



11th October 2013
Preliminary conclusions of the Peer
Review Team – Ávila



SMART EUROPE is a project co-financed by the ERDF
Made possible by the INTERREG IVC



European Union
European Regional Development Fund

SMART EUROPE's general goals

Overall goal

Supporting regions in boosting employment in **innovation-based jobs**

How?

- By identifying **innovation anchors** (= main drivers of innovation)
- By collecting and exchanging **good practices**
- By developing **policy instruments and measures**



Methodology phases

Before:

Questionnaire, good practices
employment, investment,...

During:

Review details, findings and evidences
First approach to SWOT analysis
First draft of recommendations

After:

Final Report → Action Plan



Peer review participants

Organisations/institutions visited and interviews taken with during the peer review week in Ávila

Ávila County Council

Ávila Municipality

Education and Tourism Campus in

Ávila, University of Salamanca

Vettones Exhibition

Marca Tostón de Arévalo

Hotel Cuatro Postes

Ávila Autentica

CONFAE

Restaurants Association

Yemas de Santa Teresa workshop

Cerveza Gredos

Hotel Parador the Gredos

ASENORG

Tree Adventure Park

El Milano Real hotel & restaurant

SMART EUROPE Partners Coverage



Partnership



Province of Flevoland

Lead Partner

www.flevoland.nl



Assembly of European Regions

www.aer.eu



**Manchester Metropolitan University/
Centre for Enterprise**

www.mmuce.co.uk



Veneto Region

www.regione.veneto.it



Veneto Innovazione

www.venetoinnovazione.it



Province of Bologna

www.provincia.bologna.it



Észak Alföld Regional Development Agency

www.eszakalfold.hu



Maramures County Council

www.cjmaramures.ro



Almi Företagspartner Mitt AB

www.almi.se/mitt



Patras Science Park S.A.

www.psp.org.gr



The Baltic Institute of Finland

www.baltec.org



Avila County Council

www.diputacionavila.es



Sør – Trøndelag County Authority

www.stfk.no

Peer review team

the peer review is not an exam neither a trial, it is a **FRIENDLY AUDIT** and a **MUTUAL LEARNING** process



	Name	Position	Region / organisation
1.	Ms. Katalin VARGÁNÉ CSOBÁN	Assistant Professor at the University of Debrecen	Észak-Alföld region
2.	Ms. Zsófia MÜNNICH	International project manager	Észak-Alföld region
3.	Ms. Carolyn BRANSTON	Senior Lecturer, Faculty Employability Co-ordinator & Enterprise Visiting Scholar	Manchester Metropolitan University
4.	Ms. Kathryn YOUNG	Enterprise Partnerships Fellow – (Head of Marketing and Communications)	Manchester Metropolitan University
5.	Mr. Russell YATES	Smart Europe co-ordinator for Greater Manchester	Manchester Metropolitan University
6.	Ms. Mihaela LITE	Head of International relation Office	Maramures County Council
7.	Ms. Noemi GANEA	Counsellor	Maramures County Council
8.	Ms. Gleny FOSLIE	Head of unit business & innovation	County Administration of Sør-Trøndelag
9.	Mr. Lars André DAHLE	Regional representative, Trøndelag	The Research Council of Norway
10.	Mr. Per Erik SORAS	Senior Adviser	County Administration of Sør-Trøndelag

Creating an attractive touristic destination and using it in order to boost local economy and create new jobs.

SWOT Analysis



Strengths

- Common understanding of the importance of tourism
- Good business models & inspirational people (eg. Gredos)
- Large variety of tourism potential: cultural, natural, gastronomy, religion
 - Existence of heritage – wall, Teresa, Word Heritage city
 - Variety of tourism opportunities (city-rural) – diversity
 - Weather + many opportunities not depending on good weather
- Accessibility
 - Potential to show itself as an inclusive city
 - Closeness to Madrid (good infrastructure) + other large touristic centers
- Emerging initiatives for cooperation (eg. Ávila Autentica, ASENORG)
- Developed Branding (Brand Ávila, Parador etc.)
- Using wide variety of communication tools (started to use social media, websites...)
- Existing, well developed rural tourism

Weaknesses

- Need to develop a joint strategy between various actors (public-private)
- Language barriers – most information only available in Spanish; ppl not speaking English
- Need for better visibility and tourist information (free brochures, maps, signposting)
- Importance of vocational education in tourism and hospitality sector not well recognised (eg. receptionists, waiters should be better trained)
- Weak coordination and cooperation (eg. events sector)
- Insufficient business support
- Shortage of data, analysis and general market research
- Underutilisation of the possibilities offered by the university (eg. entrepreneurship in education)
- Transportation – too difficult to get here and get around

Opportunities

- University – to support tourism, research and management
- Collaboration with World Heritage sites
- Santa Teresa 5th centenary year + use it as a catalyst
- Strategic use of European programmes (new financial period, international exchanges etc.)
- Existing good infrastructure (roads, railways)
- Potential for diversification & marketing of tourism packages
- Further potential in existing brands (Ávila Autentica) to raise the standards of the products and tourism services + international connections (Spanish restaurants in other countries – think big)
- Upturn of the international economy (+ new emerging markets)

Threats

- Unpredictable economical environment & legislation – new taxes...
- Unclear understanding of target audience and their needs
- Competing similar offers nearby
- Insufficient knowledge & forecasting about the needed skills in tourism industry
- Insufficient involvement of lower decision making levels – dominance of top-down approach
- Migrations (Brain-drain, Demographic problems)
- Few links between tourism and employment strategies

Recommendations



Strategy

- Ensure the strategy is based on consultation and participation of the fullest range of stakeholders (public-private)
- Make the fullest use in the strategy of all European programmes (accessible by the county, as well as NGOs and businesses)
- Create linkages between tourism and employment strategies with measurable targets
- Strategy should reflect on the whole county (Ávila+rural areas)
- In order to reach sustainable tourism, planning and monitoring are essential (collect data, use to check future opportunities)

Education & Human Resources

- Improve language skills (eg. English degree would raise standard too)
- Educate those in the „front-line” – could be short courses, vocational training as well
- Curricula development should include managerial orientated programmes, research, sustainability, HR and entrepreneurship etc. – look at international Higher Education Institutions!
- Encourage student and teacher exchanges and traineeships abroad
- Target international markets of recruitment of students
- Actively engage employers in curricula development and delivery of education
- Promote life long learning in the tourism sector (SMEs!) – *good practice: including senior citizens in language learning in Hajdúszoboszló*
- Take the events industry sector seriously - Coordinate! Educate! Segment!
- Utilise good practices already available in the county (eg. El Milano Real restaurant)

Innovation Environment

- Focus more on entrepreneurship
- Establish proper incubators and financing schemes for start-ups
- Foster cluster development
- Encourage higher level managers to go abroad to gain experience
- Encourage (international) students placements in local businesses
- Include business environment in roundtable discussions for innovation
- Encourage continuous development of tourism products & packages (eg. learn to make a traditional Spanish sweet, experiences – *good practice: „one-man show in Tuba-tanya”, wine tasting at 4Postes, mountain cinema...*)
- Combine the offers of the city and the rural areas

Partnership

- Foster cooperations between local businesses to use possible synergies of products and services – eg. forming networks
- Encourage interaction between university and stakeholders for the purpose of research, data collection and forecasting
- Involvement in regional and international marketing opportunities – businesses, brands – media, social media
- County Council for Tourism should attract funds and get strategic projects for the benefit of local stakeholders
- Partnerships with World Heritage sites – common packages, thematic routes
- Develop cooperations with specialised tour operators and local transport companies (for better accessibility)
- Set up partnerships with overseas universities

Sustainability of jobs

- Use EU programmes (eg. Horizon2020 – innovation programmes for SMEs!, Erasmus+)
- Continuous data collection & analysis is needed – know where your assets are, and what do businesses need, what students want
- Provide consultation opportunities for employers, industry representatives with university and public administration
- Extend tourism for all year – develop new packages
- Real business cooperations to be established in order to maximise the utilisation of resources

CONCLUSIONS



Strategy

Language skills

Ávila & rural areas

Good practices

FOCUS & COLLABORATE



Follow us on:
<http://smart-europe.eu>



SMART EUROPE is a project co-financed by the ERDF
Made possible by the INTERREG IVC



European Union
European Regional Development Fund