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SMART Network Concept

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CENTRAL EUROPE
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

DANUBE REGION strategy
People & Skills

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PREFACE

PROJECT SUMMARY

TThe Innovation Union Competitiveness Report 2011 states: “European SMEs … do not grow sufficiently. The US has shown a much better capacity to create and grow new companies in research-intensive sectors over the last 35 years”.

Member State	Partner No.	Partner	Status	Work package (WP) Leader
AT	LP	European Office, Vienna Board of Education	Institutional	WP1: Project management and coordination
AT	PP2	University of Vienna, Research Group Knowledge Engineering	Expert	
IT	PP3	Region of Veneto, Directorate of Labour	Institutional	
IT	PP4	Modena Formazione	Expert	WP3: INITIATING PHASE: The regional SMART points and the transational SMART network
DE	PP5	City of Stuttgart	Institutional	WP6: INSTITUTIONALISING PHASE: The SMART plan
DE	PP6	Stuttgart Media University	Expert	
SK	PP7	Municipality of the Capital of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava	Institutional	WP2: Communication knowledge management and dissemination
SK	PP8	I-Europa, Ltd.	Expert	
HU	PP9	Budapest Enterprise Agency	Institutional	WP5: IMPLEMENTING PHASE: The transnational train the SMART Trainers and the SMART campus
HU	PP10	Budapest College of Communication and Business	Expert	
CZ	PP11	Metropolitan District Prague 14	Institutional	
CZ	PP12	Czech Technikcal University in Prague	Expert	WP4: DEVELOPING PHASE: The transnational SMART Training programmes

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Apart from this overall lack of SME growth in Europe, the project i.e. SMART has also identified specific issues/challenges in the involved partner regions such as a lack of interest in innovation and entrepreneurship, a low survival rate of business start-ups, high youth unemployment, demographic and socio-economic brain drain, and social issues involving equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In order to tackle these issues/challenges, which hold true for the whole programme area, i.e. SMART will develop a solution for the individual: “improve the framework for knowledge development as it relates to human capital in order to ensure economic competitiveness”. Develop a solution for the regions: “improve the climate for innovation in all regions”. Finally, develop a solution for the transnational programme area: “overcome thinking in terms of national/regional competitiveness in order to strive for a more competitive and innovative Central Europe as a whole.”

In specific terms, the project will develop and implement a trans-national management structure to link the involved regions so that they can provide their citizens with exciting sustainable labour market opportunities. This will be achieved through multi-disciplinary modules to spark innovation and entrepreneurship. In particular, this new approach will focus on three emerging economic sectors: Creative Industries, Green Economy, and ICT. International research has shown that these sectors will be sustainable

To achieve this, a **12 partners** membership from seven polycentric urban areas in six CE Member States will work closely together. In every CE Member State, there are two partners: one is a policy partner and the other is an expert partner. The 12 partners commit themselves to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, and the EU 2020 strategy, particularly SMART growth: “creating new products/services that generate growth and jobs and help address social challenges.”

The project foresees four methodological phases: Initiating, Developing, Implementing, Institutionalising, and builds on existing regional management structures (‘regional triangles’) consisting of key players from policy-making, economy/labour, and education/training. In WP3, the project will initiate and run at least seven regional centres for this new approach to innovation and entrepreneurship competence (SMART points). These centres will be interlinked in a transnational management structure (SMART network), which will offer transnational trainings, innovation and entrepreneurship research, and a ICMS state of the art knowledge development tool for innovation and entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries, Green Economy, and ICT.

WP4 and WP5 will develop, implement and pilot transnational concepts, and strategy and action plans for training regional staff (SMART trainers/facilitators) and emerging entrepreneurs in the identified economic sectors. In WP6, a strategy plan will be drawn up to permanently incorporate the project’s outputs in regional development plans and to institutionalise the i.e. SMART approach after project lifetime. What is the i.e. SMART approach? Many experts see the global economy in transition from the Information to the Conceptual Age. Traditionally, European education and training have focused on so-called ‘left brain skills’. To face the economic challenges confronting Europe as a whole and the I.e. SMART regions in particular in this global economic transition, a new multi-disciplinary, multi-economic sector approach to innovation and entrepreneurship is needed. I.e. SMART will provide this approach, and will develop viable, concrete solutions to tackle the identified issues/challenges.

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Four phases process-oriented implementation

WP3	WP4	WP5	WP6
INITIATING	DEVELOPING	IMPLEMENTING	INSTITUTIONALISING
Preparing for initiating, and implementing **regional SMART centres** of competence (SMART points) and esteblishing the **transnational SMART network**	Developing the transnational SMART **training programmes** including a **knowledge management tool** for SMART trainers and entrepreneurs with an emphas is on the "transformative business approach"	Implementing the transnational **SMART trainings** (Train the SMART Trainers and the SMART campus) to train entrepreneurs with an emphasis on the "transformative business approach"	**Compiling and implementing the SMART joint transnational strategy and action plan to institutionalise the i.e. SMART concept, approach, and outputs after project lifetime**

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INTRODUCTION

WP 3 - THE REGIONAL SMART POINTS AND TRANS-NATIONAL SMART NETWORK

WP3 is the initiating phase of the project, in which the basis will be established (i.e. **Regional SMART Points** and the Transnational SMART Network) so that i.e. SMART can produce the project outputs. WP3 will create regional centres of competence (SMART points) where entrepreneurs will be comprehensively trained, and individually mentored and counselled in all the skills necessary to develop new innovative business ideas in the emerging sustainable economic sectors of creative industries, green economy, and green ICT.

The regional implementation of the SMART points early in project lifetime (February 2013) will lead to the development of a joint management establishment - the Transnational SMART network (July 2013). The transnational network is a strategic cooperation between the PP regional SMART points. One of its main tasks will be to encourage and support the transnational transfer and synergy of excellent business ideas in the sustainable economic sectors.

ACTION 3.2 - DEVELOPING A JOINT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE TO MANAGE THE STRATEGIC TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PP SMART POINTS (SMART NETWORK)

Starting in month 9 the PP experts will develop a concept for a transnational joint management to establish cooperation between the regional SMART points – called the SMART Network, a virtual and physical strategic cooperation linking the regional SMART points which will be coordinated by WP3 Leader. The SMART Network main responsibilities are to organise and facilitate:

- transnational trainings;
- innovation / entrepreneurship research (i.e. research) in other PP regions for SMART point staff and emerging entrepreneurs (to provide knowledge development reports for the project);
- the transnational cooperation of emerging entrepreneurs with similar business ideas;
- to update the SMART site (ICMS).

In feedback loops involving regional stakeholder groups, the SMART Network concept will be validated and the action will lead to its initiation and implementation starting from June 2013.

The following chart summarises the precise Workplan set for the whole implementation of Action 3.2 activities and the achievement of the planned results. The SMART Network is a project core outputs becoming, right after its creation, an active player in *transformative business approach*[1] to innovation and entrepreneurship in Central Europe.

[1] "Transformative business approach" is a more scientific expression for the popularly used "right brain approach".

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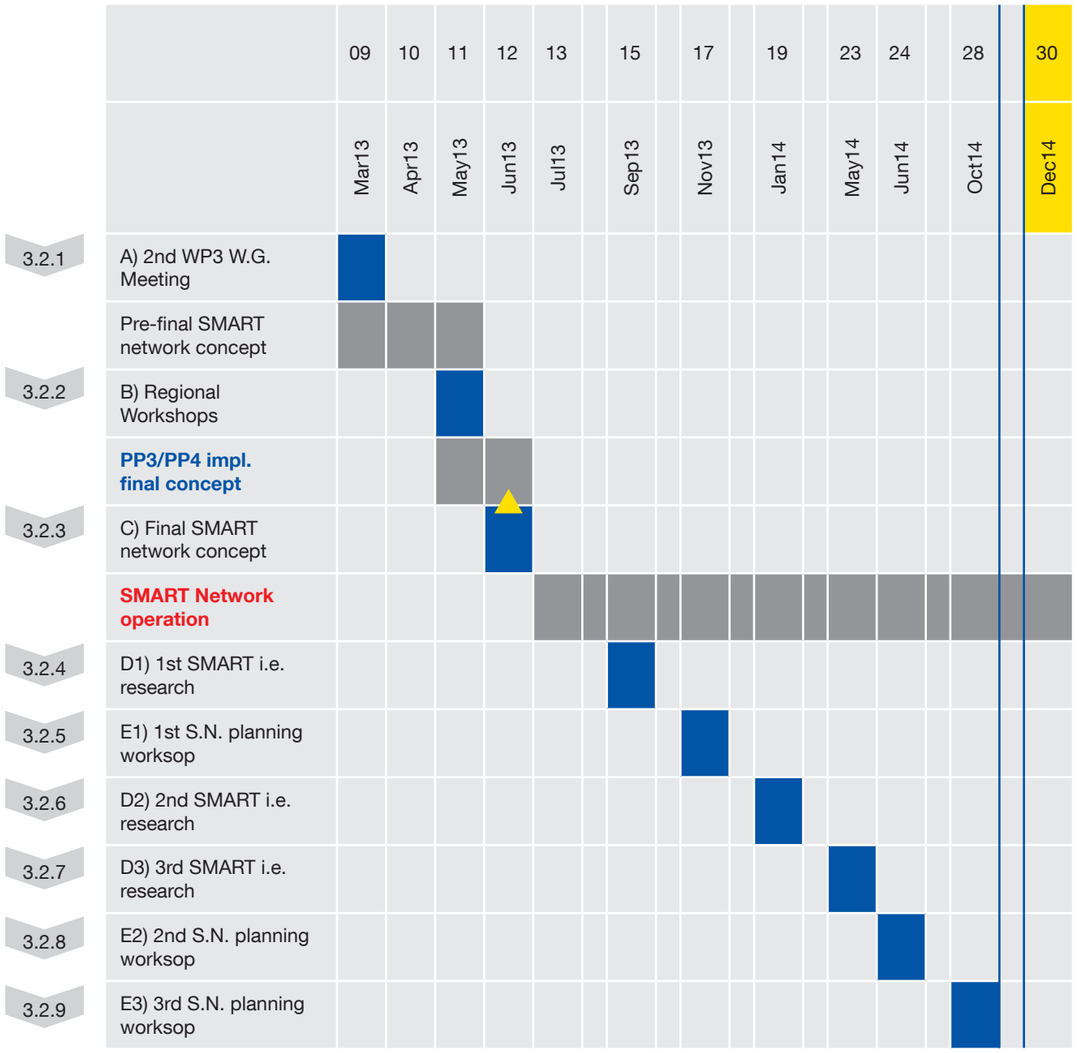
Action 3.2 - WorkPlan



A) WP3 Working group (partner experts from all PP) meet to discuss the concept for the Transnational SMART Network concept

B) ALL PP hold Regional Workshops with regional stakeholders/shareholders to validate pre-final Transnational SMART Network concept (at least 10 participants in each region) providing feedback to WP3 Leader and PP

C) WP3 Leader compiles feedback of Regional Workshops into final Transnational SMART Network concept - **the SMART Network is Launches**

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D1) LP & PP2 and PP3 & PP4 organise **research visits** for 1x SMART trainer & 1x emerging entrepreneur to another PP region (to provide knowledge development reports for the project – dissemination on SMART site)

E1) Back-to back SC3 Meeting WP3 Leader organises a **network-planning Workshop** involving at least one SMAT trainer per regional SMART point to analyse the progress and the outputs of the SMART network. A report is compiled for SMART site

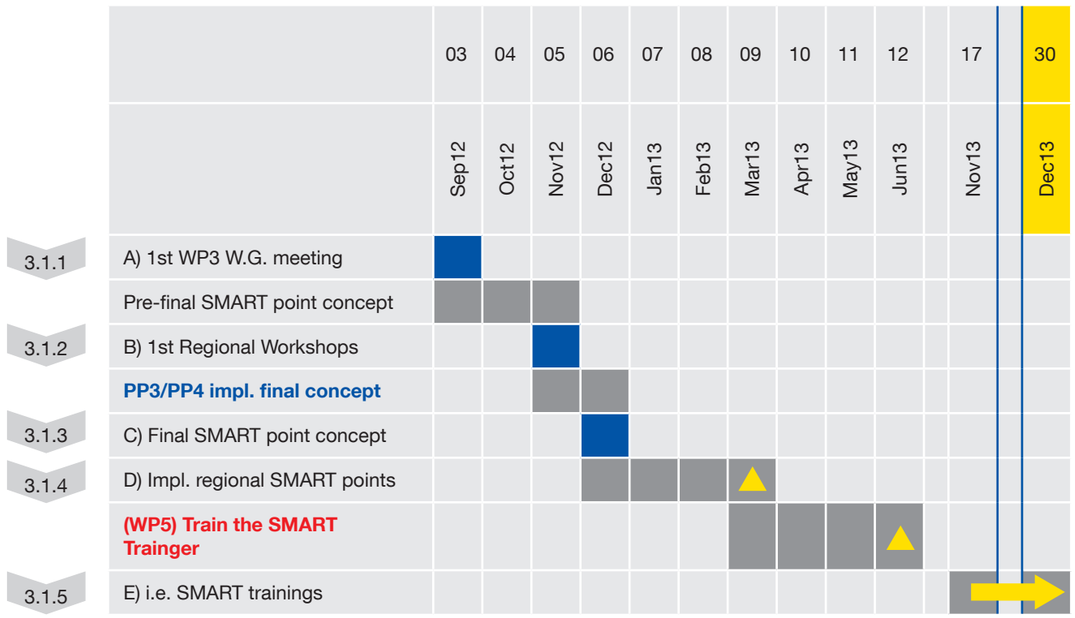
D2) PP5&PP6 and PP7&PP8 organise **research visits** for 1x SMART trainer & 1x emerging entrepreneur to another PP region (to provide knowledge development reports for the project – dissemination on SMART site)

D3) PP9&PP10 and PP11&PP13 organise **research visits** for 1x SMART trainer & 1x emerging entrepreneur to another PP region (to provide knowledge development reports for the project – dissemination on SMART site)

E2) Back-to back SC4 Meeting WP3 Leader organises a **network-planning Workshop** involving at least one SMAT trainer per regional SMART point to analyse the progress and the outputs of the SMART network. A report is compiled for SMART site

E3) Back-to back SC5 Meeting WP3 Leader organises a **network-planning Workshop** involving at least one SMAT trainer per regional SMART point to analyse the progress and the outputs of the SMART network. A report is compiled for SMART site

Action 3.1 - WorkPlan



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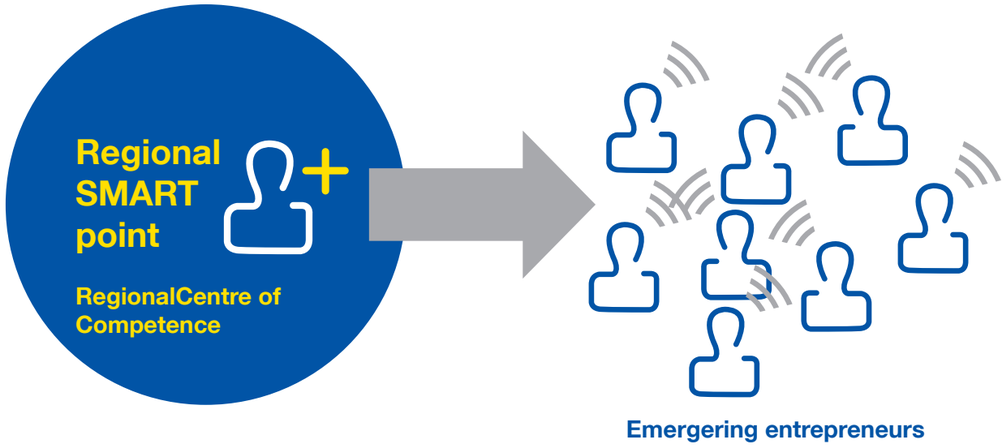
CAP 1 I.E. SMART "TOOLS"

1.1 - THE SMART POINTS CONCEPT

According to the project rationale and structure, the SMART points are truly centres where knowledge is created and translated into new products, services or processes. Throughout the project (but in particular in Work Package 5) the emphasis will be on "improving the framework conditions for the development of human capital". In this sense comprehensive transnational training for SMART trainers / facilitators and emerging entrepreneurs will be implemented, bringing together the two major components running throughout the project: a multi-disciplinary approach to innovation and entrepreneurship, and a multi-disciplinary approach to business idea development.[1]

During the first project months the partners have defined and shared a common SMART Point concept which can be summarised as follows: [2]



AUDIENCE
- Schools
- Universities
- Adult eduvation institutions
- General publis

ACTIVITIES
- Seminary
- workshops
- Consultancies
- Trainings

TOOLS
- SMART trainers/ favtilitators
- Pool of experts
- SMART site

[1] As from the Application Form, section 2.2 "Project methodology"

[2] See project Output 3.1.3: "The SMART Point Concept"

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- the common SMART points functions and "services" target group consists of e**merging entrepreneurs** in the age group between 15 and 30 years. Peculiar attention will be then addressed to Secondary Schools and Universities for attracting potential beneficiaries (acting in synergy with the same institutions), where anyway even civil society organisations and "third sector operators" will be involved in the "recruiting process" in order to catch-up potential beneficiaries also outside the "education world";
- the SMART point (one in each partner region) has to be a **"physical place"** including at least one **SMART trainer/facilitator**, the contact person, and a flexible number of collaborators at disposal for the implementation first of all of the project related activities (tutoring, consultancy and training). Collaborators will be both external and internal staff members of the partner institution thanks to the creation of a **"list of experts"** (data base / roster) to be used as necessary;
- all regional SMART points have to cover at least the first three competence areas of the i.e. SMART Vision, being **Idea generation** (acting as a laboratory for the facilitation of the genesis of innovative & transformative business entrepreneurial ideas), **Thinking about starting a business** (becoming a tool for the promotion, sensitization and stimulation of the entrepreneurial culture) and **Starting a Business** [from the Idea to the Business Plan] (each single SMART point has to guarantee the basic tools to facilitate and follow future entrepreneurs to the realisation of their Business Plan);
- the SMART Points common and shared tools are: a) **SMART trainer/facilitator** to be involved in the SMART point core activities as **facilitator / animator / sensitizer** to the "transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship in a merger of competences and thinking styles", b) **Pool of experts** for business creation and management (internal and/or external staff members), c) **SMART site (ICMS)** with relevant, state of the art training material, research and information about the transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship (particularly in the creative industries, green economy and green ICT) and d) I**CT operator** (with basic knowledge) for local management and the implementation of the SMART site.[1]

Starting from this common and basic background each region has then defined the proper customisation for its own SMART Point, according to the peculiarity of its target group and basic functions.[2]

1.2 - THE SMART SITE (ICMS) DEFINITION

According to the Application Form the **SMART site** (ICMS) aides the i.e. SMART project in managing content and enabling cooperation through a trans-national portal, thus facilitating collaboration opportunities both on an individual and on an institutional level.

The ICMS will be a reference tool to support knowledge development for all project actors but also for trainers, entrepreneurs, and experts in other regions. The site will contain all relevant state of the art training material, research and information about the transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship with a particular focus on the emerging sustainable economic sectors (Creative Industries, Green Economy and Green ICT). It will also serve as an on-line training tool and as a forum for the SMART trainers and the emerging entrepreneurs. In this way it will promote transnational synergy of excellent training methods and business ideas.

The SMART site is allocated to Action 4.3. in the i.e. SMART working plan. A working group will develop guidelines for the implementation of the SMART site, based on the concept of SMART Points and

[1] Each single SMART point has to use "autonomously" the SMART site and the contents stored / shared, managing also all the training / consultancy activities performed on-line (providing adequate support to the end users).

[2] See project Output 3.1.3

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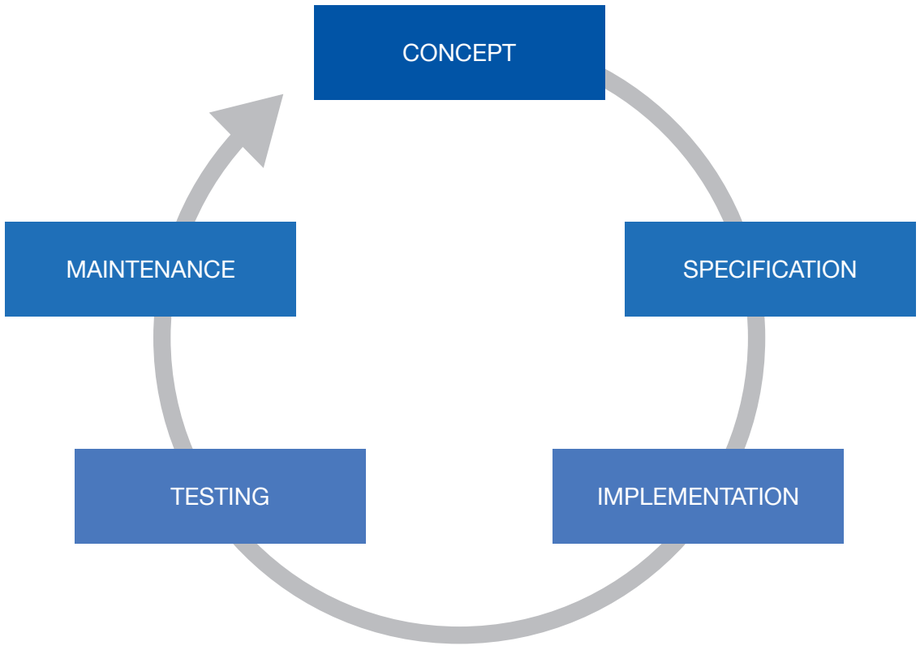
the SMART Training Programmes. The SMART site, a dedicated section of the project website, will be developed until project month 12 when it will become operational.

Targeted stakeholders of the SMART site are: (a) emerging entrepreneurs, (b) trainees, (c) trainers, (d) the project consortium, (e) associated institutions, (f) experts in the transformative business approach and or one of the sustainable business domains targeted by the project, as well as any other stakeholder group in the progress and development of i.e. SMART.

From month 12 on, the SMART site will be online fully contributing to the transformative business approach for innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe. WP2 and WP4 leaders, in cooperation with the SMART point and SMART network will update the site in months 12, 18, 24, 30.

The SMART site lifecycle is composed of five distinctive steps which can be replicated both during the original SMART site realisation and maintenance as well as after the finalisation of the project.



Interaction design is concerned with satisfying the needs and desired of the people who will act with the SMART site. The focus will be on the goals and expectations of the user groups in order to facilitate them with a simple, efficient and satisfying interaction experience. According to the Gestalt Theory, people perceive a thing not as an individual set of features and attributes but as a unified whole in a relationship with its surroundings. Thus the interaction design for the SMART site is concerned with behavioral aspects of users groups as well as how behavior relates to form and content.

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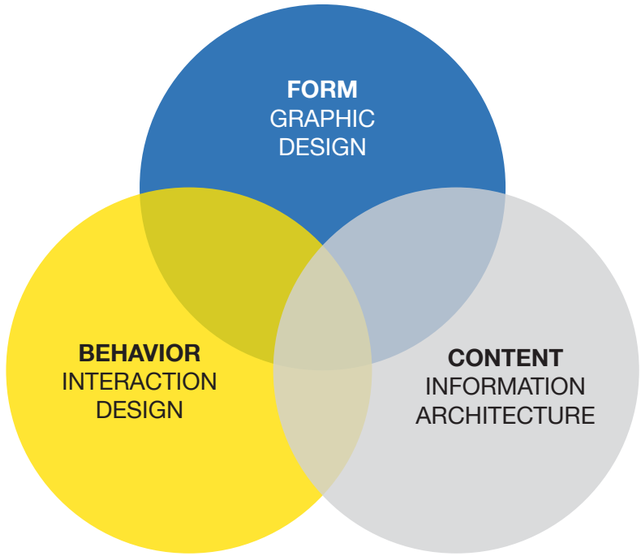

All the updated and detailed information over the SMART Site are contained in the “SMART site (ICMS) Concept - Output 4.1.3”.

1.3 – THE SMART PLAN

Work Package 6 is the institutionalising phase of the project and concentrates on the sustainability and added value of the SMART i.e. concept and approach after project lifetime. Based on the outcomes and experiences gained, PP experts in consultation with international experts, investors, and EC representatives, as well as their regional stakeholder/shareholder groups will compile a strategy and action plan – called the SMART plan. The plan will incorporate the work done in WP4, the piloting in WP5 and the resulting strategy and action plans for Train the SMART Trainers and the SMART campus training programmes. The SMART plan will be validated in feedback loops and will be used for concrete negotiations with regional/national authorities.

The main aim of the SMART Plan is to institutionalise the regional SMART points and the transnational SMART network (including the SMART site, Train the SMART Trainers, and the SMART campus) in regional/national development plans. At the same time the SMART plan will also be a knowledge reference document for other Central European regions.

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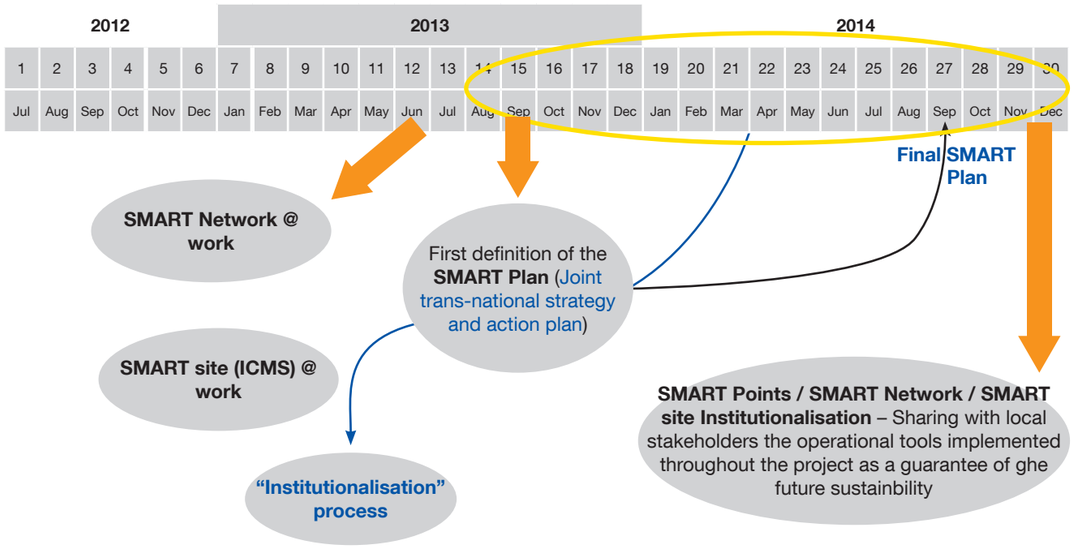
THE I.E. SMART INSTITUTIONALIZATION



The chart clearly shows the roadmap to the definition and validation of the SMART Plan (a project core output) being also considered as a summary and documentation of the experiences and outputs gained during project lifetime. It will contain clear strategies to ensure the incorporation of the SMART i.e. outputs, particularly the SMART points and the SMART network (with the SMART site, the Train the SMART Trainers, and the SMART campus) into regional / national development plans. The SMART plan will be the basis for negotiations with regional and national authorities. It will be a valuable knowledge management document for other European regions and the Innovation Union.

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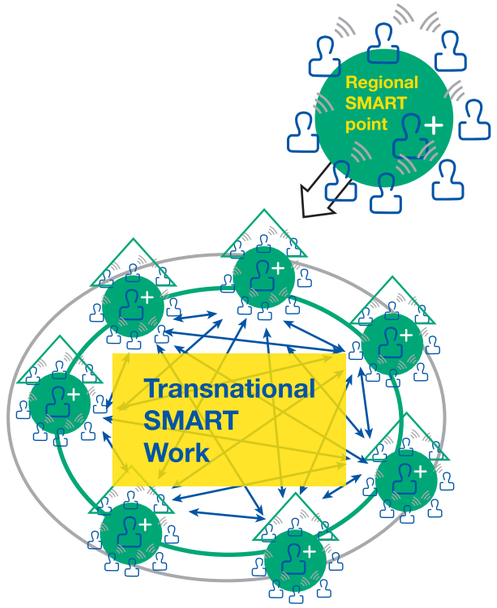
CAP 2 SMART NETWORK CONCEPT

2.1 – THE SMART NETWORK BASIC CONCEPT[1]

"Based on the establishment of the SMART points, a transnational management structure called the **SMART Network** will be formed. The emphasis of the network is on 'implementation', where the innovative characteristics of the regional SMART points will be transferred to a transnational level where regional knowledge is created and translated into new products. The SMART points and the SMART Network implementation are core outputs."[2]

In this sense the SMART Network has to be seen as a **transnational joint management** to establish cooperation between the regional SMART points of the project regions (Bratislava, Budapest, Modena, Prague, Stuttgart, Venice, and Vienna) having the following basic functions:

- to encourage and support the transnational transfer and synergy of excellent business ideas in the creative industries, green economy, and green ICT;
- to organise transnational trainings and innovation / entrepreneurship research (i.e. research) in other PP regions for SMART point staff and emerging entrepreneurs who will produce knowledge development reports for the benefit of all regions;
- to supply the transnational knowledge management tool SMART site (ICMS) with state of the art information;
- to provide networking opportunities for SMART trainers, regional experts, consultants and mentors aiming at support and bring entrepreneurs from transnational arena together.



More in details a i.e. SMART research consist of a research visit for at least 1 SMART trainer and 1 emerging entrepreneur to another partner regions to effectively start working on possible & feasible joint operations; this will also lead to the implementation of a knowledge development report enabling the definition of a practical handbook / guidelines right at the end of the project (to be also used for dissemination purposes on the SMART site).

In addition starting from Steering Committee Meeting 3 (Prague – November 2013) WP3 Leader organises **Network Planning Workshops** involving each regional SMART Point responsible and at least one SMART trainer per region with the main purpose of analysing the progress and the outputs of the SMART network itself. Based also on the reports compiled for the workshops the very final version of the SMART Network concept will be released right at the end of the project (the report itself will be add on the SMART site).

[1] As from the Application Form.

[2] As from the Application Form, section 2.2 "Project methodology".

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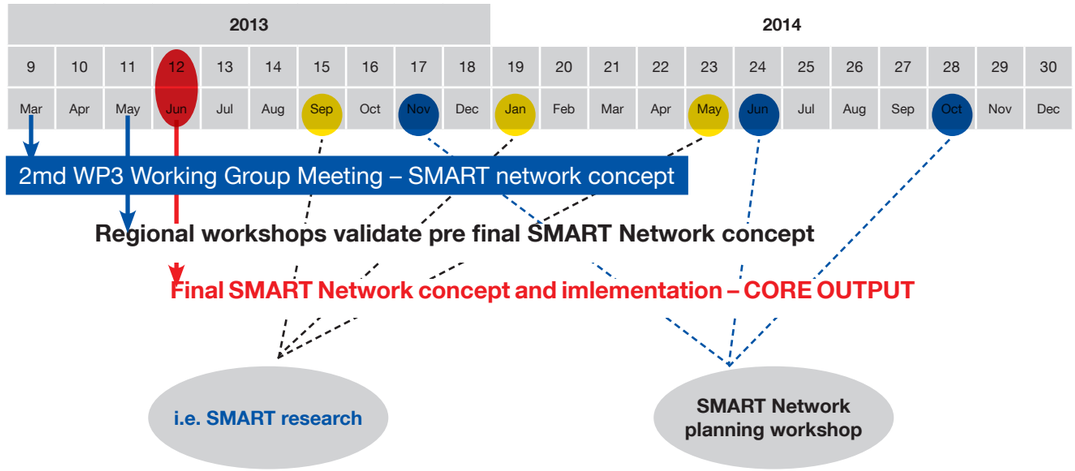
2.2 – THE SMART NETWORK ADDITIONAL OPERATION AND FUNCTIONS

The following chart clearly explains the roadmap for setting up the SMART Network (starting to be operative at the beginning of Summer 2013) and the detailed timetable for the implementation of the basic functions already described.



In addition to the basic functions as defined already in the Application Form, during the 2nd WP3 Working Group Meeting held in Modena on the 23rd April 2012 with the purpose of jointly discuss the first draft of the SMART Network concept the partners have agreed on the following additional operation and functions (referred also to the supervision / support to each single SMART Point):

- each single SMART Point has to define the contact / responsible person assuring the continuous connection to the Network;
- 7 mailboxes with the suffix **@ie-smart.eu** (one for each region) will be activated to provide each SMART Point with a formal and direct contact;
- all the SMART Points should also start using the i.e. SMART social media tools (Facebook page and twitter page) to attract emerging entrepreneurs;
- all the SMART Points should start using multimedia social networking tools (such as Skype, Google hang-out, etc.) for a more effective connection with the network;
- the SMART site is going to serve as a "virtual SMART point" which will be a common online environment and a basic tool for the network. It will support the interaction with and between trainers and peers via the online portal.

In this sense the SMART Network will represent the proper "environment" effectively enabling each single SMART Point to be also conceived as a real laboratory for the facilitation of the genesis of (innovative) ideas: thanks to the web and its potentialities and exploiting the Network, each SMART Point will be used as "a real gate to fly all over the world to also catch-up ideas and experiences". Each SMART Point will be then an "open door" location where young generations (and possibly future entrepreneurs among them) have the possibility to take profit of virtual / real experiences supported by the SMART Point staff.

At the same time the SMART Network will represent a concrete opportunity for letting business ideas (already from their very start-up phase) and business projects (also coming from already mature and consolidated businesses) be shared among the 7 partners region finding out possible synergies and concrete joint operations.

2.3 – THE SMART NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY

"The project aims at sustainability (WP6), meaning after project lifetime when the i.e. SMART concept has been incorporated into regional / national development plans, the PP regions will continue to run the SMART network from regional / national funding."[1]

As clearly stated in the Application Form "based on the pre-final version of the SMART plan, PPs will enter into formal negotiations with local shareholders, which will lead to 7 permanent regional SMART centres and the transnational SMART network (with the SMART site, Train the SMART Trainers and the SMART campus) being institutionalised or at least incorporated into regional / national development strategies".

During the project implementation the SMART Network **Management structure** will be very light and easy where the Management Board will be represented by the project Steering Committee and each SMART Point responsible will form the Operational Board. All the project related tools and resources will be then displayed to support each single SMART Point action and the whole Network operation. The Management Board will meet starting from Steering Committee Meeting 3 (Prague – November 2013) together with the Operational Board in the framework of the **Network Planning Workshops** [2] up until Steering Committee 5.

Based also on the reports compiled after every N.P.W. the PPs will prepare and release the very final version of the SMART Network concept stressing the plan for its sustainability (together with Work Package 6) and providing the new Management structure according to the "post-project" phase.[3]

In any case each single partner will be the free to adopt a tailor-made local strategy to ensure a more "visible" and strong future sustainability of its SMART Point deciding, for instance, for the inclusion on local incubators, municipal offices, universities, NGOs and so on.

[1] As from the Application Form.

[2] As already defined the N.P.W. will involve each regional SMART Point responsible and at least one SMART trainer per region having as main purpose to analysing the progress and the outputs of the SMART network itself.

[3] Especially on this perspective the involvement of the relevant local / regional shareholders in the same definition of the Network future structure and functions is of the outmost importance since the very first stages of the Network itself.

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