

Collaborate to Skill

The Local Ecosystem
Partnership Guidebook

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Introduction

Across Europe, cities and regions face a shared challenge: **how to develop the skills needed for a creative, digital, and sustainable future**. The transition to new technologies, new forms of work, and new cultural practices requires **strong local ecosystems**, where education providers, creative professionals, businesses, and public authorities work together – not in isolation.

The SACCORD Local Ecosystem Partnership (LEP) model offers a **practical and adaptable framework** for building such cooperation. It shows how to move from fragmented initiatives to a **shared skills** vision, how to connect diverse actors, and how to anchor creative skills in local and regional strategies.

This guidebook brings together **tested methods, step-by-step instructions, real case studies**, and ready-to-use tools from the four Local Ecosystem Partnerships demonstrators, namely in Amsterdam, Upper Austria, Prague, and Matera/Basilicata. It demonstrates that meaningful skills development is **not a top-down exercise**: it grows from dialogue, co-creation, and making collaboration visible through concrete projects, campaigns, and shared learning experiences.

The LEP approach invites every region – regardless of size or maturity – to build its own creative skills ecosystem: **practical, people-centred, and aligned with European initiatives** such as the Creative Pact for Skills, Creative Skills Week, Interreg, Erasmus+, and the wider EU Skills Agenda.

This handbook is your companion on that journey.

What are Local Ecosystem Partnerships (LEPs)? – and why do they matter.

Local Ecosystem Partnerships (LEPs) are **regional alliances for skills and innovation**. They bring together actors who rarely sit at the same table: public authorities, education and research institutions, cultural and creative organisations, SMEs, and citizens.

An LEP is **not a project** – it is a **process of transformation**.

It helps cities and regions build stronger creative skills ecosystems, connect diverse actors, and link local innovation with European policy agendas. Across Europe, LEPs have shown that collaboration between creatives, educators, businesses, and policymakers **drives innovation, inclusion, and long-term resilience**.

The SACCORD model offers a clear **eight-step journey**, tested in four demonstrator regions – Amsterdam, Upper Austria, Prague, and Matera/Basilicata – guiding regions from defining their purpose to scaling impact.

What is the SACCORD project?

SACCORD – The Skills ACCORD is an Erasmus+ Forward-Looking Project shaping the future of creative skills in Europe. Its mission is to build **Local Ecosystem Partnerships (LEPs)** that connect education, culture, business, and public authorities to jointly address the skill needs emerging from the **green and digital transitions**.

At the same time, SACCORD translates the **Creative Pact for Skills** (Large-Scale Partnership for CCIs) into **concrete regional practice**, ensuring that European ambitions become local realities.

Four demonstrator regions – **Amsterdam, Upper Austria, Prague, and Matera/Basilicata** – are testing how collaboration between creatives, training providers, and public authorities can make skills development a shared regional priority.

What does an LEP deliver in practice?

For skills policymakers

- Connects talents, institutions, and industries.
- Reveals hidden and emerging skill gaps.
- Turns uncertainty into opportunity.
- Aligns regional action with EU priorities.

For creatives & companies

- Opens access to skills, funding, and cross-sector partnerships.
- Helps anticipate future competences.
- Supports tripple transition.

For education & research

- Bridges classrooms, studios, and enterprises.
- Integrates real-world and newly-emerged skills into learning pathways.
- Ensures training keeps pace with change.

Linked to major european frameworks

EU Skills Agenda (2020–2030)

Part of the European Skills Agenda, which aims for **60% of adults** to participate in training every year by 2030.

MORE INFO:
ec.europa.eu/

Creative Pact for Skills

A Europe-wide coalition of **200+ organisations** investing jointly in upskilling and reskilling for the green and digital transitions.

MORE INFO:
creativepactforskills.eu/

Cyanotypes (Erasmus+ Blueprint)

A European initiative developing a **shared skills framework** and innovative training models to future-proof the Cultural and Creative Industries through anticipation, collaboration, and experimentation.

MORE INFO:
cyanotypes.website/

Creative Skills Week

Europe's annual gathering that brings together creative professionals, educators, policymakers, and industry to accelerate upskilling, foster cross-sector collaboration, and **shape the future skills ecosystem** for the cultural and creative sectors.

MORE INFO:
creativeskillsweek.eu/

Key principles of every LEP



Start small

One pilot can change everything.



Listen and learn

Trust comes before strategy.



Act together

Collaboration creates credibility.



Celebrate milestones

Make achievements visible.



Connect beyond local

Every region is part of a European movement.

Your 8-step journey to a LEP

- PART 1 – GETTING STARTED
- PART 2 – BUILDING MOMENTUM
- PART 3 – MAKING IT WORK
- PART 4 – SUSTAINING & SCALING



CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE



“Our purpose didn’t come from a strategy paper. It emerged from real conversations, real gaps, and real people trying to make training work where it matters.”

– SIMONA MARTINI, FITZCARRALDO

Define your „Why“ before you define your „Who“.

Your purpose will guide partnerships, priorities, and communication.

Every successful Local Ecosystem Partnership for re-and upskilling of creatives (LEP) starts with a clear purpose. Before building networks or launching projects, take time to define your ‚Why‘. What problem or skills gap are you trying to address locally? What value do you create for your region by connecting actors across creativity, education, business, and policy? This first step is about aligning your local vision with broader agendas such as the EU Skills Agenda, the Pact for Skills, and your regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3). A clear purpose provides the common ground for collaboration.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Start with a question:** “What gap are we trying to close in local skills?”
- ✓ **Align with larger frameworks:** EU Skills Agenda, Pact for Skills, and RIS3.
- ✓ **Use the ‘How Might We...’ Challenge Canvas** to frame open innovation questions.
- ✓ **Communicate early benefits** – make your ‘Why’ relevant to every stakeholder.
- ✓ **Keep it human:** focus on creating a shared language and trust.

Tools & Links



Challenge Definition

Tool / Resource:
‘How Might We...’
Canvas
[Link](#)



Skills Policy

Tool / Resource:
EU Skills Agenda &
Pact for Skills
[Link](#)



Regional Strategy

Tool / Resource:
Smart Specialisation
Platform (S3)
[Link](#)



Bring it into practice

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES
Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

MAP YOUR ECOSYSTEM



“Trust was built when we shared one simple project instead of another strategy paper.”

– ESZTER TOTH, UNIVERSITY DEBRECEN

A strong map makes invisible networks visible.

Identify key connectors, bridge builders, and hidden champions in your regional ecosystem.

Once your purpose is clear, the next step is to map who can help achieve it. An LEP thrives on collaboration between public authorities, education providers, businesses, and citizens. Mapping your ecosystem helps you understand influence, interest, and potential synergies across your region. This mapping process is more than a list – it’s about seeing how relationships work and where trust already exists.

Tips & Tricks

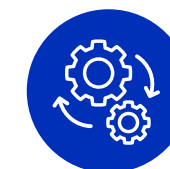
- ✓ **Apply the Quadruple Helix:** public authorities education, businesses, and creatives.
- ✓ **Use a Stakeholder Power/Interest Matrix** to prioritise who to involve first.
- ✓ **Don’t overlook micro-players** – they are agile and essential to innovation.
- ✓ **Identify intermediaries** (clusters, creative hubs, universities) who can bridge sectors.
- ✓ **Visualise your network** – maps reveal gaps, overlaps, and opportunities.

Tools & Links



Stakeholder Mapping

Tool / Resource:
Stakeholder Power-Interest Matrix
[Link](#)



Ecosystem Design

Tool / Resource:
Quadruple Helix Model
[Link](#)



Inspiration

Tool / Resource:
Creative Pact for Skills Working groups
[Link](#)



Bring it into practice

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS



“Always remember who is missing from the table: they could be the stakeholder you need most.”

– DAVID CROMBIE, HKU UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS UTRECHT

Engagement starts with listening – and grows through shared wins.

Once you have mapped your ecosystem, it's time to bring people to the table. Stakeholder engagement is about creating shared ownership, not just collecting partners. It means translating your purpose into a message that resonates with diverse audiences – public authorities, SMEs, cultural organisations, educators, and creatives. Early engagement should focus on listening first: understanding motivations, expectations, and potential contributions. Start with small, tangible collaborations that prove the value of working together. Every successful LEP begins with trust built through action.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Start personal:** direct invitations and one-to-one talks build more trust than mass emails.
- ✓ **Frame benefits clearly:** show what's in it for each stakeholder – visibility, funding, networking, learning.
- ✓ **Create early wins:** co-host a small pilot, event, or training to demonstrate immediate value.

Tools & Links



Engagement Planning

Tool / Resource:
Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit
[Link](#)



Collaboration Design

Tool / Resource:
Challenge Lab Format
[Link](#)



Communication

Tool / Resource:
EU Pact for Skills Resources
[Link](#)



Bring it into practice

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

RAISE AWARENESSES



“A big launch can fail if people don’t see what is in it for them. Once we tell simple stories, usually everyone wants to join.”

– CARINA DANTAS, SHINE TO EUROPE

Make skills visible, relatable, and worth talking about.

Even the most committed network needs visibility and understanding. Raising awareness means translating complex policy goals and skill strategies into stories that local communities understand and care about. Share why skills matter, show real examples, and communicate in a language that connects with both policymakers and citizens. In many SACCORD sessions, participants agreed: clarity beats complexity – people engage when they can see how it relates to their daily reality.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Tell human stories:** highlight how upskilling changes lives, not just statistics.
- ✓ **Show data smartly:** visualise local skill gaps and creative opportunities in simple infographics.
- ✓ **Avoid jargon:** replace policy language with practical relevance – What’s in it for us?
- ✓ **Use cultural spaces:** exhibitions, festivals, or pop-up labs are great venues for communicating skills.
- ✓ **Partner with media & influencers:** journalists, art schools, or youth media amplify your message.
- ✓ **Link to opportunities:** show concrete next steps – trainings, funding, events.

Tools & Links



Events & Outreach

Tool / Resource:
Gallery Walk / World
Café Methods
[Link](#)



Showcase

Tool / Resource:
Creative
Skills Week
[Link](#)



Bring it into practice

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES
Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

BUILD COLLABORATION



“Real collaboration began when we stopped writing strategies and started building things together.”

– MARTIN SCHWAB & MARTA ROTA, UNIVERSITY OF ARTS LINZ

Start small, act fast, and learn together.

After mapping your ecosystem and building trust, it's time to move from talking to doing. Collaboration is where your LEP becomes visible and real – when diverse partners design and test solutions together. These co-creation processes, often called „Challenge Labs“, allow partners to explore new learning formats, joint actions, or pilot projects addressing local skill needs. The aim is to build momentum through small, visible wins that prove the value of partnership and create a shared sense of achievement. Start small, act fast, and learn together – collaboration is not the final step, but the beginning of continuous co-creation.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Organise co-creation sessions:** run „Challenge Labs“ where partners jointly tackle local skill challenges.
- ✓ **Co-design your Local Collaboration Roadmap:** outline shared goals, commitments, and next steps.
- ✓ **Prototype before you formalise:** one small pilot is worth more than a perfect plan.
- ✓ **Work in mixed teams:** combine creatives, educators, SMEs, and public bodies.
- ✓ **Keep coordination light:** focus on facilitation, not bureaucracy.
- ✓ **Capture insights:** document what works to inspire others and inform future LEP actions.

Tools & Links



Co-Creation Design

Tool / Resource:
Collaboration Canvas
(shared goals, contributions, next steps)
[Link](#)



Workshop Formats

Tool / Resource:
Challenge Lab Guide
[Link](#)



Inspiration

Tool / Resource:
KSI GUNE- Regional Skills Partnership
[Link](#)



Bring it into practice

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)



“To scale impact, we need strong policy integration, dedicated long-term funding, and visibility that reflects the role of the LEPs as a catalyst for Europe’s skills agenda, innovation and economic resilience”

– RUTH MAYORAL LOPEZ, KSI GUNE

Anchor your LEP in regional strategies to ensure its future.

As your LEP grows, the next challenge is to secure its place in the regional ecosystem. Consolidation means turning ad-hoc cooperation into a sustainable partnership structure. It’s about aligning your LEP with existing city and regional strategies (RIS3, Smart Specialisation, or Skills policies) and ensuring long-term financing through a mix of EU, national, and local sources. A consolidated LEP doesn’t just deliver projects – it becomes a trusted reference point for skills development and collaboration in the region. The goal: to make your LEP resilient, recognised, and ready for future challenges.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Move toward local skills governance:** align with RIS3, city and regional strategies.
- ✓ **Discuss financing early:** combine EU funds, national support, and partner co-funding.
- ✓ **Create a light governance structure:** define roles, coordination, and decision-making processes.
- ✓ **Build visibility and recognition:** communicate your LEP achievements to policymakers.

Tools & Links



Strategy Alignment

Tool / Resource:
RIS3 Smart Specialisation Platform
[Link](#)



Inspiration

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

MONITOR & ADAPT



“We realised evaluation isn’t paperwork – it’s storytelling with data.”

– JENNY KORNMACHER, TINGVALL

Measure what matters – and learn as you go.

A Local Ecosystem Partnership only stays alive if it keeps learning from itself. Monitoring and adaptation are about tracking what works, what doesn’t, and how the partnership evolves. By defining simple metrics and collecting feedback regularly, LEPs can demonstrate real impact – to partners, policymakers, and funders – while continuously improving their model. Don’t treat evaluation as an audit; see it as a learning process that strengthens trust and transparency.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Define simple metrics:** partners engaged, trainings delivered, learners reached, funding leveraged.
- ✓ **Create feedback loops:** use surveys, short reviews, or debrief sessions after each action.
- ✓ **Visualise results:** dashboards or storyboards make achievements tangible.
- ✓ **Adapt fast:** use lessons learned to adjust processes, roles, and activities.
- ✓ **Celebrate milestones publicly:** visibility keeps motivation and support high.

Tools & Links



Monitoring

Tool / Resource:
RSP Monitoring Framework
[Link](#)



Impact Evaluation

Tool / Resource:
Social Impact Canvas
[Link](#)



Communication

Tool / Resource:
Creative Skills Week Showcase Form
[Link](#)



Inspiration

Tool / Resource:
CYANOTYPES Train-the-Trainer Toolkit
[Link](#)

CONNECT BEYOND LOCAL



“Connecting LEPs throughout Europe within our learning sessions made me realise how much we can achieve together – we stopped reinventing the wheel.”

– GISA SCHOSSWOHL, COORDINATOR SACCORD

Think locally, act globally – share, learn, and replicate.

An LEP gains strength when it connects its local learning to a wider community. By linking with national and European initiatives – such as Creative Skills Week, the Creative Pact for Skills, Interreg, or EIT Culture & Creativity – LEPs become part of a larger movement. Peer exchanges with other regions accelerate learning, spark collaboration, and create visibility for local innovation on the European stage. The next step for mature partnerships is to establish or join a Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) to scale impact across borders.

A Regional Skills Partnership is a structured collaboration of regional stakeholders – education and training providers, businesses, public authorities, and civil society – that jointly identify skills needs and coordinate up- and reskilling actions aligned with regional priorities and the European Skills Agenda, benefitting from formal recognition under the Pact for Skills.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Link with national & EU initiatives:** connect your LEP to programmes such as CSW, Pact for Skills, Interreg, EIT.
- ✓ **Join or form a Regional Skills Partnership (RSP):** align regional LEPs under a shared vision.
- ✓ **Exchange with peers:** set up regular learning sessions or study visits with other LEPs.
- ✓ **Replicate success:** document your process so others can reuse it.
- ✓ **Showcase outcomes:** present your LEP in European events and platforms.

Tools & Links



Peer Learning

Tool / Resource:
Creative Pact for Skills Working Groups
[Link](#)



Networking

Tool / Resource:
Creative Skills Week Community & Slack
[Link](#)



Funding Synergies

Tool / Resource:
European Calls
[Link](#)



Replication Support

Tool / Resource:
Blueprint for Regional Skills Partnerships
[Link](#)



“Upper Austrians bottom-up up and reskilling approach is gradually shifting the culture from competition to cooperation. A Skills Forum will give that ‘doing’ a common direction.”

– WOLFGANG GUMPELMAIER-MACH,
CREATIVE REGION LINZ & UPPER AUSTRIA

The Upper Austrian LEP – building a creative skills ecosystem from the ground up

Upper Austria is an industrially advanced region – yet its skills development landscape remains highly fragmented. While the region’s RIS3 Strategy focuses on advanced manufacturing, energy, and digitalisation, the creative sector and transversal skills have not been explicitly anchored in regional innovation or education policies. This gap has left creative skills development dependent on individual institutions and project-based initiatives rather than a coherent regional framework.

The creative sector counts around **3,500 enterprises**, representing 6–8 % of Austria’s creative economy, with high female participation and a predominance of micro-firms.

The regional ecosystem is diverse: on one side, large players like Johannes Kepler University (JKU), University of Art and Design Linz (UFG), IT:U, and WIFI/BFI; on the other, small creative SMEs, freelancers, and cultural spaces such as Ars Electronica, Tabakfabrik Linz, Grand Garage, and numerous Fab Labs. These actors operate in parallel worlds – education, culture, and business – often meeting only within short-term projects rather than sustained cooperation.

Awareness, collaboration & bottom-up momentum

The **Upper Austrian Local Ecosystem Partnership (LEP)** was initiated to **raise awareness, connect fragmented actors, and visualise the power of creative skills** through shared action. At its heart stands the **Upper Austrian Creative Skills Forum** – a participatory platform linking education providers, creative entrepreneurs, policymakers, and industry representatives.

Its goals are to:

- **Raise awareness** of creative skills as a strategic driver for innovation and regional transformation.
- **Visualise collaboration** through campaigns, exhibitions, and storytelling formats that make learning and co-creation visible to the public.
- **Identify and validate skill** needs across creative and industrial sectors.
- **Co-design flexible learning pathways** such as micro-credentials and lifelong learning programs.
- **Foster Challenge Labs** connecting designers, engineers, and SMEs for real-world innovation.

By combining co-creation with storytelling and communication, the LEP builds **trust, visibility, and collective ownership** for skills development – not through top-down planning but through shared experience and public recognition.

Impact & Outlook

The LEP’s bottom-up approach is gradually shifting the culture from competition to cooperation. By framing creative skills as a strategic enabler – not a niche – the partnership strengthens links between cultural, educational, and industrial actors. The Creative Skills Forum has already inspired pilot projects in Microcredentials in transversal curricula bridging architecture with robotics, creating new evidence for policymaking. The vision is to institutionalise the Forum as a recognised advisory body within Upper Austria’s skills and innovation ecosystem.



Challenges

No strategic anchoring:
Skills development and creative upskilling are not yet embedded in regional governance or RIS3 strategies.

Fragmented cooperation:
Education, culture, and business actors work in parallel systems with few lasting interfaces.

Project-based collaboration:
Partnerships dissolve after funding cycles, limiting impact and continuity.

Low visibility:
Creative industries’ contribution to digitalisation, innovation, and regional identity is under-communicated.

Weak awareness culture:
The public and policymakers often lack a clear picture of how creative skills drive transformation.



“A highly skilled labour supply is nothing less than a prerequisite for Amsterdam’s vital world-class creative economy. And it takes all hands on deck to maintain that position.”

– GERBRAND BAS, DUTCH CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Amsterdam LEP – building a creative skills ecosystem with seamless learning pathways

Amsterdam is one of Europe’s strongest hubs for the cultural and creative industries (CCI), yet its **skills ecosystem remains fragmented across education, culture, labour-market institutions, and SMEs.**

The region benefits from powerful infrastructures – **House of Skills (legacy until 2023), SURF edubadges, and Npuls**, a major national investment accelerating flexible learning and micro-credentials across mbo/hbo/wo. But despite these enablers, **micro-credential adoption and skills pathways are not yet structurally embedded in regional governance**, employer agreements, or talent strategies.

Amsterdam’s creative landscape is highly diverse: Large universities and applied universities (HvA, Inholland, UvA), specialised arts schools, cultural institutions like **Waag Futurelab**, and tech/creative companies coexist with **tens of thousands of freelancers and micro-enterprises**. These actors frequently operate in **parallel project cycles** rather than through a sustained, shared agenda – the classic “pilot paradox”.

Awareness, collaboration & a shared skills vision

The **Amsterdam Local Ecosystem Partnership (LEP)** was launched to create shared language, raise awareness, and build structural cooperation around **micro-credentials and flexible learning pathways** for the CCI ecosystem. At the heart of this approach stands the **Creative Skills Forum Amsterdam** – a participatory platform connecting higher education institutions, arts schools, cultural intermediaries, SMEs, and policymakers around a **joint regional skills agenda**.

Its goals are to:

- **Position CCI skills as drivers of innovation** and labour-market resilience.
- **Make learning visible** through public showcases, Challenge Labs, and storytelling that demystifies micro-credentials.
- **Map and validate skill needs** across design × digital × AI × circularity.
- **Co-design flexible learning pathways** aligned with workplace needs, issued on SURF edubadges and connected to Npuls’ national standards.
- **Run multidisciplinary Challenge Labs** linking designers, engineers, SMEs, and city actors for real urban challenges such as ethical AI or circular textiles.

Through a combination of **awareness, co-creation, and shared visibility**, the Amsterdam LEP is building trust, legitimacy, and momentum for a region-wide micro-credential ecosystem

Impact & Outlook

Early LEP pilots are already **bridging creative education and industry**, generating policy evidence on the value of micro-credentials and aligning partners behind a long-term skills transformation. The emerging **Creative Skills Forum Amsterdam** is becoming a recognised advisory and brokerage node within the region’s learning ecosystem – connecting policy, education, and practice.

The long-term ambition is to scale up to a **Regional Skills Partnership (RSP)**, delivering:

- 100 stackable micro-credential modules,
- 10,000 learners reached,
- employer adoption across 250 SMEs,
- and full alignment with national frameworks under Npuls.



Challenges

No structural embedding: Micro-credentials and skills pathways lack consistent recognition across employers and regional governance.

Parallel worlds: Art schools, universities, cultural organisations, creative SMEs, and the tech industry often collaborate only through grant-funded pilots.

Project logic: Initiatives fade after funding cycles, limiting continuity and long-term planning.

Visibility gaps: The contribution of CCI skills to innovation, digitalisation, and workforce flexibility remains under-communicated.

Fragmented learner awareness: Freelancers and SME staff lack clear access routes into flexible upskilling offerings.



“In a time of rapid technological and market change, people in creative professions need learning opportunities that genuinely connect their ambitions and skills with the realities of today’s work. Lifelong learning is most effective when it offers clear routes for developing confidence, new competences and the ability to adapt.”

– KATARZYNA KOUBA SANOJCA, PROJECT MANAGER, CREATIVE PRAGUE

Prague LEP – micro-credentials as a shared regional priority

Prague is the national centre of higher education, innovation, and the cultural and creative industries (CCI) in Czechia. Despite a dynamic mix of universities, cultural institutions, and research organisations, the region faces **significant skill gaps in the creative sector**, intensified by digitalisation, AI, and green transition pressures.

The Czech Republic maintains one of the **lowest unemployment rates in the EU**, yet many creative professionals lack access to structured, quality-assured upskilling opportunities. Although national RIS3 identifies CCI as a priority area, **regional coordination for micro-credentials and lifelong learning remains weak**.

Pilot programmes launched by public universities (under the National Recovery Plan) introduced micro-credentials, but awareness and adoption across the CCI ecosystem are still fragmented.

Awareness, coordination & shared ownership

The **Prague Local Ecosystem Partnership (LEP)** was initiated to create **shared understanding, structured communication, and cross-sector collaboration** around micro-credentials for the CCI sector.

Its centrepiece is the emerging **Prague Micro-Credential Skills Forum** – a regional coordination platform linking higher education institutions, CCI organisations, employer associations, and public bodies.

Its goals are to:

- **Raise awareness** of micro-credentials among creative professionals, employers, and intermediaries.
- **Promote a shared vocabulary** aligned with EU and national micro-credential frameworks.
- **Connect skills needs with educational offers**, especially digital and entrepreneurial competences.
- Create multi-ministerial dialogue to embed CCI needs into national policy instruments.
- **Pilot new micro-credential pathways**, co-designed by universities and creative sector organisations.

Through structured communication, targeted awareness activities, and cross-sector workshops (including at **Creative Skills Week Prague 2025**), the LEP builds **regional readiness, trust, and coordination capacity**.

Impact & Outlook

The LEP has established the foundation for a **regional Micro-Credential Working Group** to coordinate communication, share policy updates, and drive capacity building. Micro-credentials are now **formally recognised in the new State Cultural Policy 2026–2030+**, creating a mandate for continued pilots and structural development.

The next steps include creating a **Prague Skills Hub**, scaling micro-credential opportunities to vocational and non-formal learning providers, and aligning with European CCI frameworks under the **Creative Pact for Skills**.



Challenges

Fragmented awareness:
Many cultural and creative professionals are unfamiliar with micro-credentials and their benefits.

Low digital readiness:
Parts of the sector require accelerated upskilling in digital, entrepreneurial, and creative competences.

Lack of coordination:
No regional platform exists to align universities, cultural bodies, employers, and public authorities.

Uneven quality:
Short learning offers lack consistent quality assurance, reducing trust and uptake.

Policy fragmentation:
Skills governance is split across ministries (Education, Culture, Labour), slowing implementation.



“Success in building a Regional Skills Partnership depends on comprehensive stakeholder mapping, understanding power dynamics, and using a targeted engagement strategy to invite new stakeholders into governance. We believe this process is fundamentally driven by strengthening partner organisations’ capacities in collaboration and strategic alignment, ensuring institutions and the workforce grow together.”

– BECKY RICHES, MATERAHUB

Southern Italys journey towards a Regional Skills Partnership

During the SACCORD project, partners in Southern Italy have developed a proposal for establishing a Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) for the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), to be submitted by December 2025. The aim is to move from fragmented initiatives towards a coordinated skills ecosystem that addresses long-standing structural, demographic, and economic challenges. Although the CCI sector in Southern Italy – particularly in Basilicata and Puglia – holds strong cultural assets and creative potential, this potential remains underleveraged as a driver of economic diversification, talent retention, and social cohesion.

Awareness, coordination & shared ownership

The proposed RSP draws on the SACCORD LEP model, balancing awareness-raising, stakeholder coordination, and shared ownership to build a robust regional skills ecosystem.

Awareness and Ecosystem Understanding

The partnership began by building a clear picture of the CCI ecosystem in Basilicata and Puglia through comprehensive mapping across public authorities, education, businesses, and civil society. This work highlighted both active actors and missing or underrepresented stakeholders who needed to be brought in. The initiative then broadened participation to universities, vocational institutes, chambers of commerce, and trade associations to better align cultural, educational, and economic strategies. To complement this, a skills intelligence process assessed the needs of CCI professionals—particularly in digital, green, entrepreneurial, and transversal skills—and examined the organisational capacities partners required to collaborate effectively within a multi-stakeholder ecosystem.

Coordination and Shared Ownership

A targeted engagement strategy guided how new stakeholders were invited into the partnership and helped establish an inclusive governance model. A shared data and governance structure promoted transparency and joint decision-making, supported by a Continuous Data Collection System that kept needs analysis dynamic. An interregional working table coordinated national and EU funding streams, allowing partners to align investments and amplify the impact of training and innovation activities. Training Pathways for Professionals and Partners Skills development efforts focused both on CCI professionals—through future-oriented training and micro-credential formats—and on partner organisations, which strengthened their capacities in governance, collaboration, and strategic alignment. This dual approach ensured that both the creative workforce and the institutions supporting the ecosystem grew together.

Towards a Replicable Operating Model

The partnership drew on insights from regions such as Piemonte and Emilia-Romagna to shape an operating model that could be scaled nationally. Initially centred on Basilicata and Puglia, the model set the groundwork for expansion to Campania and Calabria by 2027, and potentially Sicily by 2028, contributing to a broader Southern Italy Skills Ecosystem.



Challenges

Fragmentation and Silos:

Stakeholders in education, culture, business, and public administration tend to operate independently, resulting in overlapping efforts and limited alignment between training provision and market needs.

Brain Drain & Economic Decline:

Persistent outmigration and limited local opportunities create difficulty in retaining creative talent, exacerbating demographic decline and weakening innovation capacity.

Skills Gaps & Low Digital Readiness:

Many CCI professionals and micro-enterprises lack essential competencies in digitalisation, AI, and green transition technologies. Businesses often struggle to articulate needs or engage in structured training programmes.

Training Disconnect:

The regional landscape consists of strong formal institutions but fragmented non-formal training ecosystems. Training quality, relevance, and alignment with labour market signals remain inconsistent.

Policy Gaps:

Weak coordination exists across regional authorities regarding lifelong learning, micro-credentials, and data-sharing. A central platform to align policies, employers, education providers, and cultural actors is missing.

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