

Slovenia Celebrates Over Two Years with Two European Digital Innovation Hubs and a DIH with a Certificate of Excellence

The digital transformation of organizations represents a necessary process for achieving competitiveness in both the economic and public sectors, thereby contributing to the development of the entire society. To encourage and accelerate this process, the European Commission has adopted two multi-annual work programs for the Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL) to support digital transformation and strengthen cybersecurity.

In the framework of the call for proposals for European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH), published by the European Commission in 2021, two Slovenian candidates were selected, the DIGI-SI consortium and SRC-EDIH, while 4PDIH obtained a Certificate of Excellence.

European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)

European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are one-stop shops supporting companies (particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises: SME) and public sector organisations to respond to digital challenges and become more competitive. EDIHs support to improve business/production processes, products, or services using digital technologies (artificial intelligence, supercomputing, cybersecurity, etc.) by:

- providing access to technical expertise and testing, as well as the possibility to 'test before invest'
- providing innovation services, such as financing advice, training, and skills development that are central to successful digital transformation
- helping companies tackle environmental issues, in particular the use of digital technologies for sustainability and circularity.

EDIH Network

EDIHs represent pivotal element of the EU's Digital Europe program, a flagship initiative aimed at enhancing digital transformation. By connecting in the EDIH network, the European Commission aims to establish a vibrant community of hubs and other stakeholders, encouraging networking, collaboration, and knowledge transfer activities among EDIHs, businesses, the public sector, and other relevant stakeholders and initiatives. The Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA) supports achieving this goal by managing the network's online presence and hosting the relevant software platform and tools, including the online EDIH catalogue.

The EDIH network's online portal (<https://european-digital-innovation-hubs.ec.europa.eu/home>) includes tools for assessing the network's performance, evaluating the impact of EDIH hubs on the digital maturity of the organizations they support. For this purpose, a digital maturity assessment tool has been developed, which can be used by all EDIHs to measure the progress of their clients' digital maturity. In addition to the digital maturity assessment, organizations receive useful recommendations to enhance their level of digitalization and compare their digital maturity level with similar organizations within the EU area.

Digital Innovation Hubs in Slovenia

Slovenia has ten DIHs, including two co-financed through the Digital Europe Program (DIGI-SI and SRC-EDIH), one recipient of the Certificate of Excellence (4PDIH), and the remaining seven DIHs funded through other initiatives (DIH Slovenia, DIH AGRIFOOD, DIH_DiTMaPS, GreenPulse 5.0, Healthwise Digital Innovation Hub, HPC5, and JSI).

EDIH DIGI-SI

The DIGI-SI consortium, coordinated by the University of Maribor, consists of seven partners: DIH UM, Jožef Stefan Institute, DIH Slovenia, Technology Park Ljubljana, Arctur, ITC – Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota, and TCS – Toolmakers Cluster of Slovenia Celje.

EDIH DIGI-SI promotes the digital transformation of SMEs in four strategic areas identified in the Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy: agriculture, healthcare, tourism, and manufacturing, with a focus on technologies such as AI, high-performance computing (HPC), cybersecurity, blockchain technology, big data, the Internet of Things, virtual and augmented reality, and robotics. The consortium offers 70 high-quality "test before invest" services, training, and support in finding investments. The services provided within the project are free or available at a significantly reduced price, ranging from 15% to 30% of the market price.

The project is valued at 3.3 million euros (with the EU contributing 50 percent, Slovenia 25 percent, and the remaining funds provided by the consortium from its own resources). All information about the project is available on the website <https://digi-si.eu/>.

SRC EDIH

SRC EDIH is a consortium of 16 partner organizations, including the City Municipality of Novo mesto, Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, Faculty of Industrial Engineering Novo mesto, University of Primorska, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Dolenjska and Bela krajina, Faculty of Applied Social Studies in Nova Gorica, University of Nova Gorica, Municipality of Ajdovščina, RIC Bela krajina, CAD/CAM Lab Ltd., Koofr Ltd., Mikrografija Ltd., and associated partners.

SRC EDIH is dedicated to supporting SMEs by testing solutions and components in real environments and enhancing digital processes and business models. It provides all organizations with access to technical expertise through 100 different training sessions and access to 11 testing environments. Additionally, it offers advisory services on financing and access to the innovation ecosystem. Services provided within the project are either free or available at significantly reduced rates, ranging from 10% to 20% of the market price.

The project is valued at just under three million euros (the EU contributes 50%, Slovenia 25%, and the remainder is provided by the consortium from its own resources). All information about the project is available on the website: <https://src-edih.rc-nm.si/en/>.

EDIH 4PDIH

The 4PDIH consortium, led by the University of Ljubljana, consists of 15 key stakeholders in Slovenia focused on the digital transformation of industry, public administration, and society as a whole. These include Primorski Technology Park, Pomurje Technology Park, Štajerski Technology Park, Telekom Slovenije, Iskraemeco, Sfera IT Services, Envirodual, TECOS, Institute of Local Self-Government Maribor, SAŠA Incubator, Center Rog, Incubator d.o.o. Sežana, ZAVOD 404, and the Association of Municipalities of Slovenia.

4PDIH provides technological expertise (with a significant emphasis on artificial intelligence), proficiency, and experimental facilities to successfully enhance the local economy with innovative digital technologies in industry and public administration. It strives to raise awareness about digitalization, supports the development of digital competencies, shares its extensive experience at local, regional, and international levels, and provides expertise to the government in shaping appropriate approaches to economic stimulation.

In 2023, 4PDIH was accepted into the EDIH network based on its Certificate of Excellence. For more information about 4PDIH's activities, visit <https://4pdih.com/>.



European
Commission

DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS

Helping companies across
the economy make the most
of digital opportunities