

Setting up Communities of Practice for Innovative Russian SMEs

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Presentation Overview

1. Context & Motivation
2. Rusmeco Project
3. Results of State of the Art Analysis
4. Russian Cultural Challenges
5. Conclusion



1. Context and Motivation

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important economic role in Russia
- Innovative Russian SMEs (iSMEs) often struggle to compete on a global scale
 - lack of appropriate management methods & management skills
- Management Tools for SMEs are rare and mostly designed to Western European standards
- Primary options to improve the SMEs' performance:
 - provide access to necessary knowledge and expertise
 - connect organisations and people

- -> CoP as a solution

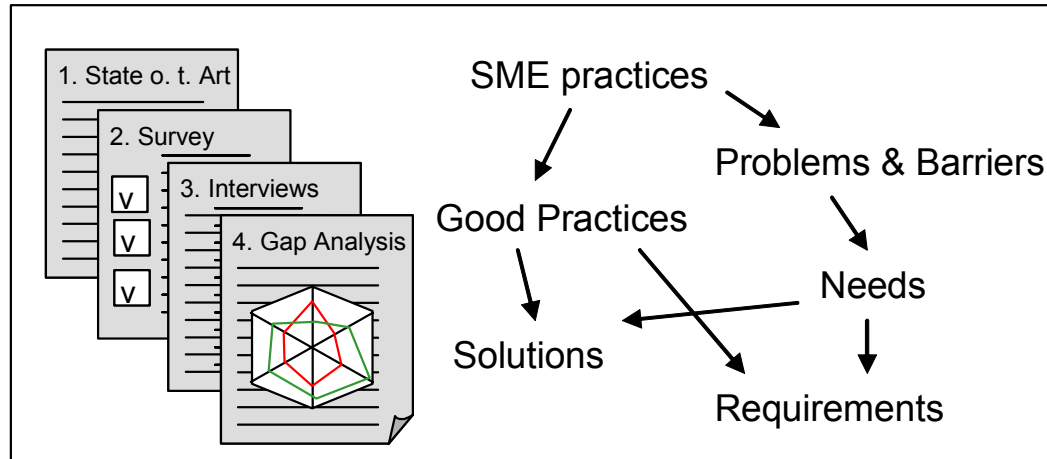
2. Rusemeco Project

- 2-year EU-funded project
- Target Innovative SMEs
- SME Clusters from Ekaterinburg, Moscow, St. Petersburg

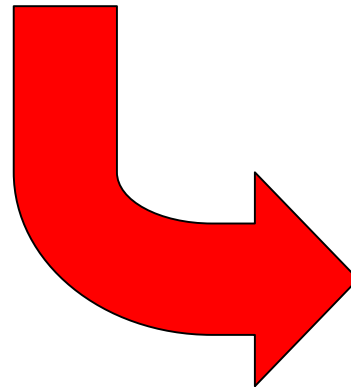
- Development Approach
 - State of the Art Analysis
 - Compare Russia & Europe:
 - Management Methods
 - IT-Tool Usage
 - Industry Requirements Collection
 - Solution Development
 - Validation & Testing



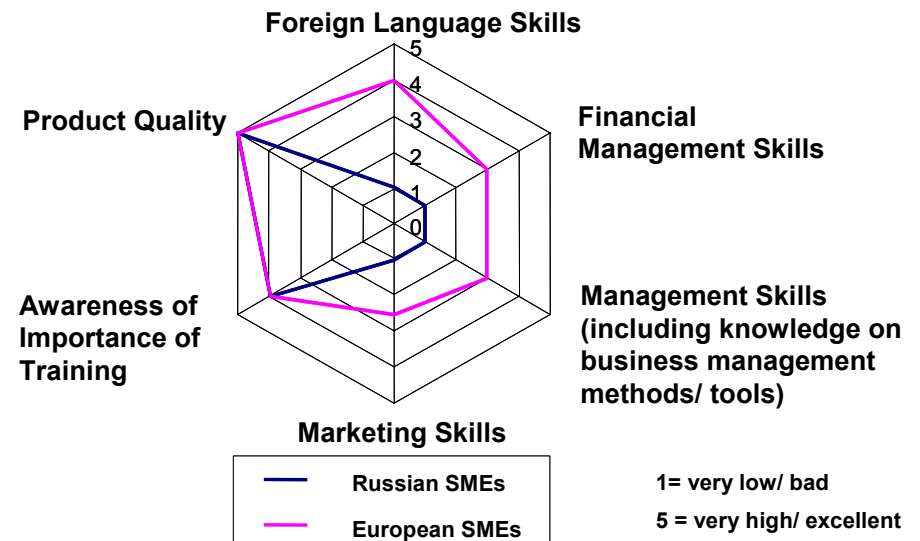
3. SoA Results - Overview



53 interviews and 81 questionnaires filled in by SMEs and Business Support Organisations (BSO)



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: SKILLS/COMPETENCIES



3. SoA Results

- The concept of communities, and especially Communities of Practice, is **something entirely new** to Russian iSMEs
- Collaboration and **knowledge-sharing is less common** in Russian organisations.
- **Lack of basic marketing competences** to bring their innovations successfully to the national or even global market
- Russian iSMEs are less developed in terms of **supply chain management, customer relationship management and quality management/ certification**. However, they manage informal contacts better than West European firms.

4. Russian Cultural Challenges

■ Knowledge Sharing

- Collaboration and knowledge sharing less common
- Lack of organisational structures to support k-sharing
- Uncertainty avoidance very high
- Fear of misinterpretation, tendency to hoard knowledge
- Passivity, initiative discouraged
- Ukaz – top level management decision

■ Technology

- All use email
- 87% use internet daily
- 50%+ use document management systems
- However, bandwidth is low – no voice or video conf.

4. Russian Cultural Challenges

■ Collaboration

- Mainly production collaboration, less knowledge-based
- Formal contracts, long-term agreements
- Confidentiality & NDA used: patents seen as insufficient
- Personal relationships important, friends trusted
- Lack of trust in subordinates & partners
- Personal, informal networks – basis for collaboration
- Prefer local community for choosing partners
- Lack of knowledge of how to organise collaboration
- Need trust building measures
- Face to Face collaboration very important

Conclusion

RUSMECO community kick-off:

Thursday 16 November 2006, Moscow

Kick-off workshops in –

St Petersburg & Ekaterinaburg

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