

European Alliance Against Coronavirus

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Cluster's role on Digital Innovation Hubs

Working format is based on "Gilles Rules":

1. conceptual framework
2. needs and disruptions
3. solutions

Speakers:

- Anne-Marie Sassen, DG CNECT
- Bianca Muntean, Transilvania IT
- Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, Agrifood Lithuania DIH/Smart IT Cluster

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Role of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) for economic recovery

Anne-Marie Sassen opened this session presenting ideas on the clusters' role on Digital Innovation Hub from the perspective of DG CNECT. She introduced the new industrial strategy for Europe, which is focused on green transition and digital transformation. Indeed, digital technologies are changing the shape of industry in many sectors and the way companies do business. They allow economic players to be more productive and, from the sustainable transition point of view, they support the decarbonisation of Europe who wants to be the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. For these reasons, it has been developed a new growth strategy for SMEs.

The European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) play a fundamental role in the transition to this new strategy. The plan is to build a network of 240 DIH which will work closely with the EEN, clusters, other networks, and authorities. All economic sectors should be addressed by the network of the DIH. They provide technological expertise and experimentation facilities to enable the digital transformation of the industry. Moreover, DIHs offer support to find investors and training. Recently, in collaboration with the European Commission, the European Digital Innovation Hubs organized a virtual hackathon to support the local tourism business and helped them to cooperate.

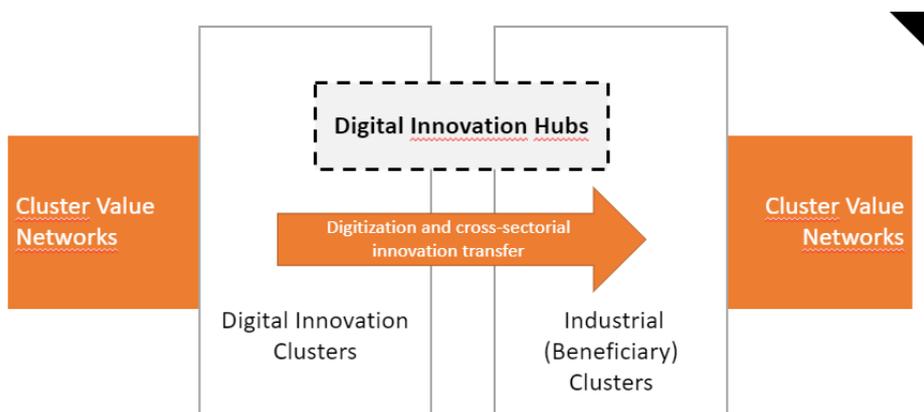


Shared experiences by Transilvania Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) and Lithuania AgriFood

Bianca Muntea from the Transilvania Digital Innovation Hub shared the hub's success story which started in 2017. Already by 2019, it started to work on "DHI2", which is the largest European project for Smart Factories and was one of the finalists of DIH Champion organised by DIHNet.

Transilvania DHI follows a cross-sectoral approach. The aim is to give complete services to the companies in order to increase the market and industrial value stream, the global competitiveness and the digitalization. The main idea of this approach is to cooperate through the value chain in order to have multiplicative effects. She highlighted that every region has its own specific assets, which are buildings blocks for the DIHs. In the regions, clusters have an advanced stage of trust. Therefore, they should be included as an integral part in the work of the DIH.

Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė underlined that – even though it is a common notion – clusters and DHI are not competitors and they have to move forward together in order to create these multiplicative effects. Agrifood Lithuania DIH is an example that a valuable collaboration between these two entities is possible:



IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

Collaboration. The need to establish strong and long-term collaborations between clusters and Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) was explicitly highlighted. Clusters create high-value chains and networks within sectors and industries, while DIHs are promoters of digital transformation, providing knowledge, skills, experience, and technological support to the public and private sector. As pointed out by Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, it is therefore essential to establish collaborations between clusters and DIHs, since they are complementary, and their synergy can push a lot digital transformation in Europe. Industry clusters are the representatives, the constituents, and the creators of value networks, while DIH enhance these value networks through the digitization of processes, products and services. The use and promotion of digital technologies and innovation enable DIHs to have multiplicative effects on cluster value networks. In addition, this type of collaboration can support an "EU-local" approach, unifying the European vision and local companies' management. This can allow a faster digitization and cross-sectorial innovation transfer.