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TASK4ISI

D.2.3.2 - Local Action Plan Package – ISIHUB Split-Dalmatia County

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TASK4ISI • Local Action Plan Package

Local Action Plan Package — Split-Dalmatia County

Region	Split-Dalmatia County, Croatia
Prepared by	PI RERA S.D.
LAPP period	October 2026 – October 2031 (five years, reviewed annually)

Purpose of this document

TASK4ISI brings together five European regions — Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Split-Dalmatia County (Croatia), Thuringia (Germany), Małopolska (Poland) and Central Hungary — around a shared challenge: many people who could become entrepreneurs never take that step. Women, young people, people with disabilities and residents of peripheral areas remain under-represented in entrepreneurship, not because support does not exist, but because it does not always reach them. TASK4ISI refers to them as "missing entrepreneurs". Each region tested pilot programmes with these groups, and the partnership used the lessons to develop a Joint Strategy Agenda (JSA), built around one strategic goal and four priorities (box below).

This Local Action Plan Package (LAPP) turns the JSA into practical action in Split-Dalmatia County for October 2026–October 2031 and will be reviewed annually. It is based on three sources: the JSA; evidence from the two county pilots delivered in 2025–2026 — Business Skills and Business Matchmaking; and the regional stakeholder workshop held during LAPP preparation. The actions below reflect the conclusions from all three.

The logic is straightforward. Split-Dalmatia County already offers a wide range of entrepreneurship support, but there is no clear first point of entry. The LAPP therefore:

- proposes **a single entry point** — the ISIHUB one-stop shop (A3);
- continues **the two education programmes successfully piloted** during the TASK4ISI project — the Business Skills Programme (A1) and the Business Matchmaking and Networking Programme (A2);
- strengthens **communication** so that people can find the support available to them (A4).

Together, the four action lines create one pathway.

The four action lines do not operate as separate five-year interventions. A1 and A2 run in annual cycles and are refined each year. A3 is established once and then operates continuously. A4 also runs continuously, supported by an annual media plan and ongoing internal advocacy. Section 1.4 presents the timeline.

Throughout the plan, the Split Development Agency RaST is referred to as the proposed future host of the ISIHUB one-stop shop and the proposed Regional ISIHUB Lead. This arrangement has not yet been agreed. RaST was identified as the preferred option at the stakeholder workshop, and negotiations are ongoing. All references to RaST in this role should therefore be read as proposed rather than confirmed.

The JSA framework behind this LAPP is summarised below. Its four priorities respond to barriers identified across the five regions: financial and administrative burdens, skills gaps, fragmented support systems and unequal territorial access. Each action line in the LAPP is linked to one or more of these priorities.

JSA Strategic Goal: expand participation of under-represented groups in entrepreneurship, so that missing

entrepreneurs become a recognised source of innovation, diversification and territorial resilience within S3/S4+ frameworks.

P1 Lower the financial and administrative threshold

P2 Build skills and capabilities through accessible learning

P3 Make support systems easier to navigate through ISIHUB intermediaries

P4 Reach across territories through hybrid delivery

This LAPP concentrates on P3 and P2 (Section 1.2).

1 Strategic Positioning

1.1 Regional starting point

Split-Dalmatia County has a highly seasonal, tourism-dependent economy and a clear divide between Split and the hinterland and islands. Most entrepreneurship support is concentrated in Split, while people elsewhere face fewer services and higher costs of participation. The county consistently has the highest absolute number of registered unemployed people in Croatia, with women forming the largest group. Training, incubation, finance and advisory support are available, but the system is fragmented and a first-time founder has no obvious place to start. The LAPP therefore focuses on better coordination rather than creating new services, while building access outside Split into delivery from the outset.

1.2 Priority focus: P3 and P2

The LAPP focuses on two of the four JSA priorities.

P3 — make support systems easier to navigate (primary priority). The main problem is not the absence of support, but the difficulty of finding the right support and moving through the system. This affects first-time founders from under-represented groups most. Both pilots showed the value of trusted intermediaries: participation worked because delivery was anchored in institutions people already knew. The LAPP therefore gives this intermediary role a permanent form.

P2 — build skills and capabilities (second priority). Skills gaps remain an important barrier for women and young people, but the skills pilot also showed that confidence is a separate issue. The offer therefore combines business knowledge (A1.1), confidence-building (A1.2) and innovation literacy (A1.3) — the ability to improve a product, service or process in any type of business. A1 (Business Skills Programme) and A2 (Business Matchmaking and Networking) both contribute to P2.

P4 and P1 are addressed through delivery rather than separate action lines. Territorial reach (P4) is built into all four actions: at least 30% of participants should come from outside the Split urban area; one Business Skills intake each year will take place outside Split or in hybrid format (A1.5); at least one networking and matchmaking event each year will be held in the hinterland or on the islands (A2.4); and the one-stop shop will combine rotating field visits to local units of self-government with periodic information days outside Split (A3.3). The financial and administrative threshold (P1) is addressed mainly through referral. The county partnership cannot create financial instruments, but participation remains free, application procedures are kept simple, and participants are referred to relevant HAMAG-BICRO and HZZ instruments through named contacts.

1.3 What the pilots and the stakeholders taught us — and what this plan changes

The Business Skills Programme ran from 20 November 2025 to 17 January 2026 at Technology Park Split, with CEDRA Split delivering evening sessions. Twenty women and young people were selected from 23 applications. The programme combined a 20-hour core module on starting a business, a 10-hour targeted track and a full-day practical camp. The strongest lesson was that lack of knowledge was often not the main barrier: self-doubt and fear of failure mattered just as much. Participants rated the confidence track — covering self-doubt, imposter syndrome, stress management and burnout prevention, with established female entrepreneurs as guest speakers — as the most useful part of the programme. Evening delivery (18:00–21:00) also proved important for participants who were working or studying.

The Business Matchmaking Programme ran from 25 to 28 May 2026 as an intensive 30-hour week at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, followed by a matchmaking event on 29 June linked to the DUMP DAYS industry conference. Participants met 23 companies, including 16 at exhibition booths. Demand exceeded expectations: 38 people took part compared with 20 planned places, and 28 completed the full 30 hours. Facilitated sessions and prepared pitches generated concrete leads. Linking the final event to an established conference gave participants access to more companies than a standalone event was likely to attract. The pilot also revealed very different levels of readiness — from students to entrepreneurs already in business — showing that future participants should be routed according to readiness rather than treated as one cohort.

The regional stakeholder workshop added a third source of evidence. Representatives of municipalities, the private sector, civil society and support organisations worked in three groups on priorities, feasible next steps, the future ISIHUB host and sustainability. Two groups selected P3 — easier navigation of the support system — as one of the county's most relevant priorities for the next two years. P1, P2 and P4 were each selected by one group, reinforcing the need to combine coordination with accessible training and wider territorial reach. For 2026–2027, participants proposed three practical steps: establish the one-stop shop in Split; strengthen and broaden the Business Skills Programme through more workshops, stronger promotion and exchange with other regional development agencies; and improve access through hybrid training and periodic field visits to other local units of self-government, including the islands and the Dalmatian hinterland. All three groups identified the Split Development Agency RaST (Entrepreneurial Incubator) as a possible future ISIHUB host and coordinator, working with local units of self-government, HZZ, HAMAG-BICRO, the chambers (HGK, HOK), the Faculty of Economics and civil-society organisations. They also agreed that continuation after TASK4ISI will require stable institutional and financial support from the County and cities, while partner organisations contribute through their regular roles. Private-sector representatives specifically offered networking support for new entrepreneurs. These conclusions are reflected in A1, A2 and A4, the funding model in Section 5.2 and the proposed hosting arrangement in Section 3.1.

Across the two pilots, three lessons stand out.

- **First, trusted existing institutions were more effective than creating new delivery structures.**
- **Second, recruitment depended almost entirely on partners' existing communication channels; the hub does not yet have its own.**
- **Third, both pilots were delivered only in Split, leaving a clear territorial access gap.**

These three lessons provide the rationale for A3 (the ISIHUB one-stop shop), A4 (Communication), and the territorial design rules built into all four action lines. Table 1 shows how each lesson is reflected in the design of the plan.

Table 1. From pilot lesson to design change

What the pilots showed	What this LAPP does about it

What the pilots showed	What this LAPP does about it
Confidence, not knowledge, is the binding constraint for women and young people	The 10-hour confidence track is funded as core content, never as an optional extra (A1.2)
Individual attention produces results — and requires the most staff time	Mentoring is budgeted per participant, and intake size is set by mentoring capacity (A1.4)
Mixed readiness reduces the value of an intensive cycle	An entry check routes applicants: those not yet ready go to A1, those ready go to A2 (A2.1)
A closing event linked to an existing conference reaches many companies at low cost	Matchmaking events are linked to established industry events (A2.2)
Both pilots used trusted host institutions, not new structures	The hub coordinates existing organisations and is hosted by a trusted existing organisation (RaST is the proposed host) — it is not a new institution (A3)
Recruitment relied on partners' existing channels	The hub gets a small set of dedicated channels, matched to each target group (A4.1–A4.2)
Both pilots were delivered in Split only	30% non-urban participation target; one non-urban or hybrid A1 intake per year; one A2 event outside Split; A3 field visits (A1.5, A2.4, A3.3)
Participants start conventional businesses and do not yet see innovation as relevant to them	Innovation literacy becomes part of the skills core: practical product, service and process innovation (A1.3, Section 5.3)

1.4 How the plan works — implementation logic and timeline

The four action lines form a single pathway:

- A4 — Communication makes the support offer visible and easy to find;
- A3 — ISIHUB one-stop shop receives people and directs them to the right support;
- A1 — Business Skills Programme builds the skills and confidence needed to start and run a business;
- A2 — Business Matchmaking and Networking turns that preparation into partnerships and first customers;
- A3 — ISIHUB one-stop shop then refers those who are ready to financing (HAMAG-BICRO, HZZ), incubation and acceleration (Technology Park Split), or city and county programmes.

Together, these actions cover the full pathway without creating services that duplicate existing county support.

The LAPP runs for five years, but delivery is organised in annual cycles:

- A1 — Business Skills Programme: intake cycles repeated every year (up to two per year);
- A2 — Business Matchmaking and Networking: one structured cycle plus networking events every year;
- A3 — ISIHUB one-stop shop: established once — the set-up, including the budget line, is the work of the first two years — then operates continuously;
- A4 — Communication: continuous, with the media plan renewed annually.

Each year ends with a stakeholder workshop that also serves as the annual LAPP review. Table 2 shows the implementation rhythm.

Table 2. Timeline — what happens when (October 2026 – October 2031)

Action line	Year 1 (10/2026 – end 2027)	Years 2–3 (2028–2029)	Years 4–5 (2030–2031)
A1 — Business Skills Programme annual intake cycles	One intake is delivered in Split, now including the innovation-literacy module. Funding for the yearly base intake is agreed as part of the ISIHUB budget line.	Two intakes per year: one in Split, one outside Split or in hybrid format. Each non-urban intake is evaluated before the next one.	Two intakes per year continue as a regular programme of the hub, funded from the base budget line; EU calls fund additional intakes when open.
A2 — Business Matchmaking and Networking one cycle + events per year	One 30-hour cycle is delivered, with the new entry readiness check; the closing event is attached to an industry conference.	The same yearly cycle continues, now with at least one additional networking event per year held outside Split.	The yearly cycle and events continue as a regular programme of the hub.
A3 — ISIHUB one-stop shop set-up, then continuous	The host arrangement is negotiated (RaST is the proposed host) and negotiation of the county budget line starts — the precondition of the whole plan (Section 5.2). If the negotiations are concluded successfully, the handover of the Lead role from PI RERA S.D. could take place in the first half of 2027.	The desk opens at Technology Park Split; referral protocols and the first-contact register come into use; field visits to municipalities start on a rotating schedule.	The one-stop shop operates continuously as the permanent home of A1 (Business Skills), A2 (Matchmaking) and A4 (Communication), funded from the budget line.
A4 — Communication continuous	The hub webpage, social channel, newsletter and the single ecosystem calendar go live; the first annual results brief is presented to the City and the County.	The media plan is repeated every year. Advocacy inputs are delivered into the county development strategy revision (2027–28) and into S3 2028+ programming.	The channels are run by RaST (proposed host) as part of its regular communication; the annual results brief and media plan continue.

The stakeholder workshop at the end of each year is used to review and, where needed, update the LAPP.

2 Action Lines

Each action line is linked to one or more JSA priorities and follows the same format. Section 1.3 brings together the evidence behind the design choices so it does not need to be repeated under every action. Funding follows the two-layer model in Section 5.2: a stable base for continuity, with EU and national funding used for expansion when available.

2.1 Overview

ID	Action line	Target group	JSA priority	Rhythm	Status

ID	Action line	Target group	JSA priority	Rhythm	Status
A1	Business Skills Programme — consolidation and scale-up	Women (all ages); youth 18–30; people with disabilities	P2 (also P4)	Annual — up to two intakes/year	Under discussion — piloted 2025/2026
A2	Business Matchmaking and Networking	Early-stage entrepreneurs	P3 (also P2, P1)	Annual — one cycle + events/year	Under discussion — piloted 2026
A3	ISIHUB one-stop shop — single entry point	All entrepreneurs; targeted outreach for under-represented groups	P3 (also P1, P4)	Set-up, then continuous	Under discussion — host proposed, under discussion budget to be calculated
A4	Communication — internal advocacy and external visibility	Potential entrepreneurs outside the support system; policy actors	P3 (also P2, P4)	Continuous	Proposal

2.2 Action lines in detail

Action Line A1 — Business Skills Programme: consolidation and scale-up	
Title and JSA link	Title: Business Skills Programme — consolidation and scale-up. Primarily advances: P2 — skills and capabilities through low-threshold learning. Also contributes to: P4, through the yearly non-urban or hybrid intake (A1.5).
Rationale	The county does face a skills gap, but the pilot showed that knowledge is only part of the problem. For many women and young people, self-doubt and fear of failure were stronger barriers. The pilot also confirmed that evening sessions (18:00–21:00) make participation possible for people who work or study, and that first-time founders benefit from seeing how their ideas connect to markets and sectors in which the county is already investing. | Retained: the two-track design — a core module for all participants plus a dedicated track for the target group — evening delivery and individual mentoring based on each participant's own business case. | Changed: the confidence track becomes a funded core component (A1.2); an innovation-literacy module is added to make innovation relevant to conventional service businesses (A1.3, Section 5.3); and one intake each year is delivered outside Split or in hybrid format (A1.5). What is retained: the two-track design (core module for everyone, dedicated track for the specific group), evening delivery, and individual mentoring on the participant's own business case. What is changed: the confidence track becomes a funded core component (A1.2); an innovation-literacy module is added, because the target group starts conventional service businesses and does not regard innovation as something available to it (A1.3, Section 5.3); and delivery leaves Split once a year (A1.5).
Main activities	A1.1 — 20-hour core module: what it takes to start a business. Delivered to the whole intake in evening sessions (18:00–21:00). It addresses, in sequence, the questions that typically concern a first-time founder: is the idea worth pursuing (tested with SWOT and the Business Model Canvas); how and in what legal form to register, with the tax and contribution obligations each form carries; how to get the first customers

	with low-cost marketing and digital tools; where the money comes from (what HAMAG-BICRO, HZZ self-employment support and county, national and EU programmes actually offer and require); and where the idea fits in the region — which sectors the county and the national Smart Specialisation Strategy are investing in. A1.2 — 10-hour confidence track for the specific target groups. Run separately for women and for young people, funded as a core component and never as an optional extra. It works on recognising and handling self-doubt and imposter syndrome; managing stress and preventing burnout; presenting yourself and your business to a bank, a client or a public authority; and meeting established female entrepreneurs who have been through the same steps. A1.3 — Innovation literacy module (new in V2). A short module built into the core, on one idea: innovation is not reserved for technology start-ups. A product, a service or a process can be improved in any business — a small travel agency, for example, can innovate its offer with new niche itineraries, its booking process or its partner network. The module uses concrete county examples rather than start-up folklore, and shows participants where a developed improvement idea can be taken: innovation vouchers and grant schemes for newly established SMEs, to which the one-stop shop (A3) refers graduates with a named contact. Rationale in Section 5.3. A1.4 — Individual mentoring, budgeted per participant. A set number of one-to-one hours with a mentor, spent on the participant's own business case rather than a generic example, plus catch-up sessions for anyone who misses a module. A1.5 — One intake per year outside the Split urban area or delivered in hybrid format. Introduced from Year 2, evaluated after each round before wider rollout, and organised with the local unit of self-government hosting it (link to A3.3 and A4). A1.6 — Peer exchange with the other TASK4ISI regions through the ISIHUB network: trainers and coordinators compare curricula and delivery problems, so no region redesigns the programme from scratch.
Target groups and scale	• Women of all ages; young people aged 18–30; people with disabilities. • Indicative scale: 40–50 participants per year across two intakes of 20–25. • Territorial target: at least 30% of participants from outside the Split urban area.
Key actors	Lead / coordinator: PI RERA S.D. (programme management) — under discussion. • CEDRA Split — training delivery. Under discussion. • Split Development Agency RaST / Technology Park Split — venue and ecosystem access (premises provided free of charge). Under discussion. • University of Split — outreach to youth. Under discussion. • Local entrepreneurs and mentors — individual mentoring, to be contracted. Under discussion. • HZZ; women support organisations; Udruga Zdravi grad; Centar Zlatna vrata — outreach to unemployed persons, women and people with disabilities. Under discussion.
Expected contribution and funding logic	Expected contribution: increased skills, confidence and entrepreneurial readiness among women, young people and people with disabilities, and a pipeline of participants into A2 (Business Matchmaking and Networking). Base (fixed county budget line + in-kind, Section 5.2): the yearly intakes — including the one delivered outside Split or in hybrid format — with the confidence track and per-participant mentoring. Upgrade (EU and national calls, when open): additional intakes and new modules — ESF+ (national programme Efficient Human Resources 2021–2027) and national entrepreneurship programmes. Referral: HAMAG-BICRO and HZZ instruments; innovation grants for newly

	established SMEs for graduates with a developed improvement idea.

Action Line A2 — Business Matchmaking and Networking: partnerships and market access	
Title and JSA link	Title: Business Matchmaking and Networking — partnerships and market access. Primarily advances: P3 — intermediaries (the hub as convener). Also contributes to: P2 (applied business skills) and P1 (referral to financial instruments).
Rationale	Entrepreneurs in the county — especially women, young people and those outside the Split urban area — have limited access to professional networks, partners and customers. Most networking opportunities are concentrated in Split. The pilot showed that structured matchmaking can address this if two conditions are met. First, participants need preparation: workshops on partnerships, market access, business models, digital tools and financial planning should lead into a facilitated event where each participant arrives with a pitch and a target list. Second, matchmaking works best where companies already gather. Linking the closing event to an established industry conference creates access to a critical mass of companies at much lower cost than a standalone event. | Retained: the intensive one-week format, the conference-linked closing event and the Faculty as host. | Changed: an entry readiness check routes participants to the right programme (A2.1); private-sector mentoring becomes a regular element with a clear exchange of value (A2.5, Section 3.2); and at least one networking event each year takes place outside Split (A2.4). What is retained: the intensive one-week format, the conference-attached closing event, and the Faculty as host. What is changed: an entry readiness check is added, so that participants are routed by readiness (A2.1); private-sector mentoring becomes a standing element with a defined exchange of value (A2.5, Section 3.2); and at least one networking event per year moves outside Split (A2.4).
Main activities	A2.1 — 30-hour matchmaking cycle with an entry readiness check. One intensive week per year: finding and structuring partnerships; pricing and presenting an offer to business customers and public buyers; hands-on digital tools that let a very small firm operate with a fraction of the overhead; financial planning (cash flow, cost-covering prices, what a bank or investor asks to see); and structured peer learning on each other's cases. A short readiness check at application routes those who are not yet ready to A1 (Business Skills Programme) instead — so the cycle stays intensive and nobody is admitted into a programme they cannot yet use. A2.2 — Matchmaking events attached to events that already exist. The closing event is always attached to an established industry conference (such as DUMP DAYS). Participants arrive with a prepared short pitch and a list of companies they intend to approach. A2.3 — Referral onwards, so the cycle is not a dead end. Participants ready for financing or premises are handed over to HAMAG-BICRO instruments and to incubation and acceleration at Technology Park Split. A2.4 — At least one networking event per year outside the Split urban area, so entrepreneurs from the hinterland and the islands are not required to travel to Split to be connected. A2.5 — Private-sector mentoring as a standing element. Established entrepreneurs each take on a small number of participants: introductions to their own contacts, and a review of the participant's offer from a buyer's point of view. The exchange of value that supports continued company engagement is defined in Section 3.2.
Target groups and	• Early-stage entrepreneurs and start-ups, with priority for A1 graduates, women

scale	and young people. • Students and young aspiring entrepreneurs, reached through the University of Split faculties and their career centres. • Indicative scale: 25–30 participants per year in the structured cycle, plus open networking events with wider attendance.
Key actors	Lead / coordinator: PI RERA S.D. (coordination) — under discussion. • Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split — hosting and co-delivery. Under discussion. • CEDRA Split — delivery. Under discussion. • Split Development Agency RaST / Technology Park Split — co-delivery and hosting of future cycles. Under discussion. • Private-sector representatives — standing mentoring and networking element (A2.5). Under discussion. • Croatian Chamber of Economy; Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts — outreach to established businesses. Potential. • HAMAG-BICRO — referral to financial instruments. Potential.
Expected contribution and funding logic	Expected contribution: new business collaborations and partnerships, improved market access for participants, and a visible, recurring meeting point run by the hub. Base (fixed county budget line + in-kind, Section 5.2): one cycle per year, the conference-attached closing event and the yearly networking event outside Split; the Faculty's hosting and the conference attachment keep costs structurally low. Upgrade (EU and national calls, when open): additional events and scale — ERDF instruments of the Integrated Territorial Programme 2021–2027 (SME competitiveness) and ESF+ operations. Referral: HAMAG-BICRO instruments; incubation at Technology Park Split.

Action Line A3 — ISIHUB one-stop shop: a single entry point to entrepreneurship support	
Title and JSA link	Title: ISIHUB one-stop shop — a single entry point to entrepreneurship support. Primarily advances: P3 — intermediaries. Also contributes to: P1 (referral to financial instruments) and P4 (presence beyond Split).
Rationale	The county has many support services, but they are not well connected. Referral pathways are weak, and people who are new to the system carry most of the burden of finding the right support. What is missing is a permanent, clearly visible place where someone with no knowledge of the entrepreneurship ecosystem can start. The project review also showed that good practices rarely continue after project funding unless they are embedded in a permanent institution. For that reason, the hub's institutional home and budget line are central to this action. | The hub is therefore designed as a coordination and referral mechanism connecting existing organisations, not as a new institution or competing service provider. RaST is the proposed host at Technology Park Split because its regular activities are closely aligned with the hub's day-to-day function. Subject to ongoing negotiations, the Regional ISIHUB Lead role could be transferred from PI RERA S.D. in the first half of 2027 (Section 3.1). A county budget line, with City of Split co-financing, remains the key open precondition (Section 5.2). The design implication: the hub is a coordination and referral mechanism connecting existing organisations — not as a separate institution or a competing service provider. It would be hosted by the Split Development Agency RaST (proposed) at Technology Park Split, the institution whose regular, funded activity is closest to the hub's function, with a possible handover of the Lead role from PI RERA S.D. in the first half

	of 2027, subject to the ongoing negotiations (Section 3.1). The open precondition is the county budget line for its operation, with City of Split co-financing (Section 5.2).
Main activities	A3.1 — Establish one entry point that answers “where do I start?” A possible entry point is a staffed desk within RaST (proposed host) at Technology Park Split and a dedicated one-stop shop subpage on the host organisation’s website, where a person can arrive without an appointment and without prior knowledge of the ecosystem and receive a straight answer on registration procedures, legal forms, obligations and what support currently exists. A3.2 — Provide basic individual advice. Short one-to-one sessions: reviewing a draft business plan, checking whether an application is complete, explaining why an application was rejected and what to do next. A3.3 — Extend the entry point beyond Split. Periodic thematic information days outside the urban area or in hybrid format, and field visits to individual local units of self-government on a rotating schedule. A3.4 — Maintain the first-contact register. The intake sheet records whether the person is using organised entrepreneurship support for the first time. A3.5 — Communicate the offer through A4 (Communication), including the single ecosystem calendar.
Target groups	• All entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs in the Split-Dalmatian county — open access. • Dedicated outreach and adapted pathways for women, young people, people with disabilities and residents of the hinterland and the islands.
Key actors	Host and proposed Regional ISIHUB Lead: Split Development Agency RaST, within Technology Park Split — under discussion (host agreement targeted for autumn 2026, possible handover of the Lead role in the first half of 2027, subject to negotiation). • PI RERA S.D. — transitional coordinator of the hub’s formation until the handover; thereafter operational partner for communication (A4) and the county-policy link. • CEDRA Split — advisory capacity. • Split-Dalmatia County — budget line for the one-stop shop function. • City of Split — co-financing of the one-stop shop function. • Local units of self-government — hosting field visits.
Expected contribution and funding logic	Expected contribution: a single, visible entry point to entrepreneurship support, reduced fragmentation, and a durable institutional home for A1 (Business Skills Programme), A2 (Business Matchmaking and Networking) and A4 (Communication) after the project. Assumption (base layer, Section 5.2): an agreement between the City of Split and Split-Dalmatia County on shared funding and a designated budget line, together with secured, designated personnel for the staffed desk, the field visits and the coordination function. Premises at Technology Park Split are in place. Upgrade (EU and national calls, when open): additional outreach days, digital tools and capacity extensions through ESF+ and ERDF/ITP operations.

Action Line A4 — Communication: internal advocacy and external visibility	
Title and JSA link	Title: Communication — internal advocacy and external visibility. Primarily advances: P3 — intermediaries (the hub’s findability and its policy anchoring). Also contributes to: P2 (uptake of the skills offer) and P4 (reaching non-urban groups).

<table>
<tr><td>Rationale and pilot evidence</td><td>So far, both pilot programmes have recruited almost entirely through existing partner channels — the websites and social media of PI RERA S.D., CEDRA Split and the host faculty, together with regional media. Direct invitations through trusted channels, such as the Faculty’s Career Development Centre, produced a stronger response than general promotion. The lesson is clear: targeted communication through trusted organisations works, but the hub currently has no channels of its own and depends on whichever institution hosts an activity. | A4 therefore has two functions. External communication makes the offer visible and recruits participants, using different channels for different target groups rather than broad, generic promotion (A4.1). Internal communication supports the decisions needed for continuity: the county budget line, the county development strategy revision, S3 2028+ programming and the next EU financial framework. These require a deliberate, evidence-based advocacy approach (A4.4–A4.6).
This action line covers two distinct functions. External communication recruits participants and makes the offer easy to find — and because the pilots showed that each group is reached by different channels, the channel set is matched to target groups rather than broadcast (A4.1). Internal communication serves an advocacy function: the hub’s continuity depends on decisions made within institutions — the county budget line, the county development strategy revision, the programming of S3 2028+ and of the next EU financial framework. These decisions require a deliberate, evidence-based advocacy line (A4.4–A4.6).</td></tr>
<tr><td>External communication — channels matched to target groups</td><td>A4.1 — A channel set per target group. One principle from the pilots: go through organisations and channels each group already trusts, rather than general advertising.
<table><tr><th>Target group</th><th>Channels that reach it</th><th>Carried by</th></tr><tr><td>Women (all ages)</td><td>women support organisations; HZZ offices; local radio and Facebook; alumni role-model stories</td><td>Outreach partners;</td></tr><tr><td>Young people 18–30 and students</td><td>Faculty career centres and direct invitations; Instagram / short-form video</td><td>Career Development Centre; CEDRA Split</td></tr><tr><td>Persons with disabilities</td><td>Udruga Zdravi grad; Centar Zlatna vrata; accessible formats in both promotion and delivery</td><td>Outreach partners</td></tr><tr><td>Hinterland and island residents</td><td>Named municipal contact points and periodic bulletin; A3 field visits; local media</td><td>Local units of self-government; RaST / PI RERA S.D.</td></tr><tr><td>Potential entrepreneurs not in contact with any support organisation</td><td>Regional media plan; alumni success stories; the hub’s own channels</td><td>RAST; PI RERA S.D.</td></tr></table>
A4.2 — A hub identity, a minimum set of dedicated channels, and one calendar. A dedicated one-stop shop subpage on the ISIHUBs website, social media channels (chosen by audience data, per A4.1), a periodic newsletter — and a single published calendar of trainings, information days, deadlines and events run by all partner</td></tr>
</table>

	organisations, maintained through the one-stop shop (A3). A4.3 — Annual regional media planning. An announcement before and coverage after each intake through regional outlets. Its core material is alumni success stories from A1 and A2 — short profiles of participants who registered a business or won a first contract — because the cross-regional analysis identified the absence of visible role models as a barrier in its own right.
Internal communication — advocacy for integrating inclusive entrepreneurship into policy	A4.4 — Towards the County and the City of Split: the case for a dedicated budget line. A one-page annual results brief — participants, completion, share of first-timers reached, referrals made — presented to county and city executives, timed to the budget cycle. PI RERA S.D. carries the case to the County; RaST carries it to the City. A4.5 — Towards S3/S4+ governance: inclusive entrepreneurship as a delivery mechanism. Structured input of LAPP evidence into the revision of the county development strategy (2027–2028) and into the national S3 2028+ process and the Croatian programming of the post-2027 EU framework — arguing that widening who participates in entrepreneurship is a way of implementing smart specialisation, not a parallel social agenda (Section 5.3). A4.6 — Towards local units of self-government. A named contact point in each unit, a short periodic bulletin on the support offer, and an invitation cycle around each A3 field visit. Municipalities are the only channel that reliably reaches residents outside Split — and simultaneously policy actors whose buy-in the hub needs.
Target groups	• External: potential entrepreneurs not currently in contact with any support organisation — the group the pilots reached least well; the specific groups in the A4.1 matrix. • Internal: City of Split and Split-Dalmatia County executives; the Managing Authorities and S3 governance bodies; local units of self-government.
Key actors	Lead: PI RERA S.D. — operational partner for communication and the county-policy link (see Section 3.1). • Split Development Agency RaST — hub-facing channels, if the host role is assumed. • Career Development Centre, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism — student outreach. • CEDRA Split — programme communication. • Local units of self-government — joint communication towards residents. • Regional media. • HZZ, women support organisations, Udruga Zdravi grad, Centar Zlatna vrata — outreach to their own constituencies.
Expected contribution and funding logic	Expected contribution: a support offer that people can find without already knowing the ecosystem; a growing share of first-time users entering the system (Section 4); and, through internal advocacy, the budget line and policy anchoring needed for continuity. | Base (in-kind + fixed budget): maintenance of channels, the calendar, bulletin and annual results brief through the host's regular communication function and partner channels. | Upgrade: campaign costs included as accompanying costs of ESF+-funded operations when relevant calls are open. Base (in-kind + fixed budget): channel upkeep, the calendar, the bulletin and the annual results brief, carried by the host's regular communication function and partner channels. Upgrade: campaign costs as accompanying costs of ESF+-funded operations, when open.

3 Local Coordination

3.1 Who does what — the actor structure

The coordination model follows the three JSA roles: a transnational Network Coordinator, a Regional ISIHUB Lead in each region and Operational Partners. In Split-Dalmatia County, the proposed arrangement is for the Split Development Agency RaST to take over the Regional ISIHUB Lead role, subject to ongoing negotiations. Until the hosting arrangement is confirmed, PI RERA S.D. remains the transitional coordinator.

This proposed division reflects the organisations' existing roles. PI RERA S.D. has a broad development and coordination mandate but is not primarily a direct support provider and has limited visibility among entrepreneurs. RaST, by contrast, works with entrepreneurs on a daily basis. It manages Technology Park Split, provides incubation and acceleration as part of its regular work and hosted the Business Skills pilot. For these reasons, and because the stakeholder workshop also identified RaST as a possible host, it is considered a logical option for the hub's long-term institutional home.

PI RERA S.D. is well placed to establish the hub: it can broker the hosting agreement, negotiate the county budget line and connect the regional hub to the transnational network. It is less suited to operating a daily entry point over the long term. TASK4ISI implementation ends in September 2026. If negotiations are successfully concluded, the Regional ISIHUB Lead role could be handed over to RaST in the first half of 2027.

After the handover, PI RERA S.D. would remain an Operational Partner, responsible for communication (A4) and the link to county policy. Its role would include presenting the annual results brief to the County (A4.4), supporting the county budget line for the one-stop shop and feeding LAPP evidence into the county development strategy revision and S3 2028+ programming (A4.5).

As the City of Split's development agency, RaST would pursue City co-financing. Figure 1 presents the proposed structure.

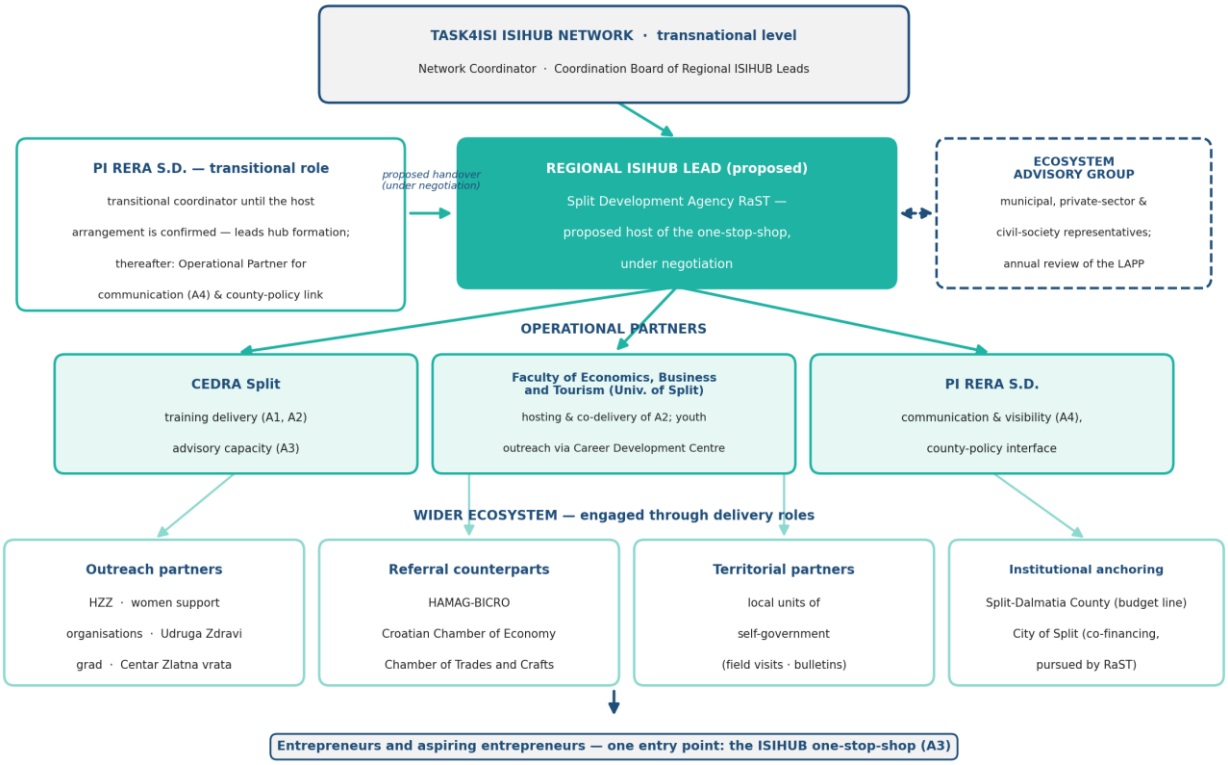


Figure 1. Organigram of ISIHUB actors in Split-Dalmatia County — proposed structure with the RERA→RaST transition (host arrangement under negotiation)

Role	Organisation	Contribution	Status
Regional ISIHUB Lead (proposed)	Split Development Agency RaST (Technology Park Split)	Host of the one-stop shop (A3); incubation and acceleration; ecosystem access; pursues City of Split co-financing. Possible handover of the Lead role in the first half of 2027, subject to negotiation	Under discussion — host agreement targeted for autumn 2026
Transitional coordinator → Operational Partner	PI RERA S.D.	Leads hub formation and negotiates the county budget line until the handover (first half of 2027); thereafter communication (A4) and the county-policy link (results brief to the County, county strategy and S3 2028+ inputs)	Under discussion
Operational partner	CEDRA Split	Training delivery (A1 Business Skills, A2 Matchmaking); advisory capacity (A3 one-stop shop)	Under discussion
Operational partner	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split	Hosting and co-delivery of A2; student outreach through its Career Development Centre	Under discussion
Outreach partners	HZZ; Women's association Domine; Udruga Zdravi grad; Centar Zlatna vrata	Outreach to unemployed persons, women, people with disabilities; referral to self-employment grants	Under discussion
Referral counterparts	HAMAG-BICRO; Croatian Chamber of Economy; Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	Referral to financial instruments; outreach to established businesses and mentors	Potential
Territorial partners	Local units of self-government across the county	Hosting field visits (A3); joint communication towards residents (A4)	Under discussion
Institutional anchoring	Split-Dalmatia County; City of Split	County budget line for the one-stop shop function — the precondition (5.2); City co-financing pursued by RaST	Under discussion
Ecosystem Advisory Group	Municipal, private-sector and civil-society representatives	Strategic feedback; annual review of the LAPP at the stakeholder workshop	Potential

3.2 Why companies will participate

Experience across the partnership shows that coordination structures are difficult to sustain after project funding unless each actor has a clear reason to stay involved. Public actors gain a functioning entry point and evidence for future policy. Companies need an equally clear benefit. The LAPP therefore defines three concrete forms of private-sector contribution:

The company gives	The company gets
A small number of mentoring hours for A1/A2 participants (A1.4, A2.5)	Early access to motivated, trained candidates — a recruitment and supplier pipeline — plus a visible mentor profile in the hub's channels
Participation in matchmaking events attached to its own industry conference (A2.2)	Booth traffic and first contact with vetted early-stage partners and suppliers; visibility towards faculty talent
A review of a participant's offer from a buyer's point of view (A2.5)	A first look at new products and services before competitors see them; direct influence on the quality of its future supplier base

These contributions are built into A2 rather than treated as a separate CSR activity. The annual results brief (A4.4) records them, allowing companies to see both their contribution and the results it supports.

3.3 Stakeholder engagement

Partners are involved through delivery rather than a separate consultation structure. Four mechanisms keep them engaged:

- Quarterly coordination meetings of the Lead, host and operational partners — to address implementation issues and agree corrective action.
- An annual stakeholder workshop — working groups on priorities, action lines and hub development, with municipal, private-sector and civil-society participation. This is also the annual LAPP review point.
- Regular bilateral contact with local units of self-government through the named contact points established under A4.6, twice a year and around each field visit.
- Participant feedback through post-module surveys, debrief sessions after each intake, and follow-up interviews with a sample of participants 6–12 months after completion.

4 Monitoring and Learning

4.1 Common indicators

Indicator	Type	Action line	Data source
Number of participants in entrepreneurship support activities	Output	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking	Attendance lists, programme records
Share (%) of participants from under-represented groups (disaggregated: women, youth, people with disabilities)	Output	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking	Registration forms
Share (%) of participants in contact with organised entrepreneurship support for the first time	Result	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking, A3 One-stop-shop	Registration forms + the hub's first-contact register (A3.4; mechanism in 4.2)
Completion rate (%) — participants reaching the full programme hours as a share of those enrolled	Result	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking	Attendance records. Pilot baseline: 74% (28 of 38) in matchmaking; 20 of 23

Indicator	Type	Action line	Data source
			applicants retained in skills
Share (%) of participants from rural, hinterland and island areas — target ≥ 30%	Output	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking, A3 One-stop-shop	Registration forms
Number of business ideas developed or supported	Output / Result	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking	Programme reports, follow-up interviews
Number of participants introducing a product, service or process improvement within 12 months	Result	A1 Skills, A2 Matchmaking	Follow-up interviews (links to A1.3)
Individual mentoring hours delivered per participant	Output	A1 Skills	Mentor timesheets
Number of entrepreneurs served and referrals made through the one-stop shop	Output	A3 One-stop-shop	One-stop-shop records, once operational
Number of organisations involved in ISIHUB or LAPP implementation	Output	A3 One-stop-shop	Coordination meeting minutes
Number of joint communication or referral actions with local units of self-government	Output	A3 One-stop-shop, A4 Communication	Communication and visit records

4.2 How the data is collected and used

Measuring first-time participants. One aim of the LAPP is to bring new people into the support system rather than repeatedly reach the same users. A simple common measure is therefore used across actions. Registration forms for A1 and A2, and the A3 one-stop-shop intake sheet, include one mandatory question: "Have you previously participated in any business support programme (training, mentoring, grant, voucher, incubation)?",

The one-stop shop keeps one first-contact register containing only name and e-mail, minimising personal data. This ensures that each person is counted as a first-time user only once across all actions and years. The pilot cohorts — recruited mainly through partner channels and therefore already relatively close to the support system — provide the baseline. As A4 expands outreach, the share of first-time users should increase each year.

The data support three recurring decisions:

- whether intake size is matched to available mentoring capacity (A1.4);
- whether the 30% territorial target is being met, and if not, which A4.1 channel needs correcting;
- and whether the one-stop shop and the communication lines are actually reaching first-timers.

Data are reviewed at quarterly coordination meetings and consolidated annually for the stakeholder workshop, which also serves as the LAPP review.

Mechanism	What it captures	Frequency
Participant satisfaction	Relevance, format quality, perceived usefulness	After each activity

Mechanism	What it captures	Frequency
surveys		
Debrief sessions	What worked and what did not; suggestions from participants and trainers	After each intake
Coordination meetings	Implementation issues, ecosystem signals, corrective decisions	Quarterly
Follow-up interviews	Whether participants progressed (business idea, registration, employment, first improvement introduced)	6–12 months after activity

5 Sustainability Perspectives

5.1 The continuation logic

Sustainability needs differ across the four action lines. The plan therefore focuses on what each action requires to continue over the long term.

A1 (Business Skills Programme) and A2 (Business Matchmaking and Networking) have already been piloted, so their main continuation need is stable funding rather than further programme design. Their cost base is also relatively contained: faculty hosting is provided without charge, closing events are linked to existing conferences and premises are contributed in kind. The base funding layer in Section 5.2 is therefore the priority. Status: under discussion within the county partnership. For expansion, co-financing options will be discussed with the national body managing the ESF+ programme Efficient Human Resources 2021–2027, which determines the calls through which A1 and A2 could be scaled.

A3 (the ISIHUB one-stop shop) is the critical sustainability issue because it is intended to provide the permanent institutional home for the other actions after TASK4ISI ends. Two conditions must be secured: confirmation of the host arrangement — with RaST currently proposed and negotiations ongoing (Section 3.1) — and a county budget line for the entry-point function, with City of Split co-financing pursued by RaST. The budget line is therefore treated as a first-year precondition rather than a later objective. Status: under discussion with the County and the City of Split, supported through A4.4.

A4 (Communication) has no separate sustainability requirement. Once the hub identity and channels are established, they can become part of the host organisation's regular communication. Campaign costs can be included in funded operations, while partner channels continue to provide reach in kind. Status: linked to the establishment of A3.

5.2 The funding model — a stable base, EU funds for expansion

The model separates what needs stable funding from what can be expanded when additional funding is available. The base layer ensures that the service does not depend on whether an EU or national call is open; external funding is used to expand and test new approaches. Table 3 sets out the two layers.

Table 3. The two funding layers

Layer	What it covers	Sources	Principle
Base — stability	The yearly A1 (Business Skills) intakes, including the non-urban	County budget line (the plan's open precondition);	Never planned against EU calls. Continuity and

Layer	What it covers	Sources	Principle
	or hybrid one, with the confidence track and mentoring; the yearly A2 (Matchmaking) cycle with its closing event and the networking event outside Split; the staffed A3 desk with field visits; the basic A4 channels	City of Split co-financing; in-kind contributions already in place — premises at Technology Park Split, faculty hosting, partner channels	territorial reach are part of the core
Expansion — EU and national funding	Additional intakes and events, new modules and formats, scale-up of proven activities	ESF+ — national programme Efficient Human Resources 2021–2027; ERDF — Integrated Territorial Programme 2021–2027 (SME competitiveness); national entrepreneurship programmes	Used only when calls are open; a closed call pauses expansion but never closes a base service.

Before the budget line is set — two preparatory steps (Year 1):

- Overlap check with RaST's existing activity. Map what RaST and Technology Park Split already deliver and finance through regular operations — incubation, acceleration, advice and communication — and identify any overlap with A1–A4, so the hub builds on existing funded work rather than duplicating it.
- Net additional cost. Based on this mapping, calculate the additional funding the base actually requires. The budget request should cover only the additional cost beyond what is already funded, keeping the request realistic.

The funding gap between EU programming periods is anticipated rather than ignored:

- Calls under the 2021–2027 programmes wind down during 2026–2027.
- The next EU framework (2028–2034, proposed to be delivered through consolidated National and Regional Partnership Plans) will realistically not produce open calls before 2029.
- In years without calls, the base layer keeps the service running at its core level, while expansion pauses — the basic service continues.
- Positioning inclusive entrepreneurship in the Croatian programming of the new framework, so that expansion can resume early in the new period, is part of the internal advocacy line (A4.5).

5.3 Anchoring in S3/S4+ — and what "innovation" means for this target group

The national Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3, to 2029) concentrates public research and innovation funding on seven thematic priority areas — personalised healthcare; smart and clean energy; smart and green transport; security and dual use; sustainable and circular food; customised and integrated wood products; and digital products and platforms. It also includes horizontal objectives that apply across sectors, including improving SME innovation performance. This explicitly covers innovation that is not research-based: new or improved products, services and processes in ordinary businesses.

In practice, however, most Croatian innovation grant schemes remain conditional on alignment with those priority areas — and the priority areas are far removed from what first-time founders in this county actually start: bookkeeping services, hair and beauty salons, personal and tourism services, with only an occasional IT project. The pilot cohorts confirmed exactly this profile. The LAPP treats the constraint openly: innovation

capability is built regardless of sector (A1.3); graduates are referred first to instruments without S3 conditionality — self-employment support, micro-loans and guarantees, digitalisation vouchers — and to S3-bound innovation calls only where an idea genuinely fits a priority area; and the internal advocacy line (A4.5) argues for S3 2028+ instruments open to non-R&D innovation in ordinary businesses.

The starting point for this LAPP is the profile of its target groups. First-time founders from under-represented groups largely start conventional service businesses, and many do not yet see innovation as something they can use. Directing them towards the seven thematic priority areas would therefore connect relatively few of them to S3.

This LAPP therefore uses the horizontal objective as its main S3 entry point: it builds the innovation capability of ordinary small businesses. Table 4 shows where this is reflected in the plan.

Table 4. How the LAPP connects to S3

Where in the LAPP	How it connects to S3
A1 (Business Skills Programme) — innovation-literacy module (A1.3)	Innovation taught as a skill: product, service and process innovation at the scale of an everyday business — a small travel agency can innovate its offer, its booking process or its partner network. The core module (A1.1) keeps its session on the county's smart-specialisation niches
A2 (Business Matchmaking and Networking)	Hands-on digital tools for marketing, customer management and administration; direct contact with companies in S3-relevant sectors at conference-attached matchmaking events
A3 (ISIHUB one-stop shop)	Graduates with a developed improvement idea are referred, with a named contact, to instruments they can actually access: self-employment and micro-finance instruments, digitalisation vouchers and — where the idea fits a priority area — innovation grants for newly established SMEs
Policy integration — internal advocacy (A4.5)	Inclusive entrepreneurship proposed as a horizontal priority in the county development strategy revision (2027–2028) and carried into the S3 2028+ process, evidenced by this LAPP's monitoring data

Consistent with the JSA, this LAPP treats its contribution as a step towards S4+ readiness rather than evidence that the shift from S3 to S4+ has already taken place.