



# DIHELP

## **DIH Enhanced Learning Programme**

# **Guide for Applicants - updated**

Join the DIHELP coaching and mentoring programme to establish and/or scale-up your Digital Innovation Hub (DIH).

January 2019

## **Guide for Applicants – January 2019**



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## 1 Introduction

DIHELP aims to develop a coherent, coordinated and sustainable approach to support European industries in all EU Member States at regional level by offering a coaching and mentoring programme to Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs). To achieve this objective, the DIHELP project consortium<sup>1</sup> is launching a **call for Expressions of Interest (EoI) to support the establishment and scaling-up of 30 regional Digital Innovation Hubs, from at least 12 countries.** 

As part of the **DIH Academy**, the selected DIHs will receive **mentoring and coaching on business development**, **financing and innovation management delivered both face-to-face and remotely**. The coaching and mentoring programme will set up a sector-specific business plan for the digital innovation hubs to support the digital transformation of industry.

The present Guide for Applicants provides an overview of the programme's approach and detailed information to prepare a successful Expression of Interest.

## 2 The role of Digital Innovation Hubs

In April 2016, the European Commission launched the Digitising European Industry strategy<sup>2</sup> (DEI), "to reinforce EU's competitiveness on digital technologies and to ensure that every business in Europe – whichever the sector, wherever the location, whatever the size – can fully benefit from digital innovation". The DEI consisted of a set of measures and recommendations with the aim of fostering European industrial competitiveness by supporting companies in their digital transformation. To support SMEs in the uptake of digital technologies, the DEI initiative aims to ensure that **any business in Europe has access to a Digital Innovation Hub at 'a working distance'.** 

As stated in the DEI brochure from March 2018<sup>3</sup>, **Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) can help ensure that every company, small or large, high-tech or not, can take advantage of digital opportunities**.

### What is a Digital Innovation Hub?

"Digital Innovation Hubs are one-stop-shops that help companies to become more competitive with regard to their business/production processes, products or services using digital technologies. They are based upon technology infrastructure (competence centre) and provide access to the latest knowledge, expertise and technology to support their customers with piloting, testing and experimenting with digital innovations. DIHs also provide business and financing support to implement these innovations, if needed across the value chain. As proximity is considered crucial, they act as a first regional point of contact, a doorway, and strengthen the innovation ecosystem. A DIH is a regional multi-partner cooperation (including organizations like RTOs, universities, industry associations, chambers of commerce, incubator/accelerators, regional development agencies and even governments) and can also have strong linkages with service providers outside of their region supporting companies with access to their services"<sup>4</sup>.

Digital Innovation Hubs offer the following services:

- Access to digital technologies and competences
- ✓ Infrastructure and training to test digital innovations

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Consortium: CARSA (leader), ECORYS, Eurada and Imp³rove Academy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Source: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-initiative-nutshell">https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-initiative-nutshell</a>

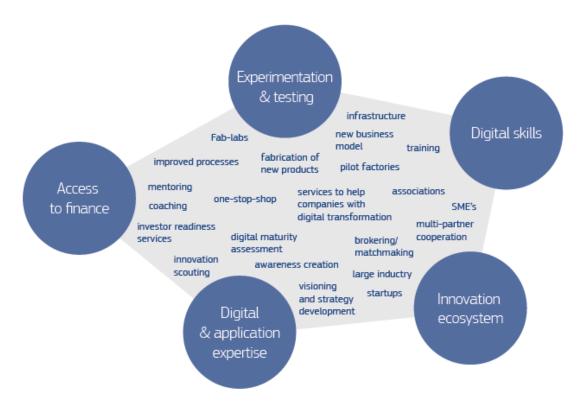
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Source: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-2-years-brochure">https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-2-years-brochure</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Source: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-innovation-hubs



- ✓ Financing advice
- ✓ Market intelligence
- Networking opportunities
- ✓ Access to digital skills development and training

Figure 1. Key elements and services of a Digital Innovation Hub<sup>5</sup>



The application of **digital technologies** in combination with other key enabling technologies (KETs) has demonstrated to be a key strategy for the design, production, commercialisation and generation of value in new products, processes, services and business models.

## 3 Call for Expressions of Interest

## 3.1 Objective

The objective of the call for Expressions of Interest is to select 30 regional Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), from at least 12 countries. The selected DIHs will receive support for their establishment and/or scaling-up.

The call focuses on:

- Geographical scope: the call prioritises DIHs located in regions that have potential to benefit from industrial digital transformation and do not have a digitisation programme or plan yet, and those for which industry capacity needs to be improved.
- Technological coverage: the call is open to DIHs operating in any technological domain.
- Development stage of the DIHs: the call is open to new DIHs as well as established DIHs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-2-years-brochure">https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-2-years-brochure</a>



## 3.2 Key dates

The key dates of the programme are as follows:

Activity	Dates
Launch of the call	28 November 2018
Deadline to submit Expression of Interest (EoI)	23 January 2019 at 17:00 CET
Evaluation and selection	23 January – 11 February 2019
DIH Academy kick-off conference	To be confirmed - March 2019
Coaching and mentoring programme	March to November 2019 (9 months)

## 3.3 Who can apply?

DIHs are usually formed by a collaboration of different regional actors working together to offer a set of technological and innovation services that the industry of the region needs to go through their digital transformation.

The applicant is the **coordinator of the DIH** and the status of the coordinating organisation falls under one of the following categories:

- DIH whatever legal entity has been created for the DIH;
- Technical universities and research and technology centres (RTOs), generally referred to as 'competence centres' (CCs) or 'centres of competence' (CoCs); these organisations will provide companies technological support through access to facilities for experimenting and testing digital innovations;
- o Incubators and accelerators that help start-up companies to grow and scale;
- Cluster organisations and industry associations representing private sector companies;
- Public administrations that are aware about the importance of innovation and are developing their smart specialisation plans.

#### 3.4 Exclusion criteria

DIHs that have received mentoring and coaching to carry out a feasibility study within I4MS phase 2 (this does not include the support your DIH may have received from Innovation Actions) or participate in the Smart Factory in EU 13 Member States are not eligible for DIHELP.



## 3.5 Eligibility criteria

In order to be considered as eligible, applicants must comply with the following:

- Based in an EU 28 Member State or Horizon 2020 associated countries.
- The EoI must be submitted in English. EoIs submitted in any other language will be excluded.
- The EoI must be submitted within the stipulated deadline.
- Complete the application following the template provided.
- Status of the organisation presenting the EoI falls under the categories presented in section 3.3.
- The DIH did not receive support in previous initiatives: I4MS feasibility study and Smart Factory as mentioned in section 3.4 of the present guide.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted electronically in PDF format at: https://dihelp.ems-carsa.com/

## 4 DIH Academy: what's in it for you?

The DIH Academy is the mentoring and coaching programme of DIHELP. The aim of the DIH Academy is to support you on your way to make your DIH sustainable. The three overall benefits of the DIH Academy for you are summarised in the figure below.

Develop new digital innovation management capabilities

Profit from on-site and virtual support

Become part of a European community

Figure 2. DIH Academy benefits

As part of the DIH Academy, you will acquire and enhance your digital innovation management capabilities. This will enable you to translate the needs of key regional stakeholders and in particular SMEs into compelling service offerings, to develop a viable business model for your DIH and to ultimately design an actionable roadmap for the business model implementation.

During this process, you will be introduced to different proven tools and techniques for business management in general and (digital) innovation management in particular. You will learn about alternative sources of financing and how to engage the (local) network of stakeholders. In the entire process you will be accompanied with a combination of different on-site coaching sessions and digital service- and learning-offerings. This mixture of tailor-made one-on-one workshops and individual learning opportunities will ensure the development of high-quality, tangible results in a flexible and personal environment. Furthermore, you will become part of an exclusive community of DIHs from all over Europe which will give you unique networking and peer-learning opportunities.

The DIH Academy programme is presented in the figure below.



**DIH Academy** ~9 Month DIH Academy Conference Individual on-site Coaching 3-day kick-off conference with all participating DIHs in Brussels 2-day personalized on-site workshop with tangible results 1-day regional workshop to engage the **DIH Academy virtual Backoffice** Learn about Gain digital confidence Develop innovation network of sustainable Regular webinars on relevant topics for Virtual on-demand coaching sessions to discuss individual digital management E-learning portal for innovation thematic deep-dives and inspiration management approaches to support SMEs issues Provision of high-quality training material – guidelines, manuals/handbooks, templates, etc.

Figure 23. DIH Academy and coaching

#### 1. The DIH Academy kick-off conference

Starting point of the programme is the initial kick-off meeting: a **3-day DIH Academy Conference** which will take place in Brussels, in March 2019 for all selected DIHs. The conference will focus on an interactive, hands-on learning and "edutaining" experience in plenary and group sessions. Networking between DIHs, peer-to-peer mentoring, and exchange of good practices will further enrich the learning experience and help you in setting a solid foundation for your journey towards a sustainable business model. You will be introduced to digital innovation management approaches to support SMEs and gain first confidence in their practical application. Against this backdrop, you will also be introduced to state-of-the-art online assessment tools to measure SMEs' digital innovation capabilities. The tools can be leveraged to create transparency on a macro level in light of SMEs' digital maturity levels, to design suitable digital innovation support programmes and to assess and address the digital readiness of SMEs on an individual level.

Additionally, you will work on your individual case during the DIH Academy Conference with our experienced coaches and at the end of the three days you will return home with a first draft of a viable business model and a clear action plan to follow your next steps.

#### 2. Individual on-site coaching

In the following period, you will be further supported in the definition and implementation of your business model with different virtual and non-virtual methods.

Individual on-site coaching will comprise two essential elements:

Each participating DIH will profit from a tailor-made, 2-day on-site workshop. In this two-day session our experienced coaches will come to your region and work with you (~5 participants per coaching) on issues you are facing. Based upon the maturity of your DIH, regional circumstances, and individual aspirations the concrete programme will be designed from a set of modules according to your personal coaching needs.



 Each participating DIH will also profit from our support in the organisation of a one-day regional workshop to engage stakeholders. This format with around 20 participants from your individual stakeholder network will help you to gather direct input from local SMEs and establishing keypartnerships for a better integration into the local (digital) innovation network.

#### 3. Virtual backoffice

The physical support formats will be complemented by the **virtual Backoffice** by different virtual means that can be accessed through the website and that allow for individual upskilling as well as support, whenever needed:

- Throughout the project phase, various informative, thematic and interactive webinars will serve to
  provide additional information on theory and practice on specific themes, sectors, and technologies.
  These webinars will help you to deepen your knowledge, on the one hand, but also to foster
  exchange between DIHs a part of the network, on the other hand.
- An e-learning portal will be established where participating DIHs can access additional supporting material like guidelines, manuals, templates, presentations, etc.
- When implementing your business model, issues might arise where further ad-hoc support is needed. For these situations you will be given the opportunity of requesting virtual coaching sessions of approximately 1 hour. Depending upon the nature of your request we will link you to the best-suited coach from our diverse consortium who will then schedule a web-session with you to jointly discuss the issue and develop a solution.

## 4. Overview of the coaching and mentoring topics

A preliminary list of topics that might be addressed by the various coaching measures throughout the project could include some of the examples listed below or additional topics to be added based on the individually assessed requirements by the DIHs.

Table 4. Exemplary topics

#### Potential topics on Potential topics on "digital innovation support" "business planning" • Assess the digital innovation management • Identify and attract local companies in a targeted capacities of SMEs sector Connect to the regional innovation ecosystem Develop a business plan and define a business Optimise a portfolio of (digital) innovation transformation services Generate and manage a pipeline of opportunities Increase and manage a pipeline of opportunities Manage technology transfer and IPR in a regional innovation context Increase the demand for the DIH services Accelerate innovation and digital transformation Raise awareness on the digitalisation Define the professional services offered opportunities and inspire / motivate SMEs towards Support SMEs to develop digital skills embracing digital transformation Engage SMEs to pilot digital innovation to improve Adapt digital innovation support services to the specific needs of the digital innovation ecosystem their production processes, products or business mode · Focus support services on value-creation and Promote the regional DIH model business impact • Validate business use cases / customer needs Help DIHs to identify and define specific digital transformation support services Develop a commercial go-to-market strategy that maximises returns



potential topics on "establishment / organisation of DIH"	Potential topics on "sustainability"
<ul> <li>Establish organisational and governance structures</li> <li>Define technology frameworks for sharing expertise, infrastructure, equipment, resources, locations and activities</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Identify multiple sources of public European, national and regional and local funding - with a special focus on RIS3 and EFSI funding (e.g. H2020, EFSI, ERDF, RDAs, etc.)</li> <li>Acquire private sources of funding (e.g. partner investments, loans, fees, customer payments)</li> <li>Determine costs and charging models</li> <li>Systematise and adapt the "multi-funding" approach and establish a tailored funding scheme</li> <li>Manage finances</li> <li>DIH funding and sustainability manual</li> <li></li> </ul>

## 5 Expression of Interest – application form

The Expression of Interest (EoI) is submitted in a single stage through the <u>EMS online platform</u><sup>6</sup>. The EoI template can be downloaded from the EMS platform. Applicants are asked to carefully read and follow the instructions provided in the EoI template.

The Expression of Interest includes the following sections:

General information on the DIH

- 1. Regional strategic relevance
- 2. Regional transformation potential
- 3. Business vision ambition and objectives
- 4. Organisational and technical capacity

The EoI template details what is expected from the applicants in each of the sections. Each section of the EoI corresponds to an evaluation criterion.

In addition to the application form, applicants are welcome to support their application by providing the following annexes on the platform:

- Annex I: Additional documentation to support the EoI (not mandatory)
- Annex II: Letter of support of the DIH partners/members (not mandatory, although highly recommended)

Furthermore, whenever the DIH has no formal legal organisational form, it is highly recommended that applicants demonstrate well established links with the DIH partners through the provision of letters of support.

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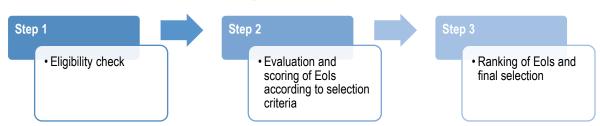
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://dihelp.ems-carsa.com



## 6 Evaluation and selection

The Expressions of Interest received will go through the following evaluation process:

Figure 5. Evaluation process



The steps are briefly described in the sub-sections below.

## 6.1 Eligibility check

All EoIs received go through the automatic eligibility check. The eligibility check ensures that the criteria presented in section 3.5 are met. Criteria are the following:

- Based in an EU 28 Member State or Horizon 2020 associated countries.
- The EoI must be submitted in English. EoIs submitted in any other language will be excluded.
- The EoI must be submitted within the stipulated deadline.
- Complete the application following the template provided.
- Status of the organisation presenting the EoI falls under the categories presented in section 3.3.
- The DIH did not receive support in previous initiatives: I4MS feasibility study and Smart Factory as mentioned in section 3.4 of the present guide.



## 6.2 Evaluation criteria

The following table presents the evaluation criteria.

Table 1. Evaluation criteria description

Criterion	Description of the criterion	Weight
1.Regional Strategic Relevance	<ul> <li>Demonstrates alignment with the smart specialisation strategy of the region or digitisation strategies of sectors demonstrated through ongoing or planned actions;</li> <li>Demonstrates involvement and commitment from industry players along the value chain;</li> <li>Facilitates user-supplier partnerships across value-chains in the region or sector;</li> <li>Supports (or plans to support) the companies in the region respectively with expertise/competences on the digital technologies they need for their digital transformation (e.g. robotics, HPC cloud-based simulation, photonics, laser technologies, 3D printing, etc.).</li> </ul>	30%
2.Regional Transformation Potential	<ul> <li>Offers (or plans to offer) technological and innovative services/solutions, including e.g. mentoring, testing, prototyping, digital infrastructures, etc.;</li> <li>Addresses at least three different sectors that are important for the region;</li> <li>Demonstrates potential market demand in the region from SMEs for these services;</li> <li>Demonstrates that the region of the targeted DIH has large potential to benefit from industrial digital transformation;</li> <li>Shows that there is a critical mass of companies that can benefit from the DIH in their region - with potential for creating new businesses and manufacturing jobs;</li> <li>Identifies and engages the relevant stakeholders within the regional innovation ecosystem, such as chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, local banks, SMEs, training providers for skills development, associations, innovation intermediaries, competence centres, etc.</li> </ul>	30%
3.Business, Vision, Ambition and Objectives	<ul> <li>Has established/defined clear business objectives;</li> <li>Envisions a viable business concept and business model – with a clear value proposition.</li> </ul>	20%
4. Organisational and Technical Capacity	Has the required capacities to deploy the proposed services (personnel, infrastructure and budget).	20%

## 6.3 Evaluation process

Each Eol will be evaluated by two evaluators against the four criteria outlined above. The evaluation will be carried out by experts who are completely independent from the applicants. These experts will be individuals with experience and knowledge in the fields of digital transformation and the implementation of digital



strategies. The result of the evaluation (comments and scores) will be reflected in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), which will be sent to the applicant.

Each selection criterion will be weighted accordingly. A threshold of 12 is required – with a minimum score of 3 for each criterion.

Table 2. Criteria thresholds and priority

Criterion	Threshold	Weight	Priority (in case of ex-aequo)
Regional strategic relevance	3	30%	1
2. Regional transformation potential	3	30%	2
3. Business vision, ambition and objectives	3	20%	3
4. Organisational and technical capacity	3	20%	4

The result of this evaluation is a ranking of the DIH applications according to the obtained scores.

The following table details the evaluation scores for each criterion:

Table 3. Evaluation scores

Score	Description
0. Fail	The EoI fully fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1. Poor	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses that will impede success.
2. Fair	While the EoI broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would hinder the project implementation.
3. Good	The Eol addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary and various details are missing on implementation.
4 Very Good	The Eol addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible and some particular details are missing on implementation.
5. Excellent	The EoI successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

All activities proposed should respect fundamental ethical principles, including those reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. If any issues with these fundamental ethical principles are identified while the EoI is being evaluated the initiative will take any measures deemed appropriate in order to deal with the situation.

#### 6.4 Final selection

Once the evaluation process is completed for all EoIs, applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive a notice on the outcome of the evaluation and their Evaluation Summary Report.

The final selection will ensure a geographical reach of at least 12 countries across the Europe.



## 7 Commitment of the DIH

Once selected, DIHs will be invited to sign a Letter of commitment to confirm their participation and engagement in the programme.

By participating in the DIHELP programme, DIHs are agreeing to manifest their capacity, determination and commitment, which will require participating in the DIH Academy kick-off, allocating resources to managing, implementing and following up on the coaching and mentoring programme.

In practical terms, this mean that the DIH will commit to provide the following:

- A dedicated DIH project manager/coordinator;
- A trip to Brussels for the DIH Academy kick-off conference in March. The DIH conference will last for 3 days and up to 2 representatives of the DIH will be invited to join (travel expenses will be covered by DIHELP);
- The mobilisation of local stakeholders, in particular for the regional workshop including:
  - Local policy makers;
  - Representatives of industries;
  - o SMEs:
  - Active players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- A strong commitment to follow the training programmes as instructed and deliver expected performance.

## 8 Submit your EOI on the EMS platform

The Expression of Interest (EoI) is submitted digitally in a single-stage through the **Evaluation Management System (EMS)**. The application form can be downloaded from the online platform. Applicants are kindly asked to read and follow the instructions provided carefully.

Eols prepared according to the instructions provided, shall be submitted electronically through the EMS platform. Applicants should follow the 4 steps below starting from the DIHELP website.

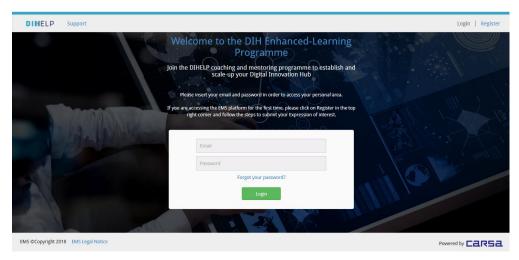
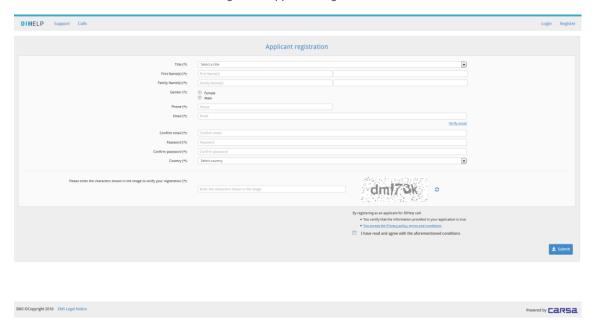


Figure 6. EMS platform overview



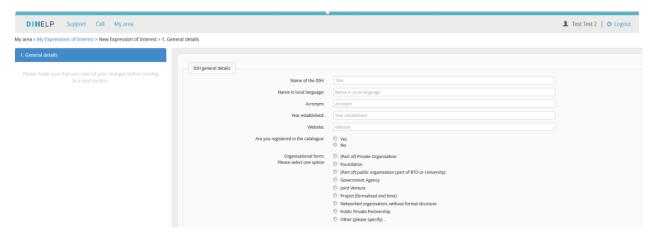
## Step 1: Register

Figure 7. Applicant registration



## Step 2: Complete the general details of your DIH

Figure 8. General details



Step 3: Upload your Eol

Figure 9. Upload your Eol





#### Step 4: Submit

Figure 10. Submit your Eol



Once the EoI is completed, click "Submit". Applicants will have the chance to submit new versions of their EoI as many times as they wish before the call closure. Only the last version submitted before the deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent out via email to all successfully submitted EoIs, as soon as possible after the closure of the call. However, this receipt will not be proof that the EoI is eligible for evaluation.

## 9 Support to applicants

In addition to the present Guide for Applicants, the following tools are available to support applicants:

#### Frequently Asked Questions

A Frequently Asked Questions section is available on the website. The section is constantly updated to reflect the questions received.

#### Newsletters and webinars

Subscribe to the DIHELP newsletter on the website and get to know about the webinars that will be organised to support you in preparing a successful Expression of Interest.

#### Helpdesk

Applicants may contact the DIHELP helpdesk should they wish to receive further information on the Call for Expression of Interest content and conditions:





## 10 Additional information on Digital Innovation Hubs

- Digital Innovation Hubs Catalogue. As part of the implementation of the <u>Digitising Europe Industrial Strategy</u> a <u>Digital Innovation Hubs</u> catalogue is currently being created containing comprehensive information on the digital innovation hubs in Europe to help companies get access to competences needed in order to digitize their products and services: <a href="http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-innovation-hubs-tool">http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-innovation-hubs-tool</a>
- Roundtable on Digital European Industry 2017 : https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/dei\_working\_group1\_report\_june2017\_0.pdf
- **DEI Stakeholder Forum 2018 Report :** <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-stakeholder-forum-2018-report-and-presentations">https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digitising-european-industry-stakeholder-forum-2018-report-and-presentations</a>

### **CONSORTIUM**







