EDIH Network Finalists Showcase Inspirational Speech

Olga Shapoval

Executive Director

Eastern Ukraine EDIH

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

Driving resilience

Ukraine's Digital Transformation and the Role of EDIHs

*We used to think **digital transformation** was about **competitiveness***
*In Ukraine, we discovered it is also about **resilience***

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network

The nature of disruption has changed

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

Europe faces simultaneous disruptions:

- Geopolitical instability
- Infrastructure vulnerability
- Cyber threats
- AI transformation
- Energy insecurity
- Pressure on SMEs and cities

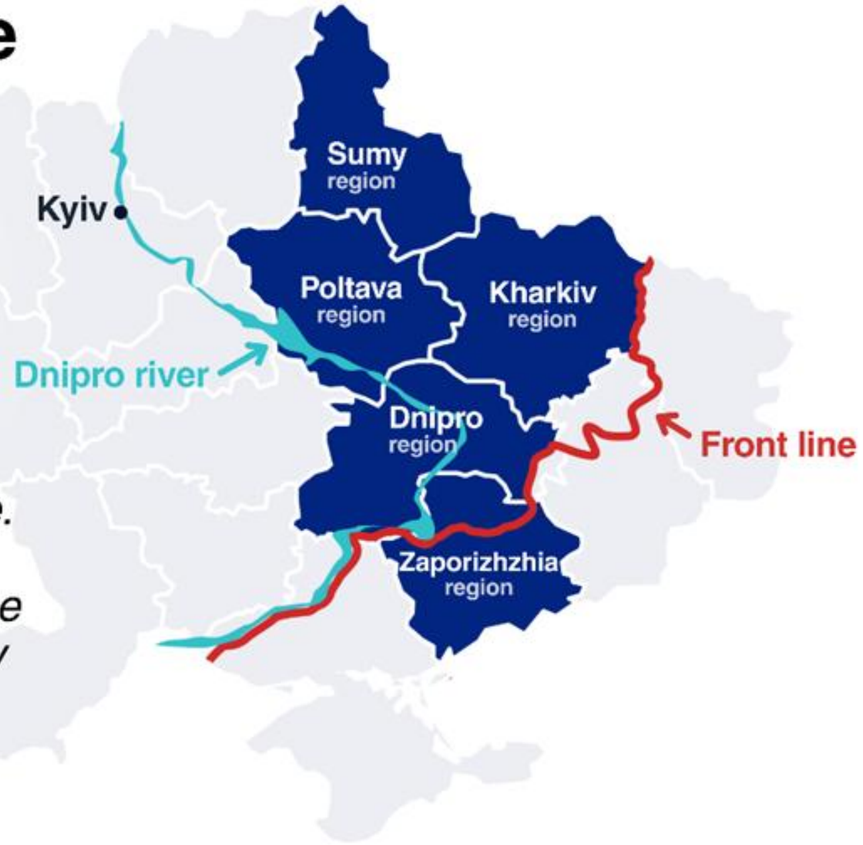
The challenge is no longer only competitiveness. The challenge is whether systems can adapt fast enough under pressure.

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network

When disruption becomes constant

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

Eastern Ukraine EDIH Regions



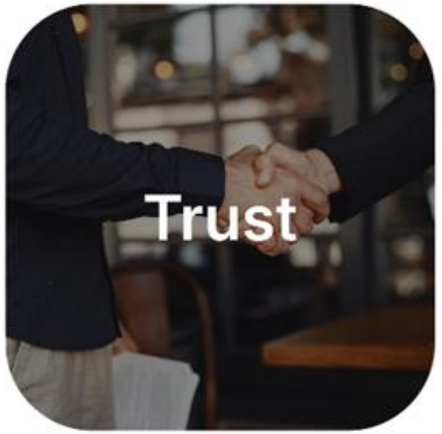
Crises compresses time. Digitalization stopped being optional. It became an operational necessity

Challenges

- Infrastructure attacks
- Energy disruptions
- Interrupted operations
- Education instability
- Pressure on public services

Digitalization became a resilient infrastructure

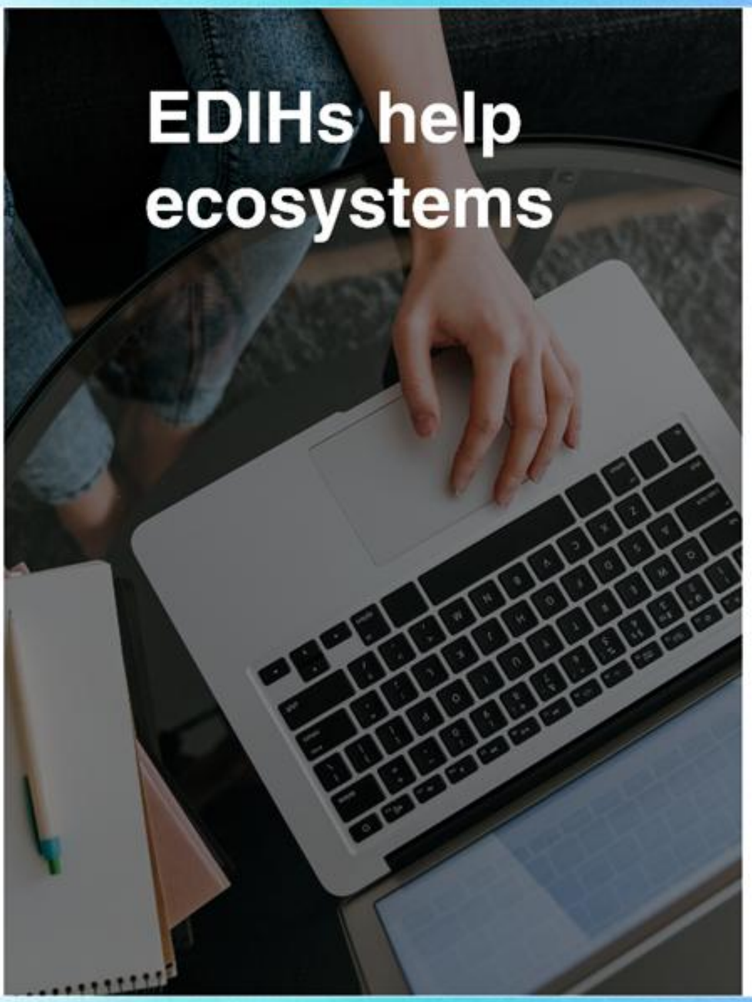
EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub



Digital systems are not only technological systems.
They are systems that help society continue functioning.

The role of EDIHs

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub



- Adapt faster
- Reduce fragmentation
- Accelerate adoption
- Coordinate stakeholders
- Connect SMEs and technologies
- Build trust

> *EDIHs are not only innovation hubs.*
> *They are ecosystem orchestrators.*

How digitalization builds SME resilience

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

CHALLENGE

- Operational disruption
- Uncertainty

For SMEs, resilience is often very practical: can the business continue operating?

DIGITAL RESPONSE

- Cloud infrastructure
- Cybersecurity
- Digital operations
- AI and automation
- Remote coordination

RESULT

- Business continuity
- Adaptive capacity

How digitalization builds urban resilience

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

KHARKIV EMERGENCY CENTER

- Differentiated alerts
- Adaptive response
- Coordination systems
- City functionality preservation

Proud to be shortlisted in the Excellence Awards of the EDIH Summit 2026!

> *The goal was not only to protect*
> ***The goal was to preserve normality***

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network

Three lessons we learned

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

1

Digital infrastructure is resilience infrastructure

2

Adaptation speed matters more than perfection

3

Ecosystems outperform isolated institutions during disruption

> *Technology alone is never enough. The real advantage comes from ecosystems capable of coordinating adaptation quickly*

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network

What this means for Europe's EDIHs

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

EDIHs can become:

- Adaptive infrastructure
- Resilience accelerators
- Trusted ecosystem coordinators

> *Ukraine's experience is extreme.*
> *But the lessons learned are increasingly universal.*

Europe needs:

- Stronger regional ecosystems
- Faster adaptation mechanisms
- Collaboration

  SMEs + academia + cities + public institutions

EDIH EASTERN UKRAINE
European Digital Innovation Hub

Resilience is built together

Resilience is not built by technology alone. ***It is built by ecosystems willing to keep adapting — even under pressure***

This is why EDIHs mater!

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network