



EU4Digital ICT Innovation sixth networking event

CONCEPT OUTLINE

When and where: date – 18 May 2021, 10:00 - 13:00 (CET), online.

Concept: The EU4Digital Initiative will hold ICT Innovation sixth networking event remotely in form of virtual session.

Language: The event will be held in English.

Topic: ICT Innovation ecosystems for start-ups and scale-ups: Facilitate the development of expert communities and increase their involvement into policy design and implementation.

Goals:

1. Offer a practical session on understanding the composition of an entrepreneurial ecosystem and how to assess its maturity.
2. Increase the knowledge about the value proposition [Startup Europe Regions Network](#), including expert communities of regional authorities, development agencies, universities and associations who build and scale up the start-ups' ecosystems at the regional level in Europe and EaP. Promote the membership of relevant stakeholders from the Eastern partner countries.
3. Increase the knowledge about the value proposition of the [European DIGITAL SME Alliance](#) and promote the membership and partnership opportunities for EaP organisations.
4. Present the experience of the European DIGITAL SME Alliance on establishment and management of expert communities focusing on digital markets, where the organisation acts as a cross-border [working groups](#) composed of experts from various organisations dedicated to a specific agenda.
5. Promote the projects and strategic [partnerships](#) of European DIGITAL SME Alliance, including the European Association of SMEs, Small Business Standards, Alliance for the Internet of Things Innovation, European Artificial Intelligence Alliance, International Association for Trusted Blockchain Applications (INATBA), European Internet Forum, EU Gateway|Business Avenues initiative, as well as European Cyber Security Organisation of which it is a founding member.

Potential strategic cooperation areas:

- [Joining](#) SERN as a member or their communities, including regional authorities, development agencies, universities and associations who build and scale up the start-ups' ecosystem at regional level in Europe as well as EaP; benefiting from participation in policy analysis, study tours, webinars, training workshops, requests for a peer review of policies on the topics of workplace innovation, innovation procurement, financial instruments, joint projects and other.
- [Joining](#) European DIGITAL SME Alliance as a member.
- Networking and engagement of national ICT business associations in the six Eastern partner countries with the largest [network](#) of the ICT SMEs in Europe.
- Development of joint communities of digital experts for work on digital markets' harmonisation within the Eastern partner countries, including regulatory environment, standardisation and digital skills competence frameworks.
- Cooperation of SMEs associations from the EU and Eastern partner countries interested in a joint development of innovative products or services, and starting new companies.

Key EU participants:

- [Startup Europe Regions Network](#) (SERN).
- [European DIGITAL SME Alliance](#).
- [Federal Association of ICT-SMEs of Germany](#) (BITMi).

Target audience in the EaP countries:

- Ministerial level representatives and agencies coordinating the development of innovation ecosystem.
- ICT associations and networks: national SME associations with focus on digital markets.
- Actors with links to regional authorities impacting the innovation ecosystem such as tech parks.

Number of participants: around 30 – 50.



AGENDA

EU4Digital ICT Innovation sixth networking event:

«Facilitate the development of expert communities and increase their involvement into policy design and implementation»

18 May 2021 – Tuesday		
Time (CET)	Topic	Speaker
9:45 - 10:00	Time for connection – the session will start at 10:00 sharp	EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team
Introduction		
10:00 - 10:20	Opening notes; Participants brief introduction; Networking event organisation – goals and objectives.	EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team
Session 1 – Role of communities for innovation ecosystem development		
10:20 – 10:45	Keynote speech: Understanding the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Eastern partner countries	Jesus Lozano, Key Expert at EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team
10:45 - 10:55	Q&A	All participants
10:55 – 11:15	Startup Europe Regions Network (SERN) value proposition	Chiara Frenca, SERN Board Member
11:15 – 11:25	Q&A	All participants
11:25 - 11:35	Short break – Session 2 will start at 11:35 sharp	All participants
Session 2 – Expert communities focusing on digital markets development		
11:35 – 12:10	European DIGITAL SME Alliance value proposition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association, its role & network, membership benefits SME interest representation through the Working Groups & decision making Networking & funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary-General at European DIGITAL SME Alliance Annika Linck, Senior Policy Manager at European DIGITAL SME Alliance Justina Bieliauskaite, Projects Director at European DIGITAL SME Alliance
12:10 - 12:20	Q&A	All participants
12:20 - 12:40	The way forward - cooperation with the EaP associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership in the Alliance – first-hand experience Replicating DIGITAL SME's success on the national level & away towards international cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lisa Ehrentraut, Operations Team Lead at BITMi Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary-General at European DIGITAL SME Alliance
12:40 - 12:50	Q&A	All participants
12:50 - 13:00	Wrap up and closure of the event	EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team



Annex 1. Short descriptions of organisations

Name	Description
Startup Europe Regions Network (SERN)	SERN is a network of regions dedicated to scaling up the support of start-ups, promoted by the EC Startup Europe initiative. The purpose of SERN is to reinforce the links between regional authorities, development agencies, universities and associations who build and scale up the start-up ecosystems at the regional level in Europe and promoting a culture of start-up friendly regions. The membership of SERN is open to any legal representative of Europe, development agencies, universities or any other legal entities that contribute to the development and implementation of regional policies toward start-ups and entrepreneurship in Europe. The activities of SERN include promoting support initiatives to start-ups and entrepreneurship, collecting and highlighting the best regional practices, facilitating networking of regional decision makers and mobilising regional resources to address relevant barriers to start-ups' growth.
European DIGITAL SME Alliance	European DIGITAL SME Alliance is the largest network of small and medium sized ICT enterprises in Europe, representing about 20,000 digital SMEs. The alliance is a joint effort of 30 national and regional SME associations from EU member states and neighbouring countries to put digital SME at the centre of the EU agenda. European DIGITAL SME Alliance is implementing initiatives of general interest for the ICT SMEs in Europe; monitoring EU policies and regulations on ICT and informing its members; representing the interests and stances of the association's members on specific problems vis-à-vis the institutions of the EU. Also, the network is representing the interests of SMEs in the standardisation process at raising their awareness for standardisation, carrying out actions in third countries, especially in matters relating to the support and training of local ICT enterprises.
Federal Association of ICT-SMEs of Germany (BITMi)	BITMi is an association for German small and medium sized enterprises in the information technology sector (ICT-SMEs). The association has a wide network of 17 associated member associations such as the CyberForum in Karlsruhe, REGINA in Aachen or the BIKT in Hamburg, and over 2000 members of individual enterprises. Together, all involved parties form a turnover volume of several billion euros. The membership structure includes the entire spectrum of the ICT sector: the association organises software developers and hardware producers as well as computer retailers and ICT consultancy enterprises. The members benefit from the association's relationships and regularly held networking events. Also, BITMi directly represents the interests of members in various settings including working groups and policy-making. In this way, the association aims at accelerating corporate growth and productivity of the ICT sector. Furthermore, the dedicated communication strategy around the perspectives and problems of the ICT SMEs targets politicians and the general public. As a result, opportunities for a new business and public-private partnerships are constantly evolving within BITMi operations.