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# SRSP Exchange between Austria and Sweden

Learning from Failures and Successes regarding the Support of Small and Medium Enterprises in the Process of Digitalisation in Sweden for the implementation of the Austrian Digitalisation Agency

**Final Report**

**June 2020**

RAMBØLL Bright ideas. Sustainable change.

This report has been carried out by Ramboll on behalf of Tillväxtverket (the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth). The report was delivered 30 June 2020. Ramboll is responsible for the analysis and conclusions in the report.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2019, the Austrian Digitalisation Agency (Digitalisierungsagentur, in short DIA) and Tillväxtverket (the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth) launched a joint initiative aiming to improve processes of digitalisation in Austria. The initiative received funding from the European Structural Reform Programme ("SRSP Regulation") and stretched over ten months, starting in October 2019 and ending in July 2020, and involved key stakeholders from both countries. The Action had a strong focus on learning together through sharing of knowledge, insights and experiences to provide Austrian stakeholders with valuable input on support programmes and initiative that could support the country's digital transformation.

In January 2020, Swedish consultancy firm Ramboll was commissioned by DIA and Tillväxtverket to conduct a summarising study of the Action[1]. The purpose of the study was to capture the process, results, key learnings and insights generated through the Action as well as to summarise the exchange between Austria and Sweden. As part of the study, Ramboll studied output reports and project documentation as well as conducted interviews with 15 stakeholders.

## THE COMPONENTS OF THE ACTION

The joint Action built on three main components, each with a different focus: **1) empowering SMEs in Austria, 2) raising public awareness of digitalisation in Austria and 3) improving stakeholder management and interaction in Austria.** Each component consisted of different activities, such as analysis of Swedish best practices and comparisons between Austrian and Swedish initiatives. The activities were expected to lead to outcomes such as improvement of Austrian promotion measures and subsidy programmes, new ways of involving the public or improved relationships between stakeholders.

**In order to foster in-depth exchange of knowledge and experience, the Action involved activities to enhance interaction and collaboration between key stakeholders in the two countries.** This involved video calls between the project management teams in both countries, feedback loops, arranged meetings between Swedish and Austrian startups as well as a series of four workshops. The aim of the workshops was to engage relevant stakeholders from both countries in learning together and from each other and co-creating Austrian approaches to Swedish best practices. **Each of the four workshops had a specific theme** and consisted of a mix of presentations to provide insights into relevant activities, programmes and initiatives in both countries. Focus was on mutual learning, in-depth discussions and task sessions to further explore and explain what different stakeholders are doing and why. The interactive setting and open culture at the workshops, as well as during the continuous video calls

[1] This final report is the output report 1.3.1 of the Action. See appendix 3 for a list of all produced outputs of the Action.

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and conferences, enhanced learning, not only between the countries but also between stakeholders in each country.

## RESULTS OF THE ACTION

The exchange between Austria and Sweden resulted in **two jointly developed pitches/drafts for Austrian digitalisation initiatives**, one with a focus on SMEs (The Austrian Digital Lift, inspired by the Swedish Digilift programme) and one with a focus on regional cooperation (The Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, inspired by the Swedish counterpart). At the end of the exchange, several Austrian stakeholders were planning on continuing to work to implement these pitches. In addition to the pitches, the exchange also **resulted in new contacts and increased collaboration between participants, valuable insights** for Tillväxtverket regarding the agency's project portfolio and established relations between the service provider, Tillväxtverket, and the beneficiary, the DIA.

Due to previous experience of international projects, some stakeholders had expected the exchange to suffer from lack of transparency and openness among participants and therefore only scratch the surface of the issue at hand. However, at the end of the Action, all stakeholders agreed that the exchange had been very successful and achieved more depth than earlier experiences. **As success factors, stakeholders pointed to the openness, transparency and humbleness that all those involved showed during and in between the four workshops.** This led to an exchange where exhaustive sharing of knowledge, challenges and possibilities quickly became natural. The setup of the workshops, commitment of stakeholders and fortunate chemistry between participants laid the ground for an in-depth exchange, showing great potential for further collaboration.

## KEY LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS

The aim of the exchange was for Austria to learn from Sweden on how to improve processes of digitalisation. However, throughout the exchange, **stakeholders from both countries have taken part in in-depth discussions about possibilities and challenges associated with digitalisation from a broad perspective (such as digitalisation ecosystems) as well as in regard to** specific topics and programmes. Consequently, the exchange has generated several mutual learnings and key insights, some of which were unexpected from the start.

### Sweden and Austria face similar challenges, but have different possibilities and preconditions to handle them

Through the exchange, stakeholders have built mutual knowledge and achieved a better understanding of the importance of territorial perspectives (regional, national, local) when designing policy and support programmes. Stakeholders have also gained a greater understanding of the importance of taking national and regional preconditions (e.g. political systems and agency structures) and

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culture (e.g. attitudes towards digital transformation or relations between employees) into consideration when working with digitalisation activities and initiatives. Many of these key take-aways were generated by deep diving into the digitalisation ecosystems in each country, combined with continuous Q&A sessions on multiple digitalisation topics.

During the Q&A sessions, Austrian and Swedish stakeholders discussed the impact of e.g. national strategies and regional independence in regard to support programmes and other initiatives. These discussions resulted in the **shared view that, despite similar digitalisation goals, countries can do things differently and through different means**, strongly affected by their institutional settings as well as the resources and influence of different stakeholders on both the regional and the state level. Several participants expressed that the workshops enabled them to better grasp the topic of digitalisation in their future work and that there is no easy or "one-size fits all" solution to different problems.

### There is a strong need to work beyond organisational silos to strengthen multistakeholder governance

The broad and open approach during and in between workshops allowed stakeholders to look beyond their own area of expertise and responsibilities and take a broader perspective on how to enhance digital transformation through a multistakeholder approach. A key learning in connection to this is **the need to work beyond and between organisational boundaries and to connect vertically (between levels of the state) as well as horisontally (between different stakeholders).** Some stakeholders pointed out that while they were aware of the importance of a multistakeholder approach before participating, the Action have made this even clearer. To make the most of the outcomes of the exchange, such as established relations and a solid and shared knowledge base, several stakeholders emphasised that they must, and will, try to push for a multistakeholder approach (vertically and horisontally) in their future work.

### The importance of national collaboration and coordination in digital transformation

Another key learning, closely related to the multistakeholder approach, is the importance of national collaboration, coordination and the understanding of territorial differences. For example, Austrian stakeholders expressed **a strong will to improve collaboration at all levels, from local and regional to federal and national state level, being strongly inspired by the Swedish approach of cooperation**. One potential progress in this area could be the implementation of Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, but also the adaptation of a national digitalisation strategy. Several stakeholders emphasised that having a national strategy could boost collaboration between stakeholders in a more natural way, as well as support them in coordinating activities and initiatives around a common goal or vision.

### There is a need to go from individual learnings to organisational impacts

The exchange proved to be very valuable at a personal level, but a little less so at an organisational level. For instance, some Austrian and Swedish stakeholders

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pointed out that in terms of personal gains the exchange provided them with new contacts and personal capacity building, whereas the organisational gains are a bit unclear. They mention several reasons for this, e.g. discrepancy between the focus of the exchange and the main responsibility of the organisation and the perception that the organisation lacked the necessary mandate to implement any of the pitches.

It is important to stress **that processes of collaboration start with individuals and that it takes time to influence entire organisations**, this underlines the importance of making sure that there are functions in place to take care of learnings and results. To support the transition from individual learnings to organisational impacts, a potential progress could be to appoint one or more organisations to act as coordinators after the Action ends, for example by having the responsibility to continue to assemble stakeholders and further strengthen processes of collaboration on the topic of digitalisation in Austria. The coordinating role should also involve supporting stakeholders in making further contacts with each other to deepen the exchange between Austrian stakeholders as well as Swedish-Austrian relations.

### Action is needed at several levels for long-term impacts

Some stakeholders pointed out that, in order to push digitalisation forward, there is a need for Austrian policymakers to prioritise and fully commit to the task, for example by formulating and implementing a national digitalisation strategy. This would not only support different organisations by providing clear goals, but also strengthen the multistakeholder approach by facilitating horizontal and vertical collaboration and cooperation. This would lay the ground **for more and better coordinated and executed interventions, that in turn could better address the actual needs** of SMEs, regions and the public. To conclude, some of the stakeholders expressed that there is a chain of events that need to take place before concrete action is possible within their own organisation. There is thus a shared view among the participating stakeholders that action is needed at several levels for long-term impacts and that policymakers have a fundamental part in this.

### The impact of culture on collaboration

Several Austrian stakeholders expressed that Sweden has progressed further in terms of transparency and collaboration and that there are interesting insights to further discuss and reflect upon in Austria. For instance, **the openness between agency employees to share insights and experiences as well as the sense of a lower hierarchy** expressed in flatter organisations and close collaboration between agencies and different entity levels of the state, e.g. regarding strategy implementation. Several Austrian stakeholders noted that Tillväxtverket invited high-ranked employees from the Swedish ministries to the workshop in Stockholm and that the invitations were accepted. Many of the Austrian stakeholders interpreted this as an indication of good relationships and an open approach to shared knowledge between the state and the agencies.

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## POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

Throughout the Action, stakeholders dived deep into the topic of digitalisation in both countries, jointly developing ideas on how to move forward as well as several suggestions on other initiatives and programmes to further investigate together after the end of the Action, e.g. regarding:

- Implementation of the jointly developed pitch “The Austria Digital Lift” in Austria, inspired by the Swedish Digilift programme.
- Implementation of the jointly developed pitch “The Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators” in Austria, inspired by the Swedish programme Regional Digitalisation Coordinators.
- The European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs).
- The design of support programmes for SMEs after the outbreak of Covid-19.
- Austrian and Swedish initiatives for increasing digital skills.
- Open data and blockchain.
- Supporting further exchange between startups.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanking all stakeholders who actively participated in the Action and in particular representatives of the Austrian Chamber of Labour in Vienna (AK Wien); the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO); the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW); the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK); the Federation of Austrian Industries (IV); Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE); Swedish Regional Digitalisation Coordinators from Västerbotten, Västmanland and Västra Götaland; Teknikföretagen; Vinnova; Tillväxtanalys and the Swedish Embassy in Austria.

Thanking in particular Tillväxtverket and all involved employees and experts who actively shared their knowledge throughout the Action, and especially Mattias Alisch, the responsible project manager of the Action.

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# APPENDIX


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# 1 A JOINT ACTION BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND SWEDEN

## 1.1 Digitalisation is a priority in Austria

On the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)[2], Austria ranks 13th in 2019 and is thus ranked among the medium performing member states of the European Union. Nevertheless, digitalisation is a top priority and there is a strong political will to increase the country's performance. There is, for example, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, which was established in December 2017, every ministry has its own Chief Digital Officer (CDO) and in October 2018 the government established the Austrian Digitalisation Agency, called Digitalisierungsagentur (in short DIA). The DIA was created as a department of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft, in short FFG).

### The Austrian Digitalisation Agency (DIA)

Established in 2018 as a part of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG). Role to promote digitalisation in Austria, with a specific focus on SMEs.

Since 1 March 2020, DIA is detached from FFG and function as a stand-alone agency with a new focus on e-government.

### The Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)

Established in 2004, owned by the federal government and represented by two federal ministries: Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW); Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Innovation, Mobility and Technology (BMK).

Role to support Programmes and Services for Research, Development and Innovation in Austria.

During the first months after its establishment, the team of the DIA/FFG faced many challenges in enhancing digital transformation. For example, there was a need to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders and interest groups from different levels of the federal state. However, interests often differ, and collaboration and progress are affected. In order to find new ways of handling the challenges, the team of DIA/FFG decided it would be the best to learn from the best.

### SWEDEN IS STATED AS A GOOD PRACTICE AND RANKS HIGH ON THE DESI

In Sweden, digitalisation in society has progressed further. For example, the Swedish programme "Digilift" (focusing on digitalisation of manufacturing SMEs) is stated as a good practice by the European Commission[3] and the country ranks second on the DESI 2019. Sweden and Austria are also quite similar countries regarding e.g. population size both country wise as in the capital cities. Both countries are export oriented, and machinery as well as iron, steel and metalware are important sectors. Another similarity is that SMEs stand for a large part of

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/desi

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-initiatives/digilyftet

the companies in both Austria and Sweden. 99.6% of Austrian companies are SMEs[4] and 99.9% of the Swedish companies are SMEs.[5] As of this, the DIA/FFG sought support from Sweden in order to improve the process of digitalisation in Austria in general, and for SMEs in particular.

## 1.2 An exchange was initiated to learn from Swedish failures and success

In October 2019, the DIA/FFG and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) initiated a joint Action to improve the process of digitalisation in Austria. The initiative had a strong focus on learning together, by sharing knowledge, insights and experiences that will support the DIA/FFG and Austrian stakeholders in digital transformation. For example, by providing the Austrian stakeholders with valuable input on support programmes targeting digitalisation of SMEs, based on Swedish experiences.

The Action leaped over ten months, starting in October 2019 and ending in July 2020, and involved key stakeholders from both countries.

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)

Established in 2009 under the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation. Role to foster sustainable growth and competitiveness by providing funding, knowledge and networks, creating attractive environments for entrepreneurs and companies in all Swedish regions.

### THE ACTION WAS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIA/FFG and Tillväxtverket were granted funding from the European Commission under regulation (EU) 2017/825 on the establishment Structural Reform Support Programme ("SRSP Regulation"[6]) to carry out the exchange. The European Commission provides support with the purpose of developing programmes for SMEs, enhancing inclusion of not yet digital members of the Austrian society and fostering the collaboration between stakeholders.

## 1.3 Structure of the report

- Chapter 1 has given a brief background and context of the Action
- Chapter 2 gives an overview of the objectives, outputs and expected outcomes of the Action
- Chapter 3 explains the process of the Action and its activities
- Chapter 4 focuses on presenting direct results of the exchange between Sweden and Austria
- Chapter 5 focuses on learnings and future work

In Appendix 1 the methods for this study are presented.
In Appendix 2 the complete logical framework of the Action is presented.
In Appendix 3 a list of participating organisations, produced output reports and attended events is presented.
In Appendix 4 the Austrian and Swedish digital ecosystems are visualized.

[4] WIFO 09/19

[5] See https://www.ekonomifakta.se/fakta/foretagande/naringslivet/naringslivets-struktur/

[6] The mission of the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) is to provide support for the preparation and implementation of growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms by mobilizing EU funds and technical expertise.

# 2 THE ACTION AIMED TO IMPROVE DIGITALISATION IN AUSTRIA

The joint Action was built on three main components with different focus areas: 1) empowering SMEs in Austria, 2) raising public awareness of digitalisation in Austria and 3) improving stakeholder management and interaction in Austria. The focus areas are further explained in the sections below. See Appendix 2 for a complete specification and overview of activities, outputs and expected short term/long term outcomes of the Action.

## 2.1 The general objective of the Action was to contribute to institutional, administrative and growth-sustaining structure reforms in Austria

The specific objectives of the Action were to support national Austrian authorities:

- to **design their reforms** according to their priorities, considering initial conditions and expected socioeconomic impacts.
- in enhancing their **capacity to formulate, develop and implement reform** policies and strategies and in pursuing an integrated approach ensuring consistency between goals and means across sectors.
- to **define and implement appropriate processes and methodologies** by considering good practices of and lessons learned from other countries in addressing similar situations.

## 2.2 Four core activities drove the Action forward

Throughout the Action, Austria learn from Sweden on how to improve digital transformation. In order to foster in-depth exchange between the countries, the action involved core activities for enhancing interaction and collaboration between key stakeholders. These core tools were a series of workshops, video calls between the project management team in both countries, feedback loops and arranged meetings for Swedish and Austrian startups. Each activity will be further explained in chapter 3.

1. Video calls between the Austrian and Swedish team for planning and developing the exchange

2. Workshops with Swedish and Austrian stakeholders for knowledge sharing and joint development of support programmes for Austria

3. Continuous feedback loops and video conferences between the project teams and selected stakeholders

4. Austrian and Swedish startups meet in order to foster relations

## 2.3 The Action generated outputs such as written reports, analysis of best practices and action plans for future work

The activities of the Action will lead to outputs that support new initiatives and programmes for digital transformation in Austria, based on key learnings and insights generated through the exchange activities. The outputs for each focus area are listed in the boxes below.

**Outputs: Empowering SMEs**

- Report summarizing Austrian SME programmes and subsidy system and a shortlist of best and worst practices in both countries
- Analysis of the principles guiding SME programmes and subsidies in both countries
- Study summarizing different measuring methods used in Sweden (KPIs)
- Summarized report of the exchange between Swedish and Austrian SME representatives

**Outputs: Public awareness**

- Analysis of Swedish public interaction practices
- Presentation summarizing the Swedish system
- Action plan on how to involve Austrian regions in digitalisation

**Outputs: Interaction**

- Summarized report of the interaction between Austrian and Swedish stakeholders and among Austrian stakeholders
- Plan for implementation of next steps

## 2.4 The action should generate outcomes that improve digitalisation in Austria in general and for SMEs in particular

The Action is expected to lead to outcomes that empower SMEs, raise public awareness and improve interaction among stakeholders in Austria. The expected outcomes in the short and longer term are:

1.

Empower SMEs

- Improvements for Austrian promotion measures and subsidy programmes for SMEs, developing new ways of measuring success.
- Development of new programmes for SMEs that are inspired by the Swedish best practices.
- Further exchange between Austrian and Swedish SMEs and an increased level of interaction between the countries.

2.

Raise public awareness

- New ways of involving the public by getting to know ways of involving different groups of the public regarding the implementation of digital projects.
- An enhanced cooperation between urban and rural areas in Austria with the help of digitalisation.

3.

Improve Interaction

- Improvements in the relationship of stakeholders. The participating stakeholders feel invited to cooperate with DIA and each other. They feel connected through the activities of the actions.

# 3 A CORE PART OF THE ACTION WAS KNOWLEDGE SHARING THROUGH WORKSHOPS AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

The exchange built on activities enhancing collaboration and mutual learnings between key stakeholders. The process of the Action and its activities for in-depth exchange will be further explained in the sections below.

### THE ACTION WAS MANAGED BY A BILATERAL TEAM

The Action was managed by a bilateral team consisting of a project manager from Tillväxtverket in Sweden and of two project managers from the DIA/FFG in Austria. The Head of Unit for Digitalisation and Skills at Tillväxtverket and the Head of the DIA acted as an advice group involved in decisions important for the direction of the exchange. The team also had support from both agencies in developing communication plans and in finding internal and external activities for spreading knowledge and results of the exchange.

## 3.1 The activities enhanced collaboration and mutual learning

### 1. Video calls between the Austrian and Swedish team

Video calls were a crucial part for the project management team in planning, developing and implementing the Action. Approximately two meetings per week were held in the first months of the exchange to set the direction and plan for coming activities. Throughout the exchange meetings were held regularly to keep the project managers up to date with progress and expected deliveries of each activity, such as reports, analysis and stakeholder involvement.

Regular calls at an early stage of the Action until the very end enhanced close collaboration between the Swedish and Austrian teams, laying grounds for an opened mindset, deep understanding of conditions and context. This enabled the teams to get to know each other and their organisations in-depth, generating a good understanding of the digital ecosystems and the support systems for SMEs in both countries.

”The workshops were set up in a way that made us all feel included and important, making it easier to build trust and to be open about challenges and possibilities.”

- Swedish stakeholder

## 2. Workshops with Austrian and Swedish stakeholders

A core part of the exchange were workshops held in Stockholm and Vienna. The purpose of the workshops was to engage relevant stakeholders[7] from both countries in order to learn together and co-create Austrian approaches to Swedish best practices. Each of the four workshops had a specific focus and consisted of a mix of presentations to provide insights into relevant activities, programmes and initiatives in both countries. The approach was on mutual learning, in-depth discussions and task sessions to further explore and explain what different stakeholders are doing and why.

The interactive setting and open culture enhanced learning, not solely between the countries but also between stakeholders in each country. For example, the project management team actively invited Swedish organisations in Austria (the Swedish Embassy in Austria, Business Sweden and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Austria) to participate in the Action. The purpose was to build on existing structures, to jointly learn about each other's work and to give an overview of their activities to both Swedish and Austrian stakeholders.

The participating organisations differed from each workshop because of different focus areas and possibility to practically attend. However, throughout the exchange, a core group of Austrian and Swedish stakeholders attended most of the workshops. This group consisted of e.g. the DIA/FFG, Tillväxtverket, BMDW, WKO, AK, IV and the Swedish Embassy in Austria.

In total, the project management team gained insights from more than 60 individuals that were involved in different parts of the Action, representing more than 30 organisations.

### KICK-OFF IN VIENNA TO COLLABORATIVELY DECIDE ON THE COMING WORK

The kick-off workshop (Workshop 1) in Vienna 6-8 November 2019 focused on getting to know each other, the institutional settings and the digitalisation ecosystems in both countries. Presentations were held by selected key stakeholders from Austria, for example the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO), the Federation of Austrian Industries (IV) and the Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK), and from Sweden, for example managers of Swedish support programmes at Tillväxtverket, with a specific focus on two Swedish programmes: the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators[8].

Both Swedish and Austrian Stakeholders shared experiences and learnings from working with different initiatives concerning digitalisation and SME support in their respective countries. The Austrian stakeholder presentations enabled members of Tillväxtverket to better understand how the Austrian system works and what is possible within this ecosystem, what actors that were already working in the area of digitalisation and SME support, and thus to better identify potential areas where Tillväxtverket could act as a sparring partner for improvements.

[7] A list of all organisations involved in the Action is listed in Appendix 2.

[8] For more information on the Digilift and Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, see: https://tillvaxtverket.se/english/digitalization.html and https://tillvaxtverket.se/amnesomraden/digitalisering/digitaliseringskoordinatorer.html

The participants collaboratively decided on focus areas for the remaining Action based on Austria's needs. For example, the workshop opened for discussions about existing SME support programmes in Austria in relation to Swedish approaches, such as the support programme KMU Digital (SME Digital)[9].

### The Swedish Digilift

Part of Smart Industry strategy

In 2016, the Swedish agency Tillväxtverket was commissioned to implement a program to increase the usage of digital technology in small and medium-sized industrial companies and industry-related service companies. The government assignment was carried out from 2016 to 2020 with a total budget of 78 million SEK, financing a total of 31 projects, including the first pilots. The projects within the Digilift can be divided into three general categories:

- Kickstart Digitalisation, a knowledge development series targeting 2-3 key individuals from each company, aiming at increasing the insights of digitalization and what it can be for each specific company, and networking with other companies.
- Kickstart GO, INDIGO and other schemes/methods in 15 different regional coaching projects that offer SMEs a retainer of expert coaching hours on how to strengthen the competitiveness through digitalization according to each company's specific needs.
- Method development and other interventions (incl. online platform Time to digitalise!)

The Digilift and the KMU Digital have some similarities and share the same key aim, to improve digitalisation in SMEs, but with two main differences. The focus of Digilift is on the manufacturing sector, while KMU Digital does not have any sectoral restrictions for its support. The Digilift also offers individual coaching, introductory workshops as well as online guidance, while KMU Digital focuses on consulting and implementation funding.

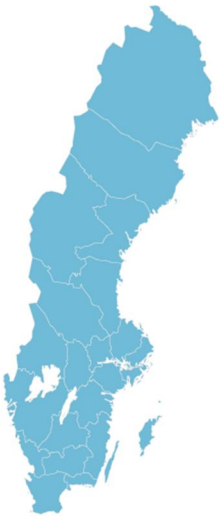
### The Swedish Regional Digitalisation Coordinators

Part of Digitalisation strategy

In 2018, the Swedish Government invited all 21 (NUTS3) regions to establish a function as Regional Digitalisation Coordinator (RDC) during the period of 2018-2020. The agency Tillväxtverket was commissioned to administrate a national secretary to coordinate the RDCs and to issue the yearly grants of 1 million SEK per region (0.5 million SEK during 2018) to uphold the regional function.

The RDCs should, with regards to regional preconditions, contribute to the overall digitalisation strategy by:

- Promoting digitalisation
- Identifying areas for improvement
- Developing regional networks
- Dissemination of information
- Participating in national network



[9] For more information on KMU Digital, see https://www.kmudigital.at/

Based on the discussions at the first workshop, the DIA/FFG later decided that a focus should be put on two of Tillväxtverket's programmes, and the potential of developing similar projects in Austria: the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators.

### Conclusions of Workshop 1

*The kick-off workshop showed that many Austrian stakeholders are working with digitalisation and that there is a large variety of initiatives to support SMEs in their digitalisation efforts. However, there is a need for coordination and communication since many stakeholders are unaware of other's work in the area. The stakeholders also showed a lot of interest and commitment to the Action and in participating in the exchange between Sweden and Austria.*

## THE SECOND WORKSHOP IN STOCKHOLM FOCUSED ON SWEDISH APPROACHES

Throughout the three days' workshop in Stockholm, members of the project management teams at Tillväxtverket and the DIA/FFG, as well as Austrian stakeholders from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) and representative organisations (the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), the Federal Chamber of Labour Vienna (AK Wien) and the Federation of Austrian Industries) took actively part in all sessions. In addition, other Tillväxtverket employees, Swedish stakeholders (e.g. The Swedish Internet Foundation and the Swedish innovation agency - VINNOVA) as well as Austrian stakeholders working in Sweden (e.g. the Austrian Embassy in Sweden and Advantage Austria (WKO)) attended some of the sessions.

"For me, the workshop in Stockholm gave a broad understanding of Swedish best practices. Of course, it's hard to directly translate to Austrian context, but the insights were eye-opening and interesting to further discuss."

- Austrian stakeholder

To give the Austrian stakeholders an opportunity to learn more and to discuss potential approaches to implementing a similar programme in Austria, a task session was dedicated to the programme Digilift.

The Digilift Coordinator at Tillväxtverket, introduced the programme, which was followed by additional comments from two Digilift experts: The Association of Swedish Engineering Industries (Teknikföretagen), who provided insights into Digilift's Kickstart Digitalisation, and a representative from the Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE) who provided insights into Digilift's Kickstart GO. The presentations were followed by an in-depth Q&A session, which allowed the Austrian stakeholders to gain an in-depth knowledge of the program.

The workshop primarily focused on gaining in-depth knowledge of the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators and a variety of Swedish activities and initiatives in the area of digitalisation (such as measuring digital maturity and public interaction practices). For example, Tillväxtverket presented the government website Verksamt.se[10], a website for businesses that collects relevant information and e-services structured around five life events: considering, starting, running, developing and closing a business. In total, Verksamt.se contains public communication tools and useful information for SMEs from more than 45 Swedish government agencies.

[10] For more information, visit https://www.verksamt.se/en/web/international

To allow the stakeholders to also learn more about the Swedish innovation policy and the national digitalisation strategy[11], presentations were held by representatives of the Swedish Ministry of Enterprises and Innovation, the Swedish Ministry of Infrastructure, the Swedish Digitalisation Council and the National Innovation Council.

The workshop sessions allowed the participating stakeholders to develop first ideas for Austrian approaches of the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, initiating a process to jointly develop Austrian digitalisation programmes inspired by the Swedish experiences.

As for the Digilift, a part of the workshop was a dedicated task session on the programme Regional Digitalisation Coordinators to give the Austrian stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about the programme and to discuss potential approaches to implementing a similar programme in Austria.

The Head of the Swedish Regional Digitalisation Secretariat at Tillväxtverket introduced the programme, followed by input from two regional digitalisation coordinators on their work in their regions: Västmanland (274,000 citizens, 10 municipalities) and Västra Götaland (1.7 million citizens, 49 municipalities). As for the session on the Digilift, the presentations were followed by an in-depth Q&A session, which allowed the Austrian stakeholders to gain an in-depth knowledge.

”I really felt that Tillväxtverket took the teaching role very seriously and with great commitment. For example, it was very surprising to see representatives from ministries at the workshop. It made me very curious to get to know more about the Swedish government-agency relationships.”

- Austrian stakeholder

Based on the insights and discussions at the workshop, the project management team at the DIA/FFG developed first pitches of Austrian versions of the two programmes, including plans on how to implement them. The pitches were sent to selected Austrian stakeholders before the third workshop in order to get feedback before presenting the work to all stakeholders. In addition, the selected Austrian stakeholders and the FFG met between the second and the third workshop to jointly develop the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators pitch.

## Conclusions of Workshop 2

*At the second workshop, the project team and the Austrian stakeholders decided on working together on “pitches” for Austrian versions of the two Swedish programmes Digilift and Regional Digitalisation Coordinators. Overall, stakeholders showed strong interest in the two selected programmes as well as the Swedish approach to developing and implementing innovation and digitalisation strategies.*

### THE THIRD WORKSHOP IN VIENNA FURTHER DEVELOPED AUSTRIAN APPROACHES TO SWEDISH PROGRAMMES

The workshop in Vienna, 4-6 March 2020, gathered participants from several Austrian organisations, such as the Austrian Economic Chamber, Association Industry 4.0 and Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) and from Sweden, organisations such as the Swedish Embassy in Vienna and Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE).

[11] https://www.government.se/information-material/2017/06/fact-sheet-for-sustainable-digital-transformation-in-sweden--a-digital-strategy/

”What surprised the most was the openness that all participants showed during the workshops, both Swedish and Austrian. Everyone talked freely about challenges and mistakes, making it way easier to give the right input and support.”

- Swedish stakeholder

The workshop focused on further discussions on the topic of digitalisation and development of drafts of the two digitalisation programmes for Austria, but also on providing insights into a variety of Austrian activities and initiatives (such as Austria's Competence Centers for Excellent Technologies (COMET), European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) and KMU Digital). This allowed the Swedish stakeholders, as well as the Austrians, to further learn about on-going initiatives in the area of digitalisation.

The workshop also dived into the topic of regional stakeholder cooperation in Sweden. For example, a presentation was held about multi-stakeholder governance and the need to take the national digitalisation policy down to the municipal and regional level, and to elevate needs and initiatives from the local and regional level back to the national level.

Since some of the Austrian stakeholders expressed strong interest in the Swedish approach to developing and implementing innovation and digitalisation strategies at the workshop in Stockholm, the project team arranged for Tillväxtverket to present how the Swedish government gives assignments to governmental agencies.

The purpose of the presentation was to give the Austrian stakeholder a possibility to learn more about the political system and a better understanding of the relations between the government and the agencies in Sweden.

The core part of the workshop sessions focused on the drafts of the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators and the Digilift programme, where Austrian and Swedish stakeholders (including experts on the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators) had the opportunity to provide further input. Based on the given feedback, the Action team at the DIA/FFG updated the drafts before sending them to the Austrian stakeholders, the Swedish Action team, the Digilift and Regional Digitalisation Coordinators experts (including implementers at the regional level) and the consultancy Ramboll for final feedback.

### Conclusions of Workshop 3

*The participants jointly discussed and further developed pitches for digitalisation programmes in Austria, inspired by the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators. The workshop also provided in-depth insights into several Austrian activities and initiatives in the area of digitalisation, such as digital skills, work-related challenges and opportunities arising through digitalisation. Moreover, participants learnt more about regional stakeholder cooperation in Sweden and how the Swedish government gives assignments to governmental agencies.*

## THE FOURTH WORKSHOP FOCUSED ON LOOKING BACK AND TO SHARE LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the fourth and final workshop in Vienna could not be executed as planned. Thus, the project management team decided to host a digital workshop in May 2020 focused on looking back at Action activities, to share key learning and insights and to discuss potential next steps. Participants of the workshop included stakeholders who had actively participated throughout the exchange: members of the Action teams at Tillväxtverket and the DIA/FFG, representatives of the consultancy Ramboll, a representative of the Swedish Embassy in Austria, representatives of stakeholder organisations active in the Austrian digitalisation and innovation landscape and the responsible policy officer and policy coordinator at DG REFORM of the European Commission.

The project management team focused on giving a recap of the exchange, how it was set up and what happened over the last months of the Action, which challenges and changes that occurred and the next steps and plans for the future – related to the exchange and going beyond.

The consultancy Ramboll gave insights into the interview study that was conducted with some of the stakeholders involved throughout the exchange. At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to share their general reflections on the exchange as well as to discuss potential next steps with the Action outputs.

Conclusions of Workshop 4

*The concluding (digital) workshop focused on looking back at Action activities, key learnings and insights. The participants also shared their ideas about potential next steps and their desires to further collaborate between the countries and between different stakeholders on digitalisation as well as other topics. Regarding providing input on the next steps, the project team had expected more active contributions of the participants. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, many of the stakeholders have been occupied with more urgent matters to handle. Overall, the inputs showed that there was great interest among participants to continue the collaboration and to implement the outputs of the exchange.*

### 3. Continuous feedback loops and video conferences

In between the workshops, the project team focused on summarising and analysing insights and learnings generated at the workshops through the regularly video calls as well as on providing additional analyses on topics of interest to the Austrian team (as per Action plan). team closely collaborated in order to produce the expected outputs of each activity, such as an analysis of the principles guiding SME programmes and subsidies in both countries and Swedish public interaction practices[12].

The continuous feedback loops enabled an iterative process that ensured an inclusive approach and mutual understanding of context, challenges and possibilities. For example, two video conferences were organised between Tillväxtverket and the DIA/FFG to allow for further in-depth exchange on the programmes Digilift and Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, allowing the DIA/FFG to get a deeper and shared understanding and how similar initiatives in Austria could look like at an early stage of the exchange.

For the Swedish stakeholders to fully function as a sparring partner in developing Austrian approaches to Swedish initiatives and programmes, a good understanding of the Austrian context was crucial. For that reason, several video conferences were held in between the workshops to clarify questions, identify similarities and differences between the countries. One such conference was held in December 2019 between Tillväxtverket and representatives of regional business agencies[13] in Austria (e.g. Business Upper Austria and Vienna Business Agency) to provide further insights into the Austrian system and its preconditions. Moreover, members of Tillväxtverket presented the Regional

[12] All outputs are listed in Appendix 3. This report is output 1.3.1.

[13] Business agencies are organisations represented in all nine Austrian federal states helping businesses and startups in their regions (e.g. funding of projects and other support).

Digitalisation Coordinators to the business agency representatives, allowing them to learn more about the programme and to foster further exchange between the stakeholders.

### 4. Austrian and Swedish startups meet to foster relations

In order to foster relationships between Austrian and Swedish startups, Tillväxtverket invited five Austrian startups working in the area of mobility and artificial intelligence to the event Ignite Sweden Day[14] in December 2019. The event takes place in Stockholm yearly and aims to foster collaboration between startups and larger corporations.

At the two days event, the Austrian startups got the chance to learn more about Swedish best practices and to be matched with larger Swedish corporations, based on their needs and the startups capabilities to meet those needs. The main purpose of the matchmaking was to generate new business deals and develop further relations. The participation allowed the Austrian startups to learn more about the Swedish startup culture and to establish relationships with Swedish startups as well as larger enterprises within their domain. After the visit, some of the Austrian startups continued to have contacts with Swedish enterprises, e.g. regarding proof of concepts and digitally arranged meetings.

To further foster relations, Swedish startups were invited to visit the Austrian startup event Vienna-Up in May 2020. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the event got postponed to 2021.

### External and internal activities for gathering and sharing information

During the exchange, the project management team and several stakeholders participated in external and internal activities to gather information about ongoing initiatives and to share information and knowledge generated through the exchange. One such example is the Association Industry 4.0 Summit in December 2019, where different Austrian and Swedish organisations providing support to SMEs (e.g. the Association of Swedish Engineering Industries and the Federal Chamber of Labour in Austria) took part and held presentations.

[14] https://igniteswеden.org/

# TIMELINE

Brief overview of activities

## THE JOINT ACTION IS INITIATED

OCTOBER 2019

VIDEO CALLS

REGULAR VIDEO CALLS BETWEEN THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM AT THE DIA/FFG, AUSTRIA, AND TILLVÄXTVERKET, SWEDEN, TO PLAN THE ACTION

WORKSHOP 1 IN VIENNA

THE DIA/FFG, TILLVÄXTVERKET AND STAKEHOLDERS GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND THE COUNTRIES. FOCUS AREAS FOR THE COMNG MONTHS WERE DECIDED

Numerous presentations were held during the 3-days workshop, e.g. introduction of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) by the European Commission, an introduction to Tillväxtverket, programmes on digitalisation in Sweden and key performance indicators (KPIs). Introduction of the FFG and the DIA, the Action and presentation of various Austrian and Swedish stakeholders.

27 participants

22 presentations

FEEDBACK LOOPS

CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK LOOPS IN BETWEEN RESULTING IN VARIOUS ANALYSIS AND WRITTEN REPORTS

WORKSHOP 2 IN STOCKHOLM

THE DIA/FFG, TILLVÄXTVERKET AND STAKEHOLDERS SHARED KNOWLEDGE AND RECEIVED DEEP INSIGHTS INTO SWEDISH DIGITALISATION PROGRAMMES, POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

During the 3-days workshop numerous presentations and discussions about digitalisation policies were held. The workshop focused on sharing information and knowledge about the two Swedish programmes “Digilift” and “Regional Digitalisation Coordinators”. Stakeholders reflected and planned on how to implement such programmes in an Austrian context.

30 participants

20 presentations

EVENT IN STOCKHOLM

5 AUSTRIAN STARTUPS WERE INVITED TO VISIT THE SWEDISH EVENT “IGNITE SWEDEN DAY” TO LEARN AND CONNECT WITH SWEDISH STARTUPS AND LARGER ENTERPRISES

FEEDBACK LOOPS

WORKSHOP 3 IN VIENNA

THE DIA/FFG, TILLVÄXTVERKET AND STAKEHOLDERS JOINTLY DISCUSSED AND FURTHER DEVELOPED AUSTRIAN APPROACHES TO SWEDISH PROGRAMMES

During the 3-days workshop the participants got insights into a variety of Austrian activities and initiatives in the area of digitalisation. Stakeholders jointly discussed and developed Austrian approaches to “Digilift” and “Regional Digitalisation Coordinators”. All participants showed interest in further collaborating with each other as well as other organisations and stakeholders in both countries.

21 participants

13 presentations

VIDEO CALLS

REGULAR VIDEO CALLS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, PROGRESS AND PLAN FOR FUTURE WORK

WORKSHOP 4: DIGITAL

THE DIA/FFG, TILLVÄXTVERKET AND STAKEHOLDERS SHARED KEY LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS

The fourth and final workshop was held digitally and focused on giving a recap of the Action activities, to share key insights and learnings and to reflect and discuss potential next steps.

19 participants

2 presentations

FEEDBACK LOOPS

JULY 2020

## ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE WORK

# 4 THE ACTION RESULTED IN INCREASED COLLABORATION AND NEW INITIATIVES

Presentations, in-depth discussions and sharing of experiences during the four workshops and the additional video calls/conferences resulted in two pitches for Austrian digitalisation initiatives, with a focus on SMEs and regional cooperation. Moreover, the exchange resulted in increased collaboration and new contacts between participants, valuable insights for Tillväxtverket regarding the agency's project portfolio, and established relations between the service provider, Tillväxtverket, and the beneficiary DIA/FFG.

"The in-depth Q&A sessions about measuring success and setting up programmes made some of us see that the next time we design a new support programme, there are things that we could also improve from the very beginning."

- Swedish stakeholder

## 4.1 The exchange resulted in pitches for Austrian approaches to the Swedish programmes Digilift and Regional Digitalisation Coordinators

Throughout the exchange, a core focus has been on developing Austrian approaches inspired by Swedish best practices: the Digilift and the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators. The work has resulted in two co-created pitches, including plans on how to implement them.

88.5% of Austrian industrial companies are SMEs and industrial companies are very important for the Austrian economy.

These companies stand for an essential proportion of the Austrian trade surplus (export intensity of 63%) and for 38% of the production value. Large companies are already taking measures to become digital, but SMEs seem to hesitate.

87% of the large companies employ IT professionals, but only 17% of the small companies do so.

*Source: WKÖ, 2016, Zukunft.Industrie. Österreich*

### THE AUSTRIAN DIGITAL LIFT

The Austrian version of the Digilift aims to increase digitalisation knowledge of Austrian SMEs, with a focus on manufacturing companies. The main idea is to arrange seminars to provide digitalisation knowledge to Austrian SMEs, held at regional centres throughout Austria. The duration of the programme is suggested to last three years. The seminars would be held for three days, with 10-15 companies per seminar and 2-3 participants per company over a period of six weeks. The training content and material is suggested to be jointly developed with employer and employee representatives. For companies, the participation would be for free and a suggested budget for the programme is approximately €8,000 per seminar.

During the exchange, Swedish stakeholders gave several inputs regarding the set up and execution of the programme, for example:

- the importance of collaboration with local partners and expert organisations who have the technical and regional knowhow
- the inspiration needs to be authentic and tangible
- focus should be on activities rather than projects to lower the bar for doing things and raise the bar for thinking

**Aim**: Provide digitalisation knowledge to Austrian SMEs.
**Target group**: Manufacturing SMEs
**Duration**: 3 years
**Implementation**: 3 seminar days, 10-15 companies per seminar, 2-3 participants per company, over a period of six weeks.
**Partners**: Joint development of content and material with employer and employee representatives.
**Costs**: Free for participating companies.
**Budget**: Approx. €8,000 per seminar

## THE AUSTRIAN REGIONAL DIGITALISATION COORDINATORS

In the pitch for the Austrian version of the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators (RDCs), it is noted that in Austria (in the area of digitalisation support for SMEs) there are "many services, but little use and little cooperation". Austria is today only slightly above average regarding using digital services and digitalisation is still not tangible for many people.[15]

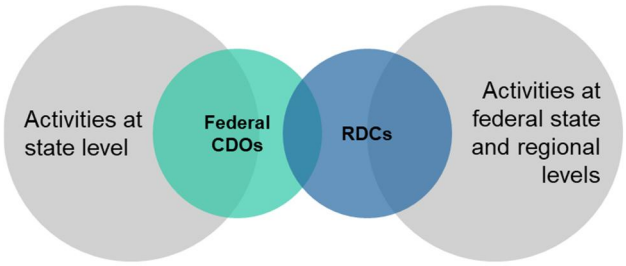
"To be able to compare Austrian SME support programmes with Swedish programmes gave many valuable insights. Not only on what parts that could be improved, but also a verification from a neutral part that a lot that we do is already good."

- Austrian stakeholder

The Austrian participants in the exchange had the impression that regions and municipalities want to cooperate regarding digitalisation, but that they lack resources to do so. Thus, the Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators aims to increase the use of digitalisation services and increase digital cooperation among companies and other organisations in the Austrian regions as well as between the regions.

**Aim:** Comprehensive network of coordinators, relevance at the regional level and efficient use of existing structures (e.g. federal states/federal state governments and business agencies.)
**Duration**: 3 years
**Implementation**: Funding via the FFG, contracting organisations as implementers and employment of RDCs, e.g. at the business agencies.
**Budget:** €100,000 per RDC (1 FTE and project budget) + €200,000 for the Secretariat and their activities (per year)

The core idea is to have digitalisation coordinators (RDCs) at the federal state level (the "CDOs of the federal states") who would coordinate digitalisation at a more regional level and therefore push forward related topics in the Austrian regions. Their role would be to communicate and demonstrate the possibilities of digitalisation to the people, companies and administration in their regions and support them in implementing different measures. They would be Austria-wide contact points and "regional trouble-shooters", on-site managers of the regional, digital ecosystems.




*The federal CDOs are in regular exchange with the RDCs to take advantage of synergies at all levels.*

One of the main tasks of the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators in Austria would be to implement the national-level digital strategies at the federal state and the regional levels. They would also be responsible for having an overview of their federal state and its regions and to identify areas for improvement, fields of development as well as strengths of the regions, regarding digitalisation. The coordinators would be involved in creating regional networks, encouraging joint

[15] DESI 2019: 12/28, IMAS Survey 2019

projects and approaches in the area of digitalisation and serve as a contact point for national and federal-state-level organisations as well as regional communities. The regional digitalisation coordinators would also inform their regions about activities at national and federal state level, such as support measures, planned projects, new research and so on.

### Expected impacts of successfully implemented Austrian RDCs

- *More efficient and effective implementation of digitalisation projects throughout Austria, resulting from more cooperation and better coordination.*
- *Dedicated, regional players engaging with digitalisation and to joint approaches, with the state, federal states and regions digitally growing together and to them anticipating each other's digital strategies.*
- *An acceleration of the digitalisation of the Austrian administration and economy and an increase of the awareness and use of digital services throughout Austria.*

#### SEVERAL AUSTRIAN STAKEHOLDERS EXPRESSED AN INTEREST TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE PITCHES

During the third and fourth workshop and in interviews, several stakeholders expressed an interest to continue working with the two pitches and to see similar programmes, or part of the programmes, being implemented in Austria. For example, one of the key stakeholders with mandate to pursue and decide on implementing new digitalisation concepts in Austria planned on taking all the experiences gained from the exchange into the upcoming programme KMU Digital 3.0. The stakeholder also planned to pursue the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, e.g. by sharing the concept at one of the regular meetings of the federal states' economic consultants (Wirtschaftslandesreferentenkonferenz). The Swedish stakeholders also expressed a will to further support the Austrians in future work, for example by continuing working as a sparring partner, and vice versa.

During the exchange, the role of the DIA changed (see chapter 5.4 for more information). Several of the Austrian stakeholders expressed an uncertainty how this would affect Action outputs and the potential next steps. However, despite of the change of the DIA, the FFG planned to continue working to implement the pitches in close collaboration with involved stakeholders. For instance, that the agency could act as a coordinator for the Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators (in comparison with the role of Tillväxtverket in the Swedish version) and perhaps as well for the Austrian Digital Lift, but with a slightly more advisory role.

## 4.2 Several stakeholders have initiated new important contacts and increased collaboration

As a direct result of the exchange, all stakeholders have developed new contacts and increased collaboration, between the countries as well as between different Austrian stakeholders. Participants have gained a deeper understanding of ongoing initiatives and projects concerning digitalisation, leading to continued exchange of experiences and insights.

#### FURTHER EXCHANGE BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

As concluded at the first workshop, there is a large variety of initiatives to support SMEs in their digitalisation efforts in Austria, and a need for coordination and communication since many stakeholders are unaware of others' work in the

area. Some of the Austrian stakeholders pointed out that the exchange provided them with a possibility to approach other stakeholders from a mutual core. In the sense that the setup of the exchange has given an opportunity to reach out to other organisations, to get to know their digitalisation activities and the people behind it in a more natural, straightforward way. Some of the stakeholders emphasised that it is easy to talk about collaboration and coordination but that it is harder to execute in practice, even between stakeholders that operate within similar focus areas. The work done in the exchange has helped to bridge the gap somewhat, as one stakeholder expressed it: “it has been constructively and important to meet all relevant stakeholders and talk about the issues regarding digitalisation together.”

One Austrian stakeholder found the Digilift especially relevant for the work of his organisation, wishing to further learn about the Swedish set up. Hence the stakeholder was planning on visiting the Swedish Digilift delegation’s training course for Kickstart GO in Lithuania. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the process. Though, the interest is still strong, and the stakeholder would like to continue the exchange when possible. Other stakeholders also witnessed that the coronavirus pandemic has prevented planned activities, e.g. meetings with other Austrian stakeholders to discuss digitalisation. Despite the circumstances, stakeholders are still planning to continue the work that has been initiated through the exchange as soon as possible.

”The new relations generated in the exchange, made it easy and natural for us to reach out to FFG to discuss the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. We are very keen to learn from what Austria is doing and planning to do for SMEs after the crisis.”

- Swedish stakeholder

### NEW CONTACTS ENHANCE MORE COLLABORATION

The exchange has opened new doors for several of the participants, both Swedish and Austrians. For example, a Swedish stakeholder in Austria pointed out that the participation has resulted in new contacts within the Austrian administration and other organisations that are of great importance for the work of the stakeholder. For instance, the stakeholder has been involved in several study visits to learn from others. The new contacts have enabled the stakeholder to use the new insights and experiences in other work areas that are affected by digitalisation, such as industry, where there is an expressed wish among several stakeholders to further deepen and extend the Swedish-Austrian exchange.

### ESTABLISHED RELATIONS BETWEEN TILLVÄXTVERKET AND THE DIA/FFG

As a direct result of the exchange, new relations have been established between Tillväxtverket and the DIA/FFG. The project management teams at both agencies worked in close collaboration throughout the exchange learning together and of each other, for instance regarding the similarities and differences between the national digital ecosystems and the challenges and possibilities that comes of multistakeholder governance. Hence, leading to a deep understanding of each other’s work and responsibilities.

The established relations have also opened new doors for further and deepened exchanges between the agencies, for example concerning the coronavirus pandemic and support programmes for SMEs after the crisis. There is a strong interest to further discuss and reflect on potential interventions to ease the burden on SMEs in this matter.

## 4.3 The Action has provided Tillväxtverket with a better understanding of the work of the agency

Through the exchange, Tillväxtverket have acquired a better understanding of the work of the agency and how to present, explain and connect different digitalisation initiatives, both internally at the agency and externally to stakeholders.

”For Tillväxtverket, the exchange has resulted in a better understanding of the work of the agency. We have been forced to ransack ourselves and thoroughly explain what we do and why, to an inquisitive audience.”

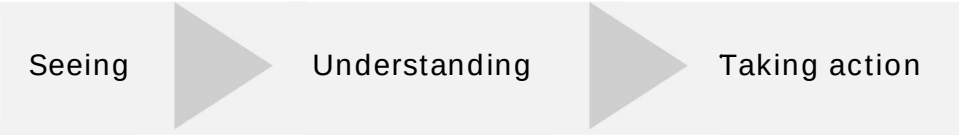
- Swedish stakeholder

As a part of the exchange, Tillväxtverket commissioned the consultancy Ramboll to analyse the agency’s portfolio of digitalisation programmes to support SMEs. The aggregated analysis did not only provide an overview of programmes that might be of interest for Austrian stakeholders, but also provided Tillväxtverket with a summarised presentation of all on-going initiatives. For example, one employee referred to the work done in the exchange as “resulting in a clarified, substantialised description of our offer in digitalisation that makes it easier to pitch ourselves to others, internally and externally.” Other employees pointed out that the exchange has challenged them in several ways, e.g. in explaining and arguing why a programme is designed in a certain way, leading to personal capacity building and a solid knowledge of why things are set up and run as they are.

# 5 INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNINGS LAY GROUND FOR FUTURE WORK

The Action intended to lead to outcomes that empowered SMEs, raised public awareness and improved interaction among stakeholders in Austria, e.g. improvements for Austrian promotion measures and subsidy programmes for SMEs and new ways of involving the public in digital transformation.

**Overall approach of the Austrian-Swedish exchange**




There are several examples of learnings amongst the participating stakeholders, both at an individual and organisational level, that point in a positive direction for future work in the area of digitalisation in Austria. Those key learnings and insights are further explained in the sections below.

## 5.1 The focus of the exchange was for Austria to learn from Sweden, but there are several examples of mutual learnings

**The Austrian Digitalisation Ecosystem**

〉 In terms of the boundary conditions of SME programmes and subsidies, they are strongly shaped and guided by the Austrian federal state system.

〉 Some organisations offering SME support are organised on a national level and others work mainly on the regional level and are not necessarily formally connected to each other, such as the business agencies of the federal states.

〉 There are also organisations that work on both the national and federal state level, as well as on regional levels (e.g. Federation of Austrian Industries (IV), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (AK)).

The purpose of the exchange was for Austria to learn from Sweden on how to improve digitalisation. However, throughout the exchange stakeholders have jointly discussed digitalisation possibilities and challenges on an in-depth level (focused on specific topics and programmes) as well as digitalisation from a broader meta-perspective (such as digitalisation ecosystems). Consequently, several mutual learnings have been generated, including some that were not expected beforehand:

- The countries face similar challenges, but with different possibilities and preconditions to handle the difficulties
- There is a strong need to work beyond organisational silos to strengthen multistakeholder governance
- National collaboration and coordination is important

### Austria and Sweden face similar challenges regarding digitalisation

Throughout the exchange, a shared understanding that the countries face similar challenges (such as reaching SMEs for interventions and implementation of digitalisation ideas) but in slightly different ways and with different possibilities and preconditions to handle the difficulties have emerged.

For example, throughout the exchange, stakeholders have built a mutual knowledge base and a better understanding of the importance of territorial perspectives (national, regional, local) and the importance of national and regional preconditions (e.g. the political systems and agency structures) and culture (e.g. attitudes towards digital transformation) in working with

**The Swedish Digitalisation Ecosystem**

- The Swedish National Digitalisation Council has specific tasks to analyse, discuss and give policy recommendations in the area of digitalisation. The council also follow up on the implementation of the existing National Swedish Strategy for Digitalisation.
- The 21 regions are responsible for implementing several of the national state policies, programmes and decisions.
- On the regional level, several intermediary SME-related organisations are active (e.g. ALMI, Teknikföretagen, RISE). Tillväxtverket works closely with them by providing funds and support for projects and initiatives regarding digitalisation.

digitalisation activities and initiatives. Many of these key learnings and take-aways were generated through deep dives into the digitalisation ecosystems in each country[16] and continuous Q&A sessions on multiple digitalisation topics.

In these sessions, Austrian as well as Swedish stakeholders, reasoned and discussed the impact of e.g. national strategies and regional independence on support programmes and other initiatives. Hence, resulting in a shared view that, despite having similar digitalisation goals, countries can do things very differently and through different means, strongly affected by their institutional settings and what resources and influence different stakeholders have on the regional as well as the state level. Several participants expressed that the workshop series has enabled them to better grasp the topic of digitalisation in their future work, that there is no quick-fix and no "one-size fits all" solution to different problems.

"I have a very important take-away that I did not expect to get beforehand: the importance of regional and national cooperation on these matters. This, I would like to take with me to Austria."

- Austrian stakeholder

## Multistakeholder governance and digital transformation

The broad and opened approach at and in between workshops allowed Tillväxtverket, the DIA/FFG and involved stakeholders to look beyond their own area of expertise and responsibilities on the topic of digitalisation, to a broader view on how to enhance digital transformation through a multistakeholder approach. One such key learning is the need to work beyond and between organisational boundaries and to connect vertically (between levels of the state) and horizontally (between different stakeholders).

For example, in Sweden, public sector governance is by tradition decentralized. State agencies operate quite independently from the ministries and the municipalities and regions of Sweden are to a large extent independent from the state government. To succeed with the digital transformation of Sweden, public sector authorities therefore need to connect and involve stakeholders, vertically between levels and horizontally between different public, private and civil sector actors. One way this is executed is through the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators who are tasked to bridge the gap between, on the one hand the state level, and on the other hand the local and regional level.

### KEY INSIGHT

To succeed with a multistakeholder approach it is key to include and distinguish between two perspectives - or domains - on digitalisation policy:

- **Domain 1.** The digitalisation of society at large, which is a massive evolution that the public sector needs to relate to, support and remove obstacles for within all policy areas, e.g. through regional growth policy, education or better regulation.
- **Domain 2.** The digitalisation of the public sector, which is a transformational process of the public sector itself that public authorities need to drive, e.g. through process automatization, creating digital interfaces to citizens or information management.

If the domains are not distinguished, different actors representing the two domains will mix them up, effectively resulting in miscommunication and inaction. Thus, relevant actors nationally need to engage in comprehensive dialogues about these two domains in order to bridge the existing policy gap, avoid sub-optimizing behavior and to close up on the overall strategic potential of digitalisation nationally.

[16] Visualizations of the digital ecosystems in Sweden and Austria are to be found in Appendix 4.

At the beginning of the exchange, there was a shared view among Austrian stakeholders that there are many on-going initiatives to strengthen digitalisation, but little cooperation and knowledge of others' work in the area. Despite this shared understanding, some stakeholders pointed out that they already knew that a multistakeholder approach was important before participating in the exchange, but that the Action have made it even clearer how important it is. To cherish the outcomes of the exchange activities, such as established relations and a solid and shared knowledge base, several stakeholders emphasised that they must, and will, try to push for a multistakeholder approach (vertically and horizontally) in their future work.

"A national strategy is very much needed to set a strategical focus on the topic of digitalisation and to bring stakeholders together. I, personally, see that this is a must-have for future work."

- Austrian stakeholder

### National collaboration and coordination is important

Another key learning, closely related to the multistakeholder approach, is the importance of national collaboration and coordination. For example, Austrian stakeholders expressed a strong will to better collaborate at all levels, from the local to the regional, to the federal state and the national state, being strongly inspired by the Swedish approach of cooperation. One potential progress could be the implementation of Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, but also by adapting a national digitalisation strategy. Several stakeholders emphasised that having a national strategy could boost collaboration between stakeholders in a more natural way, as well as supporting them in coordinating different activities and initiatives around a common goal or vision.

## A NEED TO GO FROM INDIVIDUAL LEARNINGS TO ORGANISATIONAL IMPACTS

The exchange has been very valuable at a personal level, but a little less so at an organisational level. For example, some Austrian and Swedish stakeholders pointed out that in terms of personal gains the exchange have provided them with new contacts and personal capacity building, whereas the organisational gains are a bit unclear for some of the participants. There are several reasons mentioned for this, e.g. that the main responsibility of an organisation did not overlap entirely with the focus of the exchange or that a participant felt that their organisation did not have the mandate to implement any of the pitches. Despite this, there is a shared opinion that there is a lot that different Austrian organisations could gain from insights and learnings generated during the exchange, e.g. how Swedish agencies work with intermediaries and regional cooperation.

### KEY INSIGHT

It is important to stress that processes of collaboration start with individuals and that it takes time to influence whole organisations, which underlines the importance of making sure that there are functions in place for taking care of learnings and results.

To support the transition from individual learnings to organisational impacts, a potential progress could be to appoint one or more organisations to act as coordinators after the Action ends, for example by having the responsibility to continue to assembly stakeholders and to further strengthen processes of collaboration on the topic of digitalisation in Austria. The coordinating role should also involve supporting stakeholders in making further contacts with each other, to deepen the exchange between Austrian stakeholders as well as the Swedish-Austrian relations.

## 5.2 There was a shared view among stakeholders that Austria will benefit from the exchange in the longer term

Change takes time and it might take years before the impact of an activity or initiative is observable. This is also true for processes of collaboration and mutual learnings, such as this joint exchange, and usually leads to softer outcomes and results that are harder to measure and evaluate. However, amongst the stakeholders, there was a shared view that all the work done in the exchange might lead to outcomes that will positively affect Austria as a country, and SMEs in particular, in the longer term.

Those positive impacts were related to the direct outputs of the exchange, such as successful implementation of the Austrian Digital Lift and the Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators, but also successful integration of parts of the Swedish Digilift into the existing Austrian programme KMU Digital. There was also a common view amongst all participants that the main stakeholders in the exchange (i.e. the core group who have participated in all workshops) would benefit already in the short to medium term, mainly because of the increased knowledge and the established relations that the Action has resulted in.

### ACTION IS NEEDED AT SEVERAL LEVELS FOR LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Some of the stakeholders pointed out that there are insights and learnings that they would like to further develop in an Austrian context to improve digitalisation, but that several factors are affecting their possibilities of doing so. For example, that there is a strong need to have politicians aboard, both nationally and regionally, in order to execute a programme such as the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators. Some stakeholders also pointed out that in order to push digitalisation forward there is a need for Austrian policymakers to prioritise and fully commit to the task, for example by formulating and implementing a national digitalisation strategy. This would not only support the country in the area of digital transformation by providing clear goals, but also strengthening the multistakeholder approach by facilitating horizontal and vertical collaboration and cooperation. It would lay the grounds for more and better coordinated and executed interventions, that in turn could better address the actual needs of SMEs, regions and the public.

To conclude, some of the stakeholders expressed that there is a chain of events that needs to take place before concrete action is possible within their own organisation. Thus, resulting in a shared view that action is needed at several levels for long term impacts and that policymakers have a fundamental part in this, as one stakeholder put it: “Our organisation is ready to act, but before we can do so, a political act is necessary”.

### THE PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MUST BE STRENGTHENED

In addition, stakeholders also emphasised the importance of strengthening the public opinion (including the opinion of SMEs) towards digital transformation to further boost processes of digitalisation in Austria. There was a shared view amongst the stakeholders that Austria must accelerate this work in order to positively affect the mindset of people and businesses. Many expressed that there is a suspicion towards digital services in Austria today, for example regarding privacy and integrity, that needs to be considered in future work.

A part of the exchange focused on learning from Swedish public interaction practices, where the Austrian stakeholders found the work of the Swedish

**Swedish public interaction practices discussed in the Action**

- When providing direct support with subsidies and funds, Tillväxtverket is often using intermediaries working close to the enterprises. The Agency does not target the public directly.
- In the governmental instruction and in several of the governmental assignments, Tillväxtverket is directed to cooperate, collaborate and to implement many defined tasks in a joint manner, e.g. with other agencies such as the Swedish Agency for Innovation or the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority.
- To meet, communicate and simplify for the public and for SMEs, a joint interconnected website called verksamt.se is operated by Tillväxtverket together with e.g. the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Companies Registration Office.

> “SMEs do not care about e-government, they care about digitalisation in relation to their clients and suppliers. It is necessary that the government realises this rather sooner than later. Here, the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators and a national strategy could play important roles.”
>
> - Austrian stakeholder

Internet Foundation[17] (targeting the public directly) and Tillväxtverket's use of intermediaries (SME-related organisations working close to the target groups) as especially interesting, a way of working that is not present in Austria. In Sweden, the cooperation, both within the regions and with national state agencies is often seen to be crucial for effective and sustainable regional and enterprise growth, as well as for the successful implementation of regional and business development strategies and initiatives. Several Austrian stakeholders noted that they would like to bring with them this common ground of cooperation to Austria to be able to better address the needs of different target groups.

### THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON COLLABORATION

Several Austrian stakeholders expressed that Sweden has progressed further in terms of transparency and collaboration, and that there are interesting insights to further discuss and reflect upon in Austria. For instance, the openness between agency employees to share insights and experiences as well as the sense of a lower hierarchy expressed in the close collaboration between agencies and different entity levels of the state, e.g. regarding strategy implementation. A notation made by several of the Austrian stakeholders was the fact that Tillväxtverket invited high-ranked employees from the Swedish ministries to the workshop in Stockholm, and that the invitations were accepted. Many of the Austrian stakeholders interpreted this as a symbol of good relationships between the state and the agencies.

### KEY INSIGHT

In Sweden, most workplaces have open plan solutions with integrated digital services and possibilities to work remotely by using different digital tools. As a result, Sweden is digitally prepared, and many employees could easily adapt to working from home during the coronavirus pandemic. By having established digital workplaces, or perhaps from now on called "corona-proof workplaces", adaption to external changes goes quicker, thus leading to less risk for interruption at work.

### EXTERNAL FACTORS MIGHT CAUSE PAIN, BUT ALSO FUNCTION AS A GAIN

During the exchange, two main external factors had an impact on the process: the change of the role of DIA (see section 5.4) and the coronavirus pandemic. Those external factors did not affect the Action and its activities to a large extent but had some additional effects on, for example, stakeholders' opportunities to have further exchanges with new contacts. Several stakeholders experienced that non-pandemic-related work was put on hold and that it affected their possibilities to dig into the topic of digitalisation. Some expressed the fear that digitalisation might not get as much political attention as before the pandemic, and that ongoing initiatives might be heavily affected. However, there was also a view among some of the Swedish and Austrian stakeholders that there are digitalisation opportunities to further explore during and after the pandemic, for example the fact that many citizens are working from home.

> "Before the coronavirus pandemic, no one in Austria would ever believe that so many of us would be able to work from home. We need to take advantage of this opportunity to further promote digitalisation."
>
> - Austrian stakeholder

[17] The Swedish Internet Foundation is an independent, private foundation that "works for the positive development of the internet" and is responsible for the Swedish top-level domain .se and the operation of the top-level domain .nu, and has a vision "that everyone in Sweden wants to, dares to and is able to use the internet". See: https://internetstiftelsen.se/en/we-are-the-swedish-internet-foundation/

Another opportunity to further explore could be digitalisation support for SMEs. In times of economic upturns, companies are usually fully occupied and hard to access, which also is a key learning from the Swedish Digilift. Because of the crisis, some companies (that are not too heavily impacted) might have additional time and incentives to develop their businesses. As of this, some stakeholders see that there could be an arising opportunity to approach Austrian SMEs to investigate their needs of digital solutions and the possibilities to help them in improving digital transformation.

> "A total focus on digitalisation is hard now, but it is important to ask the question "How can digitalisation help us in the current crisis?", probably a lot if we let it."
>
> - Austrian stakeholder

### LEARNINGS AND RESULTS NEED TO BE COMMUNICATED IN A PROPER WAY

Some of the Austrian stakeholders emphasised that it is easy for the participating organisations to see all the benefit that would come from implementing new programmes in Austria or adapting different parts of the Swedish way of working. At the same time, it might be hard for organisations that has not been a part of the in-depth exchange to see those advantages and to fully understand why a certain action is needed. Hence, properly introduced and communicated learnings and results to other stakeholders and policymakers were considered as important by several of the stakeholders.

A concrete example is the Kickstart GO concept of the Swedish Digilift, where one stakeholder pointed out that it will be hard to communicate to the political level why it should be implemented in Austria. When comparing the straight numbers, the Austrian counterpart KMU Digital reaches tenfold more cases than Kickstart GO. However, the Swedish concept digs deeper into the SMEs' needs and has the coaching approach, whereas the Austrian concept is more focused on consulting.

Another similar communication matter is how to handle the regional perspective. Some of the Austrian stakeholders expressed that it could be hard to properly communicate to the Austrian regions why a programme like the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators is needed, without risking causing disbelief or a sense of intrusion on regional independence.

## 5.3 All stakeholders would participate in a joint Action again if given the opportunity

All stakeholders agreed that they would like to participate in a joint Action again. Mainly because of the benefits that comes from participating, such as personal capacity building, new relations and contacts of importance for their organisations as well as for their own development. Many of the Austrian and Swedish stakeholders also wished to continue having an exchange between Sweden and Austria, for example by developing a similar Action on other topics, such as digitalisation, sustainability and industry but also to put more focus on two–way learning, i.e. that Austria could teach Sweden about blockchain or open data. Those are topics that emerged during the exchange, and where the stakeholders saw that Sweden was lagging behind.

### KEY INSIGHT

Due to previous experience of international projects, some stakeholders had expected the exchange to suffer from lack of transparency and openness among participants and therefore only scratch the surface of the issue at hand. However, at the end of the Action, all stakeholders agreed that the exchange had been very successful and achieved more depth than earlier experiences.

As a success factor, stakeholders pointed to the openness, transparency and humbleness that all those involved showed during and in between the four workshops. This led to an exchange where exhaustive sharing of knowledge, challenges and possibilities quickly became natural. The setup of the workshops, commitment of stakeholders and fortunate chemistry between participants laid the ground for an in-depth exchange, showing great potential for further collaboration.

## 5.4 During the exchange the role of the DIA changed, affecting ownership of Action results

When the DIA was founded in October 2018, the agency was owned by the BMDW and the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie (BMVIT)).[18] After early elections in September 2019, a new Austrian government was formed in January 2020. The new government decided that the DIA would be separated from the FFG from 1 March 2020 to become an independent organisation, with a new focus on e-government applications. This transformation of the DIA also included a change of ownership: while the BMDW remains the responsible ministry for the DIA, the BMVIT/BMK is not a co-owner anymore.[19]

Despite the separation of the DIA from the FFG, the FFG continued to implement some DIA activities that are no longer in the scope of the 'new DIA', including activities of the SRSP Action between Austria and Sweden. It was emphasised by the involved stakeholders that the Action and its outputs are relevant for future measurements by the Austrian government, agencies as well as non-governmental organisations.

## 5.5 Looking forward and beyond

Throughout the exchange, several of the Austrian as well as the Swedish stakeholders expressed a great interest in continuing collaborating. Hence, there are several potential next steps to pursue, whereas some were already in progress at the end of the exchange. For instance, there were several potential next steps to take regarding the implementation of the Austrian Digital Lift and the Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators.

### STEPS TO TAKE REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUSTRIAN DIGITAL LIFT

As an immediate next step after the end of the Action, the pitch of The Austrian Digital Lift is planned to be presented to relevant decision makers at the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) by the FFG as well as by Action participants from the BMDW. Continuous exchange between the FFG and the Austrian stakeholders who participated in the Action will also take place to keep them in the loop and to support continuous action.

A desirable intermediate next step (3-8 months after the end of the Action) is to have decision makers (e.g. BMDW) engaging with employer and employee representatives (e.g. Federal Chamber of Labour (AK), Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), Federation of Austrian Industries (IV), Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)) to jointly implement the Austrian Digital Lift. In the longer term, a setup and running of a pilot and eventually a rollout of the programme in Austria is desired. In addition, several of the Austrian stakeholders expressed that an Austrian version of the Digilift would be fruitful for manufacturing SMEs in Austria.

Some of the stakeholders are also planning to continue learning about the Digilift, e.g. by visiting training courses. Parts of the Swedish Digilift (for instance, the

[18] Name of the ministry as of December 2019; the BMVIT was renamed to the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (Bundesministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Energie, Mobilität, Innovation und Technologie (BMK)) after the formation of the new Austrian government in January 2020.

[19] https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzleramt/die-bundesregierung/regierungsdokumente.html, p. 222 (accessed 27 April 2020; German only).

Kickstart Go concept) is also planned to be integrated into the programme KMU Digital 3.0 (the newest version of KMU Digital) as highlighted by a key stakeholder in the exchange. Some parts are planned to be implemented within the coming months and others during the next year (2021).

Swedish stakeholders also expressed a will to continue to act as a sparring partner to the Austrian stakeholders, and vice versa. Both regarding the pitch but also on other SME matters that could be of interest for both countries.

### STEPS TO TAKE REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUSTRIAN REGIONAL DIGITALISATION COORDINATORS

As an immediate next step, the pitch of the Austrian Regional Digitalisation Coordinators as well as the accompanying Action Plan[20] is planned to be presented to relevant decision makers at the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism (BMLRT) by the FFG as well as by Action participants from the BMDW. Continuous exchange between the FFG and the Austrian stakeholders who participated in the Action will also take place to keep them in the loop and to support continuous action.

A key stakeholder is also planning to present the pitch at the next meeting of the federal states' economic consultants (Wirtschaftslandesreferentenkonferenz). A desirable intermediate next step is to have decision makers (e.g. BMDW, BMLRT, federal states' economic consultants) engage with each other and decide to jointly implement the programme. In the longer term, a setup and running of a pilot and eventually a rollout of the programme in Austria is desired. In addition, Austrian stakeholders emphasised that an Austrian version of the Regional Digitalisation Coordinators would be very useful in developing a better coordination and cooperation between levels of the state and different stakeholders in Austria.

Swedish stakeholders also expressed a will to continue to act as a sparring partner to further support the Austrians, and vice versa, regarding the pitch but also on other topics of interest for both countries.

### ADDITIONAL IDEAS EXPRESSED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the Action, stakeholders deep dived into the topic of digitalisation in both countries. Hence, they **jointly developed additional ideas on how to move on**, expressing several suggestions on other initiatives and programmes to further investigate and new topics to collaborate on after the end of the exchange, e.g.:

- Further discussion and cooperation regarding *the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)*: Both Swedish and Austrian stakeholders responsible for implementing DIHs in their country presented their approach at Workshop 2 and Workshop 3, respectively. Contacts between relevant stakeholders are initiated.

- Ongoing discussions and cooperation between Tillväxtverket and FFG regarding the *design of support programmes for SMEs after the crisis*.

[20] Output report 2.3.2

- Austrian and Swedish stakeholders want to know more about the other country's work within the area of Digital Excellence Skills and *initiatives for increasing digital skills*. A need is expressed, and first contacts are initiated.

- Austrian stakeholders expressed an interest to *teach Swedish stakeholders about open data or blockchain*. It is suggested that digital meetings about topics such as open data and blockchain could be established between Austrian and Swedish stakeholders to allow learning from each other.

- Interest in further *exchange between startups and enterprises in both countries* was expressed, whereas some relations were already established during the exchange (e.g. Swedish Demo Day and Ignite). There is a possibility for Swedish startups to visit the startup event Vienna UP 2021.

- A Swedish stakeholder in Austria actively invited all Austrian stakeholders to stay in contact, *offering possibilities to use the organisation's premises and competence* for future and on-going cooperation.

- There is a strong will amongst all stakeholders to *continue cherish the relations and contacts built during the Action* to further support each other on different topics of interest.

# APPENDIX 1 METHOD

In this chapter the method for the study is presented.

## DOCUMENT STUDIES

Ramboll studied and synthesized written documentation provided by the project management team, e.g. summaries of each workshop, progress reports, output reports and additional documents such as notes from video calls and e-mail correspondence. The purpose of the document studies was to gain a full understanding of the process of the Action and to properly capture activities and outputs.

## INTERVIEWS WITH AUSTRIAN AND SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

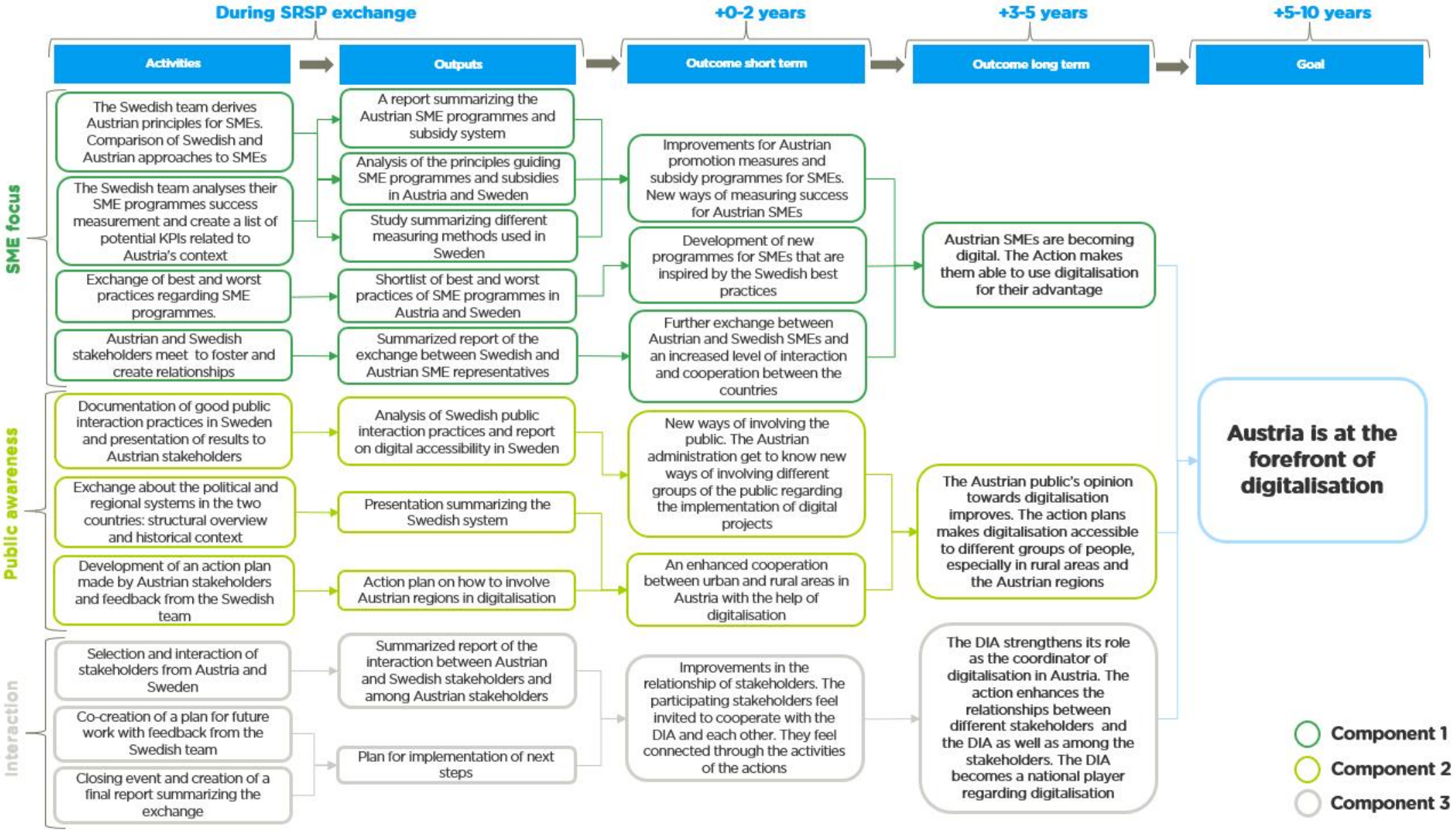
Ramboll conducted interviews with a selection of Austrian and Swedish stakeholders, a total of 15 semi-structured interviews. The main purpose of the interviews was to capture key learnings and insights generated in the exchange.

A list of potential interviewees was provided to Ramboll by the project management team at DIA/FFG and Tillväxtverket. The selection was based on the stakeholders' involvement in the Action, and thus their possibility to contribute to the study. The final selection of stakeholders was done by the project management team in close dialogue with Ramboll. During the process of writing the final report, some additional interviews were added to fill in potential information gaps and to make sure that all perspectives were included.

The interviewed stakeholders are listed in the table below.

| Organisation | Position | Interviewed |
|---|---|---|
| Austrian Chamber of Labour | Head of Department of Digital Affairs | April 2020 |
| Austrian Economic Chamber | Head of E-Center | April 2020 |
| Austrian Research Promotion Agency, Austrian Digitalisation Agency | Project Manager | April 2020 |
| Austrian Research Promotion Agency, Austrian Digitalisation Agency | Project Manager | April 2020 |
| Embassy of Sweden, Vienna, Austria | Embassy Counsellor | April 2020 |
| European Commission (DG REFORM) | Policy Officer, Growth & Business Environment, European Commission | April 2020 |
| Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) | Chief Digital Officer | April 2020 |
| Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) | Field Specialist | April 2020 |
| Federation of Austrian Industries | Communication Manager | April 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Senior Project Manager | April 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Head of Unit | April 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Senior Program Manager | April 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Senior Program Manager | April 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Project Manager | May 2020 |
| Tillväxtverket | Project Manager | May 2020 |

## APPENDIX 2 LOGICAL FRAMEWORK



## APPENDIX 3 ACTION INFORMATION

| Organisations involved in the exchange, either as participants in workshops, in video calls, events etc. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Austrian** | **Swedish** | **Other** |
| • Association Industry 4.0<br>• Austria Wirtschaftsservice (AWS)<br>• Austrian Digitalisation Agency (DIA)<br>• Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)<br>• Austrian Federal Economic Chamber in Sweden/AußenwirtschaftsCenter Stockholm<br>• Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)<br>• Federal Chamber of Labour Vienna (AK Wien)<br>• Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW)<br>• Federation of Austrian Industries (IV)<br>• ibw Austria<br>• Institute of Federalism<br>• Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA)<br>• Platform for Digital Initiatives Vorarlberg<br>• Swedish Embassy in Austria | • Business Sweden<br>• Embassy of Austria in Sweden<br>• National Innovation Council, Prime Minister's Office<br>• Ramboll Sweden AB<br>• Regional Digital Coordinator Västerbotten<br>• Regional Digital Coordinator Västmanland<br>• Regional Digital Coordinator Västra Götaland<br>• RISE AB<br>• Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Austria<br>• Swedish Digitalisation Council<br>• Swedish Internet Foundation<br>• Swedish Ministry of Enterprises and Innovation<br>• Swedish Ministry of Infrastructure<br>• The Association of Swedish Engineering Industries (Teknikföretagen)<br>• The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)<br>• The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (Tillväxtanalys)<br>• Vinnova | • European Commission (DG REFORM) |

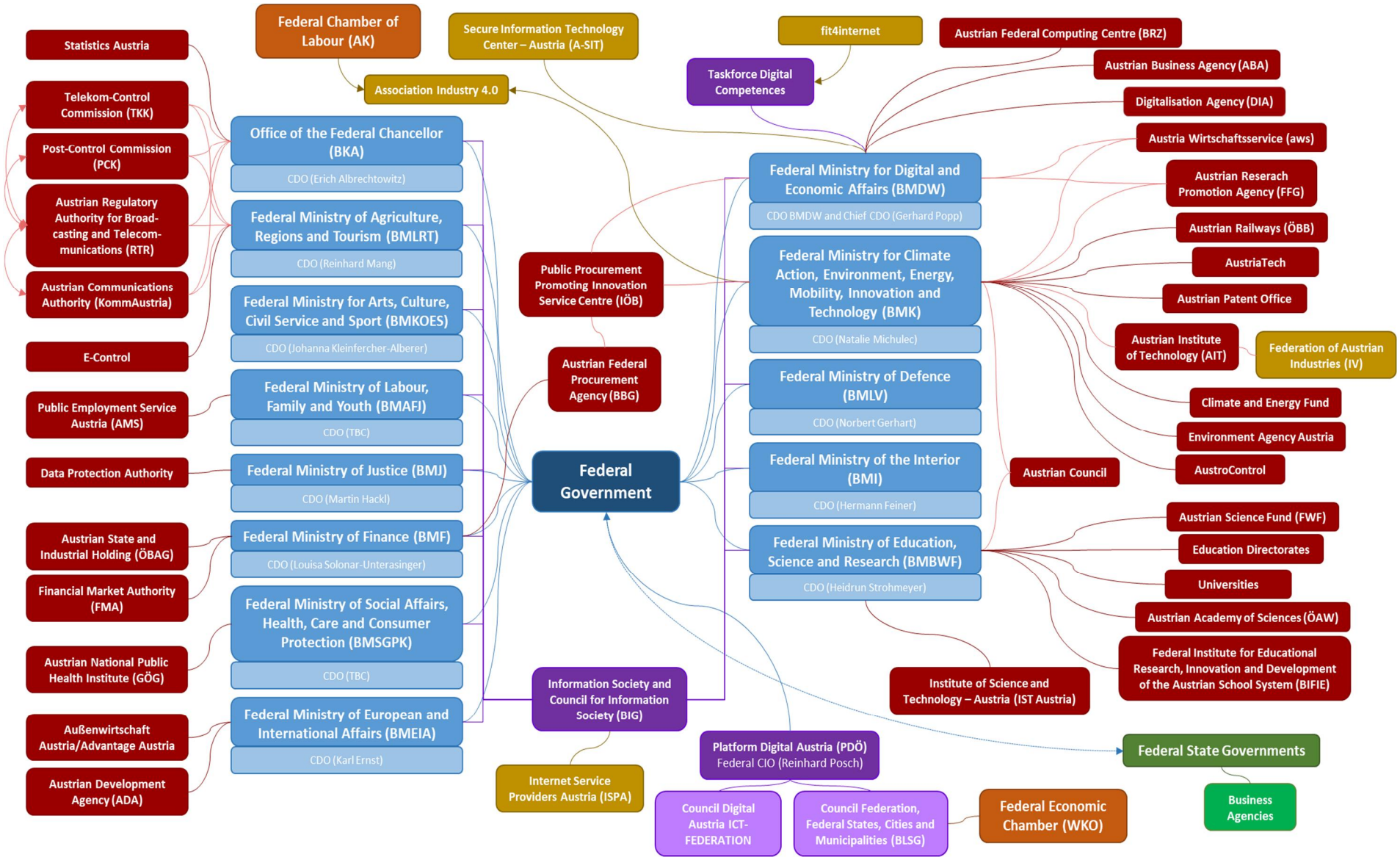
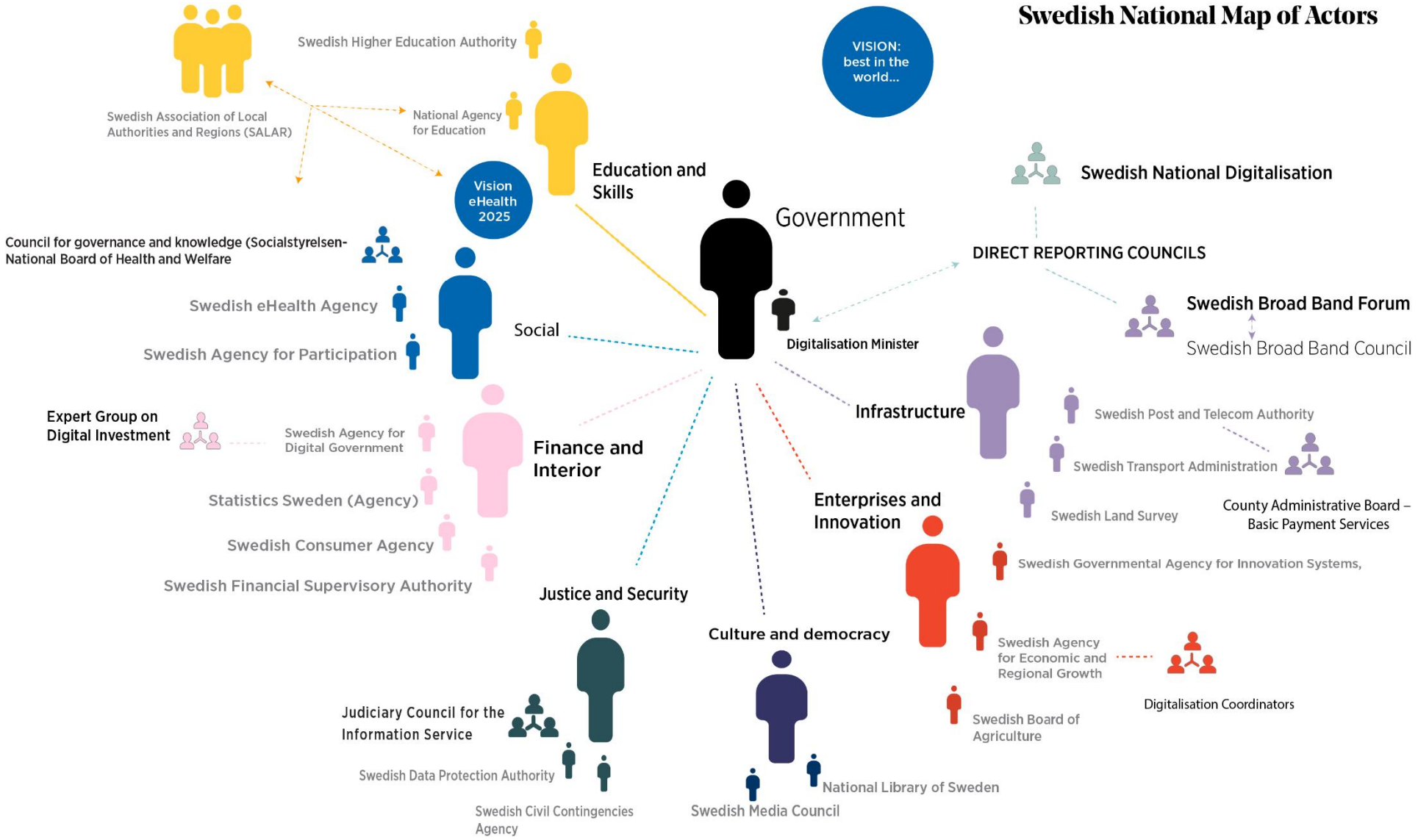
| Attended events |
|---|
| Linz Summit 4.0 (Project management team and selection of Swedish and Austrian stakeholders) |
| Ignite Sweden Day 2019 (Tillväxtverket and selection of Austrian startups) |

| Produced output reports | Short description of output report |
|---|---|
| Output 1.1.1 | Report summarising the Austrian SME programmes and subsidy system |
| Output 1.1.2 | Analysis of the principles guiding SME programmes and subsidies in Austria and Sweden |
| Output 1.1.3 | Study summarising different measuring methods used in Sweden |
| Output 1.2.1 | Shortlist of best and worst practices of SME programmes |
| Output 1.3.1 | Summarised report of the exchange between Swedish and Austrian SME representatives[21] |

[21] The report at hand.

| | |
|---|---|
| Output 2.1.1 | Report on the DIGG programme and digital accessibility in Sweden |
| Output 2.2.1 | Analysis of Swedish public interaction practices |
| Output 2.3.1 | Presentation summarising the Swedish system |
| Output 2.3.2 | Action Plan on how to involve regions in digitalisation |
| Output 3.1.1 | Summarised report of the interaction between Austrian and Swedish stakeholders and among Austrian stakeholders |
| Output 3.1.2 | Plan for implementation and next steps |

## APPENDIX 4 THE AUSTRIAN DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM



## APPENDIX 4 THE SWEDISH DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM