

# UPREST

UP- & REskilling Sustainable  
Tourism in a new digital era

Peer review Process



# PEER REVIEW Process

## WHAT IS PEER REVIEW

Peer Review is a form of external evaluation with the aim of supporting the reviewed institution in its quality assurance and quality development efforts. Peer review is a powerful tool for mutual learning. It creates a structured opportunity for organizations to assess one another's strengths and weaknesses, share best practices, and discuss potential improvements. This process is typically voluntary, reciprocal, and non-judgmental, as the aim is not to criticize but to help both parties grow through shared insights. The process can be based on reciprocity.

An external group of experts, called Peers, is invited to assess the quality of one or more fields of activity of the organisation, such as the quality-of-service provision of individual departments or services. During the evaluation process, the Peers visit the reviewed institution.

Peers are external but work in a similar environment and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject. They are 2-3 "persons of equal standing" with the persons whose performance is being reviewed.

## WHY A PEER REVIEW

There are a number of reasons why companies or other organisations active in the field of tourism should arrange and participate in peer review:

- Peer review allows organizations to exchange knowledge and expertise. This process often results in learning new strategies or approaches that might not have been considered otherwise. By observing how another organization operates, entrepreneurs individual employees and/or teams can gain fresh perspectives on common challenges.
- Organizations that undergo peer review often see improvements in their practices due to the external perspective brought by peers. The constructive feedback encourages accountability and can lead to more efficient and effective operations across the company/organisation.
- Through the review process, organisations become more acquainted with an external perspective organization and have the opportunity to identify skill gaps or areas where further training is needed. Obtaining critical yet sympathetic feedback on the quality-of-service provision from colleagues in the field can lead to enhanced organizational competencies.
- A peer review process fosters collaboration and trust among participating organizations. by working together in a structured way, organizations build stronger relationships, which could also lead to future collaborations and partnerships.
- Objectivity and credibility: unlike internal evaluations, peer reviews bring an external and unbiased perspective. this objectivity adds credibility to the findings, making the feedback more actionable and trustworthy.

- Both the reviewed organization and the reviewing peers benefit from the process. While the reviewed organization gains insights on improvement areas, the reviewing team also learns about new approaches, processes, or practices they can adapt within their own context.
- By learning what works well elsewhere, organizations can adopt and adapt those ideas, driving improvement and innovation in their own operations

## ROLES

In a peer review process, several key roles are typically involved to ensure a structured and effective evaluation. Each role has specific responsibilities, and the collaborative efforts of these participants drive the success of the review. Here are the primary roles involved in a peer review process between organizations:

### 1. Reviewing Organization (Peer reviewer):

The reviewing organization (or team) is the peer responsible for evaluating the performance, processes, or practices of another organization. Their role is to provide objective, constructive feedback and insights based on their observations and expertise.

Responsibilities:

- **Preparation:** review the materials (Self-Assessment report) provided by the reviewed organization and understand the scope of the evaluation.
- **Observation and data collection:** conduct the Peer Review visits, interviews, and collect other documents to gather relevant information about the organization's processes.
- **Analysis:** compare the organization's practices against industry standards, best practices, or the agreed-upon quality areas and assessment criteria.
- **Providing Feedback:** offer constructive feedback, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement, and propose practical recommendations.
- **Reporting:** compile a report outlining the findings and recommendations, ensuring clarity and actionable insights for the reviewed organization.

### 2. Reviewed organization (host organisation or subject of review):

The reviewed organization is the entity being evaluated. They voluntarily open themselves up to examination by peers to gain insights on how to improve their performance and learn from external perspectives.

Responsibilities:

- **Preparation and openness:** share relevant documentation, reports, and data with the reviewing team and be open to the process.
- **Facilitation:** ensure access to staff, facilities, and operations for the reviewers to gather necessary information. Arrange interviews or meetings with key personnel.
- **Reflection and engagement:** engage in constructive dialogue with the reviewers, considering their feedback thoughtfully.
- **Implementation:** after receiving the review, the organization reflects on the feedback, decides which recommendations to adopt, and integrates improvements into their practices.

### 3. Peer Review coordinator:

The peer review coordinator is often a neutral facilitator or actor responsible for managing the review process. This role may be filled by an internal staff member from one of the participating organizations or by an external organisation (municipality or other institutional actor) to ensure neutrality.

Responsibilities:

- **Planning and coordination:** arrange the logistics of the review, including setting up meetings, coordinating schedules, and ensuring that both parties are clear about the process and timeline.
- **Clarifying objectives:** work with both the reviewing and reviewed organizations to clearly define the goals, scope, and evaluation criteria for the peer review.
- **Facilitation:** serve as a point of contact, mediating discussions between the two organizations and ensuring that the process remains smooth and focused.
- **Monitoring progress:** track the review process, ensure adherence to deadlines, and provide guidance on next steps.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- The Peer Review starts with a **preparatory phase**. In this first phase, the Peer Review is organised and a self evaluation-Report is written by the organization which is peer reviewed. Peers must be identified and get informed about the peer review procedure. A timetable for the Review is drawn up and arrangements are made for the Peer Visit.
- In the second phase, the **Peer Visit**, which is the core activity of the Peer Review procedure, takes place: Peers come to visit the hosting municipality and carry out an evaluation. This evaluation includes a tour of the premises and interviews with different groups of stakeholders. The Peers give initial oral feedback at the end of the Peer Visit.
- After the Peer Visit, a draft report is drawn up by the Peers. This report is commented on by the Peer review organization and the final **Peer Review Report** is issued.
- The fourth phase is crucial for the organisation's development: results and recommendations from the Peer Review are transferred into **concrete actions** for improvement, which are planned and implemented.

## EXAMPLE OF A TIMETABLE

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Month 1-2</b>	Organisations are identified
<b>Month 3-4</b>	A Self-evaluation Report is written by the organizations which are peer reviewed. Peers must be identified and get informed about the peer review procedure. Practical organisation of the Peer Review visit,
<b>Month 6</b>	Peers come to visit the hosting municipality and carry out an evaluation. This evaluation includes a tour of the premises and interviews with different groups of stakeholders. The Peers give initial oral feedback at the end of the Peer Visit.
<b>Month 7-8</b>	After the Peer Visit, a draft report is drawn up by the Peers.
<b>Month 8</b>	This report is commented on by the organization which Peer reviewed and the final Peer Review Report is issued.
<b>Month 9</b>	Results and recommendations from the Peer Review are transferred into concrete actions through an internal meeting in the organisation to discuss how to implement the improvements

# Self-Report for the UPREST Peer Review



**Reviewed organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## SELF-REPORT FOR THE UPREST PEER REVIEW

### 1. Data sheet

#### 1.1 Contact information

	Name	Contact (e-mail)
Peer Review Responsible		
Other person involved		

#### 1.2 Aims and purpose of the Peer Review

#### 1.3 Internal Organisation for the conduct of the Peer Review (describe who is responsible for which tasks?)

#### 1.4 Scope of the peer review

#### 1.5 Focus areas to be reviewed

#### 1.6 List of Peers (to be provided by the partners) with names and contact information

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Contact person			
Peer 1			
Peer 2			
Peer 3			
Peer 4			

## SELF-REPORT FOR THE UPREST PEER REVIEW

### 2.

#### Description of the organisation

*This section should give the Peers an overview of the kind of services offered. All important features should be mentioned. Make sure that the Peers have sufficient information on those parts of your institution that are to be reviewed.*

*The section should include:*

- *the mission statement*
- *a brief general description of the services and sufficient information on those parts of your institution that are to be reviewed.*
- *information on the cooperation with stakeholders (e.g. companies, public authorities, schools etc. if applicable) and*
- *a short description of the environment (regional social and economic situation, regional competition, regional challenges).*
- *a summary of quality assurance and development efforts undertaken so far*
- *statistical information*

*An organisational chart should be attached*

*For a transnational Peer Review, an explanation of how the system works should be given*

**Tip:** *Supporting documents like brochures etc. can be annexed.*

**Tip:** *Make sure that the Peers have sufficient information on those parts of your organisation that are to be reviewed.*

#### **2.1 Mission statement**

*(max. 0.5 - 1 page)*

#### **2.2 Description of the services including information on cooperation with stakeholders**

*(max. 1 page)*

#### **2.3 Short description of the environment**

*(max. 0.5 - 1 page)*

#### **2.4 Summary of quantitative statistical information**

*(max. 0.5 - 1 page)*

#### **2.5 Organisational Chart**

*(optional)*



## SELF-REPORT FOR THE UPREST PEER REVIEW

### 3.

#### Quality assurance/quality management

*In this section give an overview of the quality assurance policies in your organisation, the structures and responsibilities and the kind of activities and improvement measures that are currently undertaken. If you have a quality management system in place, please explain shortly how it works.*

*Make sure to describe:*

- *Quality assurance and (if any) development policy*
- *Quality assurance activities and improvement measures (including QM system and an overview of data generated and used)*
- *Overall self-assessment of quality of the service*

*Also give an overview of the most important kind of data you collect (including how it is collected: e.g. "satisfaction of users with provision, biannual online survey").*

**Tip:** *Make sure that the data you will use in your assessment of the quality areas is described.*

#### **3.1 Description of quality assurance/quality management if any** (max. 0.5 page)

## SELF-REPORT FOR THE UPREST PEER REVIEW

### 4. Self-evaluation/self-assessment

*The self-evaluation should respond to the following questions: What goes well? What does not? What are our strengths and weaknesses, what should we improve and how should we improve in general? A short description of the self-evaluation/self-assessment process as a whole should give a brief summary of the aims of the self-evaluation, the people responsible and involved, the procedure and methods and the timeframe. Then main results of the self-evaluation should be reported.*

**Tip:** Do not repeat the general quality policies and measures reported in chapter 3, but refer to them when necessary (e.g. when data from surveys, which are regularly conducted within the QM system, is used)

#### 4.1 Self-evaluation (max. 0.5 page)

## SELF-REPORT FOR THE UPREST PEER REVIEW

### 5. Assessment of Quality Areas

*This is the "heart" of the self-report. In this section all the information the Peers need to prepare and conduct the Peer Review should be provided.*

- *Assess each quality area separately (max. 1 pages per quality area, an overall assessment of the quality of the services that are provided)*
- *At least 2 criteria should be reviewed for every quality area. For each criterion, the strengths and areas of improvement should be summarised. Substantiate your assessments and briefly record sources of evidence.*
- *Then the whole Quality Area should be assessed on the basis of the assessment of the strengths and areas of improvement on the levels of the criteria.*
- *Improvement measures (planned and implemented) must be pointed out.*
- *Evaluation questions for the Peers should be formulated (recommended).*

*Please describe the results of the self-assessment in continuous text (only illustrative use of tables).*

**1) Sustainability and 2) Digitalization : Use of artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Open Data.**

#### 5.1 Quality area 1: SUSTAINABILITY

Strengths and areas of improvement by criterion (including the sources of evidence)

Assessment criterion 1

Assessment criterion 2

Assessment criterion 3

Assessment criterion ...

Overall assessment of the Quality area

Is there any improvement measures (already planned and/or implemented)

Possible Evaluation questions for the Peers

## 5.2 Quality area 1: DIGITALISATION

Strengths and areas of improvement by criterion (including the sources of evidence)

Assessment criterion 1

Assessment criterion 2

Assessment criterion 3

Assessment criterion ...

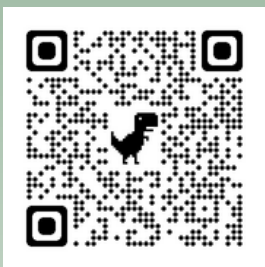
Overall assessment of the Quality area

Is there any improvement measures (already planned and/or implemented)

Possible Evaluation questions for the Peers



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