

SMERF

1st newsletter

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



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the European Union

SMERF

INTRODUCTION

What is SMERF?

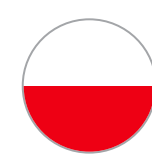
SME Ready for the Future is an international project supported by Interreg Central Europe (Priority SMART), with its main mission to support low-tech and medium-tech SMEs' transition towards SMERF: SME Ready for the Future and providing new services to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Innomediaries (entities either supporting SMEs or closely cooperating with SMEs on innovations development) that will enhance their competences and equally support SMEs.

This project is co-financed by the Interreg Central Europe programme and is set to run from April 2023 to March 2026. The project is being implemented by 8 partners from 7 countries (Poland, Italy, Austria, Germany, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia).

Partnership



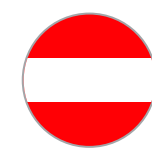
Lead Partner



Wrocław University
of Science and Technology

Wrocław University of Science and Technology

Project partners



Business Upper Austria



Center of Research and Technologic Innovation s.r.l.



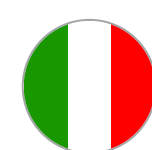
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)



Pannon Business Network Association



Science and Technology Park
of the University of Rijeka Ltd.

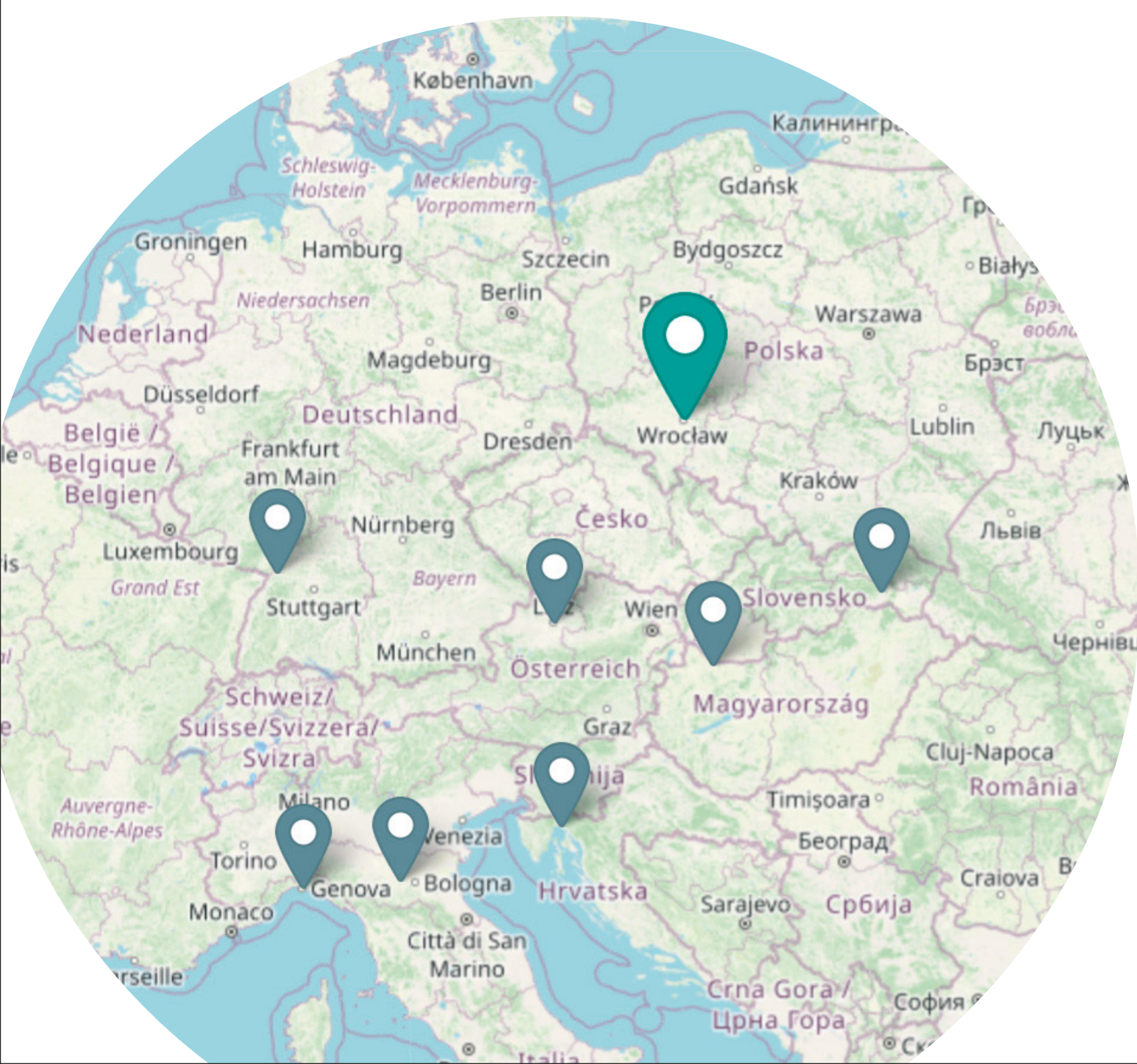


University of Genoa



TECHNICKÁ UNIVERZITA
V KOŠICIACH

Technical University of Kosice



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Characteristic features and transformation tools for SMERF

The consortium managed to do quite an extensive work related to characteristic features and transformation tools for SMEs, aimed at fostering readiness for future challenges through the SMERF project. The SMERF research elaborates on four pillars crucial for SMEs to thrive in the future:

Innovation Culture: SMEs fostering an environment where innovative ideas and practices are embraced and implemented. It emphasizes the importance of unorthodox thinking, autonomy, and experimentation, supported by a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and external cooperation.

Digital Manufacturing: It highlights the integration of advanced technologies and digital solutions into manufacturing processes, adopting automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to optimize production and improve efficiency.

Open Innovation 2.0 & Sharing Economy: This section discusses how SMEs can accelerate innovation and enhance market position by adopting open innovation, which involves leveraging external ideas and paths to market, and participating in the sharing economy to access or share resources more efficiently.

Green & Circular Economy & Sustainability: This pillar focuses on SMEs adopting practices that minimize their ecological footprint through waste reduction, recycling, use of renewable energy sources, and implementing sustainable practices across operations.



Best practices and success stories regarding SMERF

This created catalogue compiles a diverse set of best practices and success stories that demonstrate the potential economic benefits and innovative advancements possible for SMEs prepared for future challenges.

The catalogue is a testament to the collaborative spirit of the SMERF consortium, aiming to share knowledge, inspire innovation, and foster sustainable growth within the SME community across Europe. This document is a cornerstone for further dissemination and educational activities within the SMERF project, contributing significantly to its overall goals of enhancing SME readiness for future opportunities and

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challenges. It is also intended to serve as a vital resource for upcoming SMERF webinars and the Inspiration Knowledge Base.



Audit tools for assessing companies' level of advancement in 4 pillars

Prepared SMERF audit tool presents a comprehensive methodology for developing a self-assessment tool aimed at assisting SMEs in their transformation journey, focusing on four key pillars: innovation culture, digital manufacturing, open innovation and sharing economy, green & circular economy and sustainability. This tool is designed to be user-friendly, enabling SMEs to evaluate their current status and strategic planning through a two-part questionnaire that covers broad and detailed areas of interest related to each pillar.

The self-assessment tool is developed as a cornerstone of the SMERF project, structured into two main parts: an initial set of 40 questions for a broad assessment and a second set of 80 detailed questions for in-depth analysis across the four pillars. The tool aims to provide SMEs with a comprehensive platform for self-evaluation and strategic planning. The tool also identifies specific features for each pillar. The output of the tool is divided into two parts corresponding to the two steps of the questionnaire. The first part's output is descriptive, summarizing responses in a verbose manner, while the second part provides transformation scenarios based on the assessment. The methodologies which are part of this tool will be incorporated also later on during the duration of the project.



Best practices, policies and strategic initiatives of more innovative partner regions

This activity of the project outlines a structured approach to identifying and disseminating best practices and innovative policies across European regions. By focusing on the transferability of successful strategies from more to less innovative regions, it underscores the project's commitment to fostering innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation among SMEs and local authorities. This collaborative effort is expected to enhance the innovation ecosystem and promote the sharing of knowledge and resources among partner regions.

LOOKING AHEAD



Interviews with experts

Starting from April 2024, 16 videos- 2 interviews per partner with experienced experts, will be presented and published on project's social media- YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn. They are created based on case studies and interviews about success stories and best practices in the 4 thematic pillars.

SMERF Diagnosis Tool

Stakeholders will be provided access to self-assessment tool providing analytical audit of the company within 4 thematic pillars and according to the results individual tailored transformation scenario will be provided. This tool will be tested during 2024 and launched later in 2024.

The Inspiration Knowledge Base

The Inspiration Knowledge Base will be an on-line knowledge repository containing theoretical and practical approach, including best practices and success stories, regarding 4 thematic pillars. It will be developed and launched on the basis of research performed in numerous project activities. It will be tested during webinars in May 2024 and launched later in 2024.

Webinars

Webinars will be aiming to reach out to Higher Education Institutions and intermediaries to spread awareness about the SMERF project and its efforts to support SME transformation. Each webinar is focused on one of the four pillars identified by the SMERF project. The structure will include an introduction to the SMERF project, presentations on specific pillars, inspirational presentations by experts presenting, showcases of the Inspiration Knowledge Base, success stories, and the SMERF Assessment Model Methodology. Interactive sessions for engaging the participants will be included as well. The webinars are scheduled online in May 2024. The registration will be available on project's social media and webpage.

PROJECT PARTNER MEETINGS



Kick-off in Wroclaw

The kick-off meeting of the project took place on the 10-11 May 2023 in Wroclaw, Poland and was organized by the lead partner of the project - Wroclaw University of Science and Technology. During this meeting the project partners met for the first time in person and discussed first acts and approaches towards the project.



Meeting in Genoa

1st Project Partner meeting took place on the 4-5 October 2023 in Genoa, Italy. It was organized by the University of Genoa in a beautiful scenery of Italian region of Liguria. The partners had many fruitful conversations about what has already been achieved in the process of the project, mainly discussing the work that has been done on the 4 Pillars- Innovation culture, Digital Manufacturing, Open Innovation 2.0 & Sharing Economy and Green & Circular Economy and Sustainability.



Meeting in Szombathely


2nd Project Partner meeting was organized by partners from Pannon Business Network in Szombathely, Hungary on the 14-15 February 2024. During this meeting the consortium was also joined by Joint Secretariat project officer which allowed to have more interactive project discussions with direct answers from Joint Secretariat. Partners also took part in a study visit to Galambos Trans Ltd., where they got to see the processes of this logistic company. It was very interesting to see a company working first-hand as SMERF project is planning to help better processes of such companies. Partners also got to visit AM-LAB as well as At.HOME which are research areas of the project partner PBN.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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