



# Creatives and Job Opportunities Action Plan Germany

as guided by Exploratory Panels

[www.circularcreatives.eu](http://www.circularcreatives.eu)

By  
Global Impact Grid, Germany



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## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

### What is the overall aim of the Circular Creatives project and the role of Exploratory Panels?

Circular Creatives is a unique ERASMUS+ Vocational Education and Training project that aims to increase the number of creative businesses using Circular Economic practices and equipping VET educators with the skills to teach current and emerging creative entrepreneurs about the circular economy. Significantly, this project will transform the employment potential of unemployed and underemployed aspiring creatives, allowing them to return to and enter the creative industry as more sustainably minded entrepreneurs.

The creative industry has been among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on events significantly affecting business operations and revenue generation. Lockdowns and social distancing measures have led to the closure of craft fairs and markets, which are vital sales channels for many artisans. These closures have caused a significant drop in revenue for craftspeople. According to the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, some 53pc of businesses reported a decrease in sales because of the pandemic, resulting in an estimated fall in turnover of €1.6bn. According to a study by the Crafts Council in the UK, 74% of craft businesses reported a fall in income due to COVID-19, and nearly half were uncertain about their survival without further support.

Moreover, global political instability has led to increased costs and uncertainty. Supply chains, in particular, have been disrupted due to tariffs (in the case of Brexit), and the war in Ukraine. Climate change, too, is creating new costs and uncertainties, affecting the availability and pricing of materials, and forcing creative industries to adapt to new norms and standards to mitigate their environmental impact. For example, in regions affected by severe drought or flooding, the supply of certain types of wood, plant fibres, or other natural materials may be reduced, leading to price increases. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimated in 2018 that the creative industries could experience losses of up to \$160 billion annually by 2030 due to climate change-related issues. These could include the increased cost of raw materials, losses from extreme weather events, and the cost of transitioning to more sustainable practices.

As part of our new world of work, one of the most important pathways towards a sustainable economy is the circular economy, aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources through reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling to create a closed-loop system. But many struggle on where to start.

In this complex environment, our project Circular Creatives seeks to bring transformative solutions, stabilise employment and provide opportunities for the un/under employed and ultimately to foster resilience and sustainability in the creative industry. The project aims to incorporate circular economy practices that will make a difference across the creative industry:-

- **Fostering Sustainable Entrepreneurs:** By prioritizing circular economy practices, we are not just changing the way creatives work, but also cultivating a new generation of entrepreneurs who value sustainability and are conscious of their environmental footprint. These entrepreneurs will be equipped with the skills to innovate and adapt to a rapidly changing environment, helping to ensure the long-term viability of the creative industry.
- **Enhancing Employment Potential:** Many creatives are currently underemployed or unemployed due to the impact of the pandemic and challenges of increasing material costs. By providing them with training on circular economy practices and sustainable entrepreneurship, the project can help them create more resilient and competitive businesses. This could, in turn, lead to new job opportunities and avenues for growth within the industry. Furthermore, the appeal of sustainable practices can make creative professions more attractive to consumers and investors, leading to an increase in demand and revenue.

- **Educating VET Educators:** VET educators play a crucial role in shaping the skills and mindsets of future creative professionals. Equipping them with the knowledge and tools to teach about circular economy can create a ripple effect, fostering more sustainable practices across the industry.
- **Sustainability in Creative Businesses:** Circular economy practices, which involve reducing waste, increasing the lifecycle of products, and creating a loop of reuse and recycling, can help to significantly cut down costs and environmental impact. For instance, a fashion designer could use recycled materials and create designs that are modular and can be updated instead of replaced, greatly reducing waste and material costs. Artisans could repurpose materials, while architects and interior designers can promote the use of sustainable building materials and designs. We will help these businesses to focus on more sustainable methods of doing business and growing their business with a triple line motive – planet, people, profit.

The challenges faced by the creative industry are significant, but so too are the opportunities for transformation and resilience. By embracing the principles of the circular economy, the Circular Creatives project can help to steer the industry towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

### WHAT ARE CREATIVES AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES EXPLORATORY PANELS?

Under the leadership of Roscommon LEADER Partnership, our [Partners - Circular Creatives](#) have established four regional think tanks called **Creatives and Job Opportunities Exploratory Panels** in Roscommon, Ireland; Berlin, Germany; Šibenik, Croatia; and Athens, Greece. Bringing together a panel of 30 creative entrepreneurs, VET educators, those working with the unemployed, creative sector networks and development agencies to share best practice approaches and co-creating solutions that are responsive to real need in the regions.

Over the course of our project each Exploratory Panel will meet several times to:

- Research and explore the challenges and opportunities faced by creative entrepreneurs and how adapting to a circular economy approach can transform their creative practice and businesses.
- Involve creative professionals in developing innovative solutions that will future proof their employability and resilience in the face of potential crises.
- Gauge the desire and ability of unemployed people to learn and upskill from creative and VET trainers in implementing circular economies in employment or self-employment.

In addition to meeting as a group, each Exploratory Panel conducted a series of interviews, surveys and discussion panels before developing an Action Plan of collective action. This publication is our Polytechnic, Croatia Action Plan, and is the first action of [4 resources](#) to support Circular Creatives.

<b>The Metrics of Creative and Job Opportunities Exploratory Panels</b>
<p><b>4</b> Creative and Job Opportunities Exploratory Panels (1 in each country)  <b>120</b> people (<b>30 per country</b>) will be involved in the panels from our key target groups  <b>400</b> people will download the action plans created by the</p>



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# 1. Country Specific Context – Germany

## Creative entrepreneurship industry in Germany

The creative entrepreneurship industry in Germany is a dynamic and diverse sector with significant growth potential. While challenges such as funding and market saturation exist, the sector's capacity for innovation, strong support infrastructure, and international reputation position it for continued success. With a focus on sustainability and cross-sector collaboration, Germany's creative entrepreneurs are poised to contribute both economically and culturally to the nation's future. The creative entrepreneurship industry in Germany has experienced substantial growth in recent years, contributing significantly to the country's economic and cultural landscape.

Here is an overview of the creative entrepreneurship sector in Germany, including key characteristics, challenges, and opportunities.

### The Creative Entrepreneurship sector is characterized by

1. **Diverse Ecosystem:** Germany boasts a diverse and vibrant creative ecosystem encompassing various sectors, including design, music, fashion, film, visual arts, and digital media.
2. **Innovation and Collaboration:** Creative entrepreneurs in Germany often emphasize innovation and collaboration. Startups and small businesses frequently collaborate with traditional industries, leading to innovative products and services.
3. **Supportive Infrastructure:** The country offers a robust support infrastructure for creative entrepreneurs, including incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and funding programs. This support fosters the growth of creative startups.
4. **International Reach:** German creative entrepreneurs frequently expand their reach globally, showcasing their talents and products on the international stage. This globalization has helped Germany establish itself as a creative hub.

### Challenges

1. **Funding and Investment:** While support for creative startups exists, securing funding and investment remains a challenge, especially for those in niche or non-traditional creative sectors.
2. **Intellectual Property Protection:** Protecting intellectual property can be complex in the creative industry, and ensuring fair compensation for creators remains a concern.
3. **Market Saturation:** In certain segments like the digital media and design sectors, competition is fierce, and market saturation can make it challenging for new entrants to differentiate themselves.
4. **Sustainability:** As in other industries, the creative entrepreneurship sector faces pressure to become more sustainable. Balancing creativity with environmental responsibility is a growing concern.

### Opportunities

1. **Tech Integration:** Integrating technology such as AI, AR, and VR into creative products and services presents opportunities for innovative startups.
2. **Cross-sector Collaboration:** Collaboration with traditional industries like manufacturing and tourism offers avenues for creative entrepreneurs to create unique and marketable products.
3. **Exporting Creativity:** German creative entrepreneurs can continue to leverage the "Made in Germany" reputation to expand their global reach and exports.

4. **Sustainable Practices:** Incorporating sustainability into creative entrepreneurship can attract eco-conscious consumers and investors.

### Circular Economy in Germany

Germany is a leader in the circular economy, with a well-established policy framework, a strong focus on waste management and resource efficiency, and a commitment to sustainable innovation. While challenges remain, Germany's continued efforts in this direction are essential for a more sustainable and resource-efficient future. By being a leading proponent of the circular economy in Europe Germany has made significant strides in transitioning towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient economic model.

Here is an overview of the circular economy in Germany, including key initiatives, policies, and achievements.

1. **Policy Framework:** Germany has a robust legal and policy framework to promote the circular economy. The German Circular Economy Act (Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz) is a key legislation that sets the stage for waste prevention, recycling, and sustainable resource management. Additionally, the National Resource Efficiency Program (ProgRes) outlines strategies and targets for conserving resources.
2. **Waste Management:** The country boasts an advanced waste management system, with a focus on recycling and waste reduction. Germany has one of the highest recycling rates in the world, recycling around 68% of municipal waste in 2019. The "Green Dot" system, which assigns responsibility to producers for their packaging waste, has been successful in promoting recycling and waste reduction.
3. **Industrial Initiatives:** Germany encourages industrial symbiosis, where one company's waste becomes another's resource. Numerous industrial parks and networks exist, promoting the exchange of materials and resources. Companies such as BMW and BASF have adopted circular principles in their production processes.
4. **Resource Efficiency:** Resource efficiency is a central goal in Germany's circular economy strategy. Industries are encouraged to minimize resource consumption while maintaining economic growth. The Resource Efficiency Programme supports businesses in optimizing their processes and reducing waste.
5. **Sustainable Innovation:** Germany is known for fostering innovation in sustainability. Initiatives like the "Mittelstand 4.0-Kompetenzzentrum Berlin" help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) adopt digital technologies for sustainable production and resource efficiency.
6. **Circular Business Models:** German companies are exploring various circular business models. For instance, car-sharing services like Flinkster promote shared mobility, reducing the need for vehicle ownership. Additionally, platforms like Too Good To Go combat food waste by connecting consumers with surplus food from restaurants and stores.
7. **Challenges:** Despite substantial progress, Germany faces challenges in fully implementing a circular economy. These include the need for better design of products for recyclability, reducing waste incineration, and addressing the issue of electronic waste. Achieving circularity across all sectors remains a long-term goal.
8. **Future Outlook:** Germany's commitment to the circular economy is expected to intensify. The country aims to be climate-neutral by 2045 and will need to further integrate circularity into its

climate strategy. This will likely involve continued investment in research, innovation, and the adoption of circular principles across industries.

### Challenges in Implementing Circular Economy in Germany

Germany's pursuit of a circular economy, while commendable, is not without its share of challenges. Germany faces several challenges in its pursuit of a circular economy, ranging from product design and consumer behaviour to regulatory frameworks and funding. Overcoming these obstacles will require concerted efforts from government, businesses, and civil society. Despite the challenges, Germany's commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency remains strong, making it a significant player in the global circular economy movement.

Some of the key obstacles faced in the process of transitioning to a circular economy model are summarized below:

1. **Product Design and Lifecycle:** One significant challenge lies in rethinking product design and lifecycle management. Products are often designed without easy disassembly or recycling in mind, hindering the circular flow of materials. Encouraging eco-design principles across industries is essential.
2. **Consumer Behaviour:** Changing consumer behaviour and preferences is a complex task. Encouraging reuse, repair, and sharing rather than traditional ownership poses a challenge, as does overcoming the convenience-centric throwaway culture.
3. **E-waste:** The management of electronic waste (e-waste) remains problematic. Germany generates a significant amount of e-waste, and effective recycling and recovery systems are necessary. Improving collection and recycling rates for electronic devices is vital.
4. **Regulation and Standardization:** Achieving a circular economy requires a harmonized regulatory framework and standardized practices. Consistency in waste sorting and recycling procedures across regions and industries is necessary for success.
5. **Investment and Funding:** Transitioning to circular business models often requires substantial initial investments. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may struggle to access the necessary capital to adopt sustainable practices.
6. **Lack of Awareness:** While Germany has made strides in raising awareness about the circular economy, there is still work to be done. Many individuals and businesses remain unaware of the economic and environmental benefits of circular practices.
7. **Waste Incineration:** Germany's reliance on waste-to-energy incineration plants poses a challenge to achieving zero waste goals. Shifting away from this practice requires alternative waste management solutions and infrastructure investments.
8. **Global Supply Chains:** Germany's export-oriented economy is intricately tied to global supply chains, which can make it challenging to trace and control the lifecycle of products and materials.
9. **Cultural Shift:** Cultivating a culture of resourcefulness, where waste is seen as a resource, requires time and effort. Convincing stakeholders to prioritize circularity over traditional linear economic models is an ongoing challenge.

### Opportunities for Implementing Circular Practices in Creative Startups in Germany

Creative startups in Germany can embrace circular practices to drive innovation, sustainability, and economic growth.



Here's a brief overview of the opportunities for incorporating circularity into creative ventures:

### **1. Product Life Extension**

- Repair and Restoration Services: Creative startups can offer services that extend the lifespan of products, such as furniture restoration or vintage clothing repairs.
- Digital Archiving: Creative ventures in media and entertainment can preserve and digitize historical or rare content, reducing the need for physical copies and preventing content loss.

### **2. Material Recycling and Upcycling**

- Fashion and Textiles: Startups can design clothing using recycled textiles or upcycled materials, reducing textile waste.
- Art and Sculpture: Creative entrepreneurs can use discarded or repurposed materials to create unique art pieces, reducing landfill waste.

### **3. Collaborative Consumption Models:**

- Art and Design Sharing: Platforms can facilitate the sharing or renting of art, design pieces, or equipment, promoting resource-sharing and reducing overconsumption.
- Co-working Spaces: Creative startups can establish eco-friendly co-working spaces with shared resources to minimize waste and energy consumption.

### **4. Digital Solutions**

- Digital Design Tools: Startups can create digital design tools that optimize material use, reducing waste in the production process.
- Digital Marketplaces: Platforms can connect artists, designers, and customers in a digital ecosystem, reducing the need for physical intermediaries and resources.

### **5. Circular Business Models**

- Subscription Services: Creative ventures can offer subscription-based models for art, design, or media content, promoting access over ownership.
- Product as a Service: Startups can shift from selling products to offering services, maintenance, or upgrades, ensuring products are kept in circulation.

### **6. Waste Reduction and Recycling Initiatives**

- Zero-Waste Events: Creative event management startups can promote zero-waste practices, encouraging responsible consumption and recycling.
- Sustainable Packaging Design: Creative startups can design eco-friendly packaging solutions that reduce waste and environmental impact.

### **7. Cultural and Educational Initiatives**

- Awareness Campaigns: Creative entrepreneurs can use their storytelling and design skills to raise awareness about circular economy principles.
- Education and Workshops: Startups can offer workshops or online courses on circular practices, inspiring the next generation of circular thinkers.

### **8. Cross-Industry Collaborations**

- Partnering with sustainable fashion brands, tech startups, or manufacturing companies to co-create products or solutions that align with circular principles.

## 9. Eco-friendly Events and Exhibitions

- Hosting or participating in eco-conscious events and exhibitions that showcase sustainable creative practices and products.

In conclusion, creative startups in Germany have numerous opportunities to integrate circular practices into their business models. By embracing circularity, these ventures can not only reduce their environmental footprint but also appeal to a growing market of environmentally conscious consumers, positioning themselves as leaders in sustainability and innovation.

## So, what is happening in our region? Mapping initiatives, past and present

Germany has been a hub for circular creative initiatives, where innovation and sustainability intersect.

Here are some notable initiatives of circular creative practices in Germany's creative sector that actively contributes to the country's circular economy goals. Whether it's through sustainable fashion, art installations, shared workspaces, or innovative digital tools, these practices not only reduce waste but also inspire others to adopt circular principles.

### 1. Upcycled Fashion Brands:

- HempAge: A sustainable fashion brand in Germany, HempAge, specializes in using hemp and organic cotton to create clothing. Their circular approach includes recycling and upcycling old clothing into new products, extending the lifecycle of materials.
- mymarini: mymarini is a swimwear brand that incorporates recycled materials, like ocean plastic, into their designs, demonstrating how fashion can contribute to reducing plastic pollution.

**2. Circular Art Installations:** HA Schult's "Trash People": German artist HA Schult's famous installation "Trash People" features life-sized human figures made from recycled materials like scrap metal and plastic. This thought-provoking artwork highlights the issue of waste and consumption.

**3. Shared Workspaces and Studios:** Factory Berlin: Factory Berlin, a co-working space in the heart of Berlin, fosters innovation and collaboration. They prioritize sustainable practices and have initiatives to reduce waste and promote eco-friendly events and workshops.

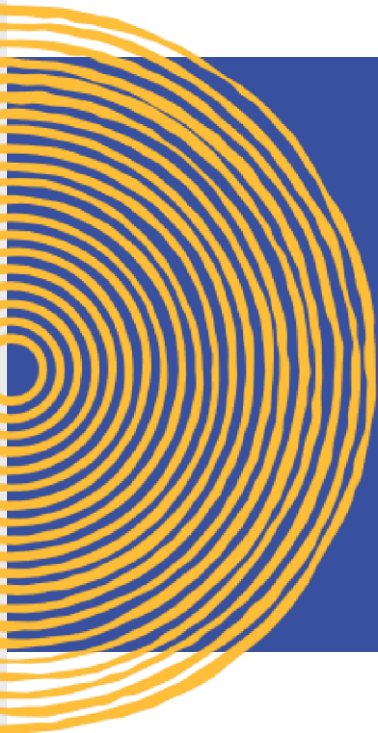
**4. Circular Event Management:** Greentech Festival: An annual event in Berlin, the Greentech Festival showcases cutting-edge technology and innovations with a strong focus on sustainability. The festival adopts circular practices by minimizing waste and promoting responsible consumption.

**5. Online Platforms for Circular Exchange:** Too Good To Go: While not exclusive to Germany, this app connects consumers with surplus food from restaurants and stores at reduced prices, reducing food waste and promoting circular consumption habits.

**6. Digital Circular Design Tools:** TetraBIN: TetraBIN is a German startup that designs smart recycling bins equipped with digital displays. These bins encourage people to recycle by turning it into an interactive game.

**7. Eco-Friendly Packaging Innovations:** biodegradable.de: This company focuses on developing and supplying biodegradable and sustainable packaging solutions, offering eco-friendly alternatives to traditional packaging materials.

8. **Sustainable Art Galleries:** Berlin Blue Art: Berlin Blue Art is an art gallery in Berlin dedicated to sustainable art practices. They showcase environmentally conscious art and promote circularity within the art community.
9. **Cultural and Educational Initiatives:** Circular Economy School: This platform offers online courses and workshops that educate individuals and businesses about circular economy principles, fostering a community of circular thinkers.



## 2. Exploratory Panels get to Work

Circular Creatives is based on the understanding and acceptance that the creative industry cannot regain its pre-pandemic level without introducing new methods to support and enhance the skills of creative professionals to meet the demands of modern business and future employment trends.

Global Impact Grid (GIG) played a pivotal role by offering a comprehensive overview of the essential stakeholders required to ensure the success of the Creative and Job Opportunities Exploratory Panel in Berlin, Germany. During the organization of Panel meetings, GIG compiled an extensive list of participants, including creative entrepreneurs, vocational education and training (VET) educators, professionals engaged in workforce development, representatives from creative sector networks, and development agencies. These individuals were invited to participate in the project, contributing their best practices and solutions tailored to address the genuine needs of the Berlin region.

These meetings and workshops served as the catalyst for the development of our Action Plan.

### 1. Inaugural Meeting/Panel Meeting – July 2022

On 08.07.2022, GIG visited an artists' co-working space in Berlin, Neukölln (Flughafenstraße 17, 12053 Berlin) which is used by 10-15 artists ranging from architects to visual artists, to craftsmen. The panel was held with the participation of the space's 2 leaders and 6 other artists.

#### 1.1. Win – What went well?

There were some insights given by the artists, which can be used for the next project results:

- They were generally not very badly hit by the pandemic as they are anyway not profit-oriented, and they received state help. Indeed, for some of the artists, the pandemic was an opportunity of free time to focus on their own artistic work in an unrestricted way.
- Information / guide about available funds / prize-competitions is something they would be mostly interested to know about, because 'fund-restriction' is usually their biggest challenge. This can be considered for the Training Course (PR2).
- For some of the artists, 'circularity' is part of their work already. For example, they make use of the 'waste' of big artistic events, constructions, etc. as their 'material'. Although they have personal connections in getting such by-products, a 'market-place' where different parties can meet could be an interesting feature of the Knowledge Sharing Platform (PR3).

#### 1.2. LEARN - What did you learn? What didn't go well?

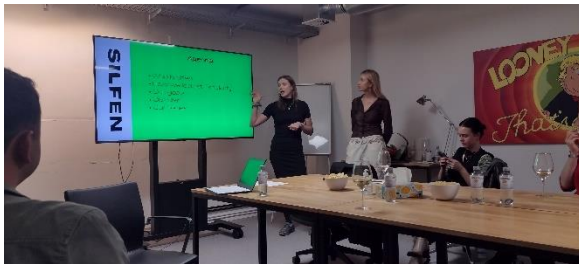
The artists that participated in the panel were not business- / profit-oriented. Their working concept already evolves around 'zero-waste' and it was not very clear for them how they can benefit from the ECCE project and its outputs. Still, during the exchange, some valuable insights could be received (explained above).

#### 1.3. CHANGE – What would you do differently next time?

To be able to collect diverse insights, the next panels should try to attract creatives with more business / entrepreneurial drive.

## 2. Panel Meeting 2– November 2023

On 11.11.2022, GIG organized a panel meeting at Silfen Studio a designer house that produces bags and accessories. They operate in the fast fashion industry and they hosted the meeting at their venue on behalf of GIG for the ECCE project. There were 7 participants. Silfenstudio presented a detailed case study and focused primarily on circularity in fashion businesses and showcased Silfenstudio's efforts towards ensuing circularity in their operations.



### 2.1. WIN – What went well?

The right host who was well aligned with the topic, therefore inviting participants was easier.

The discussions around 'When is a brand circular' was encouraging. Metrics such as average no:of times an apparel such a t-shirt is worn and how increasing the average directly contributes to circularity and sustainability was insightful.

The focus should be on making sure that

- The Products lasts as long as possible
- The Products are produced with as less waste as possible and
- We know what will happen to the product at the end

The participants were forthcoming in suggesting how to be more circular given the context of Silfenstudio. In the absence of a context, it becomes difficult for participants to relate to and contribute. The following suggestion came up from the participants:

- Tracing and tracking are the long-term goals.
- Renting of products (or subscription model) was discussed as against purchasing.
- Provision of reselling back to the company may also be a way of ensuring circularity.

There were some insights given by the artists, which can be used for the next project results:

- One common point between the first panel and the second one was, the business was not hit so much in the pandemic. In fact the post pandemic slowdown is posing more of an issue than during pandemic.

### 2.2. LEARN - What did you learn? What didn't go well?

The assumed that building concepts or circularity and sustainability during early stages of business is much easier than in the later stages, turned out to be only partially true. While it is easier to drive the

culture of thinking and designing products right from the early stages, it is not easy to operationalize from early on. There are certain aspects of business that is viable only after a certain scale. For e.g. the logistics of renting products is prohibitively high, even though the intentions are right. It is possible for larger companies but not a start-up or individual entrepreneurs.

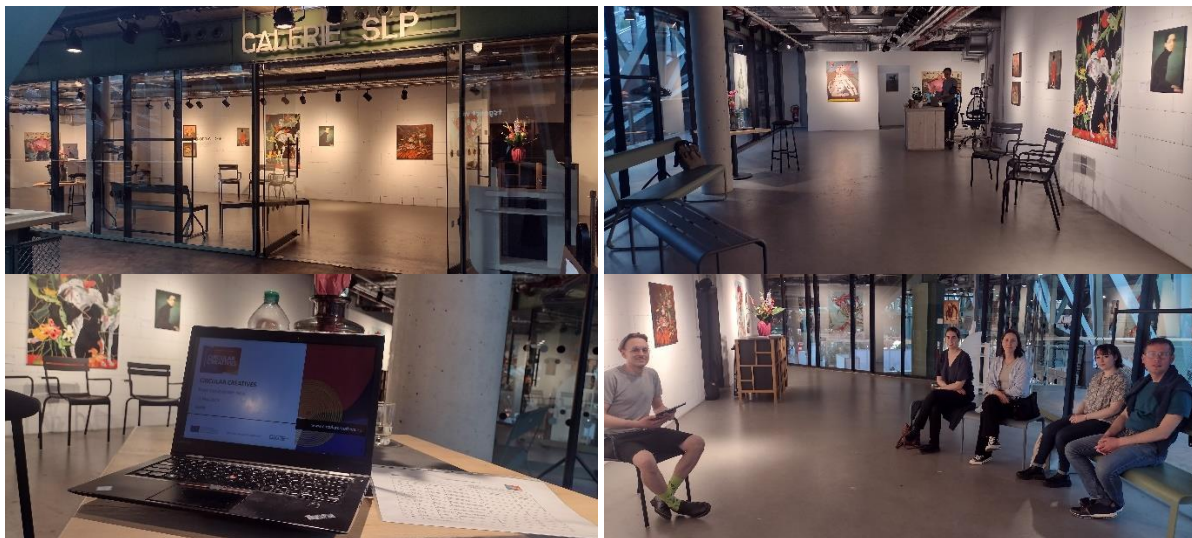
### 2.3. CHANGE – What would you do differently next time?

To explore deeper relationship with businesses like Silfenstudio for better connection with creative entrepreneurs. Building on such networks would be beneficial in the long run.

## 3. PANEL MEETING May 2023

On 12.05.2023, GIG organized the third panel meeting at SLP Galerie an art Gallery that promotes contemporary artists and painters. They operate in the creative arts industry and they hosted the meeting at their venue on behalf of GIG for the ECCE project. There were 8 participants. GIG started by presenting the project and introducing SLP Galerie to the participants. SLEP Galerie presented about their Galeria and how it supports budding artists and how they promote circularity through arts.

SLP Galerie takes prides from the fact that they provide space for artists from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition to theme-based exhibitions, SLP also organizes exhibitions that implement circularity in arts by supporting artists who work with waste materials to produce arts. SLP is a truly inclusive art house which aligns well with the principles of Erasmus+ program.



The discussion followed the structure of a) GIG presenting the project and organization, b) SLP Galerie presenting about the Galerie and, c) open discussions to encourage participation from the participants.

### 3.1. WIN – What went well?

The right host who was well aligned with the topic, therefore inviting participants was easier. Also, the space and location of SLP Galerie provided an advantage by providing the right ambience for people to relate to the topic easily.

The discussions started by going around ‘How to implement Circularity in arts’. However, in contrast to the previous panel, this panel naturally gravitated to one of the vital angles of sustainability, which is, financial sustainability. Noble thoughts apart, one of the main reasons why circularity in arts is still an issue to be tackled is the lack of a financial model.



Some of the participants who were from music background brought this perspective out. Music though a creative, art, is not easily relatable when it comes to the concept of circularity. This is similar to the digital creative segment. Though creative, is difficult to relate to circularity.

The discussion was specifically related to IPR and how to monetize. SLP Galerie explained the business model of art galleries and how the value appreciation of art pieces never goes back to the artist.

The discussion was lively and invited participation of all the attendees. Some of the participants who had thought of circularity in their businesses went back with a commitment to implement circular practices in their line of functioning.

There insights given by the musicians, can be an area of exploration:

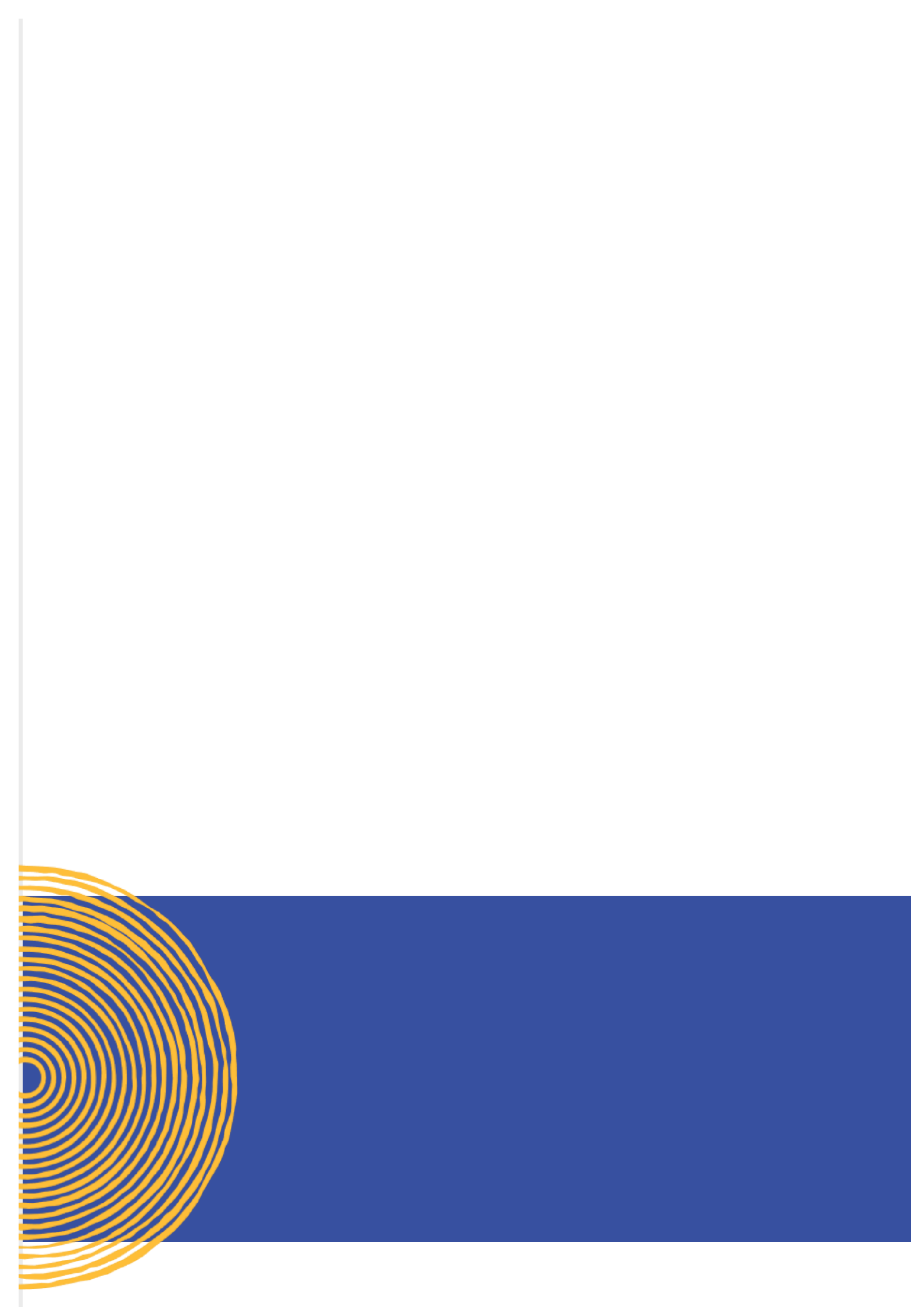
- Which is how to ensure financial sustainability of artists, craftsmen and artisans, so that circularity becomes their way of expression that results in sustainable art practices.

### 3.2. LEARN - What did you learn? What didn't go well?

The event was an eye-opener to the areas of circularity which is difficult to think through. Some of the participants anticipated that some solutions or insights to their challenges may evolve as an outcome of the discussions. However, it is an area where we found ourselves inadequate.

### 3.3. CHANGE – What would you do differently next time?

In addition to explore deepering relationship with businesses like SLP Galerie, Silfenstudio (host of panel 2) for better connection with creative entrepreneurs, we also realized the need to engage with event partners who specialize in running events targeting either a) creative entrepreneurs, artists etc. or b) circularity/sustainability related events. Utilizing their existing events to take our project to a wider audience will definitely benefit the project. However, such organizations are a very targeted niche and hence finding and tying up with them will be a challenge that we would like to overcome next time.





# 3. Research Findings

Research findings from Creative Entrepreneurs Survey 1, completed by 32 participants working in the following fields:

- Fashion, Clothing, Retail
- Graphic/Web design, Videography, Photography
- Media (acting, content, writing, etc) and textile art
- Social Media & Management
- Music
- IT
- Production
- Others

The main objective of the survey was to gather information about how the pandemic affected creative entrepreneurs in different countries and if they are familiar with circular economy practices.

The survey was structured in 4 parts with each part having with a specific purpose:

1. The first part aimed at assessing the impact on the pandemic on Creative entrepreneurs. The highlights of the responses are as follows:

- 25% of the respondents agree that the business was prepared for the pandemic.  
However, 44% disagree
- 34% of the respondents agree that the business was not affected by the pandemic  
41% disagree with this
- 53% of the respondents agree that they could switch to online business easily  
28% disagree
- 25% of the respondents agree that the Government reacted promptly and offered adequate help and support  
34% disagree
- 38% of the respondents agree that online workshops were available to help with the business  
38% of the respondents disagree
- 22% of the respondents agree that creative entrepreneurs organized support among themselves  
37% of the respondents disagree
- 25% of the respondents agree that the **local** government assistance and financial support was available  
47% disagree with this
- 34% of the respondents agree that the **National** government assistance and financial support was available  
47% disagree with this
- 34% of the respondents agree that the **other** assistance and financial support was available  
44% disagree with this
- 25% of the respondents agree that customers stopped using the services and struggled to bring them back  
41% disagree
- 62% of the respondents agree that they are still active creative entrepreneurs  
6% are not active anymore
- 47% of the respondents agree that prefer working in person rather than online  
31% do not prefer that

- 22% of the respondents agree that circular economic/sustainable practices helped during the pandemic  
41% do not agree

The need for the Circular Creatives project is ascertained from the facts that:

- More respondents disagreeing that a) they were prepared for the pandemic and b) the business was not affected by pandemic.
- More respondents disagreeing that the financial support was available (locally, nationally and otherwise).
- 41% of the respondents disagreeing that circular practices helped them. This clearly shows the lack of awareness and education.
- The positive aspect is 62% of the participants are still active as entrepreneurs, which gives a huge opportunity.

2. The second part aimed at capturing the circular practices and preferences of the respondents. The highlights of the responses are as follows:

- 56% of the respondents agree that the main objective of their work is to live and have a purpose not to build wealth
- 41% agree that waste material in their work is of creative use
- 50% agree that sustainability is an important factor in their work
- 50% can often use discarded goods
- 50% share their creative resources (e.g. materials etc) with other businesses
- 59% re-use materials more often than not
- 41% do not use resources with pollutants/that cause pollution
- 66% try to find time to spend in nature as part of their work
- 44% try to live 'zero waste'
- 44% are familiar with the circular economy and incorporate it in daily work

All these responses indicate a significant majority over the responses that are not in the affirmative, which shows an impressive level of inclination to sustainable circular practices among the creative entrepreneurs in Germany.

3. The third part assesses the VET system and how it helps the Creative Entrepreneurs in generating awareness on circular economy and circular practices.

- 31% disagree that the VET School a mechanism for ensuring a skilled workforce that can thrive in and scale up the circular economy
- 41% disagree that VET School collaborate with industry to advance knowledge on the circular economy. However 50% agree as well.
- 31% disagree that the VET School encourages the development of basic circular economy skills
- 28% disagree that there is a circular economy platform in your VET School

These responses presents a strong case validating the inadequacy of the VET system in Germany, in terms of preparedness or alignment with the needs of circular creatives.

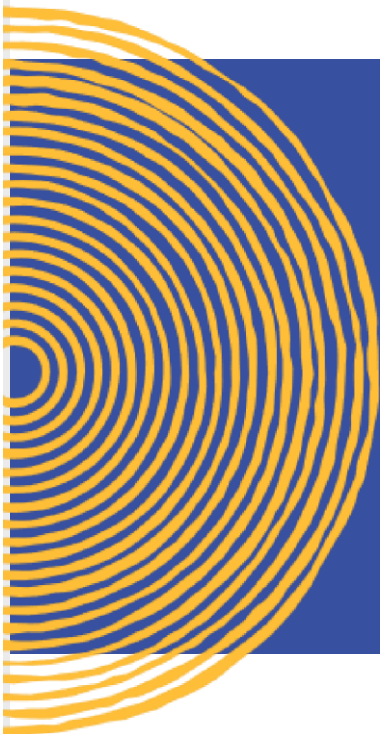
4. The fourth part captures the entrepreneurs' preferences in terms of networking, access to resources and business development.

- A good 88% would like to meet other creative entrepreneurs and create networks

- 63% of the respondents would like to meet local policy makers and influence policies on sustainability, the arts and entrepreneurship
- 72% would like to have access to resources that educate them on ways to implement the circular economy in practice/business
- Not surprisingly 91% of the respondents would like to find new business opportunities.

These responses support our project's initiatives of exploratory discussions and the marketplace events that are to be executed on a larger scale.

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## 4. Committing to Action

### Action Plan for Circular Creatives Germany – what can we achieve

This section of the Action Plan presents a commitment to **7 actions**, summarised as:

Action	Proposed Action	Cost	Who is involved?	Anticipated Outcome	Completed by
1.	<p><b>Promotion and visibility:</b> Promoting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Circular Creatives project in general</li> <li>- The exploratory panels so that the format/forum can be continued even after the project ends</li> <li>- The project’s knowledge platform and course modules</li> <li>- The market place event</li> </ul>	Time and effort	Global Impact Grid	Potential future circular creatives that will start their businesses	Oct – January 2024
2	<p><b>Training:</b> Explore the opportunity of having tie-ups with Universities utilize the course modules of this project so that students and faculty can benefit from it</p>	Time and effort	Global Impact Grid, potential partner University	Tie up with at least one University	December-January 2024
3	<p><b>Training:</b> Explore the opportunity of having tie-ups with training organizations so that SME organizations can be trained</p>	Time and effort	Global Impact Grid, potential SME training organization	Signup with at least 3 SME organizations	Dec – January 2024
4	<p><b>Circularity Awareness Events:</b> Explore the opportunity of having tie-ups with creative art businesses to organize events that spotlight circular creative works, providing a platform for artists and designers to display their innovative, sustainable creations.</p>	Time, effort and cost of the event	Global Impact Grid, potential circular event organizing firm	Tie up with at least one event organization	December 2023
5	<p><b>Cross-utilization in other projects:</b> Commit to implementing the concepts in one or more EU projects and utilize the project results developed</p>	Time and effort	GIG, other project partners	Implementation of the results of Circular Creatives in other projects and programs	December – April 2024

6	<b>Impact Measurement:</b> Establish metrics to assess the reach of the initiatives and assess the social impact of circular creative initiatives.	Time only	Global Impact Grid	Social media responses and events attendance	December 2023 – April 2024
7	<b>Hosting Circular Creatives Exploratory Panel Event</b> To focus on how to track actions and long-term sustainability planning.	Time and effort	Global Impact Grid	Participation of Creative Entrepreneurs	December 2023 – April 2024

