



# **BEST PRACTICES ON ASSISTING SMEs WITH THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

# FOREWORD

Digitalisation is one of the main challenges – if not the biggest challenge – for European business at the moment. Especially for SMEs, which are a heterogeneous group. In digitalisation, there are “front-runners” developing new technologies and those which have to adapt to new technologies. Moreover, SMEs are not homogenous in terms of internal capacity and resources either, ranging from microenterprises to medium sized companies. Therefore, challenges are different and SMEs need different support measures according to the level of digitalisation and size.

To face digitalisation, SMEs needs an enabling legal framework which must be flexible enough, technology neutral and future-proof. Additionally, it needs to ensure fairness, transparency and a level-playing field for all companies.

Many initiatives exist at European level concerning digitalisation. It is easy for SMEs to get lost and miss the potential of these measures. Therefore, SMEunited advocates for a holistic approach among all the Commission's measures and services.

In order to create a facilitating environment, SMEunited proposes non-legislative measures in five different domains: skills development, financial support, capacity building, appropriate infrastructure and standardisation. The creation of a “Digital Knowledge Centre” should support the holistic approach.

SMEunited and its member organisations have already taken up the change in business and society towards a digital transformation some time ago. With the rapid development in digitalisation, the actions and practices offered to SMEs by SMEunited member organisations increased as well. A number of best practices to assist SMEs with the digital transformation are presented in this brochure.

To ensure continuation in the future, the SMEunited working group “Digitalisation” will continue to exchange best practices and share knowhow on the different aspects of digitalisation, ranging from e-commerce and cloud computing over datamining to blockchain, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence.

Ulrike Rabmer-Koller  
President

Véronique Willems  
Secretary General



The European brand is based on excellence and quality. European products and services are attractive worldwide because people trust their quality and like their design. This reputation has been built by decades of technological progress and creativity, investment in skills, and hard work of European companies. But to maintain this reputation, our industry and service providers must access the latest technologies. If we want to remain competitive, digitalisation is essential for every business activity.

This is particularly true for SMEs, which are the backbone of the European economy. However, today, only 20% of SMEs are highly digitalised in Europe and the situation across countries varies a lot: while 40 % of companies in Denmark and the Netherlands are highly digitised, in Bulgaria and Romania it is 1 in 10.

With the aim to build a digital continent, the current situation is not satisfactory. Europe is not a digital continent yet. It is more like a “digital archipelago” with a number of hot spots, which are the big clusters of London, Paris, Stockholm, Berlin or Sofia, in a sea of wide territories, which are still far from reaping the benefits of the digital shift.

For a rebalancing, market forces will not be sufficient, as they often tend to concentrate digitalisation into a few areas. Ensuring that everyone has a chance implies some important policy choices to bring digital to our territories, including the remoted ones.

An initiative as this brochure, bringing together best practices to support SMEs in their digital transformation, can only contribute to my objective to transform Europe into a digital continent. SMEs do not always have the resources or knowhow to adapt to new technologies or change their business model to the digital age. Providing showcase examples, neutral information on new technologies and support to implement them in the day-to-day business activities ensures SMEs also get on the digital train.

Ultimately, we have to enshrine competitiveness into a broader societal project, which is to bring together all Europeans and all businesses on board of the digital revolution.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society



# NATIONAL SME ORGANISATIONS



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## ABOUT APCMA: ASSEMBLY OF FRENCH CHAMBERS OF CRAFTS

APCMA, through their network of local chambers of crafts, provides four services to allow their members to increase competitiveness, efficiency and proximity to their customers through digital technology. The four services focus on **digital training, digital diagnosis, creation of mobile applications (apps) and creation of innovation poles**.

- DIGITAL TRAINING DELIVERED BY CONSULAR NETWORKS**  
 The network of chambers of crafts offers craft companies various **training courses** on digital tools in four main areas: computer, digital, internet and social networks. The aim is to teach companies how to create a website, do SEO, retouch a digital photo or use smartphones at their full potential. APCMA also puts efforts into making sure that future artisans are aware of the need to integrate digital tools, from the very start of the business to the administrative and commercial organisation of the company.
- DIGITAL DIAGNOSIS**  
 Chambers of crafts offer personalised **digital diagnostics** for craft companies. In this context, a counsellor visits the company, **carries out a “digital inventory” and advises a digital strategy**. The format of this diagnosis and advice can vary according to the local chambers. For example, the Paris Chamber offers companies a digital inventory and formulates recommendations of evolution and investment through the development of an action plan.
- DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS (APPS) TO INTEGRATE SMALL ENTERPRISES INTO THE DIGITAL MARKET**  
 APCMA and the network of Chambers worked on the **development of different mobile applications** to bring together entrepreneurs and apprentices in the digital world. Moreover, APCMA created the application “Choose my craftsman” that lists the artisans based on the geolocation of the user. The local chamber CMA Aquitaine has created “Aqui artisan”, an app that communicates relevant news to artisans of the region.
- THE CREATION OF INNOVATION POLES FOR ARTISANS**  
 These **clusters are an interface between professional organisations, innovation support structures, centers and research laboratories**. They make it possible to develop synergies and cooperation, both on the digital front and on innovation in general.

Finally, APCMA has also contributed to the development of a handbook on digital practices in crafts: « Compendium of good digital practices in crafts ».



## ABOUT CDM : LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF SKILLED TRADES AND CRAFTS

In order to support SMEs in the digital transformation, the Luxembourg Chambre des Métiers launched its **'eHandwierk' program** as a part of the "Pakt Pro Artisanat", an initiative by the Ministry of Economy to strengthen the development of the craft sector.

The aim of 'eHandwierk' is to **raise awareness** about **digital opportunities** and to inform and **guide SMEs in their digital transformation**. In order to meet its objectives, 'eHandwierk' has set up the following initiatives:

- **DIGICHECK**

DigiCheck is an online self-assessment tool that helps SMEs discover their level of digital maturity in order to develop a strategy for digital transformation. Users can decide whether to complete a full diagnosis of their company or pick only one specific area such as 'Communication', 'Management', 'Human Resources' or 'Production'.

- **ON-SITE VISITS**

SMEs that need support and guidance in their digital transformation can schedule an appointment with an 'eHandwierk' consultant, who will then visit the company in order to conduct an initial assessment of their needs and to guide them to the appropriate partners and initiatives.

- **WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES**

The free-of-charge events provide opportunities for discussion and interaction, often in smaller groups, and cover a vast array of digital topics such as e-commerce, online marketing, supply management, paperless office, digital collaboration and cybersecurity.

- **SUCCESS STORIES**

A series of interviews with small business owners that have successfully implemented digital technologies in their business serves as an inspiration for other SMEs to embark on their journey to digital transformation.

- **WIDE RANGE OF INFORMATION AND MATERIALS**

'eHandwierk' regularly publishes articles and reports in journals, newspapers as well as on their own website where SMEs can find answers to a wide range of questions that are frequently raised in connection with digitalization. The website also offers an online dictionary, which includes easy-to-understand explanations of widely used terms and abbreviations in the digital world.



## ABOUT CNA: NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ITALIAN SMEs

CNA supports SMEs in the digital transformation by engaging in different actions, such as being a partner in specific portals, organising events on the subject and giving specific advice on support structures to small companies.

In the efforts to support SMEs in digitalisation, CNA has promoted a long-term project called DIGITALY. The project has the aim to connect small businesses, support them in digitalisation and encourage the transfer of knowledge and tools to spread digital culture. It has involved more than 3.000 companies from north to south in 2017.

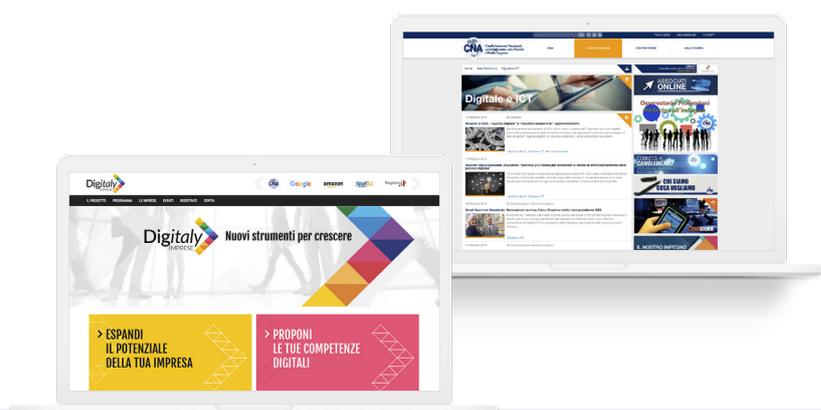
As part of the **National Plan for Industry 4.0**, CNA has also activated a project aimed at creating a **network of Digital Innovation Hubs** among the territorial realities of the Confederation. 55 provinces have already joined the project. They have initiated communication campaigns and information activities on the topic of Industry 4.0, reaching thousands of companies with different methods and communication tools.

Moreover, at local level CNA offices guide companies in understanding their technological needs, give advice on investment decisions, provide information on support tools and technical advice on the requirements to have access to the support structures that favour the digital transformation.

**Over 70 conferences and seminars on digital issues have been organised at different levels, national, regional and provincial, involving over 2.500 companies.**

CNA also reacted positively to the initiative of the **“Growing in digital”** launched by the Italian Ministry of Labour, activated to promote the employability of young people who do not study and do not work through the acquisition of digital skills, investing in their skills to empower businesses in the internet world.

CNA is focusing its efforts on qualification and digital skills considering that **the human factor will be decisive within a 4.0 company in which the central element is the flexibility of production**. As small companies increasingly need to have appropriate trained workers with specific skills, CNA underlines the importance of technical, scientific and engineering courses, and promotes new forms of education such as alternation school – work in order to train the appropriate digital technical profiles.





## **ABOUT CNIPMMR: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED PRIVATE ENTERPRISES OF ROMANIA**

CNIPMMR used digitalisation as an internal tool to increase its capacity to formulate and support alternative public policies regarding the SME sector.

In the framework of a project aiming at developing and strengthening the operational and administrative capacity of CNIPMMR in order to enable a strong and effective representation of SMEs, the association developed a dedicated mobile application to obtain feedback on alternative public policy developed by key players.

The digital tool served to collect feedback complementing more traditional methods such as the organisation of round tables with representatives of institutions targeted by the alternative policy.

The app served as a good practice to reach members and stakeholders on policy issues.



## ABOUT CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE: ITALIAN ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING SMEs AND CRAFTS

Following the decision of the Italian government to launch the programme “Industry 4.0” (then more properly re-named Enterprise 4.0) to invest in digital development, Confartigianato Imprese also decided to develop a **programme of information, education and service for their members**. The programme could take advantage of the right momentum as the incentives scheme set out in “Enterprise 4.0” has convinced even those SMEs that were more reluctant to start the process of digitalisation. A newly appointed delegate of the President for Digital Affairs and a newly created Steering Committee composed by artisans and Confartigianato staff members oversee the whole programme.

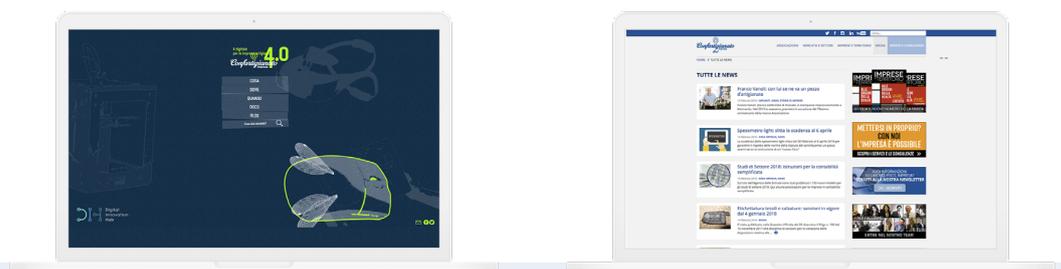
Within the framework of this new programme, Confartigianato created an online portal aimed at regrouping all the information and initiatives.

One of the initiatives within this programme is the setting up of a nationwide network of **Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)** that act as a first contact point for SMEs that want to acquire new skills, information, and advice on how to digitalise their business and that need to obtain evidence on the incentives offered by “Enterprise 4.0”. DIHs are run at local level by experts able to give advice on where to find the most suited competences and solutions.

The most noteworthy example is Confartigianato Varese - ASARVA, that three years ago opened “Faberlab” within the premises of the association. Faberlab has performed a crucial role in providing **education to schools and companies** in all the aspects of **digital transformation**, with a particular focus on digital fabrication. In addition to local and regional hubs, local offices of Confartigianato also give direct assistance on e-commerce, organise tailor-made courses on digital transformation, provide specific services and develop educational material.

Moreover, Confartigianato has contributed to the production of **ad hoc guides** to be distributed to local associations and members, for example the two editions of the “Practical guide to Industry 4.0 for artisans and SMEs” in collaboration with the University of Brescia and a “Practical guide for Industry 4.0 compliance” in collaboration with Conforma (The Italian Association of Certification Bodies). In addition, a national road show with more than 50 public events at local level with the aim to discuss the benefits of Enterprise 4.0 and of digital transformation is still in place since last year.

Finally, Confartigianato Imprese continues to **collaborate with institutional actors** and bodies to ensure that the needs of SMEs are correctly met in shaping digitalisation policies and in addressing public resources.





## ABOUT CPME: FRENCH CONFEDERATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

CPME contributes to helping their members' digitalisation through different actions: **online tools, specific internal working groups and dedicated information, organisation of trainings and awareness raising events, institutional collaboration.** The areas on which CPME focus most are three aspects of digitalisation: **digital transformation, cybersecurity and GDPR.**

Concerning **online tools**, CPME launched EvalNumPME to help business owners assess their digital maturity. It is an online, free self-diagnosis to assess the numerical maturity of a company. Fourteen questions allow business owners to know in a few clicks their margin of progress in the digitalisation of their business. These questions, based on the use, are divided by topic: customer relationship, offer, management of the company, models of value creation.

Moreover, CPME is the co-founder of the platform [www.cybermalveillance.gouv.fr](http://www.cybermalveillance.gouv.fr) that gives information on how to protect from cybercrime acts and how to help victims from these cybercrime acts. On the platform, more general tools and guides are also available.

CPME is also member of the platform EducNum which has the objective of educating young people about digitalisation and an institutional partner of France NUM, a government **platform dedicated to the digital transformation of SMEs.**

When it comes to **internal specific forums and useful information**, CPME created a sub-committee "digital economy" with 3 working groups on digital transition, cybersecurity and start-ups and a dedicated website. Moreover, they have co-written handbooks on digitalisation: guide on how to choose a telecom offer & guide on best practices in digitalisation and a guide on GDPR: "Personal Data and GDPR: how to do it?", written in collaboration with CNIL.

In addition, CPME has organised **several events about digitalisation** and is **partner of projects and raising awareness initiatives.** CPME is a **desk officer for France for the project "Consumer Law Ready"**. The aim of the project is to train SMEs **on consumer law in the digital era.** Additionally, CPME is also a partner of the European Cybersecurity Month, which takes place every year in October and a partner of the cybersecurity campaign targeting SMEs: "3 steps to secure your digital space".

Finally, CPME organised the **second edition of the "Digital Trophies"**, a competition which rewards traditional SMEs using digital tools. In this way, CPME proves that **digital technology is not only a prerogative of tech companies.** The objective is to show business owners that making a digital transition is not about digitalising the entire business, but about using existing digital tools to improve the working environment, such as optimising working time, develop growth, increase productivity, etc.

## ABOUT ESEE: GREEK SME ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING ENTREPRENEURS IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

ESEE makes several contributions to help its members with digitalisation. These actions include the **'FeelSafe' initiative regarding the security of online transactions**, as well as the provision of **access to their free website builder**.

**The FeelSafe@e-commerce** project is a cooperative effort between ESEE, the Greek Police, the Department of Electronic Crime, and the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. The objective of this programme is for these organisations to come together for the systematic, scientific study of online risks. This platform informs both entrepreneurs and consumers about risks of online transactions, and how to perform these transactions safely. There is a FeelSafe app, providing instructions on preventing electronic fraud based on three axes: electronic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, electronic entrepreneurship and employees, and electronic commerce. There is also a complaints hotline to the Contemporary Internet Threats Management Centre, for which specialised officers of the Cyber Crime Unit provide information and handle cases / threats that the citizens and enterprises face in electronic commerce.

**The free website builder** gives entrepreneurs support in enhancing their online presence. ESEE cooperated with Industry Disruptors-Game Changers (ID-GC) to create this website builder, which also provides a **step-by-step guide for retailers looking to go online**. The builder takes into account the basic necessities of website building, and also adds elements of branding and marketing. This service is completely free-of-charge and users can rely on training manuals and ESEE's collaborators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Czu48xQrTpg>



## ABOUT FFE: FEDERATION OF FINNISH ENTERPRISES

The promotion of digital transformation in the field of small and medium-sized businesses is a key focus for the Federation of Finnish Enterprises on several fronts. Indeed, the Federation invests in **raising awareness activities**, organisation of **webinars**, publication of **guidebooks and handbooks**, providing **useful information** on digital developments and in **conducting surveys and studies**.

In order to **raise awareness among SMEs** on the effects and opportunities of digitalisation, FFE, together with a number of private and public partners, organises **Entrepreneur's Digital School, an annual series of events** that covers the main cities in Finland. The events, consisting of down-to-earth case examples and motivational peer-learning activities, are aimed at small-business owners who are in the early-stages of their digital transformation.

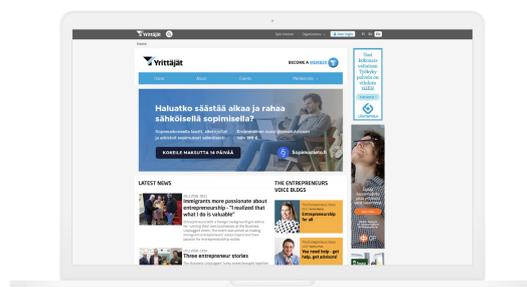
Through scalable **webinars**, FFE is invested in providing its members and other SMEs around the country with **low-cost and easy-access training on how to utilise the latest digital tools and applications**, for example in marketing and other core business operations.

To complement the events and webinars, **FFE also publishes Entrepreneur's Digital Guidebook**, an instructional online manual containing step-by-step learning material on various aspects of digital business from building a website to automating financial management. In order to prompt further action, the guidebook is thematically linked to a partner platform that connects SMEs seeking to digitise a part of their operations with the best digital service providers in the country.

Similarly, FFE has released a **user-friendly and widely-acclaimed Entrepreneur's GDPR Handbook assisting SMEs to meet the requirements of the EU's general data protection regulation**.

FFE makes a full use of Entrepreneur's Media, the organisation's print and digital editorial outlets reaching tens of thousands of small-business owners daily, to **inform and inspire SMEs on the latest developments** in the new and exciting technology and novel business models it enables.

Lastly, to gain a deeper understanding of the state of digital maturity and competences among SMEs and entrepreneurs, **FFE conducts a variety of surveys and studies on the subject** on a regular basis. This helps the organisation improve its service offering, media outreach and policy positions to better promote the ongoing shift to the age of intelligent machines and productive companies that wield them.





## ABOUT GRTU: MALTA CHAMBER OF SMEs

GRTU has always encouraged and assisted SMEs with digitalisation and it has therefore conducted a number of initiatives to support them in the digital transformation and tackle the major challenges.

### Your Business On the Internet

With the support of EU funds, GRTU published **a book to help encourage and guide small businesses on e-commerce** and on using the internet in their business. The book is free of charge and is distributed during events conducted by the Chamber. The publication also includes a **Web based App** that basically duplicates the content of the book online using multimedia. The app also includes a set of questions after each section so that users can test their knowledge.

- **CONFERENCES**

GRTU has held numerous **events about digital subjects**. During these events, influential speakers are invited and the content is always designed bearing in mind that the event will be a learning experience for the attendees. Great care is taken to ensure that the SMEs which attend the events gain new knowledge and take it back to their businesses.

- **REGULAR INFORMATION SESSIONS**

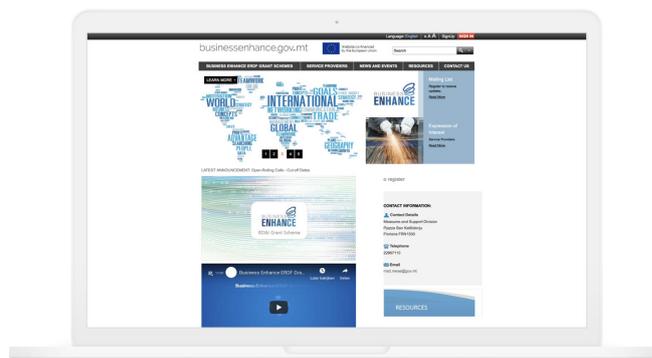
GRTU together with Business First, a one-stop-shop for small businesses set up by GRTU and the Government, regularly organises free 2 to 3 hour information sessions on digital issues such as Cyber Security, e-commerce, Cloud services and other subjects.

- **E-COMMERCE GRANT SCHEME**

Together with the Government, GRTU was very active in designing and developing a Grant Scheme, using EU funds, aimed specifically at businesses who do not already have an e-commerce platform. **The scheme funds 50% of the project and up to €5.000.** As the scheme requires documentation to be submitted, another scheme was also launched through which funds are awarded for creating these documents, including the creation of a business plan model. GRTU was involved in the original design of the scheme and was also very active in promoting the scheme through numerous information sessions.

- **ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE MALTA CLOUD FORUM**

The Malta Cloud Forum was set up by the MCA (Malta Communications Authority) to encourage Maltese SMEs to make use of cloud platforms. GRTU is represented in the Cloud Forum board and is very active in its activities.





## ABOUT IPOSZ: HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFTSMEN'S CORPORATIONS

Industry 4.0, technological innovation, the use of robots and all aspects of digitalisation will have a fundamental role in the development of companies, and this is why IPOSZ started to put more attention on this topic.

IPOSZ engaged in digitalisation policies and projects through different activities:

- **Organisation of conferences on the topic, often involving also other European countries (especially V4 countries) and EU stakeholders**
- **Sharing of best practices with other SME associations within Europe**
- **Surveys**

Together with the other V4 countries, IPOSZ carried out a survey among SMEs. The questionnaire focused on digitalisation, assessing the level of digitalisation of SMEs, the perception of digitalisation among SMEs, and whether SMEs knew about Industry 4.0 national strategies. The findings of the survey showed that digitalisation is felt as an irreversible process and not as an option by SMEs. Moreover, the survey showed that the degree of digitalisation depends on the sector in which the SME is working. SMEs recognised the usefulness of digitalisation in making some activities faster and easier, but reported the cost of it and the lack of skills required.

- **Participation in conferences on the topic to report up-to-date information to their members**
- **Analysis of national strategies concerning Industry 4.0, to make sure that they take into consideration the needs of SMEs as well.**
- **Information campaigns among Hungarian SMEs.**



## ABOUT MKB: DUTCH SME EMPLOYER ORGANISATION

For the majority of entrepreneurs **innovation takes place by modifying certain processes on a step by step basis**. MKB put in place services for its members especially in the areas of digitalisation that are most confusing for entrepreneurs and perceived as disruptive technologies: **data economy, platform economy, robotisation and cybersecurity**.

### DATA ECONOMY

The first step in digitalisation is organising your own data. Every entrepreneur has access to information but it is often not usable, or it is unknown what it can be used for. This is why **MKB-Nederland is cooperating with JADS (Jheronimus Academy of Data Science)**, which gives entrepreneurs knowhow in the area of big data. Students and entrepreneurs can find common ground in the **creation of value with data science and business analytics**. The collaboration focusses on an **SME Datahub** (a data platform at branch level, which is focussed on competitiveness supported by data and the insights extracted from it) and an SME Data-lab, a so-called 'data carwash' for SMEs, with which entrepreneurs can undertake business based on internal and external data in smarter and more efficient ways.

### PLATFORM ECONOMY

Entrepreneurs respond through branch or regional association to the opportunities platforms offer. For example, the Dutch association of real estate agents (NVM) has built the platform Funda on which all houses for sale in the Netherlands can be found. Another example comes from the Dutch association of automobile repair shops (BOVAG), which developed its own platform for garage companies that is called Viabovag.

### ROBOTISATION

The Dutch metal producer association (Koninklijke Metaalunie) developed the programme Teqnow. The acceleration of production processes through the **use of robots** is important in this sector. In order to test how this would work out in practice, SMEs can borrow a robot from a pool, hence giving the opportunity to test advantages of working with a robot, and easing the step to invest in one.

### CYBERSECURITY

In 2016 MKB-Nederland started a campaign in cooperation with the Ministries for Security and Justice as well as Economic Affairs, to support individual entrepreneurs as well as branch associations in **combating cybercrime**. With the project 'Safely doing business on the internet' (Veilig Zakelijk Internetten) entrepreneurs are able to test, among other things, the security of their digital environment. On top of that, it offers branch organisations the ability to inform their constituency about all aspects related to cybersecurity.

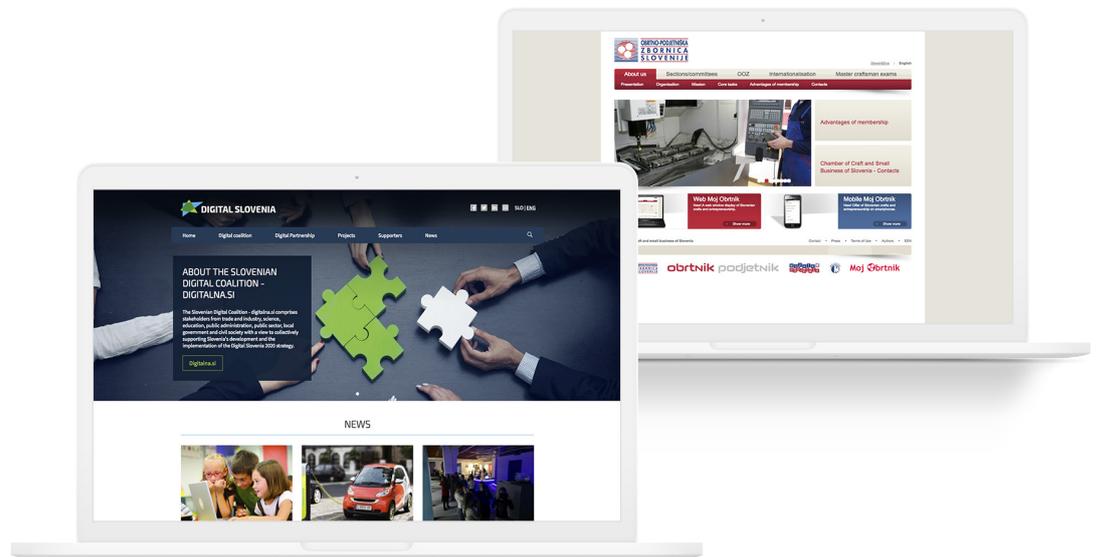




## ABOUT OZS: CHAMBER OF CRAFTS AND SMALL BUSINESSES OF SLOVENIA

OZS engaged in the digital transformation by participating in the Slovenian Digital Coalition. The coalition comprises stakeholders from trade and industry, science, education, public administration, public sector, local government and civil society in view of collectively supporting Slovenia's development and the implementation of the Digital Slovenia 2020 strategy. Within the coalition, OZS is part of the partnership for digitalisation of economy. The main activities of OZS are **promotion, training and raising competences of SMEs in the field of digitalisation.**

In addition to this, OZS complements its work by following the **institutional dimension.** In its contacts with the government, OZS asks for the proper financial measures and incentives to help SMEs digitalise and guarantee a more effective digitalisation of small companies. Initiatives such as digital credit or digital voucher, following also the example of other European countries, have been proposed.





## ABOUT PIMEC: EMPLOYER ORGANISATION REPRESENTING SMEs AND SELF-EMPLOYED IN CATALONIA

PIMEC is offering many initiatives in the field of the digital transformation. For starters, they offer several technological services and tools that help SMEs digitalise:

- **ELECTRONIC INVOICE (PIMEFACTURA)**  
online platform to create and manage digital invoices, with packages that cover different levels of needs: from totally free basic services, to advanced services for large volumes of billing.
- **DIGITAL CERTIFICATES**  
PIMEC is the first business organisation in Spain accredited to issue digital certificates: e-signature for telematics transactions, internet identity, and electronic signature. The PIMEC certificates are handled in secure formats or cryptographic tokens.
- **CYBERSECURITY**  
Cyber-alarm connected 24/7 ensures protection of Wi-Fi and navigation, anti-malware and anti-phishing for all devices, protection of bank cards, monitoring and alerting against identity theft or anti-theft protection of mobiles and tablets.
- Others such as **online IT management, customer relationship software, or personal administrative management applications**, developed with amongst others ValidatedID.

Moreover, **PIMEC has recently created a new APP** available for its SMEs and self-employed members, which offers general information on the organisation, agenda of events and courses, news, advertisement area for members, networking area and chat.

In addition, PIMEC offers programs to diagnose the degree of digitalisation, and support and guidance such as the **Digital Transformation Program**, launched in January 2018. In this, SMEs have personalised individual and collective sessions of consultancy, master classes, leadership training and support for the implementation of the digital transformation project.

**Comerç21** is another similar program focused on the digitalisation of the retail businesses. And the **+PIME program**, managed jointly with Eurecat (technology center of Catalonia) offers methodology, knowledge and co-financing for innovation projects.

PIMEC also performs collaboration agreements with the Mobile World Capital Barcelona Foundation. The agreement, signed in 2017, allows PIMEC to participate in global business platforms, such as '4 Years From Now' and 'Mobile World Capital Barcelona'. PIMEC also encourages the active participation of its members in GoingDigital, the MWCcapital educational experience program aimed at business owners.

PIMEC strengthens and encourages SMEs to join digital transformation through its presence at reference trade fairs such as BIZbarcelona or Advanced Factories 4.0.





Unie van Zelfstandige Ondernemers

## ABOUT UNIZO: BELGIAN SMEs ASSOCIATION IN FLANDERS AND BRUSSELS

In terms of assisting SMEs with **digitalisation**, UNIZO implements a variety of practices. These practices include, in addition to events and traditional local consulting, the UNIZO **Ondernemers Forum**, **retail outreach** and a **comprehensive 'Future Forward' plan for SMEs**.

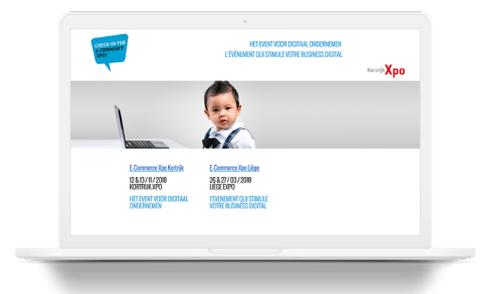
**The UNIZO Ondernemers Forum** allows small groups of entrepreneurs to come together and discuss topics related to digitalisation. These topics include digital marketing, e-commerce, data & privacy, content marketing, video marketing, e-recruitment, social selling.

**UNIZO's retail department** actively works on making SME-retailers ready for e-commerce and multichannel selling. This is achieved by providing expert and individual advice using three formats:

- Expert days for short advice sessions,
- 'Commercial inspiration' for more intense and thorough guidance. Through individual coaching, entrepreneurs are encouraged to reflect on the future of their physical business, the impact of digital innovation and social trends,
- E-Commerce Expo: a business fair focused on digital entrepreneurship for retailers.

**UNIZO's 'Future Forward' Plan** aims to create a "future-proof" way of entrepreneurship. This programme focuses on three pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose, people, and performance. The four actions for this plan include:

- **FUTURE FORWARD EVENTS:**  
to inspire and connect entrepreneurs. Pioneers and experts from various domains will pitch innovations and be available for networking,
- **FUTURE LABS:**  
entrepreneurs from various sectors gather in groups to learn from each other's best practices and develop possible future scenarios for their type of business or on specific business-related topics,
- **THE FUTURE FORWARD SCAN:**  
online scan giving entrepreneurs a good idea of the current status of their business on various aspects of future forward entrepreneurship, providing them with a list of priorities to strengthen and innovate the company's business strategy and performance,
- **FUTURE FORWARD CONSULTATION MEETINGS:**  
the entrepreneurs' results of the scan will be analysed by UNIZO's local advisors. During a one-on-one conversation, the entrepreneur can discuss several aspects after which a short personal roadmap will be provided for further follow-up by focused experts. UNIZO aims to connect with external companies and consultants that can help entrepreneurs reach their "future forward" goals in the most efficient and effective way.



## ABOUT WKÖ: AUSTRIAN FEDERAL ECONOMIC CHAMBER REPRESENTING THE AUSTRIAN SMEs AND CRAFTS

One of the first and broadest initiatives to inform SMEs about the benefits of ICT is **TELEFIT**, a **multimedia roadshow** which takes place all over Austria. The show is called “digital.now!” and is an easy to understand event. By using digital tools such as videos or digital polls, the show aims to give to the “non-digital” SME an idea about the benefits of digitalisation. Since 1997, there have been over 600 Events attended by more than 70.000 companies.

More recently, WKÖ launched “SME DIGITAL”, a new **digitalisation programme** in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs that provides support to SMEs in grasping and using the business opportunities arising from digital transformation.

Firstly, “SME DIGITAL” offers the possibility to do an “online status check”, to determine how digital the company is. With this online analysis tool, companies can carry out a quick first status check to identify their respective digital starting position.

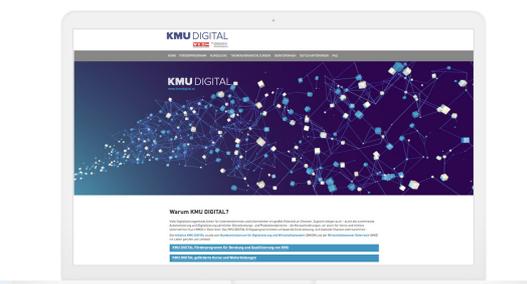
Moreover, the programme includes **financial support, consulting services, events, webinars, analysis tools and training programmes**. “SME DIGITAL” covers a vast array of digital topics:

- online-shops, social media and electronic commerce,
- smart products, service design, electronic invoices, production 4.0, 3-D printing, use of big data, crowd sourcing and crowd funding,
- CRM-tools, electronic recruiting, Near Field Communication, electronic banking, data security, IT security, cybercrime.

The **consulting service** analyses digital trends, opportunities and risks for a company. Topics that have not yet been the focus of the company, but which are relevant, are addressed. The outcome is summarised in a digitalisation map. The company gets an overview of possible ways for implementation. The analysis of potential is conducted by certified digitalisation consultants and especially recommended for smaller companies for which the service is free of charge. Companies can also apply for financial support.

Given the absolute importance of digital expertise, the programme financially supports **training** and further education to increase **digital skills** of entrepreneurs and employees alike.

Within the framework of the “SME DIGITAL” project, WKÖ created **ten** digitalisation manuals providing **customized tips and recommendations for different branches of trade**, such as for carpenters, hairdresser, cosmeticians, massage therapists, etc.





## ABOUT ZDH: GERMAN CONFEDERATION OF SKILLED CRAFTS

ZDH is responsible for several practices helping SMEs with digitalisation. These include being responsible for the coordination between the government and craft organisations for the **Skilled Craft IT Competence Centre**, acting as **a partner in the Global Design Thinking Week**, and also cooperating with Germany's Federal Office for **Security in Information Technology (BSI)** on protecting SMEs in cyberspace.

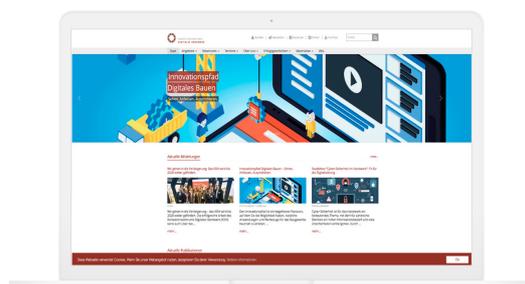
**The Skilled Craft IT Competence Centre**, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs (BMWi), is a national network of competence centres providing local craft companies with access to IT know-how specifically tailored to their needs. From each of the four regions, a craft organisation acts as the 'IT showcase leader'. These leaders make use of both on-site walkthroughs of IT topics for interested companies, as well as transferring competencies into the region to allow the skills to filter down in other transfer structures.

They also play a leadership role in promoting the five subject-matter focuses, which include:

- expanding a company's offerings through IT-based business models,
- process management as a way of professionalising company processes,
- using new production and automation technologies within a company,
- using new forms of ICT within a company,
- possibilities to digitalise in the construction sector with a special focus on "Building Information Modelling (BIM)".

The Global Design Thinking Week is an initiative taking place at the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) School of Design Thinking. This event brings together students from 20 countries to work out digitalisation issues specific to craft sectors. Teams are multidisciplinary, allowing them to have a broad range of ideas which allow to creatively help SMEs and crafts. Students propose solutions tailored to the users and provide help in a variety of issues put forward. This event has eight co-partners, including ZDH and the Competence Centre for Digital Crafts.

**ZDH's cooperation with the Security in Information Technology (BSI)** is meant to support SMEs in defending themselves against cyber-attacks, to create cyber-safety awareness and organise specific events. The cooperation also resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. With this platform, ZDH will be able to introduce the SME perspective in cyber security. Additionally, the BSI will now be able to more effectively support SMEs and crafts in cyber security competencies.



# SECTORIAL SME ORGANISATIONS



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## ABOUT EBC: EUROPEAN BUILDERS CONFEDERATION, REPRESENTING SMEs IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

EBC is active on the **political, technical and raising awareness** aspects of the ongoing **digital transformation of the construction sector**.

In its efforts to make the digitalisation of the construction sector a reality adapted to construction SMEs needs, EBC coordinated the **“European Construction Industry Manifesto for Digitalisation”**, developed together with 22 stakeholders from the sector, which makes a strategic call for a strong political leadership from the European Union, an appropriate regulatory framework on data policy and a budgetary focus on digital skills, R&D and deployment of IT infrastructure.

Moreover, EBC is increasingly involved in EU-funded projects aimed at developing **SME-friendly digital tools and reduce the digital skills shortage in the construction sector**.

- The participation of EBC in the Horizon 2020 funded-projects **BIM4REN** “Building Information Modelling (BIM) based tools and technologies for fast and efficient Renovation of residential buildings” and **BIM-SPEED** “Harmonised Building Information Speedway for Energy-Efficient Renovation” aims to contribute to the **promotion and uptake of BIM tools along the building renovation chain**. Through collaborations with industry representatives, universities, research centres, and many other construction stakeholders, EBC has the ambition to develop BIM-tools adapted to construction SMEs needs in the housing renovation market.
- Additionally, EBC is part of several Erasmus+ projects that encourage the **digitalisation of construction**. First, the **“Skills Blueprint for the Construction Industry”** project aims at setting up a sustainable sectorial alliance between European construction sector representatives and VET centres in order to reduce skill gaps between this industry requirements and sectorial training provision in the fields of digitalisation and circular economy. Second, as part of the CONDAP **“Digital skills for workplace mentors in construction apprenticeships”** project, EBC addresses the digital skills of construction on-site mentors. Third, NETconVET **“Network for future innovation of major competences in vocational education and training”** gathers key construction stakeholders to develop VET business partnerships promoting work-based learning with updated VET curricula, in the domain of digitalisation.
- In addition to contributing to EBC activities, EBC members are also launching their own actions on digitalisation. The **French member CAPEB** has notably launched “Les Lumières de l’innovation” award which is dedicated to innovative and digital solutions proposed by craftsmen and entrepreneurs to tackle the most pressing challenges of the construction sector. Moreover, CAPEB innovation centre IRIS-ST, created in 2009, helps construction SMEs with digital technical and organisational solutions tailored for their needs, e.g. the IRIS-ST mobile application on occupation health and safety.





## ABOUT EFAA: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ACCOUNTANTS AND AUDITORS FOR SMEs

As the European umbrella organisation for national accountants and auditors' organisations whose individual members provide professional services to SMEs, EFAA works on a number of initiatives concerning digitalisation. The principle behind EFAA's engagement in digitalisation is that small and medium-sized practitioners (SMP) are a trusted advisor to SMEs and therefore this advice goes beyond pure accounting, finance and taxes and arrives to include digital tools. Therefore, a proper knowledge of digitalisation for SMPs can translate in better support and service provided to SMEs.

Hence EFAA held an **annual conference** on the theme of **digitalisation**. The conference aims to raise awareness of the impact of digital technologies on SMEs and SMPs as well as to showcase how SMPs can best leverage such technologies to improve their operating capability and to enhance the value of their professional services for SME clients.

In June 2017 the conference was themed 'Developing the Digital Professional' with the focus on building the **digital capability** of the professional accountant working in an SMP or as an employee of an SME. In June 2018 instead, the conference was themed 'Digital Transformation of SMEs' with the focus on the digital technologies most impacting SMEs, in particular **artificial intelligence (AI)** and **Blockchain**, and the **role of SMPs in helping SMEs embrace such technologies while strengthening their cyber security**.

Moreover, EFAA is developing a **Digital Competency Maturity Model** that SMPs can use to measure and benchmark their adoption of digital technologies and to support their transition towards a greater digital capability. The model will be available in mid-2019.

Finally, in order to help EFAA's member organisations to remain informed about digital developments, and therefore to support them in keeping their members up to date, EFAA's twice monthly electronic newsletter, 'Latest From Brussels', has **a section called 'EFAA Digital'** which includes a compilation of articles on digitalisation most relevant to SMEs and SMPs.





## ABOUT EUROPEAN DIGITAL SME ALLIANCE: ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING SMEs IN THE ICT AND DIGITAL SECTOR

SMEs are driving forward and leading the fourth industrial revolution as well as digitalisation. This is why the aim of DIGITAL SME is to put digital SMEs at the centre of the EU agenda, as the digital development of Europe will depend on the success of European digital SMEs.

Therefore, DIGITAL SME promotes the interests and positions of SMEs in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector focusing on:

- **Digitalisation:** industry4.0 hubs, IoT, AI, BIM, big data, cloud, blockchain;
- **Cyber & Data:** cybersecurity, privacy, GDPR, data economy, AI ethics;
- **Standards:** ICT standards, telecom and technical regulations for a digital single market;
- **Skills:** digital skills, social dialogue, mobility of workers, competence centres;
- Supporting digital SMEs in voicing their opinion and needs, DIGITAL SME develops **SME positions and contribute to policy discussions**, e.g. on standards, cybersecurity, data economy;
- Further, the association **delivers hands-on practices**, driving forward the digitalisation of the European economy by closing the skills gap in Europe. **#digitalSME4skills** campaign unites digital SMEs throughout Europe in order to equip the workforce with digital skills and offer highly skilled professionals to all industry sectors. By 2019, European companies that have subscribed to #digitalSME4skills will have trained over **10.000 ICT professionals**. DIGITAL SME runs the campaign #digitalSME4skills as its contribution to the **Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition** launched by the European Commission.

Europe must rely on digital SMEs to secure its digital independence and to successfully compete globally. Hence DIGITAL SME is participating in several EU-funded initiatives aiming to strengthen the capabilities of European digital SMEs:

- The main objective of the **SIGHT** initiative is to research, design, test and validate specific measures supporting specialised skills development related to Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT) and Cybersecurity for SMEs in Europe.
- The **UNICORN** project aims at simplifying the design, deployment and management of secure and elastic -by design- multi-cloud services.
- **Cyberwatching.eu** has launched the EU Cybersecurity and Privacy Observatory, an initiative to monitor EU and national R&I projects. The Cybersecurity & Privacy Marketplace allows SMEs to offer their products or services, while the SME end-user club allows SMEs to test and validate innovative solutions improving their cybersecurity posture.





## ABOUT UETR: EUROPEAN ROAD HAULERS ASSOCIATION

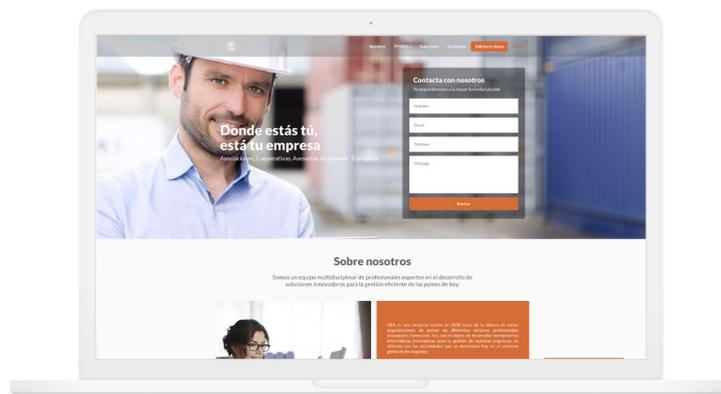
UETR represents more than 200.000 road transport undertakings in Europe by SMEs with a total capacity of 430.000 commercial vehicles. Digital technologies have become an essential part of vehicles and a major tool for the transport sector.

As best practices in the sector, UETR highlights the initiative of its Spanish member, FENADISMER, currently holding the presidency of UETR.

FENADISMER launched the **VEA Software**, a management software aimed at supporting Spanish transport associations. **VEA Software** is used and applied by all FENADISMER's Members Organisations in connection with the transport companies being both enterprises and independent workers that belong to FENADISMER's regional associations.

VEA is a software that allows the management of all the different needs and activities of the association, such as preparation of the invoices of the fees for the members; storage, custody and analysis of tachograph data; organisation of training courses; sending and receiving telematics information and documentation in a private virtual space with each associated member; and many more technological services developed in direct collaboration with an entity of development and innovation.

The software therefore helps the organisations both with internal administration and improving the relationship and communication with the transport companies.





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\*This document has been built on the results of a consultation conducted among SMEunited's member organisations and on the feedback and information received.

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