

SMERF *Diagnosis Tool*

SMERF Diagnosis Tool is a self-assessment tool aiming to evaluate SME's level of advancement in four SMERF Pillars (Innovation culture, Digital Manufacturing, Open innovation & Sharing Economy 2.0, Green & Circular Economy & Sustainability).
This tool is completely free of charge.



Did you know that...?

out of 12 342 SMEs, 13% have difficulties with digitalization, 9% struggle with innovation and 8% with internationalization?
-according to Flash Eurobarometer

only 27% of EU SMEs introduced at least one new or improved product?
-according to European Innovation Scoreboard

only 12.3% of EU SMEs collaborate with others in their innovation activities?
-according to European Innovation Scoreboard

WHAT IS THE SMERF TOOL?

The SMERF online questionnaire is a self-assessment platform designed to help companies measure their progress in four critical areas, referred to as "Pillars". The four Pillars are the core focus areas the questionnaire is built around. They include:



Innovation culture



Digital manufacturing



Open innovation 2.0 & sharing economy



Green & circular economy & sustainability

Using advanced algorithms, the tool analyses the responses to simulate the decision-making process of a human expert, providing insights and actionable suggestions based on the results. By following this guided process, companies will identify their current position and pinpoint areas for improvement, receiving clear and actionable insights.



SMERF *Diagnosis Tool*

If you are an SME which seeks to be more innovative, digital, open or green, get ready to unlock the full potential of your business with our comprehensive self-assessment and find out your business' strengths and weaknesses! This easy-to-follow process is designed to guide you through two key steps:

Step 1: General SMERF Survey

- A 40-question assessment designed to highlight areas for improvement across the four SMERF Pillars.
- Provides a broad analysis of your company's performance, highlighting key strengths and opportunities for growth.

Step 2: In-Depth SMERF Pillar Analysis

- A deeper dive into your company's performance, focusing on specific SMERF Pillars of your choice.
- Each pillar contains 20 targeted questions, allowing for a customized assessment based on your business needs.
- Delivers personalized insights and actionable strategies to drive measurable growth and improvement.



How does it work?

Step 1



Register or Login

Start your journey by creating an account or logging in

Step 2



Complete the quiz

Answer questions to competencies and operational aspects

Step 3



Receive Tailored Insights

Get personalized recommendations and actionable strategies



Pillar 1: Cultivating a Culture of Innovation

Where Businesses Struggle:

- Limited creativity and innovation that limits growth potential
- Difficulty adapting to shifting market trends and evolving customer demands
- Inefficient processes and poor teamwork that hold back progress
- Resistance to change from both employees and leadership
- Challenges in attracting and retaining top-tier talent

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

- Cultivation of innovation culture and collaboration
- Launching of products and services that align with market demands
- Improving adaptability to remain ahead of the competition
- Boosting employee motivation and engagement
- Optimizing operations for efficiency and scalability

Question 1

Question 1 of 40

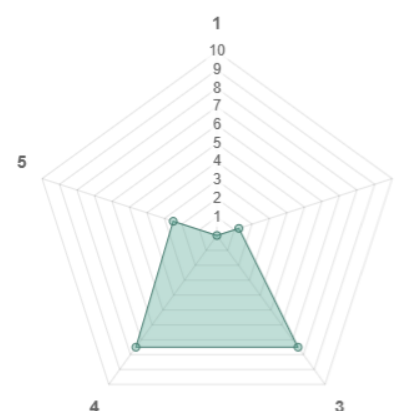
Assess the extent to which you feel your company encourages its employees to explore new ideas and experiment in their roles.

- ☐ Not encouraged at all ⓘ
- ☐ Slightly encouraged ⓘ
- ☐ Moderately encouraged ⓘ
- ☐ Highly encouraged ⓘ
- ☐ Not applicable

I often see that the employees feel restricted and discouraged from exploring new ideas and experimenting in their roles. The organizational culture seems resistant to change and innovation.



INNOVATION CULTURE



1 - Innovative Thinking & Creativity: 0
2 - Human Resources Development: 1.25
3 - Knowledge & Learning: 7.5
4 - Collaboration & Communication: 7.5
5 - Leadership & Relations: 2.5



Pillar 2: Advancing Digital Manufacturing

Question 11

Question 11 of 40

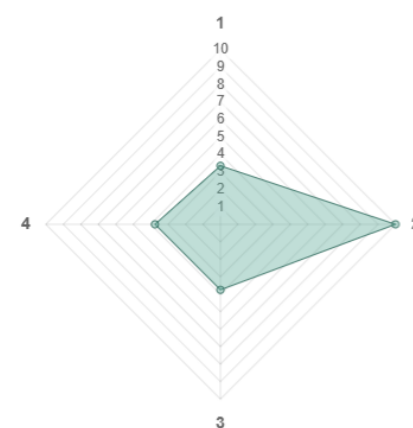
To what extent are digital technologies integrated into your overall business processes?

- ☐ Not integrated ⓘ
- ☐ Minimal use in some areas. ⓘ
- ☐ A balanced approach, integrated into several key processes. ⓘ
- ☒ Comprehensive integration in all business processes. ⓘ
- ☐ Not applicable

Digital technologies are seamlessly embedded in every aspect of the business, from production to marketing and customer engagement. This approach maximizes efficiency and data-driven decision-making.



DIGITAL MANUFACTURING



1 - Internal Digitization Awareness: 3.35
2 - Proactive Tech Adoption: 10
3 - Embraced Advanced Technologies: 3.75
4 - Competitive via Digital Technologies: 3.75

Where Businesses Struggle:

- Inability to adapt to fast-evolving markets
- Unexplored potential in manufacturing data
- Downtime and inefficiencies reduce productivity
- Quality inconsistencies due to manual processes
- Rising operational costs from outdated methods

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

- Utilize data to optimize processes and elevate quality
- Reduce costs by improving resource efficiency
- Predict and prevent bottlenecks with advanced analytics
- Achieve consistent product quality through automation
- Enhance flexibility to meet market demands



Pillar 3: Embracing Open Innovation and the Sharing Economy

Where Businesses Struggle:

- Limited budgets and resources for R&D and innovation
- Resistance to adopting open, collaborative practices
- Complexities managing utilization of infrastructure and resources
- Concerns over sharing proprietary information
- Challenges navigating ownership and intellectual property rights

Question 25

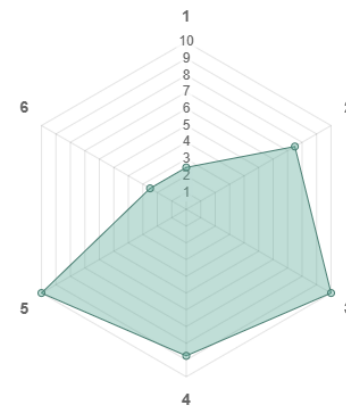
Question 25 of 40

What is your organization's attitude towards founding a start-up*?

- ☐ We have tried, and it works
- ☐ We have considered it and it is possible
- ☐ We have considered it but it is not possible
- ☐ We have not considered it or we do not know what a start-up is
- ☐ We have tried, but it didn't work
- ☐ Not applicable

Start-up* "is an independent, organisation, which is younger than five years and is aimed at creating, improving and expanding a scalable, innovative, technology-enabled product with high and rapid growth".

OPEN INNOVATION & SHARING ECONOMY



1 - Open Innovation Mindset : 2.5
2 - Open Innovation Initiatives: 7.5
3 - Networks of Partners and Start-ups: 10
4 - External Ideas, Co-creation & Crowdsourcing: 8.75
5 - Model of owning/renting Resources: 10
6 - Sharing Economy and utilization of Resources: 2.5

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

- Access external expertise to drive innovation
- Reduce costs through shared infrastructure and resources
- Develop innovative solutions with collaborative R&D
- Enter new markets through strategic partnerships
- Promote sustainability with optimized resource use



Pillar 4: Transitioning to a Green and Circular Economy

Where Businesses Struggle:

- Lack of experience with sustainable practices
- High upfront costs for green technologies and training
- Ensuring sustainability across the supply chain
- Limited innovation in eco-friendly products and services
- Difficulty aligning operations with sustainability goals

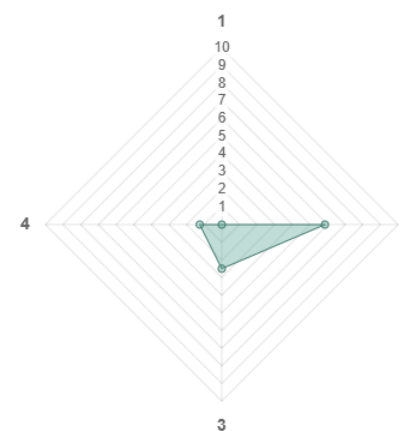
Question 35

Question 35 of 40

Strategy: Does the company have a dedicated environmental and sustainability strategy for the own business?

- ☐ Yes, we have a comprehensive sustainability strategy.
- ☐ We have a partial sustainability strategy in place.
- ☐ A strategy is in early stage of development.
- ☐ No, we do not have a dedicated sustainability strategy yet.
- ☐ Not applicable

GREEN & CIRCULAR ECONOMY & SUSTAINABILITY



1 - Circular Approach in action: 0
2 - Sustainability in action: 5.85
3 - Environmentally Friendly Approach: 2.5
4 - Innovative Approach: 1.25



What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

- Achieve long-term savings by reducing waste and resources
- Tap into lucrative, sustainable markets
- Build eco-friendly products that drive growth
- Strengthen supply chain sustainability
- Empower teams with green-focused skills and training

What can SMERF project offer you after the completion of the SMERF Diagnosis Tool?

SMERF Trainings - will serve as a support to the SMEs in the transformation process (coming in May 2025)

Individual Support Programme - programme based on expert consultations, mentoring and access to support from HEIs and RTOs (coming in September 2025)

InnoGreen Event - will bring connection with big companies and their services and HEIs and RTOs which can provide expert knowledge (coming in October 2025)

Study visits - will give the opportunity to develop new project and research ideas and share knowledge (coming in October 2025)

SMERF Final Conference - where the SMERF project results, developed tools and action plans will be presented (coming in February-March 2026)

For more information about the SMERF Diagnosis Tool or the SMERF project, feel free to reach out to the representative for each country:

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