

SMERF *Diagnosis Tool*

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



Did you know that...?

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

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

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

Welcome to the SMERF tool

The online questionnaire is a **self-assessment tool** designed to help companies evaluate their progress across **four key areas**, referred to as "**Pillars**". This tool allows businesses to systematically assess their current status and pinpoint opportunities for improvement within these Pillars.

By answering **targeted questions**, companies can gain a comprehensive understanding of their performance in essential competencies and operational aspects related to each Pillar. The questionnaire provides a structured framework for evaluation, ensuring consistency and clarity in the self-assessment process.

Based on the results, the system generates **actionable insights** and **tailored recommendations**, leveraging the functionalities of an expert system. These insights are intended to guide companies toward strategic improvements and optimized operations.

Sign in



SMERF *Diagnosis Tool*

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

Step 1: General SMERF Survey

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

Step 2: In-Depth SMERF Pillar Analysis

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





Pillar 1: Cultivating a Culture of Innovation

Where Businesses Struggle:

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

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

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

Question 1

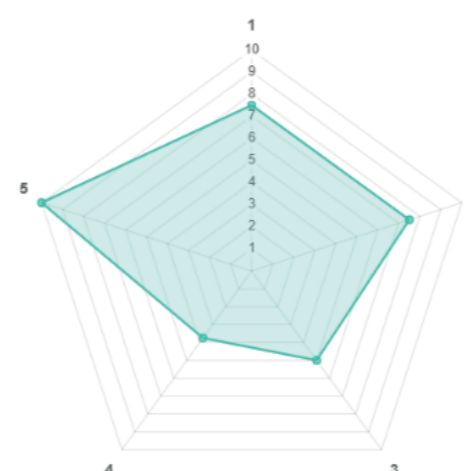
Question 1 of 40

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

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

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

Innovation Culture



1 - Innovative Thinking & Creativity
2 - Human Resources Development
3 - Knowledge & Learning
4 - Collaboration & Communication
5 - Leadership & Relations



Pillar 2: Advancing Digital Manufacturing

Question 11

Question 11 of 40

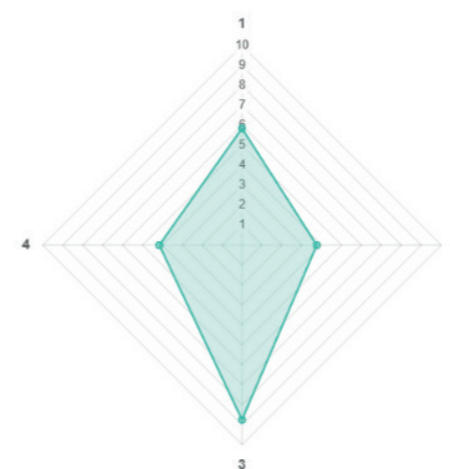
To what extent are digital technologies integrated into your overall business processes?

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

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



Digital Manufacturing



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

Where Businesses Struggle:

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

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

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





Pillar 3: Embracing Open Innovation and the Sharing Economy

Where Businesses Struggle:

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

Question 25

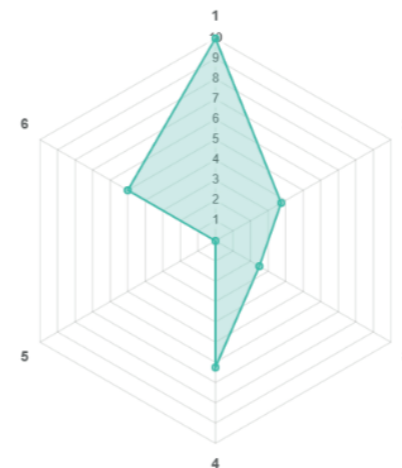
Question 25 of 40

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

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

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

Open innovation & sharing economy



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

What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

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



Pillar 4: Transitioning to a Green and Circular Economy

Where Businesses Struggle:

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

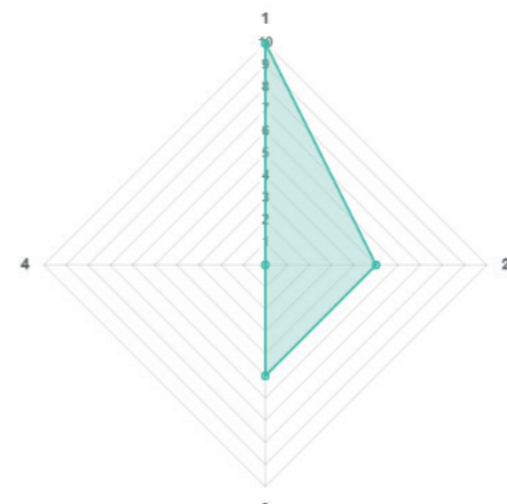
Question 35

Question 35 of 40

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

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

Green & circular economy & sustainability



- 1 - Circular Approach in action
- 2 - Sustainability in action
- 3 - Environmentally Friendly Approach
- 4 - Innovative Approach



What Our Diagnosis Unlocks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


 **Austria:** jennifer.quoc@biz-up.at

 **Croatia:** smerf@uniri.hr

 **Germany:** to.mueller@kit.edu

 **Hungary:** andrea.kurucz@pbn.hu

 **Italy:** corbella.m@crit-research.it

 **Poland:** innomanu@pwr.edu.pl

 **Slovakia:** dev.ekf@tuke.sk

 www.interreg-central.eu/projects/smerf/

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