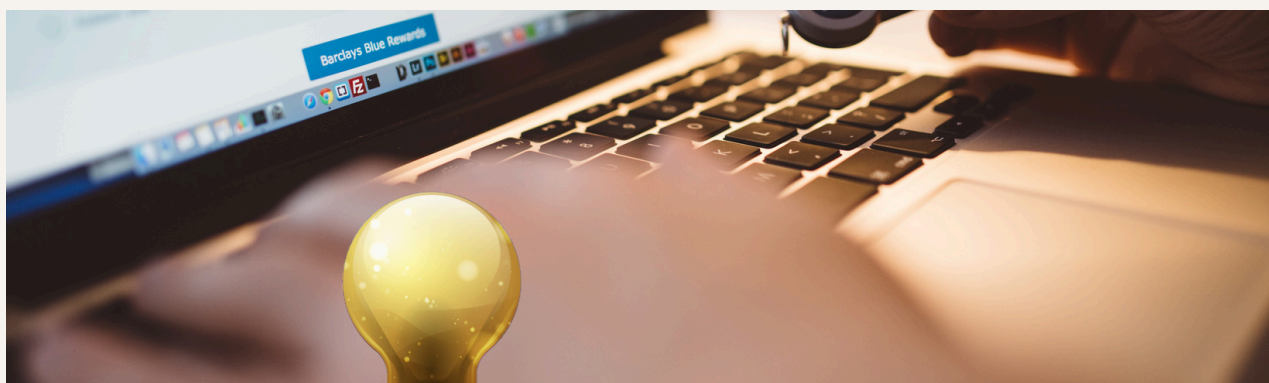

SpinIT

BULLETIN II.



SpinIT Project Advances: Local Discovery Groups and Action Plans Completed

The SpinIT project has successfully completed a key phase, with 10 Local Discovery Groups (LDGs) established across 8 countries in the Danube Region. These groups brought together representatives of the quadruple helix model, which includes businesses, academia, public authorities, and civil society organizations. Through a series of 30 workshops, partners engaged stakeholders in discussions on local challenges, opportunities, and innovation pathways tailored to regional needs.



<https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/spinit>

Following these workshops, each partner developed a Local Action Plan (LAP), outlining concrete steps to enhance digital skills, foster innovation, and improve competitiveness in their respective territories. These action plans align with Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) and serve as a foundation for the next stage of the project—the implementation of pilot projects in key sectors such as ICT, AI, Industry 4.0, and digital education.

With this milestone achieved, the project is now moving forward with the selection and launch of pilot initiatives, testing innovative solutions in real-world environments. The insights and experiences gained so far will not only shape these pilots but also contribute to a broader discussion on digitalization and economic development in the Danube Region. Stay tuned for more updates as we enter this exciting new phase!



<https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/spinit>

SpinIT

**LOCAL DISCOVERY
GROUP
WORKSHOPS**

OPTIMIZATION LTD.



Approach

Our approach in organizing the Local Discovery Group workshops focused on fostering collaboration among the quadruple helix sectors—government, academia, businesses, and NGOs.



"Being part of the Local Discovery Group has been very productive, especially as we selected the 3P pilot project that meets the community's needs. I am glad to be part of this initiative that will provide young people with essential digital skills and support innovation in our region. – Ivan Todorović, Makerspace"



Outcomes of the workshop

These workshops were designed to engage stakeholders and leverage their expertise in prioritizing projects that address regional needs, particularly in digitalization and skills development. Through active participation, stakeholders contributed to shaping impactful and sustainable initiatives aligned with local and national strategies. Our targeted region covers *Varaždin County*.

Government representatives emphasized alignment with local development goals, academia contributed expertise in education and skill-building, startups and SMEs shared insights into practical challenges and technological innovation, and NGOs brought experience in fostering community-driven initiatives and promoting entrepreneurship. This diverse mix ensured that discussions were both inclusive and comprehensive.

The key outcome of the workshops was drafting the Local Action Plan (LAP), with the selected pilot project named 3P (Pametni poslovni procesi - Smart Business Processes). This initiative integrates IoT, digital skills, and entrepreneurial development, addressing key priorities in Croatia's Smart Specialization Strategy (S3). By promoting digital transformation and fostering innovation, the 3P project supports regional competitiveness, bridges the gap between research and business, and fosters sustainable growth in the local economy.



INOVACIJA



Approach

As part of the SpinIT project, the INOVAcija Institution held four workshops focusing on strengthening local digitalization and developing new skills. Our approach was based on collaboration with the Local Discovery Group (LDG) and methods that promote active participation and idea exchange. The workshops were structured to enable the gradual development of ideas, from collection to concrete implementation proposals. The LDG included representatives from the quadruple helix: local authorities, entrepreneurs, academic institutions, and the civil sector. This diverse group provided a comprehensive insight into local needs and resources.



Outcomes of the workshop

Through the workshops, we gathered over 30 participants per session, achieving balanced discussions and a rich exchange of perspectives.

The most important outcomes of the SpinIT workshops in Zadar County include the development of programs aimed at increasing digital literacy through targeted education for all age groups, from primary school students to adults. A particular emphasis was placed on the need for workshops covering the basics of using digital tools and introducing practical courses on the use of artificial intelligence. The application of AI tools in the local context, such as predictive analytics in public services and process automation in the private sector, was recognized as a key opportunity to enhance efficiency and innovation.

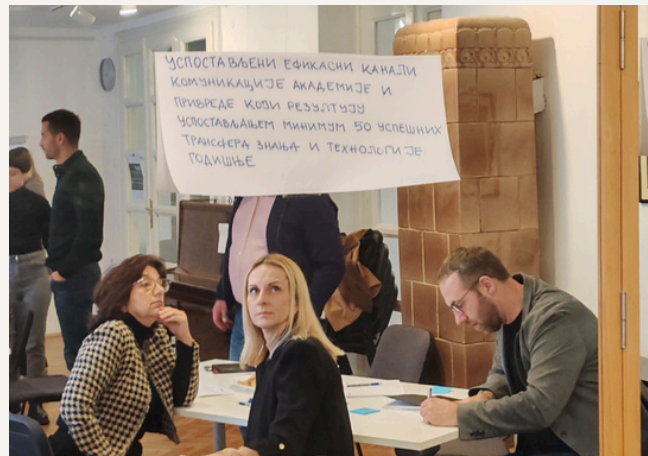
The SpinIT workshops highlighted the importance of linking technical knowledge with local challenges, emphasizing the need for strategic investments in education and the implementation of AI technologies. The discussions prompted us to consider the necessary resources and methods for implementing these ideas, which will serve as a foundation for further activities within the Action Plan.





Approach

The SpinIT workshops, held with Local Discovery Groups (LDG) in Novi Sad, were thoughtfully designed to foster active participation from key stakeholders and contribute to the development of the Local Action Plan (LAP).



Organized in collaboration with the Institute for Development and Innovation (IRI) from Belgrade, these interactive workshops combined plenary presentations, group work, and structured discussions to ensure meaningful engagement.



Outcomes of the workshop

The LDG comprised a diverse group of representatives from the University of Novi Sad, provincial secretariats, unions of employers, and small and medium-sized enterprises. This diversity brought a broad spectrum of perspectives and ideas, enabling the identification of specific challenges and opportunities to strengthen the innovative ecosystem in Novi Sad and the broader Vojvodina region.

Building on this foundation, the workshops identified several key priorities for local development. Among these was the establishment of a sustainable system to enhance youth capacities through training in entrepreneurship and financial literacy, with the potential to generate at least 30 startups annually in Novi Sad. Additionally, scenarios for digitalizing traditional sectors were developed, focusing on mentorship, training, and collaboration with technology companies to introduce innovative solutions. The creation of a Technology Transfer Office was also recognized as a critical priority to connect researchers with industry, facilitating the practical application of scientific outcomes. Throughout the sessions, participants emphasized the importance of aligning activities with local needs and resources, while discussions highlighted the necessity of long-term strategic planning and cross-sectoral collaboration.



FITT



Approach

In December 2024, FITT organized four LDG workshops for the development of the Local Action Plan for Skill Development in the field of digitization within the SpinIT project.



"By investing in knowledge and innovation, we give the local community the opportunity to respond to the challenges of the modern digital era."



Outcomes of the workshop

The workshops were attended by representatives from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the University of Tuzla, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science of Tuzla Canton, the "Laboratorium" Citizens' Association Tuzla, the Tuzla Canton Chamber of Commerce, the Public Employment Service of Tuzla Canton, and representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises. This was an opportunity to highlight numerous challenges in the field of digitization faced by our local community, such as the lack of awareness about the importance of digital transformation, the significant gap between academia and industry, and the imbalance between supply and demand in the labor market.

After a productive discussion, we identified several pilot ideas for the LAP, which focus on skill development in the areas of artificial intelligence and IoT, skill development for the existing workforce in the field of CNC machines, and the development of specialized training programs based on the requirements and needs of companies.



BULGARIA ECONOMIC FORUM



Approach

The Bulgarian Economic Forum (BEF) plays a crucial role in organizing workshops aimed at collecting ideas for the SpinIT project in Haskovo.



"By joining this initiative, we are shaping a brighter future through digital innovation and create sustainable growth in our region!"
"Participating in the SpinIT project workshop has been an incredibly inspiring journey!"



Outcomes of the workshop

The primary goal of these events is to promote the digitalization of activities and services in the region while focusing on the needs and growth opportunities of local stakeholders. Through a series of workshops, BEF creates a platform for idea exchange and strategy development to be included in the local action plan. This approach facilitates dialogue among various participants and ensures that solutions address the real needs of the community.

The Local Digital Group (LDG) in Haskovo consists of representatives from various sectors, including academia, business leaders, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations. These members contribute their experience and knowledge to identify best practices and innovations that can be applied in the context of digitalization. The inclusion of diverse perspectives fosters a comprehensive and balanced approach to the development of the local economy and society.

Workshops conducted in October and November 2024 yielded significant results. Participants generated a multitude of ideas for digitalization, which were analyzed and prioritized based on their feasibility and potential impact on the local community. Among the top proposals were plans to implement "Telemedicine" and "Telecare," focusing on health technologies essential for enhancing the sustainability and modernization of the regional health sector. The successful implementation of these digital innovations will also serve as a model for other municipalities in Bulgaria.



EUDA



Approach

EUDA's Local Discovery Group (LDG) workshops were grounded in inclusivity, collaboration, and a bottom-up approach.



"By joining this initiative, we are shaping a brighter future through digital innovation and create sustainable growth in our region!"
"Participating in the SpinIT project workshop has been an incredibly inspiring journey!"



Outcomes of the workshop

They brought together stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, and business. Participants included a city councilor, a civil society leader with a focus on regional development, an academic researcher specializing in energy-efficient solutions, and a business leader with entrepreneurial expertise. This diverse group fostered a dynamic and inclusive environment for meaningful discussions.

The workshops focused on four key themes: digital transformation, inclusive growth, innovation and talent development, and sustainability. Discussions emphasized the importance of knowledge transfer, skill-building, and meaningful community engagement to incorporate diverse perspectives into project design. Feasibility, scalability, and stakeholder support were identified as critical factors for ensuring lasting impact.

The workshops also identified impactful potential pilot projects and ultimately, shaped the Local Action Plan (LAP): a tailored mentorship and training program for university students in European studies and political science. The pilot project is designed to address local needs, achieve scalability, and generate long-term regional benefits. Digital transformation aims to equip students and SMEs with essential skills for thriving in a technology-driven economy. Inclusive growth will focus on equitable access to mentorship and internships, reducing regional disparities and fostering social cohesion. Innovation and talent development will leverage experiential learning and cross-sectoral collaboration to build a workforce aligned with regional priorities. Sustainability will be promoted through mentorship programs encouraging green innovation and preparing students to address environmental challenges.



MUNICIPIUL CLUJ-NAPOCA



Approach

The workshops organized under the SpinIT project in Cluj-Napoca achieved significant outcomes, fostering collaboration among public, private, academic, and civil society stakeholders.



"This initiative represents a great opportunity to foster cross-sector collaboration, bringing together public institutions, academia and businesses to create tangible solutions for local communities."



Outcomes of the workshop

Participants included prominent IT companies such as AROBS Transilvania Software, GlobalLogic (Fortech), Telios Care, Alfa Software, Mejix, Ensemble Software, EC Music Festival, Control Data Systems, Transart and BRINEL, alongside academic institutions like Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB) - Faculty of Economics and Business Administration and Mathematics and Computer Science. Representatives from innovation ecosystems, including National Research and Development Institute for Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Transilvania IT Cluster, the European DIH in Transilvania and The Northwest Regional Development Agency, also contributed, supported by creative and entrepreneurial voices from startups or small companies like Jack Daw Studio, Scripor Alphabet, Rofinntech, RF Meters and Qinsoft Solutions.

The first workshop successfully launched the Local Discovery Groups (LDGs) and initiated a dialogue on digitalization and innovation priorities. Participants identified key areas for development, such as digital skills, IT sector growth and Industry 4.0, aligning with the Smart Specialization Strategy (S3). The following workshops focused on generating and prioritizing pilot project ideas. Through interactive brainstorming sessions, participants proposed innovative solutions in energy efficiency, waste reduction and fostering entrepreneurial spirit among students. One of the most impactful outcomes was the prioritization of pilot projects based on local relevance, feasibility, and innovation. The top ideas included implementing energy-efficient technologies in public buildings, creating a digital document management system for local authorities, and organizing entrepreneurship workshops for students. These projects aim to address pressing local challenges while promoting digitalization and sustainable development. The workshops also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the municipality, private sector and academia, ensuring that the proposed solutions are both practical and scalable.

The discussions emphasized the need for a pragmatic approach to innovation, with participants stressing the importance of clear communication about project opportunities and the municipality's role as a catalyst for digital transformation. The workshops not only generated actionable ideas but also strengthened the local innovation ecosystem, paving the way for future cross-sector collaborations and the implementation of pilot projects that align with regional and European priorities.





Approach

The Local Discovery Group (LDG) Workshops in Ptuj were structured to encourage open discussions, co-creation, and idea generation using interactive methods such as the **Carousel Brainstorming**, **World Café discussions**, and **Scenario Building**.



"As an educator, I see podcasts as a great way to make learning more engaging and accessible. This project can bridge the gap between traditional education and modern digital skills."



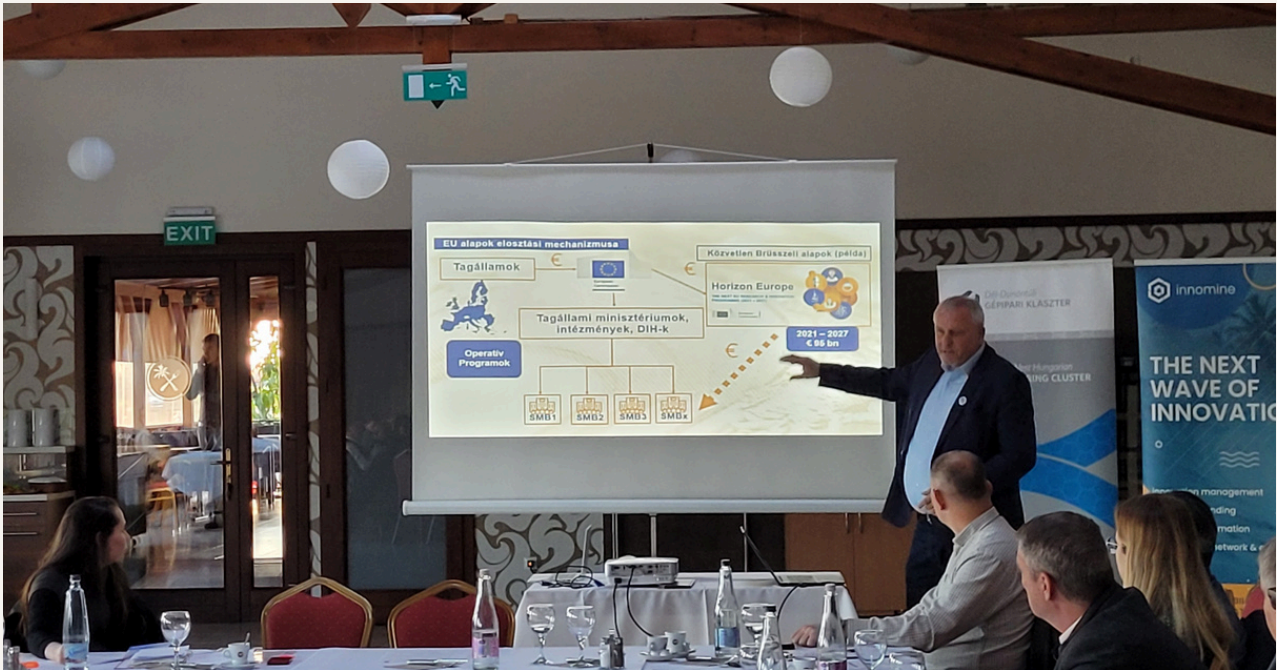
Outcomes of the workshop

These methods helped stakeholders explore innovative ways to develop the podcast curriculum while ensuring inclusivity and collaboration. The LDG consisted of representatives from local government, media organizations, educators, students, business professionals, and civil society, bringing diverse perspectives on how podcasts can be used for education, storytelling, and community engagement.

The workshops resulted in several key insights and groundbreaking ideas. Stakeholders highlighted the educational potential of podcasts, particularly in supplementing classroom learning and promoting digital literacy. Businesses saw an opportunity to use podcasts for brand storytelling and marketing, while civil society emphasized the need to create content that breaks societal taboos and raises awareness of critical issues. One of the most impactful ideas was the development of a practical podcasting guide for beginners, allowing aspiring podcasters to learn through step-by-step episodes that combine theory with real-world practice.

The discussions also raised important considerations. Participants reflected on the sustainability of the initiative, stressing the need for partnerships, funding opportunities, and long-term engagement strategies. Additionally, the workshops challenged traditional learning models, reinforcing the importance of interactive and experience-based education. These insights will now be refined into a concrete Local Action Plan, guiding the next steps in developing and testing the podcast curriculum.



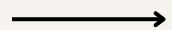


Approach

The SpinIT workshops in the Southern Transdanubia region were designed to bring together key stakeholders and facilitate structured discussions on digitalization, innovation, and economic growth.



Our approach focused on engagement and practical outcomes, ensuring that SMEs, academic institutions, local government representatives, and industry experts could exchange perspectives and collaboratively explore opportunities for regional development.



Outcomes of the workshop

Each session was built around interactive discussions, expert insights, and real-world case studies, helping participants navigate challenges and identify actionable solutions.

The Local Discovery Group (LDG) included a diverse mix of SME leaders, university representatives, municipal decision-makers, and industry specialists, ensuring that multiple viewpoints were considered. The discussions revealed several key themes, including the need for more accessible funding mechanisms for SMEs, stronger university-business collaborations, and a clearer pathway for digital transformation. One of the most promising ideas was the creation of a Regional Knowledge Hub, which could serve as a central point for knowledge-sharing, training, and pilot projects. Additionally, the workshops highlighted the importance of simplifying funding application processes and increasing awareness of available financial support programs. As one SME leader concluded: "Understanding funding opportunities and best practices is crucial for our growth. These discussions provided clarity on where to focus our efforts. It's clear that by working together, we can drive real digital transformation in our businesses".

These insights have reinforced the need for targeted initiatives that bridge the gap between policy and practice. Moving forward, our focus will be on developing concrete action plans that build on the workshop outcomes, ensuring that regional businesses and institutions have the support they need to thrive in an increasingly digital landscape. As one municipal representative noted: "Seeing so many proactive businesses, researchers, and policymakers working towards the same goal is inspiring. This is exactly the kind of collaboration that will put our region on the digital map."





Approach

The Local Discovery Group (LDG) workshops, organized under the SpiniT project, were designed to foster a collaborative environment where stakeholders from government, business, academia, and civil society could contribute to shaping digital transformation efforts at the local level.



Over the course of four sessions, each averaging 17 participants, representatives from key institutions took part. These included the Zenica Development Agency (ZEDA), the City of Zenica, the Chamber of Commerce ZDK, the University of Zenica, technical high schools, SMEs such as Inzpire d.o.o. and New Trend, as well as civil society organizations like STEM, Input, ZeForge, and BIT Alliance — fully representing the quadruple helix model.



Outcomes of the workshop

The first workshop, held on November 27, 2024, introduced the SpinIT project and gathered initial input on digitalization priorities. Participants emphasized the need for improved collaboration between the economic sector and the local community, particularly in education, business intelligence, and smart city solutions.

The second workshop, on December 9, 2024, focused on idea collection and prioritization, resulting in the identification of 16 potential pilot projects. Through structured discussions, participants prioritized projects based on relevance to local needs, feasibility, and scalability. The most promising ideas included:

- Cybersecurity training for SMEs and citizens
- Business intelligence tools for small businesses
- Smart city projects, including IoT applications for energy management
- AI solutions for manufacturing
- A digital platform to simplify public administration procedures
- Education and mentorship programs for digital skills and creative industries

The third workshop, on December 17, 2024, refined these ideas into six key initiatives, each with defined objectives, responsible stakeholders, and potential funding sources. Zenica Development Agency ZEDA, the University of Zenica, local IT companies, and NGOs committed to taking leadership roles in implementation. The government sector, which represented 40% of the participants, stressed the importance of aligning projects with local policies and funding opportunities like Interreg and Horizon Europe.

The fourth and final workshop, on January 22, 2025, focused on integrating these projects into a Local Action Plan (LAP). Stakeholders refined project indicators, ensuring they were measurable and achievable. Recommendations included ensuring a realistic allocation of resources, defining monitoring mechanisms, and integrating cybersecurity into all digitalization efforts.

SpinIT

Boosting Smart Specialization and Encouraging Spin-offs in IT across Danube Region

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