Regional Alliance Toolkit

Erasmus+

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CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS ONLINE

This Guideline is designed to support effective stakeholder engagement in the context of the Creative Entrepreneurs Online (CEO) project which is for the development of up-to-date training for creative sector entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurship education among young people and for the creation of innovative regional alliances, that are specifically equipped with the skills to have a positive and long-lasting effect on the entrepreneurial support system, awareness and delivery in each region. The Regional Alliances seek to develop new creative sector partnerships for sharing knowledge and best practice, accessible to all creative entrepreneurs and involving the key stakeholders in academia, business and government institutions. To facilitate the process of establishing these alliances, a set of document templates are provided and can be used as helpful resources.

Introduction

Digital communications are revolutionising our economy and society, enabling disruptive innovation and creating new business models. In the words of JC Juncker, President of the European Commission, "Our priority has to be to find new sources of growth and jobs without creating new debt. The transformative role of digital technologies can be used… Europe's path to growth is paved with tablets and smartphones."

Yet the digital landscape is complex and as new business models emerge, our education and VET systems are lagging behind due to the sheer pace of change, and/or because many VET practitioners are out-of-touch with the online world. The gap between real world opportunities and teaching is most acute in the creative industries where generic online retail strategies do not apply, but new collaborative models abound: online marketplaces, outsourcing communities, real-time marketing, crowdsourcing funding, virtual networking are just some of the many opportunities which facilitate personalised marketing and pricing, while also ensuring secure payment and intellectual property rights.

Now, more than ever, the creative and cultural sector can benefit from "going digital". Lauded as one of the fastest growing economic sectors and representing €558 billion in value added to GDP (approximately 4% of total European GDP), since the 2008-9 crisis the value of the creative industries across Europe has actually declined in higher proportion than

Creative Entrepreneurship Online (CEO) aims to enable integrated action among VET providers and wider stakeholders to radically improve training in online business models for creative sector entrepreneurs, enabling them to grow professionally and increase their commercial success.

A key element of this project is to establish sustainable, cross-sector collaborative relationships between VET providers, HEIs, and wider stakeholders via 3 Regional Alliances (in 3 different countries) to optimise the creative sector knowledge triangle and create 3 Regional Action Plans for improving the quality and relevance of training and support on offer…while also creating spillovers into other sectors.

In order to do so, we will engage with 4 target groups:

-Creative industry businesses such as those from advertising, art, craft, design, fashion, photography etc
-Enterprise/business centres providing support for entrepreneurs.
-HEIs that deliver creative courses such as Art & Design, Performing Arts, Jewellery Design, Sculpture & Ceramics and Fashion & Textiles.
-Wider stakeholders: creative industry bodies, economic development agencies, local governments, chamber of commerce's and industry representative bodies.

Stakeholders are defined as those

other parts of the economy.

This project complements the policy recommendations of the European Creative Industries Alliance (a DG Enterprise and Industry initiative) but is the only project of its type to specifically focus on new online business models for creative SMEs.

groups that have a stake/interest/right in the creative industries and education sector and those that will be affected positively by CEO activities.

They include relevant government agencies, population, private sector entities, educational institutions, funding institutions and others.

Development of a Regional Alliance at a Glance

Regional Alliance development is an ongoing process from formation to implementation, maintenance and achievement of goals. The process is not linear and rigid but flexible and repetitive, thus it continues monitoring on the latest developments on policy at industry level and is needed to secure the alliance effectiveness and value.

What is currently available?
What are the current programmes related to the support of Creative Industries start-up and development? Each country has specific strategies and/or programmes encouraging or hampering Creative Industries Start-up and growth. The knowledge about current and future strategies/ programmes will contribute to the Alliance achieving its purpose and it enables the Alliance to define its region for intervention more effectively.

Who is a stakeholder?
Actors (persons or organizations) who have a vested interest in the Alliance that is being promoted are considered stakeholders in the process. These stakeholders or "interested parties" can usually be grouped into oweners and executive staff from the following categories: business development organisations, higher education organisations, trade associations and membership organisations, craft and design centres, advertising agencies, marketing sector organisations, government departments, regional economic development agencies and local government councils.

What constitutes a relevant stakeholder?

the project process and impact (through their power and leadership) are analysed.

Why is this analysis useful?
Knowing who the key actors are, their knowledge, interests, positions, alliances, and importance related to the project allows owners and managers to interact more effectively with key stakeholders and increase their support for a given programme. By carrying out this analysis *before* implementing a programme, policy owners and managers can detect and act to prevent potential misunderstandings and/ or opposition to the implementation of the programme. A programme will more likely succeed if a stakeholder analysis, along with other key tools, is used to guide its implementation.

What are the steps in the Regional Alliance Development?
The following are the major steps in the process:

- Planning the process
- Defining the regions
- Identifying current delivery of support programmes
- Identifying current strategies
- Identifying key stakeholders
- Establishment of Alliances

Characteristics such as knowledge of the sector and support environment, interests related to the project, position for or against the project, potential alliances with other stakeholders, and ability to affect

The subsequent sections of this document describe each of these steps in terms of suggested actions and tools to be used to develop Regional Alliances

Step 1: Planning the process

This is the analysis stage. It is characterized by the development and gathering of collective insights.

Mutual need – Interdependence. We need each other to accomplish a task.

Vision – What does the alliance, wish to accomplish? Vision guides the alliance mission, protocols, and constitution.

Mission – How and in what ways is the alliance going to accomplish its task?

Value systems – Do the stakeholders, value similar things in the same way and to the same extent?

Inclusion – What kind of stakeholders do we require as future partners of the alliance?

Wavelength – Are we all on the same "wavelength"?

Simple language – Are we all "speaking the same language"?

Cultures – Are there differences in the working cultures of our potential partners within the alliance

Useful Aspects to Consider:

- Identify the stakeholders.
- Communicate with them.
- Set meetings.
- Identify if all potential stakeholders are represented?
- Do any of the potential stakeholders have any previous experience of working together?
- Are there any historical or traditional barriers between the potential stakeholders?
- Is any jargon or technical language used that could be a barrier?
- How do stakeholders feel about establishing a partnership?
- Are there any barriers to developing a common vision?
- Develop a plan and timeline
- Identify the specific steps to be taken
- Establish timeframes for each step

Step 2: Defining the region

The Regional Alliances may be regarded as a regional or national initiative depending on the partnership's preferences for how they wish to define the region.

The regional approach has significant advantages when considering new entrepreneurship development. In the arena of new business start-up, it is easier to gain a creative entrepreneur's attention by promoting in a regional area. Although, in a globalizing economy, creative entrepreneur's will rarely restrict themselves to city or county boundaries. A sub-state or multi-state region is easier to market to prospects on the other side of the country or the world. Understanding and developing entrepreneurship development therefore often requires a regional perspective.

Developing new initiatives however is better on a national level. Both can be used when developing a Regional Alliance as soon as the main tasks of the partnership can be achieved.

Step 3: Identify current initiatives, programmes & strategies and possible gaps & needs

At this stage of the process a mapping exercise will be executed, using secondary sources, to identify current support programmes in relation to entrepreneurship for creative start-ups to identify the main stakeholders for start-up and to identify gaps in support for creative entrepreneurs.

It will be important that consultations in each region are held with a range of stakeholders, including policy makers from Government agencies, local councils, local business development organizations, influencers from trade associations, membership bodies and support providers.

Secondary sources
A number of Government, research and market reports are constantly developed about entrepreneurship and the creative enterprise space and at regional, national and European levels. A template of secondary sources is developed and presented for use in *Appendix 1.*

bodies and so forth in their country/region.

The purpose of the secondary sources is to identify sources of information which are useful and also to highlight programme gaps. For instance, what information and support is currently not available? Project partners are also encouraged to highlight some statistics from the sources to give as comprehensive an understanding of the creative entrepreneurship strategies in their region as possible.

Creative Entrepreneurship is identified as a growing need and sector in many EU countries and a large number of reports have been carried out by Government Departments, researchers and other bodies and business development organizations. When conducting the desk research it is important to focus on reports and surveys that highlight the key issues and opportunities that will impact on the creative enterprise space/sector

This contains possible sources of useful information at a regional, national and international level. Project partners are asked to develop their templates according to reports that have been carried out by Government Departments, regional development agencies, trade over the next 5-10 years.

Online reports, information available through local authorities and business networks are important to be included in the scope of the desk research.

Step 4: Identify key stakeholders

In order to address key project objectives and develop a sound Regional Alliance to be able to change and influence strategy in their region, each partner is expected to establish a Steering Group. Typically the members of the group will include a range of private / public sector stakeholders such as central / local Government, trade bodies, local economic development and business development agencies who have responsibility for entrepreneurship, enterprise education, creative industries and so forth.

Important questions to be answered for key stakeholder identification:

1. *Who are the key stakeholders in relation to CEO goals?*
2. *What is their role in relation to CEO?*
3. *What is their level of power/influence? (i.e. prioritise the stakeholders)?*
4. *What relationships/links exist between the key stakeholders?*
5. *What current programmes have been developed for or by each stakeholder?*
6. *What type of organisation is each programme aimed at?*
7. *What is their perceived level of success?*
8. *What are the startegy gaps in relation to CEO?*
9. *What are the programme gaps in relation to CEO?*
10. *Are there any duplication in the key stakeholders' roles, strategies and programmes?*

A summary of the key stakeholders, together with an overview of their roles in strategy formulation and programme development and implementation and impact on creation of the Regional Alliance environment, will be presented in a table. The table where the stakeholders are identified as having a medium to high impact at a strategy and programme level will be included as presented in **Appendix 2**.

To ensure that your effort is valued in the community, consider inviting key *external* representatives from:

• Community officials
• Businesses or corporations
• Nonprofit organizations or foundations
• Higher education institutes
• Other groups (e.g., creative industry associations, trade associations)

Step 5: Establishment of a Regional Alliance

This stage of the process is characterized by the success of the effort in establishing a strong and relevant alliance. It also includes the monitoring of the steering group and the delivery of planned activities.

Important when establishing the Regional Alliance:

Scope and view of the Alliance – Are the objectives of the alliance many and overwhelming or few and manageable?

Representation – Have we contacted as many agencies, constituencies, and organizations as we think necessary to solve the problem?

Priorities – What are the priority issues and concerns that are common to all participants in the partnership?

Accountability – To whom are we accountable? Our organizations, the community and general public, the entrepreneurs, others?

Rules, roles, responsibilities, and duties – All require clarity and may need to be written down.

Communication – How are we going to have timely, consistent, useful, and comfortable communication that meets our needs?

*The Alliance will be formalized by signing a Regional Alliance Commitment Charter by the organizations, companies or individual members of the Regional Alliance – **Appendix 3***

Once established the Regional Alliance will have a system for monitoring of planned activities including:

• *Routine of alliance –* Are the alliance operations now settled and embedded in the routines of the participating agencies?

• *Maintain linkages –* Preserve, nurture, and expand the relationships that have been forged.

• *Interim reports –* What "proof" and indicators of alliance success are required? How often is feedback provided and what is its quality?

• *Sustainability –* Plan early for sustainability and anticipate the unexpected or worst-case scenarios.

Useful tools:

- Establish communication channels
- Establish alliance working as the "usual way of doing business".
- Facilitate the development of programmes.
- Revisit representation & structure.
- Build on connections and capital.
- Maintain the momentum and vigor of the alliance.
- Seek for grants, look for sponsors.
- Hold social events.

Resources to help you set up and run a Regional Alliance

To facilitate the process of establishment and running a regional alliance, a set of document templates are provided and can be used as helpful resources.

The templates include:

- PowerPoint presentation to be used during the meetings with stakeholders participating in the regional alliance
- Regional Alliance Commitment Charter
- Concept regional alliance meetings and draft agenda
- Action plan template
- Best practice examples

The templates can be downloaded separately from the following address: www.ceo-project.eu
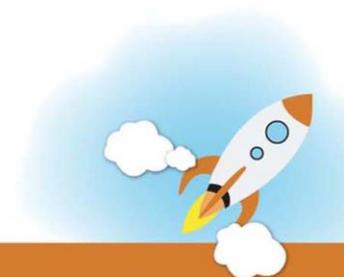
Appendix 1: Secondary Sources Table

Type of source	Name of reports/publications
Partner resources	
Case studies of best practice	
Reports for Creative Entrepreneur programmes	
Government Initiatives	
Other key stakeholders	
Local directory	
Electronic resources	
Practitioner reports	
Research reports	
Academic papers	

Appendix 2: Key Stakeholders relevant to Regional Alliance

Stakeholder	Programme Development Role	Programme Implementation Role	Reach (International, National, Regional, Sub Regional)	Impact on Regional Alliance (High, Medium, Low)

Appendix 3: CEO Regional Alliance Commitment Charter

I want to help make our region a supportive environment for creative entrepreneurs

We are working to assist creative entrepreneurs, via a Regional Alliance, to get there small business online and trading using a range of platforms to sell and market their services across the globe.

We have set three big aims:

Encourage

Contribute to a Regional Alliance of the Creative Sector, Higher Education, Business Support & Local Government to encourage a supportive environment for creative entrepreneurs

Educate

Work with the Creative Sector and a range of SMEs and education providers to help implement greater use of technology within the Creative Industries

Employ

Increase the chances of successful creative entrepreneurship by helping to develop & deliver up to date training to give a competitive edge in the global marketplace

My Pledge is on behalf of:

An Individual ☐   An Organisation ☐   A Company ☐

By 2016 we commit to:

1) Create a Regional Alliance to support Creative Entrepreneurs. ☐

2) Encourage education within the sector, to improve the use of technology, by SMEs and education providers ☐

3) Help support and encourage creative entrepreneurs to make use of training materials and online resources developed by the CEO project ☐

Your Name:_____ **Date:**_____

Company/Organisation:_____

Email address:_____

CEO is an Erasmus+ funded project to support Creative Entrepreneurs to get Online.
For more information please visit: www.ceo-project.eu