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Innovation



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Executive Summary

Since beginning of 2024, the Smart Connectivity Digital Innovation Hub Network (SCoDIHNet) have organised a survey in order to collect operational issues that Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) have and also the key services that DIHs are expecting from a network of DIHs.

This paper is describing these operational issues and is proposing a set of services that could help DIHs in their day-to-day operation

Five key services have been identified:

1. Development of EU proposals
2. Organisation of pan-EU collaborative R&D
3. Initiating EU interregional collaborations
4. EU instruments and call information
5. Technology, R&I info Hub

This paper has the objective to describe concrete activities that SCoDIHNet could put in place in order to provide useful services

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1. Digital Innovation hub operational issues

This section is describing a list of operation issues that DIHs have identified in their day-to-day operation.

1.1. How to attract and onboard end user industry?

End users are expecting digitalisation of their activities in order to be more efficient and increase their business. DIHs are not well known and industry are sometime afraid to engage a digitalisation without a clear vision of the return on investment.

1.2. How to maintain and update implemented solutions?

A digital solution implemented in the industry must be reliable on long term, DIHs should put in place a maintenance and update procedure to correct potential bugs and to enhanced the solution with the latest innovations.

1.3. What are the key stakeholders to involve, role of the integrators?

Big companies are usually using third party integrators to develop digital solutions. DIHs have also this role for small SMEs to understand the end user needs and to identify the most suitable solution to be implemented. There is a need to set up cooperation with technology providers and integrators to provide the best-in-class solution to end users.

1.4. What are the key digital transformation concerns of end users (Industry)

End user industry need confidence and return on investment before any engagement in a digitalisation process, they need:

- Confidence on DIHs capacity to deliver
- Confidence on the DIH to deliver sustainable solutions
- Confidence on the return on investment
- Confidence on their capacity to train their staff and change the way of working

1.5. What are cross border cooperation difficulties?

DIHs have the objectives to setup cooperations with other DIHs closed to their regions but they foresee a number of difficulties that need to be fixed:

- Language
- Regulation
- Needs and requirements from end users
- Funds

1.6. Delay to get 50 % member state funds?

DIHs are co-funded by the Digital Europe program and the regions. The 50% provided by regions seem difficult to get and a number of question are still open:

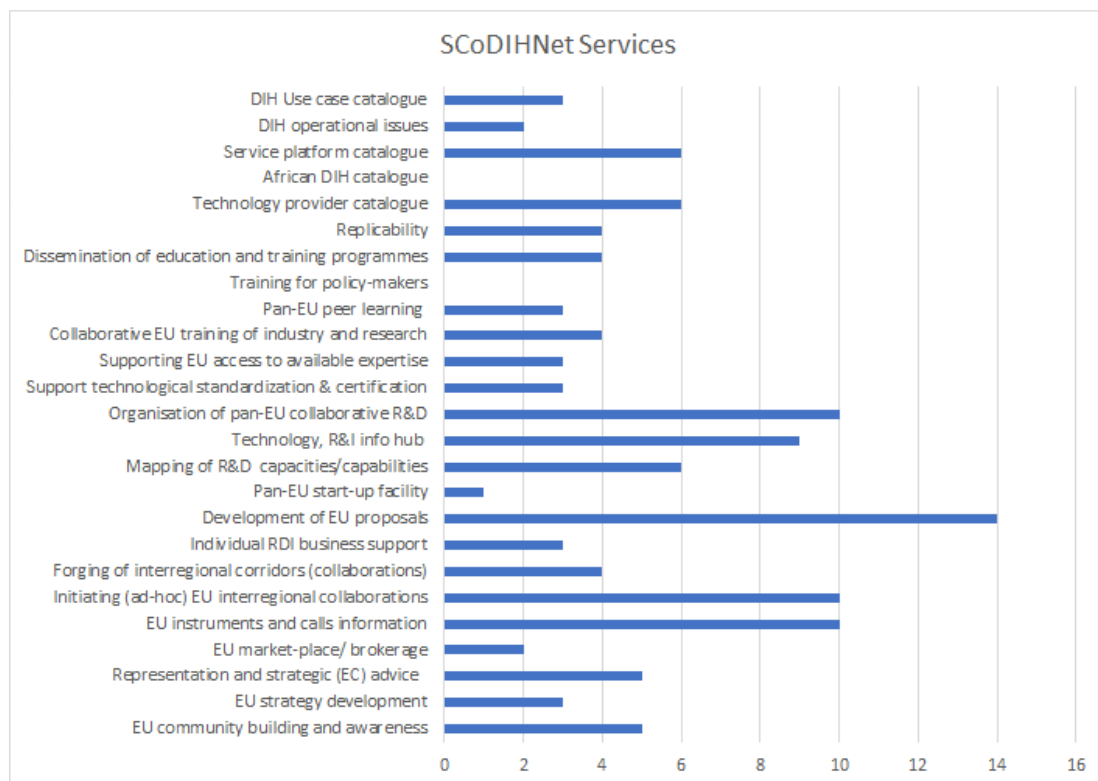
- Delays in accessing the 50% of funding coming from their national governments?
- How are the DIHs handling these delays?
- Is the European Commission open to extending the project through an amendment of the grant agreement?

2. Key Services identification

With regard to the operational issues described in the section 1 of this paper, a survey has been conducted early 2024 in order to better understand the expectation of DIHs with regards to the services offered by DIH networks. Based on an initial list of 35 services developed by 19 DIHs networks (see table below), SCoDIHNet members have been requested to select 5 key services that need to be put in place.

Sub-Network	Name
All	BOWI
Photonics	PhotonHub/VUB
Robotics	RIMA
	TRINITY
	DIH-HERO
	AGROBOFOOD
	DIH ²
Big Data	EUHubs4Data/ITI
Smart Connectivity	SCoDIHNet
	AI ICT 48 projects
AI	DIH4AI
Microelectronics	DIATOMIC
Smart Systems	EPoSS EDIH Network
Cybersecurity	ECSO SME&DIH WG
HPC	HPC Competence Cen
Agriculture	SmartAgriHubs
Manufacturing	DIH4Industry
	EDIH4MANU
	Change2Twin

The result of the survey showed a big interest in most of the services but due to the large list, it has been decided to focus on five of them.



These five key services are the following:

1. Development of EU proposals
2. Organisation of pan-EU collaborative R&D
3. Initiating EU interregional collaborations
4. EU instruments and call information
5. Technology, R&I info Hub

This paper has the objective to describe concrete activities that SCoDIHNet should put in place in order to support DIHs day to day operational activities.

SCoDIHNet has already developed a number of catalogues which are also contributing to these services, each of them will be mapped with one or the other services in the following sections.

It is important to mention that these services are not new and are already provided partially through the 2 SCoDIHNet platforms:

- [Collabwith](#) to facilitate cooperation
- [DIHWare](#) to provide a market place and a working methodology.

3. Service 1: Development of proposals for EU funded projects

3.1 Definition

Initiation and co-development of EU projects regarding EU calls

3.2 Concrete activities

Such service could put in place the following actions:

- Organisation of workshops
- Independent review/feedback of proposals
- Scouting for partners and support forging partnerships
- Proposal architecture and writing of proposals
- Initiate consortia with having already a coordinator and specific call-topic identified

3.3 Related existing catalogue and platform

SCoDIHNet has already worked on this service, the Collabwith platform could help in facilitating cooperation among stakeholders.

In addition, the mapping of stakeholder catalogue is also a possibility to find local partners to setup consortium.

4. Service 2: Organisation of pan-EU collaborative R&D

4.1 Definition

Initiating joint interregional R&D&I projects, making available outcomes, newsletters, identify common interests; etc.

4.2 Concrete activities

Such service could put in place the following actions:

- (Peer) assessments for 'seal of excellence' service
- technology and research visits
- Identify partners
- Inter-regional R&D&I assessment and strategy development
- Co-develop specific funding program(s) and support bilateral to multilateral collaborations (e.g., a funding program agreed by two or more countries/regions).

4.3 Related existing catalogue and platform

As for the first service, SCoDIHNet has already worked on this service, the Collabwith platform could help in facilitating cooperation among stakeholders.

In addition, the mapping of stakeholder catalogue is also a possibility to find local partners to setup consortium.

As SCoDIHNet is also supported by AIOTI and the 6G-IA, it is two channels that can be used to find partners and to develop proposals.

5. Service 3: Initiating EU interregional collaborations

5.1 Definition

Support to identify connections (e.g. via community platform) and brokerage to assess and find relevant partners.

5.2 Concrete activities

Such service could put in place the following actions:

- Profiling partners and suggestions for collaboration
- Opportunity scans: Facilitate identification of common topics of interest
- Training on benefits of EU-collaboration
- Following the action item mentioned to Service Nr. 2 → facilitate interregional collaboration for specific topics

5.3 Related existing catalogue and platform

As for the first service, SCoDIHNet has already worked on this service, the Collabwith platform could help in facilitating cooperation among stakeholders.

In addition, the mapping of stakeholder catalogue is also a possibility to find local partners to setup consortium.

As SCoDIHNet is also supported by AIOTI and the 6G-IA, it is 2 channels that can be used to find partners and to develop proposals.

SCoDIHNet has also signed a MoU with the Enterprise Europe Network in order to facilitate cooperation among SMEs at regional level.

6. Service 4: EU instruments and call information

6.1 Definition

Support to understand EU funding instruments and process, identify relevant EU funded calls and communicating this to the relevant EU-community.

6.2 Concrete activities

Such service could put in place the following actions:

- Collection and dissemination of available, relevant calls
- Training on EU calls process and EU instruments
- Running an FSTP or other funding EU-programme
- Financial engineering support

6.3 Related existing catalogue and platform

SCoDIHNet has already worked on this service, the Collabwith platform could help to find the relevant EU calls. You just have to register on the platform, fill your profile and interest and each month the Collabwith platform is pushing a mail with the relevant calls where you can apply.

7. Service 5: Technology, R&I info Hub

7.1 Definition

Support in understanding what technologies are associated with particular technological areas (like AI, industry 4.0., etc) and dependencies among these to create a common language and understanding.

7.2 Concrete activities

Such service could put in place the following actions:

- Technology updates (news, recent break-through's)
- Overview of use cases
- Assessments of needs, technology solution per problem

7.3 Related existing catalogue and platform

SCoDIHNet has already put in place a number of actions on the DIHWare platform with a number of catalogues that are available including:

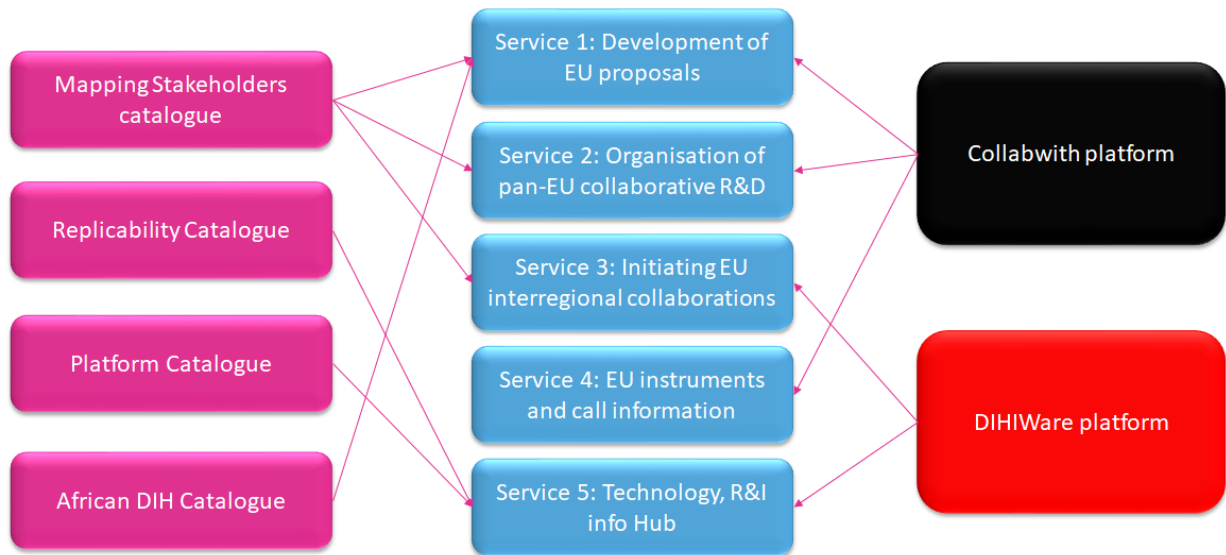
- The Platform catalogue
- The Replicability catalogue
- The Heatmap catalogue

Which bring a number of technology assets.

SCoDIHNet members could also become members of AIOTI and the 6G-IA to take advantage of the workshops and webinars that are organised from time to time.

8. Mapping Services with catalogues

This picture below is showing the relationships between services, existing catalogues and platforms:



9. Conclusion

With regards to the five selected services, this paper tried to provide an efficient list of concrete activities that SCoDIHNet could offer in order to help DIHs in their day-to-day operation.

Looking at the five key services, it happens that some of them are strongly linked together and activities could be common in order to simplify DIHs life:

- **Services 1 and 4** are complementary and is already offered by the Collabwith platform.
- **Services 2 and 3** are also complementary and several existing catalogues are contributing (Service platform, technology provider mapping).
- **Service 5** is at least covered by the replicability initiative.

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About AIOTI

AIOTI is the multi-stakeholder platform for stimulating IoT and Edge Computing Innovation in Europe, bringing together small and large companies, academia, policy makers and end-users and representatives of society in an end-to-end approach. We work with partners in a global context. We strive to leverage, share and promote best practices in the IoT and Edge Computing ecosystems, be a one-stop point of information on all relevant aspects of IoT Innovation to its members while proactively addressing key issues and roadblocks for economic growth, acceptance and adoption of IoT and Edge Computing Innovation in society. AIOTI's contribution goes beyond technology and addresses horizontal elements across application domains, such as matchmaking and stimulating cooperation in IoT and Edge Computing ecosystems, creating joint research roadmaps, driving convergence of standards and interoperability and defining policies.

About 6G IA

The 6G Smart Networks and Services Industry Association (6G-IA) is the voice of European Industry and Research for next generation networks and services. Its primary objective is to contribute to Europe's leadership on 5G, 5G evolution and SNS/6G research. The 6G-IA represents the private side in both the 5G Public Private Partnership ([5G-PPP](#)) and the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking ([SNS JU](#)). In the 5G-PPP and SNS JU, the European Commission represents the public side. The 6G-IA brings together a global industry community of telecoms & digital actors, such as operators, manufacturers, research institutes, universities, verticals, SMEs and ICT associations. The 6G-IA carries out a wide range of activities in strategic areas including standardization, frequency spectrum, R&D projects, technology skills, collaboration with key vertical industry sectors, notably for the development of trials, and international cooperation.