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Artificial Intelligence and Digital Industry  
**Technologies and Systems for Digitising Industry**

# VOUCHER SCHEMES IN MEMBER STATES

## A REPORT ON THE USE OF VOUCHER SCHEMES TO PROMOTE INNOVATION AND DIGITIZATION

VICTOR BACKER GONZALEZ SALIDO

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared in the context of monitoring the progress made by the EU Member States to launch national initiatives and measures to support digitisation of their industries. More specifically, this report analyses a single financial support mechanism - voucher schemes – and its multi-faceted application across Member States.

The report compliments findings by the ongoing study by VALDANI VICARI & ASSOCIATI (VVA) and WIK CONSULT, contracted by the European Commission to perform a 3 year monitoring exercise under the Digitising European Industry initiatives within the EU Member States.

Using the Joint Research Centre's (JRC onwards) 2016 report *Incentivising Innovation and Adoption of ICT: ICT Innovation Voucher Programmes* as a point of departure, this report aims to improve the understanding of how Member States use different types of voucher schemes to promote innovation and digitisation in their countries.

### 2. VOUCHER SCHEMES

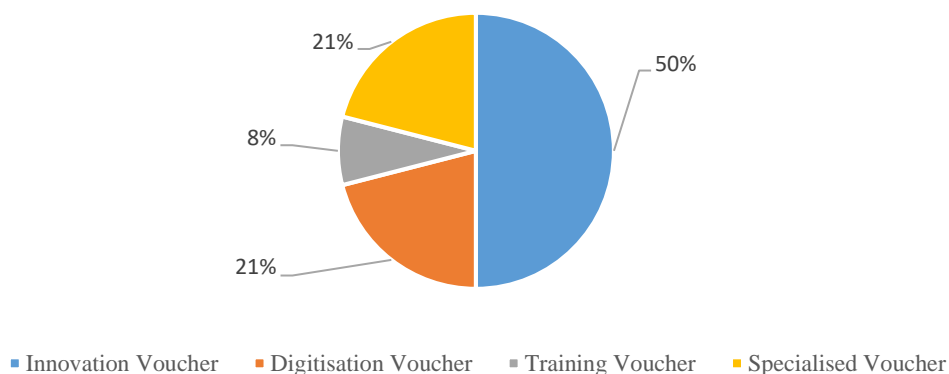
Broadly defined, voucher programmes consist of economic incentives granted by local, regional and national governments to private firms with the aim of addressing pre-defined goals. In this context, the voucher programmes are meant to address Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises' (SMEs onwards) and Governmental Institutions' issues with innovation and digitisation by incentivising the adoption of new technologies, services or skills.

Whereas earlier studies have used a narrower definition of the type of vouchers that could be relevant in addressing ICT related shortcomings, this report considers a broader spectrum of vouchers: ranging from innovation, development & digitisation vouchers to more targeted and untraditional voucher types.

Interestingly, the information presented in annex one<sup>1</sup> shows that the twenty Member States that have been sampled use one or more types of vouchers to incentivise innovation and/ or digitisation in their SME community. More concretely, we can divide these vouchers into 4 categories:

- (1) **Innovation Vouchers:** Aimed at assisting companies, mostly SMEs, in investing in innovative solutions and services or the acquisition of machinery that will facilitate innovation. This type of voucher focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitisation.
- (2) **Digitisation Vouchers:** Aimed at assisting companies, mostly SMEs, in investing in digital solutions, services and/ or acquisition of machinery that will facilitate the digitisation of the company. This type of voucher is earmarked for investments related specifically to digitisation.
- (3) **Training Vouchers:** Aimed at strengthening the basic or advanced digital skills of employees and/or citizens.
- (4) **Specialised Vouchers:** Aimed at providing very specialised and targeted assistance to address a particular situation/ activity related to ICT and innovation.

Figure 1: Distribution of vouchers



Among the sampled Member States, there is a clear preference on the use of innovation vouchers (50 per cent) with digitisation and specialised vouchers accounting for 21 per cent respectively and training vouchers only being rarely used (see fig.1).

It is important to clarify that the aforementioned vouchers are not mutually exclusive. An *innovation voucher* may finance ICT related activities, and a *training voucher* may train employees' ICT skills. As such, all the presented categories can potentially be used to promote ICT related activities. The main difference between them is the broadness of their scope. Where some Member States choose to

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to clarify that the results displayed in annex 1 do not necessarily constitute all voucher schemes currently operational in the EU. The presented results are based on the information provided by the appropriate ministries/ agencies to the best of their knowledge.

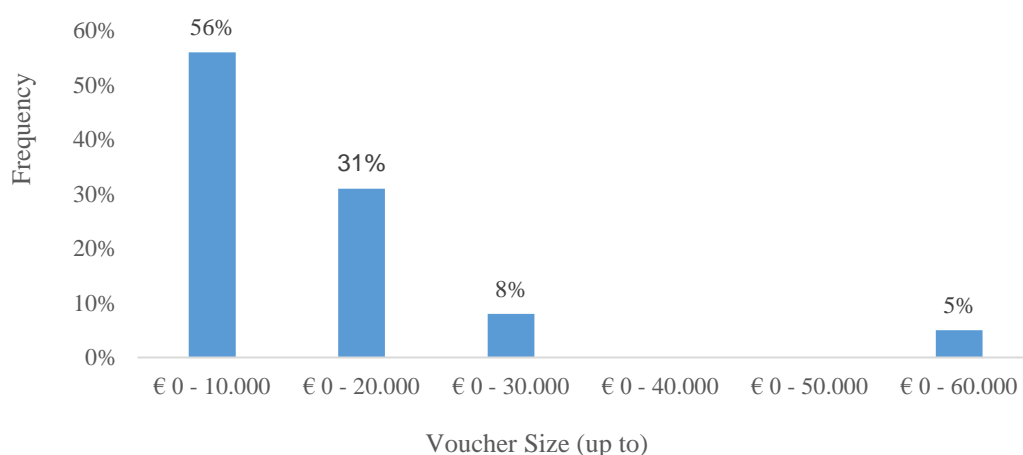
address ICT related shortcomings through targeted solutions, i.e. by means of specialised vouchers, some other Member States prefer to use a wider framework, or a combination of the two.

Nonetheless, the pattern that emerges from the gathered information seems to be a preference for creating voucher schemes that fit within a broader innovation framework. This is observable in the way innovation vouchers are concomitantly meant to address digitisation, transformation of industry (industry 4.0), support for R&D&I etc. Despite these distinctions, the vouchers cover similar activities, namely:

- Consultancy services
- Knowledge transfer vis-à-vis research institutions
- Access to research centres (and their testing facilities)
- Facilitating first-time contacts between entrepreneurs and/ or research centres, nationally or internationally
- Education and training
- Developing digital capabilities
- Investments in ICT instruments

Another differentiating feature between the vouchers is their size. Certainly, the most frequent amount for a voucher is of less than EUR 10.000 (see fig.2). By contrast, there is virtually no vouchers surpassing EUR 30.000 – with the exception of the voucher scheme organised by the region of Wallonia (Belgium) that in some instances covers costs up to EUR 60.000

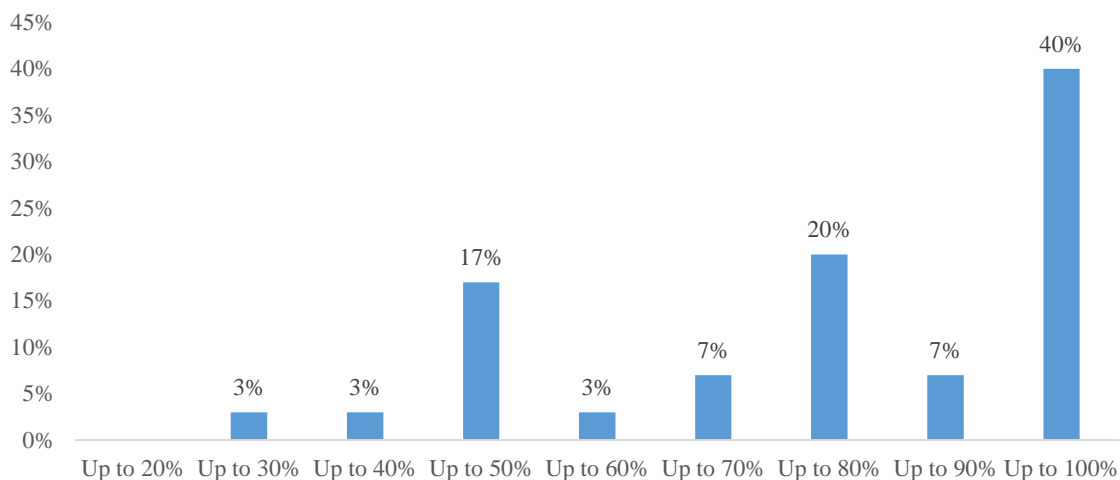
*Figure 2: Distribution of the size of the vouchers*



Furthermore, vouchers most frequently cover a substantial part of the total investment. More specifically, vouchers covering all eligible costs related to the investment are the most frequently used by Member States (see fig.3). Practically, this means that the voucher is granted as a one-off

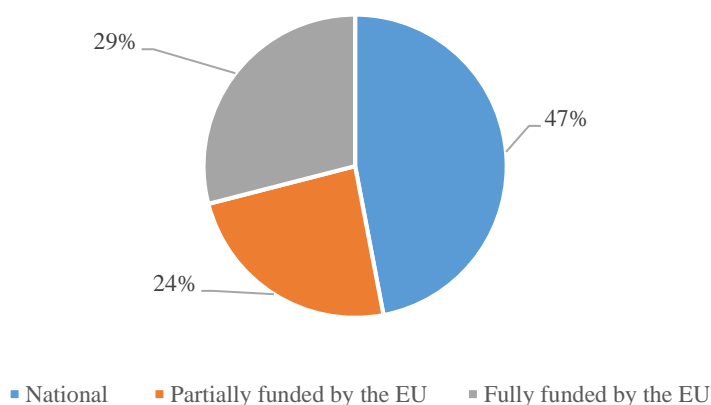
payment to the company, without any requirement for the company to bear part of the costs. It can be noted that bigger grants usually require the receiving company to participate in the transaction by including an own-payment (for more information see annex 1).

*Figure 3: Proportion of the investment covered by the grant*



Regarding how Member States finance their voucher schemes, there is a three-way split between vouchers financed through own national resources, vouchers fully funded through EU funds and vouchers partially funded through EU structural funds (primarily ERDF). A majority of the sampled vouchers are funded through own national resources – either by means of a broad innovation strategy or by targeted subsidies. Additionally, around a quarter of all vouchers are partially financed through EU structural funds and around a third of all vouchers are full financed by the EU – again by means of structural funds (see fig.4).

*Figure 4: Financing of the vouchers*



Respecting the geographic distribution of these financing methods, there does not seem to be a pattern. All Member States, be it Scandinavian, Baltic, Central, Southern or Eastern European Member States, use on or more financing methods. As such, it is not possible to draw any conclusions based on geographic distribution.

When it comes to the beneficiaries of these voucher schemes, most often than not, Member States target their SMEs. There is, however, a few examples where Member States open the competition for micro businesses (Hungary) or all public and private entities in the country (Malta).

As to the type of organisation managing the voucher scheme, it is predominantly the Member State's relevant federal ministry – e.g. ministry of business, finance, innovation etc. – that is in charge of running the scheme. However, several countries have voucher schemes at regional level, meaning that it is the region itself that runs the scheme. Interestingly, it is not solely in Member States with strong regional competencies that we find said regional schemes. Denmark, a highly centralised country, currently operates two separate voucher programs at regional level (see annex 1). Another interesting construction, is the one observable in Estonia and Finland, where it is the Confederation of Industry that operates the voucher program.

The total envelope for the sampled vouchers is of approximately EUR 140 million. However, it is important to note that this amount is not based on a single year. Some vouchers have been active since 2016 and some others have only been initiated recently. As such, the EUR 140 million cover the period 2016-2019. In the same period, we register ca. 190.000 granted vouchers. However, if we exclude the *KME portefeuille program* from the region of Flanders – which granted 150.000 vouchers in 2018 (see Annex 1) - we get a more representative output of ca. 40.000 vouchers in the period 2016-2019.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Reminiscing the JRC's aforementioned report from 2016, it concluded that "*the effectiveness of these ICT innovation voucher programmes may very much depend on the choices made by the government that implements them [...] there is no "one-size-fit-all" ICT innovation voucher programme*". The closing remarks from this report (published in 2016) illustrate clearly the multifaceted nature of voucher schemes as a tool to promote innovation and digitisation in Member States. As can be observed in annex 1, Member States have implemented different vouchers that match their budgetary constraints, national specificities and ambition levels. This diversity speaks to the strength of the voucher scheme as a means to address ICT shortcomings. It allows Member States to mimic the structure used in similarly minded Member States, and fairly inexpensively, adopt it based on the specific needs/ shortcomings of the country.

Since most of these programs are ongoing, it is still premature to draw any conclusions on their effectiveness. However, due to their flexibility and fairly straightforward implementation, it is a measure that Member States (or regions) should consider, either independently or as part of a bigger innovation/ digitisation matrix, in order to address some of the shortcoming identified by the DESI. By using this report as a point of departure, interested Member States can find inspiration in schemes across the continent, and if relevant, get in contact with representatives from that Member State, in order to exchange best practices and find a voucher structure that may address their needs.

## Annex 1

Country	Type	Granting organization	Context	Amount	Financing	Beneficiaries	Purpose	Output
<b>Austria</b>	Innovation voucher	Run by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMDVIT) and the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BDMW)	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	The subsidy can cover a maximum value of EUR 12.500 (80 % funding quota). The total envelope is of EUR 29.3 million.	This voucher is financed under the broader FTI-Strategy ( <i>Strategie der Bundesregierung für Forschung, Technologie und Innovation1 – Der Weg zum Innovation Leader</i> )	Aimed specifically at smaller, not yet regularly innovating companies, that do not have their own R&D staff and therefore rely on the knowledge transfer of research institutions	The Innovation Voucher enables enterprises to enlist the services of research institutions and to pay for these services	In 2016, 4.442 innovation vouchers had been granted

Belgium	Vouchers for SMEs, <i>Vouchers for operational excellence</i>	Organized by the region of Wallonia	Focuses broadly on Industry 4.0 transformation not specifically on digitalization	The subsidy can cover an audit scan (up to EUR 30.000), support to implementation (up to EUR 60.000) and training (up to EUR 20.000). The total envelope for the years 2017 and 2018 was of EUR 4.8 million (financed by the Walloon government) and EUR 3 million by the concerned companies.	This voucher is financed under the broader <i>chèques entreprise</i> scheme.	SMEs from Wallonia	To be spent on strengthening the operational capabilities of businesses - within the field of Industry 4.0	Between March 2017 and November 2018, 1005 companies received funding.
	Vouchers for SMEs, Vouchers for digital transformation and cyber security	Organized by the region of Wallonia	Does have a digital focus	They can cover an audit scan (up to EUR 20,000), support to implementation (up to EUR 60,000) and support for risk analysis and cybersecurity policy setting (up to EUR 20,000). The total envelope for the years 2017 and 2018 was of EUR 1.5 million (financed by the Walloon	This voucher is part of a package of RTI support measures specifically tailored to SMEs ( <i>KMU-Paket</i> )	SMEs from Wallonia	To be spent on strengthening the digital capabilities of regional SMEs	Between March 2017 and November 2018, 353 companies received funding.

				government) and EUR 800.000 by the concerned companies.				
	SME e-wallet, <i>KMO portefeuille</i>	Organized by the region of Flanders	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	For small companies, 40% of the costs up to EUR 10.000, and for SMEs 30% of the costs up to EUR 15.000	Financed through the Flemish budget. It's a euro for euro scheme (meaning that the applying SME has to provide for the other half of the costs)	Flemish SMEs and smaller companies (and those practising liberal professions)	It is a subsidy for training or advice from registered service providers	In 2018, nearly 150,000 innovation vouchers were granted



	Boost Innovation voucher	Organized by the region of Brussels Capital	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	EUR 10.000 per year covering maximum 75% of the costs	Not specified	The funding is targeted at SMEs in the Brussels Capital area	The Boost programme is intended for small Brussels companies. It enables them to access quickly and at a low cost, the competences of a research centre in Brussels	Not specified
<b>Cyprus</b>	Innovation voucher	The voucher scheme is part of the RESTART 2016-2020 programme managed by the Research Promotion Foundation - under the auspices of the Cypriot government	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	There are two types of Vouchers, worth EUR 2.500 and EUR 5.000, as follows: The former covers consulting services and the latter covers measurements, tests and access to research infrastructure. Funding is carried out as a one-off payment, in the form of De Minimis aid. The whole envelope is of EUR 260.000	Partially funded by ESIF and ERDF funds	The funding is targeted at Small or Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)	The projects concern the purchase of consulting services in issues related to innovation	Not specified

Czech R.	Innovation voucher	Managed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade ( The Agency for Business and Innovation (API) acts as an intermediate body) and distributed through open calls	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	The voucher is between EUR 1.939 to 11.637	Financed through EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020	For businesses, research institutions, state administration and NGOs	To be spent on the purchase of advisory, expert and support services in the field of innovation.	Not specified
	Innovation voucher	Organized by 11 regions (out of 14)	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	Up to EUR 19.395 that should cover between 75-85% of the budget. The total envelope was of more than EUR 5.7 million	Not specified	The funding is targeted at SMEs	E.g. Innovation projects, creative services, coaching and mentoring, foreign incubators, and international trade fairs and exhibitions	Since 2009, 2.019 applications were submitted that led to granting of 810 vouchers.

Denmark	Innovation voucher (SME: Digital)	The Danish Government runs the program through its Danish Business Authority	Focuses on strengthening digital and e-commerce capabilities among SMEs	The program offers two vouchers: a large and a small one. The large one is DKK 100.000 (approx. EUR 13.400) and the small one is DKK 25.000 (approx. EUR 3.350). Total voucher budget 2018-2021 is DKK 92 million (approx. EUR 12.3 million)	Financed partly through the Strategy for Denmark's Digital Growth.	SMEs	Strengthening digital and e-commerce capabilities among SMEs and increase competitiveness	More than 2000 beneficiaries (SMEs) in 2021. Increased digital capabilities.
	Digitisation voucher	Run by Business Centre Southern Denmark	Focuses on strengthening digital capabilities among SMEs	DKK 110.000 voucher. Total budget of DKK 12 million. From 2018-2021 (approx. EUR 1.6 million.)	Financed within the EU's Structural Funds framework.	SMEs	To strengthening digital capabilities among SMEs and increase competitiveness	Not specified
	Digitisation voucher	Run by Business Academy Zealand	Focuses on strengthening digital capabilities among SMEs	DKK 72.000 voucher. Total voucher budget of DKK 12 million (approx. EUR 1.6 million) from 2018-2021	Financed within the EU's Structural Funds framework.	SMEs	To strengthening digital capabilities among SMEs and increase competitiveness	Not specified

<b>Estonia</b>	Innovation voucher	Run by Enterprise Estonia (EAS)	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	Maximum grant size is of EUR 4.000 per voucher, with an own contribution of at least 20%. The budget is 4 million EUR for the period 2014–2020	Financed by the European Regional Development Fund.	The voucher is available to all SMEs, who are cooperating with a higher education institute, test laboratory, or intellectual property experts	Supports the creation of first-time contacts between entrepreneurs and innovation service providers	From autumn 2015 until summer 2019: Up to 4.000, 80% - 561 SMEs applied, 399 granted
	Development voucher	Run by Enterprise Estonia (EAS)	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	Maximum grant size is of EUR 20.000 per voucher, with an own contribution of at least 30%.The budget is EUR 6 million for the period 2014–2020	Financed by the European Regional Development Fund.	Targeted at SMEs whose ideas need advanced professional know-how from specialists in order to be implemented	Was launched in 2015 with an aim to continue and increase cooperation between entrepreneurs and external innovation partners	From autumn 2015 until summer 2019: Up to 20.000, 70% - 295 SMEs applied, 194 granted
<b>Finland</b>	Innovation voucher	Organized by Business Finland	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	EUR 5.000 per voucher	Financed by Business Finland	Intended for SMEs engaged in well-established business and who have a new product or service idea with international growth potential and for which the company needs external expertise.	To encourage SMEs to innovate and develop their business and to activate the supply of innovation services. Can be used to purchase new knowledge and skills for the business	Since 2016, over 2.500 vouchers have been issued

	Training voucher, <i>Digiaikakauden taidot</i>	Organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture	Focuses on strengthening digital capabilities	EUR 7 million were allocated in 2018 for this project	Financed through own resources	Open nationwide, but special attention will be given to adults with low basic education, the immigrant population, the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment and the elderly	Aims at strengthening basic digital skills among the population.	Not specified
<b>Germany</b>	Innovation voucher, <i>Go Digital</i>	Organized by the Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy	Does have a digital focus	Consulting services are funded with a funding rate of 50 percent to a maximum consultant daily rate of EUR 1.100 (excluding VAT). The beneficiary SME only contributes its own share. The funding scope is a maximum of 30 consultant days in a period of up to 6 months.	Financed through own resources	SMEs with less than 100 employees	To advance recipients' digitisation in three areas: IT security, digital marketing and digitised business processes. Funded enterprises can get expertise and support from authorised consulting firms	In 2018, 863 vouchers were awarded, totalling EUR 4.243 million. In 2017, 1238 vouchers were awarded, totalling EUR 4.783 million.

	Go Inno	Organized by the Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy	Focuses broadly on innovation, not specifically on digitalization	It covers up to 50 percent of external consulting expenses for BMWi-authorized consulting firms	Financed through own resources	SMEs with less than 100 employees, with an annual turnover of no more than EUR 20 million and with its head office and/ or branch in Germany	To fund management and consulting services for the preparation and execution of product developments and technical process innovations	Not specified
	KMU-Innovativ	Organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research	Focuses broadly on technology fields that are important for Germany's future	The subsidy amount approved to date amounts to more than EUR 1.266 million for	Financed through own resources	SMEs with less than 100 employees	To simplify the application and approval of grants for innovative SMEs in specific technology fields that are particularly important for Germany's future	More than 1,700 individual and joint projects involving around 2,900 small and medium-sized enterprises have been approved

	Digitisation and Innovation Vouchers	Run by the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia	The focus of the voucher system is twofold: While the digitisation voucher focuses solely on funding digital activities, the innovation voucher funds activities at all stages of the value chain.	Up to EUR 10.000 for the Innovation voucher B and the Digitisation voucher A. Up to EUR 15.000 for Innovation voucher F+E and the Digitisation voucher B. The total envelope amounted to EUR 4.3 million in 2017	Financed through own resources	SMEs with less than 250 employees and max. EUR 50 million annual sales or EUR 43 million annual balance sheet that want to generate innovation related to digitisation and IT security	The voucher system is set up to facilitate, increase, and further drive cooperation between SMEs and higher education institutions. Within this scheme, we find Digitisation and Innovation vouchers	Not specified
<b>Hungary</b>	Innovation Voucher	Hungarian Government	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	The total envelope is of HUF 60.6 (EUR 185.071)	Financed through EU Structural Funds (EDIOP)	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with marketable product, technology or service (not available for firms from the Central Hungarian region)	To involve micro firms and SMEs into the innovation chain by increasing the intensity of their innovation activity through the innovation services utilized by the voucher.	Until 03/05/2019 64 applications were registered (worth of 296.5 million HUF). Out of 64 applications 13 were successful.

<p><b>Ireland</b></p>	<p>The Trading Online Voucher Scheme</p>	<p>Run by the Department of Communications, Climate Action &amp; Environment under the National Digital Strategy.</p>	<p>Focuses solely on strengthening digital capabilities</p>	<p>The scheme is a matched-funding prospect where the maximum amount payable is EUR 2.500 or 50% of the eligible cost (whichever is the lesser), exclusive of VAT. The total envelope amounts to EUR 7.3 million since its launch in 2017</p>	<p>Financed through own resources</p>	<p>Small businesses with limited online trading presence and: 10 employees or less, EUR 2 million or less in turnover and at least 6 months trading.</p>	<p>Eligible businesses can apply for a voucher to invest in developing their ecommerce capability</p>	<p>Over 5.000 businesses have successfully applied for funding under the Scheme since its launch in 2014. Furthermore, circa 12.000 businesses have benefited from training under the Scheme in that time.</p>
<p><b>Italy</b></p>	<p>Voucher for digitisation in SMEs</p>	<p>Run by the Italian government, through the Ministry of Economic Development</p>	<p>Focuses solely on strengthening digital capabilities</p>	<p>Each company can benefit from a single voucher of no more than EUR 10.000, up to a maximum of 50 % of the total eligible expenses. Purchases must be made after the reservation of the voucher. Over the period of 2017-2019, the total envelope will be of EUR 45 million.</p>	<p>Financed through own resources</p>	<p>Micro enterprises and SMEs in the pursuit of the digitalisation of their processes and modernisation of their technologies</p>	<p>The planned result of the measure is to encourage investments in ICT innovation and digitalisation among micro enterprises and SMEs.</p>	<p>During the first round, 92.000 applications were received through the Ministry's e-portal, of which a maximum of 10.000 can be honoured</p>



<p><b>Latvia</b></p>	<p>Innovation voucher</p>	<p>Latvian Investment and Development Agency</p>	<p>Smart Specialization Strategy fields - bio-economy, ICT, bio-medicine, smart materials and smart energy</p>	<p>1) Classical voucher, max. amount up to EUR 25.000, co-funding rate 85%; 2) so called "starter" voucher - for those SMEs who had never collaborated with the research organizations, max. amount EUR 5.000 EUR, co-funding rate 100%.</p>	<p>Financed through EU Structural Funds, under the Technology Transfer program</p>	<p>Basically SMEs and large entities (only as of 01.09.2018.)</p>	<p>To promote innovation activities in SME's and to provide aid to them through the transfer of technologies for the development of new or significantly improved products or technologies</p>	<p>Program was established at the end of 2016. Till 01/05/2019 43 vouchers were approved</p>
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Lithuania	Innovoucher	Run by the Lithuanian Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	Applicants may receive up to EUR 5.682 for contracts with research institutions under which specific R&D services may be performed. Companies may choose a service from a list which includes nearly 2500 R&D services of different types. Applicants may get funding for up to 70 percent of total project eligible costs. The total envelope is EUR 2,5 million	Financed through EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020	All private legal entities are potential applicants	Encourages business and science institutions to build up primary contacts and to intensify the innovation activities. Two types of activities are funded: (1) early stage research and development (R&D) and (2) preparation of technical feasibility studies.	Main results of InnoVouchers scheme: 776 projects implemented and EUR 3.3 million allocated
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<p><b>Malta</b></p>	<p>Commercialisation Voucher Programme</p>	<p>Run by the Malta Council for Science and Technology</p>	<p>Focuses on Malta's Smart Specialisation Strategy that includes IT as a smart spec area.</p>	<p>One Main Entity: Maltese Public Entity (100% reimbursable incl. VAT i.e. EUR 20.060) or Maltese Industrial Entity (75% reimbursable excl. VAT i.e. EUR 12.750).</p>	<p>Financed by the Maltese Government</p>	<p>All Public and Private Maltese legal entities are potential applicants</p>	<p>The CVP is aimed at improving the development and commercialisation potential of innovative research ideas</p>	<p>As of 2014, 101 CVP Projects were funded out of a total of 230 applications and EUR 1.65 million allocated. A total of 24 private entities received funding.</p>
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	Optional Vouchers	Run by the Malta Council for Science and Technology	Focuses on Malta's Smart Specialisation Strategy that includes IT as a smart spec area.	TDP Consortium Coordinator. Maltese Public Entity (100% reimbursable incl. VAT i.e. EUR 28.320) or Maltese Industrial Entity (75% reimbursable excl. VAT i.e. EUR 18.000).	Financed by the Maltese Government	All Public and Private Maltese legal entities are potential applicants	The Optional Vouchers further support the Technology Development Programme by providing 3 optional vouchers; Initial Patent Application to pursue a patent/other forms of protection for the invention, Business Plan to establish the goals that must be achieved in order for the business to succeed and Investors Meeting to find the right opportunities through which the technology can be showcased.	As of 2017, 6 Initial Patent Applications, 1 Trademark Application, 2 Investors Meeting and 2 Business Plans were allocated to the TDP Consortium made up of at least 1 MT Private Entity and 1 MT Public Entity
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	Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme	Run by the Malta Council for Science and Technology	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	The amount of the Pre-financing Award available to any one successful Applicant is capped at EUR 5.000 per Option.	Financed by the Maltese Government	All Public and Private Maltese legal entities are potential applicants	Option A: opportunities for collaborative initiatives between Maltese academic institutions, public entities, or private entities and at least one foreign research centre or academic/private entity of proven track record of excellence. Option B: opportunities for Maltese entities intending to submit a Horizon 2020 (H2020) proposal as the coordinator of the consortium to engage a service provider (local or foreign) who will be supporting the applicant through proposal writing and submission.	As of 2015, 38 IPAS Projects were funded out of a total of 64 applications and EUR 200.000 allocated.
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<p><b>Poland</b></p>	<p>Training vouchers for SMEs*</p>	<p>Run by 3** Managing Authorities in ROPs (IP 8v - so called PSF - Podmiotowe Systemy Finansowania (subjective financing systems)**)</p>	<p>Focuses broadly on soft-skills trainings, not specifically on digitalization</p>	<p>The subsidy can cover 50%-80% of a project value</p>	<p>This voucher is financed under the ESF funds in ROPs</p>	<p>SMEs</p>	<p>Vouchers enable SMEs to attend training services</p>	<p>About 4.500 SMEs have been covered by development services in the programme so far</p>
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<p><b>Portugal</b></p>	<p>Start-up voucher</p>	<p>Financed by the Portuguese government, who through the National Strategy for Entrepreneurship (2016) created <b>Startup Portugal</b> who administers the voucher</p>	<p>Focuses broadly on innovation and R&amp;D, not specifically on digitalization</p>	<p>Applicants may receive EUR 2.000 per business project</p>	<p>Financed through EU Structural Funds and the StartUP Portugal - Estratégia Nacional para o Empreendedorismo</p>	<p>The StartUP Voucher supports the development of innovative entrepreneurial projects in the idea stage. The applications shall meet the following conditions of eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aged between 18 and 35 years old;</li> <li>• Be Portuguese or resident in Portugal;</li> <li>• Not benefiting from another grant for the same purposes and have no other source of income;</li> <li>• Not having set up a company in Portugal</li> </ul> <p>The access to the StartUP Voucher must also comply with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of the application by teams with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 promoters;</li> <li>• Be supported by a maximum of 2 promoters (grantees).</li> </ul>	<p>Supports the development of projects in the idea phase through financial support of several technical and financial tools.</p>	<p>Results of the 2016/2019 edition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 497 submitted projects</li> <li>• 226 projects supported involving 382 beneficiary entrepreneurs</li> <li>• 72 incorporated companies</li> </ul> <p>Edition 2018/2020 (in progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 320 submitted projects</li> <li>• 220 projects supported involving 375 beneficiary entrepreneurs</li> </ul>
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	Incubation voucher	Financed by the Portuguese government, who through the National Strategy for Entrepreneurship (2016) created <b>Startup Portugal</b> who administers the voucher	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	The maximum value of the ticket goes from EUR 5.000 to EUR 7.500, except in Lisbon.	Financed through EU Structural Funds and the StartUP Portugal - Estratégia Nacional para o Empreendedorismo	Not specified	Supports newly founded companies (< 1 year) through services (e.g. management, marketing, legal advice, IPR) provided by certified incubators	158 applications from SME and granted 135 incubation vouchers.
	Pitch voucher	Financed by the Portuguese government, who through the National Strategy for Entrepreneurship (2016) created <b>Startup Portugal</b> who administers the voucher	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	Not specified	Financed through EU Structural Funds and the StartUP Portugal - Estratégia Nacional para o Empreendedorismo	The beneficiaries are individual entrepreneurs that will benefit from training in pitching	Promotes the strengthening of the relationship between start-ups and large companies.	Not specified



	Voucher for the Road 2 Web Summit	Financed by the Portuguese government, who through the National Strategy for Entrepreneurship (2016) created <b>Startup Portugal</b> who administers the voucher	Does have a digital focus	No monetary support involved , it is a voucher for access training boot camp with a 50% discount on the alpha package for Web Summit	Financed through EU Structural Funds and the StartUP Portugal - Estratégia Nacional para o Empreendedorismo	The preparation boot camps are also open to large Portuguese companies and SMEs	Finances the participation of 200 Portuguese start-ups in the largest technological entrepreneurship event in the world.	425 start-ups participating on the boot camps and thus 425 vouchers were granted – 650 Start-ups applied over the period of 3 years.
<b>Slovakia</b>	Voucher	The Slovak government, through its Innovation and Energy Agency runs the voucher scheme.	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	Once the application has been approved and the partnership has been agreed, a voucher of EUR 5.000 is granted to be used on R&D. The total envelope was of EUR 125.000 in 2018	Financed within the EU's Structural Funds framework.	The funding is targeted at SMEs	To teach companies and educational institutions how to cooperate with regard to research and innovation	In 2018, 25 vouchers were granted (i.e. the full budget was exhausted). In previous years, 40 to 50 vouchers were granted per year.

Slovenia	Digitization vouchers 2019-2023 entail four components: (1) Digital Competencies Enhancement, (2) Digital Strategy Preparation, (3) Digital Marketing (4) Cybersecurity	The Digitization vouchers are implemented by the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, which is appointed as the Implementing Body within PA 3 of OP 2014-2020	Digital Competencies Enhancement focuses on individual and group trainings of beneficiaries' personnel in the field of digitalisation	<b>EUR 3 million available;</b> grants in range EUR 1.000- 9.999 (same beneficiary can receive grant twice until 2023, thus maximum EUR 19.999), de Minimis, 60% of eligible costs co-financed by European Regional Development Fund	Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and private funds.	Micro, small and medium enterprises	Mainly to provide "easy-to-access" financial support to the most vulnerable segment of Slovenian economy - sole entrepreneurs and the rest of the SMEs. Accountability of beneficiaries is enhanced by their obligatory financial contribution (40% of eligible costs + ineligible costs)	Launched in the first half of April 2019, submission of applications is on-going; as of May 15th there were <b>42 applications submitted, thereof 10 vouchers granted</b> in the ERDF amount of <b>92.977 EUR.</b>
			Digital Strategy Preparation focuses on digital transformation of beneficiaries	<b>EUR 2 million available;</b> grants in range EUR 1.000- 9.999, de Minimis, 60% of eligible costs co-financed by European Regional Development Fund				
			Digital Marketing focuses on testing and set-up of digitisation-enhanced webpages of beneficiaries and their e-Retail platforms	<b>EUR 2 million available;</b> grants in range EUR 500- 8.500, de Minimis; 60% of eligible costs co-financed by European Regional Development Fund				

			Cybersecurity focuses on set-up of pre-emptive e-Mechanism of beneficiaries against potential cyber-attacks	<b>EUR 1 million available;</b> grants in range EUR 1.000- 9.999 de minimis, 60% of eligible costs cofinanced by European Regional Development Fund				
<b>Spain</b>	Innovation voucher	The voucher scheme is run by the region of La Rioja	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	Offer grants for SMEs under de Minimis and the funding rate is 100%. The amount depends on the concept, varying from EUR 4.000 to EUR 14.000 always for subcontracting, except for R&I pilots that the limit is EUR 30.000 ( EUR 16.000 for staff costs and EUR 14.000 for subcontracting)	Financed within the EU's Structural Funds framework.	The funding is targeted regional SMEs	To stimulate the adoption of services on the part of SMEs, thus helping them consolidate their strategies, improve their management and adopt solutions related to Industry 4.0	The voucher was launched in 2018. In the first call they received a total of 282 applications and 220 have been selected.
	Innovation voucher	The voucher scheme is run by the region of Galicia	Focuses broadly on innovation and R&D, not specifically on digitalization	Not specified	Not specified	The funding is targeted regional SMEs	To encourage SMEs to apply for EU funds through local DIHs	Not specified

<p><b>Sweden</b></p>	<p>Digitisation Voucher</p>	<p>The Swedish government, through its Agency for Economic and Regional Growth runs the voucher scheme.</p>	<p>Focuses solely on strengthening digital capabilities</p>	<p>The voucher can vary from SEK 50.000-250.000 (EUR 4.870 – 24.330), and should not cover more than half of the costs. The remaining part should be paid by the company.</p>	<p>Financed through national funds (the part of the government budget which finances regional development). Targeted regions may, if they choose to, use ERDF to step up the funding</p>	<p>Target Group Small enterprises 2-49 employees, an annual turnover of between SEK 3 million and SEK 100 million</p>	<p>To support small companies that want to take in external competence to develop the company and increase competitiveness – either through a service or by hiring additional staff on a project basis</p>	<p>In 2017, 60% of the applying companies were granted a voucher (236 out of 396)</p>
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