

Cohort 7 Agenda

1 June – 7 July 2026

Week 1

Week 2

Weeks 3 & 4

Week 5

5

Weeks

23

Sessions

10+

Expert speakers

Implemented by IFC and the Ministry of Economy of Croatia · Funded by the EU

WEEK 1

What Digital Innovations Mean for Business Success

1 June 2026

10:15 – 13:00

Kick-off

Ministry & IFC, CEOs

Introduction by Marija Vukelić (Ministry of Economy) & Johanne Buba (IFC). Entrepreneurial journey sessions with Nikola Dujmović (span.eu), moderated by Alenka Ostrihon, and Dorotea Effenberg (Tahograf).

2 June 2026

12:00 – 13:30

AI State-of-the-Art

Infinum

A cross-industry tour of current GenAI breakthroughs paired with a self-assessment to help participants identify where AI can create the most value for their business.

3 June 2026

10:00 – 12:30

5 Use Cases for AI

Infinum

A structured walkthrough that takes participants progressively from the simplest AI applications to more advanced ones, covering implementation steps, prerequisites, organizational consequences, and practical lessons at each stage.

8 June 2026

TBD

Embracing IT Progress for Business Success

Namik Hrle, IBM Fellow

Explores the trajectory of IT development, including AI and quantum computing, and how adopting emerging technologies drives competitive advantage and productivity.

The Offsite

10 – 12 June 2026

All day

The Offsite

IEDC / Bled

An immersive multi-session experience covering active listening, situational management, relationship-building with collaborators, and leadership styles to strengthen participants' people and organizational skills.

11 June 2026

TBD

Marketing and Business Success

Davor Bruketa

A presentation exploring how effective marketing strategies drive business growth and competitive positioning.

10 – 12 June 2026

TBD

Clinic on AI

Infinum

Personalized one-on-one advice sessions helping participants apply AI tools and strategies to their specific business context.

More About Your Sector

IT Track Manufacturing Track

15 June 2026

IT 10:00 – 11:30

AI Ethics, Regulation, and Strategic Governance

Civitta

Provides an overview of the EU AI Act and compliance obligations, helping SMEs adopt AI responsibly and strategically.

15 June 2026

IT 12:00 – 14:00

Exploring Opportunities in Manufacturing

Civitta

Shows how IT firms can position themselves as strategic partners to manufacturers by addressing their growing demand for digital solutions.

16 June 2026

Manufacturing 10:00 – 11:30

Supply Chain Management

Luqam

A practitioner shares firsthand strategies and challenges from optimizing supply chain operations, with a focus on intralogistics and the internal flow of materials, highlighting value-adding activities while systematically eliminating waste.

17 June 2026

IT 14:00 – 15:00

Hearing from a CEO in the Sector

Anita Cvetic Orescanin

A firsthand account from a sector leader sharing practical insights and lessons from scaling a software business.

18 June 2026

IT 10:00 – 12:00

When the Technology is Faster than the Market

Tomer Simon, Microsoft

Examines how businesses can adapt their governance and decision-making processes to keep pace with rapid technological change.

23 June 2026

Manufacturing 10:00 – 11:30

LEAN Manufacturing

Luqam

Introduces the 8 types of waste and the QCDDM lens (Quality, Cost, Delivery, Motivation), equipping participants with practical diagnostic tools to identify inefficiencies on the shop floor and build a culture of operational excellence.

23 June 2026

Manufacturing 12:00 – 12:45

Hearing from a CEO in the Sector

Speaker: to be determined

A firsthand account from a sector leader sharing practical insights and lessons from scaling a business.

24 June 2026

Manufacturing 10:00 – 11:30

Digitalization and Manufacturing 4.0

Luqam

An implementation-focused session covering Industry 4.0 technologies such as digital twins, IIoT, and smart automation, illustrated with real-life examples of how AI and IT projects have optimized manufacturing processes.

24 June 2026

Manufacturing 12:00 – 14:00

A Retailer's Perspective

Metro – Karmela Plavsic

A METRO representative walks participants through what large retailers expect from suppliers, covering key certification standards required to access major retail networks and how Croatian SMEs can qualify.

25 June 2026

IT 10:00 – 12:00

The Future of Software Development

Tomer Simon, Microsoft

Explores how AI is reshaping the developer's role by automating tasks and transforming software workflows.

WEEK 5

Sustaining Your Success

29 June 2026

12:00 – 13:30

External Growth – Merger & Acquisition

Dusan Banovic

Explores the fundamentals of Mergers and Acquisitions as a practical pathway for SME expansion and value creation, backed by Croatian examples.

30 June 2026

12:00 – 12:45

Financial Options

Erste Bank – Ravlic Momcilovic Jelena ES

Erste Bank presents its product offering tailored to SMEs, including financing instruments, lines of credit, and relevant banking solutions.

1 July 2026

10:00 – 11:30

SME Governance for Business Sustainability

Ružica Šimić, Mirela Alpeza

A roadmap for introducing governance frameworks that support long-term growth and stronger strategic decision-making.

3 July 2026

10:00 – 11:30

Understanding E&S Responsibility

Ružica Šimić, Mirela Alpeza

A foundational session on Environmental and Social standards, focusing on how to identify and mitigate non-financial risks and align with regulatory expectations.

7 July 2026

10:00 – 11:30

Marketing Clinics

Davor Bruketa

Personalized advisory slots for participants to receive tailored guidance on their marketing strategy.

7 July 2026

12:00 – 12:45

Governance Clinics

Ružica Šimić, Mirela Alpeza

Personalized advisory slots offering participants tailored guidance on governance solutions, drawing on the IFC SME Governance methodology to support better strategic decision-making.