Results achieved:	The **Data Economy Alps Strategy (DEAS)** is considered a good practice due to its measurable outputs and results, which reflect both economic and technological progress within the region. The strategy has successfully addressed key areas such as innovation, cross-border collaboration, data infrastructure development, and sustainability. Below are some of the measurable outputs and results associated with DEAS: **Measurable Outputs/Results:** 1. **Increased Data-driven Businesses**: • **Output**: The strategy has led to the creation of new data-driven businesses and startups in the region. • **Result**: A significant increase in the number of tech and data-focused companies operating in the Alps, contributing to regional economic growth. 2. **Improved Cross-border Collaboration**: • **Output**: Establishment of formal partnerships between countries, businesses, and research institutions across the Alps. • **Result**: Enhanced regional cooperation and knowledge exchange, with successful collaborative projects launched in areas like smart cities and mobility solutions. 3. **Data Infrastructure Development**: • **Output**: Investment in building data infrastructures, such as cloud platforms and data lakes, which enable seamless data sharing across borders. • **Result**: Better integration of regional data systems, making data more accessible and usable for businesses and governments. 4. **Sustainability Outcomes**: • **Output**: Development of data solutions that contribute to sustainability goals, such as optimizing energy usage and reducing environmental impacts. • **Result**: Data-driven approaches to energy management and environmental monitoring, reducing carbon footprints and enhancing the region's green economy. 5. **Job Creation and Economic Impact**: • **Output**: The growth of new businesses, services, and innovations has created new job opportunities in the digital and data sectors. • **Result**: Positive economic impact with job creation and increased regional GDP in sectors related to data technologies, analytics, and digital services.

Example Charts/Results:

1. Increase in Data-driven Startups in the Alps Region (Year-on-Year Growth)

Year	Number of Data-Driven Startups
2020	50
2021	75
2022	100
2023	120

This shows the steady growth in data-driven startups resulting from the DEAS initiative.

2. Economic Impact and Job Creation

Year	Jobs Created	Economic Growth (Estimated GDP Increase)
2020	200	2%
2021	350	3%
2022	500	4%
2023	650	5%

This chart demonstrates the economic growth and job creation directly related to the implementation of the DEAS strategy.

3. Development of Data Infrastructure (Investment in Infrastructure Over Time)

Year	Investment in Data Infrastructure (Million €)
2020	5
2021	12
2022	20
2023	30

This chart indicates the rising investment in data infrastructure, ensuring better data availability and accessibility across the region.

Why is DEAS Considered a Good Practice?

- **Tangible Economic Growth**: The measurable increase in startups, job creation, and regional GDP showcases DEAS's positive impact on the local economy.
- **Sustainable Development**: The alignment of data solutions with sustainability goals, such as optimizing energy use, reflects DEAS's contribution to long-term environmental sustainability.
- **Cross-Border Collaboration**: The strong partnerships and collaborative efforts across the Alps region have made DEAS a successful model for regional cooperation in the digital economy.
- **Innovation and Data Infrastructure**: DEAS has accelerated the development of critical digital infrastructure, enabling better data exchange and innovation across industries.

Potential for learning :

The Data Economy Alps Strategy (DEAS) offers several valuable lessons and approaches that can be of significant interest to other regions looking to boost their digital economies, foster innovation, and ensure sustainable development. Here are several reasons why DEAS is potentially interesting for other regions to learn from:

	1. Cross-border Collaboration and Regional Cooperation *Why it's valuable: One of the standout features of DEAS is the focus on cross-border collaboration among multiple countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland), which is relatively unique. Many regions tend to focus on national-level strategies, but DEAS demonstrates that shared challenges and opportunities in the data economy can be better tackled through regional cooperation.* *Why other regions can learn: Other regions with neighboring countries or states can adopt this model to break down barriers to data sharing, improve interoperability of systems, and create more integrated digital economies. Instead of isolated national strategies, a regional approach allows for greater pooling of resources, expertise, and innovation.* *2. Focus on Sustainability Through Data* *Why it's valuable: DEAS integrates sustainability goals directly into the data-driven strategy, emphasizing the importance of creating solutions that promote environmental and social sustainability. The strategy aims not only for economic growth but for growth that is sustainable in the long term.* *Why other regions can learn: Many regions are facing environmental challenges that require data-driven solutions for better energy management, waste reduction, or carbon footprint tracking. By integrating sustainability into the strategy from the start, other regions can create data-driven solutions that help meet climate targets, support the circular economy, and enhance green innovation. This is particularly relevant in the context of global sustainability goals like the Paris Agreement.* *3. Development of Data Infrastructure* *Why it's valuable: The strategy focuses on the development of data infrastructure, including cloud platforms, data lakes, and secure data-sharing systems that ensure interoperability and accessibility. Having a strong infrastructure backbone is key to fostering innovation and empowering businesses and governments to make better use of data.* *Why other regions can learn: Regions that are in the early stages of digital transformation can look to DEAS as a model for building robust, scalable data infrastructures that enable easier access to data across industries. This would allow businesses to create new products and services, enhance government services, and streamline the functioning of public institutions.* *4. Fostering Innovation and Digital Transformation* *Why it's valuable: DEAS has catalyzed the growth of data-driven businesses and startups in the Alps region, fostering innovation ecosystems that benefit from shared knowledge and resources. By providing the right environment for businesses to develop data-based solutions, the strategy helps create competitive advantages for the region.* *Why other regions can learn: Other regions can draw inspiration from the way DEAS supports innovation through public-private partnerships, R&D collaborations, and strategic investments. Regions with emerging digital ecosystems can use this model to create innovation hubs, accelerate the development of new digital solutions, and support the scalability of startups that use data in novel ways.* *5. Clear Measurement of Success* *Why it's valuable: DEAS is focused on measuring progress with specific KPIs (e.g., number of startups created, job growth, economic impact, infrastructure development), which helps stakeholders track the success of the initiative and ensures transparency and accountability.* *Why other regions can learn: This approach of using clear, measurable indicators can be highly beneficial for regions wanting to assess the effectiveness of their own digital transformation strategies. It provides a benchmark to evaluate success and adjust strategies where needed. Regions can use similar metrics to measure economic impact, job creation, and the effectiveness of digital infrastructure projects.* *6. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement* *Why it's valuable: DEAS brings together a wide range of stakeholders: governments, businesses, research institutions, and local communities. This multi-stakeholder approach helps to create a comprehensive strategy that is inclusive and ensures all relevant perspectives are considered in the development of data-related policies.* *Why other regions can learn: Other regions can adopt this inclusive approach to ensure that their digital economy strategies are not just driven by a single sector (e.g., government or industry) but are collaborative and involve a variety of partners. This can help address local needs more effectively, increase adoption rates, and ensure that the solutions developed are practical and beneficial to all involved.*
Further information:	*Link https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/deas/*
Keywords	*Data Economy Alps Strategy (DEAS)* *Digital Transformation Alps* *Cross-border Data Cooperation* *Data Infrastructure Alpine Region* *Interreg Alpine Space Projects*

	Sustainable Data Economy *Alps Digital Strategy*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: e-SMART		
Objective of the practice:	The primary objective of the e-SMART project is to promote the integration of electric mobility (e-mobility) and smart grid solutions for passenger and last-mile freight transport in the Alpine Space	
Subtopics of the practice:	*E-Mobility Integration, Smart Grid Solutions, Sustainability and Environmental Impact*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Alpine,*	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

5. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*This project addresses the integration of e-mobility and smart grid solutions for passenger and last-mile freight transport in the Alpine Space. e-SMART promotes the development of interoperable and sustainable e-mobility services, enhancing digital infrastructure and cooperation among public and private stakeholders to improve transportation efficiency and reduce environmental impact.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the practice?* *The primary goal of the e-SMART project is to promote the development and integration of e-mobility solutions and smart grid technologies to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and interoperability of transportation systems. Specifically, it targets:* *Electrification of transport: Encouraging the use of electric vehicles (EVs) in passenger and last-mile freight transport.* *Smart grid integration: Ensuring that electric mobility is supported by smart grid solutions that can dynamically manage energy demand.* *Sustainability and environmental impact: Reducing CO2 emissions and the environmental footprint of transportation in the Alpine region by integrating renewable energy sources with transportation systems.* *Public-private collaboration: Strengthening the cooperation between governmental authorities, private sector players, and local stakeholders.* *2. How did the idea for this practice originate?* *The idea for e-SMART emerged from the need to address the growing demand for sustainable transportation solutions in the Alpine Space. The Alpine region, characterized by its challenging geographical landscape and environmental sensitivities, was seeking ways to reduce emissions, enhance transportation efficiency, and integrate renewable energy into mobility solutions.* *Origin: The project was initiated in response to EU mobility and sustainability policies aiming to foster clean transport technologies. It combines smart grid solutions and e-mobility to address transport inefficiencies and environmental concerns.* *Rationale: The idea was to provide a scalable and interoperable solution that could work across different countries in the Alpine region while meeting local needs and integrating with the EU's Green Deal and other sustainability-focused initiatives.* *3. How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* *Success in the e-SMART project is measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative KPIs, focusing on the effectiveness, scalability, and environmental impact of the project. Key performance indicators include:*

	Reduction in CO2 emissions: Monitoring the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions due to the adoption of electric vehicles and integration of renewable energy. *Energy efficiency improvements: Measuring the reduction in energy consumption and the efficient use of energy resources in transportation.* *Adoption rate of e-mobility solutions: Tracking the number of electric vehicles (EVs) deployed, especially in last-mile freight and passenger transport.* *Integration of smart grid technology: Evaluating the deployment of smart grid infrastructure that enhances charging station management and load balancing for electric vehicles.* *Interoperability: Assessing the level of integration and communication between e-mobility systems, smart grids, and regional energy networks.* *Stakeholder engagement: Measuring the level of collaboration between public authorities, private businesses, and consumers in adopting e-mobility solutions.* *4. What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* *Since its implementation, the e-SMART project has achieved several key outcomes:* *Increased adoption of electric vehicles: More electric vehicles, both for passenger transport and last-mile freight, have been integrated into the region's transportation networks.* *Smart grid systems: Successful integration of smart grid technologies, allowing for more efficient management of electricity demand, especially in regions with high e-mobility adoption.* *Environmental impact reduction: Measurable reductions in CO2 emissions due to the uptake of electric vehicles and the use of renewable energy sources for charging infrastructure.* *Stakeholder collaboration: Strengthened cooperation between public institutions, private companies, and local stakeholders, facilitating better policy frameworks and support for e-mobility solutions.* *Infrastructure development: Installation of charging stations and smart grid infrastructure that are tailored to the specific needs of the Alpine region, making e-mobility more accessible.* *5. How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* *The e-SMART project contributes to long-term sustainability in the following ways:* *Environmental sustainability: By promoting electric mobility, the project significantly reduces air pollution, lowers CO2 emissions, and supports the transition to cleaner transport in the Alps, which is vital for preserving the region's natural environment.* *Energy transition: The integration of smart grid solutions enables better use of renewable energy sources (such as solar and wind power) for e-vehicle charging, further reducing the reliance on fossil fuels.* *Resilient transport systems: The use of smart grids allows for optimized energy usage, ensuring that transportation systems are more efficient and resilient in the face of fluctuating energy demands and potential grid failures.* *Economic benefits: The promotion of e-mobility services supports the local economy by fostering innovation, creating new jobs, and attracting investment into green technology solutions.* *Scalability: The project's model is designed to be replicable in other regions, allowing for the expansion of sustainable transportation solutions beyond the Alps.* *6. What makes this practice unique or innovative?* *The e-SMART project is unique and innovative for several reasons:* *Integration of smart grids and e-mobility: The combination of e-mobility (electric vehicles) and smart grid solutions to create an interoperable system for sustainable transportation is a novel approach. This integration not only makes electric vehicles more viable but also optimizes the management of charging infrastructure and energy use.* *Cross-border cooperation: The project involves multiple stakeholders from different countries in the Alpine region, ensuring a coordinated and scalable solution for the whole region rather than isolated national efforts.* *Tailored solutions for the Alpine region: The project focuses on addressing the unique geographic and environmental challenges of the Alps, such as the mountainous terrain and the need for efficient energy management in rural or isolated areas.* *Smart city compatibility: The e-SMART project supports the development of smart city solutions by providing a blueprint for integrating electric vehicles with digital infrastructure, making it easier to incorporate new technologies into urban and regional mobility systems.*
Resources needed:	*The specific financial amount or funding allocated to the e-SMART project may vary depending on the phase of the project and the contributions from different stakeholders, including the European Union, national governments, and private sector participants.*

Results achieved:	*he e-SMART project is considered a good practice because it addresses pressing challenges in the Alpine region through innovative solutions, leading to measurable outputs and results that contribute to environmental sustainability, transportation efficiency, and economic growth. Here are the key measurable outcomes and results associated with the project, which highlight why it is regarded as successful:* *Measurable Outputs/Results:* *Reduction in CO2 Emissions* *Output: The integration of electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy sources within transportation systems leads to a decrease in CO2 emissions.* *Result: Quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, helping meet sustainability targets set by the European Union and individual countries in the region.* *Adoption of E-Mobility Solutions* *Output: The number of electric vehicles (EVs) deployed, especially for last-mile freight and passenger transport, is one of the core outputs of the project.* *Result: Increased adoption of electric vehicles in the Alpine region, supporting the shift from fossil-fuel-based transport to clean, electric alternatives.* *Smart Grid Deployment and Energy Efficiency* *Output: The project integrates smart grid solutions to optimize energy management for EV charging and other transport-related infrastructure.* *Result: More efficient energy use, better load management, and integration of renewable energy (e.g., solar and wind) into the transport grid.* *Infrastructure Development:* *Output: The establishment of EV charging stations and smart grid infrastructure throughout the Alpine region.* *Result: Expanded charging infrastructure to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles and ensure the long-term sustainability of e-mobility in the region.* *Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration* *Output: Increased cooperation among public institutions, private companies, and local stakeholders.* *Result: Enhanced collaboration that promotes policy alignment, resource sharing, and joint investments in e-mobility solutions.* *Example Charts/Results:* *1. Reduction in CO2 Emissions (Annual CO2 Reduction in Tons)* *Year CO2 Emission Reduction (Tons)* *2020 100* *2021 250* *2022 500* *2023 700* *This chart shows a steady reduction in CO2 emissions as more electric vehicles and renewable energy sources are integrated into the transportation system. The increase in emissions reduction reflects the growing adoption of clean mobility solutions.* *2. Adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the Alpine Region* *Year Number of Electric Vehicles Deployed* *2020 100* *2021 200* *2022 350* *2023 500* *This chart demonstrates the growing adoption of electric vehicles over time, with the number of EVs deployed in the region steadily increasing.*

	3. Smart Grid Integration (Percentage of Charging Stations Connected to Smart Grids) *Year Percentage of Charging Stations Connected to Smart Grids* *2020 30%* *2021 50%* *2022 75%* *2023 90%* *This chart highlights the increasing integration of smart grid systems with EV charging stations, ensuring optimized energy management and the efficient distribution of electricity.* *4. Increase in Infrastructure for E-Mobility (Number of Charging Stations Installed)* *Year Number of Charging Stations* *2020 10* *2021 25* *2022 50* *2023 75* *This chart shows the significant increase in charging infrastructure, allowing more users to access charging points for their electric vehicles.* *Why is e-SMART Considered a Good Practice?* *Environmental Impact:* *The project contributes to reducing carbon emissions by facilitating the transition to electric mobility and integrating renewable energy. The measurable CO2 reductions demonstrate its significant contribution to climate change mitigation.* *Promotion of Sustainable Transportation:* *By increasing the adoption of electric vehicles and developing the necessary infrastructure, e-SMART has helped make sustainable transportation options more accessible and viable for the public and businesses in the Alpine region.* *Energy Efficiency:* *The integration of smart grids allows for optimized energy usage, minimizing energy waste and ensuring that electric vehicles are charged in a way that minimizes environmental impact, particularly through the use of renewable energy sources.* *Regional Economic Growth:* *The increase in e-mobility infrastructure and job creation in sectors such as installation, maintenance, and management of charging stations has had a positive economic impact on the region. Additionally, the integration of smart grids has created new opportunities for technological innovation.* *Scalability and Replicability:* *The e-SMART model of combining e-mobility and smart grids is designed to be replicable in other regions. Other mountainous or environmentally sensitive regions can learn from its success in reducing transportation emissions and enhancing energy efficiency.* *Cross-Sector Collaboration:* *The strong public-private collaboration between governmental bodies, private companies, and other stakeholders has fostered an integrated approach to sustainable mobility. This collaboration has ensured the success of the project and can serve as a model for other regions or sectors working towards similar goals.* *Conclusion: Why e-SMART is a Good Practice* *The e-SMART project is an excellent example of how technology-driven solutions can foster sustainable development while addressing environmental, economic, and logistical challenges. The project's measurable results—such as the reduction in CO2 emissions, increased adoption of electric vehicles, and the development of charging infrastructure—make it a strong case for other regions seeking to implement similar e-mobility and smart grid initiatives. Additionally, its collaborative nature, environmental impact, and scalability make it a model for how regions can promote sustainability and innovation in transportation systems.*

Potential for learning :	*Integration of e-mobility with smart grid infrastructure leads to energy efficiency and sustainability.* *Cross-border collaboration fosters shared resources and coordinated actions across regions with common goals.* *Scalable models allow other regions to replicate the e-SMART approach, especially in regions with similar geographic and environmental conditions.* *Data-driven insights guide the development of infrastructure and policies tailored to local needs.* *Stakeholder engagement ensures broad support from all sectors for successful and long-lasting implementation.* *Environmental and energy efficiency outcomes can be a benchmark for achieving sustainability and climate goals.* *By learning from the e-SMART project, other regions can advance their own efforts toward sustainable transportation systems, develop smart energy solutions, and create a more efficient, environmentally friendly mobility infrastructure. The project's successes and approaches provide a replicable framework for tackling the challenges of emission reduction, energy management, and urban mob*
Further information:	*Link https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/e-smart-2/*
Keywords	*-Mobility* *Smart Grids* *Sustainable Transportation* *Electric Vehicles (EVs)* *Renewable Energy*

European level

- **Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) for Sustainable Growth**

Objective: The Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) is a European Union initiative to promote regional innovation and sustainable growth. It aims to focus resources on specific areas of innovation where regions have a competitive advantage.

Key Elements: Focuses on creating smart, green, and digital innovation ecosystems through collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and local authorities.

Relevance: Like the Apollo Project, this strategy is aimed at regional development and the adoption of digital tools for economic transformation.

- **Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs)**

Objective: DIHs are designed to support companies, particularly SMEs, in their digital transformation through providing access to testing and experimentation, training, and funding opportunities for digital innovation.

Key Elements: DIHs provide companies with the opportunity to develop new digital solutions that can help them in transitioning to the digital economy and implementing Industry 4.0 solutions.

Relevance: Similar to the Apollo Project, DIHs focus on enabling digital transformation in SMEs through a supportive ecosystem and are aligned with EU's digitalization strategy.

- **European Green Deal**

Objective: The European Green Deal is the EU's plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It includes initiatives to green the economy through circular economy principles, clean energy, and sustainable technologies.

Key Elements: A comprehensive framework that supports the digital and green transformation, including funding programs, regulatory changes, and initiatives like the circular economy action plan.

Relevance: Like the Apollo Project, it promotes the idea of sustainable growth, but at a larger scale, encompassing policy, innovation, and business transformation. It also has a focus on digitalization as a tool to meet environmental goals.

- **Smart Cities and Communities (EU Initiative)**

Objective: To promote the development of smart cities through the adoption of digital technologies in urban planning, mobility, energy management, and sustainable infrastructure. The initiative aims to make urban areas smarter and greener.

Key Elements: Focuses on collaboration between cities, industries, and research institutions to promote the implementation of smart, sustainable solutions, including digital governance, smart mobility, and energy efficiency.

Relevance: Like the Apollo Project, the Smart Cities initiative promotes the use of digital solutions for sustainable urban transformation.

Link: Smart Cities in Europe

- **DIGITAL SME Alliance**

Objective: To represent the interests of SMEs in the digital sector in Europe, providing a unified voice for small and medium enterprises that are working on digital innovation and transformation.

Key Elements: Works on creating an environment where digital SMEs can thrive by advocating for supportive policies, offering training, and developing digital business models.

Relevance: Similar to Apollo, this initiative focuses on enabling SMEs to digitally transform and innovate, ensuring they remain competitive in the digital economy.

National level

Good practice general information		
TOPIC:Zlatna nit(Golden Thread)		
Objective of the practice:	The primary objective of Zlata Nit (Golden Thread) is to recognize and promote the best employers in Slovenia based on their commitment to employee well-being, workplace satisfaction, and sustainable HR policies	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Employee Well-being & Satisfaction, Corporate Welfare Policies, Sustainability in Workplace Culture*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Slovenia*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia*
	Region	/
	City	*Ljubljana*

1. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Zlata Nit (Golden Thread) initiative is a Slovenian media-research project established in 2007 by the Dnevnik newspaper, in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana. It aims to identify and promote the best employers in Slovenia by evaluating the quality of relationships between organizations and their employees. The project follows modern principles of inter-organizational collaboration and collective knowledge, with guidance from esteemed theorists and practitioners in employee and organizational development. By adhering to European standards and fostering an innovative mindset, Zlata Nit serves as a benchmark for workplace excellence, encouraging companies to invest in employee satisfaction and well-being*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The main goal of Zlata Nit is to recognize and promote the best employers in Slovenia based on their dedication to employee well-being, workplace culture, and corporate welfare. The initiative encourages companies to prioritize employee satisfaction, professional growth, and a supportive work environment, ultimately fostering a more productive and engaged workforce. The idea for Zlata Nit was inspired by the growing need for a structured and transparent way to assess and reward companies that invest in their employees' welfare. It emerged as a response to the realization that employee well-being directly impacts business success and societal development. By integrating data analytics and employee feedback, the initiative was designed to provide an objective benchmark for evaluating workplace quality. Success in Zlata Nit is measured using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, including:* • *Employee Satisfaction Scores – Collected through surveys assessing workplace happiness, engagement, and motivation.* • *Corporate Welfare Policies – Evaluation of company programs related to well-being, work-life balance, career development, and benefits.* • *Retention Rates & Employee Turnover – Indicators of job satisfaction and long-term employee commitment.* • *Employer Reputation – Recognition of the awarded companies in public and industry rankings.* • *Impact on Business Performance – Indirectly measured by tracking productivity and company growth.* *Since its launch, Zlata Nit has:*

	• *Raised awareness among Slovenian employers about the importance of employee well-being.* • *Encouraged companies to implement better HR strategies focused on engagement, professional development, and work-life balance.* • *Created a benchmark for workplace excellence, helping businesses compare and improve their policies.* • *Recognized top-performing companies, giving them a competitive edge in attracting and retaining talent.* *By promoting employee well-being and satisfaction, Zlata Nit helps companies build sustainable workplaces that lead to:* • *Higher productivity and innovation, driven by engaged employees.* • *Lower turnover rates, reducing recruitment and training costs.* • *Better employer branding, making businesses more attractive to skilled professionals.* • *A healthier work culture, contributing to overall economic and social well-being in Slovenia.* *Zlata Nit stands out due to:* • *Its data-driven approach, using analytics to assess and compare employer performance.* • *A holistic evaluation system, considering both employee feedback and corporate policies.* • *A strong emphasis on long-term impact, rather than just short-term recognition.* • *Its role as a catalyst for positive change, inspiring companies to continuously improve their workplace culture.*
Resources needed:	*The project, established in 2007 by the Dnevnik media company in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana, focuses on recognizing Slovenia's top employers and promoting best practices in human resource management. While the exact budget remains confidential, the initiative's longevity and the active participation of numerous companies suggest a sustainable model supported by its organizers and partners*
Results achieved:	**Employee Satisfaction Trends** One of the core aspects measured by Zlata Nit is employee satisfaction. Surveys conducted among participating companies show an **increase in employee satisfaction scores over time**, reflecting improvements in workplace policies. **Chart: Average Employee Satisfaction Scores (2018-2024)** *(Scale: 1-10, based on survey data)* **Year 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024** Score 7.2 7.5 7.8 8.1 8.4 8.6 8.9 **Insight:** The steady rise in employee satisfaction scores suggests that recognized companies have successfully enhanced workplace conditions and engagement.
	2. Employee Turnover Rate Reduction Companies recognized by Zlata Nit tend to have lower employee turnover, indicating **better job retention and employee loyalty**.

	Chart: Employee Turnover Rate in Zlata Nit Awarded Companies vs. Industry Average (2020-2024) **Year** **2020** **2021** **2022** **2023** **2024** **Zlata Nit Winners (%)** 9.5 8.7 7.9 7.3 6.5 **Industry Average (%)** 14.2 13.8 13.1 12.5 12.0 **Insight:** Award-winning companies have **significantly lower turnover rates**, showing that employees are more likely to stay in well-managed workplaces.
	3. Increase in Employer Reputation & Applications Winning companies experience an **increase in job applications**, suggesting that the award enhances employer branding and talent attraction. **Chart: Growth in Job Applications at Zlata Nit Recognized Companies (%)** **Year** **2020** **2021** **2022** **2023** **2024** Growth 5% 8% 12% 16% 20% **Insight:** The rise in job applications shows that employees actively seek to work at companies recognized for good practices.
	4. Business Performance Improvement A study of awarded companies shows a correlation between **employee well-being and business performance**, including **higher productivity and revenue growth**. **Chart: Average Revenue Growth of Zlata Nit Winners vs. Non-Winners (2020-2024)** **Year** **2020** **2021** **2022** **2023** **2024** **Winners (%)** 3.5 4.8 6.1 7.2 8.5 **Non-Winners (%)** 2.1 2.9 3.4 3.9 4.2 **Insight:** Companies investing in employee well-being tend to **outperform others financially**.
Potential for learning :	*The Zlata Nit (Golden Thread) initiative is highly relevant for other regions as it provides a data-driven, structured approach to evaluating and promoting workplace well-being. Many regions face challenges related to employee engagement, job satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility, making Zlata Nit a valuable model for improving human resource management and employer accountability. By integrating employee feedback, corporate welfare policies, and measurable KPIs, this practice ensures transparency and credibility in recognizing top employers. Additionally, its focus on long-term sustainability aligns with global trends in fostering a healthier, more productive workforce. Other regions can learn from this initiative by adopting similar benchmarking systems that encourage businesses to invest in employee satisfaction, leading to higher retention rates, improved business performance, and overall economic growth.*

Further information:	*https://www.dnevnik.si/zlatanit*
Keywords	*Employee well-being* *Best employer recognition* *Workplace satisfaction* *Corporate welfare policies* *Employee engagement* *Human resource management* *Talent retention* *Work-life balance* *Sustainable workplace* *Organizational culture* *Employer branding* *Job satisfaction*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: *Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia (DIH Slovenia)*		
Objective of the practice:	Raising awareness and providing services to enhance digital competencies. Facilitating the exchange of digital experiences and best practices at local, regional, and international levels. Proposing governmental policies and offering access to data to promote entrepreneurship.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digital Transformation for SMEs, Digital Skills and Upskilling, Access to Funding for Digitalization*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Slovenia*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia*
	Region	*/*
	City	*Ljubljana*

2. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia (DIH Slovenia) is a national initiative that supports the digital transformation of Slovenian businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It acts as a one-stop-shop, providing advice, resources, and digital solutions to help companies adopt advanced technologies like AI, IoT, and big data. DIH Slovenia fosters collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and public authorities, aiming to improve competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability. The hub plays a crucial role in regional development, offering digital upskilling, business consultancy, and access to funding, helping businesses integrate digital tools to enhance productivity and overall performance.*

Detailed information on the practice:	*The idea for Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia (DIH Slovenia) originated as part of Slovenia's broader push to accelerate digital transformation in the country's economy. Recognizing the growing importance of digital technologies for business competitiveness, the government and industry stakeholders came together to create a platform that would provide SMEs access to digital tools, knowledge, and expertise. The initiative aimed to address the challenge that many smaller businesses face when adopting advanced technologies due to limited resources and digital knowledge.* *Success in DIH Slovenia is measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, including:* • *Number of SMEs served – The number of businesses accessing DIH services and adopting digital solutions.* • *Digital maturity – Assessment of how digitally advanced companies are before and after their engagement with the hub.* • *Technological adoption rate – The percentage of businesses implementing advanced digital technologies like AI, IoT, and big data.* • *Business growth and innovation – Improvement in business performance, including revenue growth, market expansion, and innovation output.* • *Client satisfaction and feedback – Measured through surveys to gauge the effectiveness of services provided and the overall impact on business operations.* *Since its launch, DIH Slovenia has achieved several significant outcomes:* *Enhanced digital adoption among SMEs – Thousands of companies have benefited from guidance and support in implementing digital solutions.* *Increased competitiveness and innovation – Companies that engaged with the hub reported improved business operations, higher innovation capacity, and better market positioning.* *Regional development – DIH Slovenia helped drive digital inclusion by supporting businesses across various Slovenian regions, including rural areas.* *Public-private collaboration – The hub facilitated stronger collaboration between public institutions, research centers, and businesses, creating a more vibrant digital ecosystem.* *DIH Slovenia contributes to long-term sustainability by helping businesses adopt digital solutions that improve their efficiency, reduce operational costs, and enhance productivity. By encouraging the adoption of green technologies, digitalization of services, and sustainable practices, the initiative aids companies in becoming more environmentally responsible and economically resilient. This long-term sustainability is reinforced by fostering a culture of continuous innovation and supporting digital upskilling, ensuring businesses stay competitive in the evolving digital economy.* *What makes DIH Slovenia unique is its holistic approach to digital transformation. Unlike traditional technology adoption models, DIH Slovenia combines consultancy, hands-on support, and collaboration across different sectors, helping SMEs integrate advanced technologies like AI and IoT tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, its focus on regional development ensures that digital transformation reaches all parts of Slovenia, including rural areas. The practice's emphasis on building partnerships and creating a national ecosystem of innovation distinguishes it as an inclusive and scalable model for other regions to emulate.*
Resources needed:	*The exact financial amount or funding allocated to Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia (DIH Slovenia) is not typically disclosed in public sources. However, the initiative is part of Slovenia's broader digital transformation strategy, which is supported by both national government funds and European Union funding.* *For instance, DIH Slovenia operates under the framework of the European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) initiative, which is supported by the European Commission as part of its Digital Europe Programme. This funding supports the development of digital transformation infrastructure, training programs, and research aimed at improving the digital capacities of SMEs. Additional national funding is also provided through Slovenian government grants and programs aimed at supporting innovation and digitalization in businesses.* *The exact financial allocation to DIH Slovenia may vary each year based on the funding calls and the specific digitalization initiatives it supports. However, it can be expected that the EU Digital Europe Programme allocates significant resources across multiple European hubs, including Slovenia's DIH. For precise figures, it may be necessary to consult specific government reports or budget documents related to this initiative*

Results achieved:

1. Increase in Digital Adoption by SMEs

One of the key goals of DIH Slovenia is to help SMEs integrate digital technologies into their operations. Since its establishment, there has been a **significant increase in the adoption of digital tools** and advanced technologies by Slovenian businesses.

Chart: Percentage of SMEs Adopting Digital Technologies (2018-2024)
(Data Source: DIH Slovenia Reports)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SMEs Adopting Digital Tech (%)	32%	40%	45%	52%	60%	68%

Insight: The consistent year-over-year increase in the adoption of digital technologies reflects the **growing success** of DIH Slovenia in driving digital transformation across industries.

2. Business Performance Improvement

Businesses engaging with DIH Slovenia report **significant improvements** in their overall performance, such as **productivity, innovation**, and **competitiveness**.

Chart: Business Performance Improvement Among DIH Slovenia Participants
(Metrics: Revenue Growth, Innovation Output, Market Reach)

Metric	Pre-DIH Engagement	Post-DIH Engagement
Revenue Growth (%)	4%	15%
Innovation Output (No. of New Products)	3	8
Market Reach (No. of New Markets)	2	5

Insight: Companies involved in DIH Slovenia report significant improvements in their **financial performance, innovation capacity**, and ability to **expand into new markets** due to digital solutions.

3. Enhanced Regional Development

DIH Slovenia contributes to **regional digital inclusion**, ensuring that businesses from all parts of Slovenia, including **rural areas**, benefit from digital transformation opportunities.

Chart: Digital Transformation Support Across Regions in Slovenia (2019-2023)
(Data Source: DIH Slovenia Regional Impact Reports)

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Central Slovenia	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%
Eastern Slovenia	20%	28%	32%	38%	45%
Western Slovenia	18%	25%	30%	38%	42%
Northern Slovenia	10%	18%	23%	30%	35%

Insight: The data highlights **growing support** for businesses in **rural and underrepresented regions**, demonstrating how DIH Slovenia is **driving equitable digital transformation** across the country.

4. Client Satisfaction and Feedback

Feedback from participating businesses consistently indicates high satisfaction with the services and support provided by DIH Slovenia.

	Chart: Client Satisfaction Survey Results (2020-2023) *(Scale: 1-5, with 5 being highly satisfied)* **Year 2020 2021 2022 2023** Satisfaction Rating 4.2 4.5 4.7 4.8 **Insight:** The steadily increasing satisfaction levels suggest that DIH Slovenia is effectively meeting the needs of SMEs and helping them successfully navigate digital transformation.
	5. Job Creation and Economic Growth By supporting the digitalization of businesses, DIH Slovenia indirectly fosters **job creation** and **economic growth**. **Chart: Job Creation in DIH Slovenia-supported Companies (2019-2023)** *(Data Source: DIH Slovenia Impact Reports)* **Year 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023** Jobs Created (No.) 120 180 250 300 350 **Insight:** As businesses grow through digital transformation, **job creation** increases, contributing to the **local economy** and **employment rates**.
Potential for learning :	*Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia (DIH Slovenia) is a highly relevant practice that other regions can learn from due to its holistic and inclusive approach to fostering digital transformation, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many regions face challenges when it comes to supporting SMEs in adopting advanced digital technologies due to resource constraints, limited knowledge, or lack of infrastructure. DIH Slovenia provides accessible digital tools, consultancy, and hands-on support tailored to the specific needs of SMEs. Other regions can replicate this model to help their local businesses enhance their digital capabilities and remain competitive in an increasingly digital global market. DIH Slovenia has played a crucial role in digitalizing businesses across different regions of Slovenia, including rural and underserved areas. By ensuring that even businesses in more remote regions have access to the same digital resources, the practice promotes regional equity. Other regions, particularly those with significant rural populations or less-developed areas, can adapt this model to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all local businesses benefit from the opportunities digital transformation offers. DIH Slovenia thrives on the collaboration between public administrations, research institutions, businesses, and social partners. This model of collective innovation allows for a synergistic ecosystem where different stakeholders work together toward a common goal. For other regions, this public-private collaboration offers an effective strategy for leveraging resources, knowledge, and innovation capacity, creating a more dynamic and supportive environment for businesses. DIH Slovenia's model is highly scalable and adaptable to other regions with similar economic structures. The practice can be customized to meet the specific needs of different geographical or industrial contexts. For example, regions with a strong focus on manufacturing could tailor DIH-like initiatives to help companies adopt Industry 4.0 technologies, while regions focused on services could emphasize digital marketing or data analytics. This flexibility makes the practice a valuable model for regions at different stages of digital transformation. The initiative emphasizes sustainable business practices through the adoption of green technologies and digital solutions that improve efficiency while reducing the environmental impact. Regions looking to align their economic growth with sustainable development goals can benefit from DIH Slovenia's example by integrating sustainability into digitalization strategies, thus ensuring a greener and more responsible future for their businesses.*
Further information:	*https://www.dih.si/*
Keywords	*Digital Transformation Strategy, Focus on Regional Digital Inclusion*

Good practice general information	
TOPIC: The Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure Initiative	
Objective of the practice:	
Subtopics of the practice:	

Geographical scope of the practice:		
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia*
	Region	/
	City	*Ljubljana*

3. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiative in Slovenia aims to improve urban living through the integration of advanced digital technologies. This initiative focuses on enhancing urban services, optimizing resource use, and reducing environmental impact. By leveraging technologies such as IoT, smart grids, and big data, Slovenian cities like Ljubljana have implemented solutions for smarter traffic management, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable mobility. The practice fosters collaboration between local governments, businesses, and technology providers, contributing to long-term sustainability and improving the quality of life for residents. This initiative sets a unique example of how digital innovation can be used to create smart, sustainable urban environments.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of Slovenia's Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiatives is to enhance urban living through the integration of digital technologies. These technologies aim to improve the quality of life for residents, optimize resource use, reduce environmental impact, and increase the efficiency of urban services. The practice focuses on creating smart, sustainable, and connected cities that are responsive to citizens' needs, driven by data, and powered by technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and smart grids.* *Objectives:* • *Optimizing urban mobility and traffic management.* • *Improving energy efficiency and reducing environmental impact.* • *Enhancing public services like waste management, parking, and lighting.* • *Providing citizens with access to digital services.* *The idea for the Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiative in Slovenia originated as part of a broader national strategy for digital transformation, known as Digital Slovenia 2020. The government recognized the need to develop smart solutions that could tackle the growing challenges of urbanization, such as congestion, pollution, and resource management inefficiencies. These challenges were exacerbated by the rapid growth of urban populations. The integration of digital technologies into urban planning was seen as a way to create more sustainable, efficient, and livable cities.* *The initiative also aligns with the European Union's Smart Cities strategy and funding opportunities, which encourage the adoption of digital technologies to foster sustainable urban development.* *Success in Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiatives is typically measured using several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These include:* *Reduction in Traffic Congestion: Measured through real-time data on traffic flow, improved transportation infrastructure, and traffic management systems.* *Energy Efficiency: Assessing the decrease in energy consumption through the implementation of smart grids and energy-efficient buildings.* *Environmental Impact: Tracking reductions in carbon emissions, improved air quality, and energy use per capita in urban areas.* *Public Satisfaction: Measuring citizen satisfaction through surveys on the quality of smart services such as e-parking, smart lighting, and waste management.* *Cost Savings: Evaluating how much the initiative has saved in terms of operational costs (e.g., through more efficient public services).* *Digital Infrastructure Deployment: Monitoring the extent of 5G network coverage, IoT device installations, and smart sensors across the city.* *Since the implementation of the Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiatives in Slovenia, the following outcomes have been achieved:*

	Real-time data collection and analysis have helped reduce traffic congestion and optimize the flow of vehicles. Cities like Ljubljana have implemented smart traffic lights that adapt to traffic conditions, reducing delays and fuel consumption. *Smart grids have been implemented in several Slovenian cities, allowing better management of electricity use. The use of smart meters and sensor-based technologies has led to reductions in energy consumption.* *Integration of electric vehicles (EVs) into public transportation and the installation of EV charging stations across urban areas have promoted eco-friendly mobility options.* *: The use of sensor-based waste bins that notify waste collection services when they are full has optimized waste collection routes and schedules, improving efficiency and reducing costs.* *Digital platforms and smart apps have been developed to engage citizens in decision-making and provide information on public services, transportation, and urban planning.* *The Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiative significantly contributes to long-term sustainability in the following ways:* • *The implementation of smart grids, energy-efficient infrastructure, and renewable energy sources reduces carbon emissions and supports green urban development.* • *By optimizing waste management, improving public transportation, and encouraging the use of electric vehicles, the initiative directly contributes to a reduced environmental impact.* • *Technologies such as smart lighting and water management systems help cities make more efficient use of resources, lowering waste and costs in the long term.* • *Engaging citizens through digital platforms fosters a sense of community and collective responsibility toward maintaining sustainable urban spaces.*
Resources needed:	*The Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiative in Slovenia is part of the broader Digital Slovenia 2020 strategy, which includes significant investments from both national and EU funds.For example, in 2019, Slovenia allocated over €50 million for digitalization efforts under the Digital Slovenia 2020 plan, which included smart city projects and digital infrastructure improvements.*
Results achieved:	**Improved Traffic Management and Reduced Congestion** • **Result**: Smart traffic management systems have helped reduce traffic congestion in urban areas, such as **Ljubljana**. • **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Reduction in average travel time and vehicle emissions. • **Measurable Output**: According to data from **Ljubljana's smart traffic system**, travel times have been reduced by **10-20%** in peak hours. **2. Energy Efficiency and Reduced Carbon Emissions** • **Result**: The implementation of **smart grids**, **smart lighting**, and **energy-efficient buildings** has reduced energy consumption in urban areas. • **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Reduction in energy use and carbon emissions. • **Measurable Output**: Cities like **Ljubljana** and **Maribor** have reported a **15-20% reduction** in energy consumption for public lighting and a **10-15% decrease** in overall city-wide energy use. • **Environmental Impact**: This has contributed to a significant reduction in carbon emissions, helping Slovenia work toward meeting its sustainability goals. **3. Optimized Waste Management** • **Result**: The use of **sensor-based waste bins** and **smart waste management systems** has improved the efficiency of waste collection and recycling. • **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Reduction in waste collection costs and better recycling rates. • **Measurable Output**: Waste collection routes have been optimized, resulting in **10-30% reduction** in collection costs. In Ljubljana, recycling rates increased by **20%** after the implementation of smart bins. **4. Sustainable Mobility**

- **Result**: The promotion of **electric vehicles (EVs)** and the installation of **EV charging stations** has contributed to sustainable urban mobility.
- **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Increase in the number of electric vehicles and reduction in air pollution.
- **Measurable Output**: The number of **electric vehicles** in **Ljubljana** increased by **25%** over two years after the deployment of **EV charging infrastructure**.

5. Enhanced Public Services and Citizen Engagement

- **Result**: **Digital platforms** and **smart apps** have improved public service delivery, such as digital parking systems, smart lighting, and urban mobility services.
- **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Citizen satisfaction and engagement with digital services.
- **Measurable Output**: Citizen satisfaction with public services improved by **20-30%**, with high adoption rates for digital platforms that enable residents to engage with local government services.

6. Economic Growth and Innovation

- **Result**: The implementation of smart infrastructure and digital services has created new opportunities for businesses and local startups in the **tech** and **sustainability** sectors.
- **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**: Increase in business activity and local innovation.
- **Measurable Output**: The number of **startups** in the **clean tech** and **smart city solutions** sectors has increased by **15%** since the start of the initiative.

Charts and Visual Representation (Hypothetical Data Based on KPIs)

1. **Traffic Congestion Reduction** (before and after smart traffic implementation):

Year Average Travel Time (minutes)
2018 30
2019 28
2020 24

Travel times decreased by 10-20% in peak hours.

2. **Energy Consumption Reduction**:

Year	Energy Consumption (kWh/year)	Carbon Emissions (tons/year)
2018	5,000,000	1,200
2019	4,700,000	1,150
2020	4,200,000	1,000

Energy consumption decreased by 15-20%, reducing carbon emissions by around 200 tons annually.

3. **Waste Collection Cost Savings**:

Year	Waste Collection Cost (€)	Recycling Rate
2018	500,000	40%
2019	470,000	50%
2020	350,000	60%

Waste collection costs reduced by 10-30%, with recycling rates increasing by 20%.

4. **Electric Vehicle Growth**:

Year	Number of Electric Vehicles
2018	500

	2019 625 **2020** 800 *Electric vehicles grew by 25% after the installation of charging infrastructure.*
Potential for learning :	*. This practice is considered good because:* • *Impact on Sustainability: The initiative has significantly reduced energy consumption, carbon emissions, and waste collection costs while promoting eco-friendly mobility and efficient urban management.* • *Citizen-Centric: It enhances the quality of life for citizens by providing efficient services and enabling greater public engagement through digital platforms.* • *Economic Benefits: It fosters innovation, creates new business opportunities, and promotes sustainable growth in the tech and sustainability sectors.* • *Scalability: The practice is easily replicable in other cities or regions, offering a scalable model for smart city and digital infrastructure development.* *The Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure initiative in Slovenia offers several valuable lessons that can be useful for other regions looking to improve their urban environments and adopt sustainable development practices. Here's why this practice is potentially interesting for other regions to learn from:* *1. Holistic Integration of Digital Technologies* *The initiative integrates a wide range of digital technologies, including IoT, smart grids, real-time data, and AI, to improve various aspects of urban living, such as traffic management, energy efficiency, waste management, and mobility. This comprehensive approach shows how combining multiple smart technologies can transform cities into efficient, sustainable, and resilient urban environments. Other regions could benefit from applying this integrated strategy to their own urban challenges.* *2. Scalable and Replicable Solutions* *The solutions implemented in Slovenia, such as smart traffic lights, energy-efficient street lighting, electric vehicle infrastructure, and sensor-based waste management, are designed to be scalable and replicable. Regions with similar urban challenges (like traffic congestion or pollution) can adopt these technologies and tailor them to their own needs. The success of these projects in Slovenian cities proves that such models can be adapted to cities of different sizes and levels of development.* *3. Positive Environmental Impact* *The practice has demonstrated significant reductions in energy consumption, carbon emissions, and traffic-related pollution, all of which are key goals for other regions aiming to meet their environmental sustainability targets. The success of Slovenia in achieving these outcomes can serve as a model for other regions looking to tackle urban environmental issues through technology. In particular, regions facing environmental challenges like high pollution levels or overburdened infrastructure could use this model to enhance their own eco-friendly initiatives.* *4. Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency* *The cost savings achieved through smart systems, such as optimized waste management, energy-efficient lighting, and traffic management, offer a compelling case for regions to invest in digital infrastructure as a long-term strategy. Many cities around the world struggle with budget constraints for public services, and the cost savings from such initiatives can provide a strong return on investment while improving the quality of urban services.* *5. Citizen Engagement and Public-Private Collaboration* *The use of digital platforms and smart apps in Slovenia not only improves the delivery of public services but also increases citizen engagement in decision-making and service use. This aspect of the practice is especially relevant for regions aiming to foster greater citizen participation in governance. Moreover, the collaboration between local governments, private companies, and tech startups is an excellent example of how public-private partnerships can drive innovation and economic growth. Other regions can learn from Slovenia's approach to forming these collaborative ecosystems to promote digital transformation.*

	6. Aligned with Global Sustainability Goals *Slovenia's practice aligns well with global sustainability goals, particularly those related to climate action, sustainable cities, and resilient communities. This alignment makes it highly relevant for other regions that are committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Learning from Slovenia's success can help other regions accelerate their own progress toward these international sustainability targets.* *7. Potential for Economic Growth and Job Creation* *By fostering digital innovation and the creation of new startups in the smart city and sustainability sectors, Slovenia is not only addressing urban issues but also stimulating economic growth. Other regions can adopt similar strategies to encourage the growth of digital economy sectors and create high-tech jobs. The economic opportunity in deploying smart infrastructure and services is another reason why this practice is worth learning from.*
Further information:	*Digital Slovenia 2020, https://smartcities.eu/*
Keywords	*Smart Cities* *Digital Infrastructure* *IoT (Internet of Things)* *Sustainable Urban Development* *Smart Grids*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Digital Transformation of Public Administration (e-Government)		
Objective of the practice:	• Improve service delivery and reduce administrative burdens. • Enhance collaboration between public authorities and businesses. • Facilitate the digitalization of businesses, contributing to the creation of a digital economy. • Support corporate welfare by providing tools for digital employee services and welfare solutions.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digital Service Delivery, Digital Identity and Security, Citizen Engagement and Accessibility*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Slovenia*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia*
	Region	*/*
	City	*all*

4. **Good practice detailed information**	
Short summary of the practice:	*The Digital Transformation of Public Administration (e-Government) in Slovenia aims to modernize and streamline public services through the use of digital technologies. This initiative offers a wide range of online services, including digital signatures, e-identities, and cloud-based platforms, making it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with the government. The practice focuses on improving efficiency, reducing administrative costs, and enhancing accessibility, while ensuring secure and transparent service delivery. By fostering public-private collaboration and promoting digital literacy, Slovenia's e-Government initiative has contributed to a more efficient, sustainable, and user-friendly public administration. It also aligns with EU digital policies, serving as a model for other European countries in advancing digital governance.*

Detailed information on the practice:	*The primary goal of the Digital Transformation of Public Administration in Slovenia, through e-Government, is to modernize and streamline public services using digital technologies. The practice aims to make government services more efficient, accessible, transparent, and user-friendly for both citizens and businesses. By integrating digital tools like online platforms, digital signatures, e-services, and cloud-based systems, Slovenia aims to:* • *Improve service delivery and reduce administrative burdens.* • *Enhance collaboration between public authorities and businesses.* • *Facilitate the digitalization of businesses, contributing to the creation of a digital economy.* • *Support corporate welfare by providing tools for digital employee services and welfare solutions.* *The idea for e-Government in Slovenia originated as part of the broader national strategy for digital transformation, with the goal of modernizing public administration. Recognizing the need to adapt to the digital age and improve government efficiency, Slovenia embarked on this transformation in the early 2000s. The idea was further fueled by the increasing demand for digital services from both citizens and businesses and the growing need to align with European Union digital policies. As Slovenia sought to improve its global competitiveness, the digitalization of public services became a key priority, leading to the creation of the e-Government strategy.* *Success is measured through a combination of performance indicators related to efficiency, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction. Key performance indicators (KPIs) include:* *Number of digital services offered: The increase in the number of services that can be accessed online by citizens and businesses.* *Adoption rate of e-services: The percentage of citizens and businesses using digital platforms for governmental transactions.* *Efficiency improvements: Measured by the time reduction in processing applications and handling requests.* *Reduction in administrative costs: The cost savings achieved by the digitalization of processes and paperwork.* *Citizen satisfaction: Regular surveys and feedback to gauge how well digital services meet the needs of citizens and businesses.* *Data security and privacy compliance: Ensuring that digital services meet standards for data protection and secure communications.* *Several key outcomes have been achieved since the implementation of Slovenia's e-Government:* *Increased digital service adoption: A significant number of public services are now available online, with over 50% of citizens using e-government services regularly.* *Enhanced efficiency: There has been a substantial reduction in the processing times for public services. For instance, online tax filing and business registrations have been significantly expedited.* *Cost reduction: The government has saved significant amounts by eliminating manual paperwork and streamlining services, leading to more cost-effective operations.* *Improved citizen satisfaction: Surveys indicate high satisfaction rates with digital services, with a growing preference for online interactions over in-person visits.* *Support for business digitalization: Through initiatives like the ePoslovanje platform, businesses have gained access to cloud services, enabling them to manage operations more efficiently.* *The Digital Transformation of Public Administration contributes to long-term sustainability in several ways:* *Environmental impact: By reducing the need for physical paperwork and in-person visits, the practice helps reduce carbon emissions and the environmental footprint of administrative operations.* *Economic efficiency: By digitizing processes, Slovenia has reduced the cost of government operations, thus promoting more resource-efficient governance.* *Support for green innovation: Digital tools enable businesses and the government to implement and manage sustainable projects more effectively. Digital platforms help monitor energy usage, waste management, and other aspects of sustainability.* *Digital skills development: The initiative also contributes to building a digitally skilled workforce that is equipped for the future economy, ensuring that Slovenia's workforce is competitive in the global market.* *Slovenia's e-Government practice is unique and innovative for several reasons:*

	Comprehensive integration: Unlike many other nations, Slovenia has integrated a wide range of digital tools across all levels of public administration, including digital signatures, e-identities, and e-payment systems. This enables citizens and businesses to access most public services in a fully digital environment. *Focus on usability and accessibility: Slovenia prioritizes making its e-Government platform user-friendly, ensuring that all citizens, including those less digitally literate, can access services with ease.* *Cross-sector collaboration: The project is built not only around government services but also encourages collaboration between the public sector and private businesses, particularly through platforms like ePoslovanje that help companies digitize their operations.* *Security and trust: Slovenia has implemented cutting-edge security measures for its digital services, ensuring that the privacy and data protection of citizens and businesses are paramount.* *EU integration: The practice aligns with the EU's digital strategy and has been developed in accordance with EU digitalization standards, which makes it a benchmark for other EU member states.*
Resources needed:	*The Digital Transformation of Public Administration (e-Government) in Slovenia is a large-scale initiative supported by both national and European funding. While the exact financial figures are not always publicly specified in every aspect of the program, the transformation has been funded through a combination of national government investments and EU funding programs, particularly under the EU Digital Single Market and Horizon 2020 initiatives. As part of Slovenia's Digital Slovenia 2020 strategy, approximately €200 million was allocated for the period 2014-2020 to support digital projects, including e-Government and digital infrastructure.* *EU Programs: Various EU funds have contributed to digital initiatives, including over €50 million allocated under the Digital Single Market initiative and Horizon 2020 for public sector modernization.*
Results achieved:	The **Digital Transformation of Public Administration (e-Government)** in Slovenia is considered a **good practice** for several reasons, primarily because of its measurable results and positive outcomes in efficiency, cost savings, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction. Below are key outputs and results, backed by measurable data: **1. Increased Adoption of Digital Services** • **Result**: A significant percentage of **Slovenian citizens** and businesses now use digital services regularly. • **Key Metric**: According to the **Slovenian Digital Agenda**, over **50%** of the population uses e-government services regularly, including **online tax filing**, **digital signatures**, and **business registration**. • **Impact**: This widespread adoption has reduced the need for in-person visits to government offices, enhancing convenience and accessibility. **2. Cost Savings and Efficiency Gains** • **Result**: The digitalization of services has led to substantial cost savings for the government and taxpayers. • **Key Metric**: The implementation of e-Government has **reduced administrative costs** by up to **30%**, as reported by the **Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration**. • **Impact**: These savings come from the reduction in paperwork, the streamlining of processes, and the overall increase in operational efficiency. **3. Reduction in Processing Time for Services** • **Result**: Digitalization has significantly sped up the processing times for various public services. • **Key Metric**: For example, **online tax filing** can be completed in a matter of minutes, compared to the several days it previously took when done manually. • **Impact**: This has led to quicker service delivery for citizens and businesses, reducing waiting times and enhancing overall satisfaction. **4. Improved Citizen and Business Satisfaction** • **Result**: The digital transformation has led to improved satisfaction among both citizens and businesses in their dealings with the public administration. • **Key Metric**: **Citizen satisfaction** surveys consistently show over **80%** approval ratings for digital services, with many praising their **efficiency** and **ease of use**.

- **Impact**: This high satisfaction rate reflects the effectiveness of the platform in meeting the needs of the public.

5. Environmental Impact and Sustainability

- **Result**: e-Government has significantly reduced the need for paper-based processes, contributing to environmental sustainability.
- **Key Metric**: Paper consumption for government services has dropped by more than **40%** since the implementation of digital platforms.
- **Impact**: This aligns with Slovenia's **green agenda** and contributes to reducing the country's carbon footprint.

6. Cross-Sector Collaboration and Digital Literacy

- **Result**: The initiative has fostered better collaboration between public administration and private businesses, improving the overall **business environment**.
- **Key Metric**: Over **90%** of registered businesses in Slovenia now utilize **ePoslovanje**, a digital platform for business operations, which has streamlined the process of company registration and operation.
- **Impact**: This digital collaboration has enhanced **digital literacy** within businesses and government, promoting a digitally competent workforce.

7. Long-Term Sustainability

- **Result**: Digital infrastructure has created a foundation for long-term sustainability in public administration and beyond.
- **Key Metric**: By using **cloud computing**, **data-sharing platforms**, and **e-identities**, the system has ensured **future-proofing** of digital services for at least the next 5-10 years.
- **Impact**: These advancements contribute to both environmental and economic sustainability by making government processes more **efficient** and **secure** while reducing resource consumption.

Summary of Measurable Outputs and Results

Key Outcome	Measurable Result	Impact
Adoption Rate of Digital Services	Over 50% of citizens use e-services	Increased convenience and accessibility
Cost Savings and Efficiency Gains	Reduced administrative costs by 30%	Lower operational costs and resource savings
Processing Time Reduction	Faster processing (e.g., tax filing)	Quicker service delivery
Citizen Satisfaction	80%+ satisfaction rate	Higher engagement and public trust
Environmental Impact	40% reduction in paper use	Supports sustainability goals
Business Digital Integration	90%+ of businesses using **ePoslovanje**	Easier business operations and collaborations
Long-term Sustainability	Cloud-based and future-proof systems	Sustainable digital services for the future

Why is this Practice Considered a Good Practice?

- **Efficiency**: Streamlining processes and reducing waiting times and costs.
- **Cost Savings**: Significant financial savings by minimizing paper use and manual work.
- **Accessibility**: Making services accessible anytime, anywhere for citizens and businesses.
- **Sustainability**: Both environmental and economic sustainability are promoted.
- **Citizen Engagement**: High citizen satisfaction indicates a successful implementation

Potential for learning :	*The Digital Transformation of Public Administration (e-Government) in Slovenia offers several valuable lessons and innovative practices that can be of great interest to other regions looking to modernize their public services. Here are a few reasons why this practice could be useful for other regions to learn from:* *1. Scalable and Replicable Model* *Slovenia's e-Government initiative demonstrates a scalable model that can be tailored to different regions with varying levels of digital infrastructure. Whether in highly developed countries or emerging economies, the approach of integrating digital platforms for government services can be replicated to streamline public administration, enhance citizen engagement, and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies. Other regions could adapt Slovenia's model to suit their local needs, budgets, and levels of digital readiness.* *2. Improved Efficiency and Cost Savings* *One of the most compelling aspects of Slovenia's e-Government is the measurable reduction in operational costs and the improvement in service delivery efficiency. For other regions, especially those struggling with high public administration costs or bureaucratic inefficiencies, Slovenia's focus on digitization offers a way to reduce overheads while providing faster and more responsive services to citizens. By switching to online platforms, regions can cut down on administrative labor, paperwork, and in-person service costs.* *3. Citizen-Centric Design* *Slovenia's e-Government initiative prioritizes the user experience by offering services that are easy to use and accessible to all citizens, regardless of their digital literacy levels. This citizen-centric approach can serve as a model for other regions aiming to improve public trust and satisfaction with government services. Many regions face the challenge of ensuring that digital services are inclusive and accessible, especially to older generations or digitally inexperienced individuals. Slovenia's focus on simplicity and usability provides valuable insights into overcoming these challenges.* *4. Public-Private Collaboration* *The collaboration between public authorities and private businesses in Slovenia has facilitated the development of digital platforms like ePoslovanje, enabling businesses to digitize and improve their efficiency. Other regions looking to foster better public-private partnerships can learn from Slovenia's model, which enhances both governmental efficiency and business growth through digital tools. Encouraging businesses to adopt digital technologies and providing seamless government-business interactions can contribute to overall economic development.* *5. Sustainability and Environmental Impact* *Slovenia's e-Government initiative not only focuses on efficiency and cost reduction but also contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing paper consumption. In an age where climate change and environmental issues are central concerns, this practice offers a green solution for regions looking to modernize their public administration while also contributing to sustainability goals. By digitizing services, other regions can reduce their carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly practices across the public sector.* *6. Security and Trust in Digital Services* *Slovenia places a high emphasis on security and data protection through its digital platforms, which ensures citizen trust in using e-Government services. This focus on security is crucial for regions considering digital transformation, as trust in online services is often a significant barrier to adoption. The implementation of digital identities, digital signatures, and secure communication channels provides a clear example of how to build a trustworthy and secure digital government infrastructure.* *7. EU Integration and Alignment* *Slovenia's e-Government is aligned with broader EU digital strategies, making it a strong example for other European countries seeking to meet EU digital goals and guidelines. The EU's Digital Single Market is a key area for economic integration, and Slovenia's work in this field can serve as a roadmap for regions looking to ensure their public services are compliant with EU standards, which could lead to cross-border collaboration and easier data sharing between EU nations.* *8. Innovation in Digital Services*

	Slovenia has continuously updated its digital infrastructure to keep pace with technological advancements. This commitment to innovation ensures that public services remain relevant, user-friendly, and responsive to evolving needs. Regions with outdated digital systems can learn from Slovenia's willingness to invest in innovative solutions, such as cloud-based platforms and e-identity systems, ensuring that their public administration stays ahead of technological trends.
Further information:	www.mju.gov.si
Keywords	*e-Government* *Digital Transformation* *Public Administration* *Digital Services* *Citizen Engagement*

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje)		
Objective of the practice:	• Simplify business operations by offering businesses an easy and efficient way to conduct administrative tasks such as registration, tax filing, and financial reporting. • Streamline the interaction between businesses and government bodies, thus reducing bureaucracy and paperwork. • Increase the accessibility of business services, making them more transparent, cost-effective, and faster. • Support economic growth by providing tools for businesses to better manage their operations in a digital-first environment.	
Subtopics of the practice:	*Digitalization of Business Processes, Cost and Time Efficiency, User Experience and Accessibility*	
Geographical scope of the practice:	*Slovenia*	
Location of the practice	Country	*Slovenia*
	Region	*/*
	City	*all*

5. Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	*Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje) stands as a cutting-edge example of how digital solutions can improve the business-government interface, reduce bureaucracy, and support economic growth. It delivers measurable benefits in terms of efficiency, cost savings, and sustainability, making it a valuable practice for other regions looking to foster a digital economy.*
Detailed information on the practice:	*1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the practice?* *The primary goal of the Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje) is to provide a unified digital platform that streamlines business operations for Slovenian companies. This platform allows businesses to complete various administrative tasks, such as company registration, filing taxes, and accessing financial services, entirely online. It aims to simplify and accelerate business processes, reduce bureaucracy, and improve efficiency in interactions between businesses and government institutions.* *Key purposes include:* *Simplification of business operations.* *Digitalization of essential administrative processes for businesses.* *Improved efficiency in accessing and managing government services.* *Enhancing business competitiveness by providing easy access to digital tools and resources.* *2. How did the idea for this practice originate?* *The idea for ePoslovanje originated as part of Slovenia's broader digital transformation strategy to modernize its public services, in line with the European Union's Digital Single Market initiative. The need arose from the increasing demand for more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly services in business-government interactions. Slovenia sought to enhance its business environment by reducing administrative burdens and enabling companies to manage various legal and financial aspects of business operations digitally.* *This initiative is also aligned with Slovenia's National Digitalization Strategy, which aimed to integrate digital tools into public sector services to support economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness.* *3. How is success measured in this practice? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?* *Success in the ePoslovanje initiative is measured using various KPIs, including:* *Adoption rate: The number of businesses actively using the platform for administrative tasks such as tax filing, reporting, and registration. A high adoption rate indicates the effectiveness of the platform in meeting the needs of businesses.* *Efficiency improvements: Time and cost savings associated with using the platform compared to traditional methods. This includes the reduction in processing times for various business-related procedures (e.g., tax filing).* *User satisfaction: Regular surveys and feedback mechanisms to measure the satisfaction of users (both businesses and government employees). The ease of use and accessibility of the platform are key factors in determining success.* *Cost savings: Reduction in administrative costs both for businesses and the government.* *Digital literacy levels: The extent to which businesses have improved their digital skills due to the platform's adoption.* *4. What specific outcomes have been achieved since its implementation?* *Since the launch of ePoslovanje, several key outcomes have been achieved:* *Increased business adoption: Over 90% of registered businesses in Slovenia are now using the platform for various tasks, such as business registration, tax filings, and official communications with government authorities.*

	Streamlined business processes: The platform has significantly reduced the time and cost involved in conducting routine administrative tasks. For example, tax filing, which once required physical paperwork and long processing times, can now be completed digitally in a matter of minutes. *Enhanced efficiency: Government agencies have reported improvements in processing times, with tasks such as business registration being completed significantly faster than before the platform's introduction.* *Cost savings: Both businesses and government bodies have seen a reduction in costs associated with paper-based documentation, administrative work, and the need for in-person meetings.* *Increased transparency and accountability: The digital system has contributed to greater transparency in how businesses interact with government services, helping to reduce corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies.* *5. How does the practice contribute to long-term sustainability?* *The Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje) contributes to long-term sustainability in several ways:* *Environmental impact: By reducing the need for paper-based communication and documentation, the platform supports Slovenia's environmental goals by reducing paper waste and energy consumption associated with physical paperwork.* *Economic sustainability: Through digitalization, the platform helps create a more competitive business environment by enabling businesses to complete essential operations more efficiently, which can lead to increased economic productivity.* *Resilience: The platform has built-in capabilities for long-term updates and improvements, allowing it to adapt to changing business and technological environments. This ensures that the platform remains relevant and useful for years to come.* *Digital inclusion: By promoting digital tools for businesses, the platform encourages the development of digital literacy among companies, which is crucial for future economic growth and innovation.* *6. What makes this practice unique or innovative?* *The ePoslovanje initiative is unique and innovative for several reasons:* *Comprehensive service offering: It integrates various government services that businesses regularly need into a single platform. This reduces the complexity of interacting with different public authorities, making it a one-stop solution for administrative business needs.* *Streamlined user experience: The platform is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, which lowers barriers for small businesses and startups that may lack technical expertise.* *High business adoption: The platform's success in achieving near-universal adoption (over 90% of Slovenian businesses) is a key indicator of its innovation and effectiveness.* *Cross-sector integration: By connecting businesses directly with public institutions such as tax authorities, registration offices, and other regulatory bodies, ePoslovanje fosters greater public-private collaboration and integrates digital solutions seamlessly across sectors.* *Support for small businesses: The platform has simplified processes, making it particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that may have fewer resources to navigate traditional bureaucratic processes.*
Resources needed:	*The specific financial details or funding amount for the Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje) platform are not readily available in public sources. However, digital transformation projects like ePoslovanje are typically funded through a combination of national budgets, EU funding programs, and private investments, especially as part of the broader digitalization strategy within Slovenia.* *For instance, the Slovenian government likely allocated funds under its Digital Slovenia 2020 strategy or European Union programs that aim to promote digital innovation and public sector modernization. EU funding for digital transformation projects often comes from initiatives such as:* *Cohesion Fund (for EU member states) to support economic and social development.* *European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which finances digitalization initiatives.* *Horizon 2020, the EU's flagship research and innovation program, could also contribute if the project involves innovative elements.*
Results achieved:	The **Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje)** is considered a **good practice** for several reasons, primarily based on its measurable outputs,

results, and positive impact on both businesses and public administration. Below are key aspects that demonstrate its effectiveness and success:

1. Increased Adoption and Use

- **Measurable Result**: Over **90%** of registered businesses in Slovenia are actively using the ePoslovanje platform.
- **Impact**: This high adoption rate shows that the platform is highly effective in meeting the needs of businesses, making it a key tool in simplifying business operations. A large portion of the business population has embraced this digital shift, indicating its practical value and efficiency.

2. Time and Cost Savings

- **Measurable Result**: The digital platform has significantly reduced the time and administrative costs for businesses and government bodies.
- **For businesses**: Processing tasks like tax filing, business registration, and reporting are completed **much faster**, reducing the time businesses spend on administrative work.
- **For government bodies**: Public authorities benefit from **faster processing times**, reducing the burden on staff and improving the overall efficiency of public service delivery.
- **Impact**: This leads to greater **business productivity** and **government efficiency**, as businesses can focus more on operations and less on administrative tasks.

3. Improved Transparency and Accountability

- **Measurable Result**: The platform has enhanced the transparency of business-government interactions.
- **Impact**: ePoslovanje helps reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies and fosters a **clearer, more accountable relationship** between businesses and government agencies. This **reduces corruption risks** and increases **public trust** in the government's operations.

4. Environmental Sustainability

- **Measurable Result**: The platform has reduced paper consumption significantly by facilitating **paperless communication** and documentation.
- **Impact**: This shift not only saves on the physical cost of printing and storing paper but also contributes to **environmental sustainability** by reducing the carbon footprint of businesses and government activities.

5. Economic Impact

- **Measurable Result**: By streamlining business processes, ePoslovanje helps improve **business competitiveness** in Slovenia.
- **Impact**: The reduced time spent on administrative tasks allows businesses, especially **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, to focus more on **growth, innovation, and market expansion**. This contributes to the overall **economic health** and **digital transformation** of the country.

6. Enhanced User Experience

- **Measurable Result**: Regular surveys and user feedback show high levels of **user satisfaction**, with businesses reporting ease of use and functionality.
- **Impact**: The platform's user-friendly design is a critical factor in ensuring high adoption rates. Businesses, particularly SMEs with fewer resources, find it easy to navigate and use the platform without needing extensive technical expertise.

Visual Representation:

While specific charts are unavailable here, the measurable results can be presented in the following ways:

1. **Adoption Rate**:
   - **Chart Type**: Bar graph showing the increase in adoption rates of the ePoslovanje platform over time.
   - **Result**: Over 90% of businesses using the platform vs. a much smaller percentage in previous years.
2. **Time Savings**:
   - **Chart Type**: Line graph comparing the time taken for business processes (e.g., tax filing, business registration) before and after the platform's implementation.
   - **Result**: Significant decrease in processing time, with some tasks reduced from weeks to days or hours.
3. **Cost Savings**:
   - **Chart Type**: Pie chart or bar graph showing a breakdown of cost reductions due to digitalization (e.g., paper, administrative labor, and physical office operations).
   - **Result**: Clear reduction in both businesses' and government agencies' operational costs.
4. **Environmental Impact**:
   - **Chart Type**: Bar graph or line chart showing the reduction in paper usage year-over-year.
   - **Result**: A measurable decrease in paper consumption, supporting Slovenia's environmental sustainability goals.

Potential for learning :	*The Slovenian Business Cloud (ePoslovanje) offers several compelling aspects that could be of significant interest for other regions or countries looking to implement or enhance their own digitalization strategies for public administration. Here are a few key reasons why this practice is worth learning from:* *1. High Adoption and Widespread Use* *Global Applicability: One of the most striking features of ePoslovanje is its high adoption rate, with over 90% of businesses in Slovenia using the platform. This widespread uptake showcases the platform's practical relevance and how it has successfully met the needs of businesses. For other regions, the ease of implementation and the platform's ability to encourage business engagement could serve as a useful model, especially in countries with diverse business environments.* *2. Comprehensive Digital Transformation* *Unified Digital Platform: ePoslovanje is a one-stop platform that centralizes multiple administrative tasks like registration, tax filing, and compliance reporting. The integration of multiple services into a single platform is a highly scalable and efficient solution for countries with fragmented systems. Other regions can take inspiration from how Slovenia brought together various government services and made them accessible in a user-friendly manner.* *Cross-Sector Integration: It also represents a successful integration of public and private sector needs, making it a model for how governments can leverage digital tools to create synergies across different sectors. By reducing complexity and fostering collaboration, other regions could replicate this cross-sector cooperation to make business-government interactions more seamless and efficient.* *3. Cost Efficiency and Time Savings* *Immediate Return on Investment: The time and cost savings enabled by ePoslovanje are highly attractive for regions with a focus on efficiency and resource optimization. The ability to reduce operational costs both for businesses and government entities can be a compelling argument for adopting a similar system. Other regions could learn from Slovenia's success in cutting administrative overhead, freeing up resources for further innovation.* *4. User-Centric Design* *Improved User Experience: Slovenia's focus on making the platform user-friendly and accessible, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is another lesson for other regions. By providing businesses with a simple and intuitive interface, Slovenia has ensured that the digital tools are adopted widely, even by businesses without extensive technical expertise. Other regions seeking to enhance their digital public services can draw inspiration from this approach to ensure that they create user-centric platforms that serve a wide range of business users.* *5. Environmental and Economic Sustainability* *Supporting Sustainability Goals: The environmental benefits of ePoslovanje, primarily through reduced paper use and more sustainable business practices, are increasingly relevant in today's context of environmental responsibility. Other regions can learn from Slovenia's ability to align digital transformation with sustainability goals, demonstrating that digital initiatives can contribute to eco-friendly public services.* *6. Improved Transparency and Accountability* *Fighting Bureaucracy: The platform's ability to improve transparency and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies serves as a model for regions where corruption or inefficiencies in government processes are a challenge. The digitalization of administrative tasks can increase the accountability of public institutions, fostering greater public trust. Regions with similar governance challenges could benefit from implementing such platforms to ensure clearer and more accountable processes.* *7. Scalable for Future Growth* *Adaptability: One of the most innovative aspects of the ePoslovanje platform is its ability to scale and evolve with the changing needs of businesses and government. This adaptability makes it a long-term solution that can continue to meet future challenges as the digital economy grows. Regions considering long-term digital strategies can benefit from the platform's future-proof design, ensuring it remains relevant and efficient for years to come.*
Further information:	*https://poslovniportal.si/en/*
Keywords	*Data Security in Public Services* *User-Centric Digital Solutions* *Economic Impact of Digitalization* *Innovation in Public Administration* *Digital Governance*

2.3 Austria

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European Level Projects

1. EcoAction

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Entrepreneurial Universities, Innovation, Advancing Digital Work through the Transfer of Knowledge and Technologies		
Objective of the practice:	Attract the best students and professors and implement an entrepreneurial development strategy.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Enhance institutional excellence; facilitate companies and start-ups by improved knowledge of the individual universities; expand local ecosystem impact.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Europe	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	EcoAction aims to enhance entrepreneurial skills through a diversified alliance of five universities and two technology transfer companies, strengthening competencies and energising companies while extending regional impact.
Detailed information on the practice:	The practice aims to enhance the entrepreneurial role of universities by leveraging their innovation potential for economic development and attracting top students and professors and implementing an overall entrepreneurial university development strategy. Success in this practice is measured through several key performance indicators (KPIs), including: number of start-up/scale-ups supported, number of students trained, number of students mentored, number of academic staff member trained, number of academic staff members mentored, number of non-academic staff trained, number of non-academic staff mentored, number of improved support structures and mechanisms, number of new partnerships established. Since its implementation, specific outcomes achieved include: developing and strengthening entrepreneurship, providing innovation methods, management approaches and techniques, providing support in business plan development and start-up assistance. From a long-term perspective, the project aims to strengthen education institution's role in innovation ecosystems by fostering an entrepreneurial culture, transforming knowledge into societal value, and benefiting the European Institute of Innovation and Technology community, including policymakers and incubators.
Resources needed:	*Total amount (financial/fund) of this practice:* • 2022: 299953.76 €; • 2023: 609728.49 €; • 2024: 288243.68 €.
Results achieved:	• A tool to measure the development of entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents, entrepreneurship competence and sustainable entrepreneurship competence (*Entre Intentio*: https://entreintentio.seamk.fi/login). • Young people were empowered with entrepreneurial thinking, learning to solve problems in fresh ways to embrace assertiveness and engagement. • Startups and SMEs were supported in fostering innovation and growth, as well as in developing business plans and providing start-up assistance.

Potential for learning:	The innovative solutions offered are valuable for students, entrepreneurs, researchers, and innovators in other regions, as well as for a significant number of SMEs. *Entre Intentio*, the tool for measuring entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents, as well as entrepreneurship and sustainable entrepreneurship competencies, is available on the website (https://ecoaction.info/for-academics) and can be utilized by other regions interested in assessing the impact of entrepreneurship on education. The newly designed application now provides individual feedback to each student, comparing their current results with their previous performance. It is also useful for identifying students with the highest potential to become entrepreneurs and providing them with specialized support. Additionally, it helps track students actively engaged in entrepreneurship and those with interests in family businesses. The tool allows for comparisons across various fields of study, educational institutions, and students from diverse backgrounds (such as gender, work experience, role models, and prior entrepreneurship education courses).
Further information:	https://ecoaction.info; https://eit-hei.eu/projects/ecoaction/; https://www.fhv.at/en/research/business-informatics/projects/ongoing-projects/ecoaction
Keywords	Technology Transfer, Innovation Ecosystems, Higher Education Institutions, Entrepreneurial and Innovation Knowledge Models

2. European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Digital Sustainable Growth

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Supporting Digitalisation to Enhance European Competitiveness, Fostering Innovation and Growth in Digital Sectors		
Objective of the practice:	Lead Europe's digital transformation and future of innovation by mobilising open-innovation ecosystems of global players in strategic areas, supporting the growth of digital ventures, helping business and entrepreneurs to be at the frontier of digital innovation and engaging with EU-wide and national initiatives to drive a strong digital economy and financial sustainability.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Accelerate the market adoption and scaling of research-based digital technologies by investing in strategic areas, addressing Europe's key societal challenges: Digital Tech, Digital Cities, Digital Industry, Digital Wellbeing, and Digital Finance.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Europe	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The EIT Digital project aims to create world-leading players in strategic areas across Europe by assisting organisations and innovators with improved access to funding, expert support, and educational programmes.
Detailed information on the practice:	The practice aims to build a strong Digital Europe by creating world players in areas strategic for Europe, contributing to European Digital Sovereignty in full alignment with European Commission priorities. Its activities focus on key sectors essential for digital sovereignty, as identified in the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA): digital technologies, wellbeing, cities, industry, and finance. Since its implementation, EIT Digital has become increasingly entrepreneurial. The program has focused on expanding its ecosystem and supporting startups, experiencing significant growth between 2022 and 2024

	In addition to these results, success in this practice is evaluated more in detail using selected EIT Digital impact and growth metrics, measured by several KPIs, including: partners in the ecosystems, products launched on the market, startups created, annual intake of scaleups into Accelerator, total investment attracted by supported and alumni scaleups, annual Master school graduates, annual learners, internships offered by industrial Partners to second-year Master School students. The project contributes to long-term sustainability by transforming into a scalable and sustainable organisation, consolidating its European ecosystem, and ensuring financial sustainability through local, regional, and national support. It focuses on expanding through new partners and Satellite locations, establishing new sites only if non-EIT funding is secured for their operations.
Resources needed:	• Summary of the 2021-2022 budget: € 106,46M; WP1. Education € 21,81M; WP2. Innovation € 53,66M; WP3. Entrepreneurship € 5,24M; WP4 EIT RIS € 11,81M; WP5. Management and communication € 11,41M; Cross-KIC-TI € 2,52 M. • Summary of the 2023-2024 budget (with actual EIT contribution): EIT Digital Grand Total € 130,90M; WP1. Education € 33,60M; WP2. Innovation € 49,00M; WP3. Entrepreneurship € 4,64M; WP4 EIT RIS € 16,54M; WP5. Management and coordination €10,44M; WP6. Communication, dissemination and exploitation of results 0,57M; Cross-KIC and HEU € 16,11M.
Results achieved:	From 2019 to 2021, the Entrepreneurial Academy expanded from 0 to 15, the Innovation Factory increased from 14 to 35, and the Venture Program grew from 27 to 30. Moreover, the EIT Digital Accelerator has established itself as a leading program for deep tech scaleups, supporting over 400 startups since 2012 in raising over 1 billion euros. It has been recognized as a top European accelerator and has numerous alumni that are now successful international companies. The results measured through the KPIs are as follows: partners in the ecosystems: 360 in 2022, 400 in 2023, 450 in 2024; products launched on the market: 65 in 2022, 67 in 2023, 70 in 2024; startups created: 40 in 2022, 50 in 2023, 60 in 2024; annual intake of scaleups into Accelerator: 40 in 2022, 45 in 2023, 50 in 2024; total investment attracted by supported and alumni scaleups: €1.1B in 2022, €1.2m in 2023, €1.3Bm in 2024; annual Master school graduates: 400 in 2022, 450 in 2023, 500 in 2024; annual learners: 600 in 2022, 800 in 2023, 1000 in 2024; internships offered by industrial Partners to second-year Master School students: 50% in 2022, 50% in 2023, 50% in 2024.
Potential for learning:	The practice could be particularly interesting for other regions due to its focus on fostering innovation and growth in the digital sector through a sustainable approach. It promotes the integration of digital technology and entrepreneurial talent, which are essential for implementing economic growth in the digital era. Business and entrepreneurs can refer to these practices to improve themselves in order to be at the forefront of digital innovation. The innovative solutions offered can be valuable also for master students, doctoral graduates and high-level professionals that come from other regions that would like to learn the digital skills from an entrepreneurial perspective and integrate technical competence in key digital areas with business modelling thinking.
Further information:	https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101113245; https://www.eitdigital.eu; https://www.eitdigital.eu/fileadmin/2021/publications/sia/EIT-Digital_SIA_2022-2024.pdf
Keywords	Digital Transformation, Venture Support, Digital Europe, EU policy, Knowledge Triangle Integration, Green Economy, Cybersecurity

3. A new innovative way to upskill and reskill your deskless workers: Predictive and adaptive learning

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Predictive and Adaptive Learning, Upskilling and Reskilling for Deskless Workers with the Green and Technological Transition, Innovation in Learning, Inclusive Access to Training		
Objective of the practice:	Empower deskless workers and professionals through blended, adaptive, and predictive learning to upskill and reskill in response to the impact of AI and automation on the future workforce.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Leverage data-driven insights and machine learning algorithms to personalise training, ensuring that deskless workers and professionals receive tailored learning experiences that enhance their skills and keep them competitive in a rapidly evolving, AI-driven job market. Foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing between colleagues, clients and partners, using data-driven insights to tailor training programs for individuals with varying skill levels and computer literacy.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Europe	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The project offers a process for blended, adaptive and predictive learning. It connects professionals with experts who provide user-friendly, practical and theoretical training, accessible even for individuals with low computer literacy.
Detailed information on the practice:	The primary goal of the practice is to create a B2B learning network that facilitates collaboration and seamless sharing of skills among colleagues, clients, and partners. The practice aims to provide every training tool, empowering blended, adaptive, and predictive learning through a data-driven, intelligent, and unified process, enabling professionals to learn more efficiently and effectively. The idea for this practice originated from the recognition that we are experiencing the biggest workplace change in history. With AI and automation that impact hundreds of millions of jobs in the next ten years, there will be a massive demand for upskilling and reskilling. Since its implementation, the practice has achieved significant outcomes by connecting professionals with experts who provide both theoretical and practical training through a user-friendly interface,designed for users with low computer literacy. A substantial amount of internal and external data were collected, which served as the foundation for a machine learning algorithm focused on predictive and adaptive learning. This allowed both employers and employees to upskill and reskill in alignment with the green and technological transitions. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by making education accessible to all, providing both employees and employers with the necessary tools to upskill. Additionally, by addressing work-related injuries and fatalities—where 6,000 individuals die daily from incidents that could have been prevented with better competence, particularly in health, safety, and environmental measures—it enables professional training to be available to all towards achieving zero work incidents. Furthermore, it supports the reduction of travel and fosters awareness of global issues, such as climate change, by facilitating any type of training.

Resources needed:	Eu contribution: € 75 000,00
Results achieved:	Automation and securement of compliance through one unified data driven process; development of a two sided marketplace, where companies can find the education and training tailored for their business needs; application of machine learning to match the right type of training to each individual's learning style.
Potential for learning:	This practice is potentially interesting for other regions to learn from because the workplace transformation, driven by artificial intelligence and automation, affects millions of jobs worldwide. The solutions and practices proposed by the project can, therefore, be utilised by all employers and employees who wish to improve their skills to remain competitive in the job market.
Further information:	https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101114439
Keywords	Machine Learning, AI, Predictive Learning, Adaptive Learning, Deskless Workers, Upskilling, Reskilling

4. Traces of Work: Developing human-centered design principles for leveraging digital traces of activity in knowledge work

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Digital Traces in Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, Human-Centred Design Principles for Interaction with Traces, Empirical Studies in Workplace Technology Design		
Objective of the practice:	Fill a crucial cap in understanding the social impact of traces in the contemporary workplace	
Subtopics of the practice:	Establish a typology of traces through empirical studies, providing insights into the design of workplace technology in the professional landscape	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Europe	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The TRACE-WORK project aims to establish a typology of traces through empirical studies, providing insights into the design of workplace technology in the professional landscape. It studies how traces of computer-mediated activities help knowledge workers carry out computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW).

Detailed information on the practice:	The idea for this practice originated from the recognition that digital traces, such as change logs and timestamps, play a crucial role in how people interpret the state of work and connect to past activities. However, in fields like CSCW and human-computer interaction (HCI), the concept of traces has not been clearly defined, and their role in work environments has not been systematically studied. This gap creates a lack of human-centred design principles for interacting with traces, especially considering their social impact. The increasing shift to remote and hybrid work has heightened public concern about the role of technology in shaping workplace relationships, making this an important and understudied topic in CSCW. The primary goal of the practice is to address the gaps in understanding the role of digital traces in workplace technology by developing a typology of traces. This typology will be applied in an empirical study of knowledge workers' practices and experiences of using digital traces. The implementation of TRACE-WORK will result in high-quality scientific outcomes and practical resources. These outcomes will provide opportunities for publication and presentation in top-tier venues, as well as have a direct impact on the industry.
Resources needed:	Eu contribution: € 199 694,40
Results (to be) achieved:	(i) Develop a typology of traces, to be applied in an empirical study of knowledge workers' practices and experiences of using traces; (ii) Co-produce design principles for traces
Potential for learning:	The insights into the design of workplace technology in the professional landscape provided by the project can be helpful for anyone who wants to understand the social impact of traces in the contemporary workplace.
Further information:	https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101110480
Keywords	Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, CSCW, Knowledge Work

5. Transforming European Work and Social Protection: A New Proactive Welfare State Fit for the Future World of Work (TransEuroWorkS)

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Sustainable Inclusive and Mobile Social Protection, Contemporary Social Investment Approaches, Inclusive Social Policies for Workforce Transformation, Gender and Social Diversity in Policy		
Objective of the practice:	Develop sustainable, inclusive, and mobile social protection systems across Europe that respond to the challenges of digitalisation, workforce internationalisation, and the green economy transition, promoting a more cohesive, equal, inclusive and green future for European citizens.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Conduct field experiments to evaluate the impact of participating in digital skills training programs on labour market outcomes, psychological well-being, and political integration, ensuring that European workers are equipped with the necessary skills to adapt to the labour market transformations driven by AI, digitalisation and automation, and the transition towards a green economy. Advice active labour market policies that provide workers with essential skills for the labour market. Address the gap in rigorous evaluations of digital skills training programs in Europe.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Europe	
Location of the practice	Country	/
	Region	/

	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The TransEuroWorkS project aims to conduct a field experiment that evaluates the impact of participating in digital skills training programs on labour market outcomes, psychological well-being, and political integration.
Detailed information on the practice:	The primary goal of the practice is to support the EU's objective of digitising European economies. It focuses on helping workers adapt to changing labour markets and facilitating job transitions, especially for those facing unemployment. The idea for this practice originated from the need to fill the gap in the evaluation of digital skills training programs in European contexts. Since the implementation of the project, several key outcomes have been achieved. In the first year, the team conducted 12 interviews with experts and key policy providers of digital skills training programs in Catalonia. They also presented their findings to four experts in field experiments and participated in a session at the Catalan Agency of Policy Evaluation (l-Vàlua) to receive feedback on the design. Additionally, the team prepared essential fieldwork materials, including a questionnaire, consent forms, participant payment documentation, contracts compliant with privacy regulations, a pre-analysis plan, and an ethics document currently under revision. They collaborated on a survey experiment and conducted a pre-test, with results documented as a working paper on their website. Furthermore, they engaged with the main service provider in Catalonia, SOC (Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya), to identify collaborative opportunities for providing digital skills training to women in rural areas. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability through three key aspects: 1) **Environmental Sustainability:** it helps adapt labour markets to the green transition and the increasing demand for green jobs and skills. 2) **Political Sustainability:** it promotes cohesive implementation of decarbonization processes by addressing the diverse welfare policy preferences among citizens to understand the political consensus around the welfare state and social protection. 3) **Budgetary Sustainability:** it supports inclusive decarbonization policies that consider environmental justice, ensuring that greater responsibility lies with those industries that most contribute to climate change while simultaneously creating new revenue mechanisms to finance this transition.
Resources needed:	Total cost: € 2 637 258,75; EU contribution: € 2 637 258,75
Results (to be) achieved:	Establish the connection between the three major labour market transitions (green transition, digitalisation and the internationalisation of the workforce) and the internationalisation of the workforce, in order to understand new labour market risks and address them successfully though new protection schemes. Collect new data and information through individual-level surveys (experiments), interviews, and the revision of existing EU legislation and political documents for proving a framework of shifts in employment risks in European economies and new social protection needs that they imply. Propose potential new pathways for policy adjustments that address gaps in existing EU protection schemes and align with the new policy needs of the workforce in transitioned labour markets.

Potential for learning:	This practice is potentially interesting for other regions due to its potential to address the complex challenges provided by digitalisation, automation, and the transition to a green economy. The project examines critical policy areas such as unemployment, retraining, gender equality, and family policies across 27 EU member states and 2 non-EU countries. Its multi-level, comparative, and mixed-methods design combines conventional protection policies with contemporary social investment strategies, allowing for a detailed understanding of social diversity. By focusing on skill transferability and its impact on labour market risk, the project provides valuable insights into public attitudes towards climate policies. The project's findings and methodologies can be used as a model for regions facing similar socio-economic transformations, promoting a more cohesive and inclusive response to the evolving labour market.
Further information:	https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101061198; https://transeuroworks.eu/labour-market/
Keywords	Digitalisation, Green Transition, Immigration, Free Movement, Atypical Work, Flexible Employment, Socio-economic Inequality, Job Transitions, Work-life Balance, Retraining, Subjective Well-being

Local Level Projects (Focus Austria)

1. Sozialroutenplan

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: A Digital Guideline for social problems		
Objective of the practice:	The project aims at several digital tools (open interface, mobile app, web application, etc.) by which people in need of social support and assistance can find information about social service institutions, actual offers and supply.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Low-threshold, easy access to social support services	
Geographical scope of the practice:	(Western) Austria	
Location of the practice	Country	Austria
	Region	Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Salzburg
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The goal of the »Sozialroutenplan« is to have a best practice at the end of the project that opens up and secures access to social support services for as many people as possible.
Detailed information on the practice:	Access to social assistance and support is characterised by several obstacles, which increases the risk of insufficient supply. In the project region (Vorarlberg, Tyrol, and Salzburg) at least 300,000 people are affected by that problem. Further, the target group of potential users is posing a particular challenge because of its heterogeneity and numerous relevant dimensions of diversity. The problem has also a close connection to digitalization: digitalization is as well enforcing exclusion because of a comparable lack of access to digital tools by the target group, as it can be a chance, if properly implemented. Both are further underlined by recent experiences during the Covid-19-pandemic.

	Because of insufficient answers to this challenge so far, a three-county-consortium is formed for this project, consisting of five partners from scientific institutions, three from the IT industry and 14 from social service institutions. It will collaborate in an integrated and participatory process together with potential users and – on the basis of an existing print product – aims at the development of novel digital tools: a digital social route planner ("Sozialroutenplan") for Western Austria. For that, a service design thinking and a service user involvement approach is combined to achieve this solution as close as possible to the demands of those actually affected by it. As results, the project aims at several digital tools (open interface, mobile app, web application, etc.) by which people in need of social support and assistance can find information about social service institutions, actual offers and supply as well as necessary prerequisites and the regulatory framework, and this by the most flexible and low-threshold service possible. In this context, accessibility, usability and non-discrimination are central guiding principles. While focusing development work on digital solutions, an accompanying reflection process will also ensure that other constructive options are not ignored. Overall, a comparable comprehensive product based on such an intensive participatory process was not developed so far and is thus a total novelty.
Resources needed:	€ 472,542
Results (to be) achieved:	At the end of this project, a best-practice-example shall be provided, which allows as many people as possible needing social assistance and support and being eligible for it to also actually receiving it. By that, collaboration in the consortium will also lead to an extensive know-how transfer between and within the partners, widely benefiting all. In particular, the situation of socially disadvantaged people shall be substantially improved. Finally, also insights about the limitations of digitalization shall be gained to overcome these according to the needs of those affected, but also about its potentials to make use of these as much as possible.
Potential for learning:	**Digitization of Social Services**: The project aims to provide a comprehensive digital platform that helps people navigate social services more easily. It includes an app, website, and other digital tools to ensure that vulnerable populations can access crucial information about available resources, such as consultation centers, support services, and legal frameworks. This focus on barrier-free, accessible digital tools makes it easier for people in need. **Inclusivity and Participation**: One of the key strengths of the Sozialroutenplan is its participatory approach. The project involves potential users in the development process to ensure that the final digital tools meet their specific needs. By actively collaborating with the target population, it avoids common pitfalls of top-down approaches in social services. **Collaboration Across Sectors**: The project brings together academic institutions, IT companies, and social service organizations in a collaborative effort. This consortium ensures that expertise from diverse fields, including technology, social work, and academia, is integrated to create effective solutions.
Further information:	https://www.sozialroutenplan.at/
Keywords	Social inequality, social support, service design thinking, service user involvement, digitalization

2. Fair:Play

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Prevention of bullying among apprentices		
Objective of the practice:	Development of an innovation network for the prevention of bullying among apprentices	
Subtopics of the practice:	/	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Austria	
Location of the practice	Country	Austria
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The “Fair:Play” project aims to establish an interdisciplinary and sustainable network for bullying prevention specifically for apprentices.
Detailed information on the practice:	The shortage of apprentices in Austria is a multi-faceted problem; according to the Austrian Economic Chamber, over 14,000 apprenticeship positions cannot be filled as of 2023. This makes it all the more important to create a positive and supportive working environment. However, this is not a given for prospective apprentices. In 2016, the Rat auf Draht apprentice survey found that 7.7% of apprentices had already been affected by bullying. The Ministry of Social Affairs' Apprentice Health Report reports that almost 19% of female apprentices and 11% of male apprentices have been victims of bullying in the digital space at least once in the last few months. Bullying thus refers to a systematic and hostile process that is also defined by the fact that it lasts over a longer period of time. The effects of bullying must be seen as a massive problem that requires attention, as the consequences for those affected are an impairment of performance - often associated with a loss of motivation, mistrust, nervousness, insecurity and social withdrawal. There is often talk of psychological and/or psychosomatic secondary illnesses, which in the worst case can lead to job loss or even occupational disability. Existing programs generally have a number of weaknesses, such as the difficulty of integrating them into everyday working life, the failure to address relevant aspects and the lack of attractiveness of the offers. The "Fair Play" innovation network, which already brings together initial companies and a training centre involved in apprenticeship training with management consultancy, (game) design, digital learning, gender and diversity and knowledge communication in order to prevent bullying, represents a significant leap forward in innovation.
Resources needed:	N/A
Results (to be) achieved:	The Fair:play project aims to create a training platform specifically adapted for apprentices and hybrid counselling services to effectively combat bullying in the workplace. The tools developed in a participatory manner with apprentices strengthen them on a psychological level; taking their experiences and needs into account increases their resilience and contributes to their mental and physical health in the medium term. By recognizing and respecting apprentices in their individual needs and contexts, the Fair Play Innovation Network can develop more targeted and effective strategies for bullying prevention. The goals of the project include the development of gender-specific and intersectional prevention measures, the creation of interactive training opportunities using serious games and the implementation of peer tutoring programs. These approaches are intended not only to raise awareness and understanding of the problem of bullying, but also to provide practical tools for conflict resolution and to strengthen the resilience of apprentices.

Potential for learning:	**Focus on Inclusion and Equity**: By addressing discrimination, bullying, and exclusion in apprentice workplaces, fair:play sets a proactive example for enhancing equity and inclusion. **Educational Approach**: The project provides training and workshops for apprentices. The focus on education and capacity-building means that the effects of the program can be sustained over time, with the potential for adaptation to different contexts **Cross-Sector Collaboration**: By involving educational institutions, businesses and other organisations, fair:play fosters a collaborative approach that ensures the engagement of all stakeholders in creating safer, more inclusive apprenticeship programs. This model of collaboration could inspire similar partnerships in other regions that wish to implement holistic solutions to workplace bullying
Further information:	https://projekte.ffg.at/projekt/5127180 https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/forschung/projekt/U7_PROJEKT_4294971431
Keywords	Mobbing, Apprenticeship, Gamification, Serious Games, Inclusion

3. Innovative Vienna (IWI)

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Innovation, resilient growth: the project for a sustainable economy		
Objective of the practice:	Information and networking opportunities for Viennese companies on the thematic priorities of sustainable technologies, digitalization and health innovations.	
Subtopics of the practice:	/	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Austria	
Location of the practice	Country	Austria
	Region	Vienna
	City	Vienna

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The INNOVATIVE VIENNA program aims to provide information and networking opportunities for Viennese companies on the thematic priorities of sustainable technologies, digitalization and health innovations.
Detailed information on the practice:	With regard to the current challenges posed by the pandemic, climate crisis, shortage of skilled workers and the energy crisis resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the focus is on securing prosperity and employment in Vienna. The IWI project aims to strengthen the innovative strength and resilience of companies. It complements the Vienna Business Agency's funding offer by creating information and networking opportunities. The objectives include promoting the innovative strength of Viennese companies, developing human-centred digital technologies for a sustainable, climate-neutral and resilient economy and inspiring young Viennese people for future professions and entrepreneurship. The IWI Project consists of several work packages: • Sustainable development, climate innovation and circular economy • Human-centred digitalization and automation • Health Innovations • Experience Future (School Workshops) • Cross-sectional topics that are equally relevant to all areas, such as the promotion of university spin-offs and cooperation with the high-tech incubator INiTS

Resources needed:	4.652.173,54 EUR (EFRE 1.860.869,42 EUR)
Results (to be) achieved:	Objectives: - Strengthen the innovative power of Viennese companies - Promote the development of human-centred digital technologies and innovative solutions for promote climate change and the circular economy - Support cooperation in the transformation to a human-centred, climate-neutral, resilient and circular economy - Inspire young Viennese people for future professions and entrepreneurship
Potential for learning:	**Holistic Urban Innovation** Vienna integrates technology with environmental sustainability and social well-being. This means that the city isn't just focused on one aspect but is addressing urban challenges in a comprehensive way. Other regions can learn from how the city brings together various sectors—transport, housing, energy, and digital infrastructure—into one cohesive innovation strategy.
Further information:	https://wirtschaftsagentur.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wirtschaftsagentur-at/Downloads/Projektbeschreibung_IWI_2023.pdf https://eu.wien.gv.at/w/iwi
Keywords	Networking, Vienna, Innovation, Sustainability, Technology

4. Digital Pioneers

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Digital skills for young women		
Objective of the practice:	With a share of around 16 percent, young women are still significantly underrepresented in ICT professions. The project aims to increase the percentage of women working in ICT professions.	
Subtopics of the practice:	/	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Austria	
Location of the practice	Country	Austria
	Region	Vorarlberg, Upper Austria, Tyrol
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	Digital Pioneers enables young women to get to know digital and technical professions. The aim is to utilise the untapped potential of young female talent for the digital transformation and at the same time offer young women career prospects in industries of the future.
Detailed information on the practice:	The program was initiated by the Industry 4.0 Austria platform together with the Federal Chamber of Labor and the Digital Campus Vorarlberg 2020 and was first carried out in 2021 as an AK DigiFonds-funded pilot project. During the ten-week basic training course, participants learn the basics of programming, innovation, creativity and project management. They work together to solve design sprints and interactive challenges or develop new products. Personal development and training in presentation and social skills complete the training. This is followed by an eight-month practical phase in a company, where they put their knowledge into practice and get to know technological professions at the same time.

	During the entire basic training and practical phase, the participants are accompanied and coached by mentors in order to provide the best possible support for their career entry.
Resources needed:	N/A
Results achieved:	Ongoing program providing training programs for young women interested in technological jobs.
Potential for learning:	**Cross-Sector Collaboration**: By involving educational institutions, businesses and other organisations Digital Pioneers fosters a collaborative approach that ensures the engagement of all stakeholders. This model of collaboration could inspire similar partnerships in other regions that wish to implement holistic solutions to enable young women to get to know ICT professions.
Further information:	https://plattformindustrie40.at/digital-pioneers/
Keywords	Young women in ICT professions, personal development, skills and career training

5. Digital Work during Times of Crisis. For a Gender- and Diversity-Friendly Working - from-Home Culture

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Gender- and diversity-friendly home office culture		
Objective of the practice:	The project aims to give recommendations for companies for a gender- and diversity-friendly “new” digital work work culture.	
Subtopics of the practice:	/	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Austria	
Location of the practice	Country	*Austria*
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The pandemic accelerated the need for digitalization and working-from-home became THE solution. Especially women were exposed to multiple burdens and could be disadvantaged by working from home in the long term.
Detailed information on the practice:	The project was carried out with the involvement of employees and employers and was supported by respective works councils (if available). In cooperation with organisations, different research methods were applied. In the first part of the project a questionnaire was created, data was collected and analysed. In the second step, focus groups were organised and interviews were conducted to gain qualitative insights. After the analysis of the first two steps, the results were presented to the companies. Within the specially designed Idea Lab and based on previous steps of needs-assessment and problem-definition, we generated ideas and developed prototypes for

	solutions in co-creation with the employees and works councils of the participating companies.
Resources needed:	N/A
Results achieved:	As outputs of the research guidelines and recommendations for a gender and diversity friendly "new" digital work culture are provided.
Potential for learning:	The issues tackled by this project—gender, diversity, remote work, and crisis management—are not unique to any one region. The challenges and solutions are globally relevant and can be adapted to different cultural, economic, and social contexts. Regions that are working to improve digital work environments and social equity in the workforce could benefit from the strategies employed in this project.
Further information:	https://www.oegut.at/en/projects/gender/gender-diversitaetsfreundliche-homeoffice-kuktur.php https://www.oegut.at/downloads/pdf/Bericht-Digitales-Arbeiten-AK.pdf?m=1678973904&
Keywords	Home office, diversity, work culture

Alpine Space Programme

1. AlpSatellites

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Attracting and Integrating Remote Workers; Attraction and Integration of Young People, Workers and Digital Nomads into Remote Areas		
Objective of the practice:	Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities	
Subtopics of the practice:	Prepare a shift to digital workplaces and telecommuting in the Alps. Explore remote working and telecommuting as an opportunity to mitigate negative demographic trends by attracting new residents and supporting them in settling down.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Regions	
Location of the practice	Country	Italy, France, Austria
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The Interreg AlpSatellites project aims to study the current situation in order to promote hybrid work models and establish satellite offices in remote Alpine and rural areas, with the goal of revitalising these regions by attracting professionals, seasonal workers, and digital nomads.

Detailed information on the practice:	The primary objective of this project is to carefully examine the opportunities and challenges associated with remote working, with a particular focus on reviving mountainous areas. The ultimate goal is to attract a diverse demographic into these regions, including young professionals, seasonal workers, and digital nomads. Since its implementation key outcomes include: (i) market analysis with a specific focus on the three different countries and the general trends; (ii) insights into the diverse strategies used by each country to navigate the complexities of the contemporary work environment; (iii) solutions designed by each country based on the specific objectives and outcomes of the co-design workshop; (iv) policy recommendations that consolidate all the lessons learned into a unified reflection on political and operational procedures to be adopted for remote working approaches in Alpine contexts. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by leveraging remote working and coworking initiatives to promote tourism and preserve cultural heritage. By integrating these strategies, policymakers can enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of remote areas as desirable places to live, work, and visit.
Resources needed:	Total eligible costs: 674.701€; ERDF grants: 506.025€
Results achieved:	Conducted quantitative research to measure and specify market trends and size, while also describing the demand segment through qualitative insights, specifically identifying who the remote workers in the Alpine area are. The quantitative analysis, conducted on a sample of 796 respondents from Italy (394), France (321), Austria (49), and 14 from other countries, with 18 not reporting their nationality, allowed to understand attitudes and evaluations towards remote work and coworking spaces.
Potential for learning:	This practice is particularly interesting for other regions because it focuses on adapting solutions to the specific needs of each area. The project's expansion strategy involves modifying its framework to fit different socio-cultural, environmental, and economic contexts while maintaining a focus on the core objective of promoting coworking spaces and remote working. By replicating the project in diverse regions, stakeholders can evaluate its scalability and effectiveness across various landscapes and populations. This adaptability not only broadens the project's reach but also provides valuable insights into its potential impact.
Further information:	https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/alpsatellites/
Keywords	Rural and Peripheral Development

2. AlpSib

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Ageing Populations and NEETs Needs (young people not in education, employment or training), Social Innovation, Social Economy Development, Social Impact Investments, Social Impact Bonds, Social Impact Investing Hub		
Objective of the practice:	Increase capacities for the delivery of services of general interest in changing society.	
Subtopics of the practice:	Address NEET's and senior's needs by introducing innovative solutions, such as social impact investments, social impact bonds and a Social Impact Investing Hub for knowledge sharing, policy coordination.	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Regions	
Location of the practice	Country	
	Region	/

	City	/
Good practice detailed information		
Short summary of the practice:	The aim of the AlpSib project is to accelerate new investment models in the Alpine Space, called Social Impact Investments and Social Impact Bonds, through the development of policies in the field.	
Detailed information on the practice:	The primary goal of the practice is to address growing societal challenges through social innovation, establishing a new social economy that connects the public, private, and third sectors. The AlpSib project specifically focuses on the needs of NEETs and seniors by introducing innovative solutions such as social impact investments, social impact bonds, and a Social Impact Investing Hub for knowledge sharing and policy coordination. The idea for this practice originated from the challenges faced by the Alpine Space, including an ageing population, youth unemployment rates, and increasing strains on budgets. These issues necessitate innovation within the social sector to deliver better health and social outcomes. However, achieving these outcomes cannot rely solely on public money and traditional payment mechanisms, such as "fee for services." Instead, the mobilisation of private capital to finance effective interventions emerged as a forward-looking approach, and spread all over Europe. Success in this practice is measured by these programme output indicators: number of supported transnational cooperation structures increasing capacities for the delivery of services of general interest in a changing society; number of developed implementation elements increasing capacities for the delivery of services of general interest in a changing society. The AlpSib practice contributes to long-term sustainability by addressing sustainability in all three dimensions. At the social level, it establishes a common policy framework and model for social solutions that prove to generate public savings on the economic side. On the environmental side, it enhances the quality of life.	
Resources needed:	Total eligible costs: 2.152.988€; ERDF grants: 1.830.039€	
Results achieved:	Results achieved include the designing of new solutions for NEETs and seniors through transnational co-creative labs, as well as the development of a joint approach to SII policies through advisory boards of policy makers, which will facilitate the implementation of such solutions. The main outputs of the project are the AlpSib Forum, the AlpSib web platform, and the SII policies common methodology.	
Potential for learning:	The AlpSib practice is potentially interesting for other regions to learn from because the AlpSib Forum, the AlpSib web platform, and SII policies common methodology are based on a bottom-up approach aimed at co-creating and disseminating innovative partnerships and solutions at a transnational level. Beyond partners and observers, other stakeholders will have the chance to participate in the transnational Co-Labs, and several events are planned to spread project outputs in the Alpine Space Area and outside. Additionally, the AlpSib platform offers open-access tools to implement SII in different contexts.	
Further information:	https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/alpsib/	
Keywords	Health and Social Services	

3. BIFOCalps

Good practice general information

TOPIC: Sustainable, Smart and Competitive Development of the Manufacturing Value Chain; Best Practices, Technologies and Competences in Value Chains; Strategic Policy Actions		
Objective of the practice:	Improve the framework conditions for innovation in the Alpine space	
Subtopics of the practice:	Develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem, increase the economic potential of strategic sectors	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Regions	
Location of the practice	Country	France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The BIFOCAlps project aims to enhance competitiveness in the Alpine Space manufacturing sector by fostering collaboration among innovation actors, focusing on sustainable development and Industry 4.0 and Factory of the Future technologies.
Detailed information on the practice:	BIFOCAlps main objective is to boost collaboration and synergies among main actors of the Alpine Space innovation system for a sustainable, smart and competitive development of the manufacturing value chain towards the Factory of the Future (FoF). Since its implementation, the BIFOCAlps project has achieved several key outcomes. It successfully increased collaboration and synergies among the main actors in the Alpine region's innovation system, driving innovation for sustainable and competitive development in the manufacturing value chain towards the Factory of the Future. The project developed a comprehensive map of the manufacturing sector at a transnational level, highlighting existing and potential best practices, technologies, and competencies throughout the value chain. Additionally, BIFOCAlps established guidelines for strategic actions aimed at influencing policy agendas, based on an impact indicator system, to monitor and allow the evaluation of performance in line with harmonisation of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). This practice is unique and innovative due to its "bifocal" view, which simultaneously considers both the upstream and downstream segments of the value chain. By integrating the transversal competencies of business, research, and policy actors at a transnational level, the project facilitates the gathering of best-case scenarios across the Alpine Space (AS). This enables the integration and implementation of these scenarios into a validated methodology that builds on prior results. Moreover, the practice is designed to be transferable at cross-national and cross-sectoral level aiming to connect the value chain and boost competitiveness of the whole AS in the long term.
Resources needed:	Total eligible costs: 1.619.240€; ERDF grants: 1.376.363€
Results achieved:	Project's main results are: (1) enhancing long-term sustainability of FoF practices and technologies and creating added value for competitiveness of manufacturing sector, thanks to a validated methodology that integrates good practices investigated at each level of the value chain and in each country involved in the Alpine Space; (2) establishing a standardised impact indicators system that allows to evaluate performance of FoF adoption and innovation patterns in line with smart specialisation strategies.
Potential for learning:	The issues addressed by this project are not limited to the Alpine region. Globalisation is causing competitiveness challenges for many small and medium-sized enterprises worldwide, and many are facing the rise of Industry 4.0/5.0 and Factory of the Future technologies. The outcomes of this project could be valuable for other regions, which may adapt and apply some of its practices.
Further information:	https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/bifocalps/

Keywords	Circular Economy, Evaluation Systems and Results, ICT and Digital Society, Improving Transport Connections, Innovation Capacity and Awareness-Raising, Knowledge and Technology Transfer

4. CIRCULAR4.0

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Circular Economy Innovation, SMEs Digitalisation, Alpine Circular Economy Transition, Innovative Circular Economy Business Models		
Objective of the practice:	Improve the framework conditions for innovation in the Alpine space	
Subtopics of the practice:	SMEs eco-design and innovative business models, value-chain and clusters according to Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) and the EUSALP strategic sectors; policy makers (integrate circular economy into innovation policies for SMEs and 2020+ Programme).	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Regions	
Location of the practice	Country	France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Austria
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	The main objective of the CIRCULAR4.0 project is to strengthen digitalisation processes by SMEs to foster innovation processes and accelerate the transition to the circular economy in Alpine Space.
Detailed information on the practice:	The primary goal of the CIRCULAR4.0 practice is to integrate the EU Circular Economy Action Plan with specific actions for the Alpine Space, focusing on SMEs by promoting eco-design and innovative business models. It aims to strengthen value chains and clusters in line with S3 and the EUSALP strategic sectors, while supporting policymakers in integrating circular economy principles into innovation policies and future programs for SMEs. The idea for this practice originated from the recognition that new technologies can be utilised for the creation of innovative circular economy business models aimed at contributing to a more sustainable future. The project originated from the need to answer the question of how such a transformation could be effectively carried out. Since the project's implementation, it has successfully brought together representatives from the innovation ecosystem, including policymakers, stakeholders, academia, research institutions, intermediary organisations, entrepreneurs, and citizens. These groups have collaborated to focus on the digitalization of SMEs. As a result, the project has contributed to making the Alpine area a cleaner and greener environment, improving innovation, and encouraging the development of new business opportunities. The practice contributes to long-term sustainability by using digital technologies to accelerate the transition of SMEs to the circular economy in the Alpine Space. Through pilot actions, each CIRCULAR4.0 partner developed tools that help SMEs integrate circular practices. By supporting a selected group of SMEs, the project identified the most successful cases, and assessed their approach to circular economy and to digital technologies.
Resources needed:	Total eligible costs: 2.560.693€; ERDF grants: 2.176.589€

Results achieved:	• A modular training course as a tool for SMEs to be delivered by the operators, for facilitating the circular transformation by deployment of digital technologies; • An easy toolkit to assess your company and see how circular your SME is. • All partners have realised a local pilot action based on maturity assessment check and the identification of the company innovation needs.
Potential for learning:	The practice and results from this project are potentially valuable for other regions to learn from, as in this era of globalisation, it is essential to digitalize the processes of small and medium enterprises to maintain market competitiveness. The transition to a circular economy is also a challenge many businesses must address. Furthermore, the project developed a modular training course as a tool that can be used by SMEs in any region, delivered by operators (https://circular40.talentlms.com/). CAT4.0 is specifically designed to guide and support the circular transformation through the deployment of digital technologies.
Further information:	https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/circular4-0/, https://circular40.eu/about/
Keywords	Circular Economy, ICT, Digital Society

5. BE-READI ALPS

Good practice general information		
TOPIC: Alpine Space Innovative and Digital Setting, Alpine Living Labs, Supporting Traditional SMEs, Crowdfunding Funding Options		
Objective of the practice:	Enhance the innovative and digital fabric of the Alpine region	
Subtopics of the practice:	Design and test initiatives aimed at developing an Alpine living lab that stimulates traditional SMEs to launch a "second life" through the creation of value chains extended at the interregional level	
Geographical scope of the practice:	Alpine Regions	
Location of the practice	Country	Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Slovenia
	Region	/
	City	/

Good practice detailed information	
Short summary of the practice:	BE-READI ALPS enhances the innovative and digital setting of the Alpine space by designing and testing initiatives to develop an Alpine living lab that stimulates traditional SMEs to discover innovative development paths.

Detailed information on the practice:	The project idea arises from a concrete need observed in many regions: the Alpine innovation ecosystem indeed hosts numerous traditional SMEs that tend to be characterised by a mindset often resistant to change. In addition to these, there are many start-ups with high innovation potential but often lacking experience and limited access to established channels. Lastly, there are various public and private actors involved in assisting businesses with a support service offering that is often fragmented, redundant, subject to territorial restrictions, and limited to specific fields. BE-READI ALPS aims to address these imbalances by first strengthening the network of business support organisations and simultaneously mobilising key stakeholders to redefine a common agenda to support the transnational development of the Alpine economic ecosystem. Since its implementation, the project's outcomes include: (i) the BE-READI Points Toolkit, that enabled every Point to support companies using a comprehensive, modern, and transnational approach, effectively overcoming the fragmentation of the current Alpine Space innovation ecosystem; (ii) the establishment of the BE-READI Network, a collaborative framework at the regional level, comprising 25 host organisations in the Alpine Space that are dedicated to sustaining mature companies willing to develop second-life projects; (iii) a Strategic Roadmap for Alpine Space Competitiveness, containing a set of proposals for macroregional implementation based on discussions with decision makers and stakeholders during the BE-READI Open Tables.
Resources needed:	Total eligible costs:1.963.004€; ERDF grants: 1.565.697€
Results achieved:	Development of new audit tools to assess the financial and digital situation of businesses, organisation of numerous interactive networking events, including 11 "Ideas Factory," 3 transnational "Digithons," and an international event aimed at investors, involvement of approximately 500 companies in pilot actions, promotion of around 50 new projects initiated by local businesses with the support of BE-READI ALPS, release of an accreditation methodology to better qualify business support organisations and enhance their transnational cooperation, creation of a mentoring service package for businesses, development of a White Paper suggesting strategic and concrete actions to improve the innovative development of enterprises.
Potential for learning:	Many other regions may be interested in the results of this project. In fact, many countries may find themselves in the same situation for which the project practices were proposed, as they have traditional SMEs with a resistant mindset to change, as well as various startups with significant innovation potential.
Further information:	https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/be-readi-alps/, https://www.venetoinnovazione.it/be-readi-alps/, https://www.aws.at/be-readi-alps/
Keywords	Innovation Capacity and Awareness-Raising, Institutional Cooperation and Cooperation Networks, Knowledge and Technology Transfer, New Products and Services, SME and Entrepreneurship

2.4 **Germany**

Activity 1.1 Mapping and analysis of existing best practices

Objective: The goal is to identify and evaluate best practices that align with the APOLLO project's objectives and the implementation of territorial welfare policies. The analysis also seeks to assess the impact of digital solutions in these practices.

Regional examples from the State of Baden-Württemberg:

1. Project 'Healthy and digital in rural areas': information and training services specifically adapted to rural areas were developed for older people. This enabled concepts to be developed and local support structures to be strengthened in the four rural model regions. For rural areas in particular, digital services offer good opportunities especially for older people to compensate for longer distances and a lack of mobility and thus make everyday life easier. By getting to know various educational media offers, older people were strengthened in their social participation.

2. Care innovation program: Innovative care and supply models that act as a model function for different care settings. The aim is to establish and expand day, night and short-term care places - especially in rural areas - and to improve the networking of local care services. People in need of care in Baden-Württemberg should be able to lead a self-determined life in their own homes for as long as possible. Short-term care helps to relieve and stabilize care situations at home. Digitization can be part of the projects.

3. Digitization strategy BW: The state government is actively shaping the digital transformation in Baden-Württemberg to strengthen the region as a leading hub of digital change. In doing so, it is important to understand digitalization as an evolving process and continuously adapt one's initiatives. The focus of the digitalization strategy is on delivering tangible benefits for the people of the region. Digitalization is meant to serve them. To achieve this, the strategy sets out clear goals. All projects and initiatives are aimed at securing prosperity, sustainability, social cohesion, and digital sovereignty in Baden-Württemberg.

4. Quartiersimplus: With the “Quartiersimpulse” funding program, the state has been supporting municipalities, cities and districts in the development of age- and generation-friendly neighbourhoods for more than six years and with 10.5 million euros to date. 143 neighborhood projects in the state have already benefited from the funding. The program promotes cooperation between municipalities and civil society on an equal footing and thus sets an example for the sustainable development and strengthening of intergenerational and vibrant neighbourhoodsin Baden-Württemberg.

5. Health in all policies: Anchoring health in all policy areas is a strategy pursued by the WHO, which was introduced under the term Health in All Policies (HiAP) and pursues cross-departmental and cross-policy cooperation in the sense of

health as a task for society as a whole. The approach has only been increasingly pursued in Germany and in Baden-Württemberg in recent years, particularly at municipal level and with the possibilities offered by the Prevention Act.

6. Coordination Office for Equal Health Opportunities Baden-Württemberg: The Coordination Office for Equal Health Opportunities in Baden-Württemberg aims to help promote the health of people in difficult social circumstances and vulnerable target groups. It is part of the nationwide Cooperation Network for Equal Health Opportunities and acts as a competence and networking center at the federal state level for all actors involved in social situation-related health promotion and prevention. It currently focuses on the following topics: growing up healthy, growing older healthily and municipal promotion of physical activity

7. Land of children/ Kinderland: With the guiding political principle of Kinderland, Baden-Württemberg has set itself the goal of creating a child-friendly living environment for all children in the state in which they can develop in the best possible way - from the very beginning and regardless of their social background. Children have a right to special protection, to the best possible individual support and to the development of their personality as well as to age-appropriate participation - as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is why the needs of children and their families should be considered and taken into account in all political measures taken by the state government. Kinderland therefore stands for a cross-departmental policy approach: all policy areas - from the core areas of family and child policy such as child and youth protection, family support or school policy to more distant areas such as housing construction, healthy environmental conditions and road safety - can and should contribute within their area of responsibility to making Baden-Württemberg a land of children. People in the state can contribute at all levels to further improving the situation of children and families in Baden-Württemberg.

8. The LebensPhasenHaus combines technical and social innovations. This is where the use of new services, digital/technical assistance systems and practical everyday helpers is tested and brought to life. Anyone who is interested can make their own impression of the wide range of possible applications. The LebensPhasenHaus connects locally and internationally. It is run by the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Social and Technological Innovation at

the University of Tübingen – and is supported by strong partners from business and politics, science and society. This is because innovations arise in systems and in the trusting cooperation between many different contributors. In addition to the University of Tübingen and its University Hospital, the LebensPhasenHaus has been strongly supported from the outset by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration Baden-Württemberg, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing Baden Württemberg, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Reutlingen I Tübingen I Zollernalb, SchwörerHaus, Stadtwerke Tübingen (swt), Somfy, Ridi, the Association for Garden, Landscape and Sports Field Construction Baden-Württemberg and other companies. In addition, the Seniors District Council Tübingen is actively involved in the running of the LPH together with its Senior Technology Advisors. Everyone is welcome. In 2016, the LebensPhasenHaus was awarded the prestigious German Senior Citizens' Award by the Robert Bosch Foundation for its unique concept and its strong civic involvement. The House is also internationally known, for example within the framework of Coral (Community of Regions for Assisted Living) or the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), and as part of an award that the state of Baden Württemberg received from the European Commission: as a so-called "EU Reference Site" of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA). https://lebensphasenhaus.de/en/

9. PflegeDigital@BW: Baden-Württemberg State Competence Center for Digitalization in Care (see separate Template): Innovations are made by and for people – so we should develop and transfer them into society together. The State Competence Centre for Care & Digitalisation (PflegeDigital@BW) provides the framework for this. Initiated by and in cooperation with the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration, the PflegeDigital@BW team develops, analyses and communicates digitally supported solutions for long-term care together with partners from practice, science, society, business and politics. PflegeDigital@BW raises awareness and connects people and organisations from different sectors and professions. The aim of the project is to inspire people in need of care and support, caregivers and those involved in civil society about the opportunities offered by digitalisation, while also preparing them for the challenges. Together with the many different stakeholders in long-term care, concepts for training, further

education and continuing professional development will be developed in the future, workshops with managers and employees will be organised, and small and large companies will be supported in their digitisation, innovation and transformation processes. https://www.pflegedigital-bw.de/en/

10. lea – SME Award for Social Responsibility: The two welfare organisations Caritas (Catholic Church) and Diakonie (Protestant Church) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism of the State of Baden-Württemberg present the 'SME Award for Social Responsibility in Baden-Württemberg' to companies in the state every year. 99 per cent of all companies in Baden-Württemberg are medium-sized – and many of them are naturally committed to their social responsibility for the region. This is precisely what Caritas, Diakonie and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism in Baden-Württemberg have been thanking for with the 'Lea' award since 2000. Because charitable commitment holds our society together and is the driving force behind a Baden-Württemberg worth living in tomorrow. At the same time, the prize is intended to motivate other companies to get involved in social projects and territorial welfare or to continue their existing involvement. Since 2000, a total of 3,463 projects have been honoured and 198 companies nominated. https://www.lea-mittelstandspreis.de/

National Examples Germany

1. Pulsnetz MuTIG: The mobile and virtual future centre pulsnetz MuTiG offers a wide range of services related to the topic of digitalisation in health and social services. Whether you are looking for advice, training or information and exchange, you will find the right offer for you and your institution here – in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia. Pulsnetz MuTIG is a continuation of the pulsnetz.de gesund arbeiten project, which was carried out by the Evangelische Diakonie, the AOK (the largest health insurance company in the state of Baden-Württemberg) and the Berufsgenossenschaft für Gesundheitsdienst und Wohlfahrtspflege BGW. The BGW is the statutory accident insurance provider for people who work in the health and social services sectors. The organisation supports member institutions with needs-based services and projects on the road to comprehensive occupational health and safety. Innovative and agile

approaches are used to communicate forward-looking content. https://mutig.pulsnetz.de/ueber-uns/

2. BGW-Gesundheitspreis: The BGW Health Award for Care of the Elderly is presented as part of the German Care Prize in the category 'Good Workplace'. Who is setting a good example and is making a special commitment to health in the workplace? The BGW honours dedicated care facilities. The professional association BGW is the statutory accident insurance for people who work in occupations in the health and social services sectors. The BGW Health Award honours well-thought-out groundwork and innovative concepts. It is not necessary for everything to have been implemented – points were also awarded for good approaches. However, systematic protection of safety and health at work was a prerequisite.

Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung/Work-based and Occupational Health Promotion: In the Federal Republic of Germany, there are many inter-company stakeholders who have made it their mission to support workplace health promotion. The 'Prevention and Health Promotion in the Workplace' network was founded for this purpose. The network is jointly managed by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG). In addition to the BMAS and BMG, the members include the central associations of the health insurance funds and the accident insurance providers, the federal and state occupational safety authorities, the associations of the social partners, the German Pension Insurance Association, the associations of company and works doctors and safety engineers, as well as selected professional associations, e.g. from the field of further education, and foundations. The network sees itself as a platform for the exchange of information and for promoting the implementation of health-promoting activities in companies.

- The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA): The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin, BAuA) is a federal departmental research institution dedicated to safety and health at work and human-centred work design. At its three sites in Dortmund, Berlin, and Dresden, nearly 750 staff work at the intersection between science, policymaking, and practice. They

conduct research and development projects, provide policy advice, perform statutory and official functions, and transfer knowledge into workplace practice. www.baua.de

- Bundesvereinigung Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung (BVPG): The Federal Association for Prevention and Health Promotion (BVPG) was founded in 1954 and is a non-profit, politically and religiously independent umbrella organisation. 136 organisations are currently members of the BVPG, including, in particular, federal health organisations that focus on 'prevention and health promotion' (e.g. the German Medical Association, the central associations of health insurance companies and associations of medical and auxiliary professions, but also educational institutions and academies).
  https://bvpraevention.de/cms/index.asp?inst=newbv&snr=12368

- Deutsches Netzwerk Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung (DNBGF): The German Network for Workplace Health Promotion (DNBGF) is a non-commercial and interdisciplinary network open to all institutions, organisations and individuals interested in workplace health promotion and prevention. The network is committed to the dissemination of good practice and the improvement of cooperation between practice, science and politics in this field. Membership is free of charge.

- Initiative Gesundheit und Arbeit (IGA): In the Initiative for Health and Work (iga), four associations of the statutory accident and health insurance pursue a common goal: to promote health in the workplace. iga combines knowledge and experience in prevention and in workplace health promotion, further develops successful approaches and promotes cooperation and the exchange of prevention experts. The iga supports knowledge transfer and counselling practice by means of quality-assured and application-oriented projects, events and publications. In doing so, the iga aims to get more companies and employees involved in prevention and health promotion. The three core questions of the iga are: How should work be organised so that employees stay healthy? How can prevention be made even more effective? And how can prevention and health promotion be better implemented in companies?

- The Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA): The Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA) is an initiative by the German government, the federal states ("Länder") and the accident insurance institutions. The alliance aims to modernise the German occupational health and safety system and to create incentives for companies to strengthen workplace health and safety. https://www.gda-portal.de/EN/Home/Home_node

European level

- European Network Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP)

3 On-desk and on-site needs analysis

3.1 Introduction

Within the APOLLO project, one of the most critical activities of Work Package 1 is the **needs analysis conducted through surveys and focus groups**. This activity represents the empirical heart of the operational framework, as it translates the abstract idea of territorial corporate welfare into the lived realities of workers, SMEs, and communities across the Alpine Space. By combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, the needs analysis ensures that the project's strategies and pilot actions are firmly grounded in evidence rather than assumptions.

The activity is designed to reach a significant number of stakeholders. More than **200 workers** and **40 SMEs** across the four partner countries—Italy, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia—are directly involved in filling out structured questionnaires. The surveys gather data on a wide range of issues, such as digital skills, access to welfare services, challenges of remote work, work-life balance, and the capacity of SMEs to support their employees. The questionnaires not only measure the current state of affairs but also identify gaps, expectations, and areas where innovation is most urgently needed. This quantitative dimension of the

research provides a solid statistical foundation for understanding trends and patterns across the Alpine regions.

In parallel, each partner country organizes at least one **focus group**, bringing together representatives of workers, employers, public administrations, and other stakeholders. The focus groups provide a qualitative depth to the analysis, allowing participants to share their experiences, voice concerns, and propose solutions. Unlike surveys, which are limited to predefined questions, focus groups create a space for dialogue, reflection, and co-creation of ideas. This makes them particularly valuable in capturing context-specific challenges—such as digital divides in rural areas or difficulties SMEs face in collaborating with public administrations—that might otherwise remain hidden. Importantly, all project partners are actively involved in these focus groups, ensuring cross-national learning and the building of trust among stakeholders.

The **Faculty of Organisation Studies in Novo mesto (FOS)**, as the leader of Work Package 1, plays a central role in analyzing the data. After the collection phase, FOS conducts the **quantitative analysis of the questionnaires**, ensuring methodological rigor and comparability across countries. By centralizing this task, the project guarantees a consistent analytical approach while still respecting national differences. The results are then combined with the insights from focus groups, where each partner contributes to interpreting findings and highlighting country-specific dynamics. This collaborative process of analysis ensures that the outcomes are both scientifically reliable and practically meaningful.

The objectives of this activity are multifold. First, it aims to **identify the real needs of workers and SMEs** in Alpine regions in relation to welfare and digitalization. Without a clear understanding of these needs, any intervention risks being ineffective or unsustainable. Second, the activity seeks to **strengthen stakeholder engagement**. By involving workers, employers, and institutions directly in the data collection process, the project fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the solutions that will later be tested in pilot actions. Third, the needs analysis serves to **inform the design of the pilot actions** in Work Package 2. The results of the surveys and focus groups provide direct input into the selection of themes, tools, and approaches to be tested in different countries. Finally, the activity contributes to the **policy dimension** of the project by

generating evidence that can support recommendations at local, regional, and transnational levels.

In conclusion, the needs analysis through surveys and focus groups is not simply a preparatory step but a defining feature of the APOLLO methodology. It ensures that the project is rooted in the realities of those it seeks to serve—workers balancing professional and personal demands, SMEs struggling with limited resources, and communities facing demographic and digital challenges. By combining rigorous quantitative analysis with participatory qualitative dialogue, the activity creates a comprehensive picture of welfare needs in Alpine regions. This evidence base becomes the cornerstone upon which the pilots, toolkits, and policy recommendations of APOLLO are built, guaranteeing that innovation is both relevant and impactful.

Focus group questions

- What welfare policies or programs does your organization currently have in place to support work-life balance and physical/mental health of your employees?
- What specific challenges do your employees face in maintaining work-life balance in the context of digitalization?
- What digital tools or platforms have you implemented to support work-lif balance and the physical and mental well-being of your employees?
- Do you think that your organisation adequately follows the use of modern digital tools that make it easier for citizens to access services?
- In your opinion, how could the accessibility of your services be improved with the help of modern digital tools?
- How can PAs and SMEs collaborate to enhance welfare services related to physical/mental well-being and work-life balance?
- What trends and innovations in the field of digital services for citizens do you foresee in the future?
- What emerging trends or innovations do you foresee impacting work-life balance and the physical/mental health of employees in your organization in the coming years?
- What is your ideal vision for work-life balance and health support within your organization and the wider community?

- What is your ideal vision for the use of digital technology in your organisation to provide effective services to citizens and to help them using modern digital content?

3.2 Italy

SWOT Analysis 1: Focus on Methodology (the focus group itself)

INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
Strengths (internal positive factors)	**Opportunities (external positive factors)**
• **Diverse and multi-stakeholder representation:** participants included representatives from public institutions, private companies, trade unions, and social organizations, ensuring a comprehensive discussion. • **Open and transparent dialogue:** participants actively shared insights, creating a constructive exchange of ideas. • **Inclusion of practical examples:** real-world cases and best practices helped ground the discussion in tangible, actionable insights. • **Collaborative and solution-oriented approach:** rather than focusing only on problems, the session encouraged participants to suggest improvements and explore potential collaborations.	• **Potential for ongoing collaboration:** the event established connections that could lead to further discussions and joint initiatives beyond the meeting. • **Expanding the format:** future focus groups could include additional formats such as surveys, one-on-one interviews, or workshops to complement the findings. • **Enhanced public awareness and training:** the methodology could be used to inform and train local organizations on best practices in digitalization and welfare. • **Scalability of the model:** the structured approach can be replicated in other territories or project phases to assess evolving needs and track progress.
Weaknesses (internal negative factors)	**Threats (external negative factors)**
• **Limited time for deep dives:** while the structure ensured broad coverage of topics, some discussions remained surface-level due to time constraints. • **Uneven representation:** some key stakeholder groups, such as small business owners or employees directly	• **Limited follow-up and implementation risks:** without proper follow-up actions, valuable insights may remain theoretical and not translate into policy or practice. • **Stakeholder fatigue:** if similar discussions occur frequently

affected by digitalization and welfare policies, were underrepresented.	without visible impact, participants may become disengaged. • **Potential external constraints:** economic and political changes at the municipal, regional, or EU level could affect the feasibility of implementing certain ideas.

SWOT Analysis 2: Focus on Content (key themes & findings from the discussion)

INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
Strengths (internal positive factors)	**Opportunities (external positive factors)**
• **Identification of key workplace challenges:** participants highlighted critical issues related to work-life balance, digitalization, and corporate welfare, ensuring a relevant and insightful discussion. • **Recognition of best practices:** examples such as flexible working arrangements, corporate social workers, and digital training programs showcased effective strategies. • **Consensus on the importance of digitalization:** despite challenges, there was widespread agreement that digital transformation is essential for improving welfare and workplace efficiency. • **Awareness of work-life balance issues:** the group identified risks such as burnout, excessive connectivity, and the need for clear boundaries in remote work policies. • **Focus on collaboration between public & private sectors:** the discussion highlighted opportunities for PAs and SMEs to co-develop	• **Expansion of digital training and support:** more structured training programs could help employees and managers adapt to digitalization and improve work-life balance. • **Funding and policy support:** EU and national/regional programs like PNRR and We.Ca.Re. offer financial and strategic backing for corporate welfare and digital transformation initiatives. • **Adoption of AI and digital platforms:** participants acknowledged the potential of AI to improve efficiency in workplace communication and service delivery. **Public-Private synergies:** the collaboration between public institutions and companies can lead to innovative welfare solutions that benefit broader communities.

welfare policies that benefit both employees and organizations.	
Weaknesses (internal negative factors)	**Threats (external negative factors)**
• **Disparities in digital maturity:** while some organizations have advanced digital infrastructures, others still struggle with outdated systems and resistance to change. • **Lack of uniform smart working policies:** some entities provide flexible work arrangements, while others impose strict limitations, leading to inconsistencies in employee experience. • **Unclear implementation strategies:** while challenges were well-identified, specific actionable solutions and next steps were not always discussed in depth. • **Limited employee representation:** while the focus group included institutional and managerial voices, the perspectives of frontline workers were not as strongly represented.	• **Policy and bureaucratic challenges:** the implementation of digital and welfare policies may be slowed down by regulatory constraints and administrative delays. • **Unequal access to digital tools:** not all employees or organizations have the same level of digital access, creating potential inequalities. • **Economic uncertainty:** financial instability at the municipal or business level could limit the ability to invest in new welfare and digital initiatives.

Questionnaire's Analyse

At the very beginning, a descriptive data analysis will be conducted regarding the statements that the respondents answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree).

The following section will present data related to the sample from Italy. The data collected from this sample will be presented in two tables: the first table will contain data from the sample n = 265, and the second table will contain data from the sample n = 24.

Table 1. Descriptive data - Italia (n=265)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My company provides sufficient support for employees to promote work-life balance.	265	1.00	5.00	3.4075	1.06242
The digital applications used by our company effectively help employees achieve a better work-life balance.	265	1.00	5.00	3.5057	1.06998
My company offers appropriate flexible work (time) arrangements that support employees' needs in balancing work and personal life.	265	1.00	5.00	3.4075	1.31999
Our organization actively seeks employee feedback and uses it to assess the impact of digitalization on work-life balance	265	1.00	5.00	2.8491	1.18380
We provide sufficient training to employees on how to use digital tools to improve their work-life balance.	265	1.00	5.00	3.1887	1.19431
Our digital solutions effectively help manage workload and contribute to a healthier work-life balance.	265	1.00	5.00	3.2981	1.10688
Our communication channels enable employees to clearly separate work and personal life.	265	1.00	5.00	3.1887	1.15890
Overall, I am satisfied with our organization’s approach to supporting employees' work-life balance.	265	1.00	5.00	3.4377	1.12348

Based on the recorded data for this sample (n=265), it is concluded that all variables were rated on a scale from Min = 1 to Max = 5. The variable "My company provides sufficient support for employees to promote work-life balance" has a mean of 3.4075, with a standard deviation of 1.06242. The variable "The digital applications used by our company effectively help employees achieve a better work-life balance" has a mean of 3.5057, with a standard deviation of 1.06998. The variable "My company offers appropriate flexible work (time) arrangements that

support employees' needs in balancing work and personal life" has a mean of 3.4075, with a standard deviation of 1.31999. The variable "Our organization actively seeks employee feedback and uses it to assess the impact of digitalization on work-life balance" has a mean of 2.8491, with a standard deviation of 1.18380. The variable "We provide sufficient training to employees on how to use digital tools to improve their work-life balance" has a mean of 3.1887, with a standard deviation of 1.19431. The variable "Our digital solutions effectively help manage workload and contribute to a healthier work-life balance" has a mean of 3.2981, with a standard deviation of 1.10688. The variable "Our communication channels enable employees to clearly separate work and personal life" has a mean of 3.1887, with a standard deviation of 1.15890. The variable "Overall, I am satisfied with our organization's approach to supporting employees' work-life balance" has a mean of 3.4377, with a standard deviation of 1.12348. The highest-rated variable is "The digital applications used by our company effectively help employees achieve a better work-life balance" (Mean = 3.5057).

Table 2. Descriptive data - Italia (n=24)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Does your organization offer support services for employees' mental health?	24	2.00	5.00	3.1667	.96309
My company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload.	24	2.00	5.00	4.0000	.83406
I find the mental health support services for our employees effective.	24	2.00	5.00	3.7083	.80645
My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly.	24	2.00	5.00	3.8333	.86811

The data presented in Table 6 represent the data recorded for n = 24. In this case, the statements were rated, as before, on a Likert scale from 1 to 5; however, the minimum value was 2, while the maximum value was 5. The variable "Does your organization offer support services for employees' mental health?" was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.1667, with a standard deviation of 0.96309. The variable "I find the mental health support services for our employees effective" was rated with an average score of Mean = 4.000, with a standard deviation of

0.83406. The variable "My company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload" was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.7083, with a standard deviation of 0.80645. The variable "My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly" was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.8333, with a standard deviation of 0.86811.

3.3 Slovenia

Focus group report

The focus group within the European project APOLLO took place on January 22, 2025, at the premises of the Municipality of Novo mesto. Moderator Peter Geršič, Head of the Development Office, opened the session by greeting the participants and presenting the discussion objectives. The focus was on improving the quality of life for the working population in the Alpine region through digital solutions and social innovations. Key topics included service accessibility for citizens and support for employees in balancing professional and private lives. The APOLLO project will serve as a platform for implementing these measures and exchanging best practices with other European partners.

CITIZEN SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

Izidor Jerala, Deputy Secretary for Spatial Planning, opened the discussion by highlighting the high number of visitors to the spatial portal PISO and the challenges of directing citizens who often seek information from the wrong institutions. He pointed out the issue of excessive administrative burden, as municipal employees frequently respond to inquiries that should be handled by other institutions. Another challenge involves citizens seeking speculative information regarding spatial interventions and exerting pressure on employees, as well as dealing with dissatisfied citizens who do not receive permits for their requested interventions. He noted that MONM has established a spatial information system containing all accessible data on planning procedures and documents, including links to downloadable materials. According to Jerala, no other municipality in Slovenia offers a similar citizen communication service. He suggested that an intelligent search engine on the municipality’s website could significantly ease information searches for citizens and reduce direct calls and visits.

Saša Sršen, Senior Public Relations Advisor, emphasized the overload of the municipal email address with citizen complaints and suggested improvements to the website to provide structured and clear information. She also pointed out the need for greater interactivity and visualization of key information, such as road closures and planned municipal investments.

Nastja Bučar, HR Affairs Associate, noted that her communication with citizens is limited to HR-related queries, primarily through phone calls and emails.

Deputy Mayor Sara Tomšič stressed the importance of proactive communication to reduce unnecessary visits to municipal offices. She referenced foreign municipalities that inform citizens about their rights and services at life milestones (e.g., birth, moving, retirement) to ensure they utilize available benefits without needing to submit separate applications. She believes that this approach not only helps build a sense of community but also ensures that citizens do not miss out on their rights simply because they are unaware of them. She sees the main challenge in the fact that the Municipality of Novo Mesto (MONM) disseminates an abundance of information through too many channels. She stressed the need to simplify procedures so that they do not pose significant obstacles to exercising rights or fulfilling obligations. According to her, every municipal employee should be responsible for a specific section of the website, a designated digital space, and adopt the mindset that all information on digital platforms must be accurate and useful.

Dr. Jana Bolta Saje, Director of the Municipal Administration, highlighted the need for better organization of information and clear communication points for citizens to reduce confusion when searching for relevant details. She believes that MONM lacks a central information point at the municipal administration, which should not depend on a specific individual but be structured so that any employee can effectively guide citizens while ensuring that citizens know exactly where to turn. "Even we, as employees, sometimes struggle to navigate all the information we have," she admitted. She emphasized that the process of obtaining the necessary information should be so simple that there would be minimal need for phone calls requiring direct contact with a specific person. Currently, there are too many communication channels, making it unclear where to turn, while at the same time, there is either too little information available or it is difficult to access in a straightforward manner.

Aleš Kuretič, Deputy Secretary for Archives and Administrative Affairs, agreed that the excess of communication channels creates confusion among citizens. He suggested that the municipality should define a primary entry point for communication. He also commented on the balance between physical and digital applications, noting that the number of electronic applications has increased in recent times. He emphasized the need to simplify digital forms to make administrative procedures easier for citizens and reduce errors when submitting applications.

Miroslav Strniša, Head of the IT Department, proposed using artificial intelligence to filter information and improve access to municipal services. AI at the first point of contact could filter inquiries based on citizens' questions and direct them to the appropriate procedures. This would reduce repetitive phone calls while also providing insights into what information citizens are searching for, allowing the municipality to develop more effective solutions.

Pia Svilan, Head of the Department for Real Estate Economics, proposed the introduction of a structured Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) system that would cover the most common citizen inquiries and be accessible on the municipal website. She emphasized that the website should be more systematically organized by areas of interest. Additionally, she suggested the introduction of electronic applications, where the system would only allow submission if all required information is provided.

Meta Retar Kramar, Head of the Office for Social Affairs, highlighted the need for digitizing procedures related to kindergartens and other municipal services, as well as implementing systems for easier data collection and processing regarding municipal needs. She proposed the introduction of shared digital systems with municipal public institutions, allowing for a unified overview of the status and requirements in various sectors. She also believes it is essential to present the benefits of digitalization to citizens and empower them to operate in a digital environment.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Deputy Mayor Sara Tomšič highlighted the constant intertwining of work and private obligations, which often leads to stress and employee overload, as multitasking is highly detrimental to mental health. She pointed out that many employees receive inquiries from citizens even outside working hours and that

clear rules for communication outside working hours should be considered. It is essential to ask how much a person can handle in a healthy way, to define job roles and their nature, and to relieve overburdened employees or arrange paid overtime. She believes that MONM is not the type of organization suited for remote work, as a lot of teamwork is required.

Saša Sršen, Senior Public Relations Advisor, stated that she is bothered by citizens asking her work-related questions outside of working hours. In a way, public officials are always in the public eye, meaning that their actions in their private time are also under scrutiny, and people approach them with work-related matters even outside office hours.

Dr. Jana Bolta Saje, Director of the Municipal Administration, emphasized the crucial importance of setting clear boundaries between work and personal time, which enables employees to have a better quality of life. She stressed that citizens who request information outside working hours should also be made aware of these boundaries. She is not in favour of remote work, except in exceptional cases, where MONM has already shown flexibility in the past. She underlined that the municipal administration is fundamentally a bureaucratic system providing services to citizens, and for a large part of it, fixed working hours are necessary, particularly during official office hours. However, there is another part of the administration that does not interact with citizens directly, where work can be organized differently, including remotely. If an upgrade to the work organization were to be made, a division based on job roles would be necessary.

Nastja Bučar, HR Specialist, presented the municipality's existing measures for work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, break times that can be adjusted, and the right to disconnect. Employees can also accumulate work hours in flexible time slots, allowing them to handle private matters during work hours.

Meta Retar Kramar, **Head of the Office for Social Affairs** pointed out the internal drive that pushes people to work beyond their working hours and take on excessive burdens, often because they struggle to set their own boundaries. This becomes even more challenging when the work environment, particularly leadership, supports such behaviour. She proposed developing programs to support employees' mental health, including counselling services and stress management workshops. She also advocated for the possibility of remote work,

arguing that allowing employees to work from home once a week, as is common in many organizations, would not be harmful to teamwork.

Pia Svilan stated that she did not like working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and does not wish to work remotely.

Miroslav Strniša, Head of the IT Service, suggested using digital tools to better coordinate work and personal obligations, such as smart calendars and task management applications.

Izidor Jerala, Deputy Secretary for Spatial Planning, mentioned that having all work-related documents available on MS Teams or remote access would be beneficial to him. He argued that work-life balance does not necessarily mean working for eight hours and then completely disconnecting. Instead, it could mean working in blocks of 3 hours + 3 hours + 2 hours, allowing for a more balanced workload throughout the day. For him, balance does not necessarily mean a strict cutoff after eight hours; it depends on the individual and the nature of their job.

Aleš Kuretič, Deputy Secretary for Archival and Administrative Affairs, noted that many employees greatly appreciate the municipality's provision of affordable vacation rentals at the seaside.

IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Key proposed improvements included:

- Upgrading the municipal website for better information clarity.
- Implementing an intelligent search engine to facilitate information retrieval.
- Optimizing electronic forms for easier application processes.
- Exploring the use of artificial intelligence for filtering questions and guiding citizens.
- Establishing digital solutions for better work organization, including task and document management systems.
- Enhancing internal communication tools to improve task tracking and workflow organization.

KEY DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Accessibility of Services for Citizens

Challenges Identified:

- The lack of a centralized system for accessing information and services creates confusion among citizens.
- Citizens often rely on physical channels (visiting offices, phone calls) because digital alternatives are not sufficiently accessible or user-friendly.
- Incomplete physical applications prolong administrative procedures.

The MONM spatial portal has been highlighted as an important tool, but many citizens do not know how to use it. Over 8,000 visitors to the portal in certain periods indicate a high demand for simple and accessible digital solutions.

Proposed Solutions:

- Establishing a central information hub where citizens can access all relevant information in one place.
- Creating a repository of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and interactive guides for using portals and services.
- Simplifying communication via digital channels, such as e-applications, to reduce the need for physical visits.
- Mandatory use of electronic applications that prevent submission without complete data.

2. Digital Literacy for Employees and Citizens

Challenges Identified:

- Low levels of digital literacy among some citizens and employees.
- Employees require additional training to work with new technologies and effectively support citizens in using digital services.
- Citizens, especially the elderly and less digitally literate, face difficulties in using existing digital tools.

Proposed Solutions:

- Organizing workshops tailored to different age and user groups.
- Introducing interactive video tutorials and webinars on how to use MONM's online services.

- Providing employees with access to advanced tools, such as analytical software and digital interfaces, to enhance interaction with citizens.

3. Supporting Employees in Work-Life Balance

Challenges Identified:

- Unpredictability of work tasks and pressure on employees to provide services.
- Employees struggle with overload and insufficient separation between work and personal obligations.
- Many respond to work-related inquiries outside of working hours, leading to increased stress.

Proposed Solutions:

- Implementing a "right to disconnect" policy, allowing employees to refrain from responding to work communications outside of working hours.
- Flexible working hours and partial remote work options to improve work-life balance.
- Utilizing digital tools for better work organization, such as task and project management applications.

Questionnaire's Analyse

At the very beginning, a descriptive data analysis will be conducted regarding the statements that the respondents answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree).

In this section, descriptive data recorded for the sample of respondents from Slovenia will be presented.

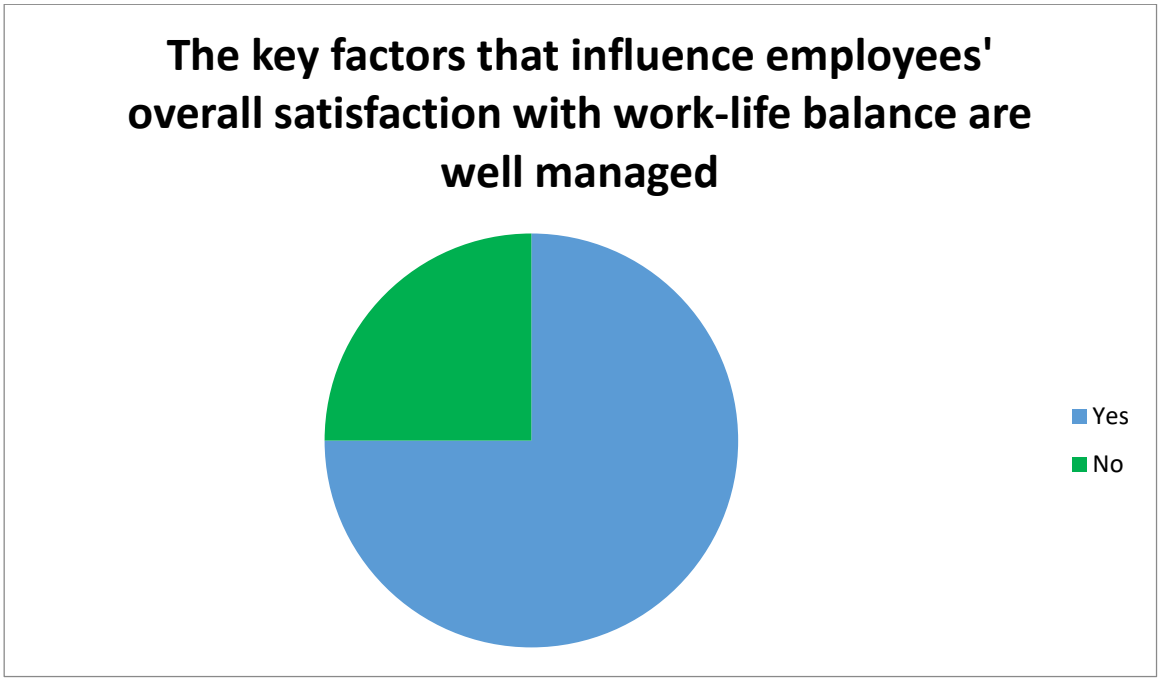
Table 3. Descriptive data – Slovenia

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that my workplace provides adequate well-being support that helps me maintain my health and a good work-life balance	68	1.00	5.00	3.6765	1.09873

The digital resources available to me effectively contribute to maintaining a healthy work-life balance	68	1.00	5.00	3.6765	1.07121
I have sufficient access to flexible work options that support my personal and professional needs.	68	1.00	5.00	3.5588	1.21413
I believe that my organization actively seeks feedback on how digital tools impact my work-life balance	68	1.00	5.00	3.0294	1.32677
I have received appropriate training on using digital tools to improve work-life balance	68	1.00	5.00	3.2647	1.31146
I believe that digital solutions effectively help manage my workload, reduce stress, and improve balance	68	1.00	5.00	3.4265	1.21331
The digital communication channels at my workplace support a healthy work-life balance by allowing clear boundaries.	68	1.00	5.00	3.6471	1.06175
Overall, I am satisfied with the support my organization provides for work-life balance.	68	1.00	5.00	3.5294	1.28679
Our organization has initiatives to support employees' mental health (psychological support), and they are effective for employees.	4	2.00	4.00	2.7500	.95743
Our organization uses effective strategies to balance workloads among employees, and the demands for overtime work are appropriately managed.	4	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.82574
Our organization allows employees to manage their work schedules flexibly, with specific policies in place for remote work or flexible working arrangements	4	3.00	5.00	4.2500	.95743
Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately.	4	2.00	5.00	3.5000	1.29099

The previous table presents the descriptive data recorded for the sample from Slovenia. The variables include the following: The statement "I believe that my workplace provides adequate well-being support that helps me maintain my health and a good work-life balance" had a mean score of 3.6765 with a standard deviation of 1.09873. Similarly, "The digital resources available to me effectively contribute to maintaining a healthy work-life balance" also had a mean score of 3.6765 with a standard deviation of 1.07121. The statement "I have sufficient access to flexible work options that support my personal and professional needs" was rated with a mean of 3.5588 and a standard deviation of 1.21413. The variable "I believe that my organization actively seeks feedback on how digital tools impact my work-life balance" had a mean of 3.0294 with a standard deviation of 1.32677. As for the statement "I have received appropriate training on using digital tools to improve work-life balance", it had a mean score of 3.2647 and a standard deviation of 1.31146. The statement "I believe that digital solutions effectively help manage my workload, reduce stress, and improve balance" had a mean of 3.4265, with a standard deviation of 1.21331. The variable "The digital communication channels at my workplace support a healthy work-life balance by allowing clear boundaries" had a mean score of 3.6471 and a standard deviation of 1.06175. Regarding overall satisfaction, "Overall, I am satisfied with the support my organization provides for work-life balance" had a mean score of 3.5294, with a standard deviation of 1.28679. The variable "Our organization has initiatives to support employees' mental health (psychological support), and they are effective for employees" was rated with a mean of 2.7500 and a standard deviation of 0.95743. Regarding workload management, the statement "Our organization uses effective strategies to balance workloads among employees, and the demands for overtime work are appropriately managed" had a mean of 3.000 and a standard deviation of 1.82574. The statement "Our organization allows employees to manage their work schedules flexibly, with specific policies in place for remote work or flexible working arrangements" received a high mean score of 4.2500, with a standard deviation of 0.95743. Finally, the statement "Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately" had a mean of 3.5000 with a standard deviation of 1.29099.

Graph 1. The key factors that influence employees' overall satisfaction with work-life balance are well managed



The research results for the sample in Slovenia indicate that 75% of respondents stated that the key factors influencing their satisfaction with work-life balance are well managed. On the other hand, 25% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

3.4 Austria

Focus Group Meeting Austria

Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung goes New Work

This report aims to document the insights from the focus group discussions and provide

readers with a general overview of the New Work approaches implemented in the Vorarlberg

state government.

Focus Group Meeting: Administration of the Government of the Federal Stateof Vorarlberg goes New Work

As Guido Flatz explained at the beginning of the focus group meeting, digitalization presents not only new challenges but also significant opportunities for rural areas. Particularly with the increasing shift of work processes into the digital realm, innovative concepts can contribute to strengthening regional structures. At the focus group meetings, Mag. MarkusV ögel and Ing. Thomas Gayer reported on a digitalization projecimplemented entitled “Schaffa4Future” (dialect: work4future) at the Landhaus, which has fundamentally changed the way the Vorarlberg state government works.

Participants of the Focus Group Meeting

Initial situation

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly and significantly altered work conditions. Unprepared for this challenge, the Vorarlberg state government had to develop practical alternatives to traditional work routines in a very short time to ensure uninterrupted operations. Decisionmakers were forced to implement The “Schaffa4future” project aimed to establish a modern, future-proof way of working. This required not only adjusting the technical infrastructure but also creating a holistic concept that involved and considered all relevant stakeholder groups.

Key-note speech Ing. Thomas Gayer on “Schaffa4Future”

Schaffa4Future: Project approach

The “Schaffa4future” project team followed a structured approach:

- Identifying and segmenting stakeholders
- Conducting a detailed analysis of the needs and requirements of the identified
- groups
- Prioritizing project objectives
- Implementing planned measures

+

The “Schaffa4future” project’s visible kickoff was an online survey, confirming broad support for the initiative: 90% of respondents were in favor of introducing remote work. Additionally, interviews were conducted, leading to the development of six personas representing different employee types. These personas helped better understand specific challenges and needs. Given the diversity of the Vorarlberg state government’s workforce, it was decided that department heads would make decisions on behalf of their units. Throughout the process, continuous feedback was gathered from employees and management. To support remote work, the employer provided necessary technical equipment, including VPN-enabled laptops and digital communication solutions. Since many internal systems were already based on browser applications and cloud services before the pandemic, the transition was seamless. Schaffa4Future: Core Principles Remote and in-office work were designed to be equivalent. To achieve this, remote work was structured around seven predefined values.

Core principles of the project “Schaffa4Future”

A key priority was open and effective communication. All employees and managers were actively involved in the process.

Space & Time

One concept developed but ultimately not implemented was the creation of flexible workspaces. The idea was to provide easily accessible office spaces to further enable hybrid working. The approach mirrored the main project: an

employee survey was conducted, followed by segmentation and analysis of workspace requirements. However, this idea was not put into practice.

Schaffa4Future: Human Resource

From a human resources perspective, the “Schaffa4Future” project posed challenges in corporate culture and leadership, affecting individuals, teams, and the entire organization. To ensure consistent implementation, guidelines were developed, including office regulations, remote work policies, and individual agreements between employees and supervisors. Workshops for managers and online networking opportunities were also provided. Additionally, HR introduced collaboration and leadership models emphasizing foresight, diligence, and appreciation. A key recommendation from HR: clear structures, such as fixed working hours or shared rituals (e.g., virtual coffee breaks), help maintain productivity in remote settings.

Schaffa4Future: Project Results and further uptake

The project's outcomes have been overwhelmingly positive. Surveys indicate high acceptance among employees and managers. Issues are rare and, when they arise, are mostly technical and easily resolved. Unexpected benefits also emerged. Many employees have adopted more digital work habits, such as using laptops in meetings for more efficient note-taking. Contrary to initial concerns, interpersonal interactions have not suffered. Employees still value in-person contact, and despite flexible attendance policies, teams frequently gather in the office. But also, as the moderators, key note presenters, and the audience highlighted, in addition to technological aspects, the social factor must not be neglected. It is essential that all social groups benefit from these developments and are actively involved in the digital transformation. Of particular interest is the interaction between the technical perspective and human resource management issues. The combination of these viewpoints enables the creation of not only efficient digital work structures but also consideration of employee needs and the sustainable shaping of corporate culture. Academia, especially the FH Vorarlberg (since it is regionally anchored), with its strong scientific foundation, can play a crucial role in this process. Through practice-oriented research and applied projects, it supports the implementation of innovative solutions and contributes valuable insights to the transformation process. One example is the APOLLO project, which addresses the challenges of depopulation in Alpine regions. The project explores new approaches to improving employee well-being and promoting work-life balance.

Appendix: further Impressions

Excursion through the Building of the Government of the Federal State of Vorarlberg – state parliament hall

Bi-lateral talks, discussions and interviews as part of the Focus Group Meeting

Questionnaire's Analyse

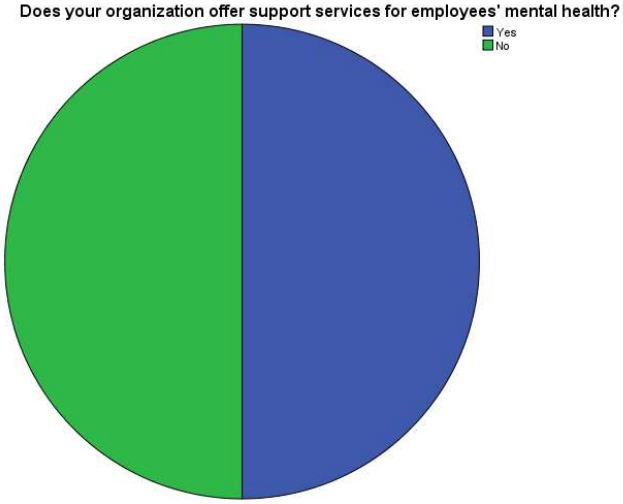
At the very beginning, a descriptive data analysis will be conducted regarding the statements that the respondents answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree).

Table 4. Descriptive data - Austria (1)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My company provides sufficient support for employees to promote work-life balance.	10	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.54919
The digital applications used by our company effectively help employees achieve a better work-life balance.	10	1.00	5.00	3.5000	1.17851
My company offers appropriate flexible work (time) arrangements that support employees' needs in balancing work and personal life.	10	1.00	5.00	4.3000	1.25167
Regarding the impact of digitalization on work-life balance, my company actively seeks and considers employee feedback.	10	1.00	5.00	3.7000	1.33749
My company provides employees with sufficient training on using digital tools to improve their work-life balance.	10	1.00	5.00	3.3000	1.15950
Our digital solutions effectively help manage workload and contribute to a healthier work-life balance.	10	1.00	5.00	2.9000	1.37032
Our communication channels enable employees to clearly separate work and personal life.	10	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.49071
Overall, I am satisfied with our organization’s approach to supporting employees' work-life balance.	10	2.00	5.00	3.7000	1.05935

In the previous table, descriptive data for each of the considered variables can be seen. The variable “My company provides sufficient support for employees to promote work-life balance” has a mean of 3.800, with a standard deviation of 1.54919. The variable “The digital applications used by our company effectively help employees achieve a better work-life balance” has a mean of 3.500, with a standard deviation of 1.17851. The variable “My company offers appropriate flexible work (time) arrangements that support employees' needs in balancing work and personal life” has a mean of 4.300, with a standard deviation of 1.25167. The variable “Regarding the impact of digitalization on work-life balance, my company actively seeks and considers employee feedback” has a mean of 3.700, with a standard deviation of 1.33749. The variable “My company provides employees with sufficient training on using digital tools to improve their work-life balance” has a mean of 3.300, with a standard deviation of 1.15950. The variable “Our digital solutions effectively help manage workload and contribute to a healthier work-life balance” has a mean of 2.900, with a standard deviation of 1.37032. The variable “Our communication channels enable employees to clearly separate work and personal life” has a mean of 3.000, with a standard deviation of 1.49071. The variable “Overall, I am satisfied with our organization’s approach to supporting employees' work-life balance” has a mean of 3.700, with a standard deviation of 1.05935. All variables were evaluated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, except for the variable “Overall, I am satisfied with our organization’s approach to supporting employees' work-life balance,” where the minimum value is 2 — meaning that none of the respondents rated this variable with 1. The lowest-rated variable is “Our digital solutions effectively help manage workload and contribute to a healthier work-life balance,” with an average score of 2.900, while the highest-rated variable is “My company offers appropriate flexible work (time) arrangements that support employees' needs in balancing work and personal life,” with an average score of 4.300.

Graph 2. Does your organization offer support services for employees' mental health?



The research found that 50% of the organizations in the sample provide mental health support to their employees through in-house services, while the remaining 50% do not (Graph 1).

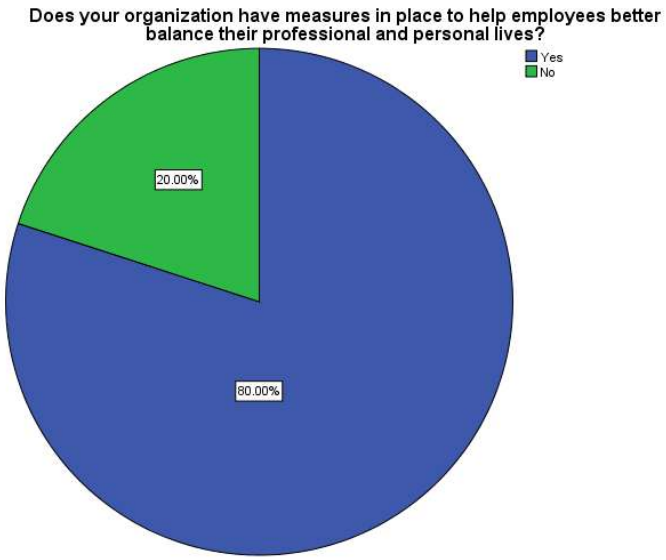
Table 5. Descriptive data - Austria (2)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find the mental health support services for our employees effective.	10	1.00	5.00	3.5000	1.35401
My company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload.	10	1.00	5.00	3.4000	1.26491
Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately.	9	1.00	5.00	3.6667	1.32288
My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly.	10	1.00	5.00	4.1000	1.19722
Our company has specific policies for telework or flexible work arrangements.	10	3.00	5.00	4.6000	.69921

The variable “I find the mental health support services for our employees effective” has a mean of 3.500, with a standard deviation of 1.35401. The variable “My

company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload" has a mean of 3.400, with a standard deviation of 1.26491. The variable "Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately" has a mean of 3.6667, with a standard deviation of 1.32288. The variable "My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly" has a mean of 4.100, with a standard deviation of 1.19722. The variable "Our company has specific policies for telework or flexible work arrangements" has a mean of 4.600, with a standard deviation of 0.69921. In this section, the highest-rated variable is "Our company has specific policies for telework or flexible work arrangements," with an average score of 4.600.

Graph 3. Does your organization have measures in place to help employees better balance their professional and personal lives?



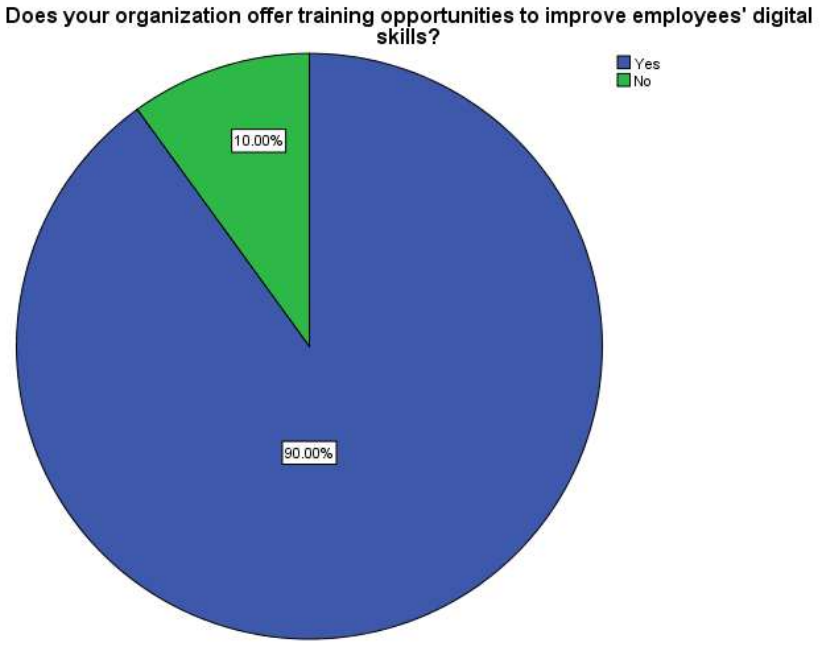
Of all the organizations in the sample, 80% have measures in place to help employees better balance their professional and personal lives. On the other hand, 20% do not have such measures.

Table 6. Descriptive data - Austria (3)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees' participation in important family or personal events is supported by the company.	10	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.47573
Continuous and regular training and education are actively promoted in my company.	10	1.00	5.00	3.7000	1.41814
Our company adequately considers employees' needs regarding work-life balance, telework, and health promotion.	10	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.47573

The research results indicate that the variable "Employees' participation in important family or personal events is supported by the company" had a mean of 3.800, with a standard deviation of 1.47573. The variable "Continuous and regular training and education are actively promoted in my company" has a mean of 3.700, with a standard deviation of 1.41814. The variable "Our company adequately considers employees' needs regarding work-life balance, telework, and health promotion" has a mean of 3.800, with a standard deviation of 1.47573.

Graph 4. Does your organization offer training opportunities to improve employees' digital skills?



Based on the previous Graph 3, it can be concluded that 90% of the companies in the sample offer training opportunities to improve employees' digital skills, while the remaining 10% do not offer such opportunities.

Table 7. Sociodemographic data - Austria

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	22.00	1	0	1
	27.00	0	1	1
	32.00	0	1	1
	34.00	0	1	1
	38.00	0	1	1
	45.00	1	0	1
	47.00	1	0	1
	53.00	1	1	2
	61.00	0	1	1
Total		4	6	10

Table 4 presents the sociodemographic data, which shows that the sample consists of 40% male respondents and 60% female respondents. The oldest person in the sample is a woman, aged 61, while the youngest is a man, aged 22.

3.5 Germany

Focus group report

<u>Summary of the answers given from each of the questions</u>.

Q1: What welfare policies or programs does your organization currently have in place to support work-life balance and physical/mental health of your employees??

- Concepts for childcare such as
    - childcare facilities within care institutions
    - Transport services for employees' children (to school/kindergarten) → very high effort due to different residential locations and various schools/kindergartens
    - "Mother tours" → work shifts (time and length) adapted to childcare needs
- AI tool for duty scheduling and general task coordination
- Flexible shift planning (adapted to individual needs/childcare arrangements)
- Digital job interviews (partially implemented in some organisations)
- Digital trainings, workshops, and upskilling (partially implemented in some organisations)
- Cooperation with local and regional authorities (e.g. police)
- Employees feedback on new work-policies and platforms to suggest improvements

- **Shared agreement that the employees are "kings and queens" and their workplace must accommodate their needs (as opposed to the generally assumed "the customer is king", which is no longer feasible in the healthcare sector)**

Q2: What specific challenges do your employees face in maintaining work-life balance in the context of digitalization?

- Guaranteeing childcare needs
- Employees who also have responsibilities as caregivers for family members

- Some working time models that would improve work-life balance for care workers and enable the above cannot be implemented due to legal labor protection laws, such as:
    - Weekly working hours or
    - split shifts are either legally restricted or difficult to implement
- Maintaining a good work-life balance in care work is challenging, but it must be ensured that care workers remain able to work
- The use of many digital tools fails due to incompatibility with primary software, lack of refinancing, and security concerns (compliance with data protection regulations)
- Lack of sustainable funding, as it is not legally regulated and not included in framework agreements (between service providers and funding institutions)
- Lack of options for billing digitally provided services
- Lack of project continuity, resulting in no long-term security or sustainability
- Software issues and bugs with current systems
- Infrastructure and internet coverage problems (especially fiberglass networks and especially in rural areas)
- Care workers are sometimes frustrated because new digital applications are constantly being tested, but often cannot be integrated into standard care provision
- Lack of trust in the nursing profession in regard to facilitating (digital) changes
- IT affinity in the outpatient care sector has increased, but:
    - Different levels of willingness to learn and varying levels of expertise need to be addressed
- A lot of improvisation and work in legal gray areas due to a lack of solutions and regulatory frameworks

- **There is a general consensus among participants that while the possibilities and innovations for digitalisation are well-developed, the main issue lies in the willingness of all stakeholders (e.g. legislators, health insurance providers, churches, associations, and regional authorities) to actively implement these measures on a broad scale rather than treating them as optional. Legal enforcement of such measures would be crucial, as they are urgently needed and would provide significant benefits.**

Q3: What digital tools or platforms have you implemented to support work-life balance and the physical and mental well-being of your employees?

- PowerApps for coordinating care workers and their assignments
- Microsoft Teams (for communication and information sharing) → no more in-person staff meetings
- Digital trainings, workshops, and upskilling (partially implemented in some organisations)
- Company mobile phones for employees in outpatient care services (partially implemented in some organisations)

Q4: Do you think that your organisation adequately follows the use of modern digital tools that make it easier for citizens to access services?

- Since many innovations are not integrated into standard care provision, there is still room for improvement (e.g. lack of options for billing digitally provided services)

Q5: In your opinion, how could the accessibility of your services be improved with the help of modern digital tools?

- Conducting digital care-consultation sessions
- Conducting digital night stand-by duty
- GPS watches or other tracking devices for patients (to promote autonomy and safety)
- Digital job interviews (partially implemented in some organisations)
- Digital trainings, workshops, and upskilling (partially implemented in some organisations)

Q6: How can PAs and SMEs collaborate to enhance welfare services related to physical/mental well-being and work-life balance?

- Digitalisation in long-term care must first be legally anchored (funding bodies must be obligated to refinance digital technologies or the application of AI)
- Expansion of fibreglass networks (state-funded)

Q7: What trends and innovations in the field of digital services for citizens do you foresee in the future?

- Nationwide rollout of apps to support individuals in need of care and their relatives (including period before an official care need is determined)
- With generational shifts and demographic changes digital competence among older individuals and their willingness to use digital tools will increase
- Germany can learn a lot about digitalisation in healthcare from other countries that are already significantly more advanced (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Denmark)

Q8: What emerging trends or innovations do you foresee impacting work-life balance and the physical/mental health of employees in your organization in the coming years?

- The concept of work-life balance is generally more challenging to apply in the context of caregiving and nursing, as it is more suited to traditional 9-to-5 jobs. The primary focus should first be on creating the necessary conditions that make it possible for (future) employees to work in this field and tend to their personal circumstances (e.g. children, caregiving of family members, study, etc.)

Q9: What is your ideal vision for work-life balance and health support within your organization and the wider community?

- Greater trust in the self-determination of care workers, particularly regarding the structuring of their working hours. Legal requirements would need to be loosened and/or adjusted in this regard

Q10: What is your ideal vision for the use of digital technology in your organisation to provide effective services to citizens and to help them using modern digital content?

- AI-powered tools enabling voice-based documentation of consultation visits (e.g., usage while driving after a consultation)
- Time savings through telecare and other digital technologies, allowing for more people to receive care or cover wider regions
- Existing digital possibilities (e.g. digital care consultation) must be actively utilized

- Digital solutions for on-call night shifts could reduce night-time emergency visits by approximately 50-80% by guiding care recipients or their relatives through a digital tool
- Good apps already exist for advising care recipients and their families, but they are not widely known and should be promoted and implemented on a larger scale
- Digital tools can help save costs and time, allowing for more patients per shift in outpatient care services
- Introduction of digital care visits or digital biography work
- Increased use of digital continuing education (via online tools for asynchronous learning)
- Flexible working hours, also in terms of care planning or documentation (e.g. from home in the evening)

Conclusions of the focus group:

- Comprehensive and standardized digitalization in care provides added value
- Raising awareness in society: many digital technologies for care already exist, but they are not widely known
- Employee satisfaction is a central aspect for employers in the care sector; employee needs must be the priority
- The introduction of digital applications often fails due to software limitations, budget constraints, and security concerns
- Fewer digital applications are used in inpatient facilities because the pressure for efficiency (through financial incentives for services) is lower
- "Digitalization is there to support care workers, not to replace them"
- "Employees are king" → in our current healthcare system, it is no longer feasible to prioritize the needs of care recipients over the needs of employees
- "You cannot opt out of digitalization in care"
- Digitalization is the only way to ease the burden on care workers
- Digital solutions and employee satisfaction are closely linked

Conclusion of digitalisation in care:

- The necessary infrastructure is currently lacking
- Implementation of digital tools in care often fails due to funding issues

- The level of digitalization in care facilities varies widely
- More digital tools in care could better integrate relatives into the care process
- There is generally a high willingness for digitalization in care, but there is a lack of widespread, collaboratively developed solutions

Questionnaire's Analyse

At the very beginning, a descriptive data analysis will be conducted regarding the statements that the respondents answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree).

In this section, descriptive data related to the sample from Germany will be presented.

Table 8. Descriptive data – Germany

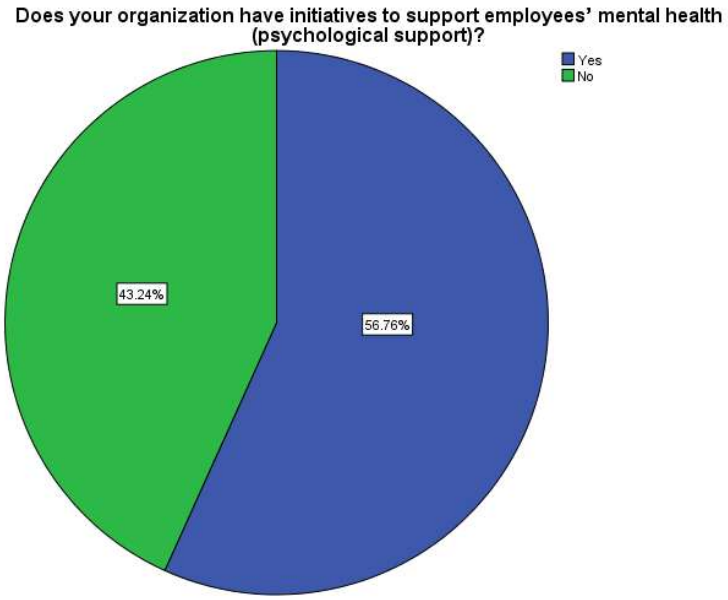
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel that my workplace provides adequate welfare support to help me maintain a healthy work-life balance.	37	2.00	5.00	3.3243	1.08151
The digital resources available to me effectively facilitate my work-life balance.	37	1.00	5.00	2.8378	1.28048
I have sufficient access to flexible working options that support my personal and professional needs.	37	1.00	5.00	3.3784	1.25502
I believe my organization actively seeks feedback on how digital tools impact my work-life balance.	37	1.00	5.00	2.3784	1.20994
I have received adequate training on how to use digital tools to enhance my work-life balance.	37	1.00	5.00	3.0541	1.10418
I feel that digital solutions help manage my workload effectively, reducing stress and improving balance.	36	1.00	5.00	2.5833	1.18019

The digital communication channels in my workplace support a healthy work-life balance by allowing for clear boundaries.	37	1.00	5.00	2.8649	1.27284
Overall, I am satisfied with the support provided by my organization regarding work-life balance.	37	1.00	5.00	3.1081	1.12506
I find the mental health support services for our employees effective.	34	1.00	5.00	2.7647	1.20752
My company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload.	37	1.00	5.00	2.4595	1.14491
Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately.	36	1.00	5.00	3.4167	1.13074
My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly.	37	1.00	5.00	3.2162	1.29390
Our company has specific policies for telework or flexible work arrangements.	37	1.00	5.00	3.4054	1.46172
Employees’ participation in important family or personal events is supported by the company.	37	1.00	5.00	3.6486	1.05978
Education and professional development that occurs continuously and regularly, often to maintain or improve job skills.	37	1.00	5.00	3.6757	1.10690
Our company adequately considers employees' needs regarding work-life balance, telework, and health promotion.	37	1.00	5.00	3.1351	1.03178

The previous table presents the descriptive data related to the sample from Germany, which consisted of n = 37 individuals. All statements were rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The variable “I feel that my workplace provides adequate welfare support to help me maintain a healthy work-life balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.3243, with a standard deviation of 1.08151. The variable “The digital resources available to me effectively facilitate my work-life balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.8378, with a standard

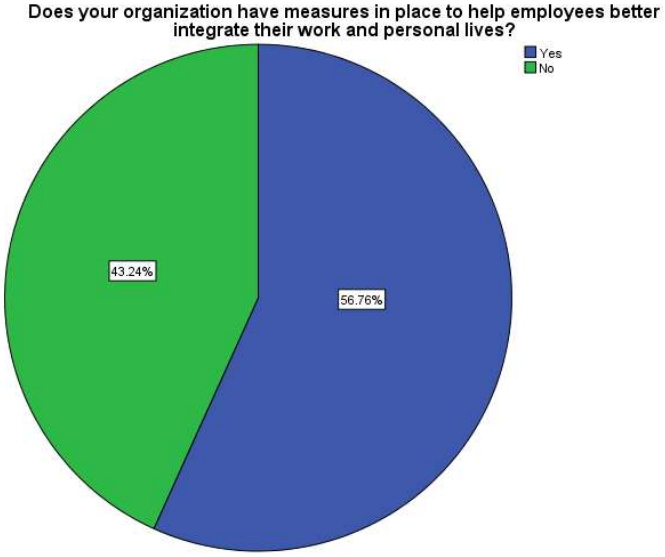
deviation of 1.28048. The variable “I have sufficient access to flexible working options that support my personal and professional needs” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.3784, with a standard deviation of 1.25502. The variable “I believe my organization actively seeks feedback on how digital tools impact my work-life balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.3784, with a standard deviation of 1.20994. The variable “I have received adequate training on how to use digital tools to enhance my work-life balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.0541, with a standard deviation of 1.10418. The variable “I feel that digital solutions help manage my workload effectively, reducing stress and improving balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.5833, with a standard deviation of 1.18019. The variable “The digital communication channels in my workplace support a healthy work-life balance by allowing for clear boundaries” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.8649, with a standard deviation of 1.27284. The variable “Overall, I am satisfied with the support provided by my organization regarding work-life balance” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.1081, with a standard deviation of 1.12506. The variable “I find the mental health support services for our employees effective” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.7647, with a standard deviation of 1.20752. The variable “My company follows effective strategies to balance employees' workload” was rated with an average score of Mean = 2.4595, with a standard deviation of 1.14491. The variable “Requests from employees regarding overtime are handled appropriately” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.4167, with a standard deviation of 1.13074. The variable “My company allows employees to organize their work schedules flexibly” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.2162, with a standard deviation of 1.29390. The variable “Our company has specific policies for telework or flexible work arrangements” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.4054, with a standard deviation of 1.46172. The variable “Employees’ participation in important family or personal events is supported by the company” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.6486, with a standard deviation of 1.05978. The variable “Education and professional development that occurs continuously and regularly, often to maintain or improve job skills” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.6757, with a standard deviation of 1.10690. The variable “Our company adequately considers employees' needs regarding work-life balance, telework, and health promotion” was rated with an average score of Mean = 3.1351, with a standard deviation of 1.03178.

Graph 5. Does your organization have initiatives to support employees' mental health (psychological support)?



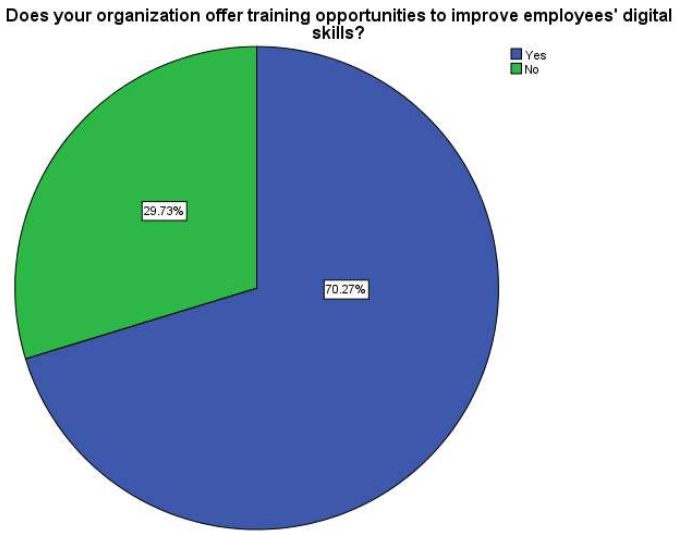
Based on the previous chart, it can be concluded that 56.76% of employees stated that their companies offer support for employees in the context of mental health, i.e., there is psychological support available. On the other hand, 43% of organizations do not provide psychological support for employees.

Graph 6. Does your organization have measures in place to help employees better integrate their work and personal lives?



The results of the research indicate that 56.76% of respondents believe that the company they work for has measures in place to help employees better integrate their work and personal lives, while on the other hand, 43.24% stated that there are no such measures.

Graph 7. Does your organization offer training opportunities to improve employees' digital skills?



The results from the previous chart indicate that 70.27% of respondents within their organizations have specific training to improve their digital skills. On the other hand, 29.73% of respondents do not have this option within their organizations

Table 9. Sociodemographic data - Germany

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	20.00	0	1	1
	24.00	0	2	2
	26.00	0	2	2
	28.00	2	0	2
	31.00	1	0	1
	32.00	1	3	4

	33.00	0	1	1
	36.00	1	0	1
	38.00	1	2	3
	40.00	1	0	1
	43.00	0	2	2
	44.00	0	1	1
	48.00	0	1	1
	49.00	0	1	1
	50.00	1	1	2
	51.00	1	1	2
	54.00	1	1	2
	57.00	0	1	1
	58.00	0	2	2
	59.00	0	1	1
	60.00	1	1	2
	61.00	0	1	1
	62.00	1	0	1
Total		12	25	37

The previous table shows the results related to the gender and age of the respondents. The sample included more women (25) than men (12). The youngest person in the sample is a female, aged 22. The oldest person in the sample is a male, aged 62.

4 4 Capacity Building (CB) and sharing of experiences

Within Work Package 1 of the APOLLO project, Activity 1.3 focuses on **capacity-building for stakeholders**, recognizing that sustainable welfare innovation cannot be achieved without strengthening the skills, knowledge, and readiness of those directly involved. While previous activities in WP1 concentrated on mapping best practices and identifying needs, Activity 1.3 shifts the emphasis toward

preparing stakeholders—public administrations, SMEs, workers, and community actors—for active participation in welfare innovation processes. The rationale is simple but vital: innovative solutions can only succeed if the people and organizations responsible for implementing them are well-informed, motivated, and equipped with the right tools.

The activity is designed as a **series of training events and workshops** across partner countries, with each national partner tailoring the sessions to local priorities while following a shared methodological framework. These workshops provide a structured space for **knowledge transfer and skills development**, covering topics such as work-life balance policies, digital literacy, business intelligence, and the use of innovative HR measures. They are not limited to abstract lectures; rather, they emphasize practical strategies, interactive discussions, and real-world examples that participants can directly apply in their organizations and communities.

The **objectives of Activity 1.3** are threefold. First, to **build competences among stakeholders**, ensuring that they are better prepared to design and implement welfare measures that respond to the challenges of digitalization and demographic change in Alpine regions. Second, to **foster cooperation and dialogue**, creating opportunities for SMEs, public bodies, and civil society actors to engage with each other, share experiences, and co-create solutions. Third, to **create alignment across the consortium**, ensuring that the lessons from capacity-building activities feed directly into the pilot actions (WP2) and ultimately inform the policy recommendations (WP3).

APOLLO not only raises awareness but also creates a stronger ecosystem of actors who are capable of contributing to territorial corporate welfare. The workshops and training sessions thus serve as both a **learning platform** and a **community-building exercise**, reinforcing the project's commitment to participatory, evidence-based, and sustainable innovation.

4.1 **4.1 Italy**

“Territorial Welfare and Digitalization: Building Local Solutions through Collaboration”

This document summarizes the training program "Territorial Welfare and Digitalization: Building Local Solutions through Collaboration," conducted by the Percorsi di Secondo Welfare Laboratory on behalf of the Municipality of Saluzzo as part of the Apollo project - Territorial corporate welfare through digitalization and cooperation, an initiative promoted by the European Interreg Alpine Space 2021-2027 program.

The document is structured into three sections. The first describes the training program, including the teaching methods adopted and participation rates. The second provides a brief summary of the content covered during the face-to-face session. The third presents the main findings, reflections, and proposals that emerged from the workshop session included in the training meeting. The

document is intended to serve both as an internal reporting tool for the Apollo project and as an informative and inspirational resource for designing future training programs on the topic of territorial welfare and digitally supported social innovation.

Teaching Methodology

The training program was designed as a capacity-building activity for stakeholders involved in the Apollo project, with the aim of strengthening participants' skills and awareness of local welfare and digital practices for social innovation. Faced with increasingly complex, interconnected, and multidimensional needs, the need for local and digital solutions that can respond by promoting an integrated, multistakeholder approach to designing local services emerges. In light of this scenario, the training objectives around which the entire activity was built can be summarized as follows:

- Increase stakeholder awareness of key concepts related to local welfare, social innovation, and the opportunities offered by digitalization for improving local services.
- Stimulate shared reflection on current challenges facing local contexts in terms of citizen well-being, accessibility to services, collaborative practices and the development of multistakeholder networks.
- Present experiences and best practices already implemented in other contexts, with the aim of offering concrete examples capable of inspiring and positively influencing local planning.
- Foster dialogue and collaboration among participants, creating a space for discussion aimed at both the mutual exchange of experiences and the construction of local networks and the definition of future shared actions.

The training program was structured into two days, divided into 3.5-hour modules, replicated for two separate groups of participants. The first group attended the training on May 20, 2025, at the Saluzzo Municipality; the second group attended the training on May 23, 2025, at the Piedmont Regional Government Building. The teaching structure included a combination of a classroom session and a workshop. The intent was to emphasize a participatory model, oriented not only toward knowledge transfer but also toward leveraging participants' skills and experiences, promoting learning as a collective and contextualized process. The workshop session, in particular, represented a key opportunity to activate dynamics of

discussion regarding specific local needs and opportunities and foster the potential co-construction and design of replicable solutions capable of responding promptly and innovatively to local needs.

Training program

The training program was designed to offer participants a broad and structured vision of local welfare, highlighting the potential of digitalization as a tool for innovating social practices. The program helped strengthen the technical and strategic skills of local stakeholders, while encouraging a shared and collaborative understanding of ongoing changes. From this perspective, the work promoted the concept of welfare as an integrated system, rooted in local communities, capable of leveraging the opportunities offered by digital technologies to expand access to services, support innovation, and generate lasting alliances between diverse stakeholders.

Specifically, the course focused on three main thematic areas:

Introduction to Local Welfare

A conceptual introduction was offered to clarify the meaning and relevance of local welfare in the current context, exploring the underlying paradigms, the role of the actors involved, and the relationship between various local stakeholders. Particular attention was paid to multistakeholder networks and collaborative practices, specifically co-programming and co-design, as key tools for integrating the public, private, and third sectors, as well as the emergence of new professional roles, such as welfare managers, in social innovation processes.

Digitalization as a Lever for Social Innovation

A reflection on platform welfare, analyzing the use of digital tools to support welfare: marketplace platforms for polling demand and professionalizing supply, and multichannel platforms for social recomposition; in particular, their potential and the conditions for their effectiveness. The presentation explored how digital technologies can enable collaborative practices, improve accessibility to services, and foster inclusion, especially at the local level.

Case study presentation: the WellGranda project

The meeting included the presentation of a concrete good practice, represented by the WellGranda project, a virtuous example of local welfare focused on collaboration between public bodies, businesses, and third-sector actors. The case study was presented directly by its promoters (Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo and Socialfare), thus offering participants the opportunity to engage with a real and transferable experience.

Workshop session

The second part of the training session was dedicated to a workshop session, conceived as a space for active discussion and reflection among participants.
This moment represented a methodologically relevant step in the capacity-building process, with the aim of activating a collective intelligence capable of bringing out the experiences, needs, and visions of the various local contexts involved.

Participants were randomly divided into groups to promote the cross-fertilization of different perspectives and foster exchange between roles, regions, and expertise.

Each group was asked to discuss a series of thematic stimuli, designed to dynamically and participatively explore the role of collaboration and social innovation in local welfare processes.

The discussion was structured along three time dimensions — past, present, and future—to enhance both past experiences and evolving perspectives. The proposed stimuli, organized in a table below:

Collaborative experiences	**Innovative experiences**
● What experiences have you had, as an organization, in which collaboration between different stakeholders led to more effective solutions for local needs? ● What were the main factors that favored collaboration? ● What, however, hindered or made it less effective?	● Have you encountered or realized experiences in your area that can be defined as "social innovation"? ● What characteristics make them innovative (new solutions, new actors, new processes)?

Current dynamicsd

- How would you currently assess your organization's ability to work collaboratively with other local stakeholders?
- In which areas do you feel strongest and where, instead, do you perceive a need for growth (interpersonal skills, participatory planning, governance, etc.)?

Future prospects

- Is there a shared vision of territorial welfare in your local context?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in trying to build it together?

Workshop Session of May 20

With respect to the dimensions listed above, the following findings, divided by thematic nodes, emerged from the workshop session of May 20 participants.

Collaborative experiences

The testimonies collected reveal a strong sense of collaboration between various local entities, albeit with varying methods and levels of formalization. For example, IMECO Ambiente e Servizi has built an informal network with trade associations and local institutions, successfully pursuing concrete projects such as the employment of people with disabilities, supported by a disability counselor.

At the same time, the Municipality of Saluzzo has collaborated with cultural, healthcare, and social organizations on initiatives that connect culture and well-being, such as projects dedicated to Alzheimer's patients or elderly people with digital disabilities. Another particularly significant model is that of WeCom with its "Accademia della Vigna," which connects producers, consortia, and social-welfare services, creating an integrated system that combines training, employment, and independent living.

The Monviso Solidale Consortium has also conducted working groups with various local stakeholders to promote a culture of collaboration that can serve as the basis for social protection and community development.

The Armonia cooperative, meanwhile, emphasizes the importance of building permanent networks between businesses and the third sector to address social needs in an integrated manner. Finally, Informatica System and the Peirone Foundation emphasize how collaborations can be valuable but often suffer from a lack of structured communication and adequate recognition.

Innovative experiences

Among these innovative experiences is IMECO's corporate welfare project, which goes beyond traditional assistance by offering healthcare support, mobility

bonuses, and specialist visits. The Municipality of Saluzzo's cultural initiatives also represent an attempt to combine culture and health, as well as promote inclusion. The Accademia della Vigna stands out for its integrated approach, directly involving companies in the training and hiring of migrant workers, thus fostering genuine social and occupational integration. Another significant innovation is the IC Lab project promoted by the Consorzio Monviso Solidale, which involved forty stakeholders in the co-design of spaces and services for young people, emphasizing shared and participatory governance.
Finally, the Ollipay project represents an interesting example of digital innovation applied to local welfare: through a platform that promotes welfare credit in local businesses, the local economy is supported and the territorial network is strengthened.

Current dynamics

A series of challenges emerge from shared experiences. One of the main critical issues concerns sectoral fragmentation, especially within municipalities, which limits a unified and integrated vision of welfare. The networks established are often imposed from above, without the true involvement of local stakeholders, and are characterized by a lack of mediators capable of facilitating dialogue between different sectors, such as social, healthcare, and business.
Communication within networks is often lacking, with smaller entities feeling excluded or out of touch with activities, and organizational differences between partners slow down project implementation. Furthermore, excessive bureaucracy represents an obstacle to the effective use of available resources. The groups expressed awareness of the commitment to building and maintaining networks and the relationships within them; in their experience, this aspect is often underestimated or unrecognized.
Finally, attention is paid to cultural welfare, which currently suffers from limited recognition, as culture is seen primarily in terms of tourism or economics, rather than as a factor of collective well-being.

Future prospects

Regarding possible directions, stakeholders agree on the importance of more formalized and shared network governance, including clear roles and stable political mandates. Direct citizen involvement is considered essential to generating

new demands and fostering change. From this perspective, steering committees and local roundtables are essential tools for maintaining collaboration, provided they are democratic and representative. It is also recognized that maintaining the network is an ongoing and delicate process: without ongoing relationships and attention to social dynamics, even the best projects risk losing effectiveness over time. This aspect underscores the need for facilitators, welfare managers, and mediators capable of building long-term relationships and managing the complexity of collaborations. The role of the digital facilitator is particularly interesting, as it combines the technological with the social and territorial dimensions, enabling the creation of a more accessible and people-focused welfare system, capable of bridging distances. Digitalization can also become a social lever if supported by facilitators with both technical and social skills, capable of translating digital tools into opportunities for inclusion and proximity. Finally, with respect to the specific characteristics of the reference territory, cultural and corporate welfare are recognized as an important field of innovation, enhancing the role of companies in promoting the well-being of employees and, more generally, of local communities.

Workshop session of May 23

As above, the findings from the May 23 workshop session, divided by thematic nodes, are reported below.

Collaborative experiences

Most participants stated that they had already experienced—in varying degrees—experiences in which collaboration between public, private, and third-sector entities has generated more effective responses to local needs. Some companies, particularly medium-sized ones, have initiated forms of cooperation with local organizations, trade associations, or other entities to offer welfare services to their employees. In some cases, these have involved micro-interventions, such as offering tax or social assistance within the company, or initiatives aimed at the local community, such as supporting schools or local associations. However, the collaborative model is often limited by a corporate culture that is still not network-oriented: in many industrial areas, companies, despite being physically close, tend to remain isolated and fail to communicate with each other. The main challenges relate to the scarcity of financial and human resources, especially in SMEs, which

struggle to structure shared and long-lasting actions. Furthermore, there is a lack of local leadership that fosters collaboration and joint planning.

Innovative experiences

Several examples of social innovation have been reported, both within companies and in their relationships with the local community. The most active companies have implemented flexible and personalized welfare interventions, resulting from a careful analysis of internal needs: parenting support, activities for physical and mental well-being (such as yoga, counseling, company choirs), as well as basic administrative services. Another area of innovation is digitalization, both as a tool to facilitate access to services (e.g., SPID, Electronic Health Record) and as a lever for citizen autonomy, particularly in inland areas. Some experiences have also highlighted the positive role of dialogue between different business environments (e.g., cooperatives and industrial companies), which has led to a constructive exchange between different organizational approaches and practices. Also innovative is the introduction of figures such as the WCLR coach, a point of reference for workers who helps them navigate the opportunities made available by the company, facilitating the emergence and addressing of individual needs, even those related to situations of vulnerability.

Current dynamics

The organizations involved demonstrate a growing awareness of organizational well-being and the value of welfare, but also highlight significant room for improvement. On the one hand, there is a growing desire to create more welcoming work environments, capable of fostering a sense of belonging and motivation among employees. In highly relational contexts, this translates into concrete attention to the individual worker. On the other hand, many organizations find themselves operating under tight deadlines and with limited resources. Welfare initiatives are often seen as an "extra" activity, difficult to plan and integrate into ordinary processes. The interpersonal and planning skills needed to implement participatory and sustainable interventions are still partially underdeveloped. The information gap also represents a significant barrier: if welfare services are tested, if they are not communicated clearly and accessible, they risk being perceived with suspicion or ignored.

Prospects

In terms of prospects, a shared challenge has emerged: building a vision of local welfare that combines the corporate and community dimensions. Many areas lack a shared framework capable of guiding and supporting individual initiatives. Businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, often find themselves facing these issues alone, without clear references or stable support networks. However, opportunities can arise precisely from these weaknesses. Fostering encounters between different realities, promoting simple yet comprehensive services, investing in training and support, strengthening the role of trade associations as network facilitators: these are all possible ways to build a more accessible, integrated welfare system that meets the needs of today. In particular, the growing focus on well-being in the broadest sense and the personalization of services represents a shared orientation, especially in response to the expectations of younger generations. Welfare, in this sense, is not just a set of benefits, but a cultural lever for rethinking the way organizations work, interact with the community, and generate social value.

4.2 Slovenia

As part of Work Package 1, the APOLLO project places a strong emphasis on **capacity-building workshops** designed to equip stakeholders with knowledge, tools, and perspectives necessary for the development of territorial corporate welfare in Alpine regions. In Slovenia, two key workshops were organized at the **Centre for Education and Culture Trebnje**, each addressing different but complementary aspects of welfare and digitalization. These workshops exemplify the project's aim of creating spaces for learning, dialogue, and the exchange of best practices among researchers, employers, employees, and local communities.

The first workshop, held on **14 March 2025**, focused on the theme *"Uravnoteženje poklicnega in zasebnega življenja"* (Balancing professional and private life). This event addressed one of the central challenges of the modern labor market—achieving work-life balance in an era of digitalization and flexible working models. The program featured a presentation of APOLLO project results to date by **dr. Lejla Imamović Lerić** and **dr. Zinka Kosec**, followed by a contribution from **Ana**

Furlani on human resources measures, particularly emphasizing the emerging **right to disconnect**. The session concluded with an interactive discussion on work-life balance, engaging participants in reflecting on practical strategies for implementing welfare policies in organizations. The workshop not only introduced participants to theoretical insights but also connected them with concrete HR measures that can be adapted to the Slovenian context.

The second workshop, held on **17 April 2025**, carried the title *"Podatki, ki govorijo: Umetnost poslovne inteligence"* (Data that speaks: The art of business intelligence). This event emphasized the **role of data and analytics in welfare decision-making**, exploring how organizations can leverage business intelligence tools to create competitive advantage and support better welfare policies. Participants were introduced to methods of transforming raw data into actionable insights and shown how data-driven decision-making can serve as a foundation for sustainable welfare systems. This workshop reflected the digitalization dimension of APOLLO, highlighting how technological tools are essential not only for businesses but also for public administrations in shaping effective welfare measures.

The **objectives of these workshops** were multifaceted. First, they sought to **raise awareness among stakeholders** about the challenges and opportunities in work-life balance and digital transformation. Second, they provided **practical knowledge and skills**, from HR practices to business intelligence, that participants could apply in their professional environments. Third, they acted as a **platform for dialogue and cooperation**, bringing together different stakeholders to discuss welfare-related issues from multiple perspectives. Finally, they strengthened the **transnational and transferable dimension** of the APOLLO project by aligning Slovenian practices with broader Alpine and European strategies.

4.3 **Austria**

Promotion of sharing welfare services in remote work

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Abstract:

The internet has transformed how organizations collaborate and cooperate with internal and external stakeholders. For example, the advancements have brought stakeholders closer together and, by the use of web-based applications, technologies, and services, opened smart and efficient forms of (inter-) organizational collaboration. In addition, innovative working models such as remote work, hybrid arrangements, and the rise of digital nomadism have been enabled. Remote work has become part of organizational culture across many industries. However, municipalities and public administrations often lag in adopting these changes and implementing them in their organizational culture. This document at hand presents a needs analysis about the promotion of sharing welfare services in remote work. This document is organized in four sections. Section 1 introduces the Apollo project and the pilot on welfare services in public administration and municipalities (pilot Austria). It presents the research motivation and research questions guiding the pilot as well as the methodological design of the needs analysis. Section introduces the responsibilities in implementing of the different actors: the Republic of Austria, the Federal States of Austria, and the Municipalities. Section 3 presents a needs analysis based on the conduction of a PEST(EL) analysis. In doing so, the needs and challenges according to the stakeholders political environment, economic environment, social environment, technological environment, natural environment, and legal environment have been developed. Section 4 presents a needs analysis by making

use of the SWOT analysis tool. Based on qualitative research (interviews) and quantitative research (Apollo questionnaire), the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats have been developed. The subject of research of the SWOT analysis is the Municipality of Doren and its employees. The document at hand has been presented in three capacity building workshops in a) Doren (presentation of the intermediate research results, May 2025), b) Dornbirn (presentation of the final results; part of FHV's market place, June 2025), and c) Langen b. Bregenz (presentation of the final results to representatives of the Regio Bregenzerwald, district administrator, state parliament representatives and state councilors.

Introduction to the Apollo project: pilot on welfare services

The Apollo project investigates into the many challenges and opportunities that come with the digitalization of work and the future of work approach combined with the further development of public services in rural communities. It starts from the observation that new forms of work, such as remote work or hybrid models, influence not only how work is organized but also how people live and what future prospects exist in rural areas.

The goal of the pilot on sharing welfare services in remote work (pilot: Austria) is to learn from good examples and to draw up practical recommendations for how rural municipalities can bring modern forms of work and social services into their structures so they remain viable in the future. It is the question of what political, economic, social, and technological conditions are needed so that these new ways of working can become part of local administration and everyday life. The pilot also looks at the role of digital social welfare services that are essential for a functioning community, especially childcare, care for older people, education, and participation in social life.

The EU project *AlpSatellites* defines welfare services as the social and structural services that allow citizens to take part in social and economic life regardless of where they live. In this context, accessibility, quality, and the integration of digital technologies are emphasized – for example, through e-health, digital administration, or virtual care formats. According to *AlpSatellites*, access to welfare services is therefore crucial for the long-term viability of rural municipalities. These include childcare, eldercare, education, social counselling, leisure activities, as well

as cultural and health-related services. In rural areas, these services are especially important because they not only improve quality of life but can also counteract the outmigration of young families and skilled workers.

Small and rural municipalities in the Alps: research motivation and research questions

Small and rural municipalities have a remarkably diverse infrastructure in the field of social services. Important services include kindergarten, primary and middle school, nature park activities, and clubs that shape cultural and social life, such as the music association and the volunteer fire brigade. These structures make an important contribution to social integration and intergenerational cooperation and facilities stabilize community life and strengthen independence, especially for older residents and families with children. However, to keep knowledge workers in the region as well as to attract the region for migrants, not only the physical availability of services is important but also their digital development – especially with new forms of work such as remote work, it becomes clear that modern welfare services are a key pillar for keeping people in the region over the long term.

In many small and rural municipalities, there are structural challenges. Access to specialized care and medical services is limited, skilled staff for social and digital services is difficult to attract, and digital administration is still in its early stages. The existing club life also holds potential for expanding low-threshold social services, such as neighbourhood help, youth programs, or support for senior citizens. To make remote work successful in the long term, more is needed than just technical equipment. The conditions analysed in the AlpSatellites project show that digital infrastructure, family-friendly structures, social integration, and digital skills are all crucial. For long-term development, however, municipalities need to offer more than a stable internet connection. A broader approach is needed, where digital administration (for example through the “Digitales Amt” app or ID Austria), social services, and good quality of life all work together. In municipalities like Doren, which already have a functioning social infrastructure with kindergarten, school, municipal office, and community life, the careful expansion of digital work and administration can become an important advantage – if the right conditions are in place. These conditions include nearby childcare, well-equipped co-working spaces, digital learning opportunities, and support services

for older people or single parents. Only when such social services are available and easy to access can remote work be established as an attractive and lasting way of living and working in the region. Two main questions that guide the pilot on welfare services are:

- What are the key factors that make it possible for municipalities to introduce remote work from political, ecological, social, and technological perspectives, and how can remote work be put into practice?
- Which social services can help to strengthen and support a culture of location-independent work in rural municipalities in the long term?

The answers to these questions are expected to provide practical insights that can also be applied in other municipalities and that can support decision-makers in administration and politics.

Methodological design: needs analysis

To respond to these questions, a needs analysis is conducted. The needs analysis of the pilot on welfare services follows a methodological design that combines both qualitative and quantitative elements. The aim is to gain the most comprehensive picture possible of the situation in small and rural municipalities and to be able to develop well-founded recommendations. In doing so, the Municipality of Doren act as pilot partner.

The starting point is a literature review on the topics of remote work, administrative modernization, and social services in rural areas, which serves to create a theoretical framework. This includes, in particular, state and federal foundations such as materials from national and regional administrative training programs, as well as studies and reports from the Austrian Association of Municipalities or Alpine Space projects such as *AlpSatellites*. The goal is to systematically capture local perspectives and needs, while also taking into account other relevant stakeholders such as regional businesses, educational institutions, citizens, and social organizations.

Initial Situation: The Republic of Austria, its Federal States and municipalities

Austria is a federal state where responsibilities are divided between the national government, the regions, and the municipalities. The national level holds the strongest powers. It sets the main legal framework for areas such as foreign affairs, defence, finance, civil and criminal law, and social insurance.

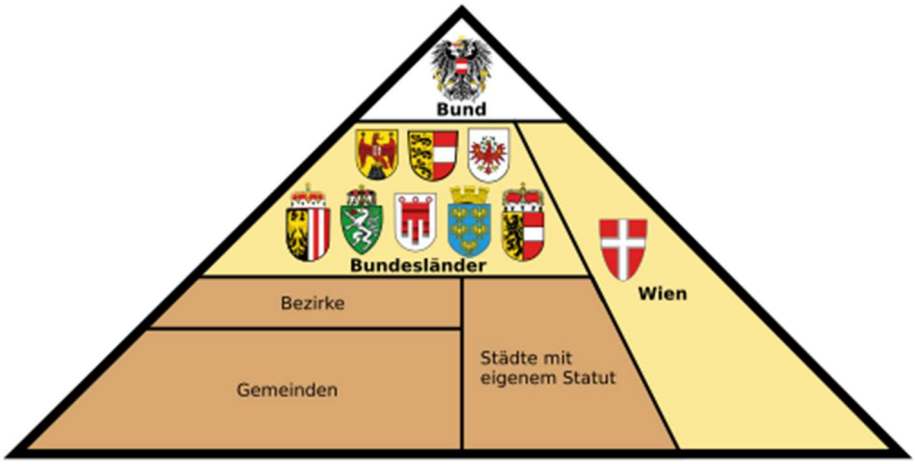


Figure 1: Administrative Structure of Austria

Many laws, as depicted in figure 1, are carried out not by federal offices directly but by regional authorities on behalf of the national government. To ensure fair distribution, taxes collected by the federal state are shared with regions and municipalities. Cooperation agreements also allow joint action in areas such as health and education.

In the social field, the national government is responsible for social insurance systems, pensions, unemployment support, and labour market policies. It provides the legal framework and finances these services. Regions and municipalities also carry responsibilities in areas such as healthcare, social assistance, childcare, and elderly care. To coordinate these tasks, the national level again uses financial transfers and agreements with the regions. In 2023, for example, billions were transferred from the federal budget to strengthen the pension system.

The regions, such as Vorarlberg, have their own law-making powers in many fields, including planning, housing, environmental protection, tourism, and education. They also carry out many national laws. The regional parliament passes laws, and regional authorities and offices implement them. In addition to their own

departments, regions often run institutions such as hospitals, schools, or cultural venues through public companies.

Municipalities form the base of the Austrian administration and are the closest level to the citizens. They not only carry out tasks such as registration, taxes, permits, and local infrastructure but also play an important social role, especially in rural areas. They shape local life, maintain community identity, and provide services such as childcare and events. Small municipalities, however, face challenges: limited funds, a lack of skilled staff, and increasingly complex regulations.

Digitalization has become a central task at the federal level. Austria has built an early and strong system of electronic government. Laws such as the E-Government Act define digital identification and signatures, and services such as *ID Austria*, *Digitales Amt* , and *FinanzOnline* give citizens and businesses access to public services. Efforts are also underway to avoid duplicate data collection through a "once-only" principle.

Digitalization is also changing local administration. In Vorarlberg, initiatives such as *Digitales Vorarlberg* support broadband expansion and online services. Many municipalities already offer digital applications, from electronic files to online registration. For small communities like Doren, these systems are costly and require expertise, so cooperation between municipalities is becoming more important. But also, digitalization creates new opportunities for remote work. With good internet connections, co-working spaces, and local services, small and rural regions can become attractive places to live and work. This can slow down the outflow of young people and even attract new residents. Municipal administrations themselves can lead by example by offering flexible work models to their own employees, helping them to recruit and keep qualified staff.

However, small municipalities face the challenge of ensuring citizen proximity, efficiency, and modernization at the same time. Their small size, short distances, and strong social ties are clear strengths, but these strengths reach their limits quickly when financial and human resources are scarce. This is especially true for technological investments, attracting skilled staff, and maintaining social services.

The system of financial equalization provides funding, but it is often not enough for small municipalities to carry out ambitious digital or social projects on their own. Targeted support programs from the national and regional levels are needed, especially for small communities. Cooperation across municipal boundaries should also be strengthened, for example through regional IT services, joint care facilities, or shared administrative platforms.

In addition to technical and financial support, a cultural shift is necessary. Small municipalities should be actively involved in innovation processes and position themselves confidently as shapers of living spaces. This includes promoting new models of work and life such as remote work, developing co-working spaces, or encouraging the settlement of digital jobs. In the long run, federal cooperation can become a driver of innovation if all levels play to their strengths, act in partnership, and share responsibility for the digital and social future of the regions. Only then can quality of life in small municipalities like Doren be sustainably secured and further developed.

Needs analysis by using the PEST(EL) framework

The needs analysis of the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal framework shows that remote work in small and rural municipalities is generally feasible but depends on specific conditions. Some municipalities already have initial structures that can be expanded but repeatedly encounters limits set by federal responsibilities, financial resources, and digital inclusion. Opportunities such as reduced commuting, strengthening the regional economy, and reusing existing infrastructure are clearly evident. At the same time, targeted measures are required, especially in childcare, digital skills, and infrastructure, to establish remote work in a sustainable way. The municipality’s scope of action is limited, but in cooperation with the state and the region, important milestones can be achieved. Remote work can thus contribute to local development if the framework conditions are strategically advanced. These findings highlight that welfare services related to remote work need to be considered holistically. Structural measures, such as working-time regulations, are a good start, but they are not sufficient if social and emotional support is lacking. It also becomes clear that access to coworking spaces, opportunities for further training, and family-friendly services play key roles.

Needs analysis from a political perspective

The political framework for implementing remote work in municipalities is shaped by Austria's federal structure. The distribution of responsibilities between the federal government, the states, and the municipalities determines which measures can be initiated and implemented at which level. While the federal government establishes the central legal framework through laws such as the E-Government Act, the General Social Insurance Act (ASVG), or the Digital Austria Act, practical implementation often lies with the state of Vorarlberg.

Municipalities itself have only limited political scope for action. It depends on cooperation with higher levels, particularly with the state and associations (i.e., Regio's). Within these structures, projects are bundled, coordinated, and in part financed. Independently, (small) municipalities can only implement measures within its statutory responsibilities, for example in the area of digital citizen services or social offerings.

Despite these structural limitations, the municipality shows a generally open attitude towards digital developments. This is reflected, for instance, in its participation in the "Apollo" project and its use of digital platforms such as ID Austria or the "Digitales Amt" service. However, there is currently no municipal digital strategy that goes beyond individual projects and explicitly integrates remote work as a political objective. The municipality therefore acts more reactively than strategically.

For remote work to become firmly established in municipalities in the long term, political frameworks should be further developed, for example through a municipal digital strategy coordinated with existing state initiatives. Clear allocation of responsibilities and the active use of regional cooperation structures (e.g. Regio) appear to be decisive influencing factors.

Needs analysis from an economic perspective

The economic situation in (small) municipalities is characterized by a limited number of local jobs and a high proportion of commuters. Many residents depend on workplaces outside the municipality, which creates structural dependence on surrounding centers.

Remote work offers a concrete opportunity to reduce this dependence. By enabling people to work from home, qualified workers could remain in the region and outmigration could be mitigated. A functioning remote work infrastructure would also increase the attractiveness of the municipality for new residents.

A prerequisite for this is reliable broadband access, the nationwide expansion of which is planned until 2028. Due to the dispersed settlement structure, this expansion is costly but represents an essential basis for economic development.

In the long term, remote work can contribute to economic stabilization in rural communities, provided that digital infrastructure and framework conditions are specifically supported and used.

Needs analysis from a social perspective

Demographic development in (small) municipalities is marked by an aging population and the outmigration of young people. This directly affects the sustainability of local services and, in the long term, challenges the social infrastructure.

Remote work requires social conditions that are only partly fulfilled in Doren. Childcare and care services are available but limited. For families and single parents, reliable services to reconcile work and care responsibilities are lacking.

The findings also show that digital skills are insufficient in parts of the population. Older people, but also some younger ones, need support. The municipality is already responding with initiatives such as “Digital Fit,” but the need for individual assistance remains high. Digital services like ID Austria are only partially used. Many people require help with setup or avoid using them altogether.

The coworking spaces (i.e., “Unser KleinWien” in the municipality of Doren) play a key role in enabling new work models in rural areas. It provides not only physical workplaces but also social structures that combine digital work with local presence. For people who cannot work effectively from home due to limited space or care responsibilities, it offers a realistic alternative. In Doren, it serves as a hub for exchange, training, and collaborative work, and is thus an important building block for a socially embedded remote work culture.

Overall, the social infrastructure in Doren is functional but not fully adapted to new work models. For a stable remote work culture, support structures are needed that ensure both care and digital participation.

Needs analysis from a technological perspective

A functioning digital infrastructure is a basic prerequisite for remote work. Especially in small and/or rural municipalities, there are still gaps in broadband coverage. In more remote areas, speed and stability are sometimes limited. A full rollout of fiber-optic connections is planned by 2028 but poses financial and logistical challenges due to the settlement structure.

Not all households have stable internet connections or adequate technical equipment. Digital services such as ID Austria or the “Digitales Amt” are not yet widely used. Many citizens require support with setup or operation, partly due to lack of experience and partly because of the variety of tools used in parallel. In addition to the commitment of municipal staff, the “Digital Fit” project is underway to promote digital skills, but it is still at an early stage. Complementary measures, such as simple instructional videos, could help to reduce recurring problems and make access to e-government services easier. Overall, the need for support remains high.

Coworking spaces provide local relief. It not only offers infrastructure but also stable connectivity and access to technical resources for those whose private circumstances are insufficient. This complements the digital provision at municipal level and creates an important prerequisite for location-independent work.

Needs analysis from an environmental perspective

Remote work can help reduce commuting in rural areas. In Doren, where most journeys are made by car due to the lack of a railway connection, this offers an ecological advantage. A stronger shift towards home offices or local coworking spaces would noticeably reduce CO_2 emissions from individual transport.

At the same time, infrastructure expansion projects pose potential risks to the natural environment. For example, the planned fiber rollout requires careful construction methods in areas prone to landslides. Digging works in such slopes

involve greater effort and ecological risks. In this context, it should also be considered that more remote work will increase electricity consumption in private households as well as in shared infrastructures such as coworking spaces. The digital shift creates new demands on energy supply that need to be factored into planning.

Taken together, remote work presents ecological opportunities but requires a careful and environmentally sensitive implementation of technical infrastructure.

Needs analysis from a legal perspective

The legal framework for digitalization and remote work in Austria is largely defined at higher levels. The Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG), the General Social Insurance Act (ASVG) , the E-Government Act , and complementary state laws form the basis. Small and rural municipalities such as Doren act within the scope of their self-administration and can only take measures in areas assigned to them, such as providing digital citizen services or information.

Implementation of national programs is often carried out through so-called 15a agreements under the Federal Constitutional Law between the federal government and the states, particularly in education and social services. The Vorarlberg Municipal Act defines the local responsibilities and the scope of municipal action. Binding regulations to promote home office or digital work do not exist at the municipal level. Whether an employee may work from home is always agreed upon between employer and employee. Municipalities such as Doren have no direct influence. They cannot prescribe or enforce digital work but can create supportive conditions, for example through infrastructure, training, or suitable workspaces. The use of digital administration tools is also subject to legal restrictions. Municipal employees may only carry out basic steps when setting up services such as ID Austria, such as initial activation. Further steps, such as setting up mailboxes or accessing sensitive services, must be done by citizens themselves for data protection reasons. This results in a certain need for assistance, which, however, can only be covered informally within legal limits.

Needs analysis by using the SWOT analysis tool

In the course of the pilot on welfare services, a SWOT analysis has been conducted.

SWOT Analysis (pilot partner: municipality of Doren)		Internal Analysis	
		Strenghts	Weaknesses
External Analysis	Opportunities	* Premium Coworking Hub, * Family-friendly Remote Work, * Role Model / becoming a role model, * Workplace close to nature, * Funding and International Relations	* Intercommunal IT-services, * Peer-2-peer education and trainings, * Vacancy activation, * Funding for re-constructions, * Expansion of the digital fit
	Threats	* Flexible Administration, * Talents Aquisition, * Remote-Community formats, * Hybrid work for clubs and societies, * Social network	* Central Funding Strategy, * Resilient Infrastructure, * Crisis-safe planning, * Avoidance of non usable investment, * Operating frames

Figure 2: SWOT-Analysis

As depicted in Figure 2, a SWOT analysis is a tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a situation. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors, while opportunities and threats come from the external environment. A SWOT helps in strategic planning by identifying advantages to build on, weaknesses to address, opportunities to pursue, and risks to manage. The following sections present the results of the needs analysis of the pilot case partner “Municipality Doren” (a small and rural municipality in Vorarlberg, Austria) by using the SWOT analysis tool.

Analysing the strengths of pilot partner Doren

- Good basic infrastructure: presence of a kindergarten, primary school, active clubs, and the library “Unser KleinWien” with Wi-Fi and workspaces.
- Social engagement: projects like “Zukunftszeichner:innen” and “Digital Fit” show openness to innovation.
- Broadband initiative: planned comprehensive fiber-optic expansion provides a foundation for home office and coworking.
- Nature and quality of life: high living standards due to a natural environment and strong sense of community.
- Inter-municipal cooperation: active participation in regional and supraregional projects (e.g., AlpSatellites).

Analysing the weaknesses of pilot partner Doren

- Limited personnel resources: lack of IT specialists and low administrative capacity for complex digitalization projects.
- Geographic location: no direct rail or highway connection, making access difficult for commuters.

- Demographic pressure: double burden from childcare and eldercare responsibilities, combined with a shortage of skilled workers.
- Construction limitations: risk of landslides reduces available space for new housing or work areas.
- Digital divide: older generations or less tech-savvy groups need intensive support to participate digitally.

Analysing the opportunities of pilot partner Doren

- Growing acceptance of remote work: societal shift toward more flexible forms of work.
- Funding programs & EU projects: support from federal, state, and EU levels for digitalization and strengthening rural areas.
- Attraction of digital nomads and returnees: appeal to people with digital professions who value rural quality of life.
- Development of coworking offerings: expansion of “Unser KleinWien” into a multifunctional community hub.
- Pilot role in the region: positioning Doren as a model municipality for remote work in the Bregenzerwald.

Analysing the (possible) threats of pilot partner Doren

- Migration of young people: if attractive job opportunities are lacking, the risk of rural exodus remains.
- Financial overload: a limited municipal budget can hinder necessary investments in infrastructure and services.
- Technological dependence: delays in broadband expansion or system failures can undermine trust in remote work.
- Administrative overload: increasing tasks without adequate staff or expertise can overwhelm the administration.
- Social isolation: without proper support, digital work arrangements can lead to loneliness.

4.4 Germany

Workshop Objective

Organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration Baden-Württemberg in cooperation with the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Social and Technological Innovation, the APOLLO Workshop convened 21 experts from public administrations, academia, health insurance funds, outpatient care services, trade unions, the digital innovation sector in care, and various associations across Baden-Württemberg. Held at the LebensPhasenHaus in Tübingen, the workshop provided a space to collaboratively explore interdisciplinary approaches to future-proofing welfare provision, with a particular focus on digitally supported outpatient care and nursing services—especially in the field of telecare.

Throughout the workshop, participants engaged with key challenges in care delivery, including night shift organisation, digital infrastructure, and effective interface management. In line with the workshop's objectives, discussions began with an in-depth analysis of territorial welfare needs, tailored to the specific structural and demographic conditions of the region. Building on this foundation, participants examined best practices from across Europe, identifying transferable success factors and potential pitfalls when adapting innovations to the local context in light of the possibilities for a potential APOLLO piloting project.

A central pillar of the workshop was the emphasis on the co-creation process: interactive and interdisciplinary work groups of 4-5 people enabled diverse stakeholders to collaboratively develop forward-looking and practice-oriented care solutions which were then presented and discussed in the collective plenum. This participatory format ensured that the proposed concepts remained grounded in real-world conditions and stakeholder experiences. Finally, the role of digital solutions was explored in depth—ranging from telecare applications and digital tools for care coordination to broader digital infrastructures that support remote care work and client autonomy.

Altogether, the APOLLO Workshop successfully fulfilled its objectives by fostering knowledge exchange, strengthening regional cooperation, and promoting

innovative, inclusive, and technology-enhanced approaches to welfare service delivery in light of the Working Package II Piloting Action.

Findings and Results

Summary of Working Groups

Working Group 1: Family-Friendliness & Flexibility

Participants: Mazlum Oktay, Karen Winterhalter, Dorothee Hummel-Wagner, Manuel Meder, Hermina Koszt

Focus Points:

- Strengthening video consultations to save travel and personnel resources.
- Enabling more family-friendly working hours, including split-shift models that are currently not permissible under existing labour protection regulations.
- Optimising on-call services.
- Legal obligation for municipalities to take more responsibility – e.g., through binding partnerships with care providers or local authorities.
- Deregulation: balancing flexible work models with labour protection laws – reconciling safety with realistic needs.

Working Group 2: Structural Reform & Care Society

Participants: Dr. Karolin Hartmann, Frank Kontermann, Ronja Windmüller, Sabine Feig

Focus Points:

- Structural changes through bottom-up approaches: Stronger involvement of care employees in decision-making processes and more sustainable care and trust relationships between interdisciplinary actors.
- Care society in rural areas: Municipal and/or nursing ward alliances for mutual relief. Again: strengthened care and trust relationships are essential.
- Virtual care society: Bringing care, entertainment, and social participation directly into the home – especially relevant for immobile individuals.

- Expanded interfaces and interdisciplinarity: collaboration between medicine, care, and social work, especially through legislative and regulatory pathways.
- Pull-approach instead of push-approach: user-cantered services and proactive information delivery.
- AI-assisted systems to relieve care personnel.
- Securing sustainable financing for digital care services.
- Politicising pilot projects to create political connectivity and/or policy recommendations.
- Stronger integration of Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) into care services.

Working Group 3: Skills, Infrastructure & Transparency

Participants: Beate Risch, Marianne Thoma, Alexander Hegele, Charlotte Rahmede, Andreas Seitz

Focus Points:

- Clear decision-making aids to determine when physical presence is required and when digital tools suffice.
- Infrastructure issues: availability and regulation of devices and systems, network quality, and data protection.
- Interface issues between care actors, benefactors, and digital tools.
- Expansion of video conferencing and consultation formats.
- More flexible home office arrangements and new working time models.
- Reducing bureaucracy through trust and clearly defined responsibilities and guidelines.
- Improving information dissemination – both between service providers and benefactors and between care services such as nursing wards and patients/families.

Working Group 4: 24/7 Telecare & Language Barriers

Participants: Felix Buss, Michael Kaiser, Andrea Uhlmann, Jennifer Weisz

Focus Points:

- Clarifying competency mapping and interface definitions across stakeholders.
- Digitalising medication reminders and controls.
- 24/7 telecare with translation functions to overcome language barriers.
- Discussions on how digital interfaces should be structured – including financing, liability, and billing.

Summary of Key Issues & Approaches

1. Structural and Legal Frameworks

- *Challenge*: Legal regulations are often seen as hindering innovation in care. They create uncertainty, inhibit autonomous action, and suppress creative problem-solving while reinforcing unclear responsibilities.
- *Approach*: Reform legal frameworks to enable flexibility and experimental practices. Future structures must be based on clear responsibilities and greater trust in local actors.

2. Reducing Bureaucracy Through Trust and Clear Responsibilities

- *Challenge*: Excessive bureaucracy and vague distribution of responsibilities, especially at interfaces between stakeholders, hinder effective care.
- *Approach*: Responsibilities must be clearly and reliably defined. Trust rather than control should be the guiding principle to enhance capacity for action and innovation.

3. Interface Management and Information Flow

- *Challenge*: Inefficient communication between payers, care professionals, relatives, and patients hinders coordinated care.
- *Approach*: Improved communication and transparent structures are needed – both between service providers and payers, and between care services and patients/their families.

4. Targeted Expansion of Digital Solutions

- *Challenge*: The possibilities of digital infrastructure (e.g., for video consultation or telecare) is not yet exhausted and would encompass many solutions, however their sufficient application and implementation is often blocked by technical or legal barriers.
- *Approach*: Targeted expansion of digital care formats and improved digital infrastructure – particularly in rural areas – are essential for modern care delivery.

5. Rethinking Rural Care

- Challenge: Care providers and institutions in rural areas are often overburdened and isolated, which threatens care security.
- *Approach*: Alliances between municipalities and/or care providers can ease the burden. Prerequisites include stable, long-term care and trust structures as well as supportive legislation.

6. Strengthening Participation and Genuine Bottom-up Structures

- *Challenge*: Care workers and their organisations are still too rarely included in decision-making processes. Instead, top-down regulations by legislators and insurers dominate, often detached from real-world practice.
- *Approach*: Sustainable structural reform requires recognising care workers as experts in their field. Reforms and innovative models must be developed bottom-up – with legal frameworks and funding designed to support, not block, these processes.

Plenary Discussion – Cross-cutting Topics

1. Financing & Billing

- How can digital care services be billed more sufficiently?
- How can night shifts be legally and financially regulated?
- Existing financing systems (care funds, SGB regulations) are not yet sufficiently adapted to the variety of digital care services.

2. Interface Issues

- Fragmented systems and lack of unified standards.

- Data protection, liability, and technical compatibility are not ensured.
- Experimental clauses are needed to enable innovation.

3. Digital Night Services & Safety

- *Problem*: Low willingness among staff to be on night call.
    - Reasons: threat perception, lack of safety, solo night-time travel.
    - Existing measures (e.g., emergency buttons, flashlights, pepper spray) are limited in effectiveness.
- Outsourcing night shifts is expensive and lowers care service quality.
- *Suggestions*:
    - Partnerships with local actors (police, emergency services).
    - Digital co-presence, e.g., via tablets with video support.
    - Incident databases to analyse night-call use cases.
    - Standardisation and framework agreements to ensure legal certainty.

4. Lack of Information

- Lack of accessible information for both care workers and recipients:
    - Who offers what?
    - What digital services exist?
    - What financing options are available?
- *Solution*: A central advisory app with an overview of interfaces.

Challenges (Summary)

1. Fragmentation of digital systems & interfaces
2. Legal uncertainty in digitalization (liability, data protection)
3. Inadequate billing mechanisms for digital care services
4. Lack of structural incentives for digital night care
5. Staff shortages vs. on-call obligations
6. Information deficits across all stakeholders
7. Insufficient funding & support instruments

8. Technical infrastructure (especially in rural areas)

Outlook and Solution Approaches

1. Digital & Legal Standards

- Develop interoperable platforms for care providers.
- Unified framework agreements and data protection policies.
- Regulatory “experimental zones” with continuous evaluation.

2. Making Night Services Safe & Attractive

- Virtual co-presence via telecare tools with video monitoring and voice assistants.
- Local safety partnerships with police & emergency services.
- Digital "You’re never alone" concepts.

3. Information & Advisory Ecosystem

- App or platform for all stakeholders including:
    - Available care providers & services
    - Billing options
    - Emergency services & on-call availability
    - Care planning & preventative support

4. Stronger Collaboration with the Tech Sector

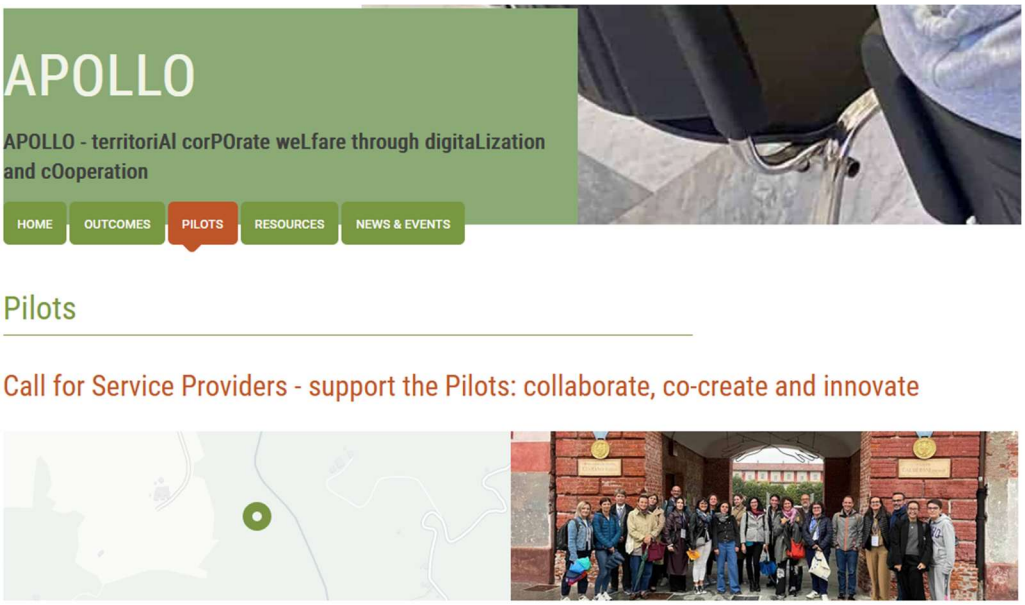
- Reference existing solutions (e.g., Pflegeplatzmanager).
- Collaborate with health-tech and civic-tech startups.
- Promote innovation in interface development.

5 Activity 1.4 and 1.5

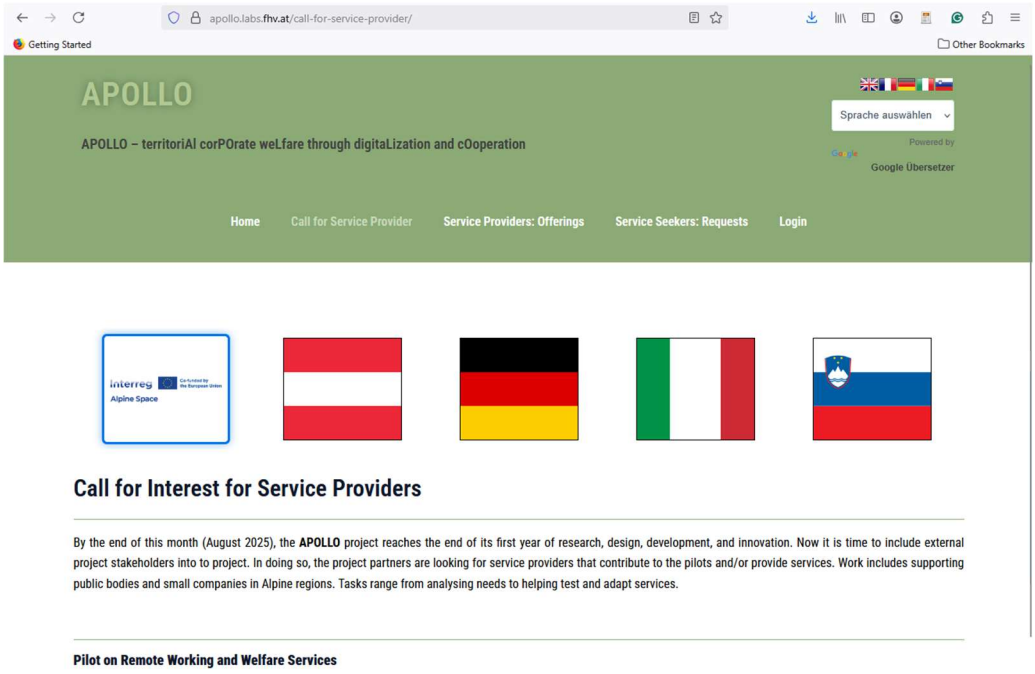
5.1 Activity 1.4 Call for Interest for Service Providers

This activity aims to identify and engage qualified service providers who can contribute to the project's implementation. Through a structured call for interest, potential providers are invited to present their expertise, services, and capacity to support project objectives, ensuring a pool of competent partners for pilot activities.

- Newsletter, launched on the 28th of August
- Homepage Apollo: https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/apollo/
  Section: Pilots



- Call for Service Providers: https://apollo.labs.fhv.at/call-for-service-provider/



5.2 Activity 1.5 Common Methodological Framework for Pilot Implementation

This activity focuses on developing a standardized methodological framework to guide the pilot implementation across different contexts. The framework will define common procedures, tools, and indicators to ensure consistency, comparability, and quality in the delivery and evaluation of pilot interventions.

LINKS FOUNDATION

1. Introduction

This document outlines the common methodological framework for all APOLLO partners implementing pilot actions under Work Package 2. While the content of each pilot may vary according to local context, this framework ensures coherence, comparability, and shared quality standards across the partnership. It also facilitates the preparation of the consolidated deliverable D.2.2.1 coordinated by Saluzzo.

From the AF: *LINKS Foundation and Saluzzo will guide the pilot preparation with two main focuses: 1. CB to improve digital skills to benefit from welfare services; 2) sharing of services and best practices in the field of territorial welfare.*

2.Common elements for all Pilots

2.1 Capacity Building (CB)

Each partner in its pilot action must implement at least one training or empowerment activity addressed to citizens, workers, or public/private employees. The objective is to strengthen digital skills to access and benefit from territorial welfare services, or to promote innovative practices (e.g. digital facilitators, workshops, info materials, etc.) [cfr. pp. 52-53 AF)

2.2 Service Sharing or Innovation

Each partner must implement or test a shared or enhanced welfare service, proposed locally through a participatory territorial welfare approach. Participatory territorial welfare is an approach that actively involves citizens, businesses and local institutions in the co-design and management of welfare services and policies. The goal is to create a social protection system that is more inclusive, personalized and responsive to the specific needs of the local context. Examples include: time banks, info platforms, remote access to services, agreements between PAs and companies, and pilot services in health, mobility, family, digital literacy training program etc… [cfr. pp. 52-53 AF)

2.3 Twinning and Peer Learning

Each partner must establish **one twinning collaboration** with another project partner implementing a similar pilot action. Once you decide on your twinning partner, please let the lead partner know. Twinning may take different forms, such as joint workshops, mutual peer reviews, exchange of methodologies, tools or information, and, where possible, reciprocal participation in each other's events and training activities. This collaboration must be planned from the outset and actively integrated into both the delivery and reporting phases, in order to generate meaningful mutual learning and transnational added value.

3. Implementation Steps

All partners will follow these operational steps:

3.1 Planning phase

Each partner must define the following elements during the planning phase, and report them clearly in the local pilot documentation:

- **Objectives of the pilot action**: describe the specific goals and intended outcomes of the pilot. In order to define your objectives you may want to include any relevant actor/stakeholder (NGOs, welfare service users, digital inclusion expert…).
- **Expected results**: identify both tangible and intangible outputs (e.g. number of trained individuals, developed tools, improved access to services) and the anticipated impact on local stakeholders.
- **SWOT analysis**: provide a brief and strategic overview of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to the pilot implementation.
- **Transnational added value**: clarify how the pilot contributes to transnational learning, and how it can inspire or be transferred to other Alpine territories.
- **Plan twinning and Peer Learning**. Each partner must establish **a single** twinning collaboration with another partner (see p. 53 AF), implementing a similar pilot action. The twinning partner can be anyone from the APOLLO consortium and may be either from the same country or from another one. Twinning may take different forms, such as joint workshops, mutual peer reviews, exchange of methodologies, tools, information or reciprocal participation in each other's events and training activities (if possible). This collaboration must be planned from the outset and actively integrated into the delivery and reporting phases of the pilot, with the aim of generating concrete added value at the transnational level. No specific funds are allocated for twinning activites.

3.2 Delivery phase

- **Implement pilot activities:** CB, sharing of services and best practices**.**
- **Carry out monitoring activities**: collect data and evidence to track progress, including key indicators, participant feedback, questionnaires and any emerging issues or risks. Monitoring should support adaptive management of the pilot. Suggestion: you may keep a weekly or bi-weekly diaries/logs that capture qualitative observations and insights.
- **Engage in active twinning and peer learning**: during implementation, each partner must carry out at least one joint activity with their twinned partner, based on the initial planning. This may include peer reviews, mutual visits, co-development or testing of tools, and shared training or

dissemination events. All twinning activities must be well documented and clearly linked to the pilot's objectives, in order to support knowledge transfer and cross-partner learning.

3.3 Reporting phase

Draft a short Pilot Implementation Report (ca. 2 pages) including:

- **Summary of results**: the final report must include a synthesis of the main results achieved during the pilot, drawing from the information produced in both the planning and delivery phases. This includes initial objectives, expected outcomes, activities implemented, and lessons learned (see par. 3.1).
- **Transnational impact**: assess how the pilot has contributed to transnational knowledge exchange and innovation in the Alpine region, highlighting any concrete added value generated through twinning and peer learning processes.
- **Updated SWOT analysis**: reflect post-implementation insights and re-assess risks and opportunities based on results achieved.
- **Final evaluation**: highlight lessons learned, replicability potential, and relevance for local or regional policies (policy implication).

→ reports must be submitted to Saluzzo and will feed into the consolidated deliverable D.2.2.1.

→ each partner is responsible for the realization of the report. Please, make sure to follow the short template provided at the end of the document.

4. Timeline WP2: from period 2 to period 5

- **Pilot action preparation**: takes place during **Period 2 to Period 3** (*March 2025 – February 2026*), covering all planning activities, partner coordination, and the definition of objectives, expected results, and twinning arrangements.
- **Pilot implementation**: is scheduled from **Period 3 to Period 5** (*February 2026 – February 2027*), during which the planned capacity building actions, service testing, and peer learning exchanges must be carried out.
- **By the end of January 2027** (i.e. one month before the end of Period 5): all partners must submit their **individual pilot implementation reports** to the Municipality of Saluzzo. This buffer allows sufficient time to consolidate the inputs and finalise the joint deliverable D.2.2.1.

6. Overview of Partner Pilot Actions

Below is a summary of each partner's pilot action:

Saluzzo (LP – IT)

- Implementation of a **training programme for digital animators**, who will support workers and citizens in accessing local digital welfare services.
- Coordination of the final report D.2.2.1 and peer contribution to other pilots.

LINKS Foundation (PP2 – IT)

- Development of **digital welfare services** within the organization.
- Contribution to the creation of a transferable model to be used by other Alpine stakeholders (activity 2.3, Gearing up toolkit)

Piedmont Region (PP3 – IT)

- Support to local pilot activities and participation in the coordination of twinned pilots.

FOS (PP4 – SI)

- Implementation of a **Digital Literacy Training Programme** addressed to workers and vulnerable groups.

FHV – University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg (PP5 – AT)

- Creation of a **database of available welfare services** and development of **replicability guidelines** to scale up results.
- Collaboration with Doren to test remote working services for environmental and social sustainability.

TSTI – Steinbeis Transfer GmbH (PP6 – DE)

- Provision of **health and wellbeing services** for workers.

CIK Trebnje (PP7 – SI)

- Local coordination of the Slovenian pilot focused on capacity building for digital inclusion.
- Support in cross-border activities and data collection.

Municipality of Doren (PP8 – AT)

- Joint pilot with FHV focused on **remote working solutions to reduce commuting and air pollution**.
- Support in coordinating Austrian stakeholder involvement.

Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration Baden-Württemberg (PP9 – DE)

- Support in the implementation of digital health services for workers.

Urban Municipality of Novo Mesto (PP10 – SI)

- Engagement in **digital training activities** for municipal employees, to better support citizens in using digital content

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