Learning Together:
Peer Review Methodology

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The Peer Review learning process applied to Integrated Urban Strategies

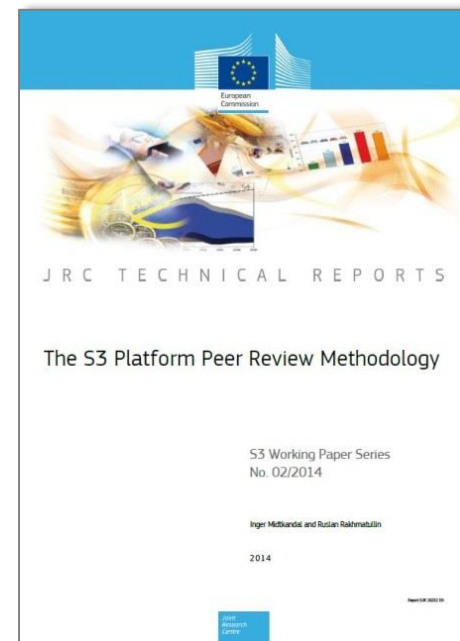- From Research & Innovation to **Urban Development**

  This peer review methodology was originally developed by the S3 Platform (Joint Research Centre, European Commission) and applied in the context of regional Research & Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation

- Developing further an innovative way for the European Commission to **engage with cities**

  proven to be an effective tool in sharing, exchanging and integrating knowledge

- **An experimental pilot** with actors coming from various parts of Europe, with different working methods and expectations

- The '**learn-by-doing**' approach

JRC TECHNICAL REPORTS

The S3 Platform Peer Review Methodology

S3 Working Paper Series
No. 02/2014

Inger Midtkandal and Ruslan Rakhmatullin

2014

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Peer Reviews are about **mutual learning**

Friendly (yet critical) discussions that allow us all:

- *Focus on specific objectives and issues/problems*

- *Build shared cognitive frameworks (common understanding)*

- *Discover good practices (and failed policies!)*

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Peer Review basics

* Participants switch roles (being peer-reviewed in one session, and becoming a reviewer/peer in another one)

* Get some experience in evaluating/benchmarking:
- *Cities under review*
- *Critical peers*
- *Experts*

* Integrating expertise and knowledge from a variety of sources (peers, invited experts, European Commission)

* Feedback reports

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Peer-Review Actors

Representatives from the cities under review

Representatives from 4 cities under review: **SEVILLE, BRNO, REGGIO EMILIA and ROTTERDAM**:
- have undergone intensive preparatory work
- will present for review their integrated urban strategies
- will reflect on their Lessons learned and Next steps

Critical friends

All peers at the workshop have the role of a critical friend providing critical (yet friendly) advice and sharing their knowledge and experience.
- The city being reviewed in one session will act as a critical friend in other sessions.

Invited experts

Experts offer their expert advice and recommendations.
During the peer review sessions, experts act as peers alongside everyone else.

Urban Development Network - UDN team

The UDN team assist the peer-reviewed cities throughout the entire peer review process.

EC Team

JRC team

The JRC colleagues assist the UDN team to apply this custom-tailored peer review methodology in the context of integrated urban strategies.

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Peer-Review structure

Thematic plenary session

- Expert presentations
- Policy opportunities in EU regulations and instruments
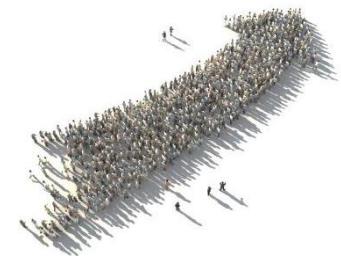
Parallel Peer Review sessions – Peer discussions

- Presentations from the cities under reviews
  - followed by short Q&A sessions
- Parallel table discussions
  - These questions are put forward by each city under review
- Followed by the results of these discussions

Plenary sessions

- Thoughts from experts and cities under review about **Lessons learned** after each peer review session
- In the final plenary session, the 4 cities under review will present their **Next steps.**

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At the core of our workshop… Peer discussions

Presentation of the **integrated urban strategy** from the city

3 questions prepared by the city

3 rounds of discussions in smaller groups (circles)

Discussion – Round 1
What is the question behind the question?

Discussion – Round 2
Your suggestions for how the underlying issue(s) can be addressed

Discussion – Round 3
What are the relevant lessons to take home?

Sharing the results - Reporting back from tables

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What can you do to benefit from this workshop?

- **Attentive listening**
    - **Listening to understand** what is being said
    - What do your peers have to teach you that you do not know?
- **Intentional speaking**
    - Focus on **what matters.**
    - Share both positive and negative experiences. These are **equally important.**
- **Suspending assumptions** and judgements
    - Contribute with your mind and heart. Allow yourself to be **both a professional and a human being**.
- Keep **networking** in mind
    - Think of possible ways to cooperate with your peers from other European cities.

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Have fun and enjoy your day!

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