

D.T3.1.3 Training on innovative

financing

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The DIHs of CNA Emilia-Romagna

CNA Emilia-Romagna supports the directives presented by the Italian government within the "Industry 4.0" national plan, and is investing in the implementation of a network of Digital Innovation Hubs at regional level, with the aim of accompanying companies in the transition to the new business model 4.0, key theme of the project 4 steps.

Through its Digital Innovation Hubs, CNA Emilia-Romagna supports companies to help them understand their digital maturity, identify priority areas of intervention and use the public tax incentives made available by the Industry 4.0 Plan.

The strength of the DIHs of CNA Emilia-Romagna is to be able to offer companies a qualified level of services using a network of national and European innovation actors, strengthening their skills on new enabling technologies.

Through its offices located throughout the Emilia Romagna Region, CNA Emilia-Romagna is able to guide companies towards support structures aimed at digital transformation and technology transfer to stimulate and support them in the implementation of industrial research and experimental development projects.

CNA Emilia-Romagna considers technology transfer and digitalization in SMEs among the priorities of its policy, and for this reason its presence in the *Smart Specialization Platform* represents an opportunity to get in touch with present and new actors of innovation at European level.

The cooperation and exchange of new ideas coming from the launch of new partnerships will enable CNA Emilia-Romagna and its DIHs to develop new innovation strategies keeping into consideration the local strategic positioning and the growth prospects of SMEs.

Within this logic, and in order to improve the business / production processes of the companies of Emilia-Romagna, CNA Emilia-Romagna has organized a path aimed at its DIHs and the companies of the Emilia Romagna Region.(pilot action D.T3.1.3.)

Introduction

CNA Emilia-Romagna aims at addressing its pilot action to its local DIHs, which are the access points to tools, services and relations for the companies interested in knowing the programs and opportunities regarding Industry 4.0 better. CNA Emilia-Romagna has analyzed the needs of the Emilia-Romagna area concerning a greater demand from companies to invest in innovation and digitalization 4.0.

According to the needs of companies, CNA Emilia-Romagna, in collaboration con RELAB, has planned the two events of the Pilot Action 3 (D.T3.1.3) addressed to the professionals of its DIHs and the companies of the Emilia Romagna Region.

The path includes 2 parts. **The first part:** a workshop, held on 21 January 2022 entitled: "Regional and European Innovation Network: new opportunities for companies". The experts intervened: Marcella Contini (CNA E-R), Roberto Montanari (RE: LAB) and Alex Zanon (People Change Management Project Leader SCS Consulting). This path was reserved to the professionals of its DIHs of Emilia Romagna Region. Marcella Contini presented a picture of the I4.0 opportunities and services that CNA Emilia-Romagna, through the 4 steps project, reserves to the companies interested in approaching I4.0 topics. The speech of RE: LAB, supported by Luca Cattani of the University of Bologna, concerned the "Presentation of data and regional report on the technological maturity of companies".

In this phase, a platform accessible from the CNA Emilia-Romagna site was presented, in which it is possible to analyze the positioning, from a 4.0 perspective, of SMEs in Emilia Romagna and the impact of digitization on companies and production chains compared to 9 dimensions of the "Technology Maturity Level".



Figure 1: Investments in 4.0 technologies in the survey on the SMEs of Emilia Romagna

These analyses will allow to study the positioning and strategy of companies with respect to some factors considered enabling technological innovation.

A great advantage for the institutions and trade associations interested in receiving a picture of the state of the art of small businesses compared to investments in I4.0 technologies.

The third speaker Alex Zanon explained how learning of new knowledge can also take place through new tools and enabling technologies. Training takes place more and more often at the workplace and is becoming more important nowadays to qualify workers within one's organization. Technologies come in handy as they can become a support for training and facilitate learning.

The rapid changes taking place in our society have an inevitable impact on the way people work and train. Organizations must be able to operate with greater reactivity and flexibility than in the past, as they are confronted with an increasingly changing, fast, demanding and unpredictable market. Therefore, it becomes necessary to update skills in a flexible way that is compatible with working times. New themes and training methods are emerging, often based on innovative technologies such as augmented reality or artificial intelligence. It becomes important not to passively undergo these changes, but on the contrary to proactively respond to new training needs in a dynamic and innovative way.

**The second part** consists in the activity of Mackaton aimed at disseminating digital content to companies for a transition to a new business model 4.0. It is developed in collaboration with RE:Lab s.r.l. and takes up the concepts of "Marathon" and "Hackaton" promoting a moment of sharing design within which to converge various skills.

This path started in November 2021 and will end on February 25, 2022. The project idea, provided by **CNA Emilia-Romagna and RE:LAB**, stems from the consideration that many companies not only have difficulty in effectively entering the world of digitization, but even when there are opportunities and resources related to this world, the options that emerge, often, do not take into account the needs of the companies, nor the needs of the end users to whom these services are aimed, whether these services are addressed to the company itself or to the perimeter of the company's partners (customers or suppliers).

Therefore, this event aims to disrupt this risky process by facilitating dialogue between digital solution providers and enterprises seeking these opportunities. Through a methodology designed for project sharing, pairs of enterprises will collaborate assisted by mentors to carry out an intensive digitalization project (for this reason partly marathon). There are no constraints to the content of the project, except those of the feasibility of the interest by the enterprise and the technical feasibility that could be shared with the volunteer partner. At the end of the co-design there will be a phase of presentation of the ideas developed during the event in order to evaluate the collaboration and promote the most innovative project in view of the purpose of the initiative itself.

The project theme is therefore related to services that can provide for the digitization of a B2B consumer service. The aim is that this service can potentially solve a problem of a company or favor the expansion of a business. The preparatory work for the initiative, which began as early as November, took shape in December 2021 with the preparation of the Call4Interest aimed at involving the key players in the development of the project idea. The initiative involves ten highly specialized digital service providers selected following a careful analysis of the applications received and ten production companies selected in continuity with the design thinking initiatives. In particular, the initiative will focus on three different categories (advertising, engagement, interaction; process improvement; e-commerce delivery) and will be divided into five phases designed to encourage dialogue and design fluidity.

The selection process led in January for the creation of supplier-client pairs that will compete in design during the one-day event scheduled in February (expected on 25 February 2022 from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.). The activities scheduled in February include: a first meeting with companies involved to explain the methodology and to present the agenda, and the event that will be held at the end of the month.

1. Nuove opportunità e servizi I 4.0 per le imprese

CNA ER, providing high-level tailored services for companies, supports innovation, internationalization, green and digital transition, access to finance and help them to exploit the opportunities to expand their businesses.

The activities carried out by CNA ER are characterized by European added value. Services are aimed at supporting SMEs to become more sustainable and resilient, and digital.

CNA ER provides all the SMEs groups – belonging to all sectors, from manufacture to service providers - new opportunities to improve their innovation and their competitiveness, through the support of European and institutional partners, competence centers, Clusters and Research Centers.

It is important to underline that these activities provide further support to the regional policies and actions in the innovation field. In order to achieve synergies with the regional policies and in particular with the Structural Funds 2021-2027, CNA ER will particularly focus on the sectors and technology areas identified as priorities in the regional Smart Specialization Strategies for research and innovation of the Emilia-Romagna region. The regional technology Clusters, which represent an important instrument to define and implement the regional S3, will be supported with specific services aiming at favouring the internationalization and innovation of the companies, an added value for the companies interested in I4.0 technologies.

* 1. CNA Emilia Romagna’s catalogue of services

In order to sensitize companies to the Industry 4.0 impact and to accompany them towards processes of growth and transformation, CNA Emilia Romagna offers a catalogue of services, which provides individual answers to the needs expressed by the companies, starting from a bottom-up approach, through the identification and analysis of the needs of the artisan world and of SMEs.

The services developed by CNA Emilia Romagna for companies are described below.

**INNOVATION AND RESEARCH**

**WHAT**

CNA accompanies businesses in identifying instruments for the development of new products and processes for their economic expansion and digital transformation.

**HOW**

**1. ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION**

We help companies in their growth through the innovation of managerial and decisional models.

For example: business networks; lean manufacturing; creation of international partnerships.

**2. DIGITALIZATION**

We accompany enterprises throughout the selection of the most adequate computer solutions for each reality.

For example: purchase and installation of hardware; choice of the management software; implementation of websites and business networks

**3. MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY**

We implement process and product analyses from the perspective of Industry 4.0.

For example: survey of the innovation potential; implementation of development plans.

**4. MATCHING THE BUSINESS WORLD WITH HIGH LEVEL SKILLS**

For example: training internships; research apprenticeship

**5. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

We bring the technologies developed in research agencies to companies.

For example: agreed conditions; support to companies; training paths and seminars.

**6. PATENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS**

We assist the companies in these procedures.

For example: protection of industrial property rights.

**TRAINING AND EXPERTISE**

**WHAT**

For companies, training is the keystone to generate value, activate change, enhance their own potential and position themselves as protagonists.

**HOW**

1. DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING COURSES TOGETHER WITH COMPANIES

We identify the needs of companies in order to create an adequate business training plan.

2.TRAINING PATHS MANAGED BY EXPERTS

We propose training on the most innovative aspects of management organization, of internationalization, of research.

3.FINANCING FOR TRAINING

We identify financing opportunities and propose them to companies.

4. INTEGRATION OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFILES

We select new specialized skills to meet the companies’ needs.

**FINANCING CONSULTANCY AND CREDIT**

**WHAT**

CNA offers companies consultancy and services in the fields of credit and finance, in order to guarantee them an adequate competitive and development level.

**HOW**

1.IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC FINANCING

2. SEARCH AND ASSISTANCE ON TAX BREAKS

For example: super-amortization and hyper-amortization; tax credit for research and development; incentive laws.

3“CREDIT PLAN”

We offer a comprehensive consultancy, in order to plan the needs for credit of every company at the best.

For example: bank agreements; debt restoration; creation of a business control system; assessment of the economic-financial effects of investments.

**INTERNATIONALIZATION**

**WHAT**

CNA supports the growth of companies in the global market, by identifying the most adequate instruments for their international development

**HOW**

1. SCOUTING OPPORTUNITIES OF FINANCING

We monitor the main financing sources, with special attention to the non-repayable funds, and accompany enterprises in designing proposals.

For example: international partnerships; ministerial, regional and local calls.

2. PLANNING A COMMERCIAL ACTION

We support companies in developing their national and international market.

For example: marketing plans; structure of the distribution channel; promotional events; trade exhibitions.

3. ACCESS TO NEW MARKETS

We implement market analyses and define the most adequate strategies of commercial penetration.

For example: business meetings (B2B); integration of Export Managers and Digital Marketing experts.

* 1. Smart Specialisation Platform

The profile of CNA Emilia-Romagna has been published on the *Smart Specialisation Platform* portal and this opportunity will put CNA ER at the center of a database consulted by policy makers and stakeholders at international level. Being published in this database represents a great opportunity, which will guarantee visibility to the structure and an exchange of experiences with other centers.

Thanks to this possibility and the support of pilot 1, CNA ER will be able to offer a qualified level of services, availing itself of a network of innovation actors, both within the Emilia Romagna region and in Europe.

* 1. The Hub of CNA Emilia-Romagna

Through its hubs, CNA Emilia-Romagna supports and sustains companies in the processes of growth and digital transformation, helping companies in identifying their innovation needs, up to the actual implementation of the research project and the introduction of the necessary technologies, through an offer of services and opportunities aimed at creating an organization able to generate employment growth by improving the efficiency of their structures and knowledge systems.

* 1. The networks

Coherently with the National Industry 4.0 Plan and the Smart Specialization Strategy of Emilia Romagna, aimed at creating an increasingly dynamic and competitive region, able to generate employment growth by improving the efficiency of its structures and knowledge systems, CNA ER aims at creating and maintaining a strong connection with the key actors (research laboratories, companies, Emilia Romagna Region, innovation centers, Clust-ER, etc.) in order to favor the generation of knowledge, technology and organizational innovation, capitalizing competence and relationships.



Figure 9: CNA ER Network

* 1. The Business Models Canvas

CNA Emilia Romagna has adopted the methodology of Design Thinking as it represents the most adequate choice to support its DIHs, which play both the role of catalysts for change within SMEs and of facilitators for the development of a new mentality in organizations for the creation of a new innovation process.

CNA Emilia Romagna also adopts the Business Model Canvas methodology, a strategic tool using a visual language to represent the business model of an organization.

Through this methodology, action plans are designed through a visual template showing the infrastructure, the products, the customers, the suppliers and other elements characterizing a company, offering an overview.

1. The digital transformation and the opportunities for SMEs

The SMEs of Emilia-Romagna are interested in the advantages they could get through the technologies of Industry 4.0, which would make them increasingly “intelligent” and interconnected along the whole production chain.

The presence in the area of the Emilia Romagna region of Technopoles, University, Bi-Rex Competence Center and industrial research laboratories supporting companies in developing high TRL solutions, guarantees a high degree of availability for the experimental development and industrial research within a public-private cooperation.

Together with its 10 DIHs spread in the Emilia Romagna area, CNA ER has the goal to support companies in the transformation process and to inform them about I4.0 issues, thus raising their awareness on the theme, thanks also to supporting measures such as the National Plan I4.0, sustained not only by CNA ER but also by all the key actors (research laboratories, companies, Emilia Romagna Region, innovation centers, Clust-ER, etc.), in order to facilitate the development and experimentation of real solutions and their fast application, able to have the widest diffusion and impact on the regional and national area.

Thanks to the funding from the Commission of new programs on digital Europe, digital investments will be promoted at EU level, enabling companies to face the digital challenges in a more aimed and rational way, strengthening ecosystems in support of digitalization.

The objective is to create the largest number of jobs, thus enhancing the growth of organizations and stimulating their competitiveness on international markets too.

In this way, also the role and functions of the “European DIHs” will be strengthened, as they will be given a role of support and acceleration of the digital transformation in SMEs, thanks to their function of catalysts of incentives and promoters of innovation projects.