Digital Transformation Monitor

Slovenia: Slovenian Digital Coalition

February 2018
## Slovenia: The Slovenian Digital Coalition

### Fact box for the Slovenian Digital Coalition policy initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Policy Lever(s)</strong></th>
<th>Bottom-up approach with a focus on digital skills and awareness raising.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding Model</strong></td>
<td>No dedicated funding scheme; coalition members contribute on a voluntary basis.</td>
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<td><strong>Target audience(s)</strong></td>
<td>Civil society, public and private sector, industry.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts &amp; Focus Areas</strong></td>
<td>To improve digital literacy and digital competence, to facilitate the greater uptake of ICT solutions, services and infrastructure and to coordinate development policies and measures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key drivers</strong></td>
<td>High level of mobilisation of stakeholders, increasing number of members and supporters.</td>
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<td><strong>Key barriers</strong></td>
<td>The absence of a balanced funding model, resilience and overall lengthy process of implementing the changes in the legal and regulatory framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation strategy</strong></td>
<td>Based on working groups, supported working groups and coordination board.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Results achieved</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td>No dedicated budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uniqueness factor</strong></td>
<td>Diverse platform with broad membership base from all sectors; Development of joint projects covering a wide range of themes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Value-added for policy-makers</strong></td>
<td>Bottom-up approach enabling policy coordinators to collect feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected Impact</strong></td>
<td>To unite, harmonise, and coordinate all stakeholders in the development of a digital economy and creation of digital jobs.</td>
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</table>

*Source: Digital Transformation Monitor*
Executive Summary

The Digital Coalition was established in November 2016 at the 11th Slovenian Business Summit as a coordinating body with a view to effectively implement the strategy Digital Slovenia 2020 – A Strategy for the Development of Information Society by 2020 and other sector specific economic development strategies.

The Slovenian Digital Coalition brings together key stakeholders from trade, industry, research and development, civil society and the public sector. The Coalition serves as a coordinated and consultative non-discriminatory open forum with the objective to foster the development of the digital economy, the creation of digital jobs as well as the exploitation of opportunities closely linked to the development of ICT and the internet. The Coalition is established for the period until 2020.

The initiative started off with wide spread support from a range of different stakeholders as founding members of the Coalition. The Coalition is coordinated by three main governance bodies - the coordination board, three working groups and supported working groups, e.g. the Block Chain Think Thank.

Policy background

In March 2016, the Slovenian government adopted Digital Slovenia 2020 – the country’s Development Strategy for information society until 2020. The strategy aims at speeding up the country’s transformation towards a digital society and making Slovenia a reference for innovative digital solutions. This strategy lays down Slovenia’s key strategic development goals in this area and merges the Next-Generation Broadband Network Development Plan until 2020 and the Cyber Security Strategy into a unified strategic framework.

Along with the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia and “Slovenian Industrial Policy” the initiative supports the creation of an innovative, knowledge-based society. These strategies are at the core of economic development projects which are aligned with the priority areas of the Strategy of Smart Specialisation. The Slovenian Digital Coalition was formed to ensure the successful implementation of the Digital Slovenia 2020 strategic framework and to speed up the digital transformation of Slovenia.

Main Objectives

The Digital Coalition was established to accelerate the digital transformation of Slovenia with the objective to:

- Coordinate economic/industrial development policies and measures for capacity building related to the digitalisation of Slovenia among stakeholders;
- Increase economic performance and employment opportunities and achieve synergistic and cross-sector multiplier development impact;
- Facilitate the uptake of ICT solutions, services and infrastructure, which will be based on open, secure, private, non-discriminatory access and will contribute to reducing environmental impacts;
- Improve digital literacy and digital competence across target populations according to identified gaps, improve e-skills, e-inclusion and the overall quality of life for the population and better integrate ICT in education and lifelong learning for inclusion in the digital society;
- Develop digital content and services in Slovenian, and for language technologies and resources in Slovenian (text to speech and speech to text recognition);
- Increase the uptake of e-services (e-government, e-banking, e-health, etc.) and accelerated deployment of ICT within the public sector.

Policy levers for the Slovenian Digital Coalition
Bottom-up approach, digital skills focus

Even though the Coalition was established with the adoption of the Digital Strategy 2020 prepared by the Slovenian Ministries, the Slovenian Digital Coalition leans more towards a bottom-up approach, since platform members are given an important role in the initiative’s implementation. The Coalition emphasises the need for a proactive involvement of key stakeholders to ensure the successful transformation into a digital society.\(^3\)

Regarding the content priorities of the Digital Coalition, a great emphasis is put on skills. Indeed, the main focus is on improving digital literacy and digital competences as well as on the integration of ICT in education to adapt the workforce to new needs. However, one of the key transformation targets concerns the increased uptake of ICT solutions, services and infrastructure (including public services, broadband and ICT infrastructure, cyber security).

Targeting the whole civil society

The coalition serves as an open forum with a view to attract and involve as many stakeholders and supporters as possible. While all stakeholders are expected to work together towards becoming a digital society, the platform targets in particular the public and private sector as well as civil society.

Main Activities

Through the Digital Coalition, the Slovenian government is seeking to accelerate cross-sectoral integration, support the development of joint projects, harmonise economic development activities as well as produce synergy effects.

The priority fields for the measures adopted under the Coalition include:

- Broadband and electronic communication infrastructure;
- Innovative data-driven services;
- Digital entrepreneurship;
- Cyber security;
- Inclusive information society.

Based on a consultation with the private sector, the technological focus will be on IoT, Big Data, Cloud Computing and mobile technologies, while the activities’ thematic contents will concentrate on the digitisation of entrepreneurship and business as well as smart communities, towns and homes.

With a view to build synergies, joint projects with involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organisations will be designed. The main goal of the projects is to improve the digital skills of the population, stimulate young people to choose the ICT sector as a career path and provide them with the needs and training of the private sector for new digital jobs.

Funding Model

No dedicated public funds have been allocated to finance the activities of the Digital Coalition. While the platform is free of charge operating on a voluntary basis, the members provide their expertise, participate in the Management Board and provide their resources (e.g. workspace) for free. The Platform is currently in the process of identifying partners from the public and private sector in order to obtain additional financing for expert groups, events and business trips. Moreover, the Coalition is further exploring the possibility to make use of EU funding programmes.

Working Groups and first expected results

The first open Digital Coalition Forum was held in June 2017 and set up three main national challenges to be tackled by experts from the working groups. The three working groups were focusing on:

1. Digital Competences and Education
2. Digital Environment and regulatory measures
3. Digitisation of industry and cooperation.

Each working group consists of recognised experts working together on formulating goals, overcoming challenges and drafting proposals for broader programmes. As the topics are interconnected, the working groups collaborate closely.

In the first phase, the Coalition identified actual needs and key challenges faced by businesses and civil society. At this stage, the common goals were established. In 2018, the implementation phase will enter the second phase of developing the real cases, specific projects and changes within the legal and regulatory framework.

The first results are expected to be available by the end of the second phase in the form of proposals for regulatory changes and the preparation of proposals for education programmes and models. Moreover, promotion material and awareness raising activities will be launched in order to enhance the visibility and user-friendliness of digitisation.

The coordination board was established to coordinate, connect, and overlook the activities and conclusions drawn by the working groups. It consists of nine members representing the key stakeholders and the government.

BlockChain Think Tank

The BlockChain Think Tank was formed under the Slovenian Digital Coalition, initially as a working group, aiming at working towards an advanced digital society focusing on:

“If we want to create new, better jobs, it is crucial that we take advantage of the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, which all economic sectors depend on.”

– Zoran Stančič, Deputy Director-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology.
• the integration of Slovenian knowledge in the field of blockchain
• the preparation of legal and other proposals
• education and awareness-raising
• the development of tests and production environments
• the creation of a global blockchain hub in Slovenia
• connections with similar think tanks and other organisations
• awareness-raising regarding Industry 4.0.

As a result of the high interest of organisations joining the so-called BlockChain Slovenia initiative, the BlockChain Think Tank was set up as a non-profit association in January 2018. Altogether, the BlockChain Think Tank has established seven working groups:

• Regulation,
• Fintech,
• Taxation,
• Public Sector,
• Smart Cities And Logistics,
• Block chain Community,
• Energy;

The working groups can each count on the support of 20 to 40 participants. In addition, in the near future a collegiate body will be formed in order to synchronise and coordinate the work of the Think Tank. The meetings will be held on quarterly or biannual basis, while the day-to-day operations will be managed by the digital platform.

The working groups have actively reached out with the intention to build partnerships. Current efforts focus on creating ties with the Bank of Slovenia, the Securities Market Agency, the Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, business representatives of IBM (discussing the possibility of using IBM products created by HyperLedger technology) and cooperation with start-ups’ possibility of using IBM products created by HyperLedger technology) and cooperation with start-ups’ successful Initial Coin Offering campaigns - an unregulated means by which funds are raised for a new cryptocurrency venture.4

The need for a balanced funding model

The main barrier of the platform until today is the lack of a balanced funding model in terms of public and private financing without compromising the neutrality and impartiality of the coalition. The Digital Coalition membership is based on genuine interest and expertise rather than potential profit or political goals. Furthermore, the slow implementation of current changes in the legal regulatory environment are also perceived as a key barrier for the implementation process.

Overcoming differences

So far, the crucial success factor has proven to be cooperation on common objectives. The cooperation of very diverse stakeholders from the private and public sector and civil society shows how diverging approaches can be successfully overcome. Moreover, all stakeholders involved in the Slovenian Digital coalition recognised the need to establish a single digitisation ecosystem, in which the main focus is on the citizen and digital society as a whole. This process is supported by a rather favourable position towards digitisation of Slovene society and business.

References

About the Digital Transformation Monitor

The Digital Transformation Monitor aims to foster the knowledge base on the state of play and evolution of digital transformation in Europe. The site provides a monitoring mechanism to examine key trends in digital transformation. It offers a unique insight into statistics and initiatives to support digital transformation, as well as reports on key industrial and technological opportunities, challenges and policy initiatives related to digital transformation.


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