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SMART Campus Strategy and Action Plan

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CENTRAL EUROPE
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

DANUBE REGION strategy
People & Skills

The project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

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PLANNING- PROJECT I.E. SMART

One of the ways of fostering the innovativeness an entrepreneurship among people is through its systematic involvement into the learning process. Project i.e. SMART has realized this from its beginning, which is proved by the structure of the selected project partnership (combination of education and municipal organizations) and through the fact that learning and training represents a backbone of the whole project. Initial starting point for spreading out the innovation and entrepreneurship is carried out by so called SMART Trainers, who are trained in Train the SMART Trainers programme. This programme is carried out in transnational training modules led by international experts in the area of entrepreneurial training with a focus on the right brain approach. Trainers are then responsible for implementing similar programmes related to the innovativeness an entrepreneurship in their own regions. They organize regional SMART Competitions (described in the following part of the document) as well. These activities are held at the regional SMART points to choose the 5 best transformative business ideas/emerging entrepreneurs per SMART point.

The selected entrepreneurs take part on the international competition SMART Campus- a transnational training campus for regional business idea owners in the emerging sustainable economic sectors: Creative Industries, Green Economy, and ICT. The Campus- its creation, realization and feedback evaluation are described in the following parts of the document.

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DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning, the project partnership had to decide upon the overall structure and approach to the SMART Campus. The basic elements were already included in the project application form- SMART Campus represents an transnational tool to train emerging entrepreneurs in the right-brain approach to innovation and entrepreneurship in the emerging sustainable economic sector. The tool will be implemented as an onsite transnational training with entrepreneurs from all partners regions. SMART Campus will conclude with a pitching session- the entrepreneurs will present their completed business ideas/ plans to an international committee at the campus. Based on the feedback, and in cooperation with their SMART Trainers and the international experts, the business plans will be finalized.
During the development phase of the Campus, the partnership decided to involve the external expert company to help with the programme agenda and the facilitation of its set up. Representatives of the partnership got together in Denmark, Kolding (IBC Innovationsfabrikken, Kolding, 14.-15.2.2013) and brainstormed on these topics. This approach was very helpful and positively evaluated.

General reflections on the SMART Campus during the development phase and description of the basic elements

Resulting from the meetings and discussions, the partnership put together basic definitions and expectations from the Campus, summarized below.

The SMART Campus will offer support and training to the participating emerging entrepreneurs and start-ups. It will be designed as a festival with different stages, venues, meeting points, exhibitors and help desks. There will be events and activities in parallel with the working sessions of the participants. Since implementation and training/learning by doing and early stage fails plays a vital role in becoming a successful company, the campus activities should be arranged around the working sessions. The basic elements of the Campus defined during the development phase are as follows:

Target groups:

Regional SMART Point	Emerging Entrepreneur	
	Qualification	Age
Vienna	Lower and middle school	14-19 years old
Veneto	High school and universities	18-30 years old
Modena	Secondary schools and universities	15-30 years old
Stuttgart	Universities	19-28 years old
Bratislava	Under graduated university students	not specified
Budapest	University students and fresh graduates	not specified
Prague	not specified	17-35 years old

Camps:
ICT, Green Technology and Creative Industry entrepreneurs & start-ups will be situated respectively together to achieve best opportunities for synergetic knowledge sharing, collaboration and maybe even co-creation. Thus, the participants referring to their specialized field of operation should also live, eat and spend time together as much as possible.

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Events:
The events taking place during the work sessions should all benefit the participants in working and maturing their concepts. There could also be different parallel events to address different needs. This option demands more capacity and of course more resources in terms of participating event holders.

Location:
The venue for the location should be open, raw and spacious. An old abandoned factory in the middle of Europe close to a budget friendly hotel would be the ideal venue. Idealistically the venue can also accommodate the participants, inspire them and offer several facilities for activities such as sports and recreation. Wireless Internet and IT infrastructure is also a must but can also be arranged from a 3rd party.

Example of a premises suitable for SMART Campus

Budget and cost covering:
The 1st SMART Campus is a free of charge event (from participants point of view), but in order to involve more participants it could invite as many participants as possible (not financed through the i.e. SMART project).

It is also possible to involve sponsors to help out and to give keynotes for free in exchange with a sponsorship. Food and beverages should be sold at cost price.

Pitching:
The pitch rounds should prepare and train participants in efficient communication and selling off their concept. There should be a keynote speaker on pitching and presentation techniques as to inspire the crowd to work with their styles. The participants will practice the pitch they have worked on before they will go on-stage and pitch the idea in front of a panel e.g. representing investors, specialists, politicians, VC's and BDO's.

Party + Surprise:
The SMART Campus should be rounded up by a social event featuring an on-stage artist or performer (surprise). The participants will have the opportunity to connect even more and discuss the SMART Campus etc.

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REALIZATION

SMART Competition

SMART Competition represented an important preliminary step for the Campus. Its main goal was to prepare and choose the best candidates in each region to go to the SMART Campus. The competition in individual regions (7 regions= 7 competitions were held) took place in the last quarter of 2013. The process of the competition from regional point of view is described below:

1, There was a two-part application form for the participants
- Part 1- Participant Information
- Part 2- Business Idea Description and Overview

2, Competition- Round one – **SMART Business Idea**
- Evaluation Criteria and Guiding Questions for Self-Assessment
- Template
- Final Assessment Rubric

3, Competition- Round two (after some work on business idea)- **SMART Transformative Business Plan**
- Evaluation Criteria and Guiding Questions for Self-Assessment
- Business Plan Template - Summary
- Business Plan Template - Detailed
- Final Assessment Rubric

The basic criteria for the Competition were as follows (max 40 grading points):
- **Innovativeness and originality of the idea** [max score 10 points]
- **Personal Purpose [**max score 10 points]
- **Feasibility** -[max score 10 points]
- **Action Plan** (in general terms) [max score 10 points]

Not required attributes, but encouraged for extra points (max 10 points):
- **Interdisciplinary approach**-connection to the 3 emerging sectors [5 extra points]
- **Transnational Approach** [5 extra points]

SMART Campus

General overview

The SMART Campus was held between the 20th and 23rd of May of 2014 in Bratislava and it was a full week of training activities for 47 young entrepreneurs, from 7 different regions of Central Europe – Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Veneto, Modena, Stuttgart and Bratislava. This training included coaching and training sessions provided by a selected group of business experts, entrepreneurs and investors, who integrate a panel of coaches, for emerging SMART entrepreneurs, in order to advise them on business models and effective presentation near potential investors. In addition, it also included the use of an innovative tool to reinforce the learning experience of the SMART entrepreneurs – the SMART Xchange.

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In this full week of training activities, SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to:

- Present their ideas to potential business partners that operate in other regions, but in
- similar sectors (Creative Industries, Green Economy, and ICT);
- Participate in additional training activities provided by international experts and their
- SMART Trainers;
- Pitch their business idea/plan before a jury composed of international experts and
- Potential investors;
- Improve and finalize their business idea/plan with the assistance of SMART
- trainers and international experts.

Timetable and activities

During the 4 days of SMART Campus Training activities, each emerging entrepreneur had the opportunity to present his/her business idea/plan to international experts and to improve their knowledge, skills and competences in specific fields regarding the presentation and negotiation with potential investors. Focused in these goals, during the SMART Campus Training event, the following activities were included:

Timetable	20th May	21st May	22nd May	23rd May
8:30	Welcome	Arrival	Arrival	Rehearsal
9:00 - 9:30		Pitch Skills for your Business	How can I get the money?	
9:30 - 10:00	Start Being SMARTER...	SMART Work	SMART Work	
10:00 – 10:30				Open the Doors
10:30 – 11:00				Competition Opening
11:00 – 11:30				SMART Pitch – Pre-Competition
11:30 – 12:00				
12:00 – 12:30				
12:30 – 13:00				
13:00 – 13:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00				
14:00 – 14:30	SMART Xchange	Let´s Negotiate!	SMART Work	SMART Pitch – Pre-Competition
14:30 – 15:00	What about SMART Marketing?	SMART Wrap-up		
15:00 – 15:30	SMART Wrap-up	SMART Interactions		
15:30 – 16:00	SMART Work	Be SMART outside!		SMART Pitch – Pre-Competition
16:00 – 16:30			SMART Team	
16:30 – 17:00				Preparation
17:00 – 17:30				Final Openning
17:30 – 18:00				SMART Pitch – Final Competition
18:00 – 18:30	SMART Interactions		SMART Interactions	
18:30 – 19:00				SMART Debate
19:00 – 19:30				SMART Challenge
19:30 – 20:00				SMART Party

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Legend:

- Pitch sessions
- Online Game
- Keynote sessions
- Complementary activities
- Improvement of Business Idea/Plan
- Free Network
- Interactive session
- Outdoor activity
- Teamwork

The more specific description of individual activities is provided below:

PITCH SESSIONS – There were three pitch sessions:

I. The first pitch session (Start Being SMARTER…) was held in the first day, and at this first session the SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to present their business idea/plan to other SMART entrepreneurs, regional SMART trainers and also to some international experts. This activity was crucial to the development of the following activities: after this first session SMART entrepreneurs, regional SMART trainers and also some international experts had the real perception of the starting point of each business idea/plan.

II. The second pitch session (SMART Pitch – Pre-Competition) took place in the last day and at this session the SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to present their business idea/plan to a public audience, including international experts and potential investors. From this second session were selected 10 SMART entrepreneurs finalists.

III. The third and last pitch session (SMART Pitch – Final Competition) happened also in the last day of the event and at this session the 10 finalists presented their business to a jury panel made up by three potential investors. From this pitch session the jury selected the Winner Business Idea of the SMART Campus Training week.

KEYNOTE SESSIONS – There were four keynote sessions:

I. The first keynote session (What about SMART Marketing?) was developed in the first day of the training week by Mark Tuttle (international expert) and it was about how marketing can enhance and promote the businesses of the SMART entrepreneurs.

II. In the second keynote session (Pitch Skills for your Business), held by Catarina Azevedo (international expert) in the second day of the training week, SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding about the relevance of the development of pitch skills and also to realize which are its main characteristics.

III. Also in the second day of the training event, occur the third keynote session (Let´s Negotiate!) related to the importance of negotiation skills in the business relations with colleagues, potential investors, business partners and suppliers, held by Catarina Azevedo (international expert).

IV. The fourth and last keynote session (How can I get the money?) was dedicated to funding sources and the different possible ways that the SMART entrepreneurs can finance their businesses and it was developed by Romain Bouttier (international expert).

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SMART WRAP-UP
Throughout this activity, SMART entrepreneurs participated in interactive sessions with the International experts. The idea was that SMART entrepreneurs take this opportunity to discuss strategic questions and challenges with the experts, in order to improve their business idea/plan in a smart, creative and innovative way and to incorporate all the knowledge shared during the keynote sessions in their businesses. There were two SMART Wrap-up sessions, one after the first keynote session (What about SMART Marketing?) and another one after the third keynote session (Let´s Negotiate!). Keynote speakers were responsible for the development of these activities in which they profound the issues approached in the keynote sessions, working in small groups and based on the experience of the SMART entrepreneurs.

SMART Campus- lecture

SMART WORK
In this activity, SMART entrepreneurs managed the available time to participate in three sub activities: SMART Xchange, SMART Business Plan and SMART Interactions. SMART entrepreneurs should manage their time in order to, in alternated system, play the interactive game, work on their Business Plans and interact with experts, trainers and local actors (start-ups). In some cases, in this activity SMART entrepreneurs had the chance to participate in interactive sessions with international experts. This happened in two moments: the first moment was after the second keynote session (Pitch Skills for your Business) where the SMART entrepreneurs get feedback related to the first pitch session with suggestion and recommendation of improvement by Catarina Azevedo; and the second moment was after the fourth keynote session (How can I get the money?), in which the SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to work on SME instrument with the support and orientation of both international experts, Romain Bouttier and Eurico Neves.

SMART XCHANGE
This was an on-going activity, running throughout the 4 days of the training and supported by an online tool. The SMART Xchange provided a virtual stock exchange system, enabling growth of new and better business ideas. In order to achieve this goal, this game brought together entrepreneurs working on their business models and market investors eager to find ideas that can be successful in the real world. The SMART Xchange was introduced in the first day of the SMART Campus Training event and the SMART entrepreneurs had the opportunity to participate in this activity during the next three days of the week. At the end of the week the results of this activity allowed the selection of: the Most Valuable Business and the Most Valuable Investor. These results were presented during the SMART Challenge activity in the last day of the week. In the SMART Challenge activity it was also announced the Winner Business Idea of the SMART Campus Training week. In some moments, this activity was developed simultaneously with two other activities - SMART Business Plan and SMART Interactions –all together they were identified as SMART Work activity.

SMART BUSINESS PLAN
During this activity, SMART entrepreneurs focused on the improvement of their business idea/plan, incorporating the learning outcomes of previous activities. For the development of this activity the coaching and support of regional SMART trainers and of the International experts was crucial. The involvement of the SMART entrepreneurs in the SMART Xchange and all the dynamics incorporated in this tool (suggestions made by the SMART trainers, buy and sell proposals, the scores of the transactions) also contribute to the development and improvement of their business idea/plan. This activity occurred simultaneously with two other - SMART Xchange and SMART Interactions – and all together they are identified as SMART Work activity.

SMART INTERACTIONS
During this activity, SMART entrepreneurs interacted with experts, SMART trainers and other SMART entrepreneurs. This interaction was important for the development of the business idea/plan, to make business and also to practice some of the skills approached during the SMART Campus Training event.

SMART Campus interactions

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BE SMART OUTSIDE!
Outdoor activity promoting team building, through the exploration of team dynamics and collaboration. In this activity SMART entrepreneurs had also the opportunity to see the points of interest of Bratislava-host city. This activity involved competition between the SMART entrepreneurs and the final results had impact in the scores of the SMART Xchange.

SMART TEAM
It was a collaborative activity related to negotiation in order to demonstrate the importance of communication and negotiation skills in the team performance and project success. This activity was developed in the third day of the training week by Eurico Neves and it was directly linked to the third keynote session (Let´s Negotiate!) held by Catarina Azevedo in the second day. This was a collaborative activity, during which SMART entrepreneurs interact with one each in small group to solve specific problems/dilemmas and at the end, each group had also the opportunity to simulate a situation of negotiations with potential business partners.

The activities implemented in the last day of the SMART Campus Training event (23rd of May, of 2014) were integrated in the Entrepreneurship Festival organized and implemented by the local partner from Bratislava. In this Festival were included the following activities:

- Pitch session – Pre-Competition;
- Pitch session – Final Competition;
- SMART Challenge.

The festival was held in the representative premises of Bratislava city center, with public audience.

SMART Campus- Entrepreneurship Festival (last day)-premises

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Methods applied

For each one of the activities implemented during the SMART Campus Training and identified previously were applied specific methods as defined below:

- **Pitch** is a method characterized for being a short summary used to quickly and simply define the business idea/plan and its value proposition. It takes approximately between 30 seconds to 3 minutes. This method was implemented in the pitch sessions. This method was used in the three Pitch sessions.

SMART Campus- Entrepreneurship Festival (last day), pitching in front of audience

- **The keynote speech** method consists in a motivational speech with two distinctive objectives: a) set the overall tone and context of a certain event or moment; b) open the discussion or interaction between speakers and participants in the following wrap-up activities. This method was applied to the four keynote sessions.

- **Active methods** are defined as the methods which involve the participants in the development of the activities: participants learn by doing it. This method was widely implemented in the SMART Campus Training activities, such as in the: SMART Wrap-up (interactive sessions), SMART Business Plan (mentoring sessions), SMART Interactions (interactive sessions), Be SMART outside! (playful and outdoor activity) and SMART Team (working team and simulation).

- **The playful method** it was included in the development of the SMART Xchange and the Be SMART outside! activities. This method is defined by the use of games and funny activities in the development of knowledge, skills and competences by the trainees and it's based on the idea that people also learn by playing.

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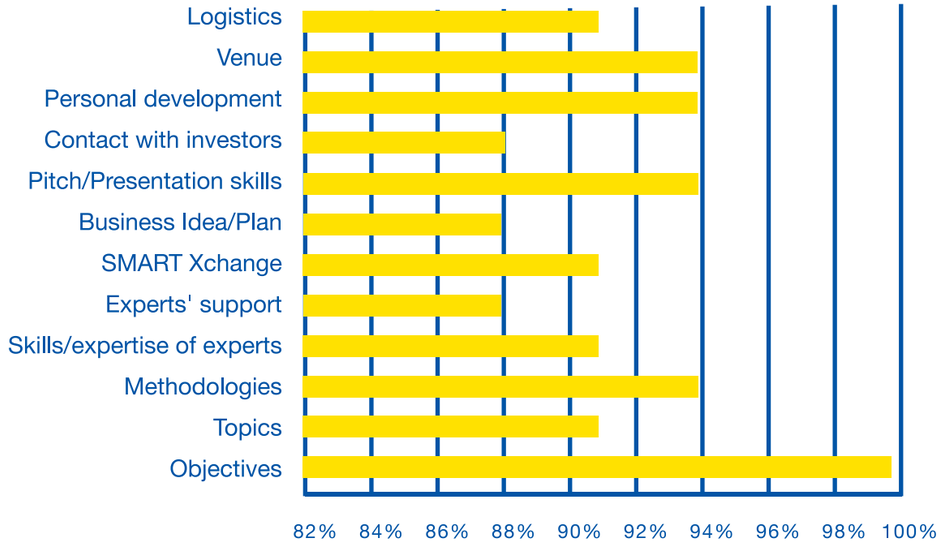
FEEDBACK

In overall, the Campus was evaluated positively. As presented in the Figure below, all the issues under evaluation in the questionnaire implemented were rated as positive by the SMART entrepreneurs that participated in the Campus.



The graphic shows that the issues rated as more positive by the participants in the training activities were clearly: *the contribution to their personal development and growth, the improvement of the pitch/presentation skills, the methodologies used in the training activities and the venue of the event.* On the other hand, the areas of the training that can be improved are related with: *the experts' support and the possibility of having a personalized mentoring; improve contacts with investors and therefore identify funding for the implementation and; contribution to the improvement of the idea/plan, revealing again the need of some personalized and one to one support.*

The **main suggestions** made by SMART entrepreneurs regarding the improvement of the quality of the SMART Campus Training were:

- Foster and improve the standardization of the selection criteria of the SMART ideas between SMART Points, guarantying more equity and homogeneity in this selection;
- Provide more individual mentoring, coaching and support between participants and international experts;
- Improve the time management skills of the coordination team;
- Adopt a more dynamic approach to the presentations of the international experts;
- Implement other strategies regarding the provision of individual feedback related to the first pitch session (video visualization, individual coaching and evaluation from peers);
- Provide more healthy food;
- Organize and implement more activities and joint moments to reinforce the interaction between SMART entrepreneurs from different regions;
- Deliver more activities to promote the interactions between SMART entrepreneurs and SMART trainers from different regions;
- Include more topics, international experts and investors in the SMART Campus Training activities;
- Provide more valuable awards (not only prizes).

Related to the **Entrepreneurship Festival** (the last day of the Campus), the SMART entrepreneurs also made some suggestions/recommendations of improvement:

- Invest more in advertising at local, national and regional levels and through different channels;
- Improve the logistical arrangements of the Festival, guarantying the ideal conditions to avoid noise during the pitches sessions;
- Improve time management skills of the coordination team;
- Provide more healthy and tasty food;
- Provide more valuable awards (not only prizes).

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I.E. SMART PROJECT OVERVIEW

i.e. SMART is an international initiative involving **12 partner organizations from 7 different regions** across the Central Europe - Vienna (AT), Stuttgart (DE), Venetto region (IT), Modena (IT), Budapest (HU), Bratislava (SK) and Prague (CZ). Partnering organizations represent mostly a mix of **educational organizations and political institutions.**

The main aim of the project is to implement a **transnational management structure that will deliver a new transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship** in three different economic sectors: **Creative Industries, Green Economy and ICT.** The role of the partners (educational and political institutions) is to develop and implement this management structure into everyday reality, supporting the **regional and transnational growth of SMEs.**

The creation of the management structure is to be achieved through so called **regional SMART points** (every region will establish at least one SMART point). These points (physical - offices) will provide motivation, trainings, counseling and other related support for emerging entrepreneurs.

The basic element of each of the SMART point is a **SMART Trainer - a person, who has knowledge and motivation to foster the entrepreneurial spirit in the target groups**, with special focus on combination of Creative Industries, Green Economy and ICT. The networking of the individual **SMART points into a transnational network** will provide strong support for the SMART Trainer. She or he can utilize the **knowledge, abilities and potential of other existing SMART points** and hence provide even better support for the entrepreneurs.

Another important activity related to the project is the implementation the so called **SMART Campus** (in 2014). The seven regional SMART points supported by their SMART Trainers will launch regional competitions for emerging entrepreneurs to evaluate the business plans they create. **The best 5 entrepreneurs per region will go to the SMART Campus -** a one week event organized by the project, to improve their business plans under the strong support of international experts and SMART Trainers.
The final phase of the project will ensure one of its main goals - to **institutionalize the project outputs and secure its sustainability.** As mentioned before, one of the main goals of the project is to set up a permanent structure supporting emerging entrepreneurs. The scope of the project is therefore far beyond its simple implementation.

Further information
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