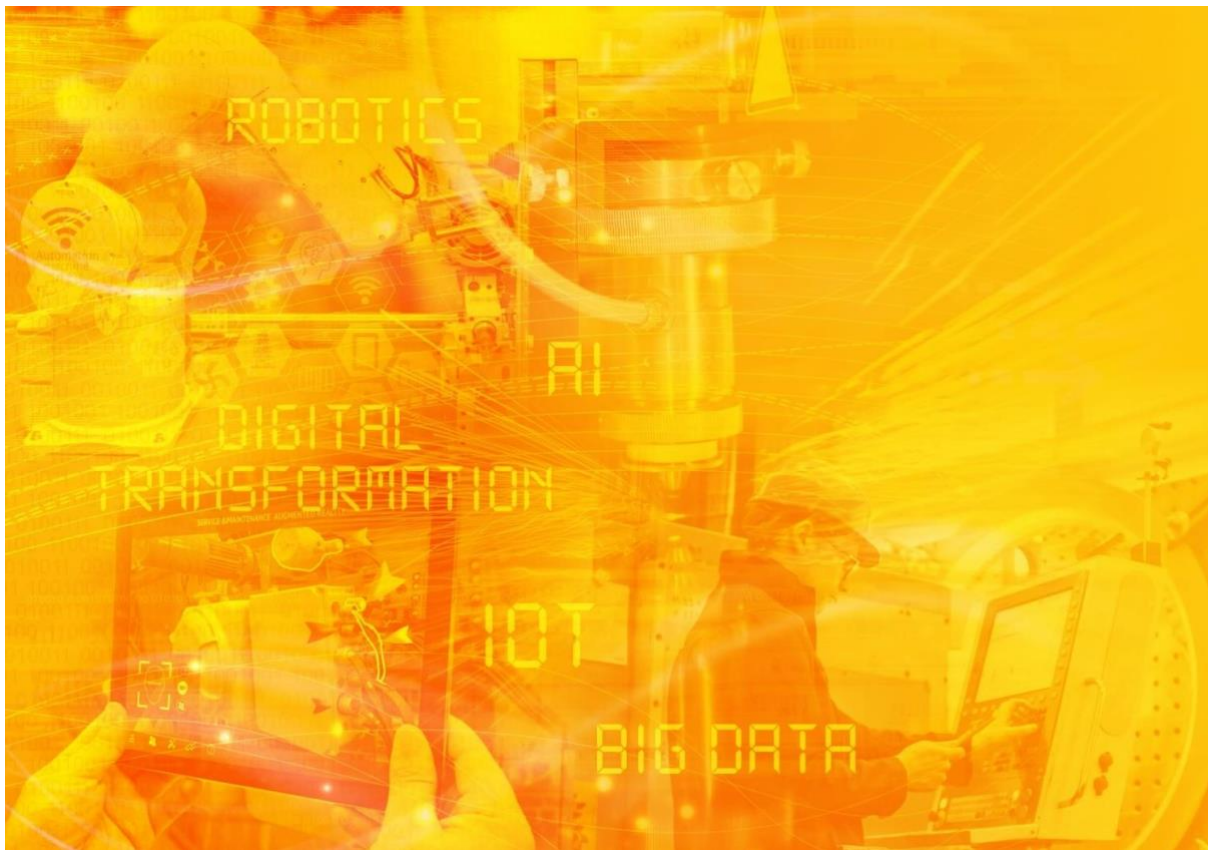


# DIGITAL REGIONS

## Action Plan

**Partner: PP3 BAA Bulgaria**



## CONTENTS

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1	Executive Summary .....	3
2	General information .....	4
3	Policy context.....	4
4	Action 1 and 2 .....	5
4.1	Background.....	7
4.2	Knowledge applied from DIGITAL REGIONS.....	11
4.3	Action description .....	15
4.4	Timeframe and Funding .....	16
4.5	Workplan.....	17
4.6	Budget breakdown for the action .....	19
4.7	Viability and sustainability .....	19
4.8	Impact expected .....	19
4.9	Monitoring activities in Phase 2 .....	20

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Bulgaria lags other EU member states in terms of digitalization of the economy. The EC's Index on the Entry of Digital Technologies into the Economy and Society (DESI) for 2021 ranks the country 26th in the EU, in the cluster of low-performing countries. The main challenges facing Bulgaria are related to the very low level of skills in the field of digital technologies in the population and the low level of implementation of digital technologies in business.

The country's focus is at technological transformation of the economy and catching up with its digitalization through targeted and focused support, one of the tools of which are the ERDF programmes like the new **“Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprise Program 2021-2027”**.

According to many surveys on the level of digitalization in the country the companies are not prepared to fully benefit the Industry 4.0 opportunities because they are not aware of them, they are not skilled enough, they lack sufficient funding and need to be supported to explore the latest technological innovations before they invest. Fully in line with the planned actions on the cited above policy instrument PKIP this Action plan adds an improvement of the Bulgarian RIS3 and planning of 2 new measures to address the SMEs needs to increase their capacity to implement innovative digital technologies related to their business and operational processes and to ensure stable conditions for SMEs to explore and analyse new Industry 4.0 and digital technologies in a tangible and practise-oriented way.

The new 2 initiatives to support the development of Industry 4.0 in relation to the peculiarities of Bulgarian organizations are designed to be offered for funding based on good practices and interregional learning. This will be achieved through the creation of platforms and demo-stations to support to companies to better exploit the opportunities provided by Industry 4.0, grounded on the Quadruple Helix principle and bottom-up approaches, with involvement of industry, universities and research partners and the public sector in the agenda setting and the execution of core activities and relying on the strategic engagement with key industrial partners.

Both actions are based on the good practices from regions participating in DIGITAL REGIONS project, The interregional learning throughout the project interactions resulted in designing actions that stimulate adaption of I4.0 measures and boosts the conditions for additional uptake of I4.0 solutions among Bulgarian SMEs. The measures enrich the RIS3 and complement and amplify the already planned groups of actions in PKIP. They result from the extended use of existing high quality I4.0 innovation capacity in innovation leader/strong regions to Bulgaria as a modest region to accelerate adaption and availability of I4.0 technology and solutions.

## 2 GENERAL INFORMATION

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- **Project: DIGITAL REGIONS**
- **Partner organisation: BUSINESS AGENCY ASSOCIATION**
- **Country: BULGARIA**
- **NUTS2 region: Severoiztochen**
- **Contact person:**
  - **Email: silvia.stumpf@vba.bg**
  - **Phone number: 00359887389999**

## 3 POLICY CONTEXT

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The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name and reference of the policy instrument addressed:

***“Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprise Program 2021-2027” – NEW***

***Innovation strategy for Smart Specialisation 2021-2027 - new***

## 4 ACTION 1 AND 2

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### 1. ACTION 1

#### **Support for creation of Open Platforms for the Adoption of Digital Innovation for industries from the 5 thematic priorities in RIS3 2021-2027 of Bulgaria**

We aim at the creation of Open Platforms for the Adoption of Digital Innovation. It will be a specific form for collaboration of technology / service providers and end-users to showcase, test, customize and/or develop new digital technologies in an interorganisational network, addressing the needs of the technology users for specific industries related to the priorities in RIS3 of Bulgaria – 4 vertical and 1 horizontal one. The platforms will be included first as required measures supporting the industrial transition of Bulgarian industry into the RIS3 of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2027.

The open platforms for technology adoption will upheave the collaboration between technology / service providers and technology end users. The platforms will be coordinated by a neutral instance, which acts as facilitator for the collaboration providing.

The platforms will strengthen the preparation of institutions for Industry 4.0. The platforms will also include Self-Assessment tools. They will facilitate the introduction of clear criteria for assessing companies for their current situation on a 6-point scale (Maturity Model for Industry 4.0), defining measurable criteria (KPIs) and offering roadmaps to improve their situation to use when financing SMEs the PKIP. We aim at ensuring a beta version software will be elaborated, designed to provide SMEs with an understanding of the company's position regarding Industry 4.0 by measuring company's actual against its target maturity along six dimensions, thereby identifying needs for action as well as classifying your current maturity level. In order to take company's understanding to the next level, the SMEs will register for the benchmark after having completed the assessment to gain valuable insights on how they are positioned against competitors in their relevant industry.

The platforms will provide support to SMEs for further digitalisation at least in 3 main areas: process management, computerization, and connectivity, based on standard models and protocols, to reach the European average.

The evaluation module will also provide support to SMEs to increase their capacity to implement digital technologies related to their business and operational processes and for the introduction of Industry 4.0 (RAMI 4.0) standards.

## **2. ACTION 2**

### **Setting up a network of Demonstration Centers for Digitalization**

These centers will complement the existing DIHs and eDIHS with interactive demo stations that help to explore and analyse new technologies in a tangible and practise-oriented way. Each demo station allows the visitor to experience in quick and easy manner how the showcased technology functions and the benefits it offers, but also shows its potential shortcomings. It helps to raise awareness and provides inspiration and ideas to test and introduce the technologies in the context of the visitor's company, e.g., through pilot projects.

The Action description will be included first in the Innovation strategy for smart specialisation for Bulgaria fo 2021-2027 in the section concerning the industrial transition for the Bulgarian economy.

The Action next aims at planning a funding scheme within the Program for competitiveness and innovation 2021-2027 for financing the establishment of a demonstration eco-system in the field of Industry 4.0, through test centers for testing / approbation of technologies from Industry 4.0, incl. virtual productions. The demo stations will ensure support to SMEs to increase the capacity to implement digital technologies related to their business and operational processes before they invest leveraging their knowledge about latest applicable Industry 4.0 solutions in their business fields. they will provide conditions for companies for prototyping (3D printing, VR) and testing of technological solutions.

Making SMEs aware of the characteristics and potential of Industry 4.0 technologies requires a practise-oriented approach. A Demo Center for Digitalization, consisting of several interactive demo stations, will help to explore and analyse new technologies in a tangible and practise-oriented way. Examples for demo stations are:

- Industrial Internet of Things
- Cobotics
- Blockchain, Cryptocurrencies & SmartContracts
- Cloud- & Edge Computing
- Augmented Reality & Virtual Reality
- Artificial Intelligence & Smart Data
- Workplace of the Future

Each demo station will allow the visitor to experience in quick and easy manner how the showcased technology functions and the benefits it offers, but also shows its potential shortcomings. It will help to raise awareness and provides inspiration and ideas to test and introduce the technologies in the context of the visitor's company, e.g., through pilot projects.

Each demo station will be created and built in connection with real-world examples and technologies provided by partner organisations. The stations might also include the view on financial aspects related to the technologies (e.g., interactive calculation of return-of-investment). The demo stations will be designed as mobile and modular units, which facilitates scaling-up and exploitation within a wider context.

## 4.1 BACKGROUND

Bulgaria lags other EU member states in terms of digitalization of the economy. The EC's Index on the Entry of Digital Technologies into the Economy and Society (DESI) for 2020 ranks the country 26th in the EU (ahead of Greece and Romania), in the cluster of low-performing countries. The main challenges facing Bulgaria are related to the very low level of skills in the field of digital technologies in the population and the low level of implementation of digital technologies in business.

The main directions for reaching the average European level for the penetration of digital technologies in the Bulgarian economy and society, set in the draft Strategy for Digital Transformation of the Economy 2020-2030 are:

- Improving the cooperation between the business in the field of ICT, industry, science and government, by orienting research to the technological trends of Industry 4.0 and promoting the opportunities for participation in various international initiatives in the field of digitalization.
- Technological renewal of the Bulgarian industry, by creating models for exchange of experience, good practices and implementation of new business models.
- Building human, scientific, organizational and institutional capacity for the development of Industry 4.0 in Bulgaria, by increasing digital skills and adapting qualification systems to new technological challenges.
- Promoting the use of artificial intelligence technologies in industry in Bulgaria.

At the national level, Bulgaria has the capacity and is recognized as a center for the development of information technology, with a developed start-up ecosystem, proven expertise in managing outsourced business processes and well-developed infrastructure that meets modern technological challenges. Bulgaria is among the countries with the fastest internet in the world and a modern technology park. The focus on the new cyber-physical systems, which are the basis of Industry 4.0, allows to upgrade this experience and to modernize the Bulgarian production facilities.

The main goal of the government for the period until 2030 is technological transformation of the economy and catching up with its digitalization through

targeted and focused government support, while increasing specialization in products and industries characterized by higher technological and R&D intensity (and therefore - and with higher added value), which will allow to occupy better and more prestigious positions in global value chains.

It is necessary to stimulate investment in high value-added developments and the use of modern technologies. These investments are an important source of innovation, productivity and therefore the competitiveness of the economy.

Providing appropriate conditions for digital business transformation and providing adequate support in this process will create an opportunity to win higher market shares in existing and emerging product niches.

The development of national initiatives for Industry 4.0 is of great importance, not only because it really supports the competitiveness of industry and encourages and supports investment in innovation and new technologies, but also facilitates the exchange of experience with other countries that have their successes and good practices in digitalization.

The support for these initiatives will be first designed in the RIS3 of Bulgaria as during the previous programming period they have not been even started. The RIS3 is related to the planning of measures within PKIP 2021-2027.

In the last years after the COVID-19 outbreak many financing schemes under the Bulgarian operational programmes and the one tackled by DIGITAL REGIONS in Bulgaria – OPIK 2014-2020, have been cancelled to allow the managing authorities to reallocate the available funds for new forms of response to the crisis and mainly as a direct financial support to the companies. This affected heavily the opportunities open to companies in Bulgaria to receive support for their digitalization. On the other side, no funds were left for additional schemes and measures. For this reason, BAA Action plan is re-focused at both new policy instruments for the actual programming period – the amended RIS3 2021-2027 and the new programme for innovation and competitiveness that is focused at the same strategic aim – supporting the Bulgarian economy competitiveness - Program "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises" for the period 2021-2027 (PKIP 2021-2027).

"The Program "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises" for the period 2021-2027 (PKIP 2021-2027) is directly aimed at achieving smart and sustainable growth of the Bulgarian economy, as well as the implementation of industrial and digital transformation.

As an instrument for the implementation of the European Cohesion Policy for the period 2021-2027 and in particular the European Regional Development Fund, the UCITS 2021-2027 is intended to contribute to the achievement of the following Policy Objectives set at European level:



Policy Objective 1 "A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smarter economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity" through the following specific objectives:

- Specific objective (i) development and strengthening of research and innovation capacity and introduction of modern technologies.
- Specific objective (ii) reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organizations and public authorities.
- Specific objective (iii) promoting sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation, including through productive investment.

Policy Objective 2 "A greener, lower-carbon and sustainable Europe with an economy in transition to zero net carbon emissions by promoting a clean and equitable energy transition, green and blue investments, a circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management and sustainable urban mobility "through the following objectives:

- Specific objective (i) promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Specific objective (vi) promoting the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy.

The planned support under the UCITS 2021-2027 is aimed at overcoming the identified challenges and problems for the development of Bulgaria by addressing the relevant needs and requirements according to the goals and priorities set out in the following strategic documents at national level: National Development Program Bulgaria 2030; The innovation strategy for smart specialization for the period 2021-2027; The National Strategy for SMEs in Bulgaria 2021-2027, Digital Transformation of Bulgaria for the period 2020-2030, Strategy and Action Plan for Transition to the Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2027, as well as the Integrated National Plan in the field of Energy and Climate of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030 (INPEK). As a tool for implementing the policies set out in these documents, the program's interventions and measures will help focus economic development efforts by improving the results and productivity of the innovation system, creating favourable conditions for quality development and sustainable business growth, and digital transformation in their interconnectedness and synergy."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Program "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises" for the period 2021-2027 (PKIP 2021-2027

The PKIP 2020-2027 also analysis the situation and planes activities to answer them:

The past decade has seen an overall improvement in the use of ICT by SMEs (Analysis of the state of SMEs conducted for the purposes of the NMMSP 2021-2027). In recent years, a gradually evolving ecosystem of digital and technological entrepreneurs has emerged in the country. However, by the beginning of 2020, only 13.7% of enterprises have a high or very high level of ICT-related activities, with smaller ones retaining a relatively lower level of ICT use compared to more the big ones. According to data from the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) in 2019 Bulgaria is the least developed EU member state in the field of

digital performance and digital competitiveness. The biggest lag is in the integration of digital technologies, which have seen almost no progress in recent years. The penetration of digital technologies in enterprises is slow, and investments in digitalization are limited. Among the main obstacles for business in the implementation of ICT are the lack of good understanding of the nature and benefits of new technologies, the lack of trust of entrepreneurs in the digital economy, their concerns about security and confidentiality, and limited financial resources. There is a need to promote the pursuit of technologies from INDUSTRY 4.0, provide financial resources for the implementation of digital solutions (including solutions related to security and confidentiality of information), increase awareness of entrepreneurs about the benefits of implementation of this type of technology.

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need to intensively promote digitalisation in the implementation of digital solutions to restructure work processes / flows in order to prepare enterprises to overcome the consequences / achieve greater resilience and adaptability in the event of crises. In this sense, the digitalization of SMEs is also a preventive measure to achieve greater resilience in crisis situations by providing the opportunity for remote work, online trade, etc.

Under Specific Objective 2 "Harvesting the benefits of digitalization of citizens, companies, research organizations and public authorities" of Priority 1 of the PKIP 2021-2027, the planned interventions will focus on achieving a successful digital / digital transformation of Bulgarian enterprises in the context of Industry 4.0, introduction of digital solutions and programs, incl. in terms of cybersecurity and data confidentiality in SMEs."<sup>2</sup>

All the enlisted needs are presented as groups of specific actions in PKIP 2020-2027 under 2.1.1. Specific objective " Specific objective "Assimilate the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organizations and public authorities"":

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<sup>2</sup> Program "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises" for the period 2021-2027 (PKIP 2021-2027), version 4, p.8

“For this specific purpose, the following indicative groups of activities are envisaged for implementation:

- Encouraging the introduction of Industry 4.0 technologies in enterprises.
- Introduction of standards in the field of Industry 4.0.
- Support for investments aimed at developing digital technologies, software, digital applications in the field of Industry 4.0.
- Implement appropriate cybersecurity and data confidentiality processes in SMEs.
- Improving the digital skills of the staff in connection with the introduced technologies from Industry 4.0

These activities related to improving digital skills will not be implemented alone, but in connection with the technologies introduced by Industry 4.0

Support under this specific objective will focus on the last four levels of digitalisation, in which the necessary technologies for Industry 4.0 are being developed: Stage 3 "Visibility", Stage 4 "Transparency", Stage 5 "Forecast Capacity" and Stage 6 "Adaptability" 2. “<sup>3</sup>.

The contribution of DIGITAL REGIONS project is envisaged as 2 different actions supporting the design of specific activities and measures for support that will ease and deepen the implementation of these actions under the Specific objective through transferring the knowledge gained within DIGITAL REGIONS project.

Action 1 is aimed at creating Open platforms for digitalisation and Action 2 is aimed at creation of demo centers for digitalisation. Both actions start with the inclusion of their descriptions within the RIS3 as an enabling condition for PKIP and next will proceed with the design of new funding measures for the creation of these platforms and democenters.

The actions stem up from the cross-fertilisation between different practices within DIGITAL REGIONS project.

## **4.2 KNOWLEDGE APPLIED FROM DIGITAL REGIONS**

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<sup>3</sup> Program "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises" for the period 2021-2027 (PKIP 2021-2027), version 4, p. 34

<b>Partner practice/experience (please, detail: practice name, short description and location)</b>	<b>good</b> <b>good</b> <b>short</b> <b>How this good practice/experience has contributed to the actions developed in your Action Plan (detail any transfers, full or partial of good practice)</b>
<p><b>ACTION 1 “Support for creation of 5 Open Platforms for the Adoption of Digital Innovation for industries from the 5 thematic priorities in RIS3 2021-2027 of Bulgaria”, is based on the Good practice “Open Platform for the Adoption of Digital Innovation” (Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne AG)</b></p>	<p>Inspiration for a specific form for collaboration of technology / service providers and end-users to showcase, test, customize and/or develop new digital technologies in an interorganisational network, addressing the needs of the technology users.</p> <p>Portugal i4.0 - Portugal's national strategy for digitising industry</p> <p>CIEBI/BIC – Business Innovation Centre</p> <p>The content of PHASE 1 and PHASE 2 and the list of proposed measures to accelerate the adoption of industry 4.0 by national companies. The monitoring tool on impacts is an important tool.</p> <p>Based on:</p> <p>MITTIC</p> <p>CIEBI/BIC – Business Innovation Centre</p> <p>Tools and methods on how to incorporate technological innovation into traditional economic sectors. The electronic questionnaire tool and the information repository or document manager concept are useful.</p> <p>Based on:</p> <p>Industry 4.0 Voucher (Vale Indústria 4.0)</p> <p>The self-assessment tool is inspired by another project:</p>

	<p>Validated assessment of SMEs using a tailor-made Industry 4.0 maturity matrix in Hungary (from another project (INNO PROVEMENT))</p> <p>The approach taken in Hungary relies on a multi-factor online self-assessment followed by an on-site assessment carried out by experts to validate results. The factors considered include vision and strategy, management, quality, supply chain, maintenance, ICT infrastructure and logistics. The experience of the on-site assessment is that SMEs tend to significantly overestimate their maturity in some factors whereas underestimate it in others. Therefore, the expert-driven on-site assessment is crucial for having a clear picture on the true Industry 4.0 maturity of the SME.</p> <p>The practice is part of a complex project aiming at facilitating the digital transformation of Hungarian SMEs.</p>
<p><b>ACTION 2</b></p> <p><b>Support for setting up a network of Demo Centers for Digitalization (up to 5)</b></p>	<p>Digitalization Parkour, consisting of several, interactive demo stations, helps to explore and analyse new technologies in a tangible and practise-oriented way</p> <p>(Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne AG)</p> <p>The demo stations are designed as mobile and modular units, which facilitates scaling-up and exploitation within a wider context. The Digitalization Parkour is set-up by the Swiss Smart Factory and its network of more than 50 partners. It is a part of an open living lab – thus accessible to a broad public audience.</p> <p>Based on</p> <p>“Technology gateways”, Ireland. Through the Technology Gateway Network, they are leveraging the expertise of over 300 industry-focused researchers, together with the specialist</p>

equipment and facilities of the 11 institutes of technology, to access near-to-market innovation and solutions. Each Gateway acts as a portal to the industry focussed capability across the network and beyond to the wider research infrastructure in Ireland. To optimise the power of the Network 3 clusters were established to deliver market lead innovation solutions for Irish companies, in the areas of Applied Internet of Things, Engineering, Materials & Design and Food and Beverages.

Within each Gateway, a dedicated Gateway Manager and a team of sector specific business development staff act as the key contact points for industry and manage the successful delivery of projects on time and within budget.

### 4.3 ACTION DESCRIPTION

Main objectives	Value brought by this action into the region	Players involved and role in the implementation and collaboration between them
<p>Action 1: To address the SMEs needs to increase their capacity to implement innovative digital technologies related to their business and operational processes</p>	<p>5% of increase in the implementation of new technological and industry 4.0 solutions by SMEs in the 4 RIS3 priorities, increase of 15% in the number of SMEs in the manufacturing smart specialisation sector cooperating with innovation actors to implement INDUSTRY 4.0 solutions.</p>	<p>PKIP MA, business clusters, universities, working together to found new entities to run the platforms dedicated to the 4 RIS3 priorities</p>
<p>Action 2: To ensure stable conditions for SMEs to explore and analyse new Industry 4.0 and digital technologies in a tangible and practise-oriented way</p>	<p>increase of 15% in the number of SMEs benefiting from exploring new technologies applicable in their business operations</p>	<p>PKIP MA, business clusters, universities, working together to found new entities to run the Centers</p>

#### 4.4 TIMEFRAME AND FUNDING

Include here the timeframe for the project funding application and set-up/implementation process. Note: this chart will be key for the reporting procedure on the indicators given in the Application Form (Number of Projects and Investments relating to your PI and other Policy Instruments)

<b>Project/Action Investment Line/Funding Source + Amount (please state each source of funding)</b>	<b>Submitted For Funding</b>	<b>Funding Decision</b>	<b>Project Start Date / Finish date</b>	<b>Other milestones</b>	<b>key</b>
<b>Action 1, PKIP 2020-2027, 200 000 EUR</b>	February 2023	July 2023	-	-	
<b>Action 2, PKIP 2020-2027, 200 000 EUR</b>	February 2023	July 2023	-	-	



## 4.5 WORKPLAN

Include an outline of the Work-plan for each project. A suggestion could be to breakdown the Work-plan in work packages and tasks as below:

<b>ACTION 1</b>  <b>Support for creation of Open Platforms for the Adoption of Digital Innovation for industries from the 5 thematic priorities in RIS3 2021-2027 of Bulgaria</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>1. Work Package 1 “Elaboration of Concept for conditions for application for a new funding measure “Support for creation of Open Platforms for the Adoption of Digital Innovation for industries from the 5 thematic priorities in RIS3 2021-2027 of Bulgaria”</b>	Task 1.1 Setting up a RMSG for Action 1
	Task 1.2 Inclusion and approval of amendment of RIS3 for the support of Open platforms for digitalisation
	Task 1.3 Elaboration of Concept for Conditions for application for the new funding measure
	Task 1.4 Holding 1 RMSG meeting for discussing the funding conditions
	Task 1.5 Improvement of the Concept for Conditions for application for the new funding measure
	Task 1.6 Holding 1 RMSG meeting for approving the Concept
	Task 1.7 Submission of suggestion for funding scheme main points
<b>Work Package 2 “Communication”</b>	Task 2.1 Planning a communication plan
	Task 2.2 Implementing a communication plan
	Task 2.3 Measuring the impact of the plan

ACTION 2 “Support for setting up a network of Demo Centers for Digitalization (up to 5)”	Tasks
<p><b>Work Package 1 “Elaboration of Concept for conditions for application for a new funding measure “Support for setting up a network of Demo Centers for Digitalization (up to 5)”</b></p>	Task 1.1 1Setting up a RMSG for Action 2
	Task 1.2 Inclusion and approval of amendment of RIS3 for the support of Demo centers for Digitalisation
	Task 1.3 Elaboration of Concept for Conditions for application for the new funding measure
	Task 1.4 Workshop with experts in Industry 4.0 for amending the Concept
	Task 1.5 Holding 1 RMSG meeting for discussing the funding conditions
	Task 1.6 Improvement of the Concept for Conditions for application for the new funding measure
	Task 1.7 Holding 1 RMSG meeting for approving the Concept for the funding conditions
	Task 1.8 Submission of suggestion for funding scheme main points
<p><b>Work Package 2 “Communication”</b></p>	Task 2.1 Planning a communication plan
	Task 2.2 Implementing a communication plan
	Task 2.3 Measuring the impact of the plan

## 4.6 BUDGET BREAKDOWN FOR THE ACTION

Category of funding	Expenditure Amount
Salaries	-
Overheads (i.e. calculated at x % of staff costs)	-
Travel & Subsistence	-
External expertise	-
Building/renovation / refurbishment	-
Equipment	-
TOTAL	-

## 4.7 VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of both actions will be monitored for the next 5 years until end of the programming period.

## 4.8 IMPACT EXPECTED

A. Refer to your 'Self-Defined Indicators' in the Application Form

- **Number of projects for better exploiting the opportunities provided by Industry 4.0. – 10**
- **An increase of 15% in the number of SMEs in the manufacturing smart specialisation sector in Bulgaria cooperating with innovation actors to implement INDUSTRY 4.0 solutions**

B. Section to explain the impact expected of this action (You might also cover the angle about what would be the impact if the action is not implemented)

This result will be amplified by:

1) Inspiration and ideas from the I4.0 Policy White paper, produced by DIGITAL REGIONS PROJECT to stimulate adaption of I4.0 measures in innovation policies in Bulgaria (RIS3 and Strategy for Industry 4.0) and additional uptake of I4.0 solutions among Bulgarian SMEs;

2) *Design of 2 new policy measures to extend use of existing high quality I4.0 innovation capacity in innovation leader/strong regions from the project to Bulgaria as modest region to accelerate adaption and availability of I4.0 technology and solutions.*

## **4.9 MONITORING ACTIVITIES IN PHASE 2**

*To be concreted in line with the monitoring methodology (under development).*

*Approval of Action Plan*

Business Agency Association agrees to implement the Action Plan for the Programme “Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprise Program 2021-2027” and for the Innovation strategy for Smart Specialisation 2021-2027 as detailed above. I confirm that I have the required authorisation of to do so and that the required authorisation process of Ministry of Innovation and Growth has been duly carried out.

On behalf of: Business Agency Association

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Silvia Stumpf

Position in Organisation: Chairwoman of Management Board

Date: 14.07.2022

*Approval of Action Plan*

Business Agency Association agrees to implement the Action Plan for the Programme "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprise Program 2021-2027" and for the Innovation strategy for Smart Specialisation 2021-2027 as detailed above. I confirm that I have the required authorisation of to do so and that the required authorisation process of Ministry of Innovation and Growth has been duly carried out.

On behalf of: Business Agency Association

Signed:



Name:

Silvia Stumpf

Position in Organisation:

Chairwoman of Management Board

Date:

14.07.2022