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**Press release**

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**Smart factories in new Europe - PwC to help set up Digital Innovation Hubs  
as part of the EU Digitising European Industry initiative**

**Warsaw, 20 September 2017** – At the request of the European Commission, the consulting firm PwC, in co-operation with Oxford University Innovation (Oxentia), is implementing the Smart Factories project, whose main objective is to create a network of so-called Digital Innovation Centres and provide them with a training programme to increase their efficiency. This is part of the EU's Digitising European Industry initiative, which involves the use of new technologies to help European industry generate an estimated additional €110 billion in revenue per year.

In April 2016, the European Commission implemented the strategy for Digitising European Industry. The purpose of the strategy is to co-ordinate work in the field of industry digitisation, co-invest in the field of European digital innovations, provide the appropriate legal and regulatory framework, and to strengthen the necessary skills for digital transformation.

An important element of the strategy for Digitising European Industry is a project named “Smart Factories in new EU Member States”. The project is open to applications from organisations that aspire to play the role of so-called Digital Innovation Hubs - such as competence centres, incubators and accelerators, clusters, industry associations and public administration units. A selected group of such entities will be provided with a training programme and workshops, organised jointly by PwC and Oxford University Innovation (Oxentia), based on best market practices.

**Piotr Łuba**, managing partner at PwC Polska, says:

*“The main objective of PwC is to build social trust and solve the key challenges of the modern world. One of these is certainly digital transformation. For many years we have been helping companies and societies use new technologies. The Smart Factories project is for us a natural element of our mission”.*

Digital Innovation Hubs are support centres that help businesses improve their market competitiveness, primarily through working on business and manufacturing processes, but also through developing digital products and services. These centres act as one-stop shops to provide businesses with access to technology, financial support, market analysis and networking.



Applications for the “Smart factories in new EU Member States” project will be accepted until 22 October 2017. The project is intended for the following EU countries: Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

**Beata Cichocka-Tylman**, director of Innovation and R&D team at PwC Polska, adds:

*“A select group of 30 Digital Innovation Centres from 13 new EU countries will receive a programme of practical training, workshops and mentoring to develop entrepreneurial skills that will address previously identified needs. The result will be the development of a dedicated business plan for each of the selected entities. In addition, the programme will provide broader access to knowledge sharing among these units and increase awareness and availability of new business funding opportunities – both for the programme participants and for the companies that support them”.*

Submissions to participate in the programme may be filed from the aforementioned 13 EU Member States by entities from the list below:

- Universities and Research and Technology Centres, generally referred to as Competence Centres
- Incubators and Accelerators that support companies/start-ups in development and scaling
- Clusters and industry associations representing companies from the private sector
- Public administration units that develop their smart specialisation plans.

Link to the application form: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ApplicationForm>

More about the project on the European Commission website: <http://bit.ly/2xXdfqr>

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## About PwC

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. PwC is a network of firms in 157 countries with more than 223,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services.

PwC has been active in Central and Eastern Europe for the past 25 years. PwC Central and Eastern Europe (PwC CEE) is a network of firms, consisting of separate legal entities in accordance with applicable local laws and regulations. We work to help our clients in local markets become more successful and globally competitive. Today we have more than 8,800 people, including 260 partners, working in 55 offices across 29 countries in the region.

More information about PwC at [www.pwc.com](http://www.pwc.com).