Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

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FI4INN

Four Regional Events Targeting Central Europe Inner Peripheries

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Document Revision History

VERSION	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	LIST OF CONTRIBUTOR(S)
0.1	28-05-2026	Drafting of the document	Luisa Marchionni, Chiara Vona, Jessica Pelizzari

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PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION		
NATURE OF THE DELIVERABLE	R	
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public, fully open, e.g. web	

*** R:** Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)
DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs
DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.
OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

A. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

Deliverable D2.4.1 reports on the organisation and implementation of four regional events targeting Central Europe inner peripheries under the FI4INN project. These events were designed to disseminate the results of FI4INN pilot actions, present innovative financial instruments and support tools, and encourage the uptake and replication of project solutions in regional ecosystems beyond the core pilot territories.

The regional events contributed to Activity 2.4, “Mainstreaming pilots results across CE area and beyond”, by creating spaces for knowledge transfer, peer learning and stakeholder engagement. In line with the project’s transferability approach, the events focused on non-urban, rural, border, island and transforming regions, where access to finance, innovation support and ecosystem connectivity remain key challenges.

This deliverable covers the four regional events organised in Hungary, Austria/Tirol, Croatia and Czechia: the Startup Factory Info Day in Budapest, FI4INN’s participation in the CO:ACT Conference in Tirol, the ZEF regional event within the INSPIRA LEADER 3 conference in Opatija, and the CzechInvest regional event in Ostrava. Together, these events engaged regional practitioners, policymakers, investors, innovation centres, incubators, universities, SMEs, startups, rural development actors and FI4INN project partners, while generating valuable insights on how FI4INN tools and methodologies can be adapted to local contexts.

2. Introduction

FI4INN aims to strengthen the capacity of Central European innovation ecosystems to design, test and adopt more impactful financial instruments for SMEs and startups. The project addresses the limited use of innovative financing schemes and the need for more inclusive, stakeholder-driven and impact-oriented approaches to the design of financial support mechanisms.

Within this framework, Activity 2.4 focuses on the mainstreaming of pilot results across the Central Europe area and beyond. The activity aims to present the lessons learned from FI4INN pilot actions and the related methodological framework to relevant target groups, including regions covered by FI4INN partners, Central European inner peripheries and rural areas not covered by the pilots, as well as other territories where the solutions can be replicated.

Deliverable D2.4.1 gathers the results of four regional events organised to support this transferability process. The events were conceived as practical dissemination and capitalisation moments, enabling stakeholders to learn from FI4INN outputs, discuss regional challenges, and explore how innovative financial instruments and co-design methodologies can be adapted to their own ecosystems.

3. Objectives of the Deliverable

The main objective of D2.4.1 is to document how the four regional events contributed to the dissemination, capitalisation and transferability of FI4INN pilot results in Central Europe inner peripheries.

More specifically, the deliverable aims to:

- present the scope, format and results of each regional event;
- show how FI4INN tools, pilot results and methodologies were introduced to local and regional stakeholders;

- identify common challenges emerging from participating regions, especially around access to finance, complexity of support systems and institutional coordination;
- highlight opportunities for replication of FI4INN solutions in non-urban, rural, border, island and transforming regions;
- demonstrate the contribution of the events to project visibility, stakeholder engagement and cross-regional learning.

4. Methodological Approach

The four regional events followed a practical and stakeholder-oriented approach. In line with the FI4INN event roadmap, the events were designed to disseminate pilot outcomes, foster uptake in regional ecosystems and support cross-regional learning through workshops, conference sessions, co-creation moments, peer exchange and networking.

The events combined several formats, including presentations of FI4INN outputs, interactive discussions, co-creation sessions, panel debates, startup pitches and networking activities. This approach allowed participants not only to receive information on project results, but also to reflect on how innovative financial instruments, support mechanisms and co-design tools could be applied in their own regional contexts.

The target audiences included local and regional innovation stakeholders, SMEs and startups, policymakers, financial intermediaries, business support organisations, incubators, universities, science and technology parks, investors, rural development actors, civil society organisations, community initiatives and FI4INN project partners.

5. Overview of the Four Regional Events

Event	Location	Date	Organiser	Main focus	Participants
Startup Factory Info Day	Budapest, Hungary	25 June 2025	NIÜ	Early-stage finance, Deep Tech and Startup Factory model	80
CO:ACT Conference - Finance the Future Track	Innsbruck / Tirol, Austria	2-3 October 2025	Impact Hub Vienna / FI4INN	Regional transformation and co-creation of finance approaches	10 in FI4INN's co-creation session
Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs - INSPIRA LEADER 3	Opatija, Croatia	11 November 2025	ZEF	Community-rooted and impact-oriented finance for smart communities	29
Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs	Ostrava, Czechia	27 November 2025	CzechInvest	Improving startup support and impactful instruments	41 attendees / 38 onsite + 3 online

Event 1 - Startup Factory Info Day, Budapest / Hungary

The Hungarian regional event, titled “Startup Factory Info Day”, took place on 25 June 2025 at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics – Building Q. It was organised by NIÜ and gathered 80 participants. The event brought together representatives of public institutions, venture capital firms, incubators, startups and international innovation stakeholders from across Central and Eastern Europe to discuss the future of early-stage startup financing and regional innovation cooperation.

The event focused particularly on strengthening the Deep Tech ecosystem and improving the financial instruments available for innovative startups in the region. The Startup Factory programme was presented as one of Hungary’s flagship startup development initiatives, designed to address the lack of sufficient early-stage funding and professional mentoring for startups in the pre-seed and seed phases.

Under the Startup Factory framework, accredited incubators receive state-backed support to identify and develop promising startups, while combining private capital with public co-financing to reduce investor risk and encourage market participation. The structure also includes a matching fund mechanism, ensuring that market validation remains a core component of investment decisions.

The event also presented FI4INN as a regional initiative aimed at improving financial instruments and innovation support systems across Central and Eastern Europe. Representatives from different partner regions shared best practices and policy approaches related to startup financing, incubation, acceleration, venture capital programmes, guarantees, hybrid financing tools and innovation-driven public support schemes.

Key conclusions included the importance of early-stage capital for startups in Central and Eastern Europe, the strategic relevance of Deep Tech, AI, life sciences, medtech and cleantech, and the value of cross-border cooperation between incubators, investors, governments and innovation agencies. The event also underlined the usefulness of non-dilutive funding and matching fund structures in helping founders access capital without heavy early equity dilution.

Event 2 - CO:ACT Conference, Tirol / Innsbruck

FI4INN participated as an official partner at the CO:ACT Conference, held in Innsbruck on 2–3 October 2025. The project was positioned within the “Finance the Future” track and contributed through a dedicated presentation and an interactive co-creation session titled “Financing Change: New Tools for Regional Transformation.” The session introduced FI4INN’s innovative financial instruments, pilot insights and practical tools, showing how these models could be adapted to diverse regional contexts.

The session adopted an interactive format rather than a traditional panel approach. Participants engaged in hands-on discussions and breakout activities to explore the adaptation of FI4INN methodologies to their own regional ecosystems, with a specific focus on inner peripheries. The co-creation session involved 10 participants, including regional practitioners, policymakers, investors and ecosystem builders.

Key outcomes included the communication of FI4INN objectives and achievements to a regional and international audience, the generation of concrete ideas for local implementation, strengthened cross-border learning and new collaboration opportunities among Central European stakeholders. The event also expanded FI4INN visibility through the partnership with Impact Hub Tirol and the CO:ACT network.

The event identified several barriers relevant to inner peripheries, including limited awareness of alternative financing instruments, fragmented regional ecosystems and weak institutional connectivity, capacity gaps in dealing with complex financial tools, regulatory complexity, and risk aversion among decision-makers.

Event 3 – Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs – INSPIRA LEADER 3, Opatija / Croatia

The Croatian regional event was organised by ZEF on 11 November 2025 in Opatija, within the INSPIRA LEADER 3 conference, a Croatian conference focused on "smart communities" ("Inspiracija za pametne zajednice"). The event took place at Hotel Amadria / Conference Park 25/7 and gathered 29 on-site participants.

The conference brought together local governments, rural development organisations, energy-transition experts, entrepreneurs, researchers, NGOs and community initiatives working on sustainable regional development, especially in rural, coastal and island communities. The event was organised primarily by LEADER mreža Hrvatske together with LAG Terra liburna, LAGUR Vela vrata and EUROPE DIRECT Rijeka, with support from the Hrvatska mreža za ruralni razvoj.

The central theme of the conference was how local communities can become more resilient, energy-independent, digitally capable and economically sustainable through practical innovation. Innovative financial instruments were explicitly addressed as one of the topics of the conference. In this context, FI4INN was presented as a framework for connecting financial innovation with local development, sustainability transition and participatory community-rooted approaches.

The event audience included representatives from regional innovation centres and incubators, universities and science-technology parks, national institutions supporting business and innovation, private companies, startups and FI4INN stakeholders in Croatia. A short survey was conducted on optimal support settings for startups, and the collected insights served as input for the panel discussion.

The event helped translate FI4INN from a transnational policy project into a visible and locally grounded ecosystem initiative connected to real territorial challenges and practical innovation actors. It strengthened stakeholder engagement, expanded the project's relevance beyond conventional startup ecosystems, and reinforced FI4INN's emphasis on participatory, impact-oriented and community-rooted financial instruments.

Event 4 – Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs, Ostrava / Czechia

The CzechInvest regional event, titled "Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs: Designing impactful instruments for innovation," took place on 27 November 2025 at KD Poklad in Ostrava. The event gathered 41 attendees, including 38 on-site participants and 3 online guests, and was organised by CzechInvest Agency.

The event focused on improving support instruments for startups and SMEs from the perspective of policymakers and innovation ecosystem stakeholders. It combined presentations of FI4INN project outputs, international good practices and a panel discussion on the future of startup support in the Czech Republic.

The audience included representatives of regional innovation centres and incubators, universities and science-technology parks, national institutions supporting business and innovation, private companies and FI4INN project partners. The programme presented the FI4INN Virtual Knowledge Centre, the Roadmap of Suitable Financial Instruments, the Support Instrument Canvas and the Czech pilot action focusing on the evaluation of Technology Incubation and recommendations for Technology Incubation 2.0.

A survey conducted during the event showed that current support programmes only partially meet the needs of startups. Financial resources emerged as the primary need, while the main barriers identified included excessive complexity and bureaucracy, insufficient flexibility, weak communication between institutions and startups, and cash-flow limitations affecting early-stage growth.

The event contributed to raising awareness of FI4INN results and generated valuable input for improving innovation support in the Czech Republic. Its regional relevance was particularly strong given Ostrava's profile as a border region undergoing economic transformation, where challenges around innovation support and access to finance are particularly pronounced.

6. Cross-event Findings and Lessons Learned

Across the four regional events, several recurring findings emerged. First, regional stakeholders showed strong interest in innovative financial instruments, but awareness of alternatives to traditional grant funding remains limited. This is particularly relevant in inner peripheries, rural, island, border and transforming regions, where local ecosystems may lack the institutional density and technical capacity needed to engage with more complex financing tools.

Second, the events confirmed the importance of adapting support instruments to the real needs of SMEs and startups. The Hungarian event highlighted the need for early-stage capital and professional mentoring in Deep Tech and pre-seed contexts; the Czech event showed that financial resources remain a primary need but must be easier to access; the Croatian event demonstrated the importance of community-rooted and territorially sensitive instruments; and the CO:ACT session showed the value of collaborative experimentation for regional transformation.

Third, the events demonstrated the value of co-design, stakeholder engagement and peer learning. Participants repeatedly underlined that effective instruments cannot be designed only from a top-down administrative perspective. They need to be informed by startups, SMEs, investors, incubators, public authorities, financial intermediaries, universities, rural development actors and civil society organisations.

Fourth, several events highlighted the importance of combining financial and non-financial support. Mentoring, financial literacy, networking, incubation, investor readiness and capacity-building are essential complements to financial instruments, especially for early-stage startups and smaller organisations in peripheral regions.

Finally, all four events supported FI4INN capitalisation by increasing project visibility, engaging new stakeholders and creating opportunities for the uptake of FI4INN tools and methodologies in different regional contexts.

7. Contribution to FI4INN Capitalisation and Transferability

The four regional events contributed to the mainstreaming of FI4INN pilot results by presenting project outputs in diverse territorial and ecosystem settings. Rather than limiting dissemination to the core pilot territories, the events enabled FI4INN to reach stakeholders active in early-stage finance, Deep Tech, rural and island development, smart communities, startup support, incubation, investment and public policy.

The events also strengthened transferability by showing how FI4INN approaches can be adapted to different contexts. In Hungary, the focus was on strengthening startup financing and incubation through the Startup Factory model. In Tirol, the focus was on co-creation and financing regional transformation. In Croatia, FI4INN was connected to smart communities, territorial resilience and community-rooted finance. In Czechia, FI4INN outputs informed the redesign of startup support and Technology Incubation 2.0.

Together, these events demonstrated that innovative financial instruments must be flexible enough to respond to different regional realities, while still relying on shared principles: stakeholder co-design, evidence-based policy learning, simplification, impact orientation and long-term ecosystem collaboration.

8. Conclusions

D2.4.1 confirms the relevance of regional events as practical spaces for transferring FI4INN results across Central Europe and beyond. The four events showed that financial innovation is not only a technical issue, but also a territorial and ecosystem challenge. Access to finance depends on the quality of instruments, the capacity of institutions, the readiness of startups and SMEs, and the strength of cooperation among local actors.

The events also confirmed that inner peripheries, rural and island areas, border regions and transforming territories require tailored approaches. Standard financial instruments are often not sufficient to address their specific needs. FI4INN therefore contributes by promoting co-designed, impact-oriented and adaptable models that can help regions strengthen their innovation ecosystems and improve access to finance for SMEs and startups.

Overall, the four regional events supported the capitalisation of FI4INN by disseminating pilot results, engaging relevant stakeholders, validating common challenges and identifying opportunities for replication. They represent an important step in ensuring that FI4INN outputs remain useful beyond the project partnership and can inspire further improvements in innovation finance across Central Europe.

9. Annexes

Event reports for the four regional events;

D 2.4.1 Regional Events Targeting Central Europe - CO:ACT

Tirol, 2-3 October 2025

1. Introduction

Impact Hub Vienna facilitated, organised, and designed FI4INN's participation at the regional CO:ACT Conference in Tirol, strategically positioning the project within the Finance the Future track and integrating it fully into the conference's collaborative framework.

Event Overview

FI4INN participated as an official partner at the CO:ACT Conference (2–3 October 2025, Innsbruck). Within the Finance the Future track, the team delivered a dedicated presentation and facilitated an interactive co-creation session titled "Financing Change: New Tools for Regional Transformation." The presentation introduced the project's innovative financial instruments, shared insights from pilot activities, showcased practical tools, and demonstrated how these models can be adapted to diverse regional contexts.

The session is designed as an interactive and collaborative experience rather than a traditional conference panel. Participants engaged in hands-on discussions and breakout activities exploring how these financial tools can be adapted to their own regional ecosystems. The broader objective is to strengthen cross-regional collaboration, disseminate FI4INN project outcomes, and connect stakeholders working on sustainable and inclusive economic transformation.

2. 2. Regional Event Objectives

The overarching objectives of the CO:ACT regional were:

- Position FI4INN as a key contributor to future-oriented financing strategies within the European innovation ecosystem
- Present the project's innovative financial instruments and pilot results to a regional and international audience
- Facilitate hands-on engagement with FI4INN's tools and methodologies through collaborative co-creation
- Strengthen relationships with regional practitioners, policymakers, investors, and ecosystem builders across Central Europe
- Organise regional outreach events and disseminate pilot projects

3. Agenda & Overview

See the annex for the full agenda. The main session hosted by the FI4INN consortium are listed below:

Financing Change: New Tools for Regional Transformation focuses on how innovative financial instruments can support entrepreneurship, regional resilience, and systemic transformation across Central

Europe. Drawing from FI4INN project experiences and pilot models, the session presents practical approaches to financing innovation and regional development.

02 October 2025 19:30 - 22:00 Open Space hosted by FI4INN
03 October 2025 10:15 - 12:30 Thematic Tracks on Financing the Future with Jana Ganzmann & Alicia Trepot Pont

3.1. Introductory Presentation

The introductory presentations will provide an overview of the FI4INN project, its objectives, and its role in advancing financial innovation for regional development. Speakers will introduce key challenges faced by entrepreneurial ecosystems in Central Europe and present examples of pilot financial instruments and support mechanisms developed through the project.

The presentations will also frame the broader “Finance the Future” track by highlighting the importance of collaboration, experimentation, and practical implementation in building sustainable regional economies. This introduction will set the context for the interactive breakout discussions that follow.

3.2. Co-Creation Session

Following the presentation, FI4INN facilitated a 30-minute co-creation breakout session with 10 participants. Regional practitioners, policymakers, investors, and ecosystem builders worked hands-on with the presented tools, exploring how FI4INN's methodologies could be applied in their own territories — particularly in inner peripheries. The session produced concrete ideas for local implementation, strengthened cross-border learning, and opened new avenues for collaboration among Central European stakeholders.

3.3. Participants & Photos from the Session

4. Key Results & Insights

4.1. Outcomes

FI4INN's objectives and achievements were clearly communicated to a diverse regional and international audience

10 participants engaged hands-on with FI4INN's tools during the co-creation session

Concrete ideas for local implementation were generated across Central European regions

Cross-border learning was strengthened and new collaboration avenues were opened

Project visibility was expanded through the partnership with Impact Hub Tirol and the CO:ACT network

FI4INN's positioning within the European innovation ecosystem was reinforced

4.2. Identified Barriers

Limited awareness of alternative financing instruments beyond traditional grant funding

Fragmented regional ecosystems and weak institutional connectivity in inner peripheries

Capacity gaps among local stakeholders to engage with complex financial tools

Regulatory complexity across different national frameworks in Central Europe

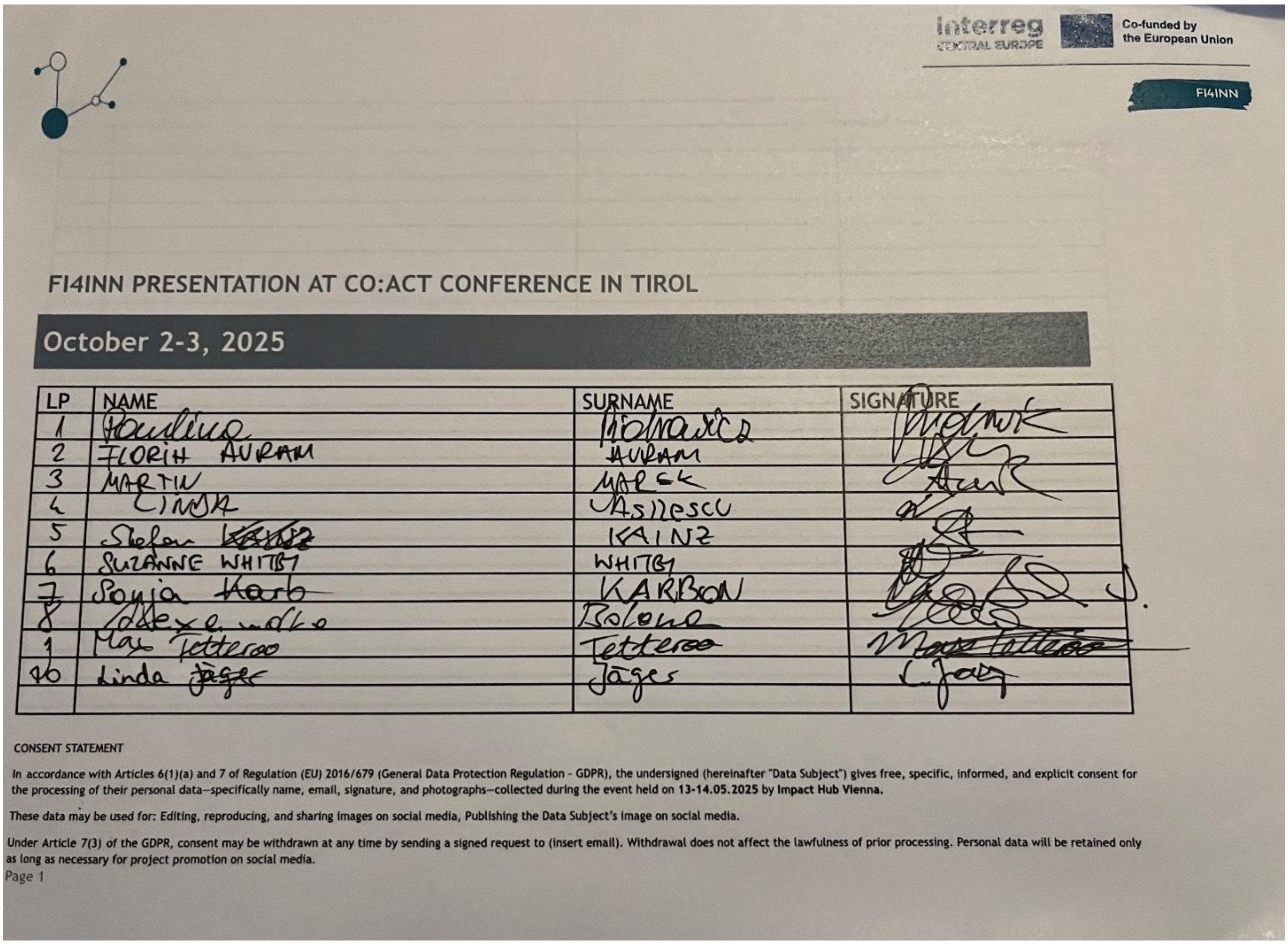
Risk aversion and resistance to systemic change among key decision-makers

5. Conclusions & Next Steps

By embedding FI4INN within the CO:ACT programme, the project fulfilled its requirement to organise regional outreach events and disseminate pilot results. The partnership with Impact Hub Tirol and the broader CO:ACT network expanded the project's visibility and reinforced its positioning within the European innovation ecosystem. Overall, FI4INN's contribution demonstrated the project's relevance, deepened relationships across the partner network, and advanced the capitalisation of outcomes across Central Europe.

Annex

1. Participant's List



FI4INN PRESENTATION AT CO:ACT CONFERENCE IN TIROL

October 2-3, 2025

LP	NAME	SURNAME	SIGNATURE
1	Paulina	[illegible]	
2	FLORIN AVRAM	AVRAM	
3	MARTIN	MAREK	
4	LINDA	VASILESCU	
5	Stefan ~~Kainz~~	KAINZ	
6	SUZANNE WHITBY	WHITBY	
7	Sonja ~~Karb~~	KARBON	
8	Alexandra	Bolona	
1	Max Tetteroo	Tetteroo	
10	Linda ~~Jäger~~	Jäger	

CONSENT STATEMENT

In accordance with Articles 6(1)(a) and 7 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR), the undersigned (hereinafter "Data Subject") gives free, specific, informed, and explicit consent for the processing of their personal data—specifically name, email, signature, and photographs—collected during the event held on **13-14.05.2025** by **Impact Hub Vienna.**

These data may be used for: Editing, reproducing, and sharing images on social media, Publishing the Data Subject's image on social media.

Under Article 7(3) of the GDPR, consent may be withdrawn at any time by sending a signed request to (insert email). Withdrawal does not affect the lawfulness of prior processing. Personal data will be retained only as long as necessary for project promotion on social media.

Page 1

2. Agenda

IMPACT HUB Vienna

CO:ACT

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Agenda

FI4INN

CO:ACT 25 | 2. OCTOBER | INNER WORK	● *Everyone in the hall* ● *Your Thematic Track group*	● *Random groups in various locations*
11:00-11:45	**Info session "Impact Innovation"** Contributing: FFG	**Seminar room - ground floor**
11:00-12:00	**Check in + light Lunch**	**Café - ground floor**
12:00-13:30	**Official Opening** Contributing: Elisabeth Zehetner, Katharina Cibulka, Lena Obermair, Thomas Pupp, Johannes Völlenklee, Alice Elliott, Florian Schuchter & Laura Gruber	**The Hall - ground floor**
13:30-14:00	**Breath & Connect**	**Café - ground floor**
14:00-15:00	**Inner Work for outer change - showcasing the power of the IDGs** Contributing: Sonja Karbon, Dalila Hernandez, Carola Weicksel, Daniela Hekel, Michael Baumgartner & Stefan Baumeister	**The Hall - ground floor**
15:00-15:15	**Breath & Connect**	**Café - ground floor**
15:15-16:15	**Finding common ground** Choose one of the 8 Breakout Sessions	
From Tension to Balance Contributing: Nicole Korlath		**Gronda Office - 3. floor**
From Wealth to Health Contributing: Laura Gruber & Christopher Inwinkl		**Impact Hub CoWorking - 3. floor**
From Pressure to Pleasure Contributing: Daniela Hochmuth		**Seminar room - 2. floor**
From Bossy to Bossless Organising Contributing: Alícia Trepat Pont		**The Hall - ground floor**
From Failing to Learning - Turning Setbacks into collective wisdom Contributing: Romy Sigl		**Seminar room - ground floor**
From Dominance to Care Contributing: Joanna Egger		**Huddle-Room - 1. floor**
From fighting symptoms to changing systems Contributing: Nora Wilhelm		**Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor**
From Linear to Circular: Navigating the Transition Together Contributing: Julia Scharting & Kristina Bogner		**Café - ground floor**
16:15-16:45	**Breath & Connect**	**Café - ground floor**
16:20-16:40	**Mobility break (optional)** Contributing: Laura Gruber & Christopher Inwinkl	**Seminar room - 2. floor**
16:45-17:15	**Building a bridge** Keynote System Change by Nora Wilhelm	**The Hall - ground floor**
17:15- 18:00	**Voices of the day** Contributing: All CO:ACT People	**The Hall - ground floor**
18:00-19:30	**Dinner Dialogues** Contributing: feld:schafft | Meet & Greet with Nora Wilhelm	**Café - ground floor**
18:00-19:30	**Mindful Eating Experience (optional)** Contributing: Soilful	**Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor**
Evening Events: Choose one out of 5 evening events		
19:30-22:00	**The Art of contructive conflict** Contributing: Roumy Iordanova & Florian Ladstätter	**The Hall - ground floor**
19:30-22:00	**Rethinking the City – Innsbruck 2035 in Focus** Contributing: Innsbruck Marketing // Invitation only	**Seminar room - 2. floor**
19:00-22:00	**Alpenpanorama - Landschaftsbilder und alpiner Tourismus im Wandel** Contributing: Innsbruck Tourismus	**AUT, Lois Welzenbacher Platz 1, 6020 Innsbruck**
19:30-22:00	**Open Space** Contributing: Impact Hub Tirol & FI4INN presented by: FI4INN	**Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor**
19:30-22:00	**Q&A with Indy Johar and Charly Kleissner** Contributing: Impact Circle Alps	**Impact Hub CoWorking - 3. floor**

IMPACT HUB Vienna

CO:ACT

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Agenda

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CO:ACT 25 | 3. OCTOBER | OUTER CHANGE	*Everyone in the hall* *Your Thematic Track group*	*Random groups in various locations*
8:00-9:00	**Check-in & Breakfast**	**Café - ground floor**
9:00-9:30	**Official Opening** Contributing: Jesse & Magneto	**The Hall - ground floor**
9:30-10:00	**Keynote Systems Change** Contributing: Indy Johar	**The Hall - ground floor**
10:00-10:15	**Breath & Connect**	**Café - ground floor**
10:15-12:30	**Thematic Tracks** Co-creating in your track group	
Finance the Future Contributing: Jana Ganzmann & Alícia Trepat Pont presented by: FI4INN		**Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor**
Economy is Care Contributing: Jenni Zeller & Joanna Egger		**Impact Hub CoWorking - 3. floor**
Climate Action Now Contributing: Felix Ambros & Sebastian Sobeslavsky		**Die Bäckerei CoWorking - 1. floor**
Technology for Good Contributing: Anna Greil & Florian Daniel		**Seminar room - 2. floor**
New Politcs Contributing: Cora Mantel & Janet Kuschert		**Café - ground floor**
12:30-13:30	**Lunch** Contributing: feld:schafft	**Café - ground floor**
12:30-13:30	**Mindful Eating Experience (optional)** Contributing: Soilful	**Huddle-Room - 1. floor**
13:30-17:00	**Thematic Tracks** Co-creating in your track group	
Finance the Future Contributing: Jana Ganzmann & Alícia Trepat Pont		**Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor**
Economy is Care Contributing: Jenni Zeller & Joanna Egger		**Impact Hub CoWorking - 3. floor**
Climate Action Now Contributing: Felix Ambros & Sebastian Sobeslavsky		**Die Bäckerei CoWorking - 1. floor**
Technology for Good Contributing: Anna Greil & Florian Daniel		**Seminar room - 2. floor**
New Politcs Contributing: Cora Mantel & Janet Kuschert		**Café - ground floor**
17:00-17:30	**Breath & Connect**	**Café - ground floor**
17:30-19:00	**Harvesting Fishbowl** Contributing: All CO:ACT People	**The Hall - ground floor**
19:00-20:00	**Dinner Dialogues** Contributing: feld:schafft	**Café - ground floor**
20:00-23:59	**Afterparty**	**Café - ground floor**

Agenda

✍️ Thematic Tracks on Friday 03. October | Outer Change

Check in starts at 8:00 | Official start of the program is 9:00

▼ Finance the Future

Contributing: Jana Ganzmann, Alícia Trepat Pont

📍 Impact Hub CoWorking - 3. floor

presented by: FI4INN

Capital shapes the future — but how do we direct it toward real systemic change? In this session, we'll dive into the roles of financial institutions, public funding, private investors, and philanthropy in transforming our region. We'll explore the underlying dynamics, belief systems and constraints that are inherent in our current instruments and look towards new paradigms. We'll explore bold new financing models from around the world, prototype local solutions together, and spark collaborations that can carry forward well beyond CO:ACT.

▶ Economy is Care

Contributing: Jenni Zeller, Joanna Egger

📍 Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor

▶ Climate Action Now

Contributing: Felix Ambros, Sebastian Sobeslavsky

📍 Die Bäckerei CoWorking - 1. floor

▶ Technology for Good

Contributing: Anna Greil, Florian Daniel

📍 Seminar room - 2. floor

▶ New Politcs

Contributing: Cora Mantel, Janet Kuschert

📍 Café - ground floor

Agenda

▸ **The Art of contructive conflict**
Contributing: Roumy Iordanova & Florian Ladstätter
📍 The Hall - ground floor

▸ **Rethinking the City – Innsbruck 2035 in Focus – Who Still Needs It? Who Will Bring It to Life?**
Contributing: Innsbruck Marketing
📍 Seminar room - 2. floor
Invitation only

▸ **Alpenpanorama - Landschaftsbilder und alpiner Tourismus im Wandel**
Contributing: Innsbruck Tourismus
📍 AUT, Lois Welzenbacher Platz 1, 6020 Innsbruck
Start 19:00

▾ **Open Space**
Contributing: Impact Hub Tirol & FI4INN
📍 Impact Hub kitchen - 2. floor

presented by: FI4INN

*After a full day of inspiration, impulses, and new ideas, this is your space to **pause, reflect and act**. The Open Space method gives you the chance to **take ownership of the conversations that matter most to you**:*

- ***Host your own topic** or **join discussions** started by others.*
- ***No time limits** – conversations flow as long as the energy is there.*
- ***Move freely** between groups and explore different perspectives.*
- *Keep it structured or simply gather in an **informal circle** – both ways are welcome.*

*This is the moment to **transform today's input into dialogue and action**. Share your reflections, test your ideas, or challenge assumptions together.*

👉 *To kick things off, one **fixed topic from FI4INN** will be:*

"Supporting the co-design of impactful financial instruments for boosting innovation in SMEs and start-ups across Central Europe."

Beyond that – it's your space. Bring in what inspired you today and let's co-create the next steps.

Language: primarily english

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Regional Event - CzechInvest - Report

Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs: Designing impactful instruments for innovation

November 27th 2025 | Ostrava

Version 1

11 2025

SMARTER SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS & SMES: DESIGNING IMPACTFUL INSTRUMENTS FOR INNOVATION

REGIONAL EVENT - CZECHIA - REPORT

A. Partner details

Partner - organizer of the meeting:	CzechInvest Agency
Partner member responsible for the organization:	Martin Marek, Michal Tureček

B. Event details

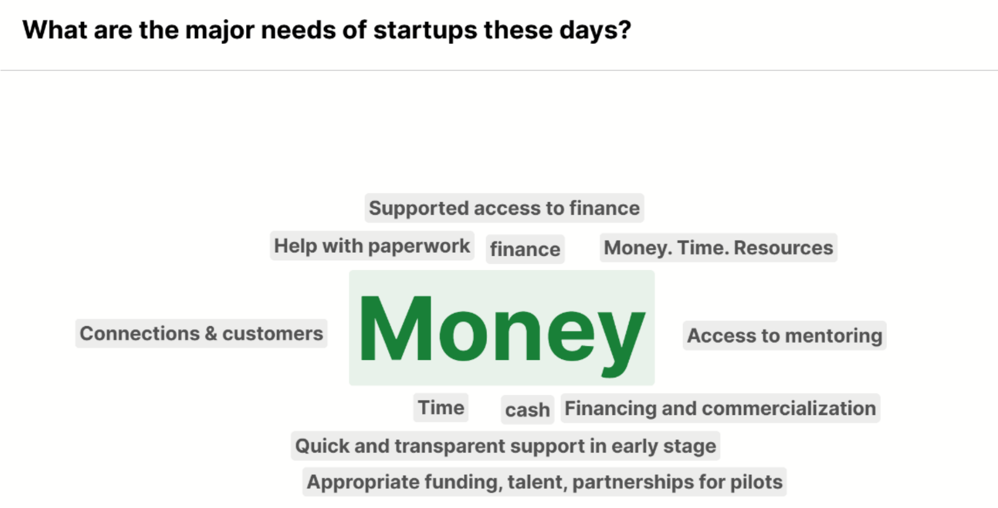
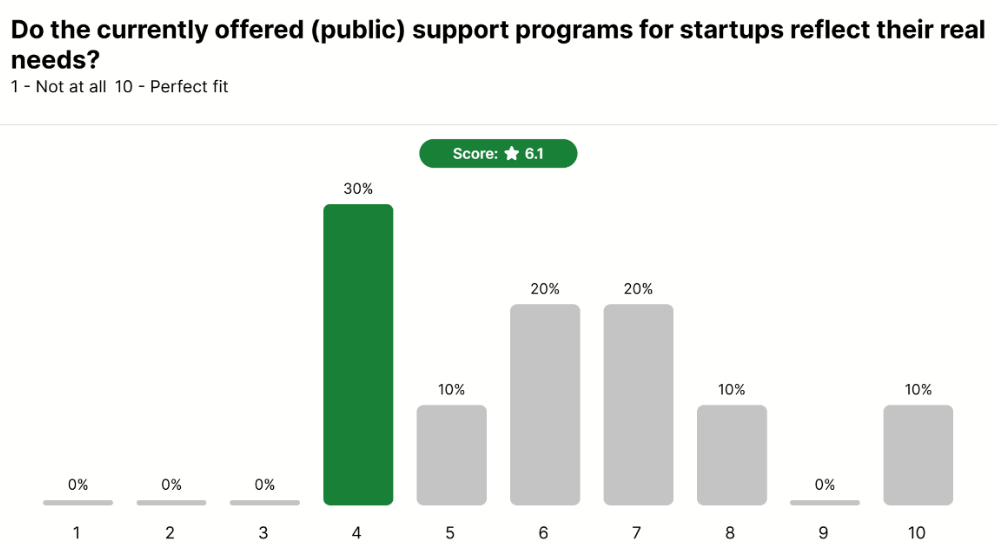
Details of the meeting	**Date**	**November 27th 2025**
	Number of attendees	**41**
	Venue	**KD Poklad, Ostrava**
KPIs	**Registered Attendees (if applicable)**	**25 confirmed in person registrations + 9 online**
	Number of participants	**38 on spot participants (including 7 internal experts) + 3 online guests**

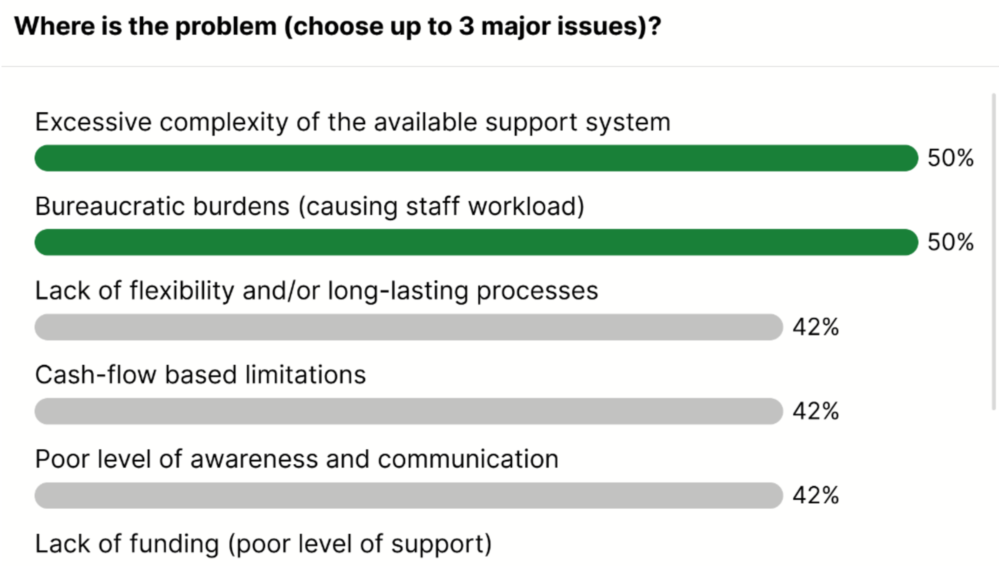
C. Event results

Summary of the meeting (max. 1000 characters) agenda, main topics tackled, participants etc.	**Overview** The event aimed to present the outputs of the **FI4INN project**, focusing on improving support instruments for startups and SMEs from the perspective of policymakers and innovation ecosystem stakeholders. The program combined presentations of project results, international best practices, and a panel discussion on the future of startup support in the Czech Republic.

	Attendance
	A total of **41 participants** attended the event, including **3 online attendees**. The audience consisted of representatives from:
	• Regional innovation centers and incubators
	• Universities and science-technology parks
	• National institutions supporting business and innovation (e.g., Ministry of Industry and Trade, Technology Agency of the Czech Republic)
	• Private companies (startups)
	• FI4INN project partners
	
	Program Highlights
	1. **Part I - Improving Support Instruments for Innovation** Presentation of FI4INN project outputs, including:
	  ○ Virtual Knowledge Centre
	  ○ Roadmap of Suitable Financial Instruments
	  ○ Support Instrument Canvas
	  ○ Pilot Action in Czechia focusing on evaluation of the Technology Incubation and recommendations for Technology incubation 2.0
	2. **Part II - Inspiration from Abroad** International best practices shared by:
	  ○ **Hungarian Innovation Agency** – Hungarian approach - Startup Factory as a case study
	  ○ **Regional Development Agency Bielsko-Biała** – Building a startup ecosystem from scratch
	  ○ **Impact Hub Vienna** – Impact-driven support as a new standard
	  ○ **TEC4I FVG** (online) – Enhancing regional competitiveness through talent and finance
	3. **Part III - Panel Discussion** Topic: *What should support for innovative activities by startups and SMEs look like in the future?* Panelists included representatives from CzechInvest, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, and Moravian-Silesian Innovation Centre.

Key conclusions and policy recommendations , pilot actions	**Survey & Insights** During the event, a **short survey** was conducted on the topic of **optimal support settings for startups**. The collected insights served as input for the panel

ideas (max. 1000 characters)	discussion, helping to shape recommendations for future innovation policies and funding instruments. SLIDO:  



Networking

The event concluded with a networking session, providing participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas and foster collaboration across the Czech and international innovation ecosystem.

Key Findings

Current support options only partially meet the needs of startups.

The **primary need remains financial resources**, highlighting the importance of accessible funding instruments.

In the context of support design, **major challenges include**:

- Excessive **complexity and bureaucracy** of the system
- **Insufficient flexibility** of programs
- **Weak communication** between institutions and startups
- **Cash-flow limitations** that hinder early-stage growth

Support institutions are actively working to improve their offerings and can draw inspiration from **innovative approaches abroad**, which the FI4INN project facilitates through its international partnerships.

An **impact-driven approach** to startup support is emerging as a significant trend, emphasizing social and environmental value alongside economic growth.

Event Impact

This event significantly contributed to **raising awareness about the FI4INN project and its current results**, while also generating **valuable inputs for the ongoing discussion on improving innovation support in the Czech Republic.** In the **regional context**, the discussion was particularly important as it highlighted

	challenges that are even more pronounced in **border regions undergoing economic transformation**, such as Ostrava and similar areas.
Photo material uploaded on Basecamp	**Yes**
News related to the meeting Please provide links to media appearances (e.g. on your website or radio, on-line portals, blogs etc.)	https://czechinvest.gov.cz/cz/Homepage/Akce/Smarter-Support-for-Startups-SMEs-Designing-impactful-instruments-for-innovation
List of attendees uploaded on Basecamp	**Yes**

D. List of participants

Institution	Representative	E-mail
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Regional Event

25.06.2025 | Budapest, HU

Version 1

11 2025

STARTUP FACTORY INFO DAY

Regional Event - Hungary - REPORT

A. Partner details

Partner – organizer of the meeting:	NIÜ
Partner member responsible for the organization:	Zoltán Palotai

B. Event details

Details of the meeting	**Date**	**25.06.2025**
	Number of attendees	**80**
	Venue	**Budapest University of Technology and Economics - Building Q**
KPIs	**Registered Attendees (if applicable)**	
	Number of participants	

1. Summary of the meeting

The Hungarian Innovation Agency Startup Factory Open Day was held on June 25, 2025, at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics Building Q. The event brought together representatives of public institutions, venture capital firms, incubators, startups, and international innovation stakeholders from across Central and Eastern Europe to discuss the future of early-stage startup financing and regional innovation cooperation. The conference focused particularly on strengthening the Deep Tech ecosystem and improving financial instruments available for innovative startups in the region.

The event opened with remarks from Bódis László, who introduced the strategic mission of the Hungarian Innovation Agency (NIÜ). In his speech, he emphasized the agency's role in modernizing and strengthening the Hungarian innovation ecosystem through the creation of new funding structures, national pilot programs, and stronger institutional coordination between government, academia, investors, and startups. Particular emphasis was placed on supporting high-potential Deep Tech ventures capable of generating globally competitive technologies and intellectual property. A major strategic objective outlined during the presentation was to increase the number of new Hungarian Deep Tech startups to approximately 30-50 annually while improving the country's international innovation performance.

One of the central topics of the conference was the presentation of the Startup Factory program, which serves as one of Hungary's flagship startup development initiatives. The program was introduced as a comprehensive financial and incubation mechanism designed to address one of the most significant weaknesses in the regional ecosystem: the lack of sufficient early-stage funding and professional mentoring for startups in their pre-seed and seed phases. Under the Startup Factory framework, accredited incubators receive state-backed support to identify and develop promising startups. These incubators combine private capital with public co-financing to reduce investor risk and encourage more active market participation in early-stage investments. The structure also includes a matching fund mechanism, where public capital is invested alongside private investors, ensuring that market validation remains a core component of investment decisions.

The conference also highlighted the international dimension of startup financing through the presentation of the FI4INN project. Claudia B., the project lead from Udine, presented FI4INN as a regional initiative aimed at improving financial instruments and innovation support systems across Central and Eastern Europe. Representatives from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Austria, and Italy shared best practices and policy approaches related to startup financing, incubation, acceleration, venture capital programs, guarantees, hybrid financing tools, and innovation-driven public support schemes. The discussions demonstrated that while the participating countries face similar structural challenges, regional cooperation offers significant opportunities for scaling innovation and sharing institutional knowledge.

Special attention was given to sector-focused incubation and investment strategies. Speakers emphasized the increasing importance of specialized incubators operating in fields such as life sciences, medical technologies, artificial intelligence, Deep Tech, and environmental technologies. These sectors were identified as areas where Europe currently has strong growth potential and strategic importance. At the same time, several presentations noted that Europe continues to lag behind global competitors in certain critical technologies, particularly cybersecurity, distributed digital infrastructure, and trust architecture systems.

During the second half of the event, Startup Factory incubators introduced their portfolios and operational models. Participants received an overview of how the program plans to support approximately 50–70 innovative startups over a three-year period with a total funding allocation of 5.75 billion HUF (approximately EUR 14.5 million). The incubators presented several successful startup case studies and highlighted the growing share of patent-driven and Deep Tech-oriented companies within their portfolios. Many startups are developing B2B SaaS products, web and mobile applications, cleantech solutions, and medical technologies with international market ambitions. Some incubators also described their efforts to integrate university research projects into the startup ecosystem and to connect founders with international investors through podcasts, demo days, and cross-border networking initiatives.

The closing panel discussion focused on the broader issue of regional collaboration in early-stage financing. Participants, including leading venture capital and incubator representatives, discussed the structural fragmentation of the Central and Eastern European startup market. One of the major conclusions was that seed-stage investment ecosystems can only function effectively if startups also have access to later-stage financing rounds such as Series A, B, and C funding. Panelists stressed the importance of creating standardized investment frameworks, improving regulatory conditions, and establishing stronger regional investor networks capable of supporting startup growth beyond domestic markets.

The event concluded with one-minute startup pitches by pre-registered innovators, followed by networking sessions that enabled further discussions among investors, incubators, policymakers, and startup founders. The organizers also announced that the initiative will continue through the Hungarian Innovation Agency's upcoming large-scale "Innovation Week" event planned for September 2025.

2. Key conlcusions

The Startup Factory Open Day clearly demonstrated that Hungary is positioning innovation and Deep Tech development as central pillars of its long-term economic strategy. The creation of new financing structures and targeted incubation programs reflects a broader ambition to strengthen the country's competitiveness within the European innovation ecosystem.

A major takeaway from the conference was that access to early-stage capital remains one of the most critical challenges for startups in Central and Eastern Europe. The Startup Factory model addresses this issue by combining public funding with market-based investment mechanisms, thereby reducing risk for private investors while maintaining professional investment discipline. This hybrid approach was widely presented as a practical solution for supporting highly innovative but inherently risky technology ventures.

Another important conclusion was the growing importance of regional cooperation. Because startup ecosystems in the region remain relatively fragmented and limited in scale, cross-border collaboration between incubators, investors, governments, and innovation agencies is increasingly necessary. Initiatives such as FI4INN demonstrate that knowledge sharing and coordinated financial instruments can help create stronger regional innovation capacity and improve international competitiveness.

The discussions also highlighted the strategic importance of specialized innovation sectors. Deep Tech, artificial intelligence, life sciences, medtech, and cleantech are emerging as priority areas where both Hungary and Europe see long-term growth opportunities. At the same time, concerns were raised that Europe still faces competitive disadvantages in key digital infrastructure and cybersecurity technologies, suggesting that further investment and policy support will be required.

The event further underlined that non-dilutive funding mechanisms and matching fund structures are becoming increasingly valuable in the startup ecosystem. By allowing startups to access capital without immediate heavy equity dilution, these instruments help founders focus on product development, market validation, and scaling activities during the most vulnerable stages of company growth.

Finally, the conference reinforced the importance of visibility, networking, and international integration. Events such as the Startup Factory Open Day not only facilitate financing opportunities but also strengthen relationships between stakeholders, increase international exposure for startups, and help integrate Hungarian innovators into broader European and global innovation networks.

List of annexes:

- Event agenda
- Attendance sheet

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

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FI4INN

Regional Event - ZEF - Report

Smarter Support for Startups & SMEs: Designing impactful instruments for innovation

11th November 2025 | Opatija

Version 1

11 2025

SMARTER SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS & SMES:
DESIGNING IMPACTFUL INSTRUMENTS FOR INNOVATION

REGIONAL EVENT - CROATIA - REPORT

A. Partner details

Partner – organizer of the meeting:	ZEF (PP9)
Partner member responsible for the organization:	Goran Jeras
Summary of the meeting (max. 1000 characters) agenda, main topics tackled, participants etc.	**Overview** The INSPIRA LEADER 3 conference is a Croatian conference focused on “smart communities” (“Inspiracija za pametne zajednice”), held in Opatija on 10–11 November 2025 at the Conference Park 25/7 venue. It brought together local governments, rural development organisations, energy-transition experts, entrepreneurs, researchers, NGOs, and community initiatives working on sustainable regional development, especially in rural, coastal, and island communities. The conference was organised primarily by LEADER mreža Hrvatske together with LAG Terra liburna, LAGUR Vela vrata and EUROPE DIRECT Rijeka, with support from the Hrvatska mreža za ruralni razvoj. Its central theme was how local communities can become more resilient, energy-independent, digitally capable, and economically sustainable through practical innovation rather than abstract policy discussions. The conference explicitly targeted innovative financial instruments as one of the topics of the conference.

B. Event details

Details of the meeting	**Date**	**November 11th 2025**
	Number of attendees	29
	Venue	**Hotel Amadria, Opatija,**
KPIs	**Registered Attendees applicable)**	**29 confirmed in person registrations**
	Number of participants	**29 on spot participants**

C. Event results

	Attendance A total of 29 **participants** attended the event. The audience consisted of representatives from: • Regional innovation centers and incubators • Universities and science-technology parks • National institutions supporting business and innovation (e.g., Ministry of Industry and Trade, Technology Agency of the Croatia) • Private companies (startups) • FI4INN stakeholders in Croatia
Key conclusions and policy recommendations ,	**Survey & Insights** During the event, a **short survey** was conducted on the topic of **optimal support settings for startups.** The collected insights served as input for the panel. INSPIRA LEADER 3 helped translate FI4INN from a transnational policy project into a visible,

pilot actions	locally grounded ecosystem initiative connected to real territorial challenges and practical innovation actors. It strengthened stakeholder engagement, expanded the project's relevance beyond conventional startup ecosystems, and reinforced the project's emphasis on participatory, impact-oriented and community-rooted financial instruments.

Photo material uploaded on Basecamp	**Yes**
News related to the meeting Please provide links to media appearances (e.g. on your website or radio, on-line portals, blogs etc.)	https://hmrr.hr/odrzana-konferencija-inspira-leader-3-inspiracija-za-pametne-zajednice/
List of attendees uploaded on Basecamp	**Yes**

D. List of participants

No.	Name	Organisation
1	Vedran Kirinčić	Tehnički fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci
2	Ugo Toić	Otočna razvojna agencija OTRA, Cres
3	Franjo Toić	Energetska zadruga Apsyrtides, Cres
4	Antun Pfeifer	Fakultet strojarstva i brodogradnje Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
5	Goran Čačić	Zelena energetska zadruga (ZEZ)
6	Marin Gregorović	Grad Cres
7	Antonija Bišćan	JU Natura 2000 Karlovačke županije
8	Daniela Peris	JU Razvojna agencija Karlovačke županije
9	Helena Štemberga	Energy Scouts
10	Denis Redžić	Energy Scouts
11	Stella Hrvatin	Energy Scouts
12	Mladen Brajan	Upravni odjel za turizam, poduzetništvo i ruralni razvoj Primorsko-goranske županije
13	Anđela Cvjetković	LAG Terra liburna
14	Doris Sošić	Institut za poslovnu izvrsnost, poduzetništvo i održive sustave
15	Robert Hadžić	ViridisFarm-AS d.o.o.

16	Sergej Lugović	Vesela Motika d.o.o.
17	Ivor Jelavić	Escont Partners d.o.o.
18	Sebastjan Pikl	Inštitut za ekonomsko demokracijo, Ljubljana
19	Goran Jeras	Zadruga za etično financiranje
20	Sandra Maglov	Orada Adratic d.o.o.
21	Marijeta Čalić	LAG 5
22	Ivan Lauc	Plodovi.hr / Reducos Software j.d.o.o.
23	Renato Stanković	Grad Kastav
24	Marija Kuljerić	Društvo Samotvorac, Silba
25	Verica Mušić	Hrvatska mreža za ruralni razvoj
26	Daniel Đuranović	Riječka razvojna agencija Porin d.o.o.
27	Neven Vidaković	Escont Partners d.o.o.
28	Eliana Zec Solina	Obrt Bonanova
29	Ana Aničić	EUROPE DIRECT Rijeka