

## **Concrete benefits of technological innovation for small and medium-sized enterprises**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, digitization greatly influences the production process of enterprises. In terms of competitiveness, we are more and more aware of the advantages that the use of digital technology entails for companies. However, there is still a digital divide between companies in northern Italy and those in the south, due to the geographical position, which undoubtedly penalizes these companies in terms of costs, but also due a certain delay in terms of economic growth. To overcome this gap it is necessary to undertake a process of change through greater cooperation between companies, creating supply chains that not only embrace different sectors, but also go beyond their borders, and create an increasingly global system. Exactly for this reason it is essential to perfect the knowledge and skills of digital tools. Only in this way can SMEs in the south have the opportunity to become more competitive in terms of international trade. The digital economy today represents the economy, therefore only digitalization can change the production systems and consequently the Made in Italy. Today the Internet is more essential than ever, above all to encourage the creation of new businesses and improve and modernize existing ones, therefore it is the Web that will encourage the growth of Southern businesses and so it will make the entire production sector more efficient. Digitization is an integral part of the way of working, especially for the new generations and for “Under 35” entrepreneurs: more than 50% of young entrepreneurs have a website (Unioncamere, 2015).

Not only the South, but the whole of Italy, lags behind in terms of digitization compared to other EU countries, only 5.1% of Italian companies used e-commerce until 2014. In EU countries, e-commerce by SMEs increased from 14% in 2013 to 17% in 2017, (European Commission and DESI, 2019), this is also what appears from the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) , which measures the results of a country in terms of online activity and digital public services.

In Italy, in general, there is a delay in digitization, which certainly keeps productivity low: on this point we need to reflect and intervene.