The EU Pact for Skills – Regional Skills Partnerships for Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT)

The context

Our society is undergoing a rapid development of new terms and expressions related to the incorporation and use of new technologies in our daily life (concepts such as blockchain, internet of things, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybercrime, etc.) for which not all of us are prepared, and which will undoubtedly transform our environment and our lives in a process that, as a whole, has come to be called digital transformation and in which we run the risk of leaving many behind people.

Therefore, Madrid Regional Government has developed the **"Digital Training Plan for the Citizens of Madrid Region"**, which has the main goal of tackling these risks by providing everyone with the necessary skills to be able to fully exercise this new reality of digital citizenship, in all facets of their development, both personal as a professional, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all citizens have the tools to acquire and develop the necessary digital skills.

Moreover, Las Rozas, as member of the Pact for Skills, together with the other promoter cities of Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT), is working at a local level to attract talent and help its citizens to re-skill and up-skill in STEM capacities. In this sense, it is essential to lead efforts in digital innovation through the development and implementation of initiatives in the field of digital transformation and smart cities. But these must be necessarily aligned with supra municipal policies, and this is why the Regional Skills Partnership activities focuses on reaching the objectives of the mentioned "Digital Training Plan for the Citizens of Madrid Region".

Nowadays, there is a global demand for programmers, data analysts, UX experts, product managers, etc. It is a global problem that society is facing; digital professionals must be trained and launched onto the market imminently, otherwise, this gap between supply and demand, which especially affects both large and small companies, will either slow down the progress of their projects, or prevent them from competing in an open market lacking digital talent.

This need makes it common for technology companies to make decisions based on the availability of technical talent, which is currently one of the fundamental variables for the competitiveness of a territory.

In this context, Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) has identified different actions (as described in the next section) to bridge the gap and accelerate digital transformation processes among citizens and companies.

The ambition

Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) is a collaborative project launched by three municipalities settled in the northwest of Madrid Region (Spain) that are firmly committed to promoting digital transformation by the creation of a **"Smart Metropolitan Area"**: Las Rozas de Madrid, Boadilla del Monte, and Majadahonda.

The aim is to constitute a pole for the development of innovative initiatives to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the region in the northwest corridor of Madrid. Technology is the main lever of change that will accelerate the sustainable growth of the region, generating public-private synergies, placing citizens at the centre of digital innovation, and maximizing their social benefits through it. **"Smart**

People" goal focuses on enhancing the human capital that resides in the city, empowering citizens to become participants in the process of co-creating the "intelligent city".

This ambition must count on an active participation of private organizations that are part of the local ecosystem: big companies, SMEs, start-ups, entrepreneurs, universities, RDi centres, etc., so that the real needs of the labour market can be projected to the goals of Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) and its associated entities. The skills partnership under the Pact for Skills can be instrumental to this objective of engaging all relevant stakeholders in the local ecosystem in the skilling actions planned.

Commitments and actions of the Partnership

Through the Regional Skills Partnership for Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT), we aim as main objectives to:

1. Consolidate MOT as the main region of digital, technological, and scientific talent in Spain.
2. Promote STEM and scientific vocations throughout the school stage up to higher education and connecting this young talent to the labour market.
3. Provide management and technical skills to entrepreneurs and start-ups so that they can develop their projects.
4. Identify skills needs of the local economy and align needs with upskilling and reskilling activities.

Participating in the **Pact for Skills initiative** will enable to achieve those objectives faster, and to develop activities aimed at:

- Create and launch a cooperation network with all relevant stakeholders at a local level. This network will consolidate a public-private collaboration framework for the digital and intelligent transformation of cities and the Madrid Oeste Region.
- Generate knowledge, good practices, and demonstrative experiences around the use of disruptive technologies, contributing to the sustainable development of the territory.
- Promote the generation of synergies between local entities, companies, and the academic and research ecosystem, for the development of projects that respond to the global and specific challenges faced by the territory.
- Facilitate the development of join projects by members of the skills partnership to access the different European and national funding sources that are available for the implementation of skilling policies.
- Get to project Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) internationally, connecting it with other similar initiatives. Positioning along Europe could improve the achievement of the goals, as it would establish collaborative tasks with other cities/entities members of the Pact for Skills, and even promote interchange of business cases as well as best lessons learned.

Commitment 1: Consolidate MOT as the main region of digital, technology and science talent in Spain.

Action 1: Development of a regional talent observatory.

Data driven policy making is essential to ensure long life of the Regional Skills Partnership. This means that building up a dataset observatory must be the basis to give both response to the demand of the local ecosystem and link it with the people and company's needs.

One of the most important barriers to defining data-driven policies at the regional and local level is the lack of information from official sources regarding numerous aspects related to economic performance, including those related to the labour market and talent. So, as part of this action, we will define a framework for collecting and measuring relevant data and develop new methodologies which will be tested at a regional level.

An annual report will be prepared to provide information on the supply and demand of talent in technological disciplines, the functioning of the market at both local and regional level with the participation of the companies, startups, RDI centres, education schools, etc.

Action 2: Ecosystem mapping.

To connect the local ecosystem, the first step must be the identification of it, and understand what the business as usual each of the local agents develops. Every city member of Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) will elaborate its database of local agents related to digital, technology and science areas.

To show and update this information, madri+d Foundation has a globally recognized tool for mapping all types of agents that allows the dimensioning of innovative ecosystems, called Dealroom. It incorporates information from agents such as startups, corporations, service providers, universities, public bodies, support programs, investors, or coworking. With numerous linked information fields (rounds, patents, news, equipment, etc.), the platform itself has a glossary to explain what is meant by each of the elements that are loaded on it. The information is public and can be accessed at https://ecosystem.madrimasd.org/intro.

The information provided will also be accessible to compare different local and regional ecosystems around Europe.

Throughout this research, new members will be identified to join this regional Pact for skills, as well as to be part of its activities.

Action 3: Pact for Skills Partnership promotion.

Among the actions to develop, introductory workshops to the Regional Pact for Skills partnership will take place at least once a year, in order to attract new members and keep them engaged as a base to develop other activities.

Commitment 2: Promote STEM and scientific vocations throughout the school stage up to higher education and connecting this young talent to the labour market.

Action 4: Smart schools.

Several actions have been designed to promote STEM and entrepreneurship knowledge and awaken vocations in the school stage by connecting students with the business world:

- **IMPULSA**, an entrepreneurial summer program to turn an idea into a viable project, land it and define its business model.
- **Science Week**, making science visible to students and open RDi centres to citizen participation.
- **STEAM Day programme**, bringing students closer to STEAM jobs and the digital economy (software development and programming, digital marketing, design and usability, cybersecurity, data journalism) through several guidance sessions with youth professionals.
- **Robotics Challenge**, a tournament for scholars to devise solutions that may improve our life or our environment & **RetoMaths,** a maths competition to challenge primary school students and bring this discipline closer to the students.

- **STEAM Congress**, an event where students act as lecturers explaining research projects they have developed at class, together with teachers who have put into practice innovative projects.
- **Entrepreneurship gymkhana**, a fun day for primary school students to learn the basic concepts of entrepreneurship.
- **Emprésate programme**, providing secondary level students with a more practical vision about the professional world.
- **International Day of Mathematics**, to explain and celebrate the essential role that mathematics play in breakthroughs in science and technology, improving the quality of life and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations.
- **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**, contributing to reduce the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

Action 5: Building university links to promote scientific knowledge transfer.

The most disruptive ideas and solutions arise from collaboration between multidisciplinary teams. In this sense, the following activities aiming to promote scientific knowledge transfer are essential to overcome the gap between RDi and business production:

- **University & Company Match**, connecting both big companies, SMEs, startups, spinoffs and research groups derived from the University environment, with the aim of promoting transfer between the academic and the business field.
- **U-CHALLENGE**, a contest that rewards the best proposals to solve technological challenges and connecting talent with the business ecosystem.

Commitment 3: Provide technical skills to entrepreneurs and start-ups so that they can develop their projects.

Action 6: Entrepreneurial support agenda.

Citizens with digital, technological, and innovative ideas, are supported by several activities focused on widening professional outings:

- **Incuba Las Rozas**, an incubation program focused on technological entrepreneurs or innovators, taking place over four months in which it is offered a specialized training for the development of the proposed idea.
- **Emprende +**, ten training sessions to promote the creation of new business projects by people with previous professional experience and who are looking forward to reinventing themselves, and to refocusing their professional career towards the creation of companies.
- **Entrepreneur Service Point "Punto PAE"**, a permanent support service providing advice on areas of interest such as: searching for financing, updating regulations, legal forms, or subsidies.
- **Business Plan assessment**, practical training in which the outline of a business plan is covered step by step, including the subsequent advice to validate its compliance.
- **Digital Workshops**, focused on the digitalization of businesses, incorporating tools, sales, and digital communication channels, as well as adaptation of the operation and legal aspects related to the digital environment.

Action 7: Acceleration services.

Several actions have been designed to help entrepreneurs and startups that have validated their ideas and want to consolidate and accelerate their projects:

- **Hub Las Rozas Innova**, providing users with mentorship and support services to help them accelerate their start-ups.
- **Early Adopters Program**, helping start-ups in the process of evaluating their technology and their products in real environments or/and with real customers.
- **Digital Professional's Initiatives**, short technical or management training sessions, technology certifications, informative sessions on technological or business trends, as well as establishment of meeting points for community learning.

Commitment 4: Identify skills needs of the local economy and align needs with upskilling and reskilling activities.

Action 8: Talent Seeking and Developing Actions.

These actions aim to create new pools of available tech talent and to give access to companies that suffer a lack of talent when hiring.

- **Upskilling/Reskilling bootcamps**, intensive courses for people who want to start a career in the technological field, either coming from other professions or from a situation of long-term unemployment. This training will be complemented with soft skills workshops as well as with the development of a real project.
- **Companies-Freelancers Connection**, a flexible SaaS solution to rapidly connect freelancers with companies looking for specific professionals to cover their needs.
- **Digital Training Cycles**, monographic sessions focused on training in digital skills and digital business.
- **Women in technology dedicated training cycles**, focused on the acquisition of digital competences among women.
- **People with disabilities dedicated training courses**, developed with the collaboration of companies and foundations, these courses will be focused on the acquisition of digital competences by people with different disabilities, helping them to connect with opportunities in the technological labour market.

All the actions listed above will provide useful information that will allow Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT) to learn more about the needs for attracting and retaining talent among digital businesses. Moreover, with the information collected, new actions will be designed in the future.

Tracking our impact

The following qualitative and quantitative indicators will support the partnership to track our impact every year after the launch of the partnership.

- Number of members of the skills partnership.

- Number of agents (such as startups, corporations, service providers, universities, public bodies, support programs, investors, coworking spaces, etc.) mapped in the whole metropolitan area of Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT).

- Number of participants across all programmes, events and guidance sessions organised by Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT).

- Number of women/people with disabilities taking part in the programmes, events and guidance sessions organised by Madrid Oeste Tecnológico (MOT).

- Annual report publication (implemented/not implemented).
- Number of people in the working age population.

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INTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

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Background information: the region's policy context and existing skills initiatives

This Digital Training Plan for Citizens of the Community of Madrid 2022-2025 has the main objective of providing the necessary skills to be able to fully exercise the new reality of digital citizenship, in all facets of their personal and professional development, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all citizens have the tools to acquire and develop the necessary digital skills.

The Plan is based on four pillars that, in turn, are developed in five axes and twenty specific measures. The four pillars established for this plan guarantee that the fundamental aspects for the execution of measures are considered when answering the questions: who?, where?, what? and what for?

1. Guests.

2. Network of Digital Competence Centers.

3. Contents.

4. Accreditation system.

On this basis, five keys of action have been designed in the Plan, which in turn, are deployed in a battery of measures conceived as lines of work.

- **Key 1. Conceptualization and awareness of digitization:** The measures contemplated have the aim of providing the citizens with the fundamental concepts and disruptive technologies on which digitization transits. The aim is to lay the foundations of knowledge about digitization.

- **Key 2. Infrastructures for digital training:** Referred to the material infrastructures and the human resources that allow the accompaniment of people who travel the path towards digitization.

- **Key 3. People at risk of digital exclusion:** Various situations can mean that people do not have the necessary knowledge bases to understand the concepts, which is why it is necessary to personalize the actions and adapt them to the levels of prior knowledge and the circumstances of the groups at risk of exclusion.

- **Key 4. Generation and retention of digital talent:** Digitization requires that training and generation of talent begin at an early age, but it is necessary to cover the current demands where we find ourselves with a lack of personnel whose qualifications do not necessarily have to be regulated, but 12-week itineraries can open a huge range of employability opportunities.

- **Key 5. Digital professionalization:** Finally, it is necessary to prepare the productive ecosystem for digitization. Methodologies, techniques, tools and use cases for each of the sectors of the regional economy shall be taught, focusing on SMEs, the self-employed, the associative ecosystem and employees of public administrations. Every professional must be able to exercise their profession using adequately the resources provided by digitization, targeting those who work with digital tools to carry out their work.