Industrial platforms and large-scale pilots

Digital industrial platforms are key to placing Europe ahead in the digital transformation, linking technology building blocks and industrial applications.

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Digital industrial platforms are essential in many areas.

In connected smart factories they take data from the machinery and make it accessible to monitoring and controlling applications. This way, third parties can develop applications based on that data.

Digital industrial platforms are also useful to energy service providers. They can offer data services to consumers to allow them to exploit the flexibility of energy consumption across household appliances, electric vehicles and heating. This is a crucial step in maximising the use of renewables and the decarbonisation of energy.

And, these platforms can be used to support farmers in crop management. They can integrate location data and combine it with data from field sensors to enable seed planting and optimise the use of water in each field.

Equipped with appropriate business models, digital industrial platforms could be instrumental in the creation of ecosystems of market actors in a multi-sided marketplace. These ecosystems enable the creation of new innovative products and services and accelerate the development of worldwide standards.

While digital industrial platforms are essential for the integration of key digital technologies, large-sale piloting and experimentation is needed to gradually develop and mature such platforms.

To reinforce the European competitiveness in digital technologies, the Digitising European Industry

(DEI) initiative supports the development and large-scale piloting of digital industrial platforms, which are essential for the integration of various key digital technologies into real-world applications, processes, products, and services.

The EU, Member States, and regions are cooperating and co-investing under common priorities in order to advance large-scale pilots. Throughout 2018-20, with an investment of around €400 million, the EU reinforced its support to strategic next-generation platform building and piloting through various large-scale federating projects.

Under Horizon 2020, a total of around €1 billion of EU investment was made available for efforts in platform building, large-scale piloting, pilot lines, and other related activities under the DEI initiative. Some of these projects have already finished or are coming to an end, while others are just launching and will continue run into 2023. Inspired by the priorities set up by the working group on digital industrial platforms, these investments focused on the following areas:

- agricultural digital integration platforms;
- integration platforms and smart data solutions for energy: connected mobility, home and appliances;
- smart hospital and healthy living at home;
- digital service platforms for smart cities and rural communities;
- digital manufacturing platforms for connected smart factories.

As well as the areas mentioned above, the cross-cutting OPEN DEI coordination and support action aims to leverage the pooling of resources, share best practices, reinforce relationships and communicate the achievements of pilots in agriculture, energy, healthcare and manufacturing.

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