

SMERF

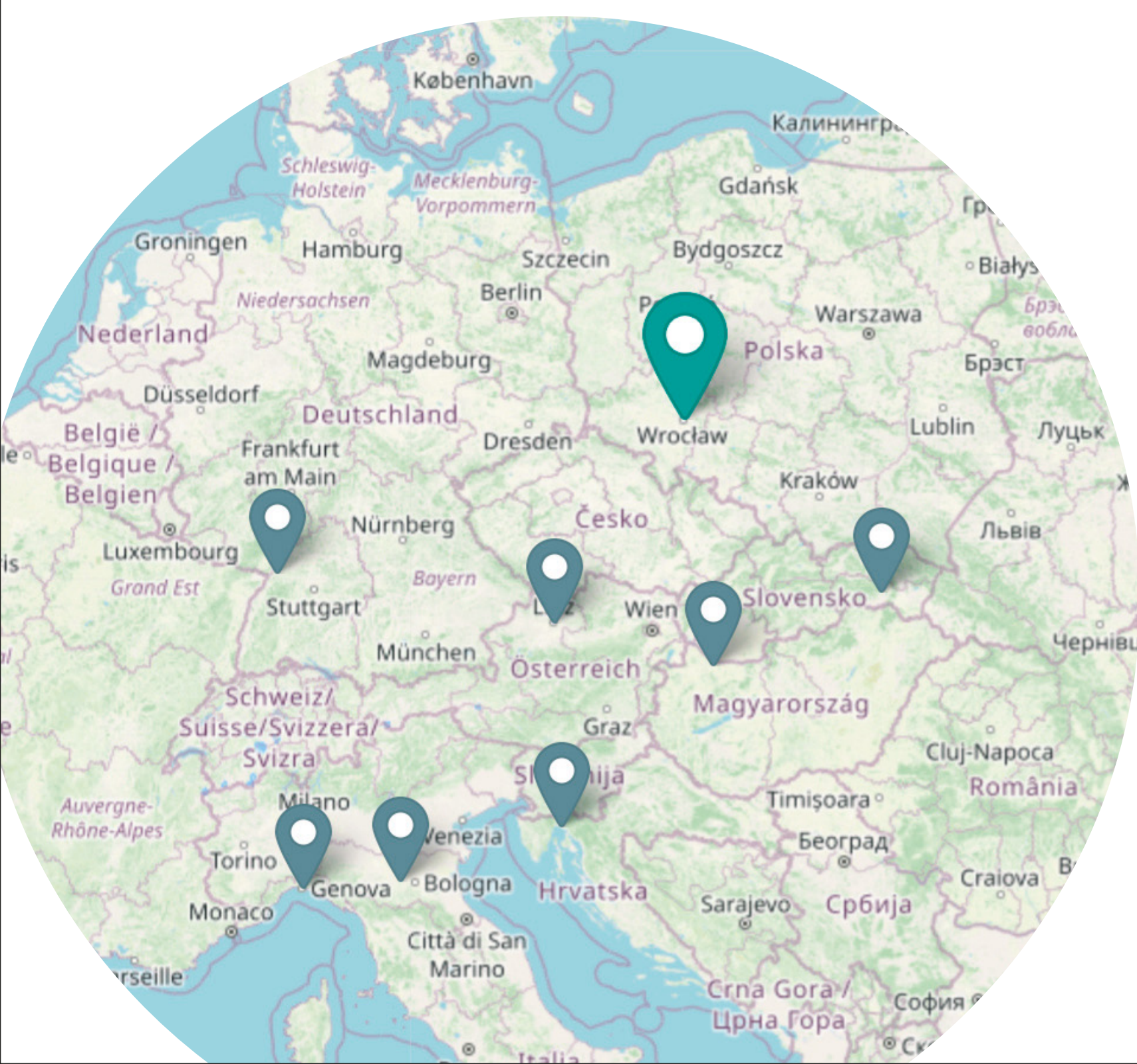
1st newsletter

INTRODUCTION

What is SMERF?

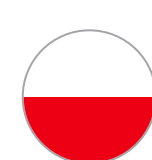
SME Ready for the Future is an international project supported by Interreg Central Europe (Priority SMART), with its main mission to support low-tech and medium-tech SMEs' transition towards SMERF: SME Ready for the Future and providing new services to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Innomediaries (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 Inter-reg 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

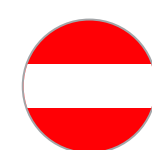
Lead Partner



Wrocław University
of Science and Technology

Wroclaw University of Science and Technology

Project partners



Business Upper Austria



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



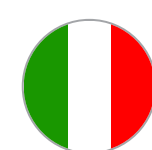
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)



Pannon Business Network Association



Science and Technology Park
of the University of Rijeka Ltd.



Università
di Genova

University of Genoa



**TECHNICKÁ UNIVERZITA
V KOŠICIACH**

Technical University of Kosice

YEAR IN REVIEW



Catalogue of best practices and success stories regarding SMERF

This project report encapsulates a comprehensive analysis of the characteristic features and transformation tools for **SMEs** across four critical pillars: **Innovation Culture, Digital Manufacturing, Open Innovation 2.0 & Sharing Economy, and Green & Circular Economy & Sustainability**. Through collaborative research, the document not only identifies key attributes that define **SMEs** ready for future challenges in these areas but also compiles an extensive list of existing tools, methods, and solutions to facilitate their transformation.

Almost a total of **80 solutions** were identified across the four pillars. This rich repository of resources is aimed at enabling **SMEs** to assess their current status, identify areas of improvement, and adopt strategies and technologies that align with their transformation goals.

This initiative is expected to significantly contribute to the **stakeholders** by providing a structured framework and actionable insights to navigate the complexities of modernizing business operations. By leveraging these identified tools and methodologies, **SMEs** can enhance their innovation capacity, digital integration, collaborative ventures, and sustainability practices, thereby strengthening their competitiveness and readiness for future opportunities and challenges.



Catalogue of 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** gathering best practices from **8 regions**, 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 challenges. It is also intended to serve as a vital resource for upcoming **SMERF webinars** and the **Inspiration Knowledge Base**, as well as preparation of a **video repository** which will consist of **16 interviews** presenting the best practices.

YEAR IN REVIEW



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.



Report on 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 innovative regions—**Austria and Germany**, to less innovative regions of the project—**Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia**, 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. The consortium managed to identify together more than **20 best practices**, not just from the more innovative regions but also from Croatia, Hungary, Italy, and Poland.

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 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.

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.







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CONTACT INFORMATION

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