



STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF TEXTILE, AEROSPACE, AND CONSTRUCTION SMES TO TRANSITION TOWARDS GREENER AND MORE DIGITAL SECTORS WITH SOCIAL AND BUSINESS INNOVATION

Grant Agreement number 101091494

***Deliverable 4.2: – Assessment of the innovation impact on funded SMEs and
their progress towards scaling up***

Lead partner:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN TRANSIT aimed to strengthen the resilience of textile, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and construction SMEs towards greener and more digital social and business models, with a mixed support mechanism including individual assessment, **coaching and a lump sum** to ensure their consolidation and sustainability. IN TRANSIT provided an open online collaborative platform involving innovation actors from the aerospace, construction, advanced manufacturing and textile sectors that will serve as a space for sharing best practices and as a matchmaking system for new ideas for innovation and circular economy and new collaboration partnerships.

This document compiles the main aspects of assessing impact of ‘Innovation’ support on funded SMEs and their progress towards scaling up, specifically developed under the framework of Work Package 4, Task 4.2.

In line with Work Package-4’s focus on Leveraging Circularity to stimulate social business development, one to one coaching session along with webinars (mix of technical and non-technical topics) were organised for engaging, facilitating and channelling cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation in scaling technological innovations, generating trust, and familiarizing participants with different sectors involved.

The aim of this deliverable is to share a report on impact of ‘Innovate’ sessions (mainly the one to one coaching sessions) towards highlighting how these interactions stimulated beneficiary SMEs to ideate innovative project ideas, apply and get selected in competitive Develop funding call and their interests in further scaling up.

KEY WORDS: IN TRANSIT; TEXTILE SECTOR; ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SECTOR; AEROSPACE SECTOR; CONSTRUCTION SECTOR; SMEs; INNOVATE IMPACT; SCALE UP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 IN TRANSIT Project	6
1.2 IN TRANSIT Objectives	6
2. 'INNOVATION' IMPACT ON FUNDED SMES.....	9
2.1 Interactions to stimulate innovative ideas during Innovate sessions (One to One)	10
2.2 Comparison of Pre and Post Innovate Diagnostic scores	12
2.3 Feedback received from Develop beneficiaries	16
3. CONCLUSION.....	20

REFERENCES FOR TABLES

Table 1 : Innovate 1st call topics and beneficiary SMEs interested to participate in one to one discussion.....	10
Table 2: Innovate 2nd call topics and beneficiary SMEs interested to participate in one to one discussion.....	11
Table 3: Innovate Diagnostic tool Pillars and subcategories.....	12
Table 4: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who applied for Develop 1 st call	15
Table 5: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who applied for Develop 2 nd call.....	15
Table 6: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who did for Develop 1 st call, were not selected and they reapplied in Develop 2 nd call	15
Table 7: Analysis of Develop beneficiary feedback to gauge inclination of SME beneficiaries towards scaling up of funded Project idea towards enhancing business value	19

REFERENCES FOR FIGURES

Figure 1: IN TRANSIT Consortium Partners.....	6
Figure 2: IN TRANSIT Project Objectives.....	7
Figure 3: IN TRANSIT Innovation Space Pathway	9
Figure 4: Snapshot of typical points of discussions with Innovate SMEs during one to one discussion.....	11
Figure 5: Snapshot of the Diagnostic tool used to assess digital maturity of Innovate beneficiaries before and after coaching.....	12
Figure 6: Innovate 1st call - Number of SMEs applying for Develop 1 and 2 funding calls and also getting selected.....	13
Figure 7: Detailed analysis of Digitalisation diagnostic scores (Post Innovate coaching score minus Pre Innovate coaching score)	13
Figure 8: Detailed analysis of Circular economy diagnostic scores (Post Innovate coaching score minus Pre Innovate coaching score).....	14
Figure 9 : Innovate 2: Number of SMEs applying for Develop 2 nd funding call and also getting selected	16

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 IN TRANSIT Project

IN TRANSIT project facilitated dedicated support to SMEs through combination of multiple mechanisms to enable cross-sectoral and cross-border innovative activities. The Project extended the uptake of technologies as part of the digital transition of the textile, construction, aerospace and advanced manufacturing sectors. The consortium partners which comprised seven innovation clusters from advanced manufacturing, construction, and textile industries, one business incubator and accelerator, one University, and one research centre brought this cross-regional partnership to life.



Figure 1: IN TRANSIT Consortium Partners

IN TRANSIT project has helped small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) take advantage of new, sustainable, and innovative ways of doing business. It supported them by combining advanced technologies with environmentally friendly practices, helping create a more sustainable business environment. As part of the Project, multiple services including 'Innovate' were designed towards encouraging digital transformation initiatives towards achieving more eco-friendly production methods. Project also was associated in helping SMEs connect seamlessly with innovation networks and digital solution providers like technology clusters, digital innovation hubs and testing labs, to help them choose the best systems for their circular business models. The project worked closely with SMEs, linking them to experts, knowledge networks, and digital tools across different industries. The Project partners brought strong expertise from various fields and regions, offering valuable cross-border support.

1.2 IN TRANSIT Objectives

IN TRANSIT project enabled SMEs to benefit from the rise of sustainable and innovative business models and practices by effectively enabling the collaboration, connecting them with innovation, knowledge networks, and digital solution providers across the EU region. As it was facilitated by experienced Project Partners who were part of well-connected industry consortia eco system in the region, cross sector and cross border collaborative projects were ideated and executed, leading to digital uptake towards more sustainable production patterns. The guiding factors for the project were the four key objectives:

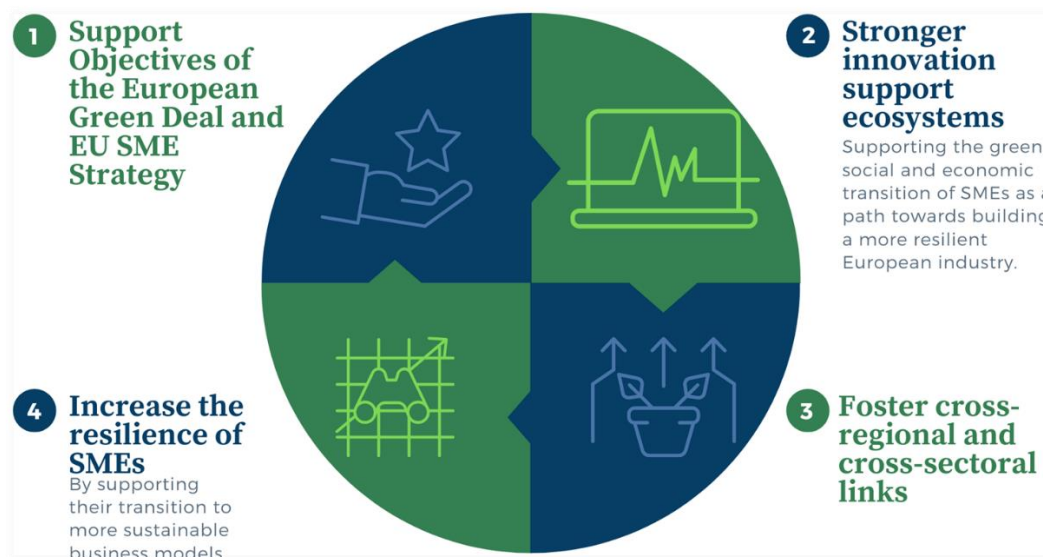


Figure 2: IN TRANSIT Project Objectives

Support Objectives of the European Green Deal with EU SME

Business model innovation was facilitated for SMEs through a mixed support mechanism including individual assessment, coaching and a lump sum aligning with the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, setting out sustainability principles and specific requirements linked to environmental and social aspects in resource-intensive focus industries (textile & construction as such, and ICT & electronics for aerospace)

Stronger innovation facilitating ecosystems supporting the green, social and economic transition of SMEs as a path towards building a more resilient European industry

An open online collaborative platform involving innovation actors from the aerospace, construction, and textile sectors and countries was created ([In Transit Community Platform - Info](#)) to share best practices and as a matchmaking system for new ideas for innovation and circular economy including new collaboration partnerships. Through this open platform, the cross sector and cross border collaboration was facilitated towards promoting discussions, innovations and partnerships which resulted in applications for Cascade funding projects and also could lead towards establishing long term business relationships. Overall, this system promoted a strategic framework to seed, explore, and scale-up new sustainable and digital value chains based on the EU Green Deal, New EU Industrial Strategy: building resilient, autonomous European industries, and EU SME Strategy guidelines to shape the SMEs' transition towards a greener business model towards driving positive economic and social impact.

Foster cross-regional and cross-sectoral links

SMEs across the EU region were facilitated with dedicated learning expeditions and INNOVATE workshops to establish the seed for collaboration among the focus sectors by identifying potential partners for commercial and innovation partnerships through projects; with a higher chance of getting funded during DEVELOP call. This not only generated long term growth opportunities for SMEs but also increased their competitiveness and resilience through the uptake of advanced technologies to become greener by adoption of resource efficiency system improvements, eco-innovation and/or circular economy strategy implementation.

Increase the resilience of SMEs by supporting their transition to more sustainable business models

Open innovation and partnership model was facilitated through the project leading to increased SME competitiveness and resilience through cross-sectoral inter-cluster cooperation

In Transit project successfully supported SMEs from the textile, aerospace, construction and advanced manufacturing sectors in their green and digital transitions. Key achievements include:

- ✚ Strengthening cross-sector collaboration by connecting over 547 SMEs and stakeholders across Europe through dedicated events, workshops, and networking activities.
- ✚ Supporting innovation and sustainability, with 61 SMEs supported by cascade funding mechanism.
- ✚ Building long-term partnerships was a key objective of the project, achieved through matchmaking and capacity-building activities that promoted knowledge transfer and cross-regional, cross-sectoral cooperation.
 - The project organised four learning visits, four cross-sectoral workshops, and two matchmaking events, which together helped identify potential beneficiaries for the open call for projects.
 - IN TRANSIT successfully granted funding to 18 project proposals, developed in collaborative consortia.
- ✚ Developing tools and methodologies to help SMEs integrate circular economy principles and assess their sustainability performance.
- ✚ Fostering international visibility and competitiveness of European SMEs by connecting them with investors, clusters, and innovation networks.

Together, these actions have helped accelerate the transition toward a more sustainable, digital, and resilient European industry.

2. 'INNOVATION' IMPACT ON FUNDED SMES

In Transit Project associated with streamlined delivery of following phases during the project lifecycle:

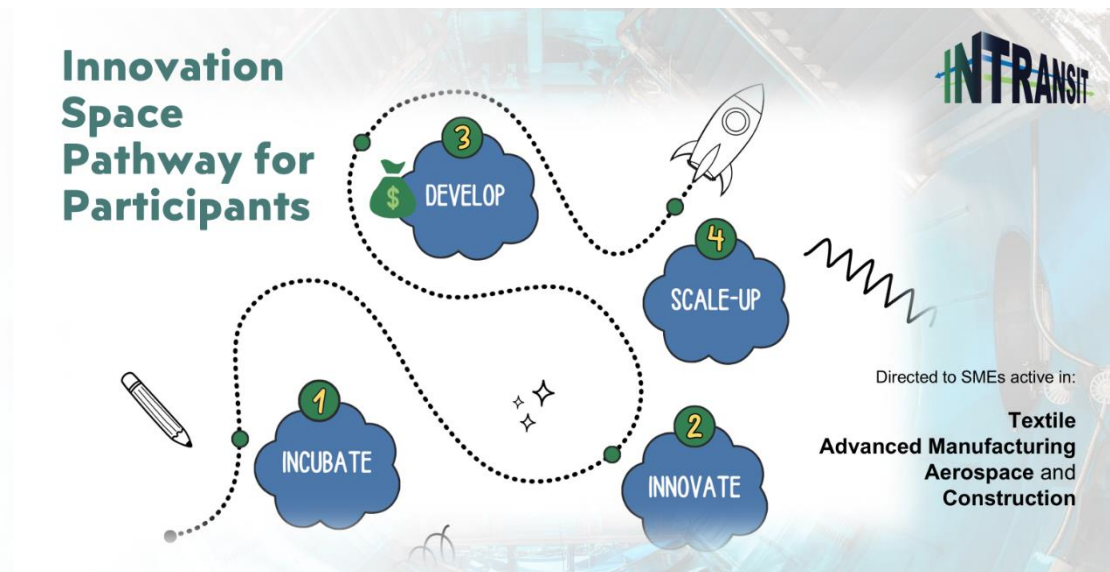


Figure 3: IN TRANSIT Innovation Space Pathway

- ✚ **INCUBATE phase provided joint services that help SMEs identify market opportunities**, address needs, and connect across sectors to foster learning, best practice exchange, and collaborative development. It offers inter-cluster learning expeditions, cross-sectoral workshops, matchmaking events, and travel vouchers to support cross-border participation and the creation of innovative circular business models.
- ✚ **INNOVATE phase offered customised advisory services, including self-assessment, [circular/digital diagnostics](#), and 40 hours of strategic-level coaching and training through workshops and one-to-one consultancy from the In Transit Consortium.** Through two Open Calls, 100 SMEs (50 per call) were supported in brainstorming innovative ideas focused on enhancing business circularity and economic plus social benefits, transforming their business models, improving processes, or developing new products.
- ✚ **DEVELOP phase provided financial support for SMEs' development projects**, including 50 hours of coaching to create innovative and sustainable business models. Through two Open Calls, it awarded up to maximum of €49k per SME selected through competitive, external evaluator scored selection process.
- ✚ **SCALE-UP aims to bring solutions to the market** and offers additional customised services for the new business models, **leveraging additional private or public funds.**

Innovate phase therefore aimed at partnering with SMEs to help them identify innovative business projects focusing on business circularity, towards motivating them further to apply for the Develop funding call to support implementation. Through [In Transit Community Platform](#) and Project partner consortia, cross regional

and cross sector collaborations were facilitated towards effective implementation. **In Develop phase of the project, the cascade funding was distributed based on competitive selection process, managed by external evaluators**, to choose the Projects focusing on innovative idea impact pertaining to economic, social and environmental aspects. In the Scale up phase of the project, the Develop beneficiaries **are further inspired to scale up their projects by creating a platform for them to pitch their approach of scale up / project expansion** in the final event of the project held on 23rd October 2025 in Seville, where public and private funding opportunities were explored.

In Innovate phase, along with Webinars, multiple one to one meeting with Innovate beneficiary SMEs were held (by Subject Matter Experts associated with Project Partners) to discuss and stimulate Innovative business ideas' identification and prioritisation based on the Organisations business strategy including sustainability goals. The aim of these discussions was to identify operations improvement project options that could align with the SME business strategy and IN TRANSIT project funding requirements. The impact of Webinars has been explained in previous reports.

2.1 Interactions to stimulate innovative ideas during Innovate sessions (One to One)

As part of Work Package 4, activities were developed to foster cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation under the framework for a systemic circular economy and digitalization, focusing on value creation for stakeholders across value chains and end consumers by leveraging circular economy solutions developed within the project; by building trust and facilitating understanding among different sectors, scaling-up of innovative business models and new value chains by complementing financial support with innovation coaching, enabling faster time-to-market and more successful launches. Under this task, Innovate SME beneficiaries were given an option to choose the One to One discussion topic based on their current strategic business expansion needs and the following table highlights the choice of topics (popularity) by Project partners in Innovate first call:

Sl.	Topic	Number of SMEs registered to attend
1	Coaching plan for SMEs	50
2	Evaluation of SMEs-diagnostic on digitalisation	7
3	Assessment of readiness levels	14
4	Transindustry innovation	23
5	Marketing Strategy and Sales Strategy	27
6	Support for future proposals	35
7	Digital Maturity Index and Roadmap	12
8	Digital Marketing Promotion	23
9	Robotics and Cobotics	10

Table 1 : Innovate 1st call topics and beneficiary SMEs interested to participate in one to one discussion

Detailed feedback on these services was collected and analysed, which helped refine the topics for the second call. The table below presents the one-to-one topics addressed under the Innovate second call, along with the number of SMEs that chose to participate:

Sl.	Topic	Number of SMEs registered to attend
1	Coaching plan for SMEs	50
2	Support in preparation of Proposals	23
3	Digital Maturity level assessment for Manufacturing Companies	6
4	Readiness level assessment	9
5	Transindustry innovation	11
6	Marketing Strategy and Sales Strategy	24
7	Digital Marketing Promotion	15
9	Robotics and Cobotics Technology	7

Table 2: Innovate 2nd call topics and beneficiary SMEs interested to participate in one to one discussion

A system of **simple log sheet** was created to document **one to one discussion points with the INNOVATE beneficiaries** wherein the date of meeting, attendees, conducted by and any specific project idea or support that the SME is looking for were listed. This not only helped **Project partners understand SME requirements in detail but also helped in connecting with other Project partners / other Innovate beneficiaries** across the region to explore opportunities as matching SME interested to participate as a consortia partner or as a solution provider. An example of such document detailing width and depth of one to one coaching is as shared:

Key points of discussion	Product/s or Service/s needed by the SME identified during meeting	What intervention will help SMEs to apply for DEVELOP call?	Any other remarks
Introduction to automation, robots and cobots. Different types of robots for different tasks. Robot applications. Exploring how their business can benefit from a robot. Asking the question if they really need a robot or something else (other technology). Q&A.	we were talking about 3 application scenarios of these technologies on his company. 1. Using drones equipped with cameras (and possibly Lidar sensors) to do photogrammetry, surveying, BIM models. 2. Using mobile robots equipped with robotic arm to do multiple tasks like painting, laying bricks, etc. 3. Using additive manufacturing to 3D print buildings.	He was very interested on the 1st application using drones for doing multiple tasks on the construction process.	He asked me to send him some links for drones equipped with Lidar and software for that. I mentioned there is this company in Ireland called "xxxx" that they are doing this as a service for construction companies and he seems to want to try to do it himself.
Introduction to automation, robots and cobots. Different types of robots for different tasks. Robot applications. Exploring how their business can benefit from a robot. Asking the question if they really need a robot or something else (other technology). Q&A.	We were talking about different application scenarios for their company. Because they don't have much space at the moment, they were considering to have a cobot installed in a mobile platform that can be programmed by moving the robot to specific locations and save all the positions and form there generating the paths for each tasks.		They asked me to send the presentation slides later by email so they can do their own research later and try to find a service provider in Spain.

Figure 4: Snapshot of typical points of discussions with Innovate SMEs during one to one discussion

This is one of the key impacts of Innovate phase as beneficiary SMEs got an opportunity to discuss their business plans, challenges they currently face in expanding their business, innovative ideas and their potential savings in energy usage etc. Based on the specific requirements of the SME beneficiaries, multiple follows on sessions on the pertinent topics were also arranged by subject matter experts, which clarified practical queries effectively.

As part of Innovate phase process, beneficiary SMEs were also required to map their digitalisation maturity (Pre Innovate sessions and Post Innovate phase

separately) using the diagnostic tool specifically designed for this project ([InTransit Diagnostic Tool](#)), as part of T1.3. This tool helped SMEs to benchmark their Organisation in terms of how streamlined the strategy and operations are with regards to following pillars:

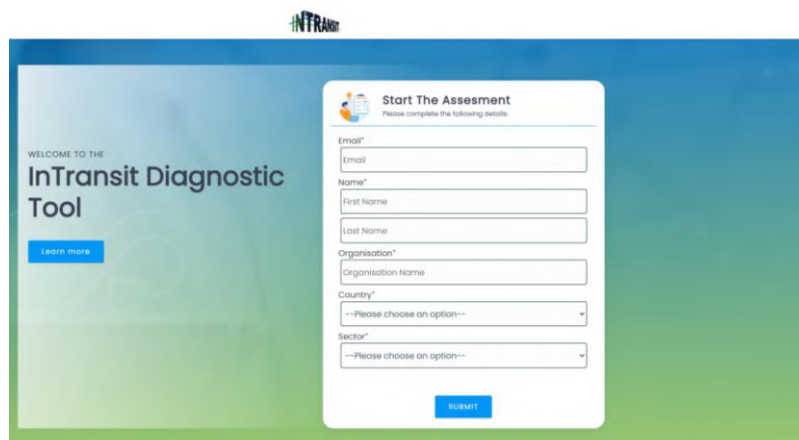


Figure 5: Snapshot of the Diagnostic tool used to assess digital maturity of Innovate beneficiaries before and after coaching

Digitalisation: • Culture, Strategy and Skills • Operations, Management & Processes • Customer Interaction • Cyber Security	Circular economy: • Reduce • Repair and Reuse • Redesign, Recycling and Remanufacturing Technology
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Table 3: Innovate Diagnostic tool Pillars and subcategories

To further **assess the impact of Innovate one to one coaching sessions**, we analysed:

- 🔗 **Comparison of pre and post Innovate Diagnostic scores and**
- 🔗 **Feedback received from Innovate beneficiaries**

These assessments are discussed in detail below with the approach and supporting numbers.

2.2 Comparison of Pre and Post Innovate Diagnostic scores

Out of 50 SMEs from first Innovate call (Innovate 1st call), 41 applied to the Develop funding calls (39, applied in Develop-1 (First Develop Cascade funding call) and 2 applied in Develop-2 (Second Develop Cascade funding call)), **with 12 selected, 4 as individual projects and 8 in consortia, demonstrating both the effectiveness of the support mechanism and the successful matchmaking fostered by the project.** For 8 SME projects which were in consortia of 2 SMEs, 4 SMEs of Innovate 1st call partnered with each other and remaining 4 SMEs partnered with other SMEs (not part of Innovate-1).

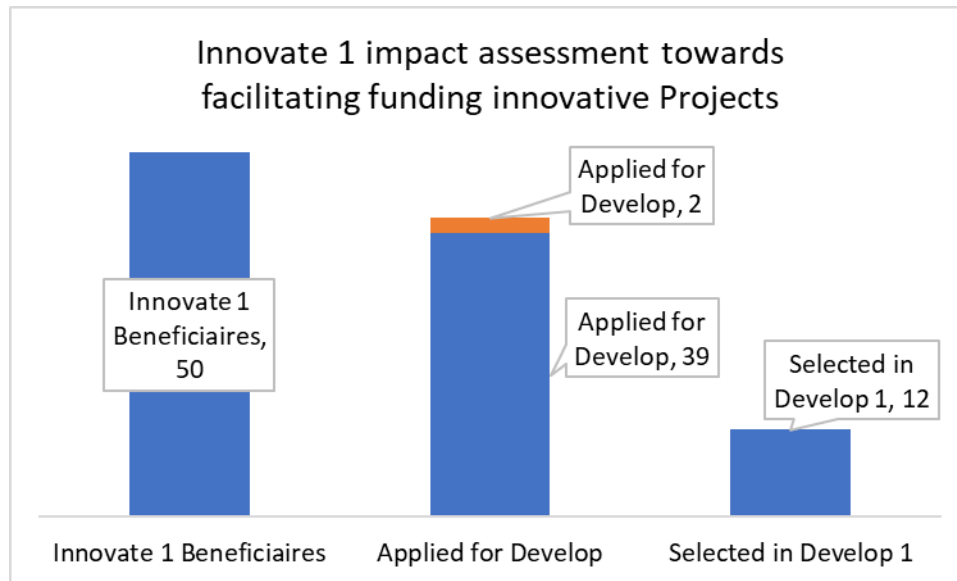


Figure 6: Innovate 1st call - Number of SMEs applying for Develop 1 and 2 funding calls and also getting selected

A detailed score analysis of each of the Diagnostic tool pdf reports as shared by Innovate beneficiaries was completed. Pre Innovate diagnostics score versus that of Post Innovate diagnostics scores were compared for each attribute. The comparison of perception of SMEs' pre and post Innovate analysis indicates:

(In the graphs below, **yellow bars** in the graph indicate number of Innovate SME beneficiaries who said no change in diagnostics scores comparing post and pre innovate coaching sessions, **green bars** indicate number of SMEs indicating positive change due to Innovate sessions and **red bars** indicate the SMEs indicating negative change)

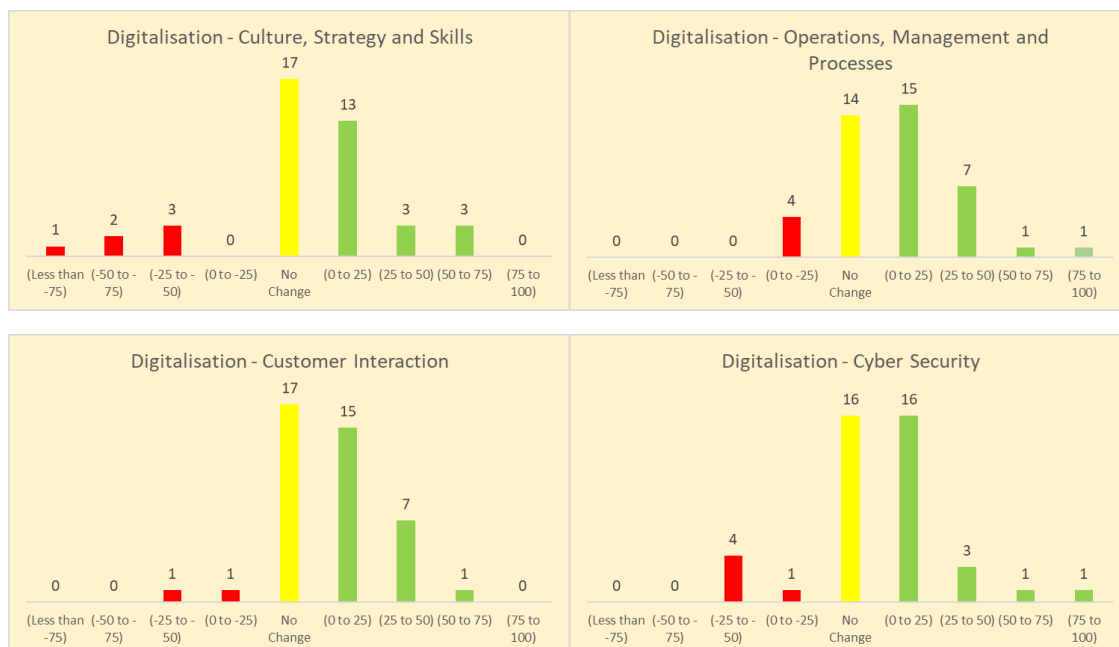


Figure 7: Detailed analysis of Digitalisation diagnostic scores (Post Innovate coaching score minus Pre Innovate coaching score)

Under Digitalisation pillar of diagnostic tool, **the comparison of all participants of Innovate first call indicates more bias towards positive change in diagnostic**

scores, **green bars**, post innovate call as compared to pre innovate. There are couple of **red bars** indicating that some SMEs did score less compared to their pre innovate scores and the reasons could be their reasoning and perception of support in helping SMEs fine tune the Develop applications etc.

Under the Digitalisation pillar, most SMEs showed positive improvements in their diagnostic scores after the first Innovate call, though a few scored lower due to differing perceptions of the support provided.

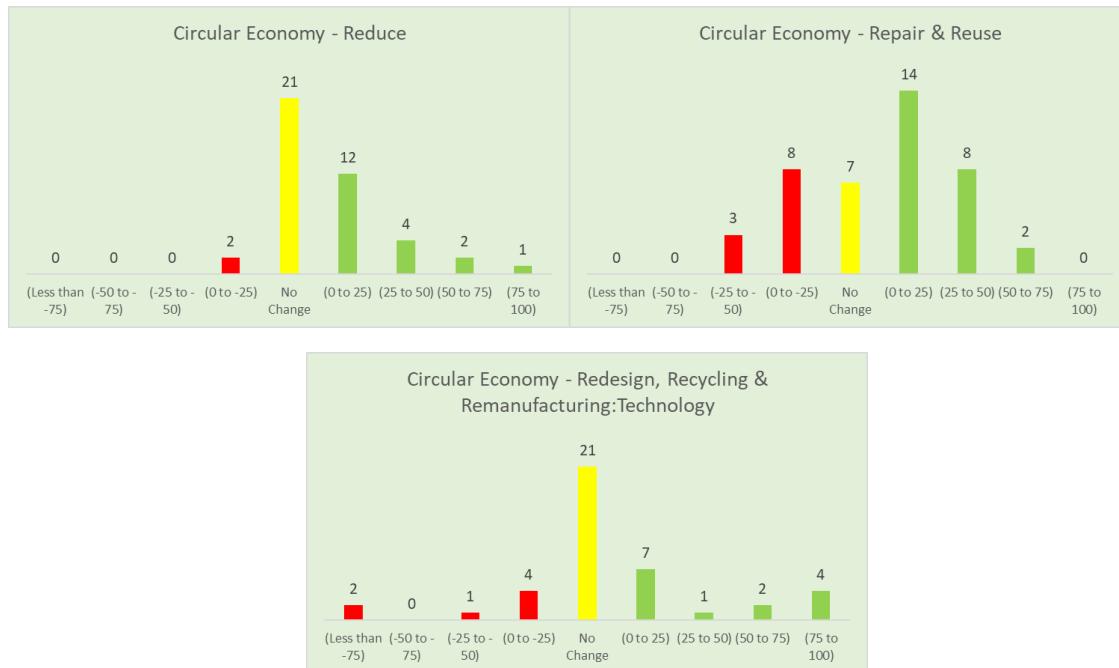
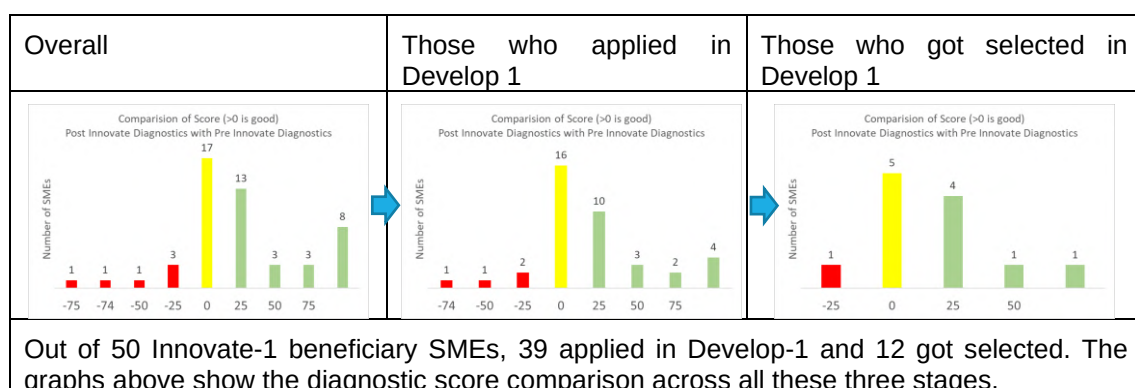


Figure 8: Detailed analysis of Circular economy diagnostic scores (Post Innovate coaching score minus Pre Innovate coaching score)

Similarly, we see **bias towards positive comparison scores in Circular economy pillars**. The negative bars, **in red**, are mainly observed in 'Repair and Reuse' pillar. This could be due to the challenge for some participating SMEs who were offering multiple services to their customers including software support etc.

To indicate the detailed analysis approach taken during the Project, we hereby share analysis of the one of the key parameters (where the positives and negatives are a bit distributed in greens and reds) as observed in Level 1 analysis above:

- Digitalisation Pillar – Culture, Strategy and Skills



We see that the perception of positive value addition due to Innovate coaching services for beneficiaries is higher (green vertical bars) as compared to the negative perception (red vertical bars)

Table 4: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who applied for Develop 1st call

For those SMEs who were Innovate 1st call beneficiaries and applied in Develop 2nd call, the diagnostic comparison results looked like:

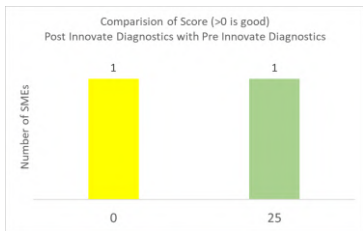
Innovate-1st call SMEs: Those who did not apply in Develop-1 st call applied in Develop 2 nd call	Innovate-1st call SMEs: Those who got selected in Develop-2 nd call
 Comparison of Score (>0 is good) Post Innovate Diagnostics with Pre Innovate Diagnostics Number of SMEs 0 25	Both the SMEs were not selected in Develop 2 nd call

Table 5: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who applied for Develop 2nd call

Let's analyse the perception of those SMEs who applied in Develop-1st call, didn't get selected, and applied in Develop-2nd call as well:

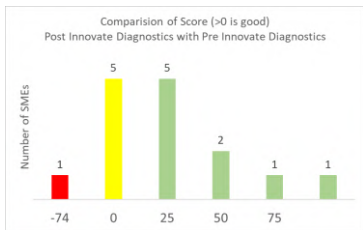
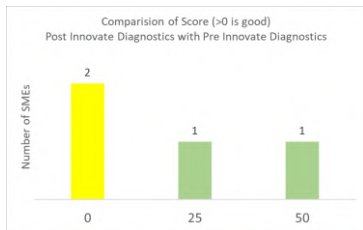
Innovate 1st call SMEs: SMES that applied in Develop-1st call, not selected and reapplied in Develop-2nd call	Innovate 1st call SMEs: Selected in Develop-2nd call
 Comparison of Score (>0 is good) Post Innovate Diagnostics with Pre Innovate Diagnostics Number of SMEs -74 0 25 50 75 100	 Comparison of Score (>0 is good) Post Innovate Diagnostics with Pre Innovate Diagnostics Number of SMEs 0 25 50

Table 6: Detailed analysis of diagnostics score difference for Innovate 1st call SME beneficiaries for Culture, Strategy and Skills attribute under Digitalisation pillar. This is for Innovate 1st call SMEs who did for Develop 1st call, were not selected and they reapplied in Develop 2nd call

This indicates the persistence and confidence in the business project idea of Innovate-1 participant SMEs who, even though not selected in Develop-1st call (15 SMEs), reapplied for Develop-2nd call and emerged successful (4 SMEs).

We similarly analysed the impact for Innovate-2nd call. Out of 50 companies in Innovate-2nd call, 40 applied in Develop 2nd call. Out of 40, 11 got selected for funding in Develop-2nd call.

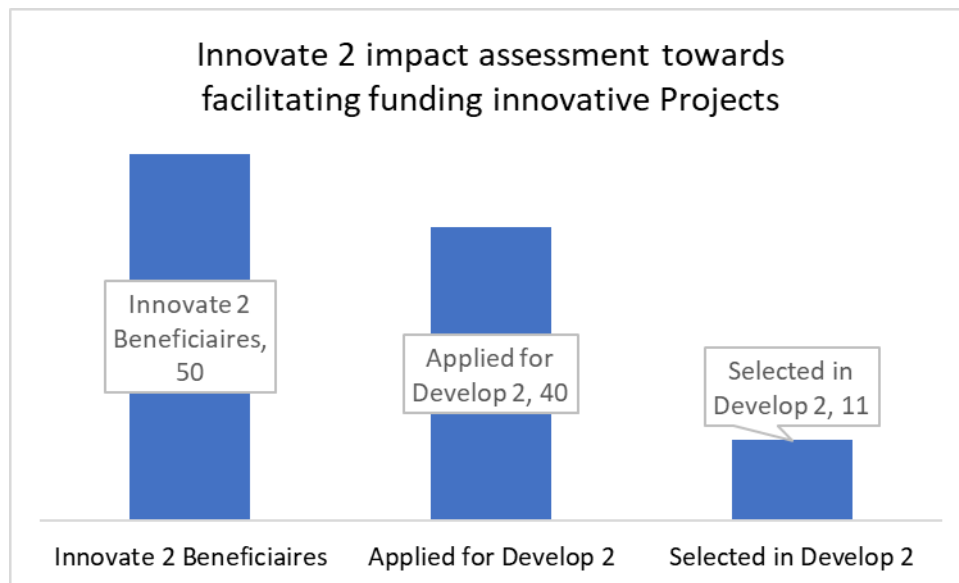


Figure 9 : Innovate 2: Number of SMEs applying for Develop 2nd funding call and also getting selected

Out of 11 SMEs which got selected for funding in 2nd Develop call, 4 SMEs applied individually. Out of remaining 7 SMEs, 1 SME partnered with another SME which was not part of Innovate. The story of remaining 6 SMEs is that 3 SMEs partnered with other 3 SMEs (selected in Innovate-2) for the project.

This again follows the trend of increased benefits and higher impact to companies which got the funding as an effect of their participation in Innovate coaching sessions.

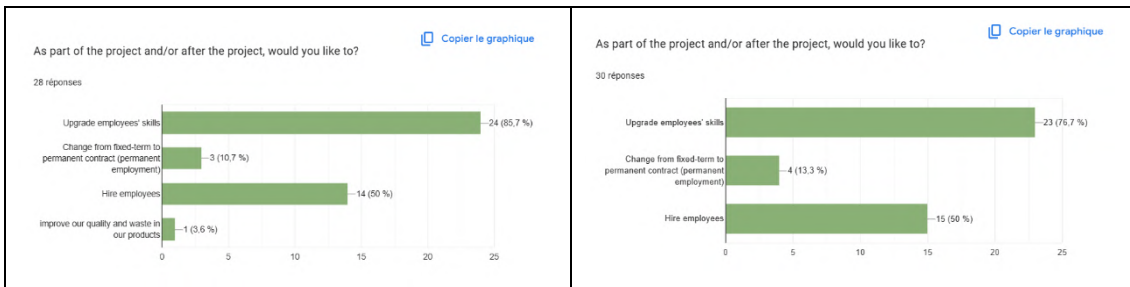
2.3 Feedback received from Develop beneficiaries

We analysed the feedback received from Develop beneficiaries towards understanding their orientations for scaling up the Develop funded project. The analysis is mainly based on following feedback questions to Develop beneficiaries:

- Regarding this new product or service: Are you currently making sales or about to?
- Do you plan to file new patents: thanks to In Transit Project?
- As part of the project, would you plan to:
 - o Upgrade employee skills
 - o Change from temporary to fixed term contract
 - o Hire more employees
 - o Improve quality and reduce waste in the product
- How much are you planning to invest in the project in the following six months after the end of the Develop funded Project
- Are you considering other potential sources of funding for the Project?

The answers helped us gauge the interests of Develop funded SMEs towards scaling the projects up either through plans for pumping in more investments into the project expansion, exporting, increasing manpower etc. The answers to these feedback questions are analysed for both Develop-1st call and Develop-2nd call beneficiaries:

Develop 1 st call beneficiary feedback		Develop 2 nd call beneficiary feedback																																					
Regarding this new product or service: Are you currently making sales or about to (writing quotations, offering your service or product) ? Copier le graphique <table border="1"><caption>Data for Develop 1st call beneficiary feedback</caption><thead><tr><th>Category</th><th>0</th><th>1</th><th>2 to 4</th><th>4 to 8</th><th>More than 8</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Number of offers/quotations</td><td>15</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Number of sales</td><td>19</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table>		Category	0	1	2 to 4	4 to 8	More than 8	Number of offers/quotations	15	2	5	3	5	Number of sales	19	3	3	2	3	Regarding this new product or service: Are you currently making sales or about to (writing quotations, offering your service or product) ? Copier le graphique <table border="1"><caption>Data for Develop 2nd call beneficiary feedback</caption><thead><tr><th>Category</th><th>0</th><th>1</th><th>2 to 4</th><th>4 to 8</th><th>More than 8</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Number of offers/quotations</td><td>13</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Number of sales</td><td>18</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table>		Category	0	1	2 to 4	4 to 8	More than 8	Number of offers/quotations	13	5	5	2	4	Number of sales	18	5	2	0	3
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Feedback questions : As part of the project or after

- Do you plan to upgrade employee skills ?**

Develop 1st call Beneficiary response : **86%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to upgrade employee skills

Develop 2nd call Beneficiary response : **77%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to upgrade employee skills

- Would you plan to change from fixed term to permanent term employees ?**

Develop 1st call Beneficiary response : **11%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to shift to permanent term

Develop 2nd call Beneficiary response : **13%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to shift to permanent term

- Would you plan to hire more employees ?**

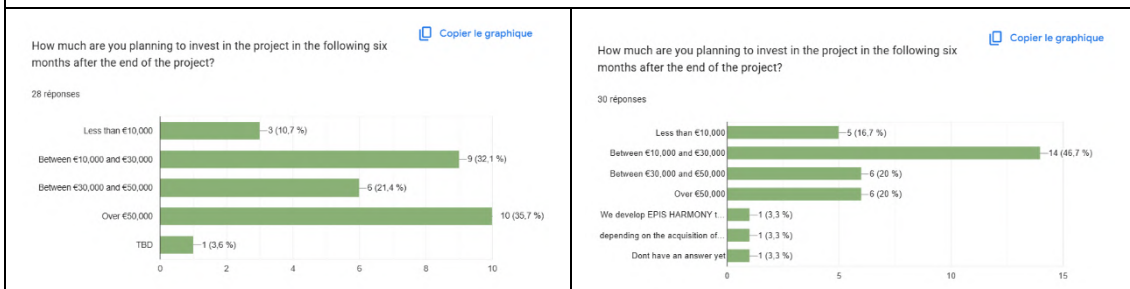
Develop 1st call Beneficiary response : **50%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to shift to permanent term

Develop 2nd call Beneficiary response : **50%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to shift to permanent term

- Improve quality and reduce waste ?**

Develop 1st call Beneficiary response : **4%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to improve quality and reduce waste

Develop 2nd call Beneficiary response : **0%** of beneficiaries mentioned they plan to improve quality and reduce waste



Feedback questions : **Amount you are motivated to invest in the project in the following six months after the end of the Project :**

Amount planned to invest	Develop 1 st call Beneficiary response	Develop 2 nd call Beneficiary response
Less than €10,000	3	5
€10,000 to €30,000	9	14
€30,000 to €50,000	6	6
More than €50,000	10	6

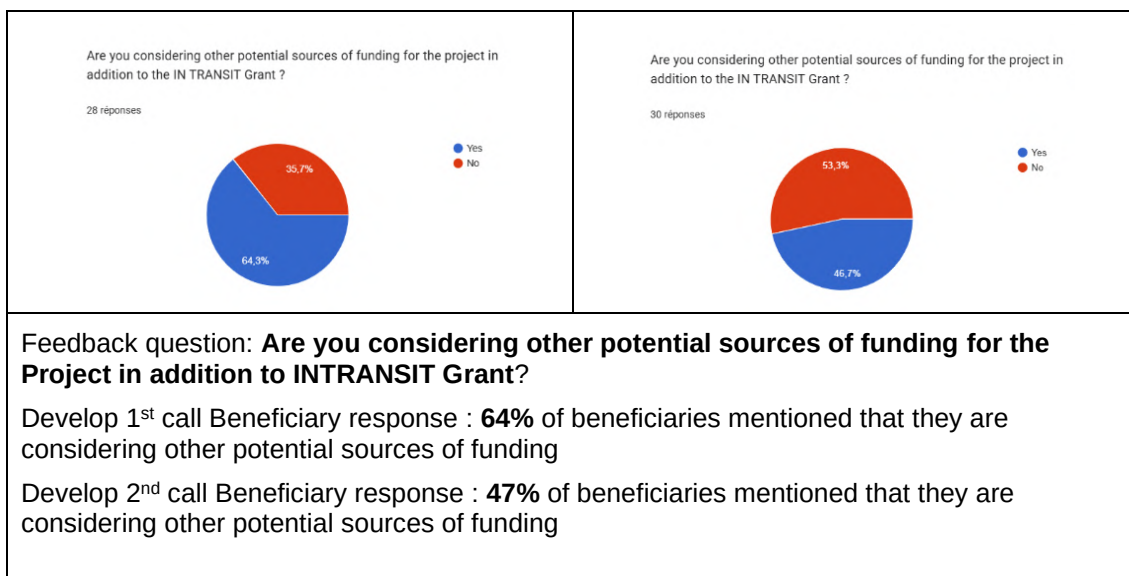


Table 7: Analysis of Develop beneficiary feedback to gauge inclination of SME beneficiaries towards scaling up of funded Project idea towards enhancing business value

As part of invitation for scale up funding opportunity, all the Develop beneficiaries had been invited for attending the Project final meeting at Seville held on 23rd October 2025, wherein funding Companies participated, listened to the project pitches and shared their views on project funding landscape.

This presented a great opportunity for Develop beneficiaries to pitch their project expansion / internationalisation idea and enhance their chances of getting potential funding. **Eight Develop beneficiaries** pitched their business expansion ideas and sought funding from the experts towards business expansion. This final event of the Project also presented good networking opportunity to further engage on projects in cross sector and cross border business expansion activities for the participants.

3. CONCLUSION

Innovate services, especially one to one discussions / coaching enabled Project partners in supporting SMEs in brainstorming innovative projects, prioritizing them towards aligning with In Transit Project Develop guidelines and helping them to apply for the Develop funding calls. **Out of 50 SME beneficiaries of Innovate 1st callst call, 41 applied to Develop call and 12 were selected for funding. Similarly, out of 50 SME beneficiaries of Innovate 2nd call, 40 applied in Develop funding call and 11 were awarded.** These numbers clearly highlight the impact of push-pull approach in delivering Innovate services towards helping SME beneficiaries progress on ideating, submitting applications for Develop funding call, thereby enhancing their chances of getting selected. Also, these SMEs were invited for the final event wherein as part of scale up activity, the beneficiaries were given an opportunity to pitch their projects for exploring public and private funding opportunity. Eight projects participated in the scale up event held on 23rd October 2025 in Seville, Spain wherein multiple business angels shared their inputs on funding landscape, approach and opportunities and beneficiaries could directly network with them.

We also analysed the impact in terms of effect (towards digitalisation and circular economic models) of Innovate coaching on beneficiary SMEs using result scores of Diagnostic tool comparing post innovate scores with pre innovate scores. We mapped these results of comparison across the pillars of Digitisation and Circular economy for both Innovate 1st and 2nd call. We observed that though there were some instances of negative perception of improvement in scores for Digitisation and Circular economy attributes, majority of the participant scores biased towards positive feedback.

We then **referred to feedback survey data of Develop beneficiaries to understand their intent of continuing to expand their company portfolio of services based on the Develop funded project scale up.** We understood that many Develop beneficiaries are not only looking forward to investing more on the project but also are planning to hire more employees, shift contractual employees to permanent role based employees and are considering filing patents.

Overall, the Innovate one to one coaching session proved to be very effective in engaging the beneficiary SMEs towards ideation of innovative project ideas focusing on business circularity based cross sector and cross border solutions and supported them in applying for Develop funding call towards getting successfully selected for funding. The sessions not only provided customised discussions with subject matter experts but also helped SMEs in understanding emerging business landscape and new technologies including applications. As part of learning from this project, it is recommended to include such phase of one to one expert focussed engagement with participating SMEs prior to funding so that they opportunity to consult and get wholistic view of their business growth opportunities, which will lead towards accelerating business expansion.