

MITTELSTAND 4.0 COMPETENCE CENTRES (GERMANY)

Authors:

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Economic Affairs and
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The case study takes a policy maker's perspective on the Mittelstand 4.0 Competence Centres, which support the digitalisation of SMEs, providing information about their mandate, activities, governance, and main implementation challenges

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Topics covered

Digital technology adoption, SMEs, digital divide, Germany

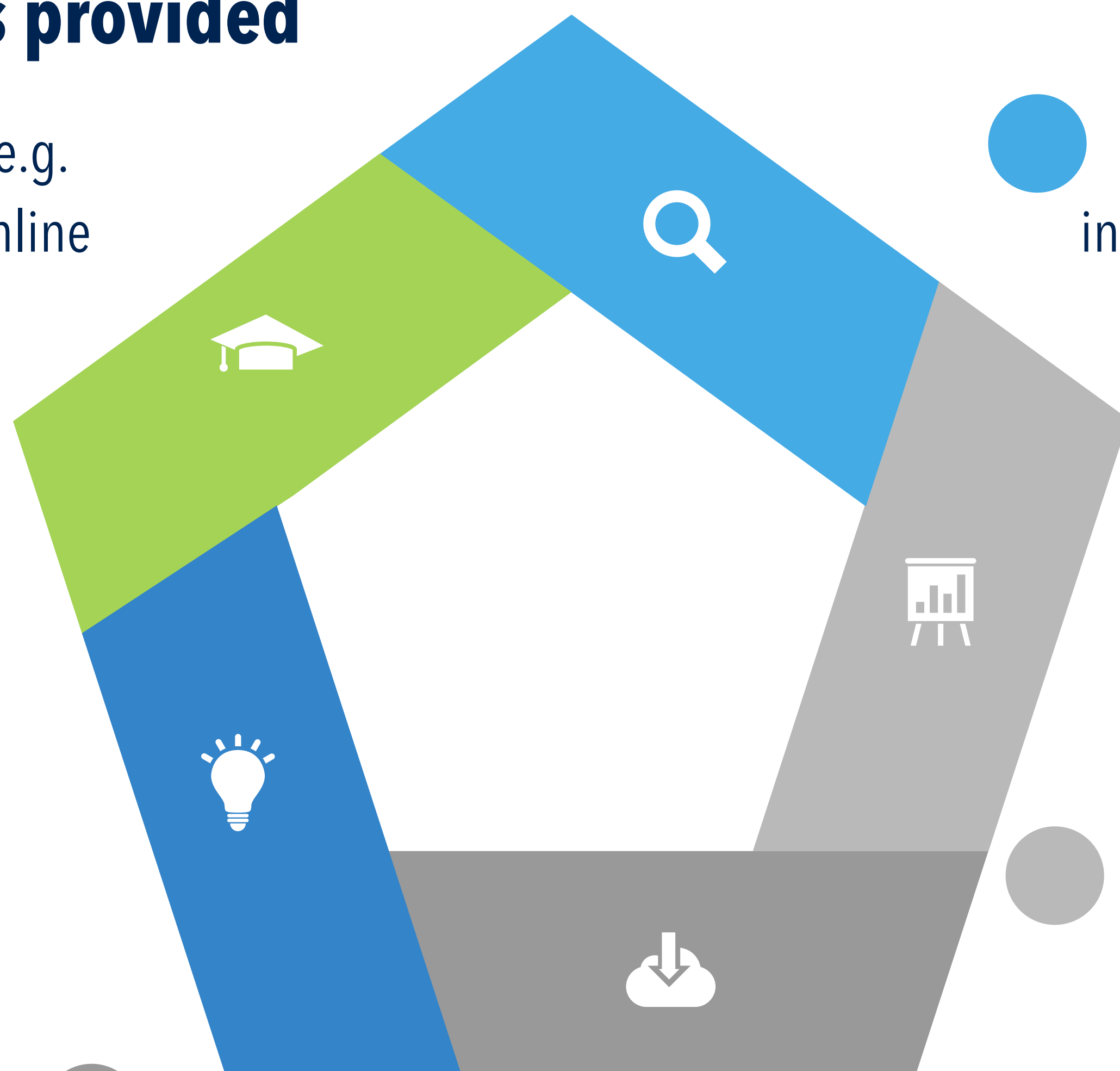
What are Mittelstand 4.0 Competence Centres?

- Network of 25 centres across Germany established and led by public-private consortia (including universities, public research institutions, chambers of commerce, transfer agencies)
- Cross-sector and cross-thematic digitalization ecosystems supporting the knowledge and technology transfer to SMEs

Business services provided

Provision of training (e.g. workshops, seminars, online learning courses)

Pilot projects with
SME generating best-
practices



Awareness building (e.g. information brochures, talks at trade shows, webinars)

Develop digitalisation road
maps for individual SMEs

Demonstration of solutions in practice
(demonstration plants, mobile showrooms)

Mandate

Support SMEs develop
their own Industry 4.0
and digital
transformation solutions

Foster SMEs'
digitalisation

Close the
digital divide
between
SMEs and
large
enterprises

Budget & governance

36 million per year
(around EUR 1.5-2
million per
Competence Centre)

Operative since
2016

Completely funded by
Federal Ministry for
Economic Affairs and
Energy (BMWi)

Supervised by
project management
accountable to the
BMWi

Main challenges

Skilled employees

Difficult to attract specialised staff due to high competition from private sector

Knowledge transfer

Academic staff needs to be familiarised with "language" of SMEs