



REGIONAL PEER REVIEWS

Methodology and guidelines

Developed by the Assembly of European Regions and Észak-Alföld Regional Development agency for
SMART EUROPE

Introduction

The following document presents the guidelines developed by the Assembly of European Regions in cooperation with Észak-Alföld (HU), and used by the partners of the SMART EUROPE INTERREG IVC project for the organization, implementation and follow up of the Peer Reviews, one of the core activities of the project.

The document is divided into three sections:

Part 1: The Timeline and organization of SMART EUROPE Peer Reviews

Part 2: The Regional Peer Review methodological guidelines:

- With instructions and recommendations for '*Peers*' or attending regions
- With instructions and recommendations for '*Hosts*' or organizing regions

Part 3: The Smart Europe Peer Review Annexes, including the different templates used by the partners.

Through the presentation of these tools, partners hope that the experiences and lessons learnt can be applied to other similar projects or activities.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	2
Table of contents.....	3
1. Timeline and organization of SMART EUROPE Peer Reviews	4
2. Peer Review methodological guide.....	5
2.1 Methodology for Peers.....	5
2.1.1 Introduction.....	5
2.1.2 Preparing for the Peer Review.....	5
2.1.3 Implementing the Peer Review	7
2.1.4 Following-up the Peer Review	10
2.2 Methodology for Hosts.....	12
2.2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2.2 Preparing for the Peer Review.....	12
2.2.3 Implementing the Peer Review	16
2.2.4 Following-up the Peer Review	17
3. Smart Europe Peer Review Annexes	19
Annex 1: Preliminary Questionnaire for Host Regions.....	20
Annex 2: Checklist for Peers	28
Annex 3: Profile of Experts within the Peer Team.....	32
Annex 4A: Feedback form for Host Regions	34
Annex 4B: Feedback form for Peers	36
Annex 5A: Peer Review Summary information	38
Annex 5B: In-Depth Assessment Report	40
Annex 5C: SWOT Analysis on innovation based job creation.....	43
Annex 6: Example division of tasks.....	44
Annex 8: Action and Implementation plans	46

1. Timeline and organization of SMART EUROPE Peer Reviews

The SMART EUROPE project organised a total of 11 Peer Reviews. Partners were organised into 3 groups consisting of 3 or 4 partner regions and institutions (ex. AER) that nominated experts as Peers. These Peers attended the Peer Reviews in the quality of international experts, and gave recommendations on how to improve policies at the local and regional level on how to create jobs in innovation-based sectors.

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
Province of Flevoland Veneto Region + Veneto Innovazione Almi Företagspartner Mitt AB Maramures County Council	Avila County Council Észak-Alföld RDA Manchester Metropolitan University Sor – Trondelag County Authority	Province of Bologna Patras Science Park S.A. The Baltic Institute of Finland

The timeline of the Peer Reviews, as well as their participants and focus are detailed below:

#	Host Region	Date	Peer Regions	Extra Peers	Focus
1st round					
1	Flevoland	1-5 Oct. 2012	Maramures Almi Veneto	AER Manchester	Development of clusters
2	Észak-Alföld	15-19 Oct. 2012	Avila Manchester Sor-Trondelag	Tampere	How regional triple-helix actors' cooperation could boost regional economy and support the innovative way of job-creation
3	Bologna	5-9 Nov. 2012	Patras Tampere	Veneto	New Innovative and Creative SMEs
2nd round					
4	Sor-Trondelag	11-15 Feb. 2013	Avila Észak-Alföld Manchester	Tampere	Strengthen R&D based development of competence, value creation and innovation.
5	Veneto	25 Feb. - 1 March 2013	Almi Maramures Flevoland	AER Patras	Creation of New Innovative Companies
3rd round					
6	Almi	27-31 May 2013	Flevoland Maramures Veneto	AER Avila Bologna	Stimulating effectiveness-led innovation based growth
7	Manchester	10-14 June 2013	Avila Észak-Alföld Sor-Trondelag	AER Bologna Patras	The value and effectiveness of formal and informal networks and partnership arrangements to stimulate growth via existing networks and also facilitate better access to finance for SMEs.
8	Tampere	13-17 May 2013	Bologna Patras	Almi Sor-Trondelag	Structural change of the ICT sector
4th round					
9	Maramures	9-13 Sept. 2013	Veneto Almi Flevoland	Észak-Alföld	Evaluation of innovation potential and opportunities for job creation in innovative fields (industrial and technological parks, etc).
10	Patras	30 Sept. - 4 Oct. 2013	Bologna Tampere	AER Flevoland	Establishing financial support for the creation and growth of Greek New Technology Firms (GNTBF's) in the Region of Western Greece.
11	Avila	7-11 Oct. 2013	Észak-Alföld Manchester Sor-Trondelag	Maramures	Tourism from a three-based strategy according with the resources: cultural, natural and gastronomy

2. Peer Review methodological guide

2.1 Methodology for Peers

2.1.1 Introduction

The following chapter indicates the instructions and recommendations for the international experts participating in the Peer Reviews, hereby referred to as *Peers*.

Each Peer Review Team using the SMART EUROPE Peer Review methodology should consist of at least 8-12 experts, from at least from at least three different European regions.

The experts acting as Peers could be:

- Senior innovation officers
- Representatives of private companies/research institutes, universities
- Regional politicians with a remit for the relevant innovation anchor of the Host Region
- Senior representatives of regional development agencies etc.

See further details in **Annex 3** (“Profile of Experts within the Peer Team”).

The Peer partner should send the CVs’ of the experts to the team Coordinator, who send everything in one go to the Host Region at least 1 month prior to the Peer Review.

The Review Team¹ should:

- Analyse the materials provided by the Host Region;
- Undertake a series of interviews with regional stakeholders in the Host Region;
- Use the checklist, together with their own knowledge and experience, in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Host Region’s policy regarding its innovation anchor;
- Produce a report and series of recommendations on how to improve the region’s policies and practice towards its regional innovation anchor – in order to boost job creation in the Host Region;
- Have necessary skills: good level of English knowledge, expertise in innovation based job creation.

2.1.2 Preparing for the Peer Review

The Peer Review is a short visit where Peers, after one week, provide input on recommendation to the Hosts. Preparation is key, in order to fully exploit results. The following steps should be taken by all Peers:

STEP 1 – Review of preliminary information provided by the Host Region

At least **6 weeks prior to the review** the Host Region should provide the Review Team with the following materials:

- Preliminary Questionnaire (**Annex 1**) filled in as completely as possible

¹ The Review Team was composed of 8-12 international experts (Peers). These experts (Peers) are coming from the Partner Group Member Regions of the host region. It was also possible to have additional experts (Peers) from other SMART EUROPE partner regions.

- General information about the economic profile of the region including any available statistics (related to selected key indicators)
- Explanations to additional questions on its regional innovation anchor and employment policy
- Background documents as strategic plans, an organisation chart of the regional authority, details of regional competences and structures etc.

A good preparation of experts taking part in the review is essential to ensure an effective and fruitful Peer Review. This is valid for both experienced reviewers and newcomers. Partners sending an external expert to a Peer Review are responsible for briefing him/her comprehensively. This includes explaining the objectives of the SMART EUROPE project, the role of the different partners and the aims and tools of the Peer Reviews.

Each member of the Review Team, be they partners or external experts should read the completed questionnaire supplied by the Host Region, and should familiarise themselves with the background documents provided by the Host Region. The team identifies any areas for further investigation, including both good practices and areas for possible improvement.

Furthermore, each team member should familiarise himself/herself with the competence fields to be investigated during the Peer Review and make an initial assessment – based on the documentation and questionnaire - of how the Host Region compares to the Checklist. He/she should review this assessment in the light of the interviews carried out during the Peer Review.

The competence fields in SMART EUROPE are as follows:

- Strategy
- Education and Human Resources
- Innovative Environment
- Partnership
- Sustainability of the jobs created by the innovative sectors

See further details in **Annex 2** (“Checklist for peers”).

It is highly recommended to divide the competences among the Peers in a way that each Peer is responsible for 1 of the fields in details and provides inputs to the others.

See examples of how the Peers have divided the work throughout the SMART EUROPE Peer Reviews in **Annex 6 (Example division of tasks)**

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- Peers should be aware of the level of commitment required to take part in the Peer Review visit: Regions should ensure experts are fully briefed on the expectations of taking part in the project.
- Peers should prepare extensively: reading the materials, familiarizing themselves with the region’s profile and key stakeholders, will allow them to better assess the issues at hand on the spot.
- The Peer Coordinator has a key role in the process, from the preparation phase he/she should be in touch with the Peers, send materials, check all Peers are ready for the review, as well as if possible organize phone calls and distribute some tasks by identifying each Peers thematic areas of expertise.

STEP 2 – Setting up the agenda and detailed timetable

At least **one month prior to the review** the Host Region should provide the Peers with a detailed timetable of the rundown of the one-week visit. In these terms, the Review Team has the following 2 obligations:

- Suggestions for meetings – the team should collate any suggestions for meetings and present them to the Host Region for inclusion in the review schedule considering the followings:
 - What additional information do you need in order to carry out the Peer Review?
 - What type of organisation could provide this information?
 - What level (management, case worker, etc.) would be the most appropriate to interview?
- Finalisation of the review schedule – the team should finalise the review schedule together with the Host Region.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *The peer review allows you to speak to all kinds of stakeholders: from the regional administration, to the owner of a small start-up, or a university student looking to become an entrepreneur. Think outside the box and ask the Host Region to set up informal meetings allowing you to get a feel of the region's full picture!*
- *Peers need time to reflect on the daily findings: allow enough time in the programme for them to take in and discuss what they saw. At least a one hour meeting is needed for this at the end of each day, make sure the Host Region is setting enough time for this.*
- *Try and plan the meetings ahead: think of useful questions to ask each stakeholder in the programme. Interviews are short, so make sure you get the most out of each one!*

2.1.3 Implementing the Peer Review

STEP 3 – Attending the Peer Review: asking questions; analysing findings

It is recommended that the Review Team, lead by the Peer Review Coordinator, divides the competences among the Peers in a way that each Peer is responsible for 1 of the fields in details and provides inputs to the others. According to the number of Peers, teams can be made.

During their interviews, the Peers should consider these competence fields as factors for assessment. To facilitate their understanding, a Checklist has been elaborated. It is advisable to take this document (available in **annex 2**) to the interviews since they simplify the questioning procedure.

Furthermore, the following remarks might assist the Review Team in structuring their interviews with stakeholders in the Host Region:

Before the Interview

- Be clear about the purpose of the Peer Review: the Host Region expects you to shed light on issues it should address in order to improve its regional policy on a specific question, the aim of any interview is to provide you with information you as a team will need to prepare the SWOT analysis and first recommendations.
- Be clear about the purpose of the interview. If you know what you are trying to find out, you will know which questions to ask!
- Write down the questions you will need to ask in order to obtain the information that you need!

Interview Style

- Your interview style will determine the quality of information you receive!
- Remember that you are (possibly) working through an interpreter, so everything will take twice the normal amount of time, unless simultaneous interpretation is provided by the Host Region. Always speak directly to and maintain eye contact with the interviewee, not the interpreter.
- Think about the types of questions you will ask
 - Closed questions – these require “yes/no” answers and do not allow the interviewee to express him/herself; this can limit the information you get
 - Open questions – these tend to begin with “how, why, what” etc., and allow the most scope for the interviewee to reply
 - Leading questions – questions should be as neutral/objective as possible (not “would you say that you haven’t really provided any services for businesses?”, but “what services has your region provided for businesses?”)
- Think about how to get the interviewee to back up their responses with concrete facts or examples, to ensure the accuracy of the information (e.g. documentation or figures).
- Decide which member of the team will lead the interview; remember that all team members should contribute (you may want to take it in turns to lead over the week).
- The person leading the interview should:
 - introduce all members of team (name, region, position)
 - explain the purpose of interview
 - explain that you are not a judge or an auditor, you are a “critical friend” or mentor
 - specify how long the interview will take
 - thank the interviewee for their time and willingness to participate
 - emphasise the confidentiality of process
 - explain that you will take notes during the meeting
- Start the interview gently, asking the interviewees to introduce themselves and to tell you about their organisation and their position.
- Then structure the rest of your questions logically, grouping together questions on the same topic.
- Decide who will be responsible for recording the answers and how much detail you need (again you may like to take it in turns, or alternatively everyone can take notes).
- Think about your posture, eye contact, your tone of voice. All of these should confirm to the interviewee that you are listening and interested in what they are saying.
- Have a catch-all question for the last question, e.g. “is there anything else you would like to add?”
- The person leading the interview should close the interview by thanking the interviewee and telling them how you will use their information and the timescale for the final report.

Do's

- Ask one question at a time!
- Be an open and sensitive listener – the interviewee should not feel like they are undergoing a test!
- Probe generalisations – ask for concrete examples.
- Allow the interviewee to complete their story.

- Invite evaluation (“why do you think that happened?”).
- Decide which questions are high priorities if time runs short.
- Stay focused on the general and specific questions the Host Region asked you to address.
- Be flexible!

Don'ts

- Interrupt unless absolutely necessary.
- Ask complicated or long questions.
- Dominate the interview – you are there to gather information and so are your colleagues.

During the Peer Review, Peers are expected to produce a certain number of outputs:

1/ A SWOT analysis of the region regarding the creation of innovation based jobs with the preliminary findings of the Peer Review

2/ A series of recommendations in the 5 thematic areas that have been defined in the checklist:

- Strategy
- Education and Human Resources
- Innovative Environment
- Partnership
- Sustainability of the jobs created by the innovative sectors

3/ The description of relevant good practices from their region or regions they collaborate with that can provide partners with inspiration for their own regional innovation and employment strategy

These outputs should be prepared during the daily Peer Review team work sessions and be finalised during the last meeting on day 4. Main findings should be presented by the whole team to the Host Region on day 5 during the final workshop.

The Peer Coordinator should take the lead on the organisation of the work sessions, in order to ensure the findings reflect the opinion of the Peer Review team as a whole. The participation and smooth collaboration of all Peers is indeed central for the success of the Peer Review. The Peer Coordinator should be assisted on this by Component 3 leader (Észak-Alföld) and AER. All Peers are expected to support the Peer Coordinator both in the coordination on the spot and in the joint elaboration of the report.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- During interviews, never forget that a Peer Review is supposed to be a friendly audit and should take place in an atmosphere of mutual learning, understanding and trust between interviewees and interviewers but also between Peers.

- The Peer Coordinator should insist on discussing the daily findings every day. At the end of the week, this will make the final presentation more efficient and comprehensive, as well as easier to compile!

- Use the peer review week to do as much of the report as possible: All information is fresh in your mind, you have the impetus of the findings. Once you're back at home, this is more difficult!

- Remember that drafting a report is a lengthy process, so don't leave it for the last minute.

STEP 4 – Delivering preliminary results

On the 5th day, during the workshop the preliminary findings should be introduced to the reviewed region's stakeholders, decision makers, representatives of relevant organisations and politicians as well as to the press in the format of a SWOT analysis. The first recommendations should also be presented as well as the good practices analysed and suggested. The presentation of the outputs during the workshop is also a mutual learning event as regional stakeholders are provided with a first presentation on the review findings and Peers can discuss and get feedback about these findings from the regional stakeholders.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *This is a key moment in the peer review, make sure you ask any remaining questions to the hosts, that will help clarify any potential issues within the report.*
- *Make the most of this occasion to engage in a debate with the Host Region's key stakeholders on your findings!*

2.1.4 Following-up the Peer Review

STEP 5 – Feedback

After the Peer Review, the Peer Regions should fill in a Feedback form providing information on the following main points of interest:

- gained experiences,
- lessons learnt,
- highlights,
- missed links,
- steps for further activities etc.

The Feedback form can be found in **Annex 4B**.

STEP 6 – Elaboration of the Final report

After the Peer Review, the Peer Review team produces an in-depth assessment report (including the Review Details, a SWOT, and the Report Checklist as well, all available in **Annex 5**) within one month of the visit a report for the Host Region. Each Peer is responsible for the timely elaboration of the report according to the division of tasks and competences agreed on during the Peer Review.

One partner/region is selected to each round of Peer Reviews within the group to coordinate the elaboration of the Final report – this should preferably be the Peer Coordinator. The members of the team may choose to take responsibility for preparing the different sections of the report, as they will be working at a distance. The Coordinator of the review will be responsible for arranging the process, and collecting the different parts of the report. The team as a whole should however reach consensus on the contents of the Final report.

Partners, who send an external expert to a Peer Review have to comprehensively brief their experts about the work that is expected from them after the Peer Review and are responsible for the outputs produced by their experts in terms of content, quality and timely delivery.

The report should focus upon identifying the regional authority's existing strengths and upon pinpointing any specific areas of concern, as well as making recommendations about prioritising and planning improvements. It is very useful to illustrate suggestions and recommendations with good practices from other regions.

The Peer Review Coordinator should send the draft report to the Host Region and the Component 3 Leader (Észak-Alföld) within one month of the review. The Host Region will have a period of two weeks to review the report for any factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings. The Host Region should send any comments back to the Component 3 Leader (Észak-Alföld) and the team leader/Coordinator by the end of this two week period. The Review Team then has an additional two weeks to incorporate the Host Region's suggestions into the report and produce the final draft. The team leader/Coordinator should send the final draft to the Host Region and to Component 3 Leader (Észak-Alföld) **within two months** of the review.

Partners are responsible for the overall quality of the report and should therefore not only provide valuable findings and recommendations but also ensure the contributions are well written.

The report should be produced in English, the Host Region might translate it into the local language of the region being reviewed, if needed.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *Draft up the contribution to the report as soon as possible! The longer you wait the harder it will be, as you will have lost the impetus of the peer review week.*
- *Keep it simple: provide simple recommendations based on your observations, as well as any examples of good practices you believe are relevant to the region.*
- *It is essential that the Peer Coordinator does not lose touch with Peers.*

2.2 Methodology for Hosts

2.2.1 Introduction

The following chapter indicates the instructions and recommendations for the region organizing the Peer Review, hereby referred to as *the Host Region*.

The Host Region must be prepared to undertake the following actions:

- Provide Review Teams² with written information in English about their region and complete a detailed questionnaire
- Organise a one-week Peer Review, including setting up meetings, arranging for interpretation and organising logistics
- Discuss the recommendations of the review team in its highest political forum
- Prepare and implement an action plan for the realisation of the recommendations of the review team
- Prepare an implementation plan that sets out a longer-term strategy and explains how the recommendations will be included in the future regional policies

The Host Region must therefore have top level political support for its participation in the project.

The Host Region should be open to the introduction of new approaches and should be willing to embrace recommendations on the improvement of its policies regarding its innovation anchor (ex. innovation policy, employment policy etc.).

2.2.2 Preparing for the Peer Review

STEP 1 – Provision of preliminary information

Deadline: At least **6 weeks prior to the review**

The first tasks of the Host Regions relate to the provision of all necessary information that the review team might need in advance to prepare for the interviews in a proper way.

This information should be based on a Questionnaire (Annex 1). The questionnaire should be filled in as thoroughly as possible and will give valuable information on the following main topics:

- General economic profile of the region
- Competencies of the region
- Support schemes to innovation-based job creation
- Regional focus of the Peer Review

Even if the questionnaire provides an overall picture of the region in terms of innovation and employment issues, further additional information might be needed.

² The Review Team is composed of 8-12 international experts (peers). These experts (peers) are coming from the Partner Group Member Regions of the host region. It is also possible to have additional experts (peers) from other SMART EUROPE partner regions.

This is why the Host Region should also provide the review team with additional data if possible and if necessary. Wherever possible, data should be provided for a period up to 5 years, in order to allow the review team to identify any relevant trends.

It is definitely of high interest for the Peers to receive a list of useful links and internet connections.

Moreover, the Host Regions should consider that the Peers must assess the potential regional innovation anchors in terms of specific conditions and competences. To facilitate the understanding of these areas, the Host Region should provide the review team with background material in English about innovation, employment and any other relevant field in their region whereby it is not as much important to translate the whole documents than to provide information and short summaries. What is essential though is to provide Peers with key data concerning the regional economic development as well as statistics related to the focus of the Peer Review.

This material could include the following documents:

- regional innovation strategy
- regional employment strategy
- regional SME/start-up strategy
- information about university-company cooperation
- regional instruments to support lifelong learning
- regional cluster policy
- long-term regional partnerships (ex. with chambers, research centers, clusters etc.)
- a chart that shows the relationships between main structures and institutions

Further information about the competence fields and means of verification can be found in the Checklist (Annex 2).

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *It is important that the Host remains focused when sending additional data to the Peers. The aim is not to send "as many pages as possible" to the Peer before the Peer Review, but to give them the important background information about the Host Region.*
- *Please send all information well in advance: Peers need time to prepare.*
- *Bear in mind this is an opportunity: make sure you ask the right questions to the Peers - the more targeted and open information you provide, the more adapted answers you will receive to your questions.*
- *In order to ensure the Peer Review will be a success, you need to be sure you asked the right question for the Peer Reviews: In Smart Europe partners organised Smart Europe Cafés, short open meetings with key stakeholders, in order to define the questions together. This ensures political support for the Peer Review, as well as interest from the stakeholders.*

STEP 2 – Setting up the agenda and detailed timetable

Deadline: at least **one month prior** to the review

When elaborating the Peer Review programme, the following main points should be considered:

- Do not plan too many interviews, but consider that all the competence fields listed in the Checklist should be covered!

- Ensure that the review team has a possibility to debrief on regular (at least on daily) basis! These work sessions for the Peer Review team should last at least 1 to 1,5 hour and should be included in the agenda.
- Peers need to have enough time at the end of the days, make sure the agenda is not too packed! Having an overloaded agenda will prove counter-productive.
- Organise on-site visits to make the attractions/efforts visible!
- Organise panel discussions with stakeholders when exchange on larger scale might take place!
- There shouldn't be too many interviewees in collective interviews
- Organise social events where the Peers will be able to further discuss with the interviewees in an informal way! Coffee breaks work well to ask specific questions and ensure quality of answers.
- In the framework of the SMART Europe project it is required to include the **political level** and **local stakeholders** to the Peer Review and to ensure **media coverage**. In order to achieve this, it is suggested to organize during the Peer Review the following promotion events
 - workshop for regional stakeholders and politicians, where the press is invited
 - press conference and press release
- Organise promotional events to foster transparency and visibility and to facilitate the anchorage of the outcomes!
- Experience shows that organising meetings *before the Peer Review* with entrepreneurs and the main institutions helps to raise awareness at regional level on the purpose and the benefits of the upcoming Peer Review and set up a coherent agenda.
- Networking dinners *before the Peer Review* are another proven useful tool to get regional stakeholders on board and ensure the Peer Review will be useful for the regional innovation ecosystem as a whole.

It is suggested that each Peer Review is organised according to the schedule set out below. An example programme is provided in **Annex 7**.

Day 1:

The review team meets in a private session in order to prepare for the review. They discuss and define the topics of interest as well as finalise the division of the he competences and tasks. They may wish to invite the Host Coordinator to part of this meeting.

It is highly recommended to have an initial meeting with the Host Coordinator who can give a view on the regional innovation anchor and related issues to ensure the adequate understanding by the Peers.

The team meets with the political and managerial leadership/or the most relevant stakeholder of the region to:

- discuss the employment situation of the region and the main issues facing the regional authority regarding its presumed innovation anchor
- clarify any remaining points about the purpose of the visit and the way in which it will be conducted.

Day 2- Day 4:

The team spends time gathering evidence of how the region is performing in terms of its innovation anchor regarding boosting employment. The programme should allow the review team to look at all aspects of this innovation anchor. It should include meetings with politicians and officers from the region, field visits to

different projects funded by the region (such as visiting sites or facilities), and interviews with business associations, chambers, employment officers etc.

Within the SMART Europe project, the review teams consist of 8-12 Peers. Thus it can be possible to organise parallel interview sessions for smaller groups of 4-5 Peers.

At the end of the 4th day, the Peers should be given the time to debrief and discuss their main findings with each-other as well as with the Host Coordinator.

The review team prepares a presentation, which should be presented during the last day to all the key stakeholders involved in the innovation development or the specific innovation anchor of the region. The team will share their individual assessments and reach a consensus about strengths and issues to consider. They may also begin to consider the concrete recommendations that they wish to make to the Host Region, although it may not be possible to define these in great detail until further analysis has been made of the information collected.

Day 5:

The final day of the visit should be put aside for the preliminary presentation of results. It is suggested for the Host Region to organise a workshop to introduce the first finding of the Peer Review. Regional stakeholders, decision makers, representatives of relevant organisations and politicians should be invited to the workshop. This will further raise awareness on the project and the discussion that will arise will give additional input to the review team.

The workshop should be run as an interactive session, with the opportunity for the audience to discuss the team's initial conclusions. The political representatives should be present at this session as this will increase ownership of the project's results at political level and allow for better implementation of the recommendations. It should be stressed that this will just be a preliminary assessment, with the in-depth results being presented in the form of the written final report. The aim of this initial presentation is to give the Host Region some immediate feedback and to ensure that the Host Region feels that it has taken part in a two-way process.

Peers can be also be asked to present some relevant good practices from their region, in order to show some international examples to the Host Region's stakeholders.

The Host Region also can also organise a press conference during this meeting.

With regards to the organisation of the interviews, it is **essential to brief the experts**, who will be interviewed during the review, on the purpose of the Peer Review. You should provide the interviewees with short information on:

- What is the SMART Europe Peer Review Methodology?
- What is the purpose of SMART Europe and how does it work?
- What feedback will I receive after the meeting?
- How should I prepare for the meeting?
- What should be the structure of my presentation? (all interviews should be structured the same way, the Host Region could provide a template in order to ensure the presentations are to the point)
- What kind of questions will they ask me?
- Why do they want to talk to me?

The interviewees should first thing be reassured by the Host Region Coordinator: they are not undergoing a test and their personal performances and capacities are not at stake! It is essential that they provide the

Peers with honest answers, reflecting the reality and not answers that fit with what interviewees think the reviewers expect.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *Plan a different kinds of activities for the Peers by using formats that allow for honest and transparent conversations about the region's policies.*
- *Make sure you keep enough time for the Peers to reflect and discuss their findings!*
- *Try to not include too many study visits (especially if this requires additional long travel). Give priority to discussion over formal presentations of study visits.*
- *Encourage all stakeholders meeting the Peers to be as open as possible.*

STEP 3 – Organisation of logistics

Deadline: **one month prior** to the review

The Host Region will need to make the following logistical arrangements:

Team Base - the Host Region should prepare a team base for the review team – for example at the hotel. This should be a room that the team can use for private meetings. The room should be equipped with the following:

- a meeting table and chairs for all Peers
- pens, pads, marker pens
- flipchart
- a laptop and projector
- WIFI

Hotel - the Host Region should make arrangements for accommodation for the review team (the Peer Regions are responsible for booking and paying for the rooms); the accommodation should be 3star standard and reasonably close to the regional authority/building where the meetings (except for the site visits) will be organised. It should be pre-checked by the hosts, especially with regards to WIFI.

Meals - meals should be arranged for the team throughout the review, either during the field visits or in the town where they are based. The review team should have some mealtimes free in order to discuss their internal business. One free dinner is recommended when the host should recommend appropriate restaurants to the Review Team.

Interpretation - the Host Region should arrange for consecutive or simultaneous interpretation into English for the whole of the review.

Transfers – try to avoid travelling too long distances during the Peer Review, depending on the organisation of the visits, using a coach may save time.

2.2.3 Implementing the Peer Review

STEP 4 – Implementation of the Peer Review

During the Peer Review, the Host Region has the main obligation to ensure the smooth run of the programme. It is very important to monitor time. The hosts should also share their expectations and draw their attention to potential specific topics of interest in order for the Peers to focus on these issues and be in a position to come up with relevant findings and deliver tailor-made advice.

A Peer Review is not a promotional one-week visit to showcase the region to international partners.

The Peer Review will only bring benefits if the Host Region offers an honest panorama of its situation, avoiding hiding the weaknesses.

It is useful for the Peers to send them the presentations already during the Peer Review.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- *If possible compile all the presentations that will be made by experts in advance, so that you can hand them out to the Peers in advance. This will save you time on the spot!*
- *Someone from the Host Region should accompany the Peers during all visits: this allows the Peers to also ask questions to their host throughout the process.*
- *On the other hand, the hosts should not attend the Peer's meetings at the end of the day.*
- *It is essential that the political level attend the preliminary results meeting on DAY 5. Here the Peers will present their findings, but more importantly they will discuss them before drafting the final report.*

2.2.4 Following-up the Peer Review

STEP 5 – Evaluation of the Peer Review

After the Peer Review, the Host Region should fill in a Feedback Form providing information on the following main points of interest:

- gained experiences,
- lessons learnt,
- highlights,
- steps for further activities etc.

The Feedback Form can be found in **Annex 4A**.

STEP 6 – Elaboration of the Final Report

The Host Regions should also be involved in the process of elaborating the final report. It is a very valuable input to the Peers, if the Host Region shares its expectations (especially in term of the predefined competence fields) during the Peer Review itself and afterwards, in the phase of elaboration of the final report.

For this purpose, the review team prepares a draft set of recommendations for the Host Region, **within one month** of the review, on improving its policies regarding its innovation anchor, in order to boost innovation based job creation.

Then, the Host Region has **two weeks** to provide feedback on the draft report to the review team that incorporates the remarks and produces the final report.

Preparing a 2-pages syntheses of the report, especially in your own language will make dissemination easier.

STEP 7 – Elaboration of the Action Plan

As a last step of the Peer Review process, the Host Region should present the review report to its political bodies in order to ensure that the recommendations in the report are discussed thoroughly and options for their implementation are properly identified. The regional experts of the Host Region should prepare an Action Plan on the basis of the report, setting out the concrete steps that they intend to take in order to implement the most important recommendations. An English translation of this action plan should be sent to the Component 3 Leader (Észak-Alföld RDA), which will distribute it to the review team for information. The Action Plan shall be elaborated **3 month after the reception of the Final Report** but no later than September 2014.

STEP 8 – Preparation of the Implementation Plan

Host Regions should prepare **by September 2014** an Implementation Plan that sets out a longer-term strategy and explains how the recommendations will be included in the future regional policies – based on the experiences gained during its own Peer Review as well as on the good practices presented by the partners during their Peer Reviews.

Tips from the Smart Europe Peers:

- Partners experiences difficulty retaining the attention of the political level and the region's stakeholders. To counteract this, certain partners organized a second Smart Europe Café in order to deliver the results of the Peer Review. Upon discussion, they then determined the steps for the Action and implementation plans.
- In order to simplify the Host Region's task and standardize the results, the CP1 and CP3 leaders developed instructions for Action and Implementation plans, available in **Annex 8**.
- Another recommendation put forward by Manchester in order to ensure the effective drafting of the action and implantation plans, as well as to more generally carry out the recommendations of the Peers, was to apply the "Action Learning Technique".

3. Smart Europe Peer Review Annexes

The following chapter includes the main tools, as well as some examples of good practices, that the partners of the project SMART EUROPE used during their Peer Reviews.

Annex 1: Preliminary Questionnaire for Host Regions

Regions differ in many respects. In order to eliminate ‘one suits all’ recommendations, each Host Region³ is asked to submit the Preliminary Questionnaire, which will help the Peers understand the situation of your region in advance and save time on the spot.

Please note that the objective is **not** for the Peer Review Team to already know everything about your strengths and weaknesses before the Peer Review. This Questionnaire is aimed at providing them with basic information, in order to better assess your situation on the spot and better prepare the interviews.

Please fill-it in as accurately as possible and do not hesitate to add comments when the questions do not apply to your situation or if you are not in a position to answer.

Once filled out, the questionnaire, including any relevant documents, should be submitted to the review team six weeks before the review visit.

Section 1: Information about the Regional Authority

Name of Region	Please choose your region
Country	Please choose your country
Name of respondent	
Position of respondent	
Department/service	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	

Section 2: Economic Profile of the Region

2.1 What is the **GDP per capita** (in purchasing power parity) in your region over the past 5 years (in euro)? Please compare to the national average:

Year	Regional GDP per capita (€)	National average (€)
------	-----------------------------	----------------------

³ „Region” not only refers to NUTS2 in this document.

2011		
2010		
2009		
2008		
2007		
Comments:		

2.2 What percentage of economic activity in your region and on national level falls into the following categories:

Sector	Percentage of <u>regional</u> GDP (%)	Percentage of <u>national</u> GDP (%)	Percentage of employment in the <u>region</u>	Percentage of employment on <u>national</u> level	Main activities in your <u>region</u> <i>(Please list maximum 3 per box!)</i>
Primary sector (agriculture & fisheries)					
Industrial and manufacturing sector					
Service Sector					
Comments:					

2.3 Please state the unemployment rate been in your region for each of the past 5 years. Please compare this to the national average:

Year	Regional Unemployment Rate (%)	National average (%)
2011		
2010		
2009		
2008		
2007		
Comments:		

2.4 What percentage of unemployment in your region falls into the following categories:

Gender	Percentage (%) - regional	Percentage (%) - national
Male		
Female		
Comments:		

2.5 What percentage of unemployment in your region falls into the following categories:

Age	Percentage (%) - regional	Percentage (%) - national
18-25		
26-45		
46-65		
Comments:		

2.6. Which sector is employing most of the employees of your region?

Sector	Average proportion (%)	Field of activity
SME ⁴		
Big companies		
Administration, public sector		
Comments (ex. what is the tendency):		

2.7. Please prepare a self-SWOT analysis about your region – focusing on its on innovation and job creation situation!

Please only mention the most important issues that are relevant in relation to your focus area. This SWOT is to show to the Peers the way you look at your region.

Strengths -	Weaknesses -
Opportunities -	Threats -

2.8. Which institutions have important share in terms of regional investments? Please also specify these sectors – ex. add field of activity, type of university etc.

Structure	Relevance	Specification
Universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Big companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Others (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm

2.9. Has your region offered financial support to innovation?

If yes, please specify: budget, supported activities, beneficiaries

Year	Budget – amount (in €)	Supported activities	Beneficiaries (ex. research institutions, SMEs, universities...)
2009			
2010			
2011			
Comments:			

Section 3: Responsibilities of the region

3.1. Responsibilities/Competences of the partner region on:	Legislative	Financial	Others (Please specify)
▪ Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Economic development and SME support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:			

3.2. Political leadership on regional level:	
Directly elected board/Parliament	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indirectly elected	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non elected (please precise the mode of nomination)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	

3.3. Financial resources:		Annual budget in € (if applicable)
Full financial autonomy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resources coming partly from the national State	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No own resources: direct transfers from the State only	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comments:		

Section 4: How does the region support cooperations of different actors, in order to foster innovation-based job creation?

4.1 Number of Universities			
4.2. Number of research centres Private/Public			
4.3. Number of incubators			
4.4. Number of clusters/innovation poles			
4.5. Number of companies created in :	2009:	2010:	2011:
4.6. Number of jobs created in the region in Please specify the sectors/fields of operations as well!	2009:	2010:	2011:
4.7. Number of jobs "lost" in the region in	2009:	2010:	2011:

Please specify the sectors/fields of operations as well!			
Comments:			

4.8. Existence of support scheme for companies (tax reduction, subsidies, others...) If so, please tick the box	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of support scheme: (please describe in a few sentences)	
Is there a size ceiling for the companies (reserved to SMEs for instance)? If so, please tick the box	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceiling (number of employees or turnover in €)	
Is this support conditioned to creating/sustaining jobs in the given companies? Please provide a few details	
Comments:	

4.9. What measures have your entity taken to fight against unemployment?

4.10. Do you assess your region as a:
A) A leader on innovation <input type="checkbox"/> B) An average innovation environment <input type="checkbox"/> C) Having still a lot to improve regarding innovation <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:

Section 5: Regional focus

5.1. What do you think is the main problem in your region that hinders job creation in your region? What are the main challenges?

5.2. What do you think would be your innovation anchor to foster job creation?

5.3. On which issues would you like to have recommendations after the Peer Review?

5.4. On what issues you think there is a strong political will to move on, and get new recommendations?



Executive summary
Optional

Should you prefer to provide any additional information, or sum up the data provided in the Questionnaire on your region through a text please use this space for it.. Please do not exceed 2 pages and provide hard data.

Annex 2: Checklist for Peers

Checklist	Yes / No / N/a	Rating ⁵	Evidence ⁶	Source of Verification ⁷
1. <u>Regional strategy</u>				
1.1	There is clear long-term strategy for innovation, supported by specific objectives and indicators.			
1.2	Job creation appears as a priority in this strategy.			
1.3	Progress is regularly assessed against its objectives and measures outcomes			
1.4	Different sources of funding are employed to support the implementation of the strategy.			
1.5	There is an employment strategy, supported by specific objectives and indicators.			
1.6	There is an SME/Start-ups strategy, supported by specific objectives and indicators (measures to sustain / boost creation of companies).			
1.7	The different regional strategies are clearly coordinated, also with national and other levels.			
1.8	The regional strategy takes into account sustainable development objectives			

⁵ Please state the extent to which the statement is true for the Host Region (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest)

⁶ Justification

⁷ Tangible elements that confirm the judgement, such as a policy document, minutes of an interview, statistical figures...

Checklist	Yes / No / N/a	Rating ⁸	Evidence ⁹	Source of Verification ¹⁰
2. <u>Education and human resources</u>				
2.1 There is an appropriate connection between universities and the business environment: companies find the manpower they need and students find the job they want.				
2.2 The region provides instruments to support reconversion and lifelong learning.				
2.3 Demand and offer fit on the regional market (regional workers find jobs and regional companies find the necessary human resources, all this in the region)				
2.4 Measures have been set up to limit the migration of the necessary workforce out of the regional territory.				
2.5 There is an equal opportunities policy regarding employment in the region.				
3. <u>Innovative environment</u>				
3.1 The region has a clearly identified innovation anchor(s).				
3.2 Clusters, science parks and other innovation hubs are present and act as economical catalysts.				
3.3 Intermediary organisations (such as Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations, innovation agencies ...) play				

⁸ Please state the extent to which the statement is true for the Region (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest)

⁹ Justification

¹⁰ Tangible elements that confirm the judgement, such as a policy document, minutes of an interview, statistical figures...

Checklist	Yes / No / N/a	Rating ¹¹	Evidence ¹²	Source of Verification ¹³
an active role in fostering innovation in the territory.				
3.4 Existence of innovative/spin off companies that generate jobs.				
3.5 Knowledge Providers (research and innovation centres) cooperate / network efficiently with companies.				
3.6 Existence of a diversified business environment (big/small/old/new companies).				
3.7 Jobs in the innovation sector are available throughout the region's territory (as opposed to only in certain areas).				
3.8 The business environment (referred to in 3.6) is active to support job creation.				
3.9 Existence of private financial actors (venture capitalist, business angels, seed funds...).				
4. Partnership				
4.1 The regional authority has an active role in fostering partnership between innovation stakeholders. (companies, clusters, innovation and research centres, universities)				
4.2 The regional authority is itself involved in this partnership and works closely with existing stakeholders.				
4.3 If applicable, the SMART EUROPE partner has an active role/is involved in the existing partnerships between innovation stakeholders.				
4.4 Involvement of other stakeholders such as Chamber of Commerce, trade unions, employment agencies in different				

¹¹ Please state the extent to which the statement is true for the Region (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest)

¹² Justification

¹³ Tangible elements that confirm the judgement, such as a policy document, minutes of an interview, statistical figures...

Checklist	Yes / No / N/a	Rating ¹⁴	Evidence ¹⁵	Source of Verification ¹⁶
projects, cooperation...				
4.5 Existence of established links and regular interactions with final beneficiaries (workers, students, unemployed...)				
4.6 Involvement of the region and/or innovation stakeholders in local/interregional, national, international cooperation projects/agreements.				
5 Sustainability of the jobs created by the innovative sectors				
5.1 The regional innovative sector is creating job on the regional territory.				
5.2 The jobs created are gender-balanced				
5.3 The innovative industries create diversified, long-term and quality ¹⁷ jobs in the region				
5.4 The jobs that disappear due to innovative processes and productivity gains are compensate by the creation of other jobs				
5.5 The regional authority has established a series of schemes to support companies that create jobs, through subsidies/taxes or other benefits.				
5.6 The regional authority monitors the creations/disappearances in companies that receive public support through subsidies/taxes or other benefits.				

¹⁴ Please state the extent to which the statement is true for the Region (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest)

¹⁵ Justification

¹⁶ Tangible elements that confirm the judgement, such as a policy document, minutes of an interview, statistical figures...

¹⁷ Full-time contracts, salaries in line with experience and qualification, average working conditions...

Annex 3: Profile of Experts within the Peer Team

- ⇒ The Peer Review team will consist of 10-12 highly experienced experts from the Partner Regions (**2 experts per region**).
- ⇒ Experts will be identified on the basis of the Host Regions' focus and specific needs (according to the Questionnaire submitted before each Peer Review).
- ⇒ These experts can be:
 - Senior innovation officers;
 - Representatives of private companies/research institutes, universities;
 - Regional politicians with a remit for the relevant innovation anchor of the Host Region;
 - Senior representatives of regional development agencies etc.
- ⇒ Since the main role of the Peer Review Team will consist of evaluating the region's policies and practice towards its regional innovation anchor – in order to boost job creation, the **experts must possess the necessary and relevant expertise in the field of regional policies and strategies aiming to boost employment in the innovation sector.** The Peer Review Team will provide the Host Region's authorities with the suggestions about how to set up effective policies in the area of innovation-based jobs. The Peer Review Team will help the Host Region to better identify challenges and will make concrete proposals about how they can be tackled.
- ⇒ The regional expert must be **fluent in English**. Please note that English will be the working language during the whole project life cycle, including the meetings, e-mail communication, the Peer Review itself and the preparation of final report. Translation will only be provided during the Peer Review from the language of the Host Region into English.
- ⇒ The experts should **be available for a 5-day long Peer Review visit: In principle, experts should arrive on Monday mid-day and depart at mid-day on Friday of the Peer Review week.** After this visit, they will prepare a written summary of their observations, integrated subsequently into the final report. The responsibility for coordinating the preparation of this report will fall upon the Peer Review Team Coordinator who will be assisted by CP3 Leader Észak-Alföld and AER.
- ⇒ **The experts should bear in mind that their work will continue until the final submission of the Report to the Host Region.** They may also be consulted after the submission, should the Host Region object to the conclusions in the final report or need further clarifications.
- ⇒ **For each Peer Review a Peer Review Coordinator has been appointed.** This person should be highly available, dynamic and reactive in order to ensure the smooth coordination of the project together with CP3 leader Észak-Alföld and AER. She/he will also be in charge of collecting inputs from other members (ex. CVs of Peers before the Peer Review, suggestions, drafts to the final Report) of the Peer Review Team and writing the final Report.

THE TASKS OF THE PEER REVIEW TEAM

The experts will be asked to:

- ⇒ Analyse the materials provided by the Host Region, namely the legislation and regional policy on innovation and employment, as well as the preliminary questionnaire that outlines the situation in the Host Region. This questionnaire will be sent around at least one month before the Peer Review.

-
- ⇒ Take part in a 5-day Peer Review visit in the Host Region. During this visit, experts will attend a series of meetings with key regional stakeholders and perform a few field visits in order to assess the situation of the region in terms of innovation and employment issues.
 - ⇒ Use the Checklist, together with their own knowledge and experience, in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Host Region's innovation policy and anchors' potential to boost employment.
 - ⇒ Fill in a Peer Review Feedback form providing information on their experience, lessons learnt, highlights, missed links, steps for further activities etc.
 - ⇒ Produce, on the basis of a Template provided in the Guidelines, a report and series of recommendations on how to improve the region's policies and practice towards its regional innovation anchor – in order to boost job creation in the Host region. It will be up to the Peer Review Team's Coordinator to put together contributions from other members of the team so that they form a coherent whole.

THE TASKS OF THE PEER REVIEW COORDINATOR

The Peer Review Team Coordinator (1 per Peer Review) will be in charge of:

- ⇒ Before the Peer Review:
 - Act as the contact point between the Team and the Host Region for any questions which may arise at this stage.
 - Collect the CVs of the suggested Peers.
 - Collect any suggestions for meetings from the Team members and present them to the Host Region for taking these suggestions into account while planning the review schedule.
- ⇒ During the Peer Review:
 - Ensure that the Peer Review Team asks relevant questions and has all necessary information.
 - Monitor the Review process during the Team's briefing meetings following each day of the Peer Review visit.
- ⇒ After the Peer Review:
 - Finalise the Report together with the Host Region, Észak-Alföld (incorporating comments and liaising with members of the Peer Review Team as regards to the suggestions of the Host Region).

Annex 4A: Feedback form for Host Regions

We kindly ask **each Host Region to complete** this form after its Peer Review. The objective is to evaluate the success of a specific Peer Review as well as to assess the effectiveness of the methodology.

Name of the respondent	
Host Region	
Date of the Peer Review	
PREPARATION	
Preparation of the Peer Review – Did you find the templates useful? What was your experience in filling in the templates or providing additional information?	
What was your experience in arranging the interviews? How was the reaction of the stakeholders? Did you receive any inputs from the Peer Review Team during that preparation period?	
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEER REVIEW	
What was your experience in organising the logistics and the run-down of the programme in the implementation phase? Do you have any suggestions to future hosts?	

Which of the interviews or site visits were the most useful for the Peer Review?

METHODOLOGY

Do you have any suggestions to improve the methodology? (criteria? means of verification? questionnaire?)

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Do you have any remarks about the organisation of the Peer Review or suggestions to make it more efficient? (programme? timing?)

OTHER

Please provide us with a quote that we can use on the website or in future publications.

Any other comments

Annex 4B: Feedback from for Peers

We kindly ask **each Peer Region to complete** this form after its Peer Review. The objective is to evaluate the success of a specific Peer Review as well as to assess the effectiveness of the methodology.

Name	
Peer Region	
Host Region	
Date of the Peer Review	

CONTENT

Were the preliminary documents sent by the Host Region useful? Which ones in particular?
Which site visit did you find the most useful/relevant? Why?
Which of the interviews gave you the most insight about the situation in the Host Region? Why? What was the format of these sessions (one on one? groups)?
How useful was the final workshop? Do you think it managed to sufficiently involve local stakeholders and to raise awareness? Do you think international good practices were useful for the local stakeholders?
What information is still missing after the interviews and visits?

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

How did you think this Peer Review was most beneficial for the Host Region?

How was the Peer Review useful for you, as Peer? What could Peers learn from the visit?

What good practice of the Host Region did you find most valuable and would transfer to your region if you had the opportunity to do so?

METHODOLOGY

Do you have any suggestions to make to improve the methodology? (criteria? means of verification?)

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Do you have any remarks about the organisation of the Peer Review or points to make it more efficient? (agenda? timing?)

OTHER

Please provide us with a quote from one of the Peers that we can use on the website or in future publications.

Any other comments.

Annex 5A: Peer Review Summary information

The following report is to be completed after each Peer Review by the Peer Review Coordinator, in cooperation with the team of experts.

Section 1: Overview

Host Region	
Contact Person	
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	
Dates of Review	
Date of delivery of final report	

Section 2: Peer Review Team

Peer Review Coordinator

Name	
Region	
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	

Peer Expert (1)

Name	
Region	
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	

Peer Expert (2)

Name	
------	--

Region	
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	

Peer Expert (3)

Name	
Region	
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	

Section 3: Activities and Interviews Conducted

Activity / Interview	Name of stakeholders involved	Organisation	Position

Section 4: Peer Review Programme

Please attach a copy of the Final Programme of the Peer Review week.

Annex 5B: In-Depth Assessment Report

The following report is to be completed after each Peer Review by the Peer Review Coordinator, in cooperation with the team of experts.

Summary

First page of the Report should include a one paragraph description of the key points of the Report, notably the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Section 0: Introduction

(a) Short introduction to the SMART Europe Project

SMART Europe is based on the concept that smart and targeted regional policies and interventions can be designed to boost the employment directly in the regional innovation-based sectors.

With this aim, a consortium of 13 partners, representing 11 EU regions, will exchange policies and instruments for identifying and supporting the main regional economic actors that can generate job opportunities in the innovation based sectors of their economy.

SMART Europe will support decision makers to improve their strategies with the aim of incorporating the creation of employment as an additional key feature of their activities.

(b) Short introduction to the Peer Review methodology

SMART Europe Peer Review Methodology helps regions to improve their policies in boosting employment in the sector of their “innovation anchor”.

The SMART Europe Peer Review Methodology is an adaptation of the Peer Review methodology of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), developed directly to use it during the SMART Europe project, when assessing different regions’ innovation anchors. The methodology standardises the relevant aspects that need to be measured, in order to enable experts with different background, to assess the regional situation in an objective way. By this, they will be able to give appropriate recommendations on the field of innovation-based job creation in the Host Region. The other important advantage of Peer Reviews is the selection of experts, who are practitioners in the field of the assessment, which means that the recommendations given by them after the review will be practical and realistic.

Section 1: Overview

(a) Short description of the Host Region, general overview, economic profile.

(b) Description of Peer Review focus (why it was chosen, specific questions and expected outputs of the Host Region)

Section 2: Regional Strategy

(a) Key Findings

- *Job creation appearing in strategy;*
- *Innovation appearing in strategy;*
- *Coordination;*
- *Etc.*

(b) Recommendations

Section 3: Education and Human Resources

(a) Key Findings

- *Connection of education and business;*
- *Migration;*
- *Equal opportunities;*
- *Etc.*

(b) Recommendations

Section 4: Innovative Environment

(a) Key Findings

- *Innovation hubs*
- *Intermediary organisations*
- ...

(b) Recommendations

Section 5: Partnership

(a) Key Findings

- *role of regional authority*
- *partners working closely with*
- ...

(b) Recommendations

Section 6: Sustainability of the jobs created by the innovative sectors

(a) Key Findings

- *support to companies to job-creation*
- *types of jobs created*
- ...

(b) Recommendations

Section 7: Conclusions

Annex 5C: SWOT Analysis on innovation based job creation

The following report is to be completed after each Peer Review by the Peer Review Coordinator, in cooperation with the team of experts.

“Structure follows Strategy” – a SWOT analysis with regard to the regional structure within the selected focus area:

Internal factors	Strengths	Weaknesses
	- ...	- ...
External factors	Opportunities	Threats
	- ...	- ...

The internal factors may be viewed as strengths or weaknesses depending upon their impact on the organization's objectives. What may represent strengths with respect to one objective may be weaknesses for another objective. The factors may include all of the 4P's (product, price, place, promotion); as well as personnel, finance, manufacturing capabilities, and so on.

The external factors may include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, and socio-cultural changes, as well as changes in the marketplace or competitive position. The results are often presented in the form of a matrix.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Annex 6: Example division of tasks

The following is an example of how one of the Peer Coordinators assigned the responsibilities of his team prior to the Peer Review week.

QuickTime™ et un
décompresseur
sont requis pour visionner cette image.

QuickTime™ et un
décompresseur
sont requis pour visionner cette image.

Annex 7: Example Peer Review week programme

The following is an example programme for the organisation of a Peer Review.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Travel	Kick-off meeting With political and Managerial leadership/ Seminar	Group Meeting / Interviews	Group Meeting / Interviews	Preliminary Results Presentation with the media
		Press briefing		Field visit	
Afternoon		Lunch			
		Field visit + Interviews on site	Field visit + Interviews on site		
	Peer Review Team meeting: Info and organisation	Daily feedback / conclusions	Discussion on drafting the report	Peer Review Team meeting: Presentation and conclusions	Travel
Evening	Free time				
	Dinner / Social events □				

Annex 8: Action and Implementation plans

Please find below further instructions on the drafting of action and implementation plans.

How to follow-up the Peer Review in the Host Region?

After the final Peer Review has been delivered by the Peer team, the host region has to make an action plan. The basic idea is that the action plan should be of maximum benefit and efficiency to the region, therefore there is no prescribed format. Since not all partners are in the same situation, there are the following possibilities:

1. The action plan becomes directly a policy document of the local/regional administration. (When this document is endorsed by the politicians, the action plan can count both as an output indicator and as a result indicator);
2. The action plan describes the actions to imbed the Peer Review recommendations in the local/regional policy and/or to implement them practically. (In this case there is no political endorsement yet, and the plan counts as an output indicator only).

Requirements action plan:

Though the action plan has no fixed format, there are some minimum requirements:

- Reference to the SMART EUROPE Peer Review;
- Description of how the Peer Review recommendations are translated into policy or actions. Also, the recommendations that don't get a follow up should be shortly mentioned, including the reason why they don't get a follow up.
- A timeline for the actions.

Ideally the Peer Review recommendations can be directly translated into policy measures (situation 1) In an official policy document it won't always be possible to meet the requirements mentioned above. In this case, a possibility may be to include this information as an attachment to the policy document or in a side document.

Requirements implementation plan:

At the end of the project, all partners have to make an implementation plan. This is an obligatory output indicator in every INTERREG project. The implementation plan is an instrument to improve the sustainability of projects, it describes the project related actions of a region after the project has ended. In the context of SMART EUROPE, the implementation plan is therefore an updated action plan that goes beyond the end date of the project. It may also contain further actions in the field of good practice transfer and/or communication.