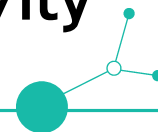


Empowering Transformation through Creativity

Policy Brief for Regional Stakeholders



Unlocking Digital, Green, and Creative Competences for Cultural and Tourism Innovation in Central Europe



Purpose of the Document

This document is a **summary version of the full Capacity2Transform (C2T) Policy Compendium**, designed specifically for policymakers, regional planners, innovation agencies, and business support organisations. It distills the project's key findings, successful pilot cases, and tested tools into an accessible format that supports **practical application** at local, regional, and national levels.

The aim is to **inform strategic decision-making** by providing evidence-based recommendations and real-world examples from across Central Europe. These insights can directly support:

- the design of **Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)**,
- the integration of **digital, green, and creative competences (DGC)** into innovation funding schemes,
- the development of tailored **support measures for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) and tourism SMEs**,
- and the creation of **cross-sectoral partnerships** to foster inclusive, place-based transformation.

✓ TOP 5 Recommendations

Strengthen
multi-level
governance

Create
innovation
funding for
CCIs + tourism
SMEs

Promote cross-
sector pilot
actions

Create
innovation
funding for
CCIs + tourism
SMEs

Embed DGC
in VET and
lifelong
learning



Key Messages at a Glance

Why this matters	CCIs and tourism SMEs are crucial drivers of sustainable and inclusive transformation, but remain under-supported in most policy systems.
What needs to change	Policy fragmentation, funding gaps, and competence mismatches must be addressed through integrated, multi-level strategies.
What policymakers can do	Embed DGC competences in training systems, unlock cross-sector funding, and position CCIs as innovation enablers.



What We Found: Barriers to Transformation

Policy Fragmentation

Digital, green, and cultural strategies often operate in silos. This leads to disconnected funding streams, lack of shared objectives, and reduced effectiveness of transformation policies.

Underrecognition of CCIs

Cultural and Creative Industries are still viewed primarily as artistic sectors. Their role as enablers of innovation and behavioural change is not sufficiently reflected in policy or funding structures.

Limited Access to Funding and Support

Most CCIs and tourism SMEs struggle to access innovation grants or green transition financing. Few mechanisms are tailored to their scale, needs, or cross-sector nature.

Skills and Ecosystem Gaps

Many organisations lack the digital, green, and creative competences needed for transformation. Support ecosystems—BSOs, education providers, municipalities—are often underprepared to help them upskill and innovate.

Lack of Integration in Regional Innovation Strategies

DGC competences are rarely embedded in Smart Specialisation Strategies or regional innovation platforms. This limits systemic change and replication potential.



What Worked: Inspiring Cases from the Field

Austria - Innovation Regatta: Hackathon for Sustainable Problem-Solving

The “Innovation Regatta” hackathon, co-led by build! and the University of Klagenfurt, brought students and SMEs together to co-create solutions for real-world sustainability challenges. Using creative methods like Crazy 8s and Lego® prototyping, teams developed business concepts and pitched them to industry mentors.

✓ Fostered academic, industry collaboration, also delivered good solutions for SMEs, and equipped students with real-world innovation experience.

Czech Republic - Hackathon: Innovation in Action

Two-day hackathon in Brno brought together students, creatives, and professionals to co-develop practical ideas for digital and green transformation in CClS. Supported by mentors, participants translated abstract challenges into bold, actionable concepts.

✓ Enabled experiential learning and rapid innovation, turning policy goals into tangible strategies through teamwork, but also experimentation, and creative problem-solving.



Hungary - SPARK! Creative Co-Creation for Green and Digital Futures

The SPARK! programme, led by CTRIA, connected creative professionals, green innovators, and digital experts through a series of interactive co-creation workshops. Participants collaborated across sectors to prototype new solutions for sustainability and digitalisation in culture.

✓ Sparked cross-sector trust, initiated real-life pilot ideas, and clearly demonstrated how hands-on collaboration can drive both policy innovation and meaningful shifts in the mindset.

Slovenia - Creative Collaboration for Sustainable Tourism

A speed dating event in Slovenia brought together creatives and tourism SMEs, leading to a month-long programme of 9 workshops on AI, branding, sustainability, and storytelling. Participants gained practical skills and mentoring to boost innovation, digital visibility, and community engagement.

✓ Strengthened cross-sector collaboration and built digital and green competences for tourism innovation.

Germany - Storytelling Masterclass: Real Story, Real Impact

Masterclass, led by PONG.Li Studios, blended storytelling techniques with the Effectuation method, guiding participants to craft authentic narratives based on their existing resources, values, and motivations.

✓ Empowered participants to turn ideas into impactful stories rooted in purpose, while promoting creative confidence, strategic thinking, and low-budget innovation.

Croatia - GreenFluencer Academy: Empowering Sustainable Voices

This 8-week training programme equipped aspiring changemakers with skills in digital storytelling, video production, and green communication.

✓ Created a visible, motivated network of digital sustainability advocates, boosting public awareness and local capacity for green transformation.



Slovakia - Building Bridges: Cross-Sector Collaboration in Rural Culture

Technical University in Košice led a series of workshops at a historic manor in Markušovce, connecting experts in ecology, heritage, and design to co-create a plan for sustainable cultural use – including installing beehives as part of a green strategy.

✓ Demonstrated on how interdisciplinary collaboration and local engagement can turn cultural heritage not just into a driver of environmental innovation, but also secure municipal support for implementation.

Italy - La Velocittà: Co-Designing of Sustainable Urban Mobility

The *La Velocittà* design sprint united CCIs, SMEs, NGOs, and young creatives to co-develop communication and service design concepts for sustainable biking culture. Using participatory tools, the workshop sparked future-oriented collaboration.

✓ Fostered co-creation between citizens and creatives, and generated locally grounded the DGC solutions for urban mobility and inclusive transformation.

While policy frameworks and strategic tools are essential, real transformation happens through practical implementation in local contexts. The pilot actions conducted within the Capacity2Transform project serve as tangible proof that **Digital, Green, and Creative (DGC)** competences can be meaningfully developed and applied in diverse regional ecosystems.

✓ TOP Policy Recommendations

The recommended policy actions are based on evidence from pilot activities, stakeholder engagement, and analysis conducted throughout the Capacity2Transform project. They are structured by thematic area to help policymakers navigate where and how to intervene.



Governance & Coordination

- 1. Break down policy silos**
Align digital, green, cultural & tourism strategies across levels.
- 2. Boost multi-level governance**
Foster collaboration between local, regional & national actors.
- 3. Track DGC uptake**
Use data tools to monitor and adapt transformation efforts.



Funding Innovation

- 1. Cross-sector funding**
Create funds for digital, creative & green innovation.
- 2. Support micro-enterprises**
Simplify access for small CCLs & tourism SMEs.
- 3. Blended finance**
Mix public, private & EU tools to reduce investment risk.



Embedding Competences in VET

- 1. Integrate DGC in education**
Embed key skills in VET & lifelong learning.
- 2. Modular micro-learning**
Offer flexible training for small teams & freelancers.
- 3. Co-design with users**
Involve CCLs & tourism in shaping training content.



C2T does not propose a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it advocates for flexible, competence-driven approaches that respect local contexts, empower stakeholders, and integrate culture and creativity as essential forces for system change.



Empowering Intermediaries

- 1. Equip support agencies**
Train BSOs & municipalities as transition facilitators.
- 2. Enable matchmaking**
Support platforms connecting creatives, SMEs & policymakers.
- 3. Recognize local champions**
Empower informal leaders driving DGC initiatives.



Positioning CCLs as Driver

- 1. Strategic role for CCLs**
Include CCLs in innovation & sustainability agendas.
- 2. Storytelling for impact**
Fund campaigns showing CCLs' transformative role.
- 3. Place-making & regeneration**
Use creative projects to boost tourism & urban renewal.



Tools for Implementation

The Capacity2Transform (C2T) project produced several practical resources designed to support the **implementation, replication, and scaling** of Digital, Green, and Creative (DGC) transformation strategies. These tools are intended for use by regional authorities, business support organisations, innovation intermediaries, and training providers.

→ The C2T Competence Framework

A practical model that defines the **key knowledge, skills, and attitudes** required for transformation in CCI and ST-SMEs.

It includes:

- Thematic competence clusters (Digital, Green, Creative)
- Assessment templates for SMEs and intermediaries
- Guidelines for using the framework in training or strategic planning

Use it to: design upskilling programs, benchmark regional capacities, or integrate DGC into Smart Specialisation Strategies.

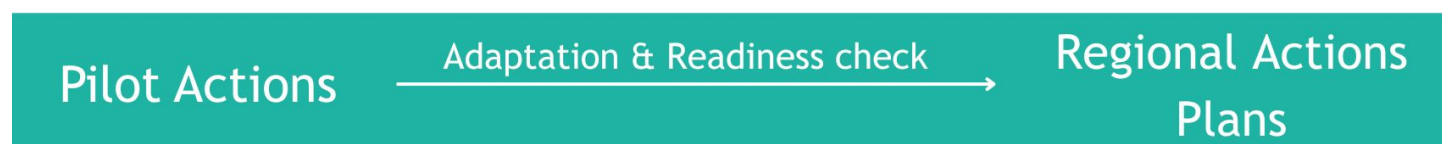


→ Transferability Guidelines

While not a formal deliverable, these guidelines are distilled from the pilot actions and policy insights. They explain:

- How to adapt co-creation formats and capacity-building methods to different regions
- What readiness factors to consider before replicating successful practices
- How to involve stakeholders in context-sensitive ways

Use it to: replicate pilot formats in new locations, or develop regional action plans inspired by C2T cases.



→ The Knowledge Factory

The Knowledge Factory was a peer-learning format within C2T, developed to facilitate exchange of ideas, pilot outcomes, and methods across partner regions.

It includes:

- Case study presentations
- Moderated learning events
- Co-creation sessions and partner showcases

Use it to: build communities of practice, onboard new stakeholders, or align regional approaches.



Local businesses in the digital age: Opportunities and challenges

Technology has enabled small entrepreneurs to reach new markets, connect with global customers, and improve operations. It also brings challenges that need to be addressed.



Sustainable Events: More than a Fad — A Cultural Shift

Sustainability, circularity and responsibility are no longer buzz-words.

By: **Francesca Visintin**



Permaculture: The key to sustainable rural tourism development

Permaculture, as a philosophy and practice based on sustainability, balance, and synergy with nature, is increasingly finding its place in the development of rural tourism.

Get in Touch: Contact Points

Janja Drole, *project manager*

janja.drole@primorski-tp.si

Project [website](#)

Social media: [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#)

