



Smart4Europe2 Catalysing Digitisation throughout Europe

Deliverable 2.2

Collaboration Synergies

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¹R=Report, DEC= Websites, patents filling, Ethics, ORDP: Open Research Data Pilot, etc., O=Other

²PU = Public, CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

Acronyms Listed in Document	
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DIH, EDIH	Digital Innovation Hub, European Digital Innovation Hub
EC	European Commission
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
IA	Innovation Action
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
RTO	Research and Technology Organisation
S4E2	Smart4Europe2
SAE	Smart Anything Everywhere
SME	Small or Medium Sized Enterprise
WP	Work Package
H2020	Horizon 2020

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Table of Contents:

1	Executive Summary	5
2	Objective	5
3	Typology of the SAE community	6
4	Types of collaboration	6
4.1	Collaboration across DIHs stakeholders	7
4.2	Collaboration according to the FSTP-scheme	8
4.3	Collaboration on DIHs sustainability schemes	8
4.4	Collaboration within sectors of applications	9
4.5	Collaboration with EC and Horizon Europe / Digital Europe programmes	10
5	Collaboration synergies	11
5.1	Structuring collaboration	11
5.2	Sectoral collaboration	11
6	Conclusion	14
7	Annex - [S4E2] SAE Custer Collaboration Event 22 Nov. 2021	15
7.1	Collaboration type	15
7.2	Collaboration synergies	15

Table of Figures:

Figure 1: SAE evolution – Granted Innovation Actions	6
Figure 2: DIH stakeholders importance ranked by IA - (Right) Stakeholders importance ranked at SAE level.	7
Figure 3: Products functionality vs applications.....	9

Table of Tables:

Table 1: Collaboration synergies.	13
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1 Executive Summary

Collaboration within Smart Anything Everywhere Initiative (SAE) and beyond has been analysed, taking into account the various dimensions of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), considering the technologies, the stakeholders, the applications, the operational modus operandi, the assets, the sustainability models, among others.

Five types of collaboration have been defined as having different aspects and involving different DIH stakeholders. These are driven by DIH stakeholder general needs to collaborate as well as specific needs on key topics crossing all DIHs like the 'Financial Support to Third Parties' (FSTP)-scheme, sustainability and digitisation across European sectors of application. For each collaboration type, the actual need for collaboration, the stakeholders to be involved, the implementation of collaboration, its outcome and longer-term impacts are presented.

Complementarily, synergies are also suggested across these different types of collaboration. This requires the gathering of experience across all SAE DIHs and mutualisation of the whole spectrum of DIH competences to define the key and common assets & processes of DIHs deserving attention, harmonisation and guidance for future support instruments, DIHs, European DIHs (EDIHs) and related actions, and possibly even beyond a sole digital topic.

2 Objective

The objective of task 2.1 was to consolidate further the SAE community that has developed through previous SAE actions, being IA and CSA, inside which the Smart4Europe2 partners have played active and leading roles. The link between Smart4Europe2 and respective Innovation Actions (IA) communities was ensured by the direct contribution of all ongoing IAs' coordinators to the present task. The coordinators acted as associated partners committed to bringing and sharing relevant ecosystem's information with their IA peers.

The task was based on defining at first the typology of each IA/DIH community, highlighting the main categories of stakeholders (e.g. innovative technology suppliers, private investors, etc.), common categories as well as specificities across IA/DIH topics. This has been reported in D2.1 *Typology of the SAE community*³.

Active and leading stakeholders have been involved in each common category to analyse possible collaboration synergies across IA/DIH. Such synergies aim to create stronger cohesion across IAs' communities by diffusing digital technologies and exporting services to sister-DIHs, strengthening the SAE community as a whole while widening business opportunities.

³ https://smart4europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/S4E2_D2.1-Typology-of-the-SAE-community_final.pdf

3 Typology of the SAE community

Figure 1 highlights the DIH/IA projects launched in H2020 under Smart Anything Everywhere that the present work has covered.

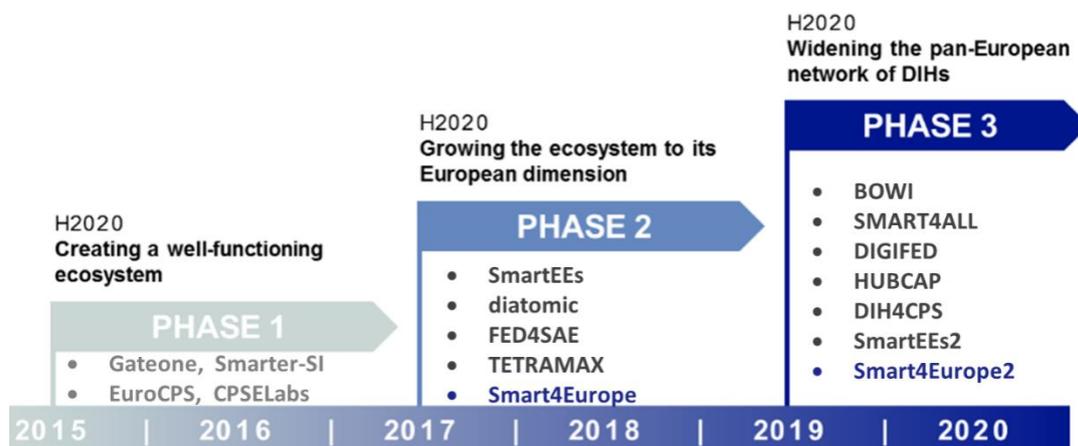


Figure 1: SAE evolution – Granted Innovation Actions

The SAE community was investigated and discussed inside D2.1 - *Typology of the SAE community*⁴, distinguishing for each IA the following aspects,

- Stakeholders
- Key Digital Technologies (KDTs)
- Sectors of applications
- Products’ functionalities vs. KDT enabling them

Collaboration synergies could be formulated that cross the aspects mentioned above from this earlier work and integrate the outcome of various exchanges organised as part of WP2 activities (see workshops in D2.3 - *Best practices guidelines*⁵).

4 Types of collaboration

Four levels of DIH collaboration have been established in the course of the S4E2 project,

- DIHs collaborate within individual projects, building seed networks;
- DIHs collaborate within a specific Initiative (like SAE or I4MS – cross project collaboration, e.g. projects do joint events like the DIH workshop “Boosting collaboration for Digital transformation” set up in Valencia on December 13-14, 2021 and co-organised by DIH4CPS, SMART4ALL and Smart4Europe2);
- DIHs collaborate through the catalogue and/or the DIHNET project (<https://dihnet.eu/>), as such without funding);
- In future, EDIHs will collaborate in a structured way across Europe.

⁴ https://smart4europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/S4E2_D2.1-Typology-of-the-SAE-community_final.pdf

⁵ https://smart4europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/S4E2_D2.3_Best-practices-guidelines.pdf

Through these different levels, topics of common interest can be set, which will mobilise different stakeholders and networks. These topics must be integrated inside a wider context (Regional, National, European) and cross-industrial, educational and/or institutional interests while truly justifying strong and long-term collaborations,

- across DIHs stakeholders
- according to the FSTP-scheme (Financial Support to Third Party via *cascade funding*)
- on DIHs sustainability schemes
- within sectors of applications
- within EC and Horizon Europe / Digital Europe programmes

The interest for these collaborations has been discussed within as well as outside of the S4E2 consortium during a [S4E2] SAE Custer Collaboration Event organised on 22 Nov. 2021, which gathered contributions from the running SAE IAs as well as EDIH applicants. Collaborations and synergies were discussed in terms of stakeholders, implementation, outcome and impacts. In addition, feedback was collected as “post-its” using the “Mural” online tool. The results of this exercise are given in the Annex.

4.1 Collaboration across DIHs stakeholders

Different programmes, instruments and initiatives are constantly put in place to encourage digital transition with the aim of creating momentum to impact the EU industry at large. However, to achieve a large impact, key stakeholders must collaborate to exchange visions, roadmaps and general needs (being technical, economic, regulatory, environmental) in order to set strategies and advise decision-makers on how to accelerate the digital transition of the industry and the society at large.

DIHs stakeholders have been mapped across IAs (D2.1), showing the central role of research, industry, institutions and funding parties (Figure 2). It has been established clearly that the digital transition at the European level has to go through these stakeholders in a coordinated manner. Clearly, the key stakeholders already have experience in Horizon 2020 DIHs and are in a position to play a leading role with EDIHs in Digital Europe. They have access to decision-makers within their organisations and have close links with public authorities and policymakers.

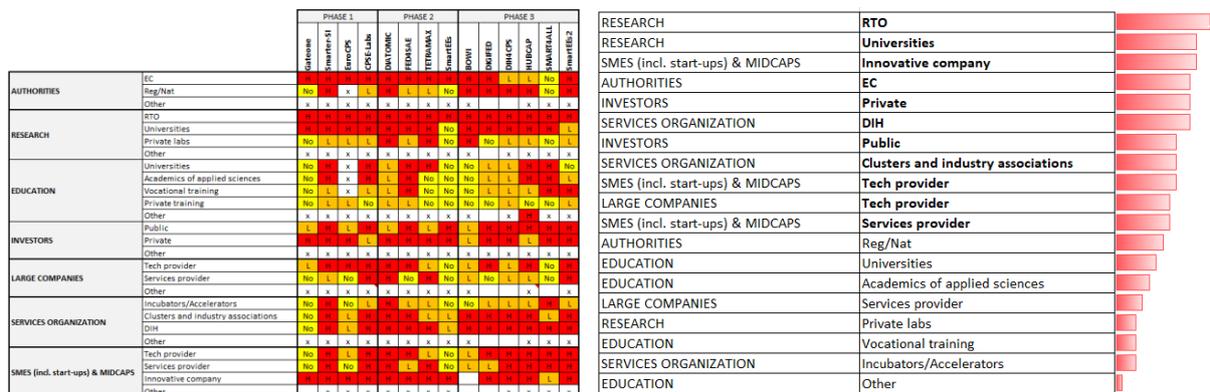


Figure 2: DIH stakeholders importance ranked by IA - (Right) Stakeholders importance ranked at SAE level.

The collaboration across key stakeholders could be enabled via major DIH events, organised on a periodic basis (for instance, annually) by a central actor like the European Commission. Collaboration

meetings could rotate around places in Europe and be hosted regionally by strongly anchored DIHs pilots or maybe even EDIHs.

As an outcome of the collaboration, engagement of investors with the digital transition, networking and outreach to SMEs with needs for digitisation, awareness-raising among local policymakers and with regional industries should be considered. Also important will be the consolidation of the overall experience gained in terms of DIH assets (e.g. FSTP and sustainability - 4.2 & 4.3) and ensure continuity across programmes and instruments to avoid repeating the same activities again. Mentoring, teaming and twinning should take an important place in that sense.

4.2 Collaboration according to the FSTP-scheme

Implementation of FSTP in SAE has induced new competences to raise inside consortia (e.g. setting up open calls, evaluation & selection boards and processes, contractual documents, monitoring tools of Application Experiments, ...), acting for the first time as executive Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) agencies towards the industry, in particular SMEs and Mid-Caps. In order to efficiently manage FSTP, IAs have set up, launched and demonstrated Open Calls with associated processes to evaluate, select and deliver (contract, execute, complete) experimentation projects with third party companies. This build up in new competences was initiated in two of Phase I IAs, then was successfully deployed and enhanced by all IAs from Phase 2 & 3, having pooled their experience and lessons learnt in common. This continuously improved process will stop as the SAE DIH projects end around 2022 - early 2023.

However, the skills to operate as executive RDI agencies will be necessary for future funding instruments similar to SAE. The passing over of skills to the future operating consortia / projects is a real challenge in order to avoid restarting the same learning cycles with newcomers. Collaboration will be essential here to bridge instruments and should be done with the help of the European Commission.

The key stakeholders to consolidate and/or pass on their experience on FSTP are all the IAs beneficiaries that have closely participated in all stages of setting up a call for innovative SME/Mid-Cap projects, evaluating, selecting, executing and delivering these projects. They can be RTOs, clusters, SMEs, etc. that have taken responsibilities in the FSTP activity and have learnt about the practical challenges and best practices.

Collaboration between these stakeholders should happen upstream of any new calls implementing FSTP in order to give potential applicants the common rules & practices and share guidelines to support them in building up their applications. For example, such collaboration could happen at workshops organised by the European Commission, possibly within infodays covering the FSTP calls.

The outcome would be FSTP players from previous projects presenting their experience and learning curve to prepare future FSTP players with the EC presenting common rules and requirements towards simplified and harmonised FSTP processes.

4.3 Collaboration on DIHs sustainability schemes

DIHs have set their sustainability schemes as part of their IA actions for the Phases 2 and 3 calls. The schemes are different across IAs and have been subjected already to several exchanges in the frame

of the S4E2 project via specific workshops on sustainability (SAE collaborative workshops: July 2, 2020; October 26, 2020; March 17, 2021; and November 22, 2021).

Due to the relatively important effort put into this exercise (e.g. creating sustainability models from scratch, creating legal entities,...) and the challenges the sustainable entities will face shortly after the end of the SAE funding period, it is of major importance to support them and collaboration to be successful. At the same time, similar instruments in H2020 have launched projects on different (non-digital) topics but with the same goal of sustainability. Therefore, the first inventory of these projects would help to appreciate the actual dimension of this *community* of sustainable projects and identify collaborative actions to learn and exchange best practices.

The key stakeholders to consolidate and/or pass on their experience on sustainability schemes are the IAs' coordinators as well as partners, having participated in all stages of setting up a sustainable DIH closely. Financial sustainability is the most critical aspect, and representatives of public and private funding stakeholders are very important as they must understand the financial issues specific to each DIH while also giving perspectives to the DIHs.

Collaboration should be co-organised as a series of webinars with governance meetings of the sustainable entities nucleated from the DIHs' actions. Global collaboration events like workshops could also be organised by the operating directors of the sustainable entities. These webinars and/or workshops should gather all organisations and initiatives that closely contributed to the sustainability models under SAE (e.g. DIHNET).

The outcomes of this will be successful DIH business models, key revenue streams and commercial and financial aspects which can be shared with less and more harmonised DIH models. This would set some reference frames for ecosystem-based, technology-focused, and multi-application-driven hubs for innovation.

4.4 Collaboration within sectors of applications

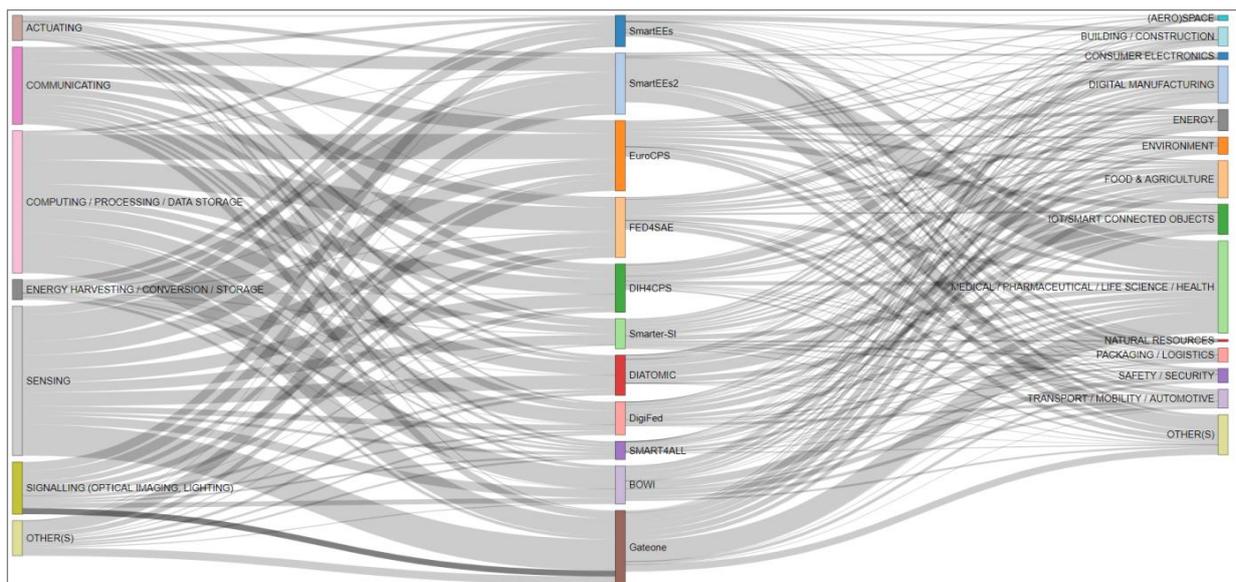


Figure 3: Products functionality vs applications.

As the SAE programme has developed, the number of application experiments and sectors covered has increased. This has led to a greater range of technologies and products and some cross-sectorial usage of technologies. It is recommended that in future initiatives (such as EDIHs), activities are pursued with a sectoral (more IA-like) or technology (more RIA-like) focus in order to concentrate efforts and enhance cohesion in specific areas.

The key stakeholders are the main representatives of each sector, who gather companies along the full value chain, technology providers and industrial associations having their own networks encompassing contacts with public authorities, standardisation committees and regulation bodies.

Collaboration should be promoted within existing sectoral networks, not by implementing additional gatherings and meetings, but by taking advantage of established networks calendars and updating agendas with DIH topics in order to bring the topic directly to end-beneficiaries: the end-user companies.

Raising awareness within DIHs would be the first priority among all sectors of applications while performing outreach and engaging increasing numbers of companies in their digital transformation. This is absolutely vital for the DIHs' network to succeed in the engagement to succeed in its core mission of supporting the digital transition in Europe.

Within the SAE domain, there is a strong concentration on IoT and CPS solutions for different sectors underpinned by technology developments in specific areas. As Europe's priorities shift towards the Green Deal, there is a need to encourage more focus on green developments as in the existing portfolio of applications, "green" aspects are not specifically highlighted.

Going forward, many applications are being driven by the New Data Economy, which is pushing technology in terms of sensing, processing, data storage and communication. This is leading to a paradigm shift towards edge computing to deal with increasing processing and storage demands. In order to successfully exploit these technologies, there is also a need to skill companies in security, privacy and safety for connected systems, which is an important field for collaboration.

4.5 Collaboration with EC and Horizon Europe / Digital Europe programmes

In order to capitalise upon the H2020/SAE experience, IAs representatives are aligning on preserving all assets generated during their unique DIHs funding period (communities, services, open call schemes, marketplaces,...) and in sustaining them in upcoming EDIHs. However, certain assets might be lost but needed again in the future. Collaboration between developers of key DIH assets and the EC is thus important to ensure continuity and long term value of public funding by bridging framework programmes.

The key stakeholders to collaborate on this topic of continuation between programmes and instruments is the European Commission as well as Regional and National authorities which are implementing their own support programmes, often aligned with European support. Based on their IA and CSA experiences, coordinators are also key actors who can share discussions and participate in the long-term impact analysis and strategic planning of DIH tools.

The collaboration could be encouraged via workshops organised periodically by the EC and also inviting future EDIHs' coordinators. CSA actions could also fuel such a collaboration, which would also be a follow up of previous CSAs like S4E, S4E2, DIHNET.

The outcome of such a collaboration would be stronger instruments, but also DIH recommendations in white papers, guidelines for EDIHs, common DIH tools to share across EDIHs like marketplaces, import/export services models, This would in turn promote some long term impact on cross-border collaboration, trust between cross-border collaborators, better services for SMEs and efficient and successful support to non-digitised SMEs.

5 Collaboration synergies

When considering the different types of stakeholders (Section 0) and collaboration (Section 4), an overall picture can be set of possible collaboration synergies for DIHs (Table 1).

5.1 Structuring collaboration

DIHs / EDIHs, RTOs, authorities and public funding bodies are the main stakeholders to be mobilised when it comes to setting the long-term vision and roadmap for a global digital transition of the EU. As they cross, most collaboration needs are expressed in Table 1.

Availability and benefits of digital technologies, global economic, industrial & societal challenges and policies and public funding instruments are the ingredients to set the right perspective to a fast and successful digital and green “twin transition”.

Synergy must be sought on financial aspects and co-funding schemes. For instance, co-funding remains unclear for EDIHs being put in place presently, and applicants would benefit from clarified schemes. Financial aspects also underpin the long-term viability of making previous DIH actions sustainable. Synergies must be discussed and found to analyse all public and private revenue streams that can be activated, how, when and across (E)DIHs when relevant.

Synergy on services within and across (E)DIHs is also important to enable the import and export of services across borders and across (E)DIHs and digital ecosystems. This topic is challenging and deserves significant effort, with the goal of having one single digital service in Europe serving all users.

5.2 Sectoral collaboration

DIHs / EDIHs and RTOs are usually tightly linked to application sectors inside which their digital technologies can be developed and turned into innovative businesses with industrial companies open to collaborative innovation. This playground is usually supported by public funding with authorities and executive agencies setting up funding schemes in line with industrial roadmaps and strategic agendas. Although not new, the collaboration of these stakeholders is fundamental to promote innovation and global competitiveness of the EU industry. This collaboration relies on high-level industrial representatives from key industrial players who represent the majority of industrial players in key sectors.

However, application sectors have companies of all types and sizes, as well as clusters and industry associations.

Sectors with high potential for digitisation have to be addressed from a top-down approach committing their own key players and networks to clarify the main needs & challenges and set bespoke strategies to accelerate the digital & green transitions, especially towards small and/or non-technical companies in Europe.

Collaboration should be promoted where cross-sectoral synergies exist to bring together communities via joint awareness/innovation workshops to establish whether local limited joint projects are possible or whether wide-scale joint activities are needed, which could be funded at a future stage. As there are many actors engaged in the community, underpinning this is a need to provide easy to engage with harmonised mechanisms that allow the stakeholders to work together in a win-win fashion.

Additionally, synergies could be found grouping different support instruments that address the same sector but from different angles and different communities.

Table 1: Collaboration synergies.

	across DIHs stakeholders	according to FSTP	on DIHs sustainability	within sectors of applications	with EC and HE/DE programmes
RESEARCH RTO	x	x	x	X	x
RESEARCH Universities	x				
SMES (incl. start-ups) & MIDCAPS Innovative company	x			X	
AUTHORITIES EC	x	x	x		x
INVESTORS Private	x		x		
SERVICES ORGANIZATION DIH/EDIHS	x	x	x	X	x
INVESTORS Public	x	x	x	X	x
SERVICES ORGANIZATION Clusters and industry associations	x			X	
SMES (incl. start-ups) & MIDCAPS Tech provider	x			X	
LARGE COMPANIES Tech provider	x			X	
SMES (incl. start-ups) & MIDCAPS Services provider	x			X	
AUTHORITIES Reg/Nat	x	x	x		x
EDUCATION Universities	x				
EDUCATION Academics of applied sciences	x				
LARGE COMPANIES Services provider	x			X	
RESEARCH Private labs	x			X	
EDUCATION Vocational training	x				
SERVICES ORGANIZATION Incubators/Accelerators	x				

6 Conclusion

Following up the typology analysis of the SAE community made previously in WP2 and reported in D2.1, collaboration within SAE and beyond has been analysed, taking into account the various dimensions of DIHs, being the technologies, the stakeholders, the applications, the operational modus operandi, the assets, the sustainability models among others.

Five types of collaboration have been defined involving different DIH stakeholders. These are driven by the general needs of DIH stakeholders to collaborate as well as specific needs to collaborate on key topics such as the FSTP-scheme, sustainability and digitisation across sectors of application in Europe. For each type, the actual need for collaboration, the stakeholders to be involved, the implementation of collaboration, its outcome and longer-term impacts have been presented.

Complementarily, synergies are suggested across these different types of collaboration. Experience needs to be gathered across all SAE DIHs to mutualise the whole spectrum of DIH competences and define the key and common assets & processes of DIHs. Harmonisation and guidance for future support instruments, DIHs, EDIHs and related actions are also needed.

7 Annex - [S4E2] SAE Custer Collaboration Event 22 Nov. 2021

7.1 Collaboration type

	Types of collaboration	Q1 - What are the key stakeholders to participate?	Q2 - What format (periodicity, type, context, financing,...)?	Q3 - What outcome?	Q4 - What impacts (long-term)?
4.1	Collaboration across DIHs stakeholders	SmartEEs, Incubators/Innovation Leaders (HUBCAP), DIH Decision Makers/Innovation Leaders (HUBCAP), Decision makers, Local policy makers (BOW)	SmartEEs: During major DIH events organized by EC or EC funded actions Yearly events (HUBCAP) Annual big event to join all DIHs for showcasing their activities and search collaboration In all of the listed ones Policy maker workshops (local BOW)	SmartEEs: who are the key investors / what do they want to invest in Networking/Best practice sharing/ Building of capabilities and SMEs success stories (HUBCAP) Creating awareness and support for DIH from local policy makers (BOW) Networking (online or in person, joint events, etc.) A big involvement for SMEs interested in the different existing funding opportunities.	Not implementing sustainability on same topics every year and every programme but ensuring actual sustainability (with no need for further FSTP instruments if actually successful) Long term vision on sustainability built with the decision makers & the funding authorities but at individual UK level/setting
4.2	Collaboration according to the FSTP-scheme	SmartEEs: SAE partners that managed FSTP and its assets (open call, diversification processes,...) Coaching Events (with HUBCAP) Decision making partners	SmartEEs during CSA actions, specific workshop organized by EC Every trimester/ semestral (HUBCAP) Sectoral engagement workshop for the EC Annual big event to join all DIHs for showcasing their activities and search collaboration	SmartEEs: common frame and process for future FSTP-projects, inspired from EC large experience Sharing of best practices, (HUBCAP) common frame and process.	One 'universal' One FSTP process for successive programmes Better FSTP programmes and partners' outcome (HUBCAP) One dedicated entry point/ portal for the SMEs
4.3	Collaboration on DIHs sustainability schemes	Innovation Actions from SAE and IMSG Key representatives of entities submitting the IA actions Makers DIH Decision Makers/ Innovation Leaders (HUBCAP)	Share and learn Workshops During governance meetings of the sustainable entities Every other year (HUBCAP)	Business models, financial plans, success to engage the community Added revenue streams for DIHs (HUBCAP)	Creation of new DIHs and attraction of partners (SMEs, academic inst,...) (HUBCAP) Make the successful sustainable models references
4.4	Collaboration within sectors of applications	DIH cluster association Via industrial networks Industrial clusters/ networks Innovation office/ Cluster/ Centers	During industrial networks/ major events Sectoral engagement workshop for the EC Sectoral events Annual big event to join all DIHs for showcasing their activities and search collaboration	Understand the momentum and aggregated needs inside each sector before to consolidate Attract partners (HUBCAP)	Make industrial sector aware of existence of FSTP and how value for to work Stronger DIH offer (HUBCAP)
4.5	Collaboration with EC and HE/DE programmes	SAE DIHs to collaborate into future EDIH Network (S4E2) Provide the EC with recommendations for future programs (S4E2) EC and H2020 IAs coordinators "DIH ecosystem" (S4E2) DIHNET, RODIN (BOW)	Networking, share and learn, joint events, joint services (S4E2) Events in Collaboration with EEN (S4E2) Workshop organized by EC Sectoral engagement workshop for the EC Recommendations White Paper (S4E2)	Joint services and events (S4E2) Networking manager/ Hub/ Digital Guidelines for related projects (S4E2) Recommendations White Paper (S4E2)	Long term cross-border collaboration (S4E2) Better services for SMEs (S4E2) Trust between collaborators Model services to manage risks (S4E2)

7.2 Collaboration synergies

	Collaboration synergies	Q1 - What are the key stakeholders to participate?	Q2 - What format (periodicity, type, context,...)?	Q3 - What synergy?	Q4 - What impacts (long-term)?
5.1	Structuring collaboration	Funding bodies, EU agencies, representatives of Regions, RTDs, Universities, Research and Innovation Institutes (HUBCAP) Funding bodies, DIH members "DIH ecosystem" (S4E2) Leading industrial sectors	Specific workshops organized by the EC Yearly events (HUBCAP) Jointly dedicated workshops under the EC oversight	Co-funding / Example (S4E2) including unclear, clearly required by applicants Networking partnership (HUBCAP)	Sustainability support (finance and non-financial support) (BOW) Better services, offer and routing of partners to specialized DIHs (HUBCAP)
5.2	Sectoral collaboration	Industrial networks representatives, RTD, key stakeholders Industrial cluster and associations, regional competitiveness centres Professional associations, networks,... (HUBCAP)	During industrial networks events/ organizing co-workshops Yearly events (HUBCAP) Dedicated workshops	Joint projects with DIH network for sectors (HUBCAP) Co-funding / Example (S4E2) including unclear, clearly required by applicants Networking in parallel to the activities and/or for the specific sector, allowing better the services	Increase visibility of industrial on availability and benefits of EU digital initiatives and instruments and communities Better services, offer and routing of partners to specialized DIHs (HUBCAP) services tailored to the SMEs' need.