DIGIBEST
PEER REVIEW REPORT:
CASE STUDY OF GRANADA, SPAIN

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List of abbreviations

AP	Advisory Partner
BDRM	Business Digitalization Regional Road Maps
DESI	Digital Economy and Society *Index*
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GP	Good Practice
HP	Hosting partner
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IE	Interreg Europe
JR	Joint Report (DIGIBEST STUDY ON THE STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL BUSINESSES)
MC	Management Committee
PP	Project partner
PR	Peer Review
PRM Guidelines	Peer Review Methodology Guidelines
PRR	Peer Review Report
RS	Regional Studies (DIGIBEST REGIONAL ANALYSIS, GRANADA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, SPAIN) and (DIGIBEST REGIONAL STUDY ON THE STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL BUSINESSES IN LATVIA)
SH	Stakeholder
SG	Steering Group
SP	Sending partner
SME	Small and medium enterprise

1   Introduction

The main objective of this DigiBEST project PR process is to perform an external analyses about SME and microenterprise digitalisation for Granada province, Spain and to provide potential solutions and recommendations for promotion of the digital transformation of SMEs and microenterprises, that could be used to improve policy instruments of HP. The objective of this PRR also includes elaboration of recommendations based on both, observations and analyses of existing digitalisation situation in Granada Province and GPs and digitalisation approaches applied in SP countries/regions, that could be brought over to HP region.

Simultaneously, during the PR process Expert's objective is not only to facilitate digital transformation of HP region, but also during PR process to gain an experience about what policy instruments, GPs and other actions attributed to digital transformation of HP could be adopted by SPs to facilitate their digital transformation process as well.

The PR process for Granada province is carried out by two external experts from two different SP countries (Latvia and Italy). More extend information about Expert team is discussed in Chapter 2 of this PRR.

During the PR process Expert's work consisted of two stages (desk research and field research) during which they gathered, reviewed and analysed information attributed to digital transformation of both HP and SP, to draw conclusions and provide suggestions to HP and SP countries/regions regarding digital transformation.

During the desk research which was carried out **between 19th and 26th April**, Experts studied and evaluated documents provided by SP and other publicly available information about digitalisation situation of SP and HP. Main source for expert analyses was RS, prepared by HP. RS provided rather extensive analyses about HP's region and its digitalisation traits and barriers. It discussed also other relevant supporting policy documents attributed to digitalisation strategy of Granada province. During this stage, to compare digitalisation situation between SP and HP, experts also studied RSs of both SPs. Other publicly available information regarding socio-economic situation, milestones of EU digital strategy and regional digitalisation was obtained and studied mainly from internet resources. Materials studied during desk research, provided experts with overall impressions about where HP stands in terms of digital development and what are potential problem points and challenges for digitalisation of HP. Experts note, that main limitation in this PR Expert stage was that part of relevant policy and digitalisation related information was in Spanish, however experts have limited working capability in this language.

Field research was carried out from **27 April 2021 until 29 April 2021**[1]. During this phase Experts had a chance to meet with HP and main SHs, that are involved in digital transformation shaping process in Granada province, and engage in discussion about digital situation in Granada Province. Field research started with introduction session which was led by HP (Provincial Council of Granada). Introduction session followed by five meetings with

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[1] **Appendix 9:** Spanish Peer Review event Online agenda: Granada – Spain (April 27-29, 2021)

main SHs, other HP Experts and GP owners (Young Entrepreneurs Association[2], Chamber of Commerce of Granada[3], OnGranada Cluster[4], Daleph Consultancy[5], Consortium Fernando de los Ríos[6]). During the meetings experts encountered with different spectre of opinions regarding main characteristics of SME an microenterprise digitalisation in Granada province, however uniting factors, that experts noticed were that there is lack of awareness about advantages that digital solutions could provide, lack of corporate digital strategy, lack of qualified ICT professionals who could facilitate digital transition, and dispersion in terms of digital knowledge between rural and urban regions among SMEs, microenterprises and population in general.

Field research studies provided more in depth view on digital situation of Granada province, supported and complemented observations obtained during the desk research. However, PR Experts noted that major limitation is that to increase quality of the PRR more time than just three days for field research would be needed to get more familiar with digital transformation framework of Granada Province. Also, it would have been very useful if there was a possibility to meet also other relevant SHs and to hear their shared opinions. For example, one of such SHs could be the University of Granada, that did not participate in PR event at all, but is considered as one of the main SHs. In fact, available literature shows that this institution has provided great amount of talent and skilled professionals for years, however most of them have preferred to move to other cities or regions and start their careers there.

In the following chapters of this PRR Experts have discussed more in details the PR process, findings and conclusions and their recommendations based on obtained information during desk and field research.

2   Presentation of the Peer Review team

According to PRM Guidelines the PR process involves collaboration of different PPs and all together they form a PR team. PR team is represented by Advisory partner (AP), Hosting Partner (HP), two sending partners (SP) and two PR experts. Structure of PR team is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

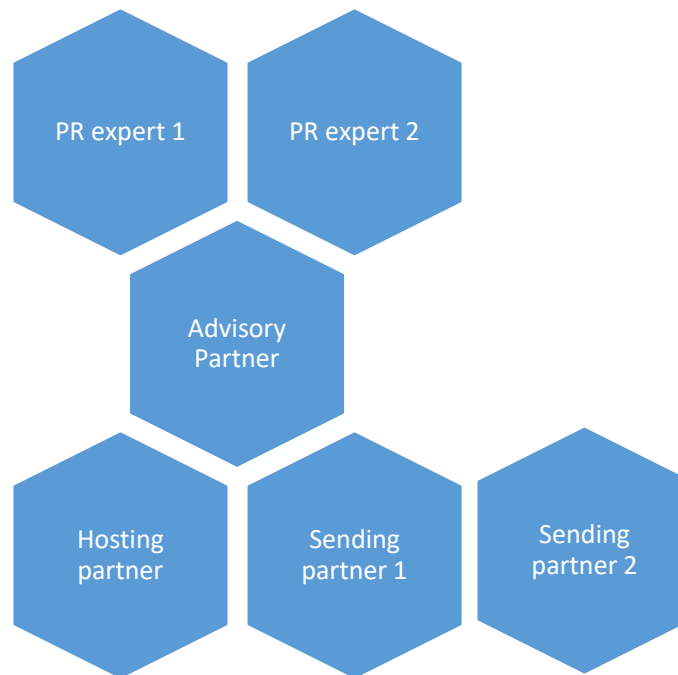---

[2] http://www.ajeandalu cia.org/granada/

[3] https://www.camarag ranada.org/

[4] https://www.ongrana da.com

[5] https://daleph.com/

[6] https://www.consorciofernandodelosrios.es/

Figure 1: Structure of the PR team

University of Latvia acts as an AP. AP is responsible for PR methodology and it monitors if this methodology is taken into account during PR process. If necessary, AP consults and provides guidance to other PR team members regarding methodology and other matters of PR process. During PR of Granada province AP participated in all field research meetings and also actively participated in the conversations, therefore in times contributing to brainstorming process of PR. AP also was actively involved during kick-off period by giving instructions and advice on how desk research and field research could be organised and performed based on best practices.

During PR process of Granada province Provincial Council of Granada acts as a HP. The role of HP is to organise and host PR events that are part of field research phase. Also, before and after the PR event HP was responsible for communication with other PR team members by providing supporting PR documentation and coordinate agenda of the PR event.

During PR process of Granada province the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia acts as one of SPs, representing Latvia. Sviluppo Basilicata spa acts as other SP, representing Italy. SP's responsibility in scope of PR process is to hire external PR expert and to coordinate communication between HP and PR Experts from SP country/region during the process of PR process. In the contract with PR Expert SP can also state specific objectives for PR experts in order to adopt GPs of HP and to facilitate development of SP's digital transformation.

Both SP has delegated their PR Experts. SP of Italy as a PR Expert contracted Protiviti Inc, that is represented by two experts. SP of Latvia as PR Expert hired KPMG Baltics AS, that is represented by two experts participating in the PR process PR Experts are responsible for implementation of PR according to PRM Guidelines. During the process PR Experts have to

jointly carry out desk research and field research analyses and based on information obtained during these activities to prepare PRR. Desk research should be caried out based on the information and documents provided by the HP and SP, as well as other publicly available documents and information prior to PR event. During the field research PR Experts are supposed to obtain additional information through meetings, interviews and discussions about digitalisation situation of Granada province, that are organised by HP. After the field research in one month time Experts are supposed to prepare PRR, which should provide elaborated conclusions and recommendations on how to facilitate the promotion of the digital transformation of SMEs and microenterprises by improving HP's policy instruments described in RS. List of PR team participants is presented in Appendix 11.

According to PRM Guidelines both PR Experts must agree, how they are dividing their tasks during desk research, field research and PRR preparation. PR Experts are jointly responsible for quality and timely prepared PRR. Tasks and objectives of both PR Experts are described in Chapter 4.

3   Peer Review implementation

3.1   Desk research

As described in previous chapters two main parts of PR were desk research and field research. During desk research several sources of information were reviewed to gain understanding and first insights about digitalisation situation of SME's of Granada province. Probably the most significant documents reviewed during this phase were RS and JR, that provided consolidated but still rather extensive overview about background of Granada Province, main local SHs, policy framework, GPs and other initiatives, main problem points regarding digitalisation in province and possible solutions. Overall PR Experts impressions were that these documents are supplementing each other, and no discrepancies between them were found. During desk research PR Experts did not find major changes since the time both researches were conducted. Economic obstacles caused by Covid-19 pandemic has remained, however as described in RS and JR, it has also forced and encouraged SMEs and microenterprises to take an advantage of digital solutions.

During the desk review PR Experts also reviewed other public documentation and documents provided by HP and SP, that are considering information about digitalisation of SMEs and microenterprises and socio-economic situation of both SP and HP countries/regions. Sources can be categorised in five categories: EU digital strategy related policies, Regional and local policy related documents, Researches performed by SP or HP or provided by SP or HP, Other internet resources of GPs, initiatives and supporting information and information on statistics (DESI, GDP, unemployment, etc.). Summary of main sources reviewed during desk research are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: PR desk research findings

No	Source of literature, document or information on the website reviewed or analysed	Date	Main findings and conclusions
1	Granada RS *Provided to experts by HP*	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	Obtained overall impression about region and digital transformation challenges. Main observations were, that there is a lack of awareness on digital solutions and their applicability among SME's, there is high unemployment and disbalance between demand and supply of high quality IT specialists in the market, SMEs mainly do not have strong digitalisation strategies, and they are often afraid to take a risk to experiment in this field, also SMEs often lack resources, both financial and human capital, to implement digital solutions in their business practices.
2	DIGIBEST STUDY ON THE STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL BUSINESSES: Joint Report (Draft) *Provided to Experts by Latvian SP*	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	Similarly as during review of RS obtained overall impression about region and digital transformation challenges. Joint report allowed to compare digitalisation of all regions/countries see Granada case in contrast against other DigiBest partner regions/countries. Especially to compare how Spain performs according to DESI.
3	Dossier Peer Review Granada *Provided to experts by HP*	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	Document provided summary Granada province, and highlighted GPs.
4	Digital Cities Challenge: Digital Transformation Strategy for the city of Granada *Provided to experts by HP*	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	The document was prepared on July 2019 and is a part of EC Digital Cities Challenge initiative. The document provided insights of OECD suggested areas that Granada province should focus, when addressing digitalisation of the region, and also listed several existing and planned digitalisation initiatives of the region.
5	GOING DIGITAL INTEGRATED POLICY FRAMEWORK *OECD Digital Economy papers, February 2020, No.292*	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This OECD document provided information about the aspects that should be taken into consideration when designing policies. Main point was that policies should consist of seven dimensions: 1) access; 2) use; 3) innovation; 4) jobs; 5) social

			prosperity; 6) trust; and 7) market openness.
			Also, when addressing these dimensions, policy makers should regularly monitor policy objectives and progress, gaps and set priorities together with main SHs.
6	OECD Reviews of digital transformation: Going digital in Latvia	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This OECD report provided insights about digitalisation situation of Latvia and allowed to compare digital challenges of Latvia with digital challenges of Granada province. Main suggestions were related to increase of digital education and awareness rising. One of the main suggestions was to provide more support and grants to organisations, like NGO`s that could promote more general use of ICT and mentor focus groups of society. Latvia should work primarily with groups that make relatively little use of ICT (for example rural areas). Similar approach could be recommended also to Granada province.
7	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This EC document describes EU approach and priorities towards sustainable and digital Europe. It describes EU priorities and main pillars that EU member states should address when they are commencing digital transformation According to EC the main pillars for digitalisation of Europe are: ― Capacity-building and support for the transition to sustainability and digitalisation; ― Reducing regulatory burden and improving market access and ― Improving access to financing.
8	https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	PR Experts explored EC web page to obtain information about what are EU priorities and strategy in digitalisation of Europe. PR Experts understand, that main goals for EC is to create Europe as a fair and competitive digital economy, an open, democratic and sustainable society, to become a global role model for the digital economy,

			support developing economies in going digital, develop digital standards and promote them internationally.
9	https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/content/european-digital-strategy	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	PR Experts explored EC web page to obtain information about what are EU priorities and strategy in digitalisation of Europe. Similarly, as in previous point 8, PR Experts gained understanding what are EC priorities regarding technology usage in EU, opening industry for technology, job market, and new enterprise creation.
10	https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	From this EC source PR Experts obtained information what are the main EC goals in 4 digitalisation[7] focus points: Skills, Government, Infrastructure and Business. The source lists specific targets that Europe should accomplish by 2030.
11	https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/policy-document/andalusian-innovation-strategy-2014-2020-ris3	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This is a RIS3 policy document for Andalusia. Andalusian Innovation Strategy defines the objectives and the prioritisation criteria of research and innovation fields, and ICT use, as well as of the opportunities in the specialisation domains of the Andalusian economy which are in line with EC guidelines of the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). According to the policy - "the vision is based on the assumption that Andalusia in the future has to be entrepreneurial; advanced in education and training; open; healthy and attractive to live; and sustainable and social. The priorities set are mobility and logistics; the industry linked to transport; the management of the region's own resources; the promotion of Andalusia as a touristic destination; the health system and welfare; R&D in agroindustry and nutrition; renewable energies, efficiency and sustainable construction; and ICT and digital economy."

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[7] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en

12	ecfin_forecast_summer_2020_es_en.pdf (europa.eu)	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This is EC document that describes potential Covid 19 impact on Spanish economy. It is said, that most impact will be on labour intense industries where unemployment will rise.
13	https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-strategy_en	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	This is another description from EC web page about SME strategy of EU. It highlights importance of reducing regulatory burden and improving market access, access to financing, EU country partnership for delivery.
14	https://digital-agenda-data.eu/datasets/desi/visualizations	19.04.2021-26.04.2021	PR Experts explored DESI index in context of Spain and identified week areas and areas where Spain performs above average. Overall conclusions are that Spain has improved its digital situation in comparison with past years, but there are still improvements needed regarding human capital and digital skills.

3.2 Field research

During field research PR Experts participated in an introduction meeting with representatives of Provincial Council of Granada (HP) during which mainly policy framework and general information about digitalisation traits of Granada province were discussed. After this meeting five consecutive meetings with main SHs were attended by PR experts. During these meetings PR Experts carried out interviews and engaged in discussions about digitalisation of the province. Main topics discussed were GPs of the province, applicable policies of the region and overall challenges regarding digital transformation. For meetings HP had selected SHs in a way that they represent different organisations with different experiences regarding digitalisation of Granada province. Although all SHs shared similar impressions, stating that main challenges for successful digitalisation of SMEs and microenterprises is lack of general awareness in population and among SMEs about benefits of digitalisation and digital tools and that there is a lack of high quality specialists who could shape digital development of SMEs. However SHs also stated that during previous years SMEs and microenterprises have become more keen on exploiting EU funds and that due to COVID-19 many SMEs and microenterprises, mainly those who represent hospitality and retail has implemented some sort of digitalisation solution, that they were not using previously.PR Expert Observation showed that those SHs who are more related to younger part of population, like Young Entrepreneurs Association, tend to have more positive impressions about overall digital literacy among SMEs.

Table 2: PR field research findings

Activity	Where and when	Stakeholders met	Policies and actions discussed
Discussion	Online meeting 27.04.2021	Provincial Council of Granada	General Policy framework including Program of Assistance and Cooperation for Local Economic Promotion.
Interview	Online meeting 27.04.2021	Young Entrepreneurs Association	Discussion about digitalisation level in Granada and how it has developed during Covid-19 situation.
Interview	Online meeting 27.04.2021	Chamber of Commerce of Granada	Meeting with two enterprises, discussion about their digital needs and available funding and applied digital tools in their practices.
Interview	Online meeting 27.04.2021	OnGranada Cluster	Discussion about collaboration between academic environment and industry, and about unemployment and overall digital skill gap in the province.
Interview	Online meeting 28.04.2021	Daleph Consultancy	Discussion about development of Granada empresas web page and digital tools needed for digital transformation.
Interview	Online meeting 28.04.2021	Guadalinfo	Guadalinfo Good Practice was discussed during the interview
Presentation and discussion	Online meeting 28.04.2021	Chamber of Commerce of Granada and other SHs	PR Expert presentation of preliminary findings

At the end of the PR event PR Experts presented their preliminary findings and suggestions to SHs and HP[8].

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4 Objectives and tasks of the PR Experts

4.1 Objectives and tasks of PR expert from Latvia

According to contract between Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia and KPMG Baltics AS, the main task for PR Experts was to perform PR process according to PRM Guidelines by evaluating digital transformation policies, GPs and support instruments, and to identify suggestions and recommendations for HP about how they could improve their digital transformation process. In addition, PR Experts were asked to prepare suggestions about possibilities to take over and implement GPs of HP to SP's country.

As stated previously besides direct objectives of PR process attributed to HP, during the desk research PR Experts were asked to study SP's RS about digital transformation situation in Latvia and its influence on entrepreneurship, including information about SME and microenterprise digital transformation policies and support instruments, as well as DESI results.

PR Experts also were asked to study HP's GPs, policy instruments, strategies and conclusions about them based on HP's RS and other available information. After review PR Experts are supposed to provide conclusions and suggestions how HP's GP`s could be potentially implemented in Latvia in order to facilitate development of SME and microenterprise digital transformation in Latvia.

At the end PR Experts should prepare these suggestions about GPs and present them to SP.

Based on these suggestions PR Experts should provide suggestions for elaboration of Road map and Action plan to facilitate following areas of SME and microenterprise digitalisation:

1. Awareness raising among entrepreneurs of the benefits of using ICT solutions in business.
2. Improvement of the availability of information on the financial support instruments offered by the state in the field of digital transformation.
3. Development of entrepreneurial competencies and corporate environment (mentoring programs, technology audits, individual consultations, management training) to promote the digital transformation of entrepreneurs.
4. Digital transformation and cybersecurity issue integration into business support initiatives.

4.2 Objectives and tasks of PR expert from Italy

As concerns the Italian PR Experts, they refer to a contract between the Sviluppo Basilicata Spaand Protiviti Government Services Srl. Main objectives in the contract relates to:

- Executing of the PR process by evaluating digital transformation policies of the Hosting Partner country.
- Analysing best practices and available resources.
- Providing opinions and new perspective in order to support and enhance good practices in the Province of Granada.

The experts were asked to work both on a desk research and a field research by Protiviti Government Services Srl. Regarding the desk research, the PR experts according to the contract were asked to delve into the situation of HPs country and focus on issues related to the digitization of SMEs and government support at SMEs disposal, referring to policies and best practices in place. Regarding the field research, according to contract the experts were required to stimulate a critical and challenging conversation during the PR Event, providing inspiring insights in order to collect the opinions of the SHs actively involved in the particular context analysed and providing proposals and ideas for improvement of the current practices in use.

Their work of in-depth analysis of the issues and comparison with the SHs involved in the process would be summarized in the PRR with the aim of raising awareness of emerging opportunities among institutions and SMEs themselves: in particular, PR Experts are asked for ideas on how to improve communication, training and awareness on digitalization tools, and application of these ideas.

5 Characteristics of the SMEs digitalization

5.1 Country level of digitalisation

During Desk research and Field research the main objective of PR Experts was to determine what is current digitalisation situation of SMEs and microenterprises of Granada, and how it compares with other EU countries/regions. First impressions and first hypothesis were developed during desk research and then later complemented by information from field research interviews.

Based on analyses, mainly supported by HP's RS, JR and Digital Transformation Strategy for the city of Granada[9], and other statistics like DESI[10], PR Experts observed that Spain and Granada province is digitally relatively well developed and according to overall DESI score of 57.5 in 2020, scores above EU average of 52.6 in 2020, as indicated in Table 3.

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[9] European Commission (2019), Digital Cities Challenge: Digital Transformation Strategy for the city of Granada

[10] https://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-composite#chart={%22indicator%22:%22desi_sliders%22,%22breakdown%22:{%22desi_1_conn%22:5,%22desi_2_hc%22:5,%22desi_3_ui%22:5,%22desi_4_idt%22:5,%22desi_5_dps%22:5},%22unit-measure%22:%22pc_desi_sliders%22,%22time-period%22:%222020%22}

Table 3: DESI score of Spain (2020)

DESI score 2020		
Indicators	**Spain**	**EU average**
DESI Index	57.5	52.6
DESI: connectivity	60.8	50.1
DESI: human capital/digital skills	47.6	49.3
DESI: use of internet services by citizens	60.8	58.0
DESI: integration of digital technology by business	41.2	41.4
DESI: digital public services	87.3	72.0

Source: Joint Report (DIGIBEST STUDY ON THE STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL BUSINESSES)

Spain scores exceptionally well in digital public services which is also supported by Eurostat data[11], that suggest that in Granada majority of population and businesses use digital avenues to communicate and exchange information with government and other public institutions digitally. Also, in DESI sub indicator "5a4 Digital public services for businesses", Spain (93.2) ranks significantly above EU average level (87.6).

However Spain lags behind EU average in human capital and digital skills indicator of DESI, and is around EU average in integration of digital technology by business as it can be seen in Table 3, however based on observation during field research PR Experts discovered, that in fact SMEs and microenterprises often have limited digital corporate strategy and understanding about what digital solutions would be necessary and beneficial for their further digital development. Also, SMEs and microenterprises very often lack resources to implement these solutions. This kind of situation applies especially to small family businesses and micro enterprises, due to fact that new technology implementation requires additional funding and is time consuming, and would take away resources from their daily core business activities.

In human capital and digital skills category, Spain lags behind in sub-categories of DESI as big data usage, cloud usage, e-commerce turnover and selling online cross-border. Also, according to survey performed in the province, entrepreneurs usually see digital tools only as a way how to increase revenues, and do not see the potential benefits of accessing international markets.

Spain also scores relatively high in DESI connectivity measure (60.8), however based on the RS and conversations with SHs there is a disproportionality between connectivity of rural and urban areas. In order to facilitate and depopulation and development of rural areas there is still place for improvements, and possibly more EU funds should be invested in infrastructure development to improve even more broadband coverage.

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[11] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database

5.2   General impressions on digitalisation in Granada province

PR Expert impression is that there is a **high disproportionality in terms of digital maturity among SMEs and microenterprises of Granada in various industries and areas** (urban vs. rural). There are relatively high level maturity ICT companies, that are led by younger generation who see benefits of digitalisation and understand ICT technologies. Probably this is the reason why SH like Young Entrepreneurs Association had more positive opinions about digitalisation level of Granada province, as described in Chapter 3.2. Also, University of Granada provides high expertise in ICT.

However local businesses from other sectors, like agriculture, hospitality, retail and food, still lag behind in their digital maturity, and general awareness about how digitalisation could benefit their businesses. Most often employees and management of SMEs and microenterprises do not have necessary skill set and digital knowledge, they are not aware what digital tools could be useful for their particular businesses, and as described previously they lack physical and financial resources to implement digital solutions. At the same time SMEs and microenterprises lack good examples and information that could encourage them to spend their resources for digitalisation. However, PR Experts should note, that during Covid-19 pandemic SMEs has started to relay more on digital solutions to overcome social distancing barer. Especially this applies to e-commerce, however according to information from interviews with SH, the situation of digital tools in business operations is still far from optimal.

High unemployment, which is the highest among DigiBEST PPs of around 21% in 2019, **is one of the main problem points in Granada Province, that is both holding back digital development of the region and also should be fought through perspective of digitalisation**. Due to Covid-19 this situation with unemployment has not improved, rather worsened.

There is significant problem of brain drain due to higher salaries in other regions, therefore skilled professionals and recent graduates choose to leave the province.

There exists high mismatch between demand of ICT skills by employers and skills that labour market can provide. Therefore, even though the unemployment is high many of remaining unemployed people get pushed out of the labour market due to fact that they lack digital skills and their current skill set does not match required skillset in labour market. Even though most digitally aware enterprises and individuals have improved their digital competencies and adapted to changes in business world, many still are stagnating and therefore are pushed out of businesses. Especially it applies to those businesses who traditionally have been dependent from human interaction, like hospitality, tourism and food sectors. In order to follow global business environment development these individuals would have to become more digitally advanced in order to find their place in labour market, as compared to traditional sectors, ICT sector and demand for ICT specialists in other sectors is in fact at the same time in deficit of labour force.

During the desk research and field research it was understood that combination of **lack of skillset and lack of digital awareness among population, SMEs and microenterprises has caused a situation, that SMEs and microenterprises very often lack knowledge, capacity to introduce digital solutions and understanding even about the relatively basic IT solutions**, like web page and e-commerce.

5.3 Main policies and instruments promoting digitalisation in Granada province

Digital development actions in Granada Province follow Digital Europe initiatives[12], national strategies like Digital Spain 2025[13] and regional strategies like Andalusian Industrial Strategy[14], Digital Business Action Plan (PAED 2020)[15], Strategy for the Promotion of the ICT Sector Andalucía, and other policies to promote National Connected Industry 4.0 Strategy[16], however as main policy tool for Granada province is considered Program of Assistance and Cooperation for Local Economic Promotion[17], which, as PR experts understood, is a cooperation agreement between Provincial Council of Granada and all municipalities, dictating that Provincial Council of Granada will provide its assistance in digitalisation and economic development in line with national, regional and EU policy objectives. There also exist several GPs and initiatives overseen by public and private players which aim to facilitate digital development of Granada Province. The policy implementation and designing are organised by Provincial council of Granada through organised support to all municipalities of the province. In collaboration with main SHs for more than ten years Provincial Council of Granada has elaborated Plan for the development of the local productive activity (PDLPA), which fully consolidates with other policy documents. The aim of this plan is to:

1. Support the SMEs innovation and competitiveness (including digital transformation).
2. Design, construction and management of local SME incubators.
3. Support for the association representatives of local strategic sectors.

This is done through "Granada Empresas" web page which according to meeting with Daleph Consultancy has the aim to consolidate information about available digital tools that might be needed for development of targeted SMEs, and to promote digitalisation through selected information. According to PR Expert's understanding this platform is like "one-stop shop" for SMEs and microenterprises, where they can find information about Spain's best practices, other SME and microenterprise positive experience and tools that might be applicable to their particular needs, depending on what they want to achieve. The focus of the platform is

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[12] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-sme-strategy-march-2020_en.pdf

[13] https://portal.mineco.gob.es/RecursosArticulo/mineco/ministerio/ficheros/Digital-Spain-2025-Exec-Summary.pdf

[14] https://estrategiaindustrialdeandalucia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/6c1114_3a6891ea308141ccbf4471f3655d9e83.pdf

[15] https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/transformacioneconomicaindustriaconocimientoyuniversidades/areas/empresas-emprendedores/paginas/plan-accion-empresa-digital-2020.html

[16] https://www.industriaconectada40.gob.es/programas-apoyo/Paginas/programas.aspx

[17] https://www.dipgra.es/seccion/AsistenciaMunicipios/

assumed to be on more simple tools, like e-commerce and e-marketing, to facilitate digital development of small SMEs who are in early digital maturity phase.

Other important SH that collaborate with Provincial Council of Granada is University of Granada, which is actively collaborating with other private association On Granada cluster to facilitate academic knowledge transfer to the industry by organising hackathons and other awareness raising events. The objective of On Granada cluster is to raise collaboration and create innovation through collaboration between different sector SMEs and microenterprises, that can potentially complement each other.

Motril Chamber of Commerce acts together with Granada Chamber of Commerce in order to support, unite and represent enterprises of Granada province, they are also in charge of GP TICCAMARAS. Also, Young Entrepreneurs Association performs similar role.

In regional level digitization is led by the Office of Economy, Innovation, Science and Employment from Junta de Andalucía, responsible, among other initiatives, of the 2020 Digital Business Action Plan, and entities like Idea Agency and BIC Granada jointly work to facilitate this plan in Andalusia.

In rural areas digitalisation is promoted by Fernando de los Ríos Consortium, which tries to educate and provide assistance regarding basic digital tools and tries to raise awareness among rural population, rural SMEs and microenterprises. It also represents one of the main GPs (Guadalinfo) of Andalusia.

Several other GPs are organised by RED. ES program[18], that is a central government level program led by Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation. But in general The Provincial Council of Granada is a supra-local and intermediate government body with the recognised constitutional right to manage specific interests of the province of Granada in full, autonomy. Also it can act independently in digital transformation strategy implementation.

Policy framework, GPs and other initiatives are further discussed in Chapters 6 and 8.

5.4 Main barriers for SMEs digitalisation

As described previously despite active involvement of various public, private and NGO organisations, GPs and initiatives, **there exist several barriers for successful digital transformation implementation, that are very often interlinked with each other**. According to PR Expert's opinion, most important barriers are **lack of general digital awareness** among SMEs and microenterprises **regarding the benefits that digitalization and digital transformation could bring the success for the business**. SMEs and microenterprises are not aware about potential benefits of digital technologies and about financing support options. This simultaneously both lead and cause lack of digital skills among SMEs and microenterprises and their unwillingness to invest in digital solutions. Unwillingness to undertake digitalisation projects is also caused by risks of not succeeding or not getting out expected results instantly. At the same time SMEs, microenterprises and their

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[18] https://red.es/redes/

managers are often not aware of digital solutions that they could use or benefits that would result in using them.

Another major obstacle for successful digitalisation, as mentioned previously is **lack of digital skills among unemployed**, which leads to situation, that they are trapped into loophole by not being able to find new job and not being able to contribute to digital development.

Even if managers of SMEs and microenterprises would be willing to adopt new technologies, they often do not have enough technical capacity to introduce them. This situation is due to both - lack of financial resources and lack of human resources.

Main barriers of digitalisation are further discussed in Chapter 7.

5.5   Possible solutions

To overcome these barriers potentially more tailored education programs could be designed to target different groups of SMEs, microenterprises and unemployed. In order for SMEs and microenterprises to become more aware of what digital solutions they might need, and how to implement them, they would need to be convinced that these solutions and support by other organisations are designed to meet their specific business needs. Digital needs of different sector, maturity level and region SMEs and microenterprises might differ, therefore also more tailored support initiatives would have to be provided to them. In order to do that, more in-depth profiling of SMEs and microenterprises could be probably performed. At the same time awareness could be raised and SMEs and microenterprises could be encouraged to take a risk by systematic presentation of successful digitalisation examples from peer enterprises.

The same applies to education programs to unemployed. In order to design education programs properly it would be needed to understand what is actual demand for digital skills by SMEs and microenterprises, especially SMEs and microenterprises who work in ICT sector. Based on that, tailored vocational and lifelong learning programs could be implemented. Learning programs, like EU fund subsidised internships or boot camps could adopted by ICT companies to simultaneously attract labour force, increase digital literacy among population and fight unemployment.

Other conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the situation are described in Chapters 9 and 10.

5.6   Comparison between host country and sending countries

5.6.1 Latvia

There are similarities between the situation in Granada province and regions in Latvia, while there are also differences. The similar main problem as in Granada Province is that among SMEs and microenterprises in Latvia there is also lack of awareness about the potential benefits of implementing digital tools and digital transformation, about available technologies in the market and how these technologies could complement or transform their already existing businesses. At the same time SMEs and microenterprises in Latvia are often rather

small, and therefore there is a lack of resources to introduce new technologies, information systems and IT tools.

At the same time, just as Spain, Latvia shows high scores in Digital public services part (Spain- 87.3; Latvia- 85.1) and connectivity part (Spain- 60.8; Latvia -61.8) of DESI in 2020, which was well above EU average. However, in 2020 Spain scored higher in terms of DESI overall score (Spain -57.5; Latvia- 50.7). While still being below EU average (49.3) Spain showed higher DESI scores (47.6) than Latvia (35) in human capital and digital skills category. Also, in use of internet services by citizens Spain scored higher (60.8) than Latvia (54), just as well for integration of digital technology by business category (Spain-41.2; Latvia- 28.3). Comparison of previously mentioned DESI scores is represented in Table 4

The major difference between both DigiBEST PPs is that unemployment in Latvia (8.8% on January 2021[19]) is significantly lower than it is in Andalusia (22.74% in Q4 2020[20]) and digitalisation strategy should probably focus less to directly address this problem in short term, but focus more on how to increase productivity of SMEs and microenterprises.

5.6.2   Italy

Accordingly, to overall DESI score, Spain (57.5) performs better than Italy (50.7) in terms of digitalization and innovation. In fact, Spain outperformed Italy in every single DESI category in 2020, as it is indicated in Table 4. However, SMEs and microenterprises, both in Italy and Spain lag behind in the use of technologies such as cloud and big data, as well as in the uptake of e-commerce. As Granada Province, Italy records low levels of basic and advanced digital skills: ICT specialists and ICT graduate's retention shortage is, in both cases, due to brain drain and lack of competitive salaries. Italian and Spanish SMEs and microenterprises have in common an economic context characterized by small family-run businesses whose management style represent a barrier to digital transformation. In addition, in Italy two other problems contribute to this situation: the offer of digital solutions from large technology providers, which is fragmented and not always adapted to the specific needs of SMEs and microenterprises, and the availability of bank credit which is often an obstacle for SMEs and microenterprises willing to go digital. Just as in Latvia, Italian unemployment rate (9.2 % in 2020[21]) is significantly lower than Andalusia (22.74% in Q4 2020[22]), but, despite this, Italy should address specific actions to better align the university educational offer to the country's needs. Both for Spain and Italy, through an effective integration of public services with private ones, the Public Administration could become an enabler of the growth of digital services in the private world.

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[19] https://www.csb.gov.lv/lv/Statistika/Covid19/bezdarba-limenis-2020-gada-decembri
[20] https://www.statista.com/statistics/455993/unemployment-rate-in-andalusia/
[21] https://www.statista.com/statistics/575057/quarterly-unemployment-rate-in-italy/
[22] https://www.statista.com/statistics/455993/unemployment-rate-in-andalusia/

Table 4: DESI comparison between Spain, Italy and Latvia (2020)

DESI score 2020				
Indicators	**Spain**	**Latvia**	**Italy**	**EU average**
DESI Index	57.5	50.7	43.6	52.6
DESI: connectivity	60.8	61.8	30.0	50.1
DESI: human capital/digital skills	47.6	35.0	32.5	49.3
DESI: use of internet services by citizens	60.8	54.0	44.5	58.0
DESI: integration of digital technology by business	41.2	28.3	31.2	41.4
DESI: digital public services	87.3	85.1	67.5	72.0

Source: Joint Report (DIGIBEST STUDY ON THE STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL BUSINESSES)

6   Policy context

To describe the policy context of the Granada region, one must assume that Spain's current digital agenda dates back to 2013. The new coalition government took office in January 2020 and digital affairs are currently under a vice-president of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation.

In order to face digital transformation and achieve a consideration of reference point for digital innovation, Granada designed a strategy strongly based on key elements like the potential of its infrastructure, the entrepreneurial spirit of the human capital, and the presence of an innovation ecosystem with stakeholders committed to digital economy (i.e., OnGranada Cluster, Young entrepreneur's association, BIC Granada).

A great number of programmes are yet in place, both national and regional, with the common aim of improving the rate of digitisation in the region. Unfortunately, they seem not to be enough coordinated with each other and therefore do not create the necessary regional synergies towards the same direction.

One of the main objectives of the national government is to prevent the depopulation of rural areas of Granada Province and for this reason some specific funds have been allocated. To mitigate this problem, Granada Province has developed programmes to teach young people how to start a business in different sectors (300 hours of courses) and to improve digital skills. The Granada Chamber of Commerce provides training and programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises financed by Spanish and European funds. Moreover, some supporting programmes such as TICCAMARAS and INNOCAMARAS provide innovative solutions to SMEs and microenterprises to drive the digital development.

Another relevant problem at local level is certainly the low capacity of municipalities. The county council helps with this by providing ongoing assistance and, in 2015, a framework called 'Granada es provincia' has been set. "Granada es provincia" is a suitable mean for the county council to provide services to municipalities such as environmental programmes,

financial aids to businesses, public co-contractions in order to create a network in which all authorities at all levels can participate.

One of the national reference policies that certainly plays a key role in the digitisation of rural areas is the "Spain Digital 2025 Agenda" which outlines ten strategic priorities to advance the country's digital transformation in line with the EU's Gigabit targets. The priorities of the "Spain digital 2025 Agenda" aim to achieve an adequate level of digitisation by:

- Ensure digital connectivity to the entire population;
- 100% of the radio spectrum ready for 5G in 2025;
- Strengthen the digital skills of workers and the general public;
- Strengthen the Spanish capacity on cybersecurity;
- Promote the digitization of Public Administrations;
- Accelerate the digitization of businesses, with particular attention to micro-SMEs and start-ups;
- Accelerate the digitization of the production model through digital transformation;
- Improve the attractiveness of Spain as a European audiovisual platform;
- Focusing on the data economy;
- Guaranteeing rights in the new digital environment.

To achieve the broadband targets incorporated in the "Spain Digital 2025 Agenda", the Spanish government published a new connectivity plan and 5G strategy in December 2020.

The Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity Plan outlines actions to cover 100% of the population with more than 100 Mbps by 2025.

The strategy for promoting 5G technology complements the national connectivity plan to take into account the different level of maturity and transformational impact of 5G compared to, for example, fibre. The strategy outlines actions to improve spectrum allocation and management, and incentivise the deployment and use of 5G, including through an updated regulatory and legal framework.

From the PR Event, it became clear that while policies are quite solid, small and medium-sized enterprises lack knowledge and awareness about the existence of programmes and training, often offered free of charge by the government.

But the introduction and the targeted actions undertaken, combined with the adoption of the "Digital Europe" program which provides funds entirely dedicated to digital transformation for the period 2021-2027 with a budget of €7.588 billion, intends to increase and maximize the benefits of digital transformation for all EU citizens, public administrations and businesses with the aim of implementing public intervention to support rapidly evolving technological areas, such as advanced computing, data management, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

The planning of the program will take place through a multi-year work program, in which the criteria for accessing funding will be defined and grants under the program will be able to cover up to 100% of eligible costs aiming at a global but sustainable technological evolution.

Therefore, all this being said sharing success stories with a digital network vision could increase the sensitivity of SMEs and microenterprises to undertake a path of digitization and cooperation with other similar realities to create a sort of district or network of excellence to have more visibility and more business opportunities.

An interesting and successful example is the Sabor Granada project where different realities with similar and interrelated businesses are grouped together.

The local University together with OnGranada Cluster and other public entities such as the provincial council of Granada should act as centre of technological development, possibly starting from a market analysis that tries to identify the potential strengths of each single rural area and brainstorm in collaboration with entrepreneurs to collect ideas and objectives to enhance awareness and sensitivity to digital shift's opportunities.

Each individual entity should provide all the information they have and work together for technological development. The University should take care of analysing the market, the public entities should take care of financing and OnGranada Cluster should support the beneficiaries and help them spend the public funds in a smart way. An information and assistance platform combined with training programs aimed at the needs of SMEs and microenterprises help to have more and more awareness and knowledge of the tools by helping the actors involved to touch the possibility of expanding their business in a simple and innovative way.

The above, combined with the promotion of European funds to develop market analyses, focusing on the interests of companies and then developing free services to accompany them in the digital world, could increase companies' awareness of the value of technological actions for their business.

Furthermore, after giving free tools and illustrating the possibilities of financing business digitization projects, an increase in the demand for professionals who have specific skills in digitization could develop, leading to an increase in the supply of work and consequently the need for young people to undertake a sustainable path of safe job opportunities. This last thing could be accompanied by the implementation and the introduction of economic resources through fiscal incentives for the recruitment of specific professional figures for digitization will increase the immediate interest in digitization and will make the above of strong interest and developable with the consequent global development of all related aspects.

The interaction between the University, ICT companies, SMEs and microenterprises are essential to take the first steps towards digitization and development of rural areas. Initially, it may be necessary to implement digital tools which should be freely offered to SMEs and microenterprises to ensure that they can have a gradual and increasingly conscious approach towards sustainable digitization.

The first steps of a technical process should be common and free of charge for SMEs. The first step should be quite standardised, some examples could be: essential software for working (Microsoft Office) and operating systems (Windows). Courses could also be added to be able to use more effectively the tools provided for the analysis of business data.

Basic and advanced courses in Excel and Power Bi would be very useful, for example.

Another example could be a platform to highlight free services, training and give a simple key to the public calls for the beneficiaries.

The platform must act at all levels: from knowledge of regional services to assistance in accessing European funds.

This would remove an important barrier to entry, which is the difficulty for beneficiaries to read European calls. Moreover, very often, SMEs do not participate in calls for European funds because they pay external companies for access, regardless of the success of the application. This may discourage many potential beneficiaries, which is why a platform is needed that not only gathers all the information, but also provides step-by-step assistance.

The change must be therefore cross-sectorial and open to the participation of all actors: Central Government, through its various Departments, Regional Governments and Local Government Bodies, Social SHs, Companies and Financial Institutions to contribute towards achieving its goals.

Such policies must be designed not only to solve current problems, but also to anticipate future challenges and must be based on the premise that the magnitude of such challenges will be beyond government limits of intervention in their respective spheres of activity. For this reason, a policy strategy for innovation should cover the following aspects:

1. Generate a dynamic network of digital municipalities that seek to share know-how and jointly address common problems and solutions with a focus on key productive sectors for the provincial economy.
2. Create sectorial clusters for public-private cooperation where a culture for innovation, participation, collaboration and commitment to digital of all stakeholders may be fostered.
3. Raise awareness and promote digital upskilling and talent enhancing at all levels in the society and the business domain.
4. Leverage the province lifestyle as a tractor element for talent retention and investments attraction, building upon Granada Province's traditional strengthens.

7 Main barriers for SMEs digitalization and possible solutions

To measure country performances in the context of digital transformation, the European Digital Economy & Society Index (DESI) assesses transformation in five areas: connectivity, human capital, use of internet, integration of digital technology, and digital public services.

When looking at the DESI index of 2020 in Table 4, Spain indeed scored slightly below the average of the EU in the first three aspects:

- Connectivity;
- Human Capital;
- Use of Internet.

Spain's current digital agenda dates back to 2013 and the actions implemented had measurable and positive effects, as DESI reports. In fact, the same report - in the 2020 edition - ranks Spain 11th out of 28 EU Member States, based on data prior to the pandemic. Spain ranks 2nd in the EU on digital public services thanks to its well-timed implementation of a digital-by-default strategy throughout its central public administration.

The current COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, however, has shown how important digital assets, connectivity, data, AI have become to our economies and how many deficiencies are still present in the Spanish context. In just a few months' time, the COVID-19 crisis has brought about years of change in the way companies in all sectors and regions do business and also Spain enjoyed an accelerated in digitalization. This shows how often technology is already available, and it takes a good opportunity to generate a sudden and decisive shift in consumer preferences (i.e., e-commerce).

One of the most important barriers faced by Spanish SMEs and microenterprises is the lack of general digital awareness: Granada market is full of micro enterprises that run their business traditionally and digitalization, in most of the cases, is seen as a waste of money and not as an opportunity.

Various local initiatives in Spain have involved citizens to identify solutions for the digital gap at the centre of the digital innovation need, as well as actions for the digital inclusion of women, migrants, the elderly, and people with disabilities (i.e., Guadalinfo). However, the lack of basic digital skills and access to the internet are to some extent still pending questions not just in Spain, but on a European scale as well. Sectors like agriculture, hospitality, and food industry are the most disadvantaged in this context because of their lack of digital vision and digital strategies, often derived from unawareness of certain issues. The EU agricultural sector is one of the world's leading producers of food, guarantor of food security and quality, and provider of millions of jobs for Europeans, but it faces many challenges. Digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, blockchain, High Performance Computing (HPC), Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G have the potential to increase farm efficiency while improving economic and environmental sustainability. Increased use of digital technologies will also have a positive impact on the quality of life in rural areas and may attract a younger generation to farming and rural business start-ups. At the same time strengthen the skill base of tourism SMEs, whose growth potential is often unexploited due to limited access to life-long learning and awareness of developments in the smart use of technologies (i.e., designing of tailored digital solutions for the tourism industry could be a practical way to help SMEs, maybe a shared portal with courses or webinars or practical resources).

The real differential element that makes a company able to undertake it successfully is personal transformation. This implies that the first change must happen in entrepreneurs and CEOs' minds. People who run business should be aware that investment in technology is not only matters of automation and reducing costs, but it represents the possibility to create new or modify existing — business processes, culture, and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements. Leading digital transformation implies, necessarily, believing firmly in the advantages of digitalization. The introduction of digital technology

will allow SMEs and microenterprises to be competitive with new business models adopted by other already more developed enterprises and will improve SME productivity.

According to PR Expert's opinion, collaborations with the University of Granada and OnGranada Cluster could rise awareness and enhance a powerful process of transformation involving young professionals and students in a virtuous circle of sharing ideas and knowledge. OnGranada Cluster, leveraging its already cohesive and strong relationship with the local community, could cooperate with UGR to stimulate young students or professionals using - for example - innovation hubs. Best innovators could be offered a collaboration contract or a partnership in some research programs held by the University as a way to reduce brain drain. Local citizen initiatives are the first step of a larger instrument to demand better access and knowledge to use digital services but the Government itself should propose to the whole population specific measures, such as the creation of special funds or subsidies to the access and use of digital services able to enhance the use of digital tools. Government should properly work on engagement and specifically on:

- Target funds: specific funds to SMEs and microenterprises on one hand could also involve the hiring of innovation managers, covering part of consultancy costs, increasing the digital resources and, on the other hand, be targeted to specific disadvantaged region or provinces;
- Communication: clear and easy messages should be defined to make each opportunity understandable and available even for not educated people;

Guidance: bureaucracy often discourages people with great ideas but not the time or skills to apply for public tenders. Therefore, before launching a call for participation, could be useful to provide specific trainings to unemployed people or professionals working with compliance matters so that they could be an effective and helpful support for SMEs that want to learn more and apply for funds.

Other two relevant and correlated obstacles to the adoption of digital technologies are concerns surrounding business digitalization and the need to recruit and retain highly skilled staff with digital expertise.

The OECD finds that SMEs and microenterprises have higher skill deficiencies than large firms and SMEs training efforts are on average significantly weaker per employee than in larger firms. The high unemployment rate and the various employment opportunities do not represent a constraint on brain drain. Better salaries and multinational careers paths are a key push factor for emigration of qualified workers from Spain.

Brain drain is still an urgent problem to downsize: University of Granada trains researchers to be engines of socio-economic growth and Granada Province cannot afford a brain waste. In this particular case, institutions should also play an important role to retain skilled professional investing in tax incentives and providing, in collaboration with SMEs, career pathing and employee development. For example, in Italy, the budget law includes a tax cut for young people that, after 2 or more years spent abroad, come back to Italy. It becomes even more convenient if you move your tax domicile to disadvantaged regions in the south (it's called "reverse brain-drain").

Another important obstacle is related to the longstanding issues that rural areas are facing both in terms of economic development and in terms of quality of life/wellbeing issues such as access to key services. Rural parts of Granada Province face challenges arising from a wide range of factors, including low productivity, low-paid jobs, a low skills base, transport and IT infrastructure weaknesses.

Local Government set different kind of support to raise digital skill levels. But, in order to make its provision/access as flexible as possible, this support should be promoted via a range of different networks (not only technology related) to maximise awareness and ensure that it's not restricted, for example, to those with an interest in new technology or working within a particular sector. Guadalinfo is a wise example of practical initiative established to provide citizens with training resources, to offer SMEs and microenterprises tools for digital transformation and the development of a model to encourage cooperation between local bodies.

Bureaucracy in Spain, as in many other European countries, is a slowdown in the process of funding SME and microenterprise digitization projects. Moreover, Spain lacks the presence of professionals able to address and properly advise entrepreneurs who try to define a process of innovation. The lack of these qualified figures does not facilitate the use of Government aids.

It is important to underline that different sources of financing are available for Spanish SMEs and microenterprises (i.e., European/Government funds) but SMEs and microenterprises are not aware of how and when they can take benefit. Moreover, the presence of funds is often not well sponsored or selective means of communication are used that fail to reach certain groups of entrepreneurs.

The deficiencies of the Province of Granada on issues such as employment and local development policies does not allow an effective local urban economic renew; Granada actually lacks coordination and digital competences compared to other administrations (regional and central). Recently, the Government has promoted some policies with the aim to shore up liquidity as businesses struggled for cash during a year of lockdowns and other restrictions. The regional government also has produced several strategic documents that set objectives and roles in the area of economic development. These policies, contained in the 2025 Digital Agenda, mainly refer to the following strategical axes: digital connectivity, cybersecurity enhancement, digitization of Public Administrations, special attention to small SMEs, microenterprises and start-ups digitalization and innovation of the production model through digital tools.

8   Relevance of Good Practices

In the RS of Granada, four particular GPs were highlighted ("Digital Advisors" programme[23], Guadalinfo - a social network of inhabitants in Andalusia[24], Digital transformation offices

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[23] **Appendix 1:** GP Digital Advisors
[24] **Appendix 2:** GP Guadalinfo - a social network of inhabitants in Andalusia

(OTDs)[25] and TICCAMARAS[26]). All four GPs were applicable and relevant to facilitate entrepreneurship through new SME and microenterprise creation, digital awareness raising and digital competency increasing among general population, SME and microenterprise managers and their employees. Especially we would like to highlight "Digital Advisors" programme, which is coordinated by RED.ES and TICCAMARAS program which is coordinated by CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE ESPAÑA. Both programs are national level initiatives, therefore are applicable also in Granada province. Both programs focus on individualised SME and microenterprise need analyses and tailored digitalisation strategy elaboration by help of qualified experts, in PR Experts pinion this is one of the key elements in successful digital transformation, meaning, that SMS very often are not enough sophisticated in new technologies and their applicability therefore external help is crucial. Also, these programs provide opportunity to elaborate digitalisation strategy to address individual needs of SMEs and microenterprises. Besides both programs are co-funded and therefore takes of financial burden from SMEs and microenterprises. "Digital Advisors" programme also works as a platform that links together digital advisors, SMEs and microenterprises, therefore facilitating also development of Granada ICT sector.

Another potential GP that PR Experts noticed during field research, but which was not included in RS of Granada province as a GP, is "Granada Empresas" tool[27], which is elaborated by Provincial Council of Granada, and developed to address digitalisation of Granada province. Based on information from field research that was obtained during meeting with Daleph Consultancy [28] (A consultant assisting in "Granada Empresas" tool development), PR Experts understood, that this tool is not yet developed, but at the moment is an idea of concept for potentially beneficial tool that is suggested by Daleph Consultancy. Daleph Consultancy has made an evaluation of the tool, and has suggested to provide the web site with different digital tools for SMEs The idea is to create a platform similar to "One-Stop-Shop" concept , where most SMEs and microenterprises could find information about relatively simple but expert assessed tools that could be used to digitalise their business activities based on their particular business sector needs. The main benefit, that PR Experts see in this practice is that already assessed digital tools would be provided to SMEs and microenterprises based on their business activity profiles. The platform also would facilitate awareness rising through presentation of other SME and microenterprise digitalisation success stories and other information about importance of digitalisation.

However PR Experts see that one of the main problem areas in Granada province is high unemployment levels and lack of digitally skilled human resources in the population, therefore causing mismatch between skills required in labour market and skills that are available in the labour market. To facilitate labour force skill transition to digital literacy, more knowledge transition and training practices could be adopted.

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[25] **Appendix 3:** GP Digital transformation offices (OTDs)
[26] **Appendix 4:** GP TICCAMARAS
[27] https://www.granadaempresas.es/
[28] https://daleph.com/

One good example of GPs that target digital skills transition into population is program from Austria "Digital Pro Bootcamps"[29], which is organised by Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and is part of DigiBEST project. According to IE "The "Digital Pro Bootcamps" program addresses the development of digital skills, the support of digital further training to master the challenges of advancing digitalization and the fight against the shortage of skilled workers". The program is designed to increase digital literacy among SME and microenterprise employees, therefore it would have to be studied more in depth to understand if it could be adjusted to increase digital literacy among general population especially among unemployed population. PR Experts see, that similar programs focused on more simple digital tools and solutions could be created and co-financed by ESF, in a way that individual ICT companies form the region provide such boot camps to learning willing potential employees with limited current digital literacy. This would provide opportunity for companies to train, integrate and select new potential employees through practical tasks and fight unemployment through integrating population into digital era. PR Expert opinion is that ICT companies who could potentially provide such boot camps would have to be incentivised to prevent their own resource spending. This could be done by creating ESF funded local, regional or national program. Main potential barrier for implementing such practice could be lack of human resources among ICT companies to organise such boot camps and selection of trained skills that are needed in the labour market, but at the same time are relatively simple and easy to learn for people with limited digital literacy.

Another example of GPs that could be transferred to Granada Province is a GP "Trainings for SME for development of innovations and digital technologies"[30] from Latvia, that is described in IE web page under SKILLS+ project and is developed by Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association and implemented by Baltic Computer Academy, Ltd and Computer Science Center, Ltd. The project was aimed at raising productivity, innovations and increasing the long-term competitiveness of small and micro-enterprises by teaching them how to effectively apply ICT technologies and e-skills. According to IE, "The training courses offered by the project are designed to improve ICT skills of SME workers and the self-employed", however similar activity could be potentially co-financed by ESF and provided to general population. The program is already proven to be easy transferable to other regions, as it was implemented also in Bulgaria. PR Experts see that Granada Province would have an advantage in implementing such practice as it has relatively strong ICT and academic sector to support it.

Another potential program that exists in Latvia and is described in IE web page under SKILLS+ project is "e-Skills Week for Jobs"[31]. This program could be transferred to Granada province in order to address awareness raising issue, as its aim is to "inform entrepreneurs about opportunities to raise their level of knowledge and competitiveness in ICT issues and all further opportunities offered by the governmental institutions (e-services, the use of e-signatures ect.), NGOs (new ICT solutions in e-commerce, cloud computing business

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[29] **Appendix 5:** GP Digital Pro Bootcamps
[30] **Appendix 6:** Trainings for SME for development of innovations and digital technologies
[31] **Appendix 7:** GP e-Skills Week for Jobs

opportunities, social networking ect.) and IT associations (trainings, practical use of ICT, integrating new programmes ect)".

PR Experts believe that such program could be transferred entirely to other regions. To do it successfully one practice owner with strong enough contacts and authority in the region to promote such practice would have to be selected. In Granada province case that could be Provincial Council of Granada.

In order to develop and maintain successful digitalisation strategy, both, awareness among companies should be raised, and overall digitalisation progress level should be continuously measured and assessed to adjust GPs and evaluate how provided support instruments should be changed alongside increase in digital maturity of SMEs and microenterprises. Applicable tool used in Latvia to address these objectives is "Smart Latvia & Digital Maturity Test"[32]. The test allows SME and microenterprise managers to assess their digital maturity and compare themselves against other enterprises and to find out what IT solutions would help the company work more effectively, with less costs and higher profits. After test completion, SMEs and microenterprises can get feedback about recommendations on what IT solutions would help the company to work more effectively. PR Experts see that such a tool can be easily borrowed or developed in any other region by. It would both raise awareness among SME and microenterprise managers and provide strategy makers with on data-based information about digital maturity in the region. Such practice would help to profile companies based on their industry and see what how to tailor the strategy for each business sector. The GP could be transferred entirely, and by the time also complemented with additional functionalities.

To implement all good practices or adjust them to needs of Granada province it would be suggested to study them more in thepth in collaboration with original owners. Therefore also knowledge transfer could be facilitated. Granada Province could incorporate in their policy documents a point, that encourages this kind of knowledge exchange and assign responsible business organizations, that could jointly work with Provincial Council of Granada to explore these GPs and communicate with their original owners. From Granada similar type of business organizations with similar overall responsibilities and competencies as those who are responsible for GPs originally in other countries could be evaluated and assigned to lead the knowledge transfer. Therefore smoother communication between GP original owners and potential GP borrowers could be accomplished.

9   Findings and conclusions

Spain, and Granada itself, have undergone remarkable growth over the last decade. Several initiatives have been implemented in the attempt to diminish the barriers listed above.

- **Public support to SMEs and microenterprises involves a large amount of public initiatives and financial instruments at various stages of development and across sectors**. This includes financial support, tax incentives and qualification programmes.

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[32] **Appendix 8:** GP Smart Latvia & Digital Maturity Test

- **Many gaps limit the adoption of digital solutions by SMEs and microenterprises**. Gaps are related to three main factors:
    - **Awareness**: Owners and managers often do not know how and where to apply digital solutions to business processes/channels.
    - **Capabilities**: Employees need technical know-how to integrate such digital solutions. They also need the skills necessary to approach larger-scale, transformational projects as well as to articulate robust technical implementation roadmaps and/or business plans.
    - **Unemployment**: Granada province face high unemployment, however the unemployed population lack digital skills to for them be incorporated in digital environment and to able to find new career paths.
- A relevant achievement is the **launch of the "2021-2025 SME Digitalization Plan"** by Spain's government: over 465 billion euros will be invested by the public sector and will directly impact 1.5 million SMEs.
- Small and medium companies' objective, for in the next five years, is to modernize and more widely digitalize their business processes. There are many important areas to develop that could make companies more resilient and flexible during crises (as covid-19) including: e-commerce, cloud services, and big data analysis.
- Overall, PR Experts see that collaboration between various stakeholders could be increased in joint strategy development, especially University of Granada could potentially play an important role in support for training program development and overall digital maturity assessment.

According to the findings mentioned, digitalization will also help to diminish social, geographical and gender disparities in Spain, and therefore Spain should focus at first on small steps of digitalisation, as the top priority especially in Granada Province are rather small SMEs and microenterprises with are in very early stages of digital maturity.

To summarise, there are areas of improvement for Spain as well as areas in which the country leads in the context of digital transformation. This gives way for many investment opportunities. On the one hand, opportunities arise in the need for basic digital transformation in the areas of connectivity, infrastructures, usage of internet and especially human capital. Combined with the statistics of where companies see the most need of digital improvement, fruitful investment strategies can be made. On the other hand, one can choose to jump on the disruptive technologies train and invest in the innovative technologies that Spain is leading in and further developing. These themes have yet assumed top importance in the policy agenda of the regional government.

10   Recommendations for the Hosting Partner

Digitalization and digital transformation of SMEs in Granada Province could be a mechanism to tackle larger economic challenges (unemployment). In order to tackle the barriers of digitalization and digitalization of SMEs in Granada Province following suggestions could be evaluated and incorporated in local policy documents as a separate concrete points. PR

Experts understood, at the moment there is Program of Assistance and Cooperation for Local Economic Promotion which works as an agreement between Provincial Council of Granada and local entities of the province and is relatively broad document. It would be suggested to incorporate in this document more certain activities or guidelines such as those indicated below, at the same time by assigning stakeholders who could be responsible for coordination of those actions:

1. **Development of system for continuous SMEs needs identification, targeted support instrument development and provision and feedback gathering** on the efficiency and effectiveness of provided instruments and support in digitalization and digital transformation.

   a. In order to develop support programs and instruments for SMEs, their various **profiles could be identified and specific needs for digital transformation and digitalization could be accordingly identified** to provide the spot on support for various profiles of companies. As noted during desk and field research the needs for digital transformation depend on the profile of the company (how many employees have, the represented industry, urban vs rural presence, etc.). To identify the profile of companies the design thinking method could be applied[33]. Such activity could be done jointly by academic organization like University of Granada, that could provide research capacity and governing body of the region that could asses the research outcomes and incorporate them in their policy actin plan. Possibly business associations could also be involved in assessing the research outcomes to identify main problem areas of their interest for further incorporation in local policy documents.

   b. To identify and continuously monitor the level of digitalization across industries **maturity assessment could be developed in case if it is not developed yet and applied consistently** – both to identify the needs for companies across industries and profiles and as well to monitor the progress in digitalization and digital transformation. From communication with representatives of Provincial Council of Granada PR Experts understood, that there already exists a tool for maturity testing in Spain[34], however during field research PR Experts did not obtain concrete evidence about how extensively it is used in practice, and how exactly this tool works. PR Experts would suggest to apply consistently this already existing tool if possible, but it would be suggested to evaluate also similar tools from other countries to obtain maximum value added. Maturity assessments as an approach are used, for example, in Latvia and Portugal regions. For example, In Latvia, as described in Good Practices part, there is an initiative called "Smart Latvia & Digital Maturity Test", which allows SMEs to assess their digital maturity, compare it with other companies and identify areas for potential improvements. Similarly,

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[33] https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking
[34] https://hada.industriaconectada40.gob.es/hada/register

in Portugal they try to tackle digitalisation, by at first identifying what are the gaps and week points of SMEs. Through PR event interviews with stakeholders, PR Experts understood that it is done also by extensive maturity test, where all SMEs can take a part. After receiving responses, they are analysed. Analyses provide information about what are the main digitalisation gaps in specific regions, how they differ among regions. This also allows policy makers to identify what are the main SME needs and how they differ among different profile SMEs.

Both initiatives also work as an awareness rising tools, because when SMEs willingly can access them self without any pressure and judgement from the side, they can consider their weaknesses without pressure and potentially pay more attention to importance of digital strategy implementation. For example in Portugal such tool is an integral part of policy framework under strategy of Industry 4.0, therefore also Granada province or Spain in general could consider incorporation of such tools in their policy framework objectives. In both Latvia and Portugal the tool is operated by business associations. In Latvian case by LIKTA[35] and in Portuguese case by COTEC Portugal[36].

c. In order to continuously monitor the changing needs of SMEs in Granada Province a mechanism of gathering them and feedback on efficiency and effectiveness of provided support could be developed. Experts highlight, that in order to identify what should be included in policy framework and on what actions policies should focus, continuous monitoring should be performed, as situation very often change. Policies and initiatives cannot stay stagnant, they should change together with changing environment. Popularisation of previously mentioned maturity tests could be one tool for this, but also regular annual surveys can be implemented to understand what is the opinion about needs of SMEs of different interest groups, like SMEs, NGOs.

d. Also, it is important to regularly evaluate the policy framework itself and existing support instruments to understand their effectiveness and how various groups like SMEs and other stakeholders see it and what is their feedback. Such approach would also facilitate collaboration between involved parties and gap identification.

2. **Awareness raising is one of the toughest but significant objectives in order to promote digitalization and digital transformation of SMEs,** as it takes time and requires general cultural changes in population and cannot be done overnight. However, PR Experts suggest to concentrate on addressing CEOs and managers of SMEs, as they are the decision makers and therefore can influence wider circle around them. This of course applies to larger SMEs that are employing at least several employees. Possibly separate initiative could be developed, that targets SME managers

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[35] https://likta.lv/
[36] https://cotecportugal.pt/en/

based on SME needs and profiling according to previously mentioned maturity identification approaches. It could also involve specific event organisation for SMEs when successful digitalisation examples are presented to them. To raise awareness among SMEs about necessity of business operation digitalization more real and tangible success stories should be advertised to SME's and microenterprises, so that they can see the real life value added, that digital tool implementation can potentially provide. Organisation of such activities can be assigned to both Provincial Council of Granada and other NGOs, as well as local Granada province policy documents could discuss how the awareness raising is organised, what is the involved organizations that are responsible for awareness raising, what are their individual responsibilities, and what is the model of their joint collaboration.

At the same time information about available support, funding, initiatives and awareness raising events, training programs as well as organisations that provide support should be represented according to consolidated approach. Meaning, that SMEs should not get confused when searching for information regarding digitalisation, which based on PR Expert experience is a common problem. In PR Expert opinion there should be a platform, that works as a one-stop-shop for citizens, SMEs and also stakeholders, where they can find most relevant information regarding various digitalisation angles. Such information source could be easier promotable and recognisable as information, that is dispersed.

3. **Training programs is another important area for successful digital transformation,** especially for Granada province where is a disproportional demand and supply for skilled labour force in high unemployment environment. Therefore, addressing this objective should be top priority when designing and implementing policy framework of Granada province.

   PR Experts highlight that training programs for SMEs and unemployed population should be rather simple, but at same time tailored to meet actual labour market and SMEs needs. Therefore, Granada province policies should focus on identify what are the target group of SMEs that need training and what are their actual real life business objectives, that they can solve by implementing digital solutions. Based on identified situation, PR Experts believe, that introduction of up to life-long learning programs that focus on reskilling population from traditional skills to digital skills should be implemented, and co-funded to raise increase incentive for population to participate in these programs. To facilitate collaboration, PR Experts believe that the University of Granada should be involved in these programs designing, as they have strong knowledge and competencies in ICT. In PR Experts opinion programs should focus on simpler but in business world demanded and applicable ICT skills that could be adopted in relatively short time by population with limited current ICT skills.

   Additionally, Granada Province in collaboration with Granada ICT companies could design special boot-camp programs to train and integrate unemployed population in the actual work environment. To facilitate collaboration and take the administrative burden away from individual ICT companies, this kind of initiative could be organised

collectively by various ICT enterprises or business associations (for example "Young Entrepreneurs Association"), or operate as a modular part integrated in life-long learning programs.

At the same time from PR Experts current experience very often SMEs are reluctant to apply for ESF funding due to lack of skills and understanding how to write projects for application to funds. It could be beneficial to educate SMEs, by providing assistance through seminars or education programs that teach how to write these projects. Either a new educational initiative could be developed for purpose of this, or it could be incorporated in existing good practices by extending their provided services. For example, Guadalinfo provided services could incorporate not just assistance on some more simple tools but could also extend their services further to facilitate development of rural areas. Also, based on experience from PR field research of Portugal PR Experts noticed a good practice, when business association pools together EU funds and does the administrative project part on behalf of SMEs, therefore taking the administrative burden away from entrepreneurs.

At the same time policy framework should focus not only on re-education of working age population but incorporate digital aspect already in pre high school education, by firstly educating teachers if necessary and then incorporating digitalisation in content of education.

4. **To support SMEs in digitalization and digital transformation in rural areas the support amount provided by programs like Guadalinfo could be extended**. PR Experts understand, that at the moment Guadalinfo focuses on providing basic services (like internet access and teaching how to use basic It tools to rural population), however based on good practices "Citizen's-Stop and "Citizen's shop" from PR of Portugal, Guadalinfo provided services could be extended by providing assistance on receiving services from government and municipal entities, digital administrative documentation filling, and awareness rising about possibilities to communicate with administrative organisations remotely.

5. Based on PR Experts impressions during desk research and field research PR Experts understand, that the priority of Granada province are SMEs with rather low digital maturity, therefore Granada Province should focus more on identifying more **simple digital tools that can be provided to current SMEs** through for example "Granada Empresas" platform, like e-commerce, digital marketing and general computer skill promoting, however policy framework should also add support to SMEs for whom the next digitalization level could be reach with the implementation of **E-commerce, CRM and ERP solutions, special support programmes could be developed to support implementation of these tools and systems.** Probably a good example is Portuguese funding program which provides financial support for establishment or expansion of SMEs and provides relatively large support of up to EUR 200 000. The program also supports creation of own employment, and finances hiring of people have been unemployed for at least two months and purchase of machinery and equipment.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: GP Digital Advisors

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Good practice general information</td></tr>
<tr><td>Title of the good practice</td><td>Digital Advisors</td></tr>
<tr><td>Organisation in charge of the good practice</td><td>RED.ES

Red.es is a public corporate entity belonging to the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and the Digital Agenda, and which depends on the Secretary of State for Information Society and Digital Agenda.

https://red.es/redes/</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Description</td></tr>
<tr><td>Short summary of the practice</td><td>Spain has been successful in tackling the recession, particularly regarding the development of the digitisation of the industry. Looking into Spain's digitisation development of the last years (2016-2018), there has been a constant improvement and Spain has surpassed the EU average. In particular, Spain has advanced in terms of digital public services and e-government and the integration of digital technology. However, one of the biggest challenges remains in reaching SMEs and support their digitization development.
Digital Advisors programme is aimed at promoting the digital transformation of Spanish SMEs through individualized advice by specialized agents. This service is focusing on the realization of a Digitalization Plan for the incorporation of ICT in its processes (business management, relationship with third parties, electronic commerce, digitalization of services and solutions).
The program includes a diagnosis of the state of digitalization of SMEs and an action plan for its digital transformation.
On the one hand, beneficiaries are SMEs which can receive a grant up to 5,000 EUR per SME. And, on the other hand, beneficiaries are digital advisors, who have to register at the database of programme to provide this individualized advice</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources needed</td><td>The budget for this programme is EUR 5 million, it is financed by the ERDF and co-financed by the Operational Program for Smart Growth.
Red.es allocates up to 80% of the costs of specialized advisory services, with a max amount of 5,000 EUR per SME. The SMEs must co-finance at least the remaining 20%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Timescale (start/end date)</td><td>November 2017 – ongoing</td></tr>
<tr><td>Evidence of success (results achieved)</td><td>267 Spanish SMEs are presently participating in the programme (133 are specifically from Andalusia). These SMEs are receiving financial support of up to 5.000 EUR for the contracting of advisory services in the digitalization of their business. Moreover, there are 79 enterprises registered as Digital Advisors. The Digital Economy and Society Index (elaborated by the European Commission) for 2018 report highlights the work carried out by the Red.es with programs such as Digital Advisors.</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for learning or transfer	The Spanish government (through the public entity RED.ES) launched a grant programme to promote the Digital Transformation of SME. This good practice is easily transferable to any region or EU member state. The entity responsible of the programme, through a general invitation, prepares a list of providers of digital advice services: Registry of Advisors. For the incorporation to this Registry of Advisors, an application must be submitted. This programme is an efficient way to transfer funds to SMEs to initiate their digital transformation process. So, SMEs can obtain a specialized and personalized advice service that is specified in the realization of a Digitalization Plan for the incorporation of ICTs in SME processes. Any SME which wants to participate in the program must send all the required documentation in the call.

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3995/digital-advisors-programme/

Appendix 2: GP Guadalinfo - a social network of inhabitants in Andalusia

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**Guadalinfo - a social network of inhabitants in Andalusia**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	Consortium Fernando de los Ríos https://www.consorciofernandodelosrios.es/
Description	
Short summary of the practice	What is the problem addressed and the context which triggered the introduction of the practice? Guadalinfo is aimed to close digital gap between urban and rural areas and to encourage full integration into the Knowledge Society. - How does the practice reach its objectives and how it is implemented? Guadalinfo shows the opportunities that the use of ICTs offers by carrying out activities for entrepreneurs, SMEs and the community in general. Some activities are dedicated to SMEs, which aim to develop entrepreneurial capacities and increase self-esteem as vital assets for adapting to change. The promotion of virtual entrepreneurial initiatives and support for start-ups aim to produce entrepreneurs capable to manage the continuity of their initiatives, while courses equip entrepreneurs with the skills they need to operate in the work place. Guadalinfo has also worked to increase the value of website creation by SMEs. The former can thus experience the benefits of trading online while the latter can raise their profile and value. Guadalinfo Centres have created a network for information, communication and learning to generate projects and initiatives among citizens and thereby stimulate the abilities to transform and improve the local areas. - Who are the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the practice? Guadalinfo is aimed at different ages and groups to train digital skills, improve professional and entrepreneurial skills, promote the

	digital transformation of SMEs and employment options, access electronic administration, make optimal use and secure technology or generate social innovation projects. The offer of activities of the centres is adapted to different ages, circumstances and needs of its users
Resources needed	The budget for Guadalinfo is about EUR 19,3 million. Guadalinfo has about 800 centres rooted in Andalusia with 800 Local Innovation Agents.
Timescale (start/end date)	2001 – ongoing
Evidence of success (results achieved)	Guadalinfo developed 70.000 activities in 2017, 90.000 in 2018 and 100.000 in 2019. About 10.000 entrepreneurs and 5.000 SMEs participated in one or more activities related to digital transformation in 2019. Currently platform has more than 1 million users. The region has improved in IT literacy in the Guadalinfo towns, benefiting in particular people, entrepreneurs and SMEs in rural areas and those with traditionally more difficulties in accessing ICTs. 53% of the users, for example, are women.
Potential for learning or transfer	The Spanish government (through the public entity RED.ES) launched a grant programme to promote the Digital Transformation of SME. This good practice is easily transferable to any region or EU member state. The entity responsible of the programme, through a general invitation, prepares a list of providers of digital advice services: Registry of Advisors. For the incorporation to this Registry of Advisors, an application must be submitted. This programme is an efficient way to transfer funds to SMEs to initiate their digital transformation process. So, SMEs can obtain a specialized and personalized advice service that is specified in the realization of a Digitalization Plan for the incorporation of ICTs in SME processes. Any SME which wants to participate in the program must send all the required documentation in the call.

Source: Granada RS

Appendix 3: GP Digital transformation offices (OTDs**)**

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**Digital transformation offices (OTDs)**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	RED.ES Red.es is a public corporate entity belonging to the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and the Digital Agenda, and which depends on the Secretary of State for Information Society and Digital Agenda. https://red.es/redes/
Description	
Short summary of the practice	Creation and consolidation of Digital Transformation Of ices to facilitate the digitalization process of the Spanish SMEs and promote digital entrepreneurship.
Resources needed	The total programme aid is EURO 5 million, divided into EUR 100 and 200 thousand per of ice to develop the action plan. It is co-financed by the managing entity (e.g. association or professional college) with a min of 20% of the eligible budget. The programme

	OTD is financed by the ERDF (EUR 5 million) and co-financed by the Operational Program for Smart Growth.
Timescale (start/end date)	March 2019 – March 2020
Evidence of success (results achieved)	Red.es has selected 28 entities in Spain (2 in Granada: Cluster of Sustainable Construction and Cluster of Technology and Biotechnology). From March 2019 to March 2020, both clusters have organised more than 240 events and activities focused on dissemination of the advantages of digitalization for SME's. The Digital Economy and Society Index (elaborated by the European Commission) for 2018 report highlights the work carries out by Red.es with programs such as Digital Transformation Of ices.
Potential for learning or transfer	This good practice is easily transferable to any region or EU state member. The entity that transfers the funds must open a public call addressed to the sector associations and professional colleges. Professional associations and colleges attend this call by submitting an application that includes an Action Plan with the actions to be carried out. The eligible actions are: a) Dissemination actions: To communicate to a group of SMEs users the advantages or necessary methodologies for the implementation of technological solutions. It also contemplates the realization of actions promoting digital entrepreneurship. These actions can be developed in the form of conferences or seminars in order to spread the advantages of using technologies and encourage their adoption. b) Supporting actions: To provide a service of attention to SMEs to solve questions about solutions and / or methodologies to improve the management of the company through the use of ICT.

Source: Granada RS

Appendix 4: GP TICCAMARAS

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**TICCAMARAS**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	SPANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE https://www.camara.es/
Description	
Short summary of the practice	TICCAMARAS promotes the systematic incorporation of the IT to the usual activities of SMEs as competitive key tools in its strategy, as well as to maximize the opportunities that IT offer to improve its productivity and competitiveness. The program is characterized by its orientation towards the specific needs of the targeted companies through the development of a mixed methodology of diagnosis, support in the process of solutions' implementation and dissemination of the knowledge. The program materializes through the following actions of direct support: In a 1st phase, technological advisors bring a qualified vision and recommendations about the solutions that they will make to improve the competitiveness to the company:

	• tools of productivity in the cloud (ERP, CRM, TPV, Lot, Big Data, virtual reality) • e-Commerce (web, online shop, footbridge of payments, e-invoicing, digital signature) • digital marketing (social web positioning, marketing email, media, mobile applications, Lot) In a 2nd phase, the accompaniment is made in the elaboration and the follow-up of a personalized Plan for implementation based on the advisors' recommendations. The Chamber of Commerce of Motril helps companies with 4,900 euros if they invest at least 7,000 euros in IT solutions (computer developments, licenses, solutions, hardware and connectivity). TICCámaras organizes also local actions in awareness-raising of the advantages of using the IT.
Resources needed	The 1st phase costs 1.200 € per SME, and also TICCámaras helps with 4.900 € more to implement the 2nd phase. For example, Chamber of Commerce of Motril advises about 12 SMEs per year. So, TICCAMARAS Motril needs 73.200 € each year. In this case, the human resources required are just one person
Timescale (start/end date)	March 2014 – March 2020 (annually renewed).
Evidence of success (results achieved)	Since 2014, 60 local businesses have participated in TICCAMARAS Motril and increased their productivity by using digital marketing, e-commerce and business management tools by using cloud technology. In addition, every year Chamber of Motril organizes seminars aimed at SMEs in order to explain the advantages of IT usage. Each year, TICCAMARAS in Spain has the following global results: - More than 1.000 Diagnoses to SMEs - More than 1.000 IT plans implemented in SMEs
Difficulties encountered	As a lesson learned, Chamber of Commerce of Motril has find out many interesting IT solutions to help SMEs in their digitalization process. The difficulty encountered during the implementation of TICCAMARAS in Motril is to collect all the required documents from each SME participating in the program
Potential for learning or transfer	We consider this practice as potentially interesting for other European regions. A lot of SMEs do not invest in IT if they are not motivated. Thanks to TICCAMARAS many of them are starting their digital transformation and, as a result of this process, are increasing their competitiveness. The evaluation of TICCAMARAS shows that the amount of money received for each SME is enough for these companies (up to 4 900 euros). Moreover, this economic incentive requires an effort for SMEs, hiring IT services for 7.000 euros. In this way, TICCAMARAS is motivating a lot of SMEs to initiate their digitalization. We firmly believe that one of the key factors of TICCAMARAS is that once the SME is advised, they have to pay the IT investment, proving the expenses. This program was initially implemented by Chamber of Commerce of Spain and later it was spread through 36 local Chambers of Commerce around the country, such as Motril,

	Madrid, Valencia, Sevilla, Mallorca, etc.

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3996/ticcamaras/

Appendix 5: GP Digital Pro Bootcamps

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Good practice general
information</td></tr>
<tr><td>Title of the good practice</td><td>Digital Pro Bootcamps</td></tr>
<tr><td>Organisation in charge of the good practice</td><td>Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Description</td></tr>
<tr><td>Short summary of the practice</td><td>The "Digital Pro Bootcamps" program addresses the development of digital skills, the support of digital further training to master the challenges of advancing digitalization and the fight against the shortage of skilled workers.
Highly motivated specialists from Austrian companies are transformed into "digital professionals" during the learning phases (4-week bootcamps). They are enabled to understand complex interrelationships of digitization and practical problems. In addition to profound IT expertise and advanced digitalization skills on specific focal points of digitization, practical skills are the focus of the qualification. Companies use this learning format to support digital expertise in the company in order to ensure rapid and effective higher qualifications on a permanent basis and thus strengthening their digital competitiveness.
The strategic goals:
• To support companies in the systematic development and upgrading of existing research and innovation personnel.
• The intensification of knowledge transfer between universities or universities of applied sciences and companies, in both directions equally.
Operational goals:
• Increasing research, development and innovation competence in future-relevant technology fields through the qualification of employees
• Facilitating access to Research Technology Innovation+Digitalisation qualification measures, especially by Austrian SMEs
• Establishing sustainable collaborations with higher education&research</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources needed</td><td>Funding within first call (2018-2019): EUR 1.67 million (2 persons within the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) responsible for implementation of the call)
Funding within second call (2020): EUR 1 million (2 persons within the FFG responsible for implementation of the call)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Timescale (start/end date)</td><td>January 2001 – ongoing</td></tr>
</table>

Evidence of success (results achieved)	• EUR 1.67 million approved funding within first call • Four funded Bootcamps within the first call, focusing on data science, data security and artificial intelligence • 55 employees from 34 companies (including 16 SMEs) in the bootcamps with 11 scientific partners (high demand for the program itself) • combination of presence and online phases was a success
Difficulties encountered	Within the first call (pilot), the bootcamp had a duration of nine weeks. According to the feedback of the participating employees / companies, the duration of nine weeks was far too long. Therefore, the duration has been reduced to four weeks within the second call.
Potential for learning or transfer	SMEs in particular have to catch up with digitization. This applies above all to e-commerce, social media marketing and the use of cloud services. With the program Digital Pro Bootcamps, Austria implements targeted measures and grants to ensure that SMEs remain internationally competitive. This enables companies to rapidly further qualify their staff, carry out digitization initiatives and pursue the development of new technologies and products.

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/4862/digital-pro-bootcamps/

Appendix 6: Trainings for SME for development of innovations and digital technologies

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**Trainings for SME for development of innovations and digital technologies**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	LIKTA (Latvian Information and communication Technology Association)
Description	
Short summary of the practice	The project was developed by Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association and implemented by Baltic Computer Academy, Ltd and Computer Science Centre, Ltd. The project was aimed at raising productivity, innovations and increasing the long-term competitiveness of small and micro-enterprises by teaching them how to effectively apply ICT technologies and e-skills. In total, 1446 SMEs were involved in the project in the first stage (2012-2015) and 3249 unique employees of enterprises were trained. Trainings were held in 20 municipalities of Latvia, over 7000 trainings in total provided. The second project is started in 2016, by 2020 it plans to deliver more than 7000 trainings involving around 1000 companies. The training courses offered by the project are designed to improve ICT skills of SME workers and the self-employed. The training consists of three thematic blocks, each offering several courses: 1.Digital Technology - focus on the latest digital technologies such as cloud services, online collaboration, infrastructure and security. 2.Digitization of Internal Business Processes - skills acquisition that will help you digitize your internal business processes, business and financial management, marketing and document management.

	3.Digital tools for production and service development will provide digital design tools, customer relationship management and communication tools, digital tools and application for production and process management
Resources needed	1) modular training program tailored to EU Digital Competence framework and multi-sector business needs 2) experienced and motivated training providers 3) public funds support to co-finance the training costs for SMEs 4)nationwide awareness raising campaigns to motivate SMEs to participate
Timescale (start/end date)	October 2018 – ongoing
Evidence of success (results achieved)	1) Over 1500 companies involved in project since 2013, 2) over 9000 trainings provided since 2013 3) positive impact evaluation from enterprise managers involved in the project 4) general overall positive rating of the training quality by trainees - 9.17 in the scale of 10 5) 87% of participants confirmed they would recommend the trainings for their colleagues and partners 6) project was finalist of the Digital Skills and Jobs Award 2017 in the category "Digital skills for workforce
Potential for learning or transfer	The project has already been transferred to Bulgaria: http://www.glbulgaria.bg/en/digisme "Digital Skills for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Bulgaria" project is being implemented by Global Libraries - Bulgaria Foundation(GLBF). Partners of GLBF are the "Made in Bulgaria - Union of Small and Medium Business" Association and the Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association (LIKTA). It is funded under the "Transnational and Danube Partnerships for Employment and Growth" procedure of the "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020 Operational Programme, co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund. Its implementation period was one year and finished at the end of 2018. 30 representatives of SMEs were trained in a pilot training, thus increasing their prospects for sustainable employment. Also other countries: Italy , Finland, Romania, Sweden has expressed interest to implement project

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/1680/trainings-for-sme-for-development-of-innovations-and-digital-technologies/

Appendix 7: GP e-Skills Week for Jobs

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**e-Skills Week for Jobs**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
Description	
Short summary of the practice	The economic crisis has shown, that European labour lags behind in e-skills (2010). Despite EU unemployment of over 10%,

	employers are unable to find job seekers with the right ICT competencies for positions across the labour market. As one of the problem were find out that there is not enough information and no awareness about the benefices given by using ICT in any life situation, including for SMEs. As a result, the European Commission (EC) has recognised the need in ICT training for the jobs. That is why the EC asked us to support the DAE's agenda by leading its E-Skills Week campaigns in the EU Member states, including Latvia. One day of the week is devoted directly for the needs of SMEs, informing entrepreneurs about opportunities to raise their level of knowledge and competitiveness in ICT issues and all further opportunities offered by the governmental institutions (e-services, the use of e-signatures ect.), NGOs (new ICT solutions in e-commerce, cloud computing business opportunities, social networking ect.) and IT associations (trainings, practical use of ICT, integrating new programmes ect). The Information Campaign reflects interest and involvement of the all stakeholders with respect to e-services. It rises cooperation between industries, educational bodies and public authorities deliver a large and diverse programme of events and activities throughout the year for people at all levels of education and skills.
Resources needed	There were no need for separate funding resources so far, as all the stakeholders used their own, however it would be really helpful for all of them to make the campaign even more effective and interactive.
Timescale (start/end date)	March 2010 – ongoing
Evidence of success (results achieved)	This is a really good example of collaboration between public institutions, NGOs and business, as well as the awareness raising activities of different public target groups, including SMEs. There are more than 25 000 participants (8-10% of them are entrepreneurs), ~300 stakeholders, ~800 events on average organized in the "e-Skills Week for Jobs" every year. The E-skills week web page provides useful information starting from the agenda of event to useful materials. See: http://eprasmes.lv/.
Potential for learning or transfer	It is a very good example and easy to transfer to other regions, because it is just sake of enthusiasm and awareness of stakeholders to understand how important it is to inform and explain to any target group, including SMEs, about the new offers of e-services and trainings and encourage them to use ICT tools in daily life. What would be the benefice of ICT, how to raise awareness and develop digital skills and competitiveness as well as developing digital economy, in general. This initiative could be joined with other campaigns in countries and it shows to the policy - makers, that the implementation of the policies have to be introduced first to the society to understand the practical beneficiaries of the policy will be developed. As it is mentioned above, all of the stakeholders involved every year and although this campaign going on for 11th year already, there are still big interest about it because the digitalization does not stop developing, it is going on every day, every hour.

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/1295/e-skills-week-

for-jobs/

Appendix 8: GP Smart Latvia & Digital Maturity Test

Good practice general information	
Title of the good practice	**Smart Latvia & Digital Maturity Test**
Organisation in charge of the good practice	Latvian Information and Communications Technology Association (LICTA)
Description	
Short summary of the practice	According to a comprehensive study in all countries of the European Union (DESI 2019 - Digital Economy and Society Index), in particular, Latvia is lagging behind in skills to use digital technologies in business. Latvia is among the last top 3 countries in the use of e-commerce solutions and between the last five countries that have implemented a variety of IT solutions in companies. The first step of "Smart Latvia" is the Digital Maturity Test, which can be completed by each Latvian company to assess its digital maturity, to compare itself with competitors and to find out what IT solutions would help the company work more effectively, with less costs and higher profits. After completing the test, each respondent receives recommendations on what IT solutions would help the company to work more effectively. Each Latvian company manager can assess the digital maturity of his/ her company by completing the Digital Maturity Test at the platform www.gudralatvija.lv. The test is designed in a simple way - the head of the company should assess how much it uses IT solutions in basic business management functions. After completing the test, the manager of the company receives not only an in-depth assessment, giving an opportunity to compare company with competitors of particular sector, but also recommendations on what IT solutions it should implement in this business.
Resources needed	"Smart Latvia" is supported by the project of Interreg Baltic Sea Region – "#R050 Digital Innovation Network, DIGINNO". Costs planned in the project for self-assessment tool Digital Maturity Tool'' (design, developing, hosting) in amount of EUR 6000.
Timescale (start/end date)	January 2018– ongoing
Evidence of success (results achieved)	The "Smart Latvia" campaign is organised with the aim to educate leaders/managers of SMEs in Latvia about the latest IT solutions, encouraging them to be introduced into their businesses and providing them with the necessary informative support. As of February 2020, the Digital Maturity Test was completed by 642 SMEs. By proving successful results, test was elaborated in English to reach an international level. It is also available in Danish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Polish and Swedish languages.
Potential for learning or transfer	In order to help Latvian companies in development of IT solutions in their businesses, LICTA together with partners, IT companies: Edisoft, Fitek, Lursoft, Microsoft Latvia and VISMA, ELVA, Bregards and the Commercial Education Centre (CEC) has launched an educational campaign called "Smart Latvia" and developed free tool for entrepreneurs to acknowledge and plan business digital transformation

	activities. This tool is also available in English (https://www.diginnotool.eu/home), thus ensuring its international use. Successful cooperation with 50 business associations has helped to distribute test to a high number of respondents.

Source: https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/4119/smart-latvia-digital-maturity-test/

Appendix 9: Spanish Peer Review event Online agenda: Granada – Spain (April 27-29, 2021)

	Time (Spain)	Principal activity	Speaker	Zoom link for meeting
			Tuesday, 27 April 2021	
	8h55	**VIRTUAL WAITING ROOM**		
1.	**90h00**	**Meeting with the DigiBEST team of the Provincial Council of Granada**		Unirse a la reunión Zoom https://zoom.us/j/9501345790 1?pwd=V0QrZFZ4dmZuRlh0 akpvOGkvN0R6QT09 ID de reunión: 950 1345 7901 Código de acceso: 033267
2.	**10h15**	**Meeting with members of AJE (Young Entrepreneurs Association)**	https://www.innosouth.com/ https://www.ajeandalucia.org/granada/speaker/innosouth/	Unirse a la reunión Zoom https://zoom.us/j/9204689666 7?pwd=SFJJK1NOMkx3Vml KdnUxTFE0amRWQT09 ID de reunión: 920 4689 6667 Código de acceso: 555793
	11h15	**BREAK**		
3.	**11h30**	**Meeting with Chamber of Commerce of Granada**	**(There will be at the meeting some businesses from the province that are dealing with the digital transformation)** **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF GRANADA** Chamber of Commerce plays an active role in improving the competitiveness of businesses, particularly SMEs. https://www.camaragranada.org/	Unirse a la reunión Zoom https://zoom.us/j/9310641840 6?pwd=K1pEdkhKU2VJbWJ MS0JzZmlDQjVBdz09 ID de reunión: 931 0641 8406 Código de acceso: 699419
4.	**12h45**	**Meeting with OnGranada Cluster**	**ONGRANADA - Asociación Granada Plaza Tecnológica** onGranada Tech City has become the largest Digital Economy business organisation and the largest Technological Cluster in Andalusia.	Unirse a la reunión Zoom

			OnGranada has 640 associated companies that represent 51% of the sector's turnover in Andalusia, representing more than 3,700 million euros, almost 3% of the autonomous GDP. https://www.ongranada.com/que-es-ongranada/	https://zoom.us/j/9793400772 0?pwd=MUg1YzNQdHJGT2 NLV01UWkVLaWI3QT09 ID de reunión: 979 3400 7720 Código de acceso: 425086
	13h45	**END OF THE DAY**		

Wednesday, 28 April, 2021				
	Time (Spain)	**Principal Activity**	**Speaker**	**Zoom link for meeting**
	9h55	**VIRTUAL WAITING ROOM**		
1.	10h00	**Meeting with Daleph Consultancy**	**Head of Incubator Department of the DALEPH Consultancy,** which has finished a first evaluation about the website Granada Empresas, including in its conclusions, the priority for dealing with the digitalization of the Grenadian businesses through some tools showed on the website. https://www.granadaempresas.es/	Unirse a la reunión Zoom https://zoom.us/j/9528325229 5?pwd=bFduQjdwakN6OHNi SWhMZVFQNDc0UT09 ID de reunión: 952 8325 2295 Código de acceso: 196054
2.	11h30	**Meeting with Guadalinfo Experts.**	**CONSORTIUM FERNANDO DE LOS RÍOS** The Consortium "Fernando de los Ríos" has been commissioned by Junta de Andalucía as well as the eight County Councils of Andalusia to develop and deploy throughout the region those projects and actions leading to the implementation of the Information and Knowledge Society among the citizens. One of the main actions they are managing is Guadalinfo Project. http://www.guadalinfo.es/	Unirse a la reunión Zoom https://zoom.us/j/9351434786 3?pwd=Snc5VmZiK01hcnpF MlZmOGtiVEhaUT09 ID de reunión: 935 1434 7863 Código de acceso: 121309
	12h30	**END OF THE DAY**		

Thursday, 29 April, 2021			
	10h00	**CONCLUSIONS**	**PEER REVIEW INTERNATIONAL TEAM and GRENADIAN STAKEHOLDERS**	Unirse a la reunión Zoom

				https://zoom.us/j/93488728805?pwd=WnhYdGczV0huSGtjWm1wMUx1NXdMdz09 ID de reunión: 934 8872 8805 Código de acceso: 154677

Appendix 10: PR event presentation

Main goals

DigiBEST
Interreg Europe

1. **To reduce an unemployment and facilitate people to learn digital tools and skills**

2. **Promote competitiveness of SME's**

3. **Promote development of ICT companies with innovative business models (Development of Start-up environment)**

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Areas of suggestions

DigiBEST
Interreg Europe

1. **Awareness and support**
   - Sharing of success stories for awareness rising (i.e. meetups, guest speakers from SMEs that have implemented tools, digital transformation.....)
   - Profile the SMEs according to their regional presence, industry, number of employees, digital maturity and develop targeted support for main profiled SMEs
   - Collaborate with the Granada University or other public entities to map existing training programs in place and possibly clusterize them for regions, different sectors and different level of digital maturity need
   - More collaboration between Granada University, ICT companies and SME's to facilitate new start-up creation, and idea generation
   - Public platform where to find information about any kind of support could be provided by institutions or government/EU

2. **People**
   - Targeted training programs oriented on people learning (i.e. specific tools)
   - Training program and strategy monitoring and adjustment based on overall maturity development of SMEs and employees

3. **Urban vs Rural**
   - Infrastructure development in rural areas

4. **Financing**
   - Promote European and Government funds in more effective ways
   - Offer new ideas to support hiring of young and skilled people (boot-camps)
   - Funding programs to get enterprises able to attract ICT consultants (i.e. fiscal incentives)

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Appendix 11: Participant list for Spanish peer review 2021

PARTICIPANT LIST FOR SPANISH PEER REVIEW 2021			
Representatives	**ENTITY**	**COUNTRY**	**POSITION**
Representative of Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia 1	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia	LATVIA	DigiBEST Project Manager
Representative of Provincial Council of Granada 1	Provincial Council of Granada	SPAIN	Project Manager
Representative of Provincial Council of Granada 2	Provincial Council of Granada	SPAIN	Project Coordinator
Representative of Sviluppo Basilicata spa 1	Sviluppo Basilicata spa	ITALY	DigiBEST Project Management
Representative of Sviluppo Basilicata spa 2	Sviluppo Basilicata spa	ITALY	DigiBEST Finance management and administrative coordination
Representative of Protiviti Italia 1	Protiviti Italia	ITALY	DigiBEST PR expert: External consultant Auditor of training plans financed by Formatemp
Representative of Protiviti Italia 2	Protiviti Italia	ITALY	DigiBEST PR expert: Senior Consultant
Representative of Ministry of environmental protection and regional development of the Republic of Latvia 2	Ministry of environmental protection and regional development of the Republic of Latvia	LATVIA	Project Coordinator
Representative of Ministry of environmental protection and	Ministry of environmental protection and regional development of the Republic of Latvia	LATVIA	Head of Digital Skills Promotion Project Division

regional development of the Republic of Latvia 3			
Representative of University of Latvia 1	University of Latvia	LATVIA	DigiBEST Advisor Partner
Representative of University of Latvia 2	University of Latvia	LATVIA	DigiBEST Advisor Partner
	University of Latvia	LATVIA	DigiBEST Advisor Partner
Representative of KPMG 1	KPMG Baltics, advisory services	LATVIA	PR expert: Senior Manager Management Consulting
Representative of KPMG 2	KPMG Baltics, advisory services	LAVTIA	PR expert: Senior Advisor Management Consulting