



## Press Release AI REGIO

### REGIONS AND DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS ALLIANCE FOR AI-DRIVEN DIGITALIZATION OF EUROPEAN MANUFACTURING SMES

**36 partners from 11 European countries have kick-started the EU-funded AI REGIO project with an online meeting with more than sixty participants in October 2020. Partners are on a mission to help European SMEs on the path towards artificial intelligence-driven digitalization whilst further integrating the pan-European network of regional Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs).**

As stated in the European Commission's communication on Artificial Intelligence ([COM\(2018\) 237 final](#)) the EU should be ahead of technological developments in AI and ensure they are swiftly taken up across its economy. Boosting AI uptake in Europe is also ever more important to take the lead in manufacturing. AI REGIO will make sure that help gets where it is needed for manufacturing SMEs by exploiting and enriching the cross-border network of so called regional [Digital Innovation Hubs](#), competence centers from which companies can access skills and facilities not available in their region. Addressing regional, cross-regional and pan-European issues will ensure that the EU takes the lead in digital manufacturing, creating new opportunities for innovation and growth.

#### AI REGIO objectives

AI REGIO partners have identified three major gaps that currently hinder regional AI-driven DIHs from embracing the new digital reality and limit offerings for interested manufacturing SMEs.

At policy level regional smart specialisation strategies for digital transformation in manufacturing are coordinated insufficiently and confine innovations from scaling-up to European and global marketplaces. AI REGIO will foster closer cooperation across European regions, EU and non-EU countries to make sure innovations can scale.

At technological level, there are projects and initiatives, which run too independently from each other and miss the opportunity of benefiting from each other's results. AI REGIO will integrate Digital Manufacturing Platforms from previous EU-funded projects such as [BEinCPPS](#), [MIDIH](#) and [L4MS](#) and [AI4EU](#) and help to integrate these into Digital Innovation Hubs offerings. These Digital Manufacturing Platforms will in turn benefit from present Digital Innovation Hubs services regarding their business and social impact challenges.

At business level the current offerings of Digital Innovation Hubs are limited to Industry 4.0 applications focusing on e.g. machine-to-machine interaction, enhanced connectivity and big data analytics. They do not focus on AI-driven applications yet, that severely change the relationship between autonomous systems and humans. AI REGIO aims to close this gap by further enhancing the network of regional Digital Innovation Hubs and SMEs, which will jointly conduct 30 AI-driven application experiments.

#### AI REGIO Open Calls for AI-driven SME experiments

AI REGIO plans for two consecutive rounds of open calls (anticipated in June 2021 and March 2022) where SMEs can apply. More information will be published on the AI REGIO website in due time.

AI REGIO is part of the [I4MS initiative](#), which supports manufacturing SMEs and mid-caps with the integration of novel information and communication technologies (ICT) to their business operations and is co-financed under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research programme (grant agreement No. 952003).