

EDIH Czech Technical University in Prague

EDIH CTU

European Digital Innovation Hub in the Czech Republic in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)

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Periodic Report on Collaboration with Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA)



Inspire and make the Czech AI-driven Industry



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Deliverable Lead	Barbora Zochova
Contributor(s)	David Pesek
	Jaroslav Liskovec
Internal reviewer(s)	Vit Sumpela
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CTU	Czech Technical University in Prague
DMA	Digital Maturity Assessment
DTA	Digital Transformation Accelerator
EC	European Commission
EDIH	European Digital Innovation Hub
EDIH CTU	European Digital Innovation Hub at the Czech Technical University in Prague
GA	Grant Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PSO	Public Sector Organization
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

Executive Summary

This deliverable provides a comprehensive overview of the collaboration between the European Digital Innovation Hub at the Czech Technical University in Prague (EDIH CTU), the Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA), and the whole EDIH network. The report describes the cooperation so far, and the progress made, highlights the outcomes achieved, and identifies areas for further improvement.

It outlines the objectives, activities, and results of joint efforts, offering insights into the benefits and challenges encountered. The report is prepared to fulfil Task T1.4, which includes cooperation with DTA in data provision and reporting, as well as monitoring participation in various DTA-organised programmes and events.

The DTA plays a crucial role within the EDIH network by providing strategic guidance, resources, and a platform for KPI reporting. Its key functions include coordination and support, resource provision, knowledge sharing and networking, overseeing educational programmes through the EDIH Academy, KPI reporting and evaluation, and promoting innovation and technology transfer.

The EDIH CTU's collaboration with other EDIHs is essential for promoting digital transformation across Europe. This includes engaging in joint projects and initiatives, participating in EDIH network events such as the EDIH Network Annual Summit 2023, and actively contributing to knowledge sharing and capacity building, e.g., through the EDIH Academy and its own knowledge hub.

The cooperation within the European Digital Innovation Hubs network is crucial for fostering digital transformation across Europe, thus, this document aims to present an accurate assessment of our collaborative efforts since the beginning of our project.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this deliverable is to present a comprehensive overview of the cooperation between the EDIH CTU and the Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA). It outlines the objectives, activities, and results of our joint efforts, providing insights into the benefits and challenges encountered.

The report is written to realise Task T1.4 Collaboration with DTA. This task ensures cooperation with DTA (data provision, reporting, etc.). It also contains monitoring of activities related to participation in Train the Trainer programmes (EDIH CTU Task T5.3) organised by DTA, matchmaking activities (EDIH CTU Task T5.2), capacity building events (EDIH CTU Task T5.1) and others.

1.2 Role and Key Tasks of the DTA

The Digital Transformation Accelerator is a key initiative within the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) network. It aims to support and accelerate digital transformation across Europe by providing expertise, resources, and coordination among the various EDIH members. The DTA also serves as a portal for reporting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), making it an essential tool for monitoring and evaluating the progress of digital transformation initiatives.

The DTA performs several crucial functions to facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of the EDIH network:

- **Coordination and Support:** The DTA acts as the central coordinating body for the EDIH network, ensuring that activities are aligned with the overall objectives of the Digital Europe Programme. It provides strategic guidance and operational support to EDIH members, helping them to implement their initiatives effectively.
- **Resource Provision:** The DTA supplies valuable resources, such as online tools, methodologies, and best practices, to support digital transformation projects. These resources are designed to help EDIHs optimise their operations and deliver high-quality services to SMEs and public sector organisations.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:** One of the primary roles of the DTA is to facilitate knowledge exchange within the EDIH network. It organises and promotes events, workshops, and seminars where members can share their experiences, learn from each other, and collaborate on joint initiatives. The DTA also supports a repository of case studies, success stories, and educational materials accessible to all EDIH members.
- **Educational Programmes:** The DTA oversees the EDIH Academy, which offers a range of educational activities aimed at enhancing digital skills and competencies. These programmes cover various aspects of digital transformation, from basic digital literacy to advanced technology adoption, providing tailored learning opportunities for different levels of expertise.
- **KPI Reporting and Evaluation:** As the designated portal for KPI reporting, the DTA plays a vital role in recording the performance of EDIH members. It collects, analyses, and reports data on key performance indicators, ensuring that the progress of digital

transformation initiatives is tracked accurately and transparently. This function is critical for maintaining accountability and informing strategic decision-making.

- **Innovation and Technology Transfer:** The DTA supports the transfer of innovative technologies and solutions across the EDIH network. It fosters partnerships between research institutions, technology providers, and industry, promoting the adoption of cutting-edge technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public sector organisations (PSOs).

The EDIH CTU, as part of this network, plays a crucial role in promoting digital innovation and enhancing the digital capabilities of SMEs and PSOs within the region. EDIH CTU has actively participated in a variety of educational activities available under the EDIH Academy, which provides training and skill development programmes designed to advance EDIHs' digital competencies.

Additionally, the EDIH CTU has been involved in several EDIH Network events, such as participation in the EDIH Network Annual Summit 2023, which was a significant event for sharing knowledge and networking within the digital innovation community.

The ongoing collaboration between the EDIH CTU and DTA is designed to align with the broader goals of the EDIH network. By working together, both entities aim to foster a more integrated and effective approach to digital transformation, ensuring that the benefits of digital innovation are widely accessible and effectively implemented across various sectors.

The EDIH CTU also plays an active role in sharing knowledge about the EDIH Network, contributing to the EDIH Catalogue, and participating in various knowledge dissemination activities. This involvement helps in building a stronger, more informed digital innovation ecosystem across Europe.

2. EDIH CTU's Collaboration with Other EDIHs

The EDIH CTU is actively engaged in collaboration with other European Digital Innovation Hubs to promote and facilitate digital transformation across Europe. This cooperation is crucial for leveraging collective expertise, resources, and best practices, thereby enhancing the impact of digital innovation initiatives. To achieve this, we use, i.a., information in the EDIH catalogue under the DTA. The following sections detail the various aspects of EDIH CTU's collaboration with other EDIHs.

2.1 Joint Projects and Initiatives

2.1.1 Cross-Border Projects

To enhance the reach and impact of digital transformation, the EDIH CTU tries to find ways how to engage in cross-border projects with EDIHs from neighbouring countries. These projects should be designed to address transnational challenges and promote the adoption of digital technologies across multiple countries. By spreading knowledge about digital skills and AI technologies, the involved EDIHs can share insights, overcome regional barriers, and implement scalable solutions.

To facilitate such an endeavour, the EDIH CTU has signed Memorandums of Understanding with EDIHs from Austria or Germany.

Closer cooperation (e.g., on joint delivery of specific technologies/services) with foreign EDIHs is not allowed by the decision of the national donor, therefore EDIH CTU tries to fulfil its cross-border commitments by cooperating with EDIHs from other countries by organising international matchmakings, networking, and educational activities, thus connecting EDIHs and their potential clients internationally.

In many cases, we have also referred the client to a potential foreign supplier (EDIH) of the requested service through a reference in the EDIH catalogue.

2.2 Participation in EDIH Network Events

2.2.1 EDIH Network Annual Summit 2023

The EDIH CTU participated in the EDIH Network Annual Summit 2023. This event provided, i.a., a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among EDIHs. During the networking parts, the EDIH CTU representative actively engaged in discussions on the EDIH CTU's services, technologies, and future trends and challenges in digital transformation. The summit also facilitated the establishment of new partnerships and the strengthening of existing ones.

2.2.2 Thematic Workshops and Seminars

Throughout the first reporting period, the EDIH CTU has actively participated in various thematic workshops and seminars organised by the EDIH network. These events focused on specific areas of digital transformation, such as digital skills development, technology adoption, and innovation methodologies. Participation in these events enables the EDIH CTU to stay updated on the latest trends, gain new insights, and collaborate with other EDIHs on specialised topics.

2.3 Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

2.3.1 EDIH Academy

The EDIH CTU team members are actively involved in the EDIH Academy, which offers a range of educational activities aimed at enhancing digital skills and competencies. By participating in the academy's programmes (so far as participants in the courses only), the EDIH CTU team members contribute to the development of their own knowledge and skills.

In future, we plan to create our own educational activities/courses to facilitate the dissemination of EDIH CTU's training materials, preparing workshops, and online courses. These activities help build the digital capabilities of SMEs and PSOs, ensuring that they are well-equipped to navigate the digital transformation journey.

2.3.2 EDIH CTU's Knowledge Hub

We have created our own knowledge hub published on the www.edihctu.eu web page where we try to provide interested parties (SMEs, PSOs, individuals) with training sources and materials, valuable insights, research findings, and best practices. These contributions are accessible also to other EDIHs, facilitating a continuous exchange of knowledge and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

By completing our task focused on designing training paths (Milestone MS9 in October 2023), we have also contributed to spreading information on possible educational sources focusing on AI and AI technologies.

In future, we plan to open our "AI Transformation Academy" to help (not only) our clients better understand our technologies, enhance their digital skills and demystify AI.

2.4 Resource and Expertise Sharing

2.4.1 Technical Expertise Exchange

To enhance the overall abilities of the EDIH network, the EDIH CTU engages in the exchange of technical expertise with other EDIHs. This involves sharing knowledge on specific technologies, methodologies, and tools that have proven effective in driving digital transformation. Through technical expertise exchange, the EDIH CTU contributes to the collective knowledge base of the network, enabling other EDIHs to implement successful strategies and solutions.

2.4.2 Resource Pooling

The EDIH CTU collaborates with other EDIHs and contributes with its resources to joint initiatives. Apart from sharing financial resources for joint events, we are open to engaging in sharing technological infrastructure and human capital to support large-scale projects and programmes. Such "resource pooling" allows more efficient use of available assets and can enhance the impact of digital transformation efforts.

2.5 Collaborative Platforms and Tools

2.5.1 Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA) Portal

As a compulsory reporting tool, the DTA portal is used by EDIH CTU to report Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitor the progress of collaborative initiatives. The portal should facilitate transparency and accountability, ensuring that all EDIHs are aligned with the objectives of the Digital Europe Programme. It also provides a platform for sharing updates, resources, and best practices among the EDIH network.

Unfortunately, the differences in the types of services provided by individual EDIHs and the complexity of the reporting process mean that it is sometimes difficult to enter the required data correctly and completely into the system. This results in incomplete reporting of services and inaccurate evaluation of KPIs.

2.5.2 EDIH Catalogue

The EDIH CTU contributes to the EDIH Catalogue, which serves as a comprehensive directory of digital innovation services and expertise available within the network. By listing its services and capabilities in the catalogue, EDIH CTU enhances visibility and accessibility, enabling other EDIHs to identify potential collaborators and leverage available resources.

2.6 Thematic Working Groups under the DTA

2.6.1 Overview of Thematic Working Groups

The Digital Transformation Accelerator supports several thematic working groups that focus on specific areas of interest and expertise within the digital transformation landscape. These working groups bring together experts from various EDIHs to collaborate on specialised topics, share knowledge, and develop targeted solutions.

Having in mind our expertise, the key themes/WGs for our EDIH CTU are:

- Public Administration, with Focus on AI,
- Sustainability,
- Cybersecurity,
- Data in Manufacturing,
- Smart Connectivity,
- Digital Health, and
- Tourism.

2.6.2 EDIH CTU's Engagement with Thematic Working Groups

While EDIH CTU is not a formal member of any thematic working group, it has actively engaged in the activities of several groups, particularly the Working Group on Sustainability. Through this engagement, EDIH CTU has contributed to discussions, shared insights, and participated in collaborative projects that align with its expertise and strategic goals.

Apart from the WG on Sustainability, the EDIH CTU team members draw useful information from online sources of other WGs.

By engaging with these thematic WGs, the EDIH CTU has benefited from the exchange of knowledge and best practices. This involvement has provided valuable insights into emerging

trends and challenges, enabling EDIH CTU to refine its approaches and enhance its service offerings.

2.7 Impact and Outcomes

2.7.1 Enhanced Digital Capabilities

Through collaboration with other EDIHs, the EDIH CTU team members try to enhance their digital capabilities. The joint projects, knowledge-sharing activities, and other efforts have enabled the EDIH CTU to implement its technologies and innovative solutions, thereby improving the digital infrastructure and competencies of its stakeholders.

2.7.2 Strengthened EDIH Network

We believe that the collaborative efforts of our EDIH CTU have contributed to the strengthening of the EDIH network. By actively engaging in joint initiatives, participating in network events, and sharing knowledge and resources, the EDIH CTU has helped build a more cohesive and effective digital innovation ecosystem across Europe.

2.7.3 Increased Innovation and Adoption

The collaboration has led to increased innovation and adoption of digital technologies among SMEs and public sector organisations. The joint initiatives and educational programmes have provided these entities with the necessary skills and tools to successfully navigate the digital transformation journey, resulting in concrete improvements in their operations and services.

By working together, the EDIHs have been able to leverage their collective strengths, share valuable knowledge, and implement effective digital transformation strategies. This collaborative approach is essential for achieving the broader objectives of the European Digital Innovation Hubs network and driving digital innovation across Europe.

3. DTA Reporting Portal and Lessons Learned

The DTA reporting portal is a tool used by the EDIH CTU to monitor and report the progress of our collaborative initiatives and some of the key performance indicators (KPIs). This chapter provides an in-depth overview of the DTA reporting portal, including its functionalities, the process of reporting, and the lessons learned from using this essential platform.

3.1 Overview of the DTA Reporting Portal

3.1.1 Purpose and Functionality

The DTA reporting portal is a tool used by the European Digital Innovation Hubs to monitor and report the progress of our initiatives and selected KPIs (services, EDIHs' events, EDIHs' collaboration with other EDIHs and/or stakeholders, and drawing down resources for SMEs and PSOs).

The portal should ensure transparency, consistency, and accountability across the EDIH network by providing a structured platform for data collection, analysis, and reporting.

The primary purpose of the KPI reporting tool is to streamline the reporting process for registered EDIH CTU members. It facilitates the submission and tracking of selected KPIs, ensuring that all data is collected and analysed consistently. Key functionalities of the reporting tool include:

- **KPI Submission and Tracking:** Allows EDIHs to submit detailed reports on their KPIs, including metrics related to digital transformation activities, educational programmes, and collaborative projects.
- **Data Analysis and Visualization:** Provides tools for analysing and visualising the reported data (on Digital Maturity Assessments), helping EDIHs and the evaluated SMEs and PSOs understand their performance and identify areas for improvement.
- **Resource Access:** Offers access to a repository of resources, including best practices, case studies, and guidelines for reporting and evaluation.
- **Communication and Feedback:** Facilitates communication between the DTA and EDIH members, allowing for feedback and support on reporting processes.

3.1.2 Reporting Process

The reporting process through the DTA portal involves several steps:

- **Data Collection:** the EDIH CTU collects relevant data from its various activities, including the organisation of training events, capacity-building events, and joint projects with other EDIHs and/or stakeholders.
- **Data Entry:** The collected data is entered into the DTA portal using the provided templates and forms. This includes quantitative metrics as well as qualitative descriptions of activities and outcomes.
- **Submission:** Once the data entry is complete, the report is submitted through the portal for review by the Commission.
- **Review and Feedback:** The Commission reviews the submitted information, provides feedback, and may request additional information or clarifications.
- **Finalization:** After addressing any feedback, the reported information is finalised and becomes part of the overall performance monitoring system.

3.2 Digital Maturity Assessments by DTA

The DTA has implemented Digital Maturity Assessments (DMAs) as part of the KPI reporting tool, using pre-defined questionnaires for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public sector organisations (PSOs). These questionnaires aim to assess the digital maturity of these entities in three stages (before the technology is deployed – T0, one year after the deployment – T1, and three years after the deployment – T2), but several challenges have been identified:

- **Complexity of Questions:** The questions within the DMA questionnaires are often too complex for many SMEs and PSOs. They may not have the detailed information or expertise required to answer these questions accurately without assistance.
- **Relevance of Questions:** Some questions do not correspond with the actual state of the companies. This mismatch can lead to incomplete or inaccurate responses.
- **Necessity of Expert Assistance:** Due to the complexity and relevance issues, EDIH CTU experts are required to assist companies in completing these questionnaires. This additional support is essential to ensure accurate data collection but can be resource-intensive.
- **Set timing of completing the questionnaires** – It may be impossible to complete all stages of DMAs questionnaires in the set schedule as some EDIHs might not exist 2 years after the technology deployment and/or the company may not cooperate as requested.

3.3 Lessons Learned

3.3.1 Benefits

In the context of the DTA reporting portal, "benefits" refer to the positive outcomes and advantages gained from using the system. These benefits enhance the overall efficiency, accuracy, and transparency of the reporting process, contributing to better performance monitoring and decision-making within the EDIH network.

- **Enhanced Transparency and Accountability:** The DTA portal shall ensure that all reporting is conducted transparently, with clear documentation and consistent data entry. This transparency is crucial for maintaining trust and credibility within the EDIH network. This level of transparency and accountability builds confidence among all participants and supports effective collaboration.
- **Improved Data Quality:** The structured templates and guidelines provided by the portal shall help ensure that data is collected and reported accurately and comprehensively. These standardised formats reduce variability in data entry, making it easier to compare and analyse information across different EDIHs. High-quality data is essential for meaningful analysis, enabling better insights and more informed decision-making.
- **Efficient Performance Monitoring:** The centralised system shall allow for efficient tracking and monitoring of EDIHs' performance, making it easier to identify trends and areas for improvement. The portal's data visualisation tools for DMAs provide intuitive insights into key metrics, enabling quick assessment of progress and performance. This efficiency helps management make informed decisions and prioritize initiatives that will have the most significant impact on digital transformation efforts. Efficient performance monitoring supports strategic planning and helps align activities with overarching goals.

3.3.2 Challenges

Conversely, "challenges" are the difficulties and obstacles encountered when using the DTA reporting portal. These challenges can complicate the reporting process, requiring additional time, effort, and resources to address. Understanding these challenges is crucial for identifying areas for improvement and implementing solutions to streamline the reporting workflow.

The reporting process through the DTA tool involves additional challenges:

- **Excel tables for bulk reporting:** The Excel templates provided for bulk reporting are overly complex and subject to frequent changes. This constant evolution complicates the reporting process.
- **Data loss in CSV conversion:** The transformation from and to the .csv format and subsequent upload into the portal often results in data loss. This issue necessitates additional checks and corrections, further complicating the process.
- **Additional information requirements:** The reporting tool requests information not specified in our Grant Agreement, such as pre-set amounts of money for SMEs and PSOs separately. This unexpected requirement creates additional data collection burdens.
- **Initial learning curve:** Familiarizing the team with the portal's functionalities and reporting requirements required special training and adjustment.
- **Complex reporting procedures:** The complexity of adding new companies and/or services and the need to report one service multiple times under different categories are time-consuming and cumbersome.
- **Data integration:** Integrating data from various sources and activities into the portal's templates sometimes posed difficulties, particularly for complex projects.
- **Navigation in the reporting part of the portal** - due to the settings of the reporting system, it is very difficult to control some elements and scroll across the inserted window. In order to work smoothly, it is necessary to set the display size to 50% of the original size, which causes the font to shrink so much that the text is almost unreadable.
- **DMA questionnaires** – the pre-set compulsory questions in the questionnaires do not correspond with the reality in the companies (both from the SMEs and PSOs). The results do not provide the desired information on the actual state of play in the companies.

3.3.3 Best Practices and Recommendations

Based on our experience with the DTA reporting portal, we have identified several best practices and recommendations to improve the reporting process:

- **Comprehensive Training:** Ensuring thorough, yet clear and comprehensible training for all team members involved in reporting is crucial. Regular updates and training sessions can help maintain high reporting standards.
- **Standardized Data Collection:** Implementing standardized data collection procedures can simplify the reporting process. Using consistent formats and templates for internal data collection ensures compatibility with the DTA portal's requirements.
- **Minimising data sheet changes:** So far, many updates have been done by the DTA in the Excel tables. Moreover, over time, several new Excel documents have been created to be filled in.
- **Streamlining Processes:** Simplifying the process of adding, e.g., new companies and services and reducing the need for multiple entries of the same service can save time and resources.

- **Clear Communication with DTA:** Maintaining open lines of communication with the DTA can help clarify reporting requirements and resolve issues promptly. Sometimes it was difficult to communicate issues with the DTA helpdesk team (e.g., when our data got lost for several days or when we needed to “activate” the portal for our members etc.). It took many weeks to achieve what we needed to address.

3.4 Impact on EDIH CTU’s Operations

The use of the DTA portal has significantly impacted EDIH CTU’s operations. By providing a mostly structured and transparent system for providing information about other EDIHs and their services, performance monitoring etc., the portal has enhanced our ability to track progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make informed strategic decisions.

Despite the challenges encountered, the insights gained from the data analysis and feedback processes from the DMAs have formed our approach to digital transformation steps, ensuring that we continue to meet our objectives and contribute effectively to the broader goals of the EDIH network.

The lessons learned from using the portal have provided valuable insights into best practices for data collection and reporting, helping to enhance our overall effectiveness and impact within the EDIH network.

Last but not least, the EDIH network’s information system and catalogue contribute to enhancing the digital transformation of European SMEs and PSOs by enabling them to navigate easily through the complex network of digital hubs in Europe.

4. Conclusion

The collaboration between the EDIH CTU, the Digital Transformation Accelerator, and interconnected EDIHs has proven to be helpful in advancing digital transformation efforts across Europe. This deliverable has provided a general overview of the joint initiatives, activities, and outcomes, highlighting the importance of such collaborations in achieving the broader goals of the EDIH network.

The DTA's role in providing strategic guidance, resources, and a platform for KPI reporting has been pivotal in ensuring that the EDIH CTU can effectively monitor and evaluate its progress. Despite the challenges faced with the complexity of the DMAs and the reporting process, the lessons learned have been invaluable.

The active engagement of the EDIH CTU in various educational programmes, knowledge-sharing activities, and participation in network events has significantly enhanced our capabilities. These efforts have not only strengthened the EDIH network but also increased innovation and adoption of digital technologies among SMEs and PSOs.

Moving forward, it is crucial to continue leveraging the insights gained from this collaboration to drive further improvements in our digital transformation initiatives. By maintaining open communication with the DTA and other EDIHs, simplifying reporting processes, and ensuring comprehensive training for all team members, we can enhance our overall effectiveness and impact.

The collaboration between us, other EDIHs, and DTA has enabled us to implement innovative solutions, improve digital infrastructure, and foster a more cohesive and effective digital innovation ecosystem across Europe. The continued use of the DTA portal and adherence to best practices will ensure that we remain aligned with the objectives of the Digital Europe Programme and continue to drive digital transformation across the region.