

Output factsheet: **SME assessment tool-kit**

Version 1

Project index number and acronym	CE 393
Lead partner	Pomurje Technology Park
Output number and title	O.T2.3 SME assessment tool-kit
Responsible partner (PP name and number)	LP (Pomurje Technology Park Ltd.), PP3 (Business Upper Austria Ltd.), PP4 (Campden Bri Hungary Ltd.), PP7 (UNISEF Ltd.)
Project website	http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/I-CON.html
Delivery date	11/2017

Summary description of the key features of the tool (developed and/or implemented)

Food SMEs are facing a shortage of a skilled labor force in relation to requirements posed by technological progress and economic innovation. Project partners mitigate these disparities with the preparation of three types of cross-sector related tools that aim to improve their technological competences and management skills. Tools are used to support capacity building process and raise the food sector entrepreneurship skills in the project area. Knowledge and expertise derives from knowledge partners regions. During the concept development, Knowledge partners shared their vision on methodological approach.

Tool-kits (elaborated for mechatronics, food safety, quality and design assessment) support identification of the actual needs of targeted companies. Elaborated tools analyze how innovation in the food sector (from technology, safety and design perspective) adds value to a SME by improving (a) technology process control, (b) food safety risk management and (c) validation of food design.

Assessment tool-kits are in principle questionnaires developed by competent I-CON Knowledge partners, e.g. mentors and/or solution providers. Knowledge partners developed 2 step/level questionnaires, to lead targeted companies from very general to very specific questions. They will used mainly by facilitators in cooperation with interested companies.

Assessment tool-kits are integrated in the Mentor scheme aiming on improved SME's cost efficiency, quality assurance and risk management.

Important task of tools developers (Knowledge partners) is to teach facilitators on the appropriate use of tools on Training academy in Treviso in March 2018, while task of Regional partners is to identify most appropriate candidates for later pilot activities of testing tools in real cases.

DesignCrowdPlatform usability validation is a part of Design assessment tool-kit and it was integrated as special module in Atlas mapping tool.

NUTS region(s) where the tool has been developed and/or implemented (relevant NUTS level)

DEVELOPMENT:

SME assessment tool-kit:

Knowledge partner	NUTS
BIZ-UP (PP3)	AT312, Linz-Wels
CBHU (PP4)	HU101, Budapest
UNISEF (PP7)	ITH34, Treviso
UHOH (PP8)	DE111 Stuttgart, Stadtkreis

CDP assessment tool:

Knowledge partner	NUTS
PTP (LP)	SI011, Pomurska

IMPLEMENTATION in regional partner's' areas:

Regional Partner	NUTS
PTP (LP)	SI011, Pomurska
CCIS-CAFE (PP2)	SI021, Osrednjeslovenska
STRIA (PP5)	HU231, Baranya
CNA ER (PP6)	ITH55, Bologna
KIGPSiO (PP9)	PL127, Miasto Warszawa
SCCI (PP10)	SK010, Bratislavský kraj

Expected impact and benefits of the tool for the concerned territories and target groups

Elaborated assessment tool-kit speed up the process of identification of target SME's real needs. Tools enable facilitators to perform analysis of target companies by comparing innovations of existing leading products on the market.

Design assessment tool within crowd design platform (CDP) is specialized and enables existing CDP to be more usable and compatible with the national food regulations.

Facilitators are front-end of "intercepting" needs of SMEs in remote regions. Three facilitators are appointed from each regional partner (person for each food topic). Knowledge partners confirm facilitators for their field of expertise. Knowledge partners have the opportunity to implement audits in their regions. It was agreed in consortium that Knowledge partners can send one facilitator to be trained in Training Academy in one of topics other than their own expertise.

Facilitators will be trained in use of developed Assessment tools in Training Academy in Treviso in March 2018.

Sustainability of the tool and its transferability to other territories and stakeholders

Sustainability will be achieved by selection of mentors interested to help targeted companies to be more competitive providing concrete information on needed actions/steps that will assist SMEs to shorten their learning curve in developing new products/services or spreading their business to new international markets.

Facilitators will use new skills/knowledge acquired in Training Academy and link mentors from I-CON transnational pools of experts with identified SMEs.

Tools will be in use often as facilitators and mentors will be accessed directly or via Atlas mapping tool platform that is essential part of community growing.

Tools are essential for SMEs to obtain necessary knowledge, information or other resources. The intensity of use results in future improvements where upon feedback from field the questionnaires will be upgraded.

During project the I-CON partnership will promote developed tools to be used world-wide and to widen the database of mentors/suppliers/solution providers.

Lessons learned from the development/implementation process of the tool and added value of transnational cooperation

In order to develop such effective tool it is essential that developers of the tools: 1) understand their role and the purpose of the “project story”, e.g. mission, 2) that they are aware of what is the purpose of collection of certain information and 3) upon collection what to make with this data. The structure of the tool should narrow the interest/needs of the targeted SMEs to more specific needs that SMEs find most important for their progress and improvement. By obtaining these information mentors are able to solve challenges more systemically, effectively and contribute to greater satisfaction of SMEs from provided help. Foreseen testing phase will show if changes can improve the tools. Various experiences of Knowledge partners coming from different regions bring in different experiences and methodological approaches. The “cocktail” of such experiences brings for each region additional value as they can find similar approach in tools as in their regions.

References to relevant deliverables and web-links If applicable, pictures or images to be provided as annex

These particular tools are referring (are based upon information collected in) following deliverables:

- D.T2.1.1 Analysis report of existing advanced tools and techniques
- D.T2.1.2 Capitalization report
- D.T2.2.1 Good practice guidelines
- D.T2.2.2 Regional good practice case reports
- D.T2.2.3 Handbook tool report

And naturally to principles and contents of Transnational Food Mentor Scheme implemented in Atlas mapping tool:

<http://www.p-tech.si/icon-mapping/>