



CIRCULAR CREATIVES Action Plan Greece



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Created By
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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 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 fibers, 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 with where to start.

In this complex environment, our project Circular Creatives seeks to bring transformative solutions, stabilize employment provide opportunities for the un/underemployed, and ultimately 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 the 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 the Academy of Entrepreneurship, our [Partners - Circular Creatives](#) have established four regional think tanks called **Creatives and Job Opportunities Exploratory Panels** in Roscommon, Ireland; Berlin, Germany; 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 cocreating solutions that are responsive to real needs 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 practices 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 Roscommon, Ireland Action Plan, and is the first action of [4 resources](#) to support Circular Creatives.

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