SME - DigIX 2026: More Mature Digital Ecosystems for More Competitive SMEs

The latest report from Webidoo Insight Lab shows a more digitally mature Europe: the average SME - DigIX score rises to 44.57 points, while Italy reaches 42.11 points and confirms its position among the Emerging Performers.

Milan, July 29, 2026 – European small and medium-sized enterprises are entering a new phase of digital transformation. While the challenge in recent years has been to adopt digital tools and technologies, sustainable growth now increasingly depends on the quality of each company's digital ecosystem. Infrastructure, innovation, digital skills and artificial intelligence are no longer separate pillars but interconnected drivers that work together to generate productivity and business growth.

These are the key findings of **SME - DigIX 2026**, the fourth edition of the annual report published by **Webidoo Insight Lab**, which measures the digital competitiveness of SMEs across the 27 European Union Member States and provides practical insight into how businesses can successfully navigate the next stage of digital transformation.

The 2026 edition highlights the continued strengthening of Europe's digital ecosystem. The average **SME - DigIX** score rises to **44.57 points**, up from **42.88** in the previous edition. At the same time, the gap between Member States continues to narrow, with an increasing number of countries closing the distance to long-established leaders. For SMEs, this means operating in an increasingly innovation-friendly European environment where competitiveness depends less on geography and more on strategic decisions and digital investment.

Denmark, Malta and Belgium lead the ranking, while Greece, Estonia and the Czech Republic record the strongest improvements. Italy reaches **42.11 points**, up from **38.91** in the previous edition, confirming its position among the **Emerging Performers** and showing particularly positive momentum in the areas that will increasingly shape business competitiveness in the years ahead.

Europe's Leaders Show What Makes SMEs Truly Competitive

The **SME - DigIX** confirms that Europe's most advanced countries do not excel because of a single strength. Their competitive advantage comes from balancing technological infrastructure, innovation, digital skills, online presence and eCommerce. This combination creates an environment where SMEs can innovate more consistently, adopt emerging technologies more rapidly and translate digital investments into tangible business outcomes.

Denmark remains the top performer with **69.90 points**, followed by **Malta (61.93)** and **Belgium (61.33)**. Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands complete the group of leading countries, all characterised by mature digital ecosystems and balanced performance across every dimension measured by the index.

Alongside these long-standing leaders, strong convergence is taking place. **Greece (+5.86 points)**, **Estonia (+4.67 points)** and the **Czech Republic (+4.37 points)** record the highest

overall improvements in the **SME - DigIX**, demonstrating that digital competitiveness can be accelerated by progressively creating the right conditions for innovation and SME development.

Innovation and Infrastructure Become the Foundations of Growth

Among the five dimensions analysed, Research & Innovation (+8.79 points) and Technological Infrastructure (+5.11 points) record the strongest improvements.

These results reflect an important shift. While digitalising business processes and strengthening online presence were once sufficient priorities, SME growth today increasingly depends on the ability to innovate, invest in infrastructure and create the organisational foundations needed to integrate more advanced technologies.

Within the **Research & Innovation** dimension, the strongest improvements are recorded by **Estonia (+32.37 points)**, the **Czech Republic (+25.06 points)**, **Lithuania (+18.94 points)** and **Italy (+18.59 points)**. These results demonstrate that investment in innovation lays the groundwork for more sustainable growth and stronger long-term competitiveness.

Meanwhile, **Digital Presence** and **Digital Skills** show more moderate improvements, suggesting that these dimensions have reached a relatively mature stage across Europe. For many SMEs, they are no longer a differentiating factor but rather a prerequisite for future development.

Italy Accelerates and Strengthens the Foundations of SME Competitiveness

Italy reaches **42.11 points**, compared with **38.91** in 2025, remaining below the EU average of **44.57 points** while consolidating its position among the **Emerging Performers**.

The country's strongest results come from **Technological Infrastructure**, where Italy ranks **6th in Europe**, and **Research & Innovation**, which records an increase of **18.59 points**, one of the highest across the European Union.

For Italian SMEs, the outlook is encouraging. Conditions supporting digital transformation continue to improve, and investments in innovation are beginning to deliver measurable results. Although further progress is still needed in digital skills and eCommerce, stronger structural foundations are creating a more solid platform on which businesses can build future competitiveness.

Artificial intelligence also shows promising momentum. In 2025, **15.7%** of Italian SMEs use AI technologies, compared with the European average of **18.9%**, representing year-on-year growth of **102.84%**. This is the highest growth rate among Europe's largest economies, outperforming **Spain (+85.73%)**, **France (+83.89%)** and **Germany (+32.75%)**.

For many Italian businesses, artificial intelligence is not the starting point of digital transformation but its natural next step. Companies that have already invested in infrastructure, data, processes and innovation are now best positioned to integrate AI effectively and translate it into higher productivity, greater efficiency and new business opportunities.

The Future of Competitiveness Depends on More Mature Digital Ecosystems

SME - DigIX 2026 highlights that the competitiveness of European SMEs will increasingly depend not on adopting individual technologies but on building integrated digital ecosystems. Artificial intelligence represents the next major accelerator of transformation, but it can only deliver its full potential within organisations that have already developed the necessary skills, infrastructure and business processes.

For European SMEs, the message is clear: there is no need to chase every new technology. Sustainable competitive advantage comes from connecting technology, people and organisational capabilities, turning digital transformation into a long-term engine for business growth.

"*SME - DigIX 2026 confirms that European SMEs are entering a new phase of digital transformation*" said **Giovanni Farese, CEO of Webidoo**. "*Today, adopting digital tools is no longer enough. The companies that will succeed are those capable of integrating technology, skills and innovation into a coherent business strategy. Artificial intelligence represents an extraordinary opportunity, but it creates value only when built on solid foundations. The competitiveness of SMEs will not be determined by who adopts the most technology, but by who is able to transform technology into productivity, growth and continuous innovation.*"

The full report is available for free at: https://webidoo.com/insight-lab/sme-digital-growth-index-2026/

About Webidoo
Webidoo is a technology company that develops AI-powered platforms and solutions to support business growth and digital transformation. Through its proprietary business units Jooice, Groow, and Welpy, its Human+ approach that combines artificial intelligence with human expertise, and the integration of products and services into its proprietary AI Operating System, Webidoo enables companies to adopt AI in a practical, scalable way across marketing, sales, and operations.
The company operates globally, with offices across the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. Its investors include Imprese per la Crescita 3 (IXC3), managed by Azimut Libera Impresa SGR, 8a+ Investimenti, and TIM Ventures.

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