Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

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CURIOST

Deliverable 2.2.1. Definition of setting, organization and involvement of creative heads

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Deliverable 2.2.1.

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1. SUMMARY

The CURIOST project aims to strengthen the innovation capacity of SMEs and small mid-caps in Central Europe by supporting the transition toward sustainable and circular product development. Focusing on four key manufacturing sectors - mechanics & mechatronics, plastics, packaging, and construction - the project provides a structured methodology and support framework to enable businesses to adopt more circular, resource-efficient practices.

2. INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

During the 2nd SC meeting of the project, ENVIPARK organised an interactive session for the PPs, to work creatively on the definition of the Pool of Creative heads.
The project aims to foster the development of innovative solutions for SMEs and small mid-caps in the circular economy. During the project, PPs will develop a business support and assistance programme for companies, structured into three steps of tailored-made workshops.
In the first "uptake workshop", 20 companies/countries will work on Circular Business Models, by following the Design Thinking Methodology. A trainer and technical experts will support the companies in a critical evaluation of the processes/products and the creation of a new business model and a prototype.
The most promising companies (4/5 out of the 20 involved) that presented a more mature concept of a circular business model, will be accompanied through the realisation of 2 "Piloting workshop" for the development of prototypes of circular and sustainable products (or processes).
During these workshops, challenges and human-centric problems should be taken into consideration as a starting point for the development of solutions. Companies will be guided by PPs together with creative heads to create a prototype for a circular process/product.
The identification of this pool of creative heads is one of the crucial points for the effectiveness and the success of these rounds of workshops.
Creative heads should bring a fresh view on the companies' process and problems, providing a beginner's mindset that will be helpful for the realisation of the circular prototypes.
The selection process of the creative heads should consider a series of factors:

1. THE OBJECTIVES

For the selection of the right persons, PPs should evaluate the goals that the creative heads should achieve during the piloting workshops;

2. THE SKILLS

The process of identifying creative minds must involve evaluating their particular skills, particularly their soft and hard skills relevant to this context.

3. THE RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

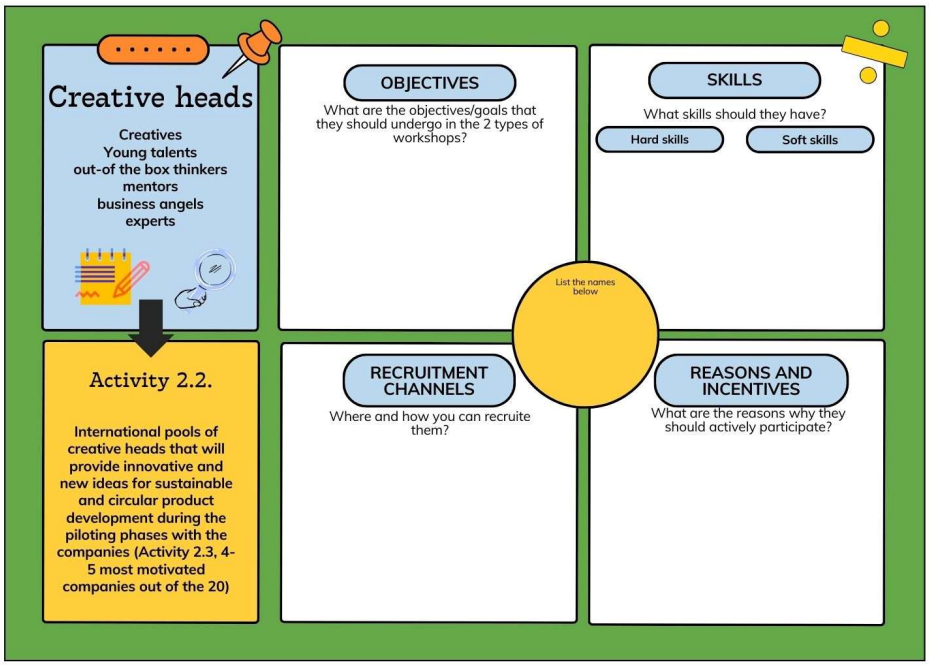
PPs should define the channels that they will use to recruit the creative heads, considering their actual connection and network of collaborations

4. THE REASONS AND INCENTIVES

PPs should consider the reason why this pool of creative heads wants to participate in such workshops, as well as potential incentives.
The identification of the reasons and the types of incentives, strictly connected with the recruitment channels should help PPs in the communication activities of the workshops

THE CANVAS STRUCTURE

To evaluate these factors preliminarily, Envi prepared a canvas structured into four boxes, which PPs can fill out and use as a tool for a preliminary assessment of the activity.



The kick off of Task 2.2. was done during the SC Meeting in Opatjia (Croatia). Envipark presented the activities and goals of Task 2.2 and then the canvas structure, with the instructions for completing the document. The idea was to stimulate creative discussion among partners from the same country who will collaborate on organising the workshops, and to suggest a structure for selecting creative heads. Then the PPs worked together (grouped within the same Country) in 1-hour interactive session.



ENVI presenting the canvas and the activities to be done



PPs working on the Countries' canvas

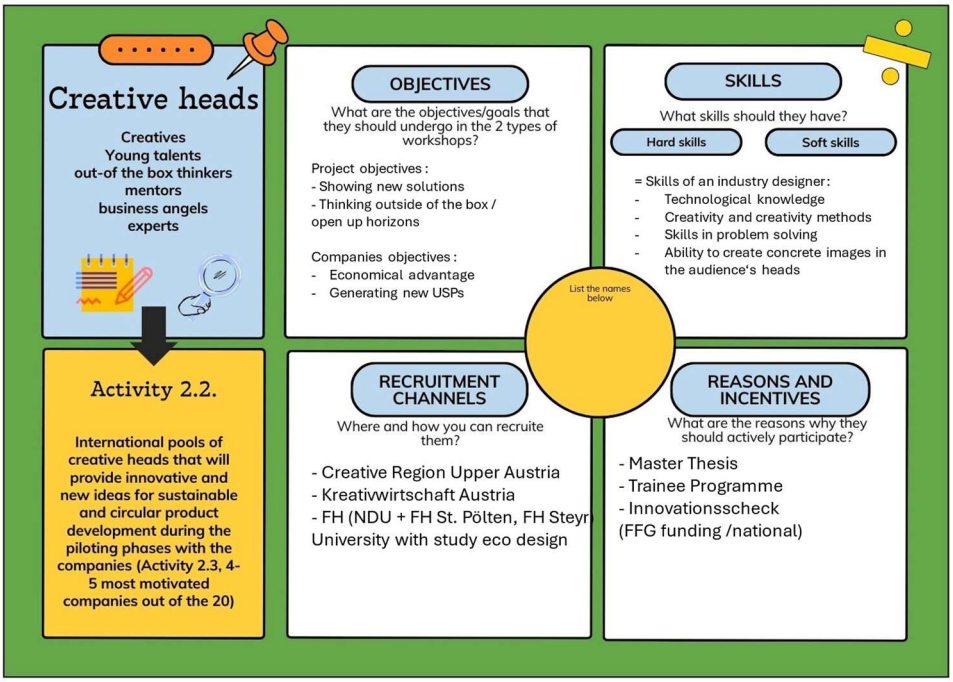
The brainstorming activity carried out by each group, led by ENVI, made it possible to assess the type of creative minds needed to conduct the upcoming piloting workshops.

After that, they filled in four boxes on the canvas for each partner region and presented the main ideas and results to all PPs in a plenary session. All the canvases were collected and saved on the Project SharePoint.

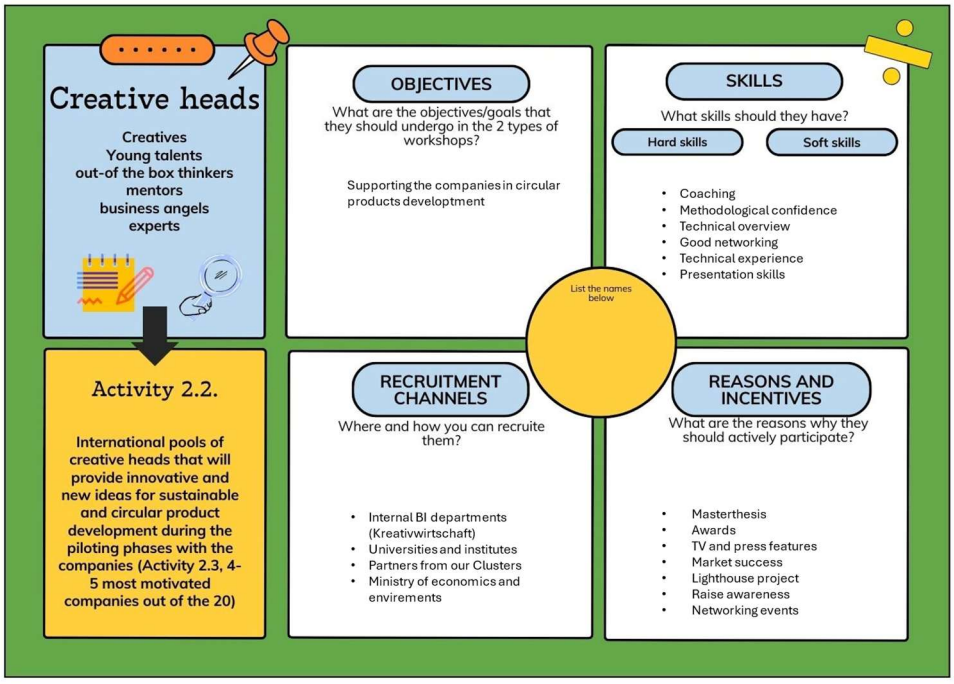
PROJECT PARTNERS' CANVAS – MAIN RESULTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Following, the images of the Countries' canvas, filled in during the interactive workshops.

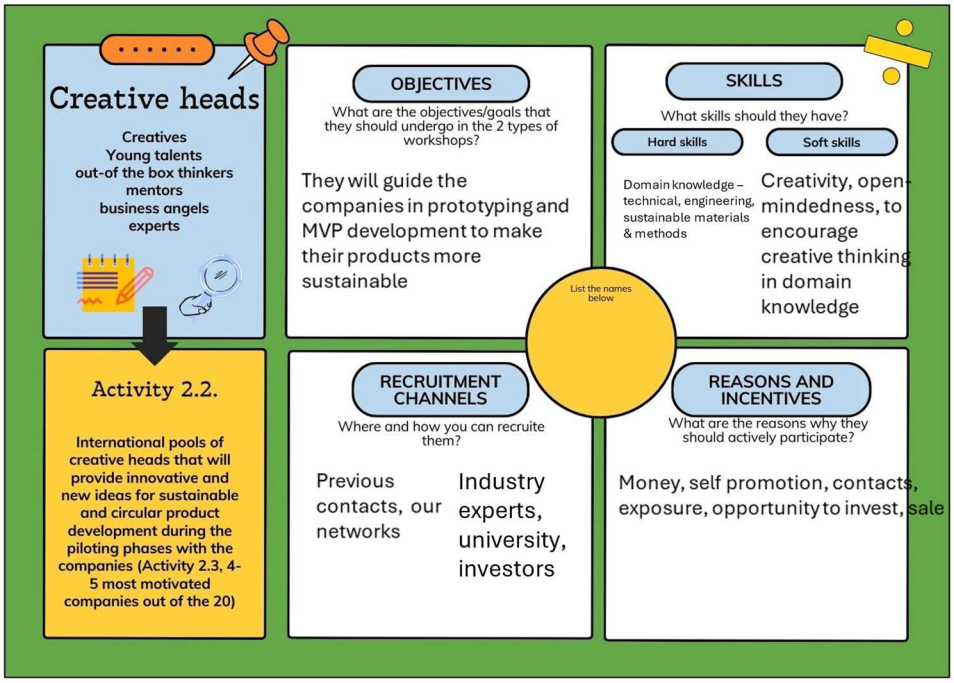
Austria



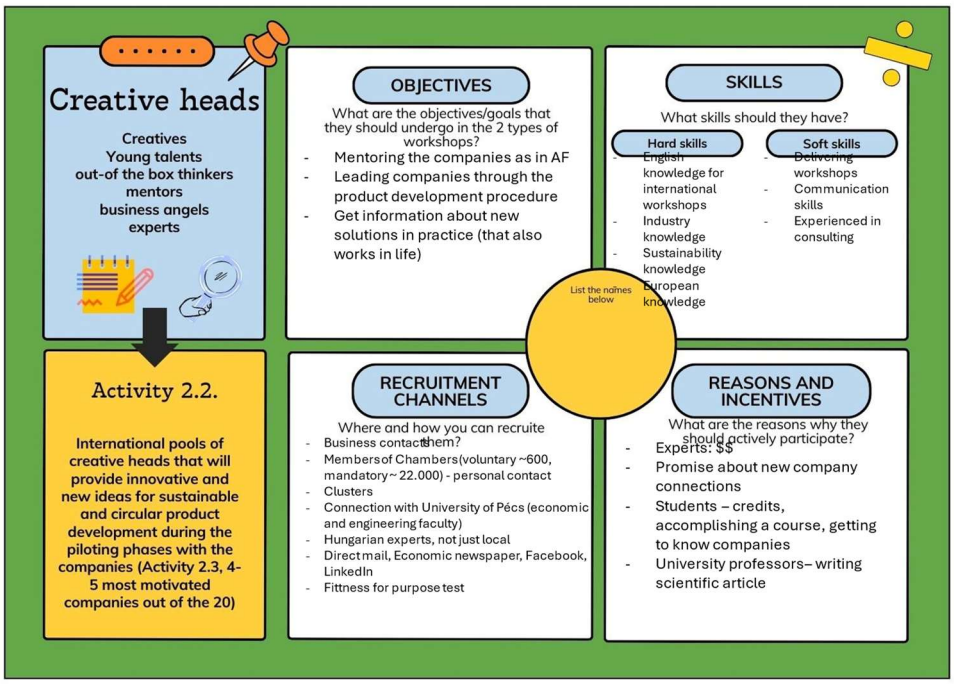
Germany



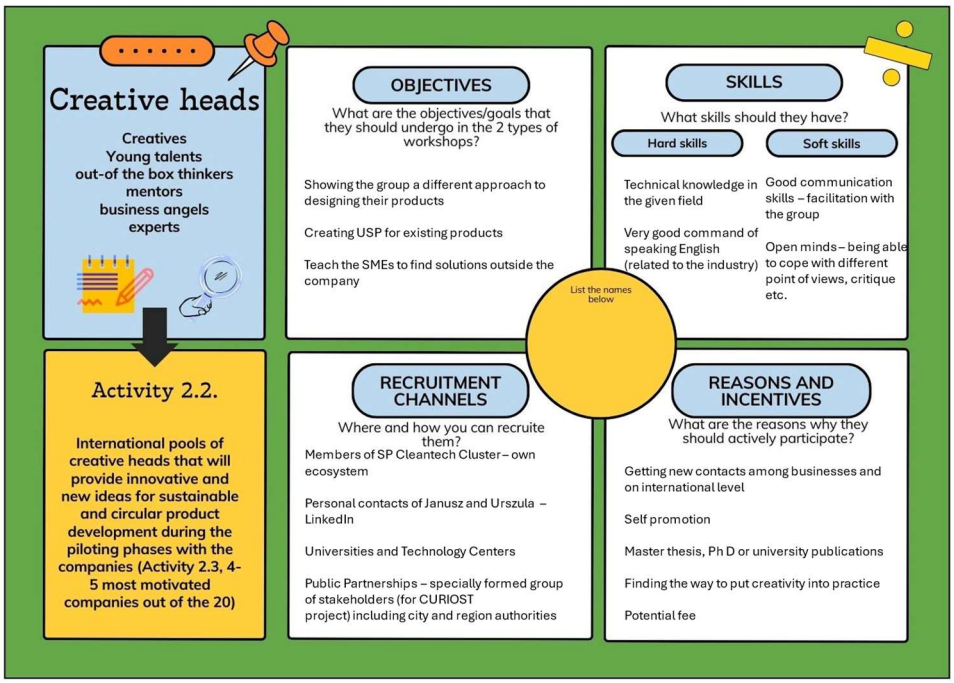
Croatia



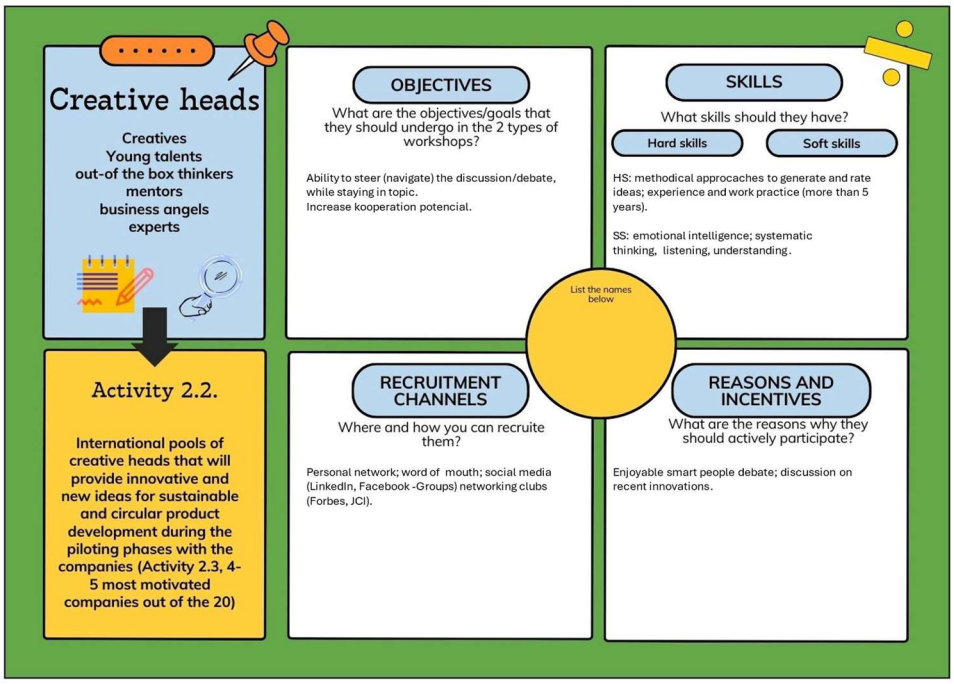
Hungary



Poland



Slovakia



Despite every PPs completing the canvas with original thoughts and evaluations, common considerations could be made:

1. OBJECTIVES

Regarding the common objectives that the Pool of Creative heads should undergo, they should:

- ✓ Stimulate the creation of innovative ideas;
- ✓ Bring side-vision

- ✓ Support the companies in the development of the circular product;
- ✓ Show new solution
- ✓ Think out of the box
- ✓ Guide companies in the prototyping and MVP
- ✓ Mentor the companies
- ✓ Be cooperative

2. SKILL

For PPs, the creative heads should possess both creativity and communication skills (emotional intelligence, systematic thinking, etc.) and a technical background, as they need to understand and evaluate the business model and the prototyping process. PPs agree that these persons should be:

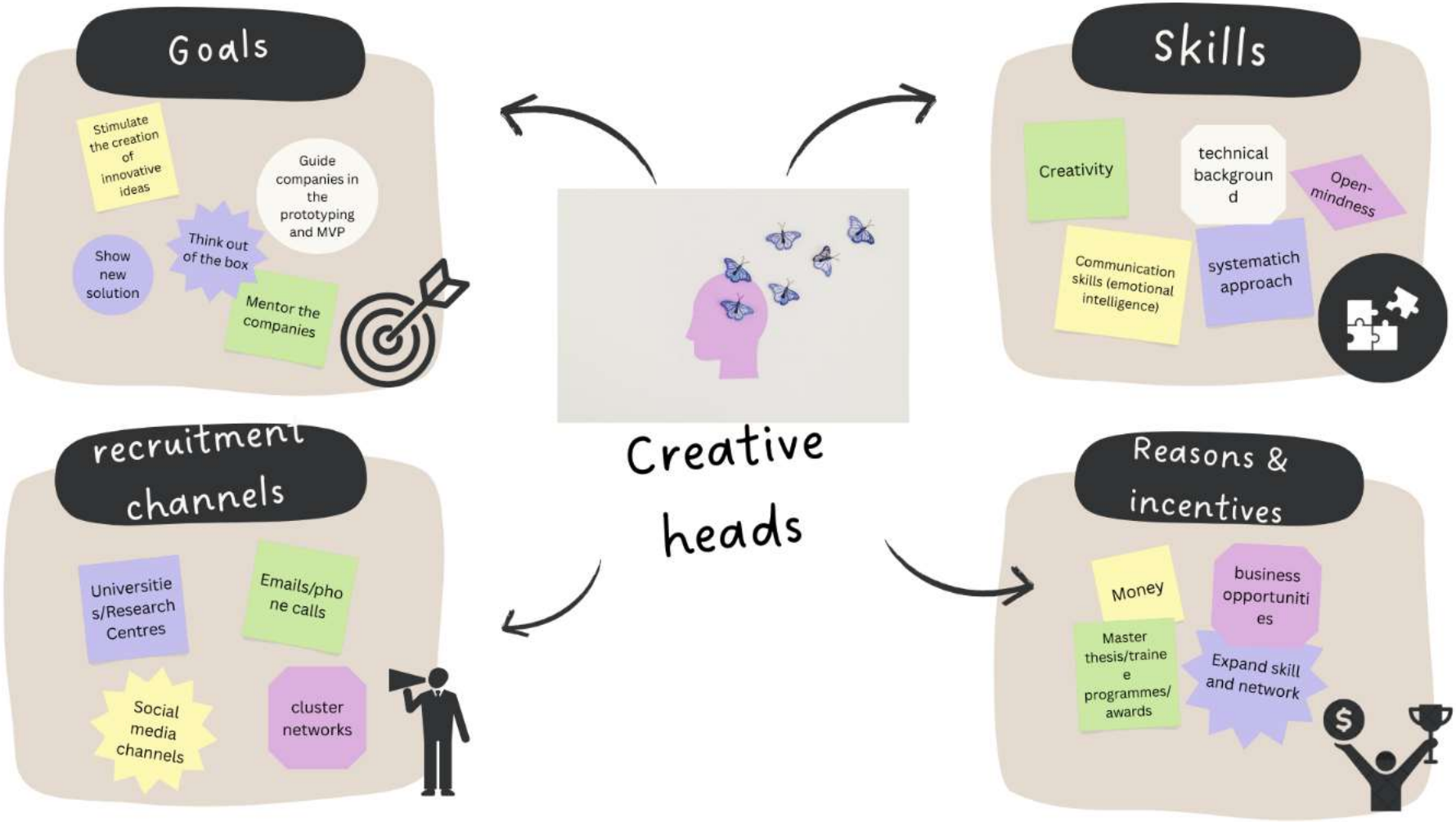
- ✓ Open-mindedness;
- ✓ Supportive;
- ✓ Encouraging
- ✓ Cooperative
- ✓ Inspiring
- ✓ Coaching

3. RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

PPs have defined the perimeter in which they can recruit the creative heads, from universities/research centres to the chamber of commerce, as well as Clusters' network and Competence Centres. The approach to these persons could be through Social Media Channels, personal email and phone calls;

4. REASONS AND INCENTIVES

PPs define a variety of reasons that is strictly related to the recruitment channels that they will use. Some PPs identify money incentives as the main reason, while others suggest more creative approaches, such as combining the activity of creative heads with a master's thesis or a trainee programme, along with an award. Every PP agrees that the possibility to expand their skills, network and business opportunities should be a great incentive. The identification of the reasons and the types of incentives, strictly connected with the recruitment channels, should help PPs in the communication activities of the workshops.
A visual representation of the main results of the interactive workshop is listed below.



Visual representation of the main characteristics of the creative heads for the piloting workshops

SELECTION OF THE CREATIVE HEADS

Every Country Region should identify an international pool of creative heads that will participate in the 2nd round of the "Piloting workshops"- Activity 2.3.
In particular, they will participate in the 1st stage of "piloting design thinking workshop on a Regional Level with 4-5 most promising companies. The goal of the first round of workshops is the creation of a first version of a prototype of a sustainable and circular product.
In the 2nd stage of Piloting workshops," the creative heads will act on an International Level, helping the companies to transform the first draft of the prototype into a minimum viable product (MVP). A business case will also be developed based on the MVP.

The creative heads will participate and support the process in a transnational way (i.e creatives from PL should support companies in IT), according to their know-how in the 4 specific sectors.

Every Country should have at least 1 creative head/sector.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE AND THE EFFORT OF THE CREATIVE HEADS

Based on the description of the piloting workshops, developed by STEP-RI (A2.3 OUTLINE OF PILOTING WORKSHOPS), which every Country has to organize in the next project period, the role and the involvement of the Creative Heads for each stage are described in the following chapters:

Stage 1 National Workshop –in PPs country- on-site

At least 1 creative head/sector
Skills: experts from the sectors, business development consultants, creatives, mentors etc.
Role: Inspire and guide companies in their pathway to sustainability. The final goal is to create a new Minimum Viable Product or Process in terms of sustainability and circularity. The CHs should guide the design thinking–based innovation process.

Option 1: 1 on-site workshop with all selected companies + follow-up consultation (not mandatory)

i. ON-SITE WORKSHOP

Who: at least 1 creative heads/sector, all the companies selected + country PPs+1 design thinking expert to train the workshop

Role of CH: support the companies and the trainer for the initial outline of a prototype concept, key features, and a development plan.

Duration: 1 full day of the workshop + online meetings for the preparation of the workshop (at least 1 meeting with all the CHs, 1 hour)

When: Mid-January / beginning of February

TOTAL EFFORT FOR 1 CH= around 8-9 hours in total

ii. Follow-Up support (consultation online, not mandatory)

Who: 1 CH/company+country PPs

Role of the CH: follow-up on the activities done during the workshop, develop:

- Initial feature map and experimentation plan
- Testing framework and results evaluation
- Product development roadmap
- Experimentation and validation activities (where feasible)
- Iteration or pivot of the initial product concept
- Innovation pitch (covering the concept, potential challenges in implementation, and sustainability aspects)

Duration: 8 hours in total of support/every CH/every company online

When: Workshop plus a 30-day follow-up period. (beginning of March, companies need to have a finalized first version of prototype)

Option 2: organisation of one workshop per company at the company's premises or at the PPs premises

Who: at least 1 creative heads/sector/company directly at the premises of the company
In total 4-5 workshops (1/company selected)

Role of CH: the same as option 1

Duration: 1 full day of the workshop + online meetings for the preparation of the workshop (at least 1 meeting with all the CHs, 1 hour)

When: Mid-January / beginning of February

TOTAL EFFORT FOR 1 CH= around 8-9 hours in total

Stage 2 – Number 4 transnational workshops=1 workshop/sector (online)

i. Stage 2a: N. 4 Transnational workshop online

Who: up to 4-6 transnational CHs /workshop + country PPs

Matchmaking activity: CHs will be matched to have 1 CH of 1 sector with 1 company from the same sector but from a different country

Role: participation in the online workshop (structure to be defined i.e. peer review of the companies' idea, or privately consultation).
Duration: at least half day
When: To be decided by PPs together after SC Meeting in Linz

ii. Stage 2b: Follow-Up support (consultation online, not mandatory)

Number of CH: 1 CH/ company + country PPs
Role: development of more advanced prototypes and MVP, refinement and testing of concepts and prototypes, business model clarification and development,
Duration: up to 8 hours/company
Timeline: 30-day after the online workshop (

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