



Pilot activity final report

Activity 3.1, pilot actions implementation and monitoring.

Project identification

Project	Danube Digital transformation Network of Active SMEs training and knowledge transfer centres (Danube DNA)
Programme	Interreg Danube Region Programme 2021–2027
Activity	3.1 Pilot actions implementation and monitoring
Activity Leader	SERDA, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency
Lead Partner	University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences

Reporting partner

Project partner	University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences
Country	Serbia
Pilot coordinator (name, email)	Sanja Bojic, sanjabojic17@gmail.com
Pilot activity title	Market Puls
Digital solution validated	5 x Market Puls + 1 x DRA
Pilot implementation period	January – April 2026
Date of submission	05.05.2026.

Participating SME(s)

For the size breakdown, enter the number of SMEs in each category. A blank counts as zero, and micro, small and medium should add up to the total.

Number of participating SMEs	5
Of which micro	2
Of which small	1
Of which medium	2
Sector(s)	Pharmacy, Machinery, Plastic, Wholesale, Transport

1. Description of the implemented solution

Describe the digital solution validated and which of the six jointly developed solutions it corresponds to. Outline the SME context, the scope of the pilot, and how the solution was deployed in the real SME environment.

The pilot activity focused on validating the Market Pulse digital solution, an AI-powered demand forecasting and inventory planning tool developed within the Danube DNA project. Market Pulse was implemented in five SMEs operating in different industries: pharmacy, machinery, plastics, wholesale, and transport. The pilot aimed to test the applicability, usability, and business value of the solution across diverse sectors and company sizes.

The implementation involved collecting and analysing historical sales and inventory data from participating SMEs, generating demand forecasts, identifying demand patterns, and providing recommendations for optimal inventory levels. The solution was deployed in real business environments and customized to the available data structures of each participating company.

In addition to the five Market Pulse pilot actions, an additional pilot activity was carried out with Galenika Fitofarmacija. At the company's request, the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) tool developed by project partner SOVA (Slovakia) was also tested. The company expressed strong interest in assessing its digital maturity during the training activities on digital tools and artificial intelligence. The DRA pilot provided valuable insights into the company's current digital capabilities and supported decision-making regarding future digitalization priorities and investments.

2. Results achieved

Complete each field below. Keep this narrative; report numeric indicators in the KPI table in Section 3 rather than repeating them here.

Expected result	<i>The pilot activities aimed to validate the practical applicability of Market Pulse and DRA in SME environments, improve data-driven decision-making, enhance demand forecasting capabilities, optimize inventory planning processes, and support SMEs in their digital transformation efforts.</i>
Achieved result	<i>All five Market Pulse pilot actions were successfully completed and achieved their intended objectives. The solution demonstrated high applicability across different industries and generated valuable forecasts that enabled participating companies to better understand market demand patterns and optimize future inventory levels. Companies received detailed analyses of their product portfolios and forecasted demand for the upcoming period, supporting more informed planning and resource allocation decisions. The additional DRA pilot action was also successfully completed. The assessment provided Galenika Fitofarmacija with a structured overview of its digital maturity level and identified opportunities for further digitalization and organizational development.</i>
Evidence supporting the achievement	<i>Evidence includes individual pilot reports generated through Market Pulse, containing demand forecasting analyses, inventory optimization recommendations, company feedback forms, and the Digital Readiness Assessment report prepared for Galenika Fitofarmacija. The pilot reports demonstrated successful forecasting of demand patterns and generation of actionable business insights.</i>
Benefits for the participating SME(s)	<i>Participating SMEs gained valuable insights into demand trends, product performance, and inventory requirements. The forecasts enabled more informed planning of production, procurement, and inventory levels for the following year. The DRA pilot supported strategic planning of future digitalization activities and investments.</i>

3. KPI values

Report the key performance indicators for your pilot. Add rows as needed. Complete the achievement rate where applicable ($\text{achieved} / \text{target} \times 100$); leave it blank for binary or qualitative indicators. Ensure values are consistent with the narrative above and supported by source of verification.

Indicator (KPI)	Baseline	Target	Achieved	Achievement rate (%)	Source of verification	Comment
SMEs participating in Market Pulse pilot actions	0	5	5	100%	Pilot reports	Target fully achieved
Industries represented in pilot actions	1	5	5	100%	Pilot documentation	Successful cross-sector validation
Demand forecasting reports generated	0	5	5	100%	Market Pulse reports	Reports delivered to all participating SMEs
SMEs receiving inventory planning recommendations	0	5	5	100%	Pilot reports and company feedback	Recommendations provided to all participants
Additional DRA pilot implemented	0	1	1	100%	DRA assessment report	Additional pilot conducted upon company request
SME satisfaction with pilot solution	N/A	Positive	Positive	N/A	Feedback forms	All SMEs reported positive experience
SMEs expressing interest in future use	0	5	5	100%	Feedback forms	All participants indicated willingness to continue using the solution

4. SME feedback

Summarise the feedback provided by the participating SME(s), drawing on the SME Pilot Feedback Form. Continuation and sustainability questions are covered in Section 7.

Main strengths identified by SMEs	- Accurate and useful demand forecasting capabilities. - Easy interpretation of results and business recommendations. - Valuable support for inventory planning and stock optimization. - Ability to identify demand patterns and trends that were previously difficult to observe. - Practical applicability across different industries. - The DRA tool provided a structured and clear overview of digital maturity and future digitalization priorities.
Main weaknesses identified by SMEs	- Smaller companies often lacked sufficient historical and digitally structured data to fully exploit all forecasting capabilities. - Additional data preparation was required for some SMEs before forecasts could be generated.
Suggestions for improvement	- Further automation of data collection and integration with existing ERP systems. - Additional support for SMEs in data preparation and digital record management. - Extension of forecasting scenarios and advanced analytics features.

Would the SME(s) recommend the solution to another SME?	YES
Reason for the answer above	<i>All participating SMEs considered the solution highly useful and relevant for their business operations. Market Pulse provided actionable insights that supported inventory planning and demand forecasting, while the DRA tool helped identify future digitalization priorities. Participants reported that the solutions improved their understanding of business data and supported more informed decision-making. All companies expressed strong interest in continuing to use the tools after the completion of the pilot phase.</i>

5. Challenges during implementation

List the main challenges encountered across the pilot phases (preparation, tender, contracting, implementation and monitoring). For Impact select Low, Medium or High; for Resolved enter Yes or No. Add rows as needed.

Challenge	Impact (Low / Medium / High)	Mitigation measure	Resolved (Yes / No)
Limited availability and quality of historical data in micro and small enterprises	Medium	Additional data preparation and validation activities	Yes
Differences in data formats across industries	Medium	Data standardization and preprocessing	Yes
Initial understanding of forecasting concepts by SME staff	Low	Training and mentoring support provided	Yes
Integration of company data into forecasting workflows	Medium	Close cooperation with participating companies and technical support	Yes

6. Lessons learned

Provide up to three prioritised lessons from your pilot, using the structure below. A lesson is more than a challenge: it states what you would keep or change, and whether it transfers to other partners. Complete Lesson 1 as a minimum; Lessons 2 and 3 are optional.

Lesson 1 (required)

Lesson title	<i>Data quality is a key prerequisite for successful demand forecasting</i>
Thematic area	<i>Technical and digital solution</i>
Priority	<i>High</i>
Situation	<i>Participating SMEs varied significantly in terms of data availability and digital maturity.</i>
What happened	<i>Medium-sized companies achieved faster implementation and more detailed forecasting results because they maintained larger, better-structured, and more digitized datasets.</i>
What worked or what you would do differently	<i>Future pilot activities should include a preliminary assessment of data readiness and additional support for SMEs with limited digital records.</i>
Transferability	<i>High. This lesson is transferable to all partners and future pilot implementations involving data-driven digital solutions.</i>

Lesson 2 *(optional, complete only if applicable)*

Lesson title	<i>Market Pulse is applicable across diverse industrial sectors</i>
Thematic area	<i>Sustainability and scale-up</i>
Priority	<i>High</i>
Situation	<i>The solution was successfully tested in five companies from five different industries.</i>
What happened	<i>Despite significant differences in products, markets, and business processes, the solution successfully generated meaningful forecasts and inventory recommendations for all participants.</i>
What worked or what you would do differently	<i>Maintain the sector-neutral approach while developing industry-specific reporting features.</i>
Transferability	<i>High. The solution can be replicated across various manufacturing and distribution sectors.</i>

Lesson 3 *(optional, complete only if applicable)*

Lesson title	<i>Digital maturity assessments complement forecasting solutions</i>
Thematic area	<i>Stakeholder and SME engagement</i>
Priority	<i>Medium</i>
Situation	<i>Galenika Fitofarmacija requested an additional DRA pilot during the implementation period.</i>
What happened	<i>The assessment provided valuable insights into the company's digital readiness and supported planning of future digital transformation activities.</i>
What worked or what you would do differently	<i>Combining forecasting tools with digital maturity assessments provides SMEs with a more comprehensive digital transformation roadmap.</i>
Transferability	<i>Medium to High. Other SMEs and project partners can benefit from combining operational digital tools with strategic digital readiness assessments.</i>

7. Sustainability and future use

Set out whether and how the solution will continue to be used beyond the project. This is a key consideration for Interreg and for the consolidated lessons learned.

Will the SME(s) continue using the solution after project completion?	<i>YES</i>
Reason for the answer above	<i>Participants reported that the solutions improved their understanding of business data and supported more informed decision-making. All companies expressed strong interest in continuing to use the tools after the completion of the pilot phase.</i>
Resources required for continuation	<i>Market Pulse and DRA tools at the Danube DNA platform (B2GreenHub)</i>

Main barriers to long-term adoption	<i>The most significant barrier is the availability and quality of historical business data. Medium-sized companies generally possess more comprehensive, structured, and digitally stored datasets, allowing them to fully utilize forecasting and inventory optimization functionalities. In contrast, micro and small enterprises often maintain fragmented records, rely on spreadsheets or manual processes, and have limited historical data available for advanced analytics. This reduces forecast accuracy and limits the potential value of the solution.</i> <i>A second barrier relates to the overall level of digital maturity. Companies with lower levels of digitalization may require additional support, training, and guidance before they can effectively integrate forecasting tools into their regular business processes. The absence of integrated ERP, CRM, or inventory management systems can increase the effort required for data preparation and maintenance.</i> <i>Resource constraints may also affect long-term adoption, particularly among smaller SMEs. Limited financial resources, lack of dedicated digitalization personnel, and competing operational priorities can slow down implementation and reduce the ability to continuously use advanced digital solutions.</i> <i>Finally, sustained adoption requires a cultural shift toward data-driven decision-making. Some SMEs are still accustomed to relying primarily on managerial experience and intuition when planning inventory and production activities. Building confidence in forecasting-based decision-making may require additional demonstration of long-term benefits and practical success stories.</i>
Overall sustainability outlook	<i>The overall sustainability outlook for the Market Pulse solution is highly positive. The pilot activities demonstrated that demand forecasting and inventory optimization generate tangible business value across multiple industries and company sizes. All participating SMEs reported positive experiences and expressed a strong willingness to continue using the solution after completion of the pilot phase.</i> <i>The solution addresses a common challenge faced by SMEs across the Danube Region: uncertainty in demand planning and inventory management. As digital transformation accelerates and more companies adopt digital business systems, the availability of structured data suitable for forecasting is expected to increase, further strengthening the applicability and effectiveness of the solution.</i> <i>The additional Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) pilot also highlighted the importance of combining operational digital tools with strategic digital transformation planning. Together, these solutions create a comprehensive pathway for SMEs to improve both their digital maturity and operational performance.</i> <i>Given the positive pilot outcomes, strong SME interest, and broad applicability across sectors, there is significant potential for continued use, further development, and wider deployment of the solutions beyond the project duration.</i>

8. Recommendations for future projects

Set out forward-looking recommendations for upscaling the solution and for other partners planning similar pilots. Focus on what would improve feasibility, sustainability and transferability across the Danube Region.

1. Strengthen SME digital readiness before implementation

Future deployments should include an initial assessment of digital maturity and data readiness. Companies with limited digital capabilities should receive targeted support in data collection, data management, and process digitalization before implementing forecasting solutions. This will improve forecast quality and increase the likelihood of successful adoption.

2. Support digital transformation of micro and small enterprises

Particular attention should be given to micro and small enterprises, which often face the greatest challenges related to data availability and digitalization. Dedicated training programmes, mentoring activities, and practical guidance on digital record keeping should accompany future pilot implementations.

3. Integrate forecasting tools with existing business systems

Future versions of the solution should facilitate integration with ERP, CRM, inventory management, and accounting systems. Automated data exchange would reduce manual work, improve data quality, and increase long-term sustainability of the solution.

4. Combine operational and strategic digital tools

The experience with the additional DRA pilot demonstrated the value of combining demand forecasting solutions with digital maturity assessment tools. Future initiatives should consider offering integrated support packages that address both operational optimization and long-term digital transformation planning.

5. Continue collecting impact evidence

Future deployments should include systematic monitoring of business outcomes such as inventory reduction, stock availability improvements, forecasting accuracy, and cost savings. Quantified evidence of business impact will strengthen the business case for adoption and facilitate wider replication across the Danube Region.

Overall, the pilot demonstrated that Market Pulse and complementary digital assessment tools have strong potential for replication and long-term sustainability. Continued investment in SME digitalization, data quality improvement, and regional knowledge exchange will significantly enhance the feasibility, sustainability, and transferability of these solutions throughout the Danube Region.

Completed by

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