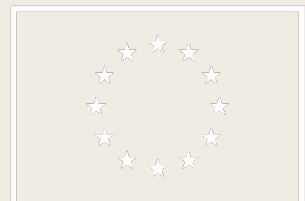




European Digital Innovation Hubs: Supporting SMEs in Their Digital Transformation

Webinar #4

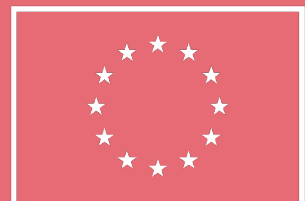
26 February 2026, 10:00



Funded by
the European Union

Agenda

1. Introduction to the European Digital Innovation Hubs
Gaspard Demur, Deputy Head of Unit “AI Innovation and Policy Coordination”, EU AI Office, European Commission
2. Case study: ER2DIGIT (Emilia-Romagna, Italy)
*Lorenzo Mannella, Front Office Manager,
ER2Digit European Digital Innovation Hub*
3. Case study: EDIH Transilvania (Romania)
*Bianca Muntean, Manager, The European Digital
Innovation Hub in Transilvania*
4. Q&A

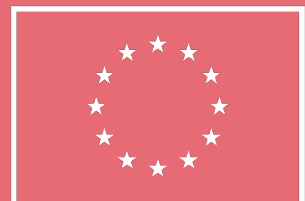


Funded by
the European Union



Housekeeping rules

- Please note that the webinar is being recorded.
- Please ask your questions in the chat or raise your hand to ask it in person.
- Make use of the chat, add your comments!



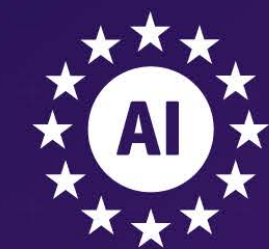
Funded by
the European Union





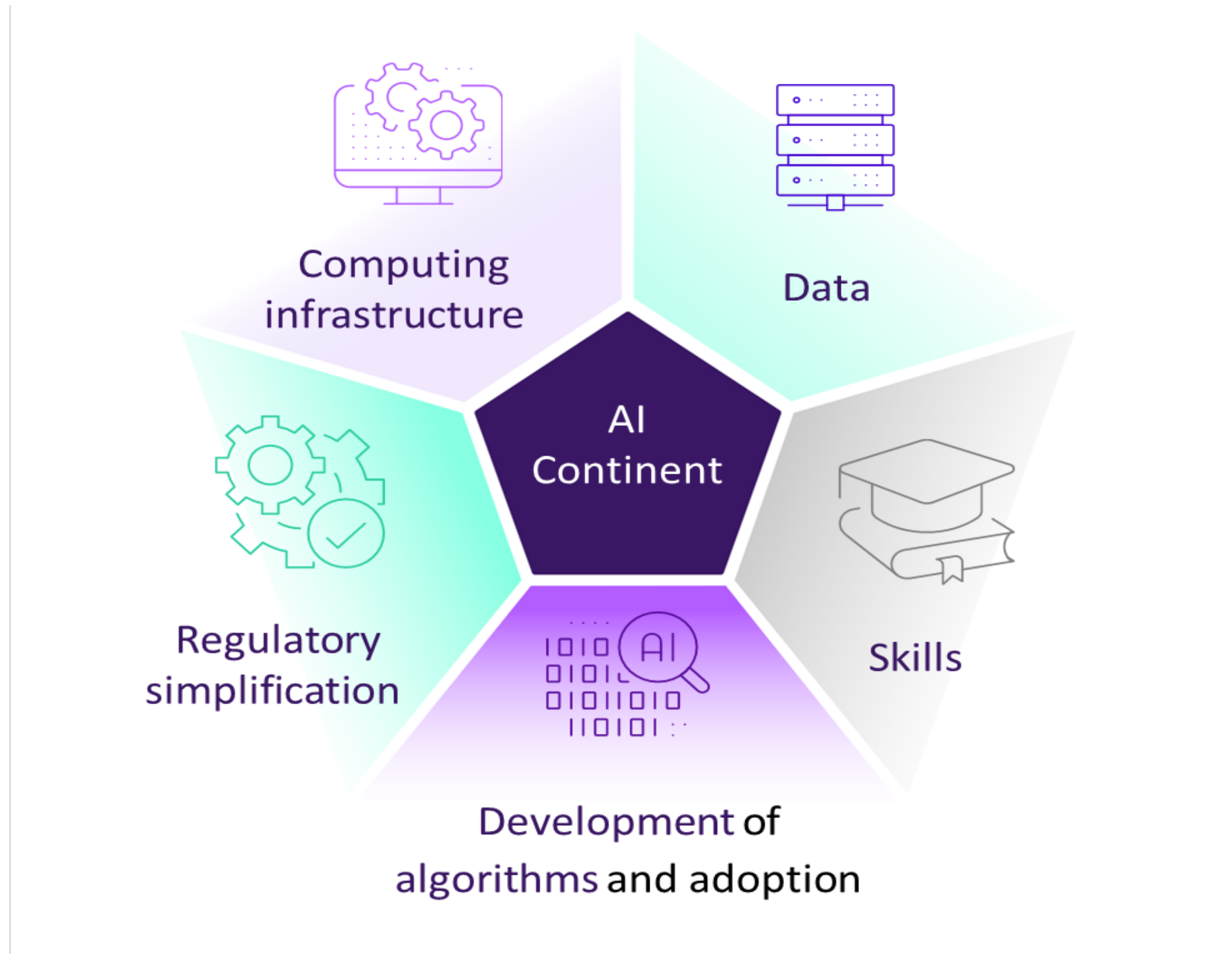
AI Continent Action Plan Apply AI Strategy & EDIH network next steps

MetaHeritage webinar on EDIHs
26 02 2026



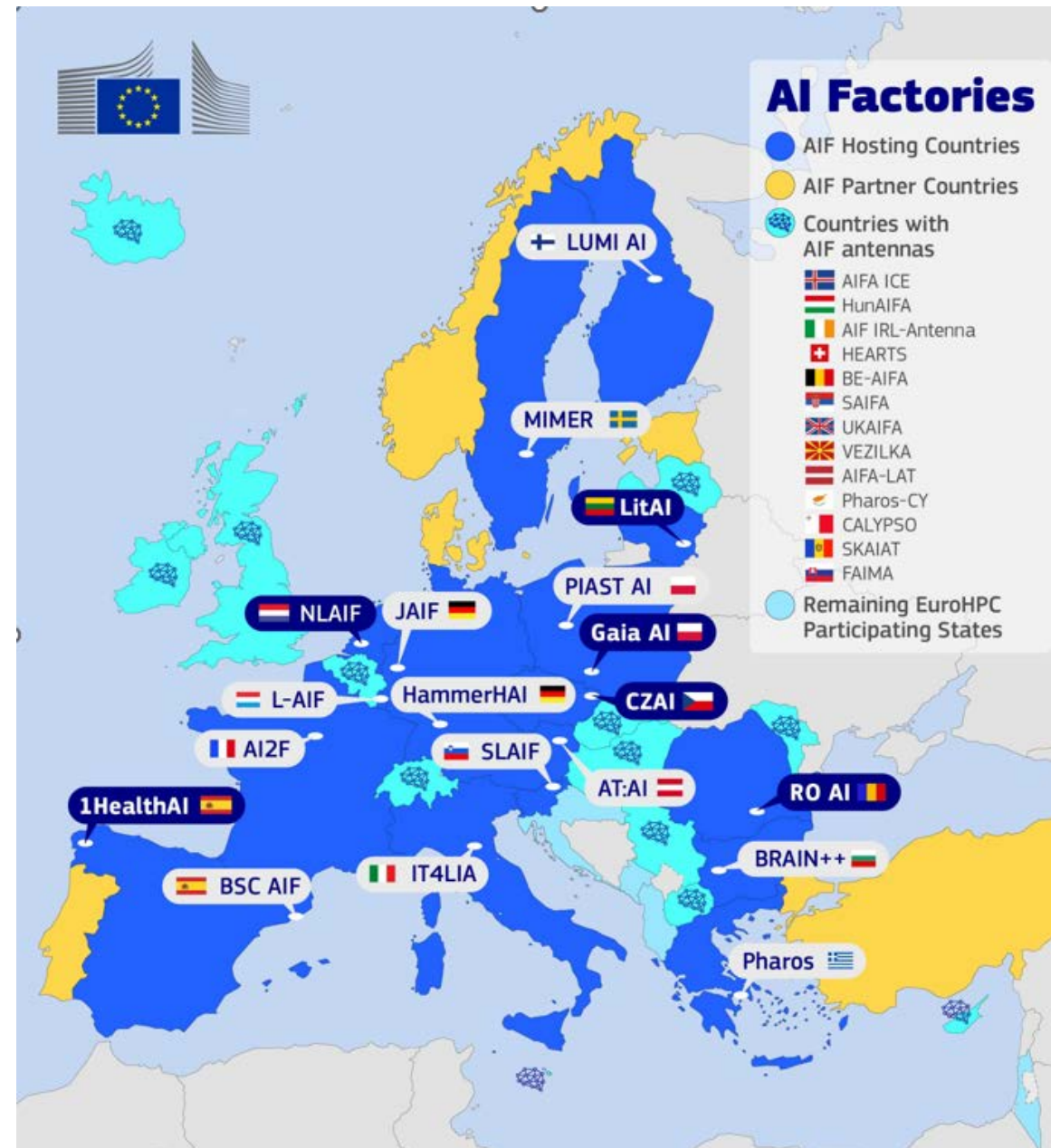
EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

TOWARDS THE CREATION OF THE AI CONTINENT



COMPUTING INFRASTRUCTURE: AI FACTORIES AND AI GIGAFACTORIES

19 AI Factories and 13 antennas across 16 MS



Public-public infrastructures

- Dynamic innovation ecosystems, connecting **supercomputing centres**, start-ups, research, industry
- 10 B€ of investments

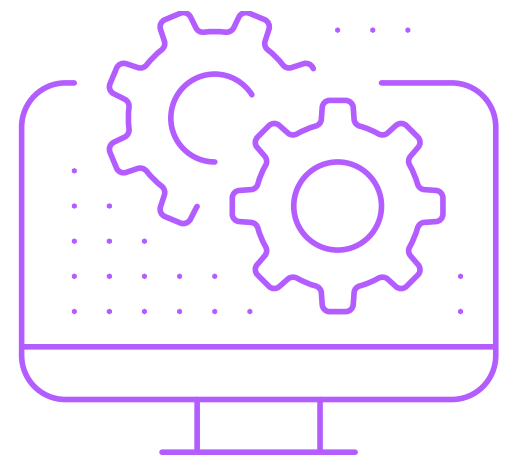
AI Gigafactories



Public-private infrastructures

- Ultra large-scale facilities for next generation AI models
- Essential for Europe to be able to **compete on the global level** and ensure its **strategic autonomy** in science and in critical industrial sectors
- Level of investment: 4-5 AI Gigafactories at ~4-5 B€ per Gigafactory

COMPUTING INFRASTRUCTURE: BOOST EU CLOUD AND DATA CENTRE CAPACITY



Cloud and AI Development Act

- **Incentivise large investments** in cloud and edge capacity, notably by **simplifying the permitting process** for building data centres
- At least **triple the EU data centre capacity within the next 5 to 7 years**
- Preserve our **technological sovereignty** by relying on highly secure EU-based cloud capacity

THE DATA UNION STRATEGY

DATA AVAILABILITY



Data Labs – 2025 onwards

Dedicated facilities linking
data spaces with the AI
ecosystem

Continue support of
Common European Data
Spaces – 2026 onwards
Further support of 100M€

SIMPLIFICATION



Consolidate data acquis –
from 4 to 1 data instrument

Modernise rules applicable
to cookies

Targeted GDPR amendments

Support the implementation
of the Data Act

INTERNATIONAL DATA FLOWS



Fair conditions in
international digital trade

Protection of EU sensitive
data

Boosting Europe's voice in
global data governance



APPLY AI STRATEGY

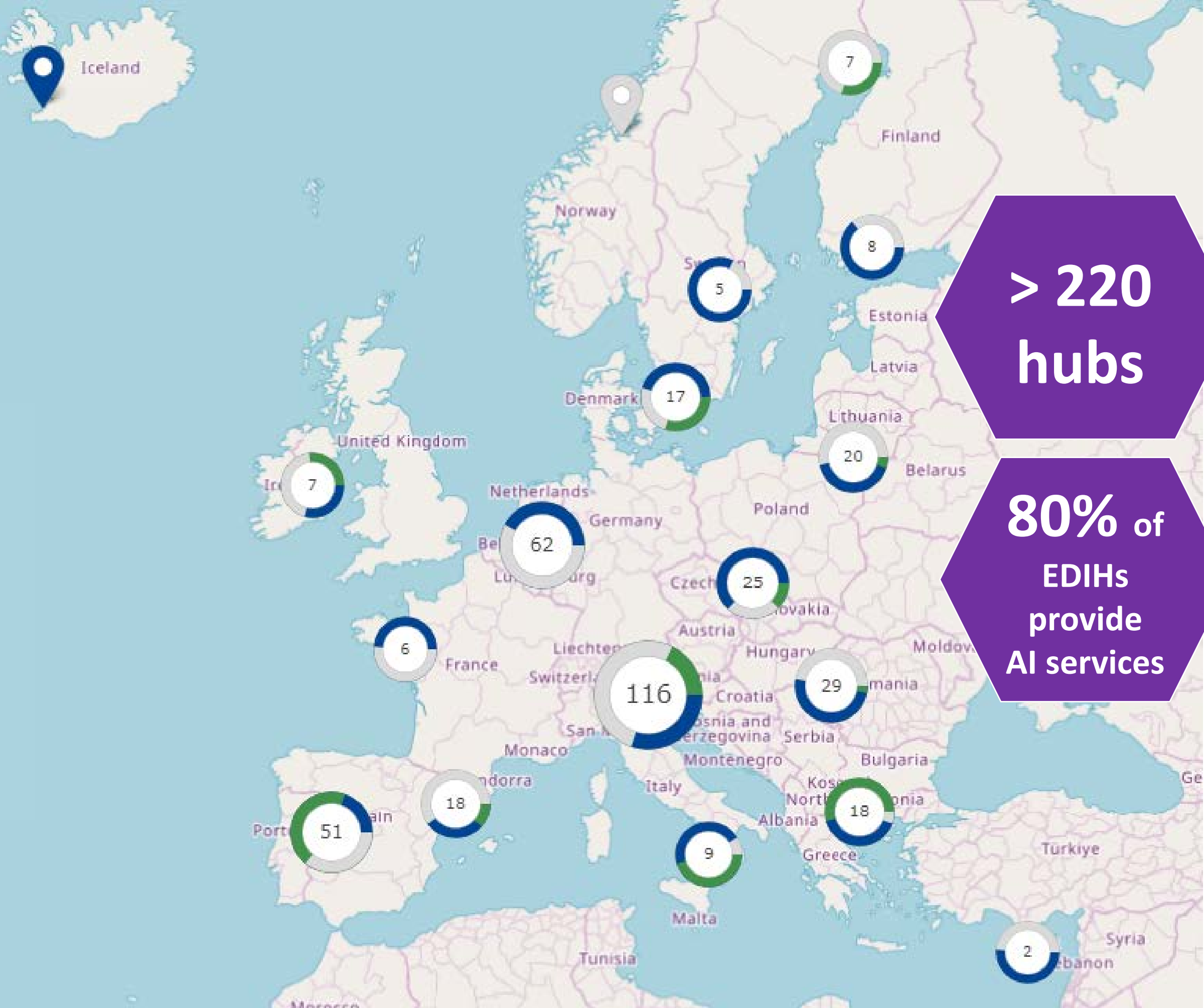
- **AI First** : help businesses to consider AI as a useful solution to tackle their challenges while also considering the risks
- Support **adoption and integration of AI in 10 strategic industrial sectors** (e.g. healthcare, manufacturing, robotics...) and the **public sector**
- **Addressing cross-cutting challenges** (e.g. support to Frontier AI, AI and science,...)



enhance competitiveness

further develop EU's technological sovereignty





EDIHs v1.0 NETWORK OVERVIEW

- **169** EDIHs (co-funded by DEP)
- **76** Seals of Excellence (funded by national authorities)
- **30 countries:** EU27 + Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein
- **7 newly associated countries** Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Kosovo

36
types of tech

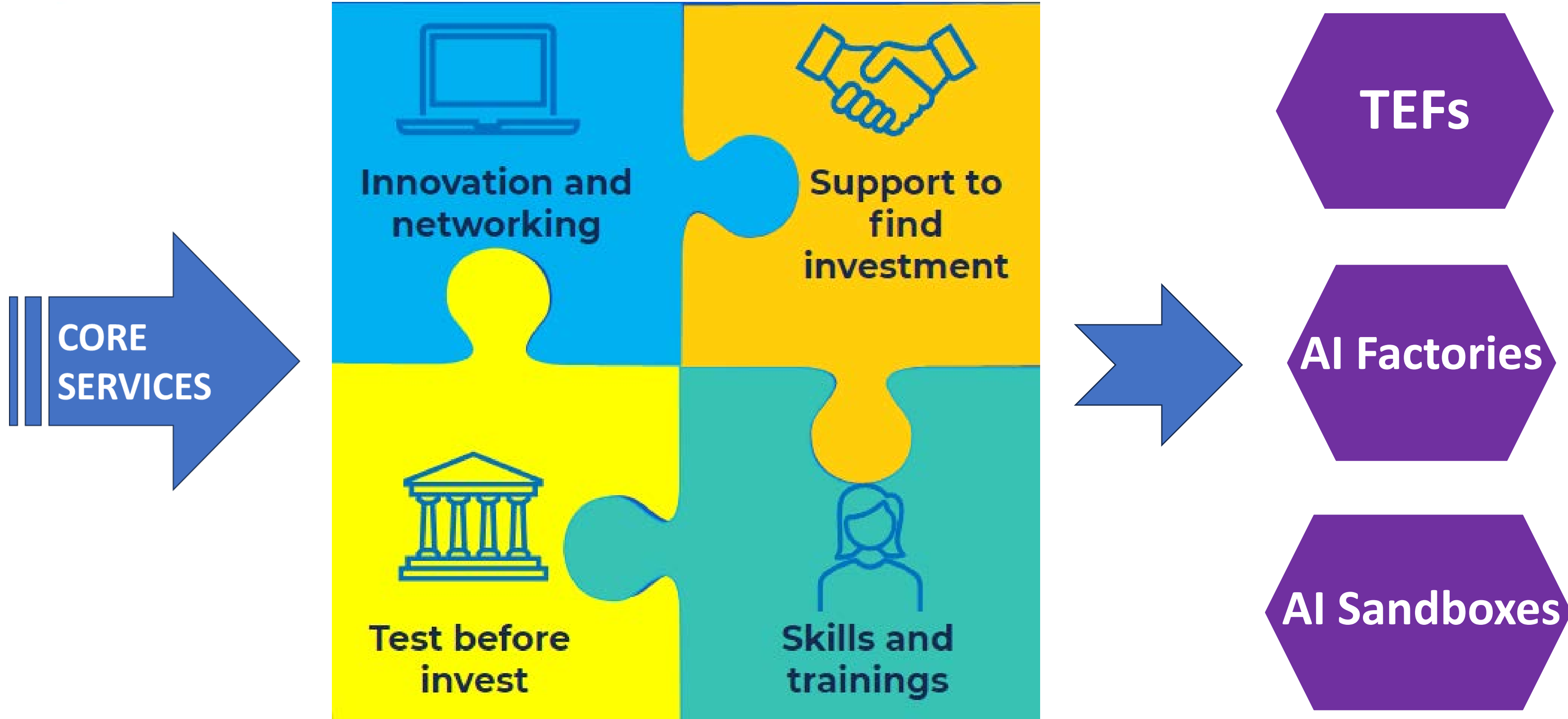
40
sectors

11
Thematic working groups



EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

EDIHS: MAIN ENTRY POINTS TO EU AI ECOSYSTEM



TEFS AT A GLANCE



Duration: 2023–2027

Budget: ~€60M

Scope:

- Testing & validation of **AI/robotics for healthcare**
- Focus on **medical devices, diagnostics, and hospital use cases**
- Support for **SMEs & startups** to reach regulatory compliance

7 core nodes + 2 associated nodes



Duration: 2023–2027

Budget: ~€50M

Scope:

- AI & robotics for **advanced manufacturing**
- Human-robot collaboration, quality control, automation
- Industrial pilots with **factories & SMEs**

7 nodes + 1 satellite



Duration: 2023–2027

Budget: ~€30M

Scope:

- AI testing for **precision agriculture**
- Robotics, drones, data-driven farming
- Sustainability, productivity & environmental impact

9 nodes



Duration: 2023–2027

Budget: ~€40M

Scope:

- AI testing in **urban environments**
- Mobility, energy, public safety & city services
- Real-world living labs with municipalities

3 super nodes

BOOSTING SUPPORT TO STARTUPS INCLUDING IN AI SKILLS



Startups and Scaleups

- **EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy** adopted in May 2025: make EU the place for starting and growing global technology-driven companies
- **28th regime** (to be proposed in 2026): a single legal framework for innovative companies across the Union
- **Investment and Savings Union Strategy:** channeling a greater share of households' savings into European innovative companies

Skills

- Educating the next generation of AI experts and training the workforce, including through the **AI Skills Academy**
- Attracting AI talent to the EU, including through **AI fellowships**
- Capitalising on the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (**EDIHs**), which will increase **training services for SMEs**

An illustration featuring four stylized human figures in a digital environment. The background consists of concentric, wavy purple lines. In the center, the text 'DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME' is displayed in white. Below the text are six icons: a server rack, a heart with a pulse line, a factory with a smokestack, a padlock, a mobile phone, and a microchip. The figures are: a woman in a yellow top and dark skirt holding a tablet; a woman in a white lab coat holding a folder; a man in a white shirt and blue pants holding a smartphone; and a man in a yellow shirt and blue pants sitting on a stool using a laptop. The overall color palette is dark purple with accents of yellow and white.

DIGITAL
EUROPE
PROGRAMME

Consolidation of the European Digital Innovation Hubs
Network in Call 09 (DIGITAL-2026-EDIH-EU-EEA-09)

#DigitalEUProgramme

DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME

DIGITAL-2026-EDIH-EU-EEA-09 Call objective

Enabling EDIHs to *continue* to drive digital transformation

↳ based on the **needs** of Europe's SMEs, mid-caps and public services

↳ with a **reinforced AI focus**

↳ For their clients &

↳ For themselves

↳ **one-stop shop** for companies looking for aid

↳ Especially from the EU AI innovation ecosystems

Outcome of the previous

Call 08

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| a) Austria | n) Latvia |
| b) Belgium | o) Lithuania |
| c) Bulgaria | p) Malta |
| d) Croatia | q) Netherlands |
| e) Cyprus | r) Poland |
| f) Czechia | s) Romania |
| g) Denmark | t) Slovakia |
| h) Estonia | u) Slovenia |
| i) Finland | v) Spain |
| j) France (regions) | w) Sweden |
| k) Germany | x) Iceland |
| l) Hungary | y) Norway |
| m) Ireland | |

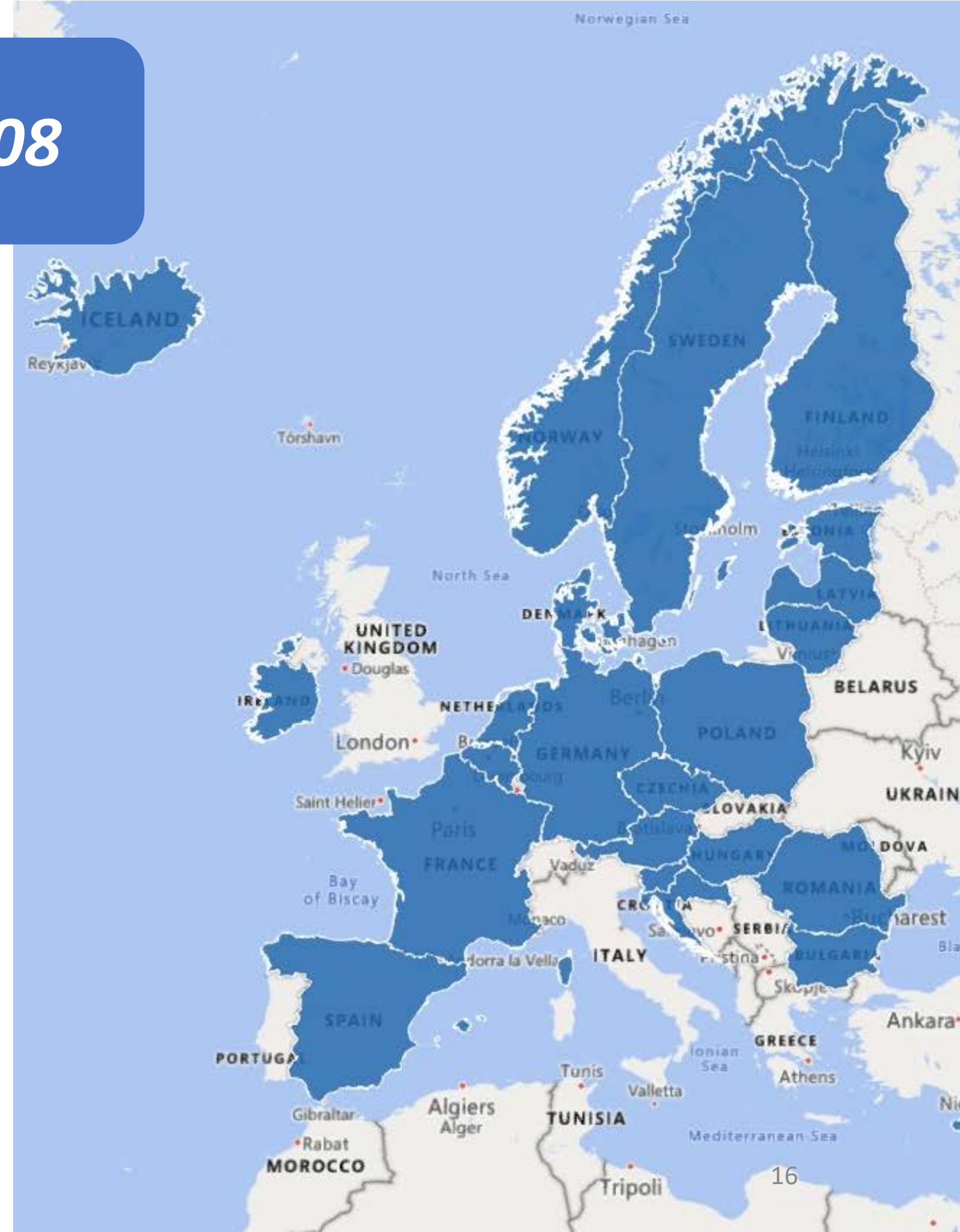
25 countries were eligible in **Call 08**

23 countries had EDIH submissions

⇒ **83 EDIHs** retained for funding, total €170 m

⇒ Currently in **Grant Agreement Preparation**

⇒ All above thresholds awarded the **STEP Seal**



DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME

Topic ID: DIGITAL-2026-EDIH-EU-EEA-09

Title: Consolidation of the Network of the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs with reinforced AI focus)

- **Objective: consolidation of the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) in EU and EEA** through the support to private and public organisations in their digital transformation, as a means for the large-scale AI deployment aimed by the upcoming AI Continent Communication and Apply AI Strategy
- **Restricted Call**, open to all EDIHs funded by DIGITAL as well as EDIHs with a Seal of Excellence ([Commission Implementing Decision 2023/1534](#))
- Each EDIH will act as an access point to the European network of EDIHs and as contact point for the **AI innovation infrastructures and offer a first-line AI help desk to businesses and public sector organisations, including basic information on compliance with the AI Act as well relevant sources of further information and ensuring a broad adoption of strategic technologies supporting the development of an AI continent.**

Why a second EDIH v2 Call?

(1) DIGITAL budget still available

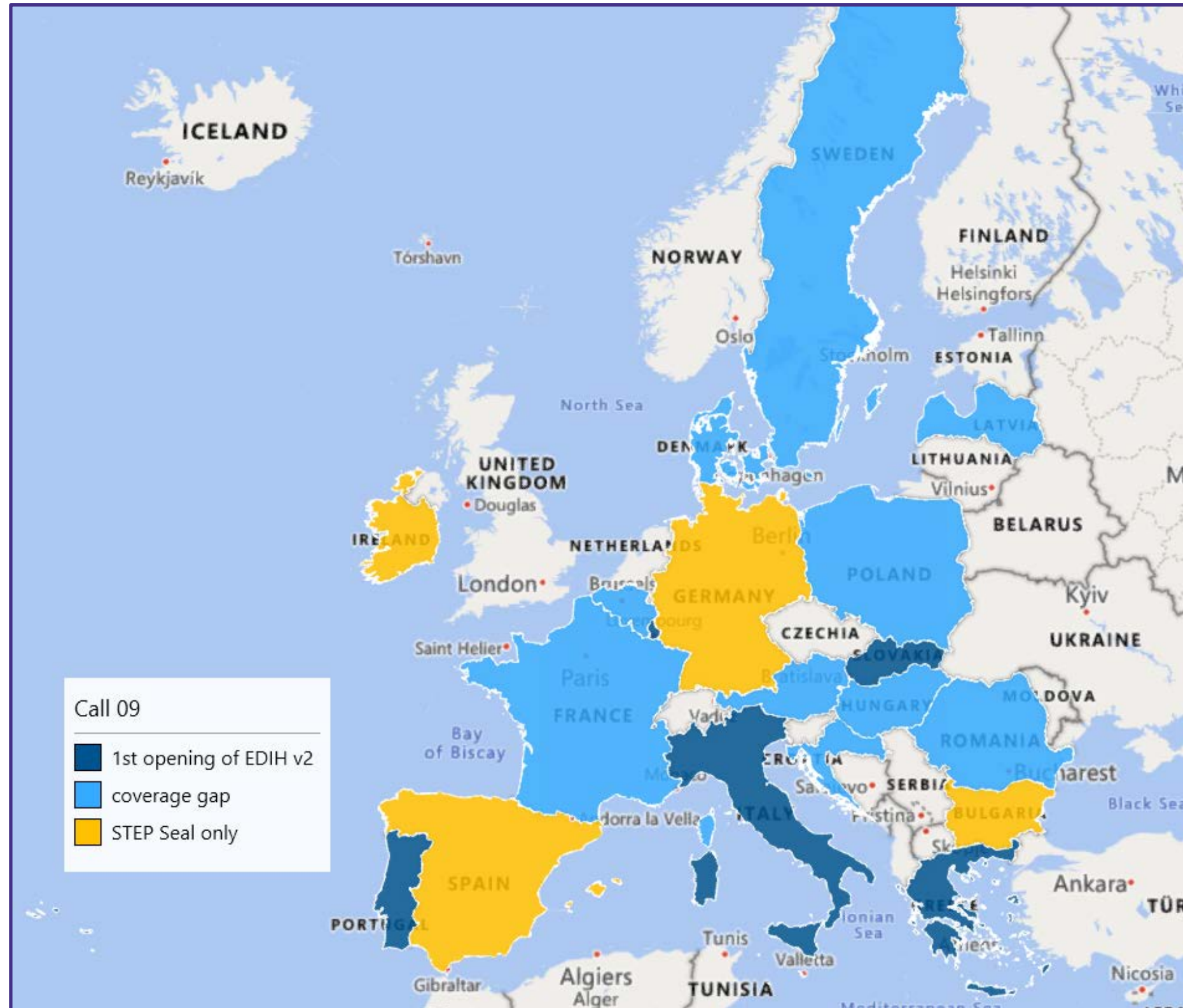
In some countries, the budget from Digital Europe programme was not spent or not fully spent, so the country coverage was not started or not complete. This call will allow potential EDIHs to apply.

(2) NATIONAL budget still available

Other countries expressed the intention to fund further hubs using national or regional budget, on condition that they are evaluated above threshold (STEP Seal). A STEP Seal will be awarded to the proposals that will be evaluated above threshold, even if no budget is available in Digital Europe Programme for the country. If Member States or regions decide to fund those entities, once they are in operation they will also be able to use the label “European Digital Innovation Hub” and will be full members of the network.

The next steps:

Call 09



1st submission Call 09:

- a) France (other regions)
- b) Greece
- c) Italy
- d) Liechtenstein
- e) Luxembourg
- f) Malta
- g) Portugal
- h) Slovakia

+ remaining gaps Call 08:

- a) Austria
- b) Belgium
- c) Croatia
- d) Denmark
- e) Hungary
- f) Latvia
- g) Poland
- h) Romania
- i) Sweden

(with remaining national budget allocation)

+ Awarding the STEP Seal :

- a) Bulgaria
- b) Germany
- c) Ireland
- d) Spain

(no DIGITAL funding)

Tentative Timeline

Webinars for MS & for candidate EDIHs to be organized in November/December.

[Call 08 information are available here](#)

- Call 2 EDIHs EU/EEA (*call 09*)
 - Open: 3 November – 3 March 2026 **17:00 CET**
 - Evaluation: April-May
 - Information on evaluation results: June
 - Signature of the grant agreements: November-December

Nov 2025
Dec
Jan 2026
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

Helpful Links and Information

About DEP

[Digital Europe Programme – WP2025 - Official Call text EDIHs EU/EEA](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Financial Regulation: 2021/694 EUR-Lex | Synergies between shared and direct management funds – Commission notice](#)

About EDIHs

[Knowledge Hub | European Digital Innovation Hubs Network](#)
(working with EEN, services best practices, ...)

[Frequently Asked Questions: EDIH – DMA – DTA - KPI](#)

[Success Stories and Good Practices: Guidelines for EDIHs](#)

Previous webinars on EDIH 2.0 Call

[A one-stop shop for the Call EDIH2.0 EU/EEA](#), including:

- [Webinar 20/02/2025 - Recording & Slides](#)
- [Webinar 21/03/2025 - Slides](#)
- [FAQ on EDIH 2.0 Call](#)
- [Know your national contact persons](#)

Submit a proposal

[Proposal roles and access rights](#)

[Submit a proposal - IT Guide](#)

[Submit a proposal — Electronic Submission System - Online Manual](#)

[DEP Model Grant Agreement & **Annotated Grant Agreement**](#)

[Online Manual for Funding and Tenders Portal](#)

European AI Innovations Ecosystem

[Web site - Leaflet](#)

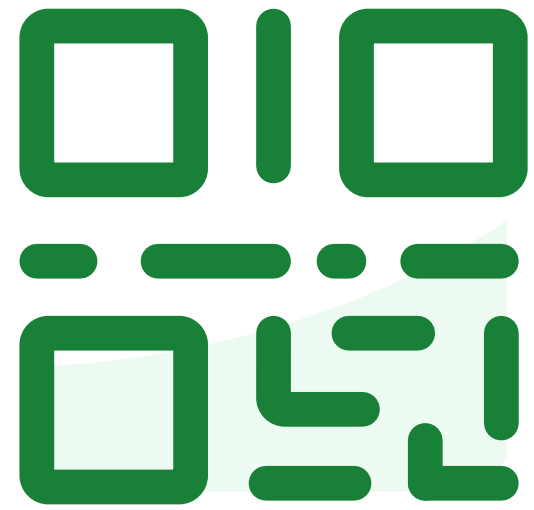


Thank you



EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

Do not edit
How to change the design



**Join at slido.com
#EDIH**

 The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

slido



Before today, how familiar were you with European Digital Innovation Hubs?



How would you describe your organisation's level of digitalisation?



What kind of digitalization support would be most valuable for your organisation?



ER2Digit EDIH

Emilia-Romagna Regional Ecosystem of Digital Innovation

*European Digital Innovation Hubs: Supporting SMEs in Their Digital Transformation
Feb. 26, 2026 | Lorenzo Mannella, ER2Digit Front Office Manager*



CON IL SUPPORTO DI

This project has received funding from the European Union's Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) under grant agreement No 101083662



ER²Digit

Emilia-Romagna Ecosistema Regionale
di Innovazione Digitale

ER2Digit is one of 250+ European Digital Innovation Hubs (**EDIH**) co-financed by the European Commission (Digital Europe programme) and one of the 13 co-financed by the Italian government (RRF).

EDIHs are one-stop shops supporting **companies** and **public administration** to respond to **digital challenges** and become more competitive.

ER2Digit project duration: 01/12/2022 - 30/04/2026



European
Digital Innovation
Hubs Network

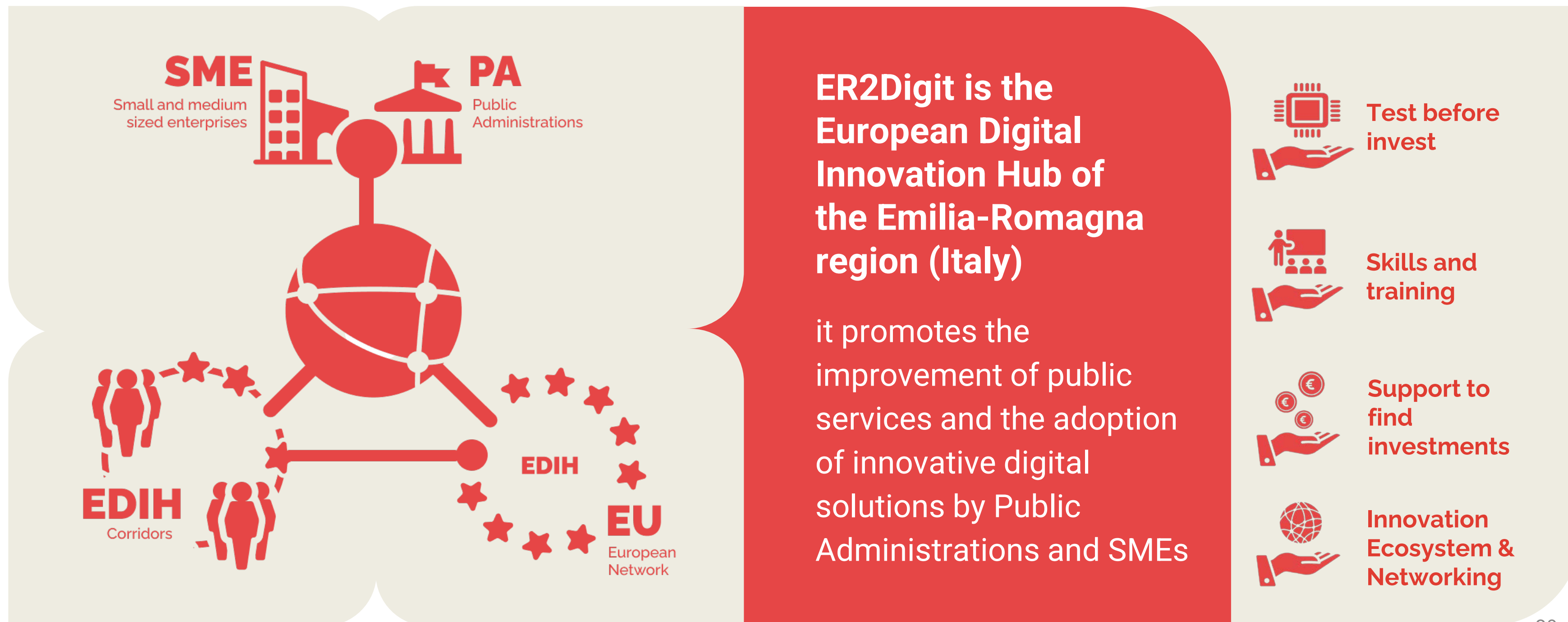
SUPPORTED BY



Regione Emilia-Romagna

ER2Digit mission

“Making the most of data, in particular **big data**, to improve the provision of **public services** through the adoption of innovative **Artificial Intelligence** solutions and the use of **supercomputing** technologies”



ER2Digit is the European Digital Innovation Hub of the Emilia-Romagna region (Italy)

it promotes the improvement of public services and the adoption of innovative digital solutions by Public Administrations and SMEs

-  **Test before invest**
-  **Skills and training**
-  **Support to find investments**
-  **Innovation Ecosystem & Networking**

ER2Digit consortium



Hub Coordinator

ART-ER is the Emilia-Romagna Joint Stock Consortium established to promote the sustainable growth of the region through development of innovation and knowledge, attractiveness and internationalization of the territory.

It coordinates ER2Digit, facilitating access to the services offered by the Hub and connections with the European EDIH network. It acts as a contact point with the [High Technology Network](#), Universities and Research Centers of Emilia-Romagna, regional and international stakeholders. In addition, it provides access to **funding and networking services**, as well as offering information events on digital technologies and innovation opportunities.

art-er.it



Partner

LEPIDA is the in-house company of the Emilia-Romagna Region that directly supports the digitalization of the public sector through the development of telecommunication infrastructures, network access, and telematic services. It represents the engine of the implementation and dissemination of the Digital Agenda topics.

It is a partner of ER2Digit and offers a portfolio of **test before invest services dedicated to the public administration**: Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Data-driven Solutions, Tools for the protection of privacy and cybersecurity.

lepida.net



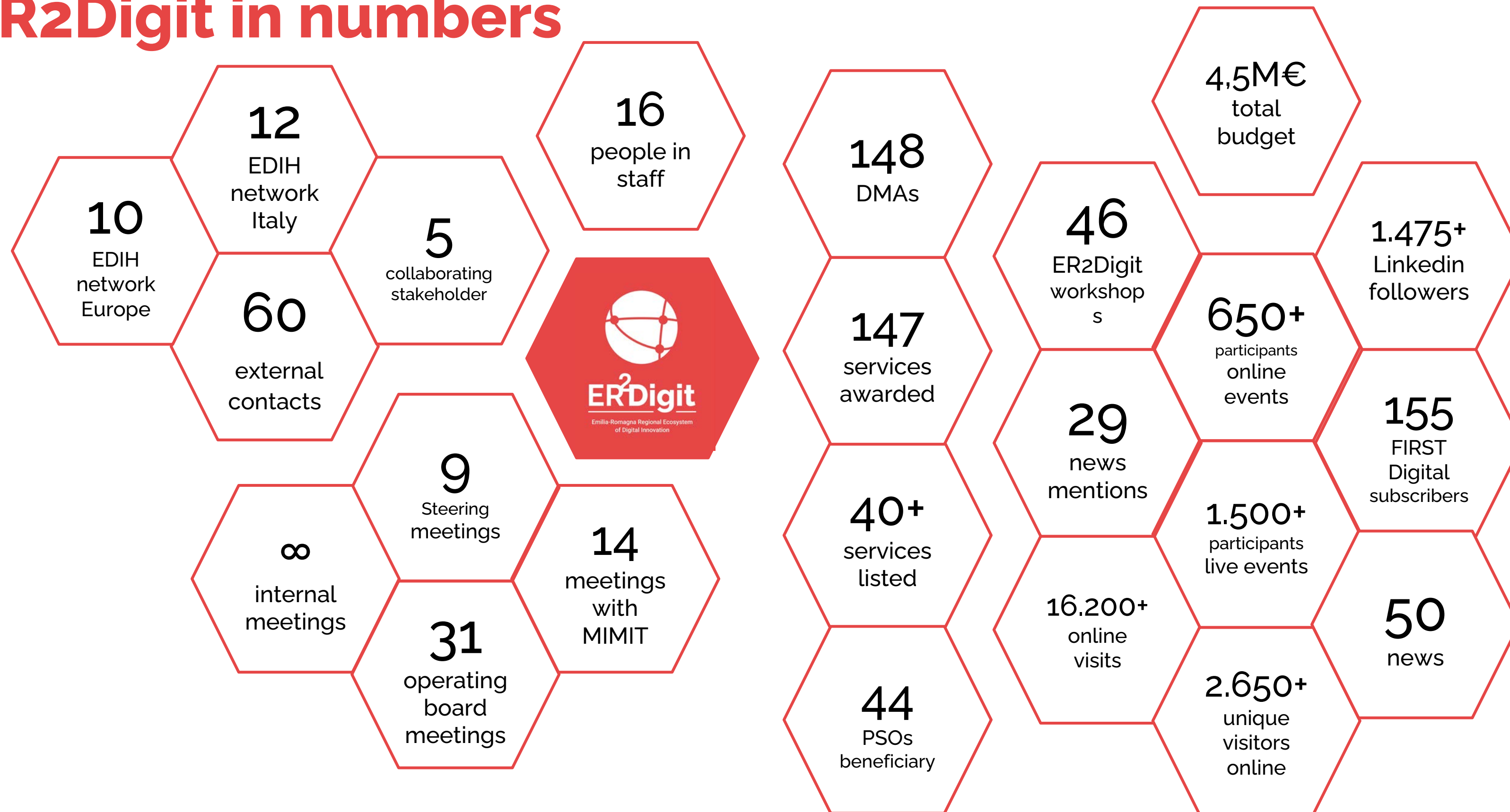
Partner

CINECA is a non-profit university consortium and represents the largest computing center in Italy and one of the leading ones worldwide. It hosts IT4LIA AI Factory and manages [LEONARDO](#), one of the most powerful supercomputer in the world.

It is a partner of ER2Digit and offers a portfolio of **test before invest and training services aimed at public administrations and companies** on the topics of technological innovation including supercomputing (High Performance Computing HPC), Big data, Data analytics and digitalization of cultural heritage.

cineca.it

ER²Digit in numbers



ER2Digit open calls: resources and progress

ER2Digit calls	1st Open Call	2nd Open Call	3rd Open Call	4th Open Call	Total
Opening date	22/11/2023	07/08/2024	03/02/2025	27/02/2025	-
Closing date	22/02/2024	22/11/2024	28/02/2026	28/02/2026	-
Beneficiary	PSOs	PSOs	SMEs	PSOs	-
Service provider	ART-ER, LEPIDA	ART-ER	ART-ER, CINECA	ART-ER	-
Service type	TBI, NET	NET	TBI, FIN, NET	NET	-
Services listed	8	2	25	7	42
Target number of beneficiaries	17	10	68	17	112
Service awarded	34	6	73	34	147
DMAs completed	22	6	91	29	148
Estimated service budget	€ 655.000,00	€ 45.000,00	€ 840.000,00	€ 695.000,00	€ 2.235.000,00

first Digital

FIRST Digital is ER2Digit's web platform showcasing opportunities for digital transition (*IT language only*).

FIRST Digital issues a newsletter every 14 days with news, events, updates on digital transformation

 digital.first.art-er.it





IT4LIA
AI FACTORY

Italy for Artificial
Intelligence

www.it4lia-aifactory.eu




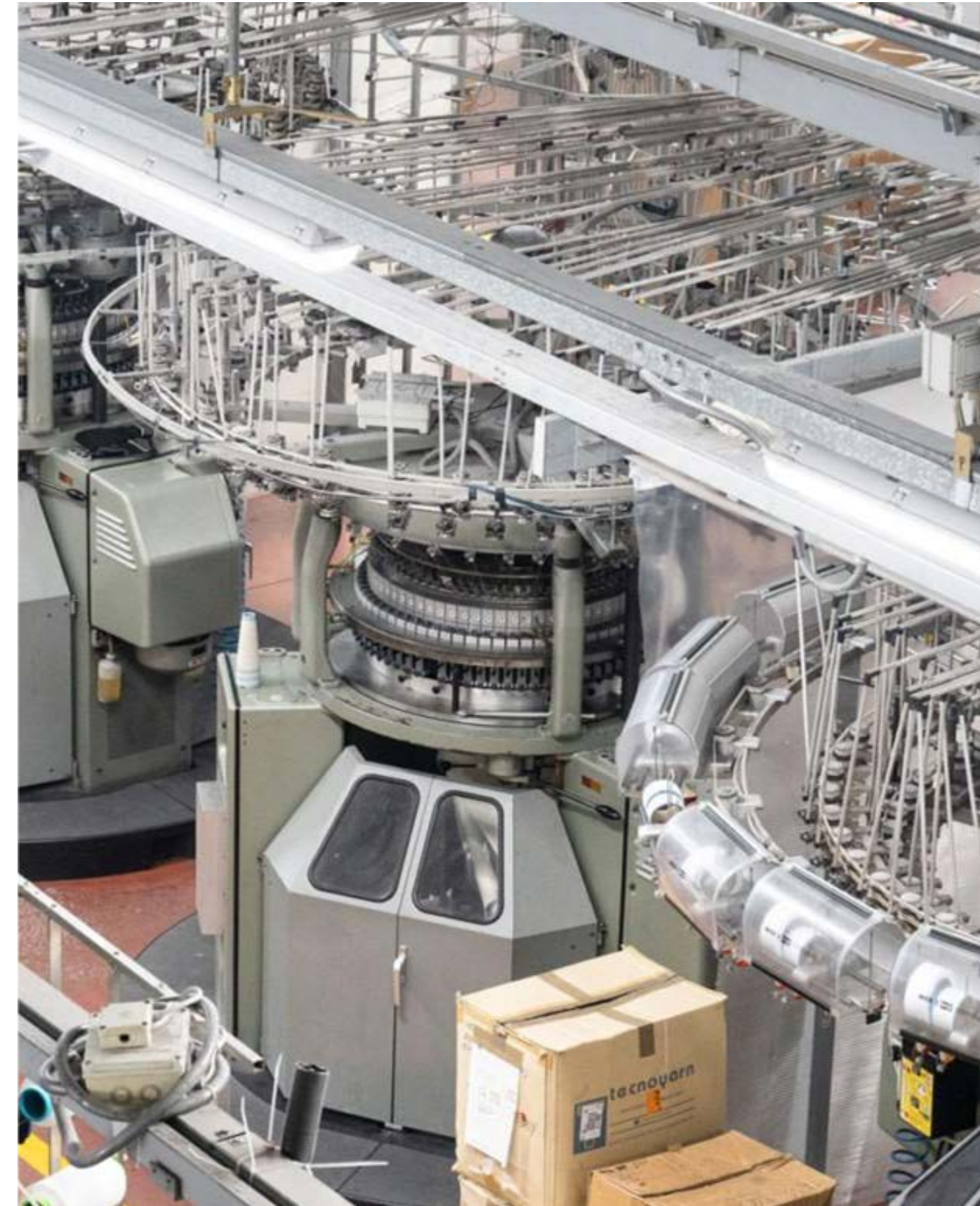
ER2DIGIT CASE STUDIES

MACHINE LEARNING SOLUTIONS TO ASSESS COMPANIES IN A MARINE CONTEXT	
Beneficiary	Sea The Change seathechange.eu Nonantola (MO)
Service provider	CINECA
Challenge	Sea The Change is an innovative startup that connects sea protection with corporate sustainability through SEAS 1.0, a web platform that helps companies adopt sustainable projects. The ER2Digit service helped Sea The Change design an AI framework for: digitization of company reports, extraction of key information, and re-elaboration of environmental sustainability advice to communicate to clients. All of this is to be implemented in the next versions of SEAS.
Service code	2025-TBI-CIN-02 Accesso a soluzioni AI/HPC per le imprese
Service value	€ 4.500,00



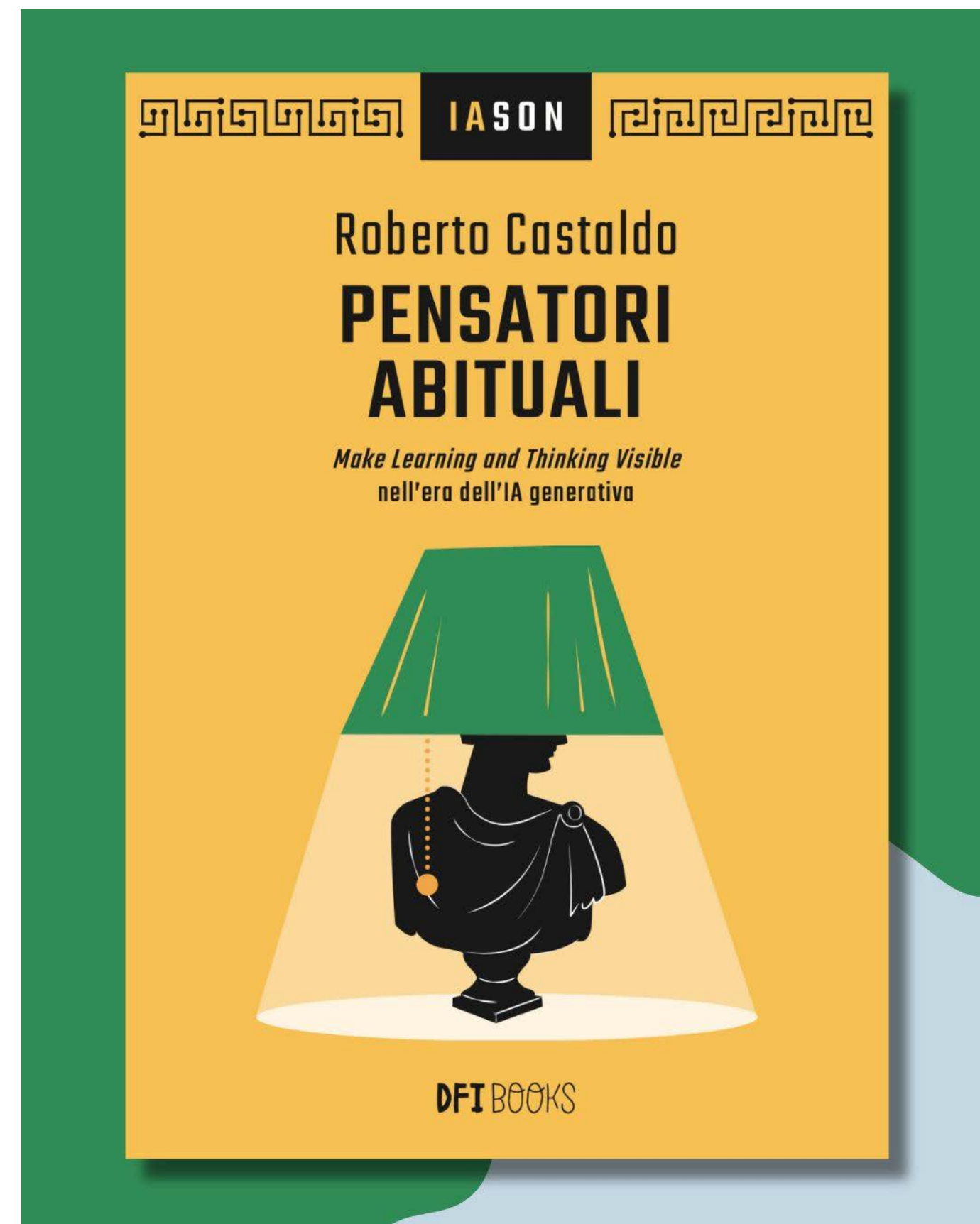
AI SYSTEM FOR ANOMALY DETECTION AND QUALITY CONTROL OF FABRICS

Beneficiary	Staff Jersey staffjersey.it Carpi (MO)
Service provider	
Challenge	Staff Jersey , textile company, was looking for anomaly detection solutions for quality control of fabrics intended for sporting goods with the aim of optimizing production processes and reducing waste. The ER2Digit service helped Staff Jersey test an AI-based vision system to identify production defects more quickly and accurately, based on a library of real and synthetic data.
Service code	2025-TBI-ART-12 Soluzioni Innovative per l'Anomaly Detection
Service value	€ 14.350,00



RAG SYSTEM FOR THE "IASON" INTERACTIVE BOOK COLLECTION

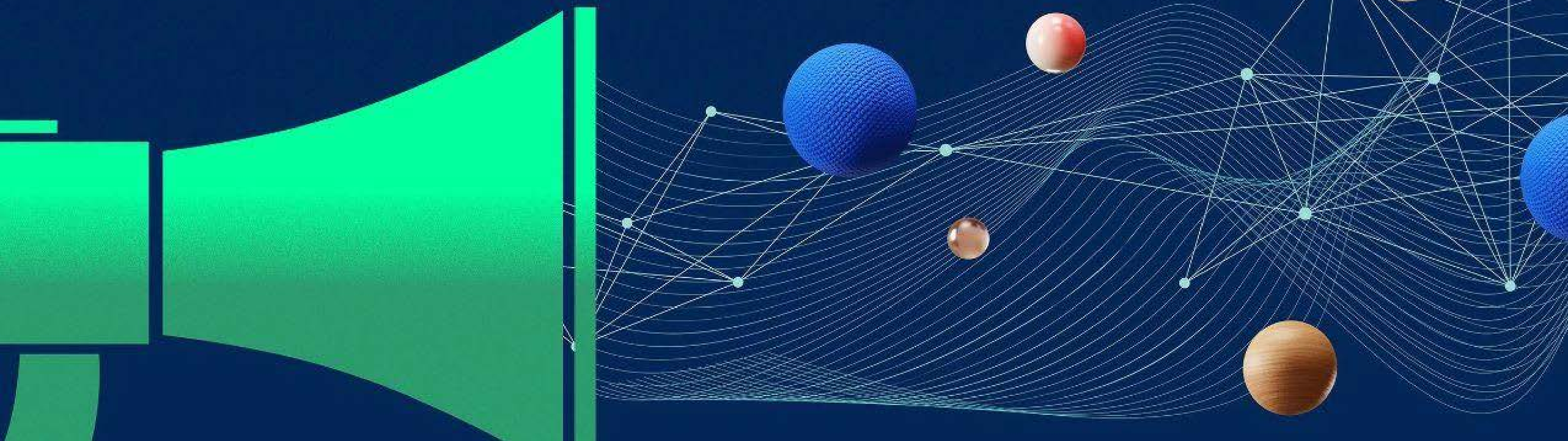
Beneficiary	Appears SRL appears.pro Imola (BO)
Service provider	
Challenge	<p>Appears publishes IAson, a book/ebook collection for teachers that gathers innovative proposals and methodologies to build the school of the future. IAson is a collection also accessible via dedicated chatbot.</p> <p>The ER2Digit service helped Appears develop an LLM-based RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) to implement a customized interface that allows teachers to develop tailored paths based on the collection's contents.</p>
Service code	2025-TBI-ART-09 Sviluppo di Soluzioni di Intelligenza Artificiale per Sfide Tecnologiche
Service value	€ 11.500,00





ER2DIGIT: WHAT'S NEXT?

Call for Proposals for the **EDIH Network 2026**



Thank you!

ER2Digit

Emilia-Romagna Ecosistema Regionale di Innovazione Digitale
European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH)

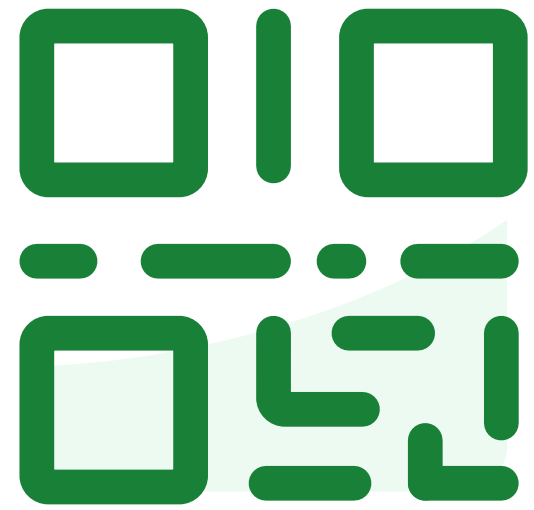
Coordinator

ART-ER - Società Consortile per Azioni
Via P. Gobetti 101 – 40129 – Bologna
www.er2digit.it | er2digit@art-er.it
Tel. +39 051 6450411



**Subscribe to
ER2Digit mailing
list (Italian only)**

Do not edit
How to change the design



**Join at slido.com
#EDIH**

 The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

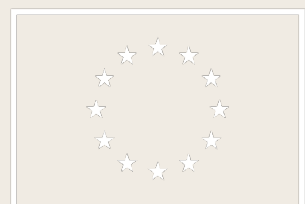
slido



If you could implement one digital solution in your organisation tomorrow, what would it be?

Thank you

www.metaheritage.eu



Funded by
the European Union

