



RCIA project

# CATALONIA ACTION PLAN

to support the growth and consolidation of SMEs by improving their access to advanced creative services



for the period January 2020 - December 2021

Developed by Barcelona Chamber of Commerce



Cambra de Comerç  
de Barcelona



Interreg  
Europe



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# Introduction

This document represents an **Action Plan** developed by the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce in the framework of the Interreg Europe project **Regional Creative Industries Alliance (RCIA)** - From European recommendations to better regional Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) policies for a more competitive economy. Interreg Europe is a programme financed by the European Commission under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. Projects under the programme are structured in two phases whereby the first phase is dedicated to exchanging experience in between partner countries ending with the provision of an action plan (present document), and the second phase focuses on the implementation and monitoring of the proposed actions therein.



The present action plan provides details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation and exchange of experience process that took place within RCIA's first phase will be exploited in order to improve the regions' policies, in this case Catalonia's, by means of targeted actions. In line with the project focus (see below), the policy field tackled here refers to SME competitiveness, more specifically the business ecosystem for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). The concrete policy instrument addressed is the ERDF Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020.

The two proposed actions refer to: (1) Support programme to foster creative processes in shaping entrepreneurs' project ideas (Design&Plug programme) and (2) Support to SME growth and competitiveness through a technical and financial support scheme for innovation (InnoCámaras programme). The document specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, their costs and funding sources.

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# PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION

This part includes general information about the authors of this Action Plan and their contacts. Moreover, it presents RCIA project, both of which are important to understand the context of the proposed actions.

**Project:** Regional Creative Industries Alliance (RCIA)

**Partner organisation concerned:** Barcelona Chamber of Commerce

**Country:** Spain

**NUTS2 region:** Catalonia

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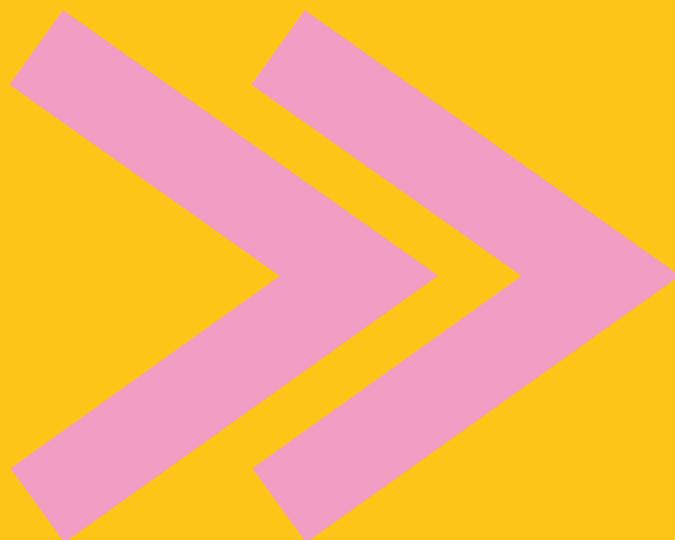
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## Interreg Europe and RCIA

RCIA (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/rcia/>) is framed within the **Interreg Europe Programme**, which helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policies by creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions and leading to integrated and sustainable policies for people and places. Specifically, RCIA falls into the SME competitiveness topic, which includes 49 projects in total.

The project started in January 2017 and will last until December 2021. It is divided into two phases out of which the first one (January 2017-December 2019) is dedicated to exchanging experience in between partner regions, resulting in an action plan for each region to improve its policies (the one at hand is the action plan for the region of Catalonia) and a second phase, dedicated to implementing the action plans (January 2020 - December 2021). The project counts on an overall budget of € 1,877,340, out of which the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce manages € 233,871. The Interreg Europe programme co-finances 85% of RCIA's budget.

The lead partner of the project is Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (AWS) from Austria. The other partners are Public Service of Wallonia from Belgium, Creative Business Cup from Denmark, North-West Regional Development Agency from Romania, Region of Central Greece (Sterea Ellada) from Greece, Joint Stock Company "Development Finance Institution Altum" from Latvia, IDM Suedtirol from Italy, City of Lublin from Poland, and the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce from Spain. Based on their good practices and experiences, the inter-regional policy learning and exchange of experience helps to inspire, adapt and possibly adopt successful examples of policy instruments applicable to partner countries according to their policy context.



## RCIA Project Objectives:

RCIA strives to shape better regional policies towards a modern business ecosystem using the transformative power of creative SMEs as a key competitiveness factor.

This is done by:

- Focusing on supporting creative SMEs to set impulses for higher growth.
- Positioning Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) as “the missing link” throughout sectors and disciplines regarding innovation and competitiveness.
- Increasing the attractiveness and innovative image of a city/region/country (attract talent, create and retain jobs in the territory).
- Positioning CCI as a pillar of the competitiveness policy.

RCIA intends to:

- Strengthen the creative SMEs competitiveness by improving their skills (development/execution of business plans, interaction with investors, mentoring programmes) and to support their growth on global markets.
- Adapt various funding mechanisms to the particularities of CCIs (including the possibility of capacity building measures for banks).
- Increase the awareness of the companies from the wider economy on the transformative power (added-value) of creative SMEs for their own competitiveness.
- Develop/adapt/improve the eco-system from classic spatial cross-collaboration into a holistic approach.

## The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce

The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce (BCC) is a public law corporation that provides services to companies, contributing to the development of the local economy and the creation of employment. It furthermore has the function of representing, promoting and defending the general interests of commerce, industry, services and navigation.

As such, BCC disposes of a series of support services for all sort of businesses and sectors with a special focus on SMEs and micro-enterprises. In the area of entrepreneurship and innovation – the most relevant ones in the context of this action plan – BCC supports companies in their constitution, orients entrepreneurs via consulting services and business solutions. It gives them access to microcredits and promotes and enables corporate entrepreneurship initiatives by putting them in contact with consolidated companies. Services also include access to finance (public and private), initiation to internationalisation and adoption of IT solutions. When it comes to innovation, a specific role within the offered services plays the InnoCámaras programme, which part of this action plan is built upon.

In the recently published strategy of the BCC “Catalonia 2030/40”<sup>1</sup>, where the Chamber presents its vision of a new economic model supported by the institution, there are two important aspects mentioned (point 6 and 7) that reflect and confirm the approach and objectives of the RCIA project:

### Encouraging creativity, innovation and talent

- Promote the “CATinnova” programme to stimulate innovation in the territory

### Impulse to entrepreneurship and startups

- RCIA strives to shape better regional policies towards a modern business ecosystem using the transformative power of creative SMEs as a key competitiveness factor.

Having the above mentioned existing services and capacities in mind, combined with the strategic vision of the Chamber as institution and considering the learnings through the exchange process, this action plan can be understood as an innovative building block in the regional planning and an added value to its services in line with the RCIA project.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cambrabcn.org/es/cat3040>



# PART II – POLICY CONTEXT AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE PROCESS

## The policy instrument:

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

- **European Social Fund Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020 (Thematic Objective 8; Specific Objective 8.3.1) – Action 1**
- **ERDF Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020 (Thematic Objective 3; Specific Objective 3.4.1) – Action 2**

The **ERDF Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020** aims to **boost economic growth in the region of Catalonia** and to help contribute to Europe reaching its goals of smart, green growth for all. SME competitiveness shall be improved through enhanced access to credit, as well as advisory and other specialised services provided.

The programme focuses on three main funding priorities (% of funding):

- Knowledge and innovation (40.9%)
- **Enhancing SME's competitiveness (37.9%) and**
- Green economy (21.2%)

The ERDF also contributes to cross-cutting priorities that are also key for advancing towards the 2020 objectives. These priorities receive no specific financing under the ERDF OP. However, they must be taken into account in all actions. They are:

1. Territorial balance
2. Internationalisation
3. Employment
4. Smart specialisation



Regarding the funding priority on “Enhancing SME’s competitiveness”, the ERDF Operational Programme will result in a better support for projects and **advanced services for SMEs**. This includes the **development of advanced programmes and services aimed at improving the competitiveness of SMEs, boosting their acceleration and strengthening their internal business innovation processes, specifically in emerging sectors.**

The Catalan business base consists mainly of micro-enterprises, which in 2012 represented almost 95% of the total number of companies in the territory, followed by SME companies. Internationalisation, complex innovation processes and the professionalisation of management require a certain business dimension that can hardly be met without cooperation between companies.

It is for this reason that, as a general rule, it is necessary to develop mechanisms and actions to support SMEs that enable them the access to finance, increase their competitiveness, the development of innovative or internationalisation activities, among others.

With the measures put in place, the results that are expected to be achieved are:

- Growth and consolidation of SMEs, thus generating new jobs.
- Development of the business activities of Catalan SMEs at international level and promotion of regular exports.

The **ESF Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020** places a strong emphasis on the need to address structural weaknesses in the Catalan economy through the strengthening of the business fabric of the region. In particular, this is planned through stimulating growth in SMEs and entrepreneurship. There is also a strong focus on:

- increasing employment opportunities, especially for long term unemployed, people with low skills and those over 45 years of age;
- addressing the needs of those at greatest risk of social exclusion and poverty, in particular through active inclusion measures and better and affordable access to social services;
- modernising the Catalan public employment services;
- **enhancing labour opportunities through improving access to permanent training and the upskilling of the workforce.**

The expected impact of the policy instrument is:

- Increase employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups, stimulate and increase entrepreneurship and reduce the gender gap by increasing the labour market participation and opportunities of women in the labour market.
- Improve the employability of those further away from the labour market by promoting employment measures as a means to combat social exclusion.
- Increase the quality of and access to training possibilities for people in work.



### **The Specific Investment priority addressed:**

Investment Priority 8.3 addresses self-employment, entrepreneurship and creation of companies, including micro and small and medium enterprises innovative. The **Specific Objective 8.3.1 aims to increase entrepreneurial skills and increase the number of sustainable businesses and self-employment initiatives created, facilitating its financing by improving the quality and efficiency of support services.**

The here addressed programme *Catalunya Emprèn* falls under this priority.

### **Specific Role of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce in the ERDF/ ESF Operational Programmes of Catalonia 2014-2020:**

The **Barcelona Chamber of Commerce**, as a partner of RCIA, promotes the general interest of the regional economy reinforcing the competitiveness of the local firms. For the preparation and execution phase of the Operational Programme of Catalonia, a consultation process takes place with the participation of different regional actors of relevance for the regional (economic) development. Several meetings are organised with the objective to collect the concerns, challenges and proposals presented by these actors. One of them is the General Council of Chambers of Commerce of Catalonia, which is the body that represents all the Chambers of Commerce in Catalonia at political level, active as a consultative body for the Government of Catalonia. The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, being the largest Chamber of Commerce in Catalonia, is a very active member participating in the drafting initiatives and proposals to favour the competitiveness and growth of Catalan SMEs.

To sum up, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce plays an important role as one of the stakeholders involved in both drafting and monitoring the implementation of the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes of Catalonia 2014-2020.

### **Involvement of policy makers and stakeholders:**

To address the above mentioned policy instrument and related policy aims, BCC set up a local stakeholder group in Catalonia. The group comprised the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), which took part in the project through diverse representatives of two departments or regional ministries: The Department of Culture, through the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies (ICEC) and the Department of Industry and Knowledge through its Competitiveness Agency ACCIÓ. The Generalitat is the political body in charge of the drafting and fund allocation under the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes of Catalonia. The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce did also involve the Municipality of Barcelona, through the Barcelona Institute of Culture (ICUB) and the Tourism department of the Barcelona Provincial Council (Diputació de Barcelona), so that the three levels of the regional institutions were involved in this project. Furthermore, some private institutions were involved in the process, namely the General Council of Catalan Chambers of Commerce, the Barcelona Design Center and EURECAT Technology Center.

**Exchange of Experience process:**

The learning and inspiration for the action plan results from the interregional exchange of experience process that took place within the RCIA project, in which the above mentioned stakeholders were closely involved. It was based on several activities, among them the collection and exchange of more than 20 good practices, study visits to the most interesting and inspiring sites and initiatives of each region, a series of staff exchanges between partner organisations of the project and finally eight policy round tables, one in each region. The interregional exchange of experience was fully integrated in the activities of the Local Stakeholder Group, consisting of policy-related representatives from the most relevant public and private institutions and organisations at regional and local level.

**a) The Local Stakeholder Group Meetings (LSGM):**

During the project's first phase (2017-2019), the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce set up periodic meetings (6 meetings in total on 11 May 2017; 28 November 2017; 05 March 2018; 04 December 2018; 12 June 2019; 03 December 2019) with the stakeholder group (see composition in page 15) with the objective to share the knowledge acquired within the RCIA, discuss the ideas, best practices shared by partner regions and see how to improve the regional policy framework for CCIs and SME competitiveness and enrich the regional policy learning process based on these learnings. Those meetings have been the perfect setting to address the potential for improvement identified through learnings from the project partners' good practices but also to spot linkages and opportunities for collaboration at regional level through the involvement and moderated dialogue of various participants from the CCI policy implementation ecosystem. In other words, it created a space for knowledge transfer and exchange of practices, an environment to better support cultural and creative industries at regional and local level. A side effect of the creation of the stakeholder group surely was the interlinkage of local and regional actors among each other in the sense of putting together representatives from different administrative levels, who often work in their own bubbles, around the same table. As a result of this process, people working on similar issues on local level but did not collaborate, connected to each other. In general, the involvement and active participation of the representatives of the different levels of the Catalan administration in the process of exchange of experience from the very beginning of the project implementation was very important.

## **b) International Conferences and study visits:**

In addition, BCC provided the Catalan stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the international workshops and study visits organised by the project. Stakeholders from Catalonia were present in Wallonia (Belgium) on 22-24 May 2017, Barcelona (Spain) on 27-29 November 2017 and in Riga (Latvia) on 5-6 June 2018. During these international meetings, the regional stakeholders from Catalonia actively discussed with partners and their local stakeholders not only about the challenges they experience in Catalonia, but also about possible solutions and other good practices (GPs) in the partner regions, their applicability and the ways how these could possibly be transferred to Catalonia.

Another way of learning from each other was an exchange of information related to GPs. The learning process was done by active communication between the project partners and their stakeholders by emails, conference calls and project meetings. Each semester meetings were organised in the partners' regions (Austria, Wallonia, Lublin, Catalonia, South Tyrol, Latvia, Sterea Ellada and North West Romania), where project partners and their stakeholders presented a selection of their GPs.

## **c) Staff exchanges:**

BCC participated with two representatives at the staff exchange in Wallonia (Belgium) from 30 October to 1 November 2019. The staff exchange included visits and presentations of the Relab fablab and the creative hubs of Liège and Charleroi, the Wallifornia Music tech initiative; Sowalfin financing institution for entrepreneurs including presentations of their entrepreneurship and innovation programmes. Furthermore the participants got to know about St'ART, a financing instrument for creative industries; the Wallimage – the Wallonia audiovisual fund and finally the KIKK festival, which was happening at the same dates of the staff exchange. From the study visits and explanations provided by the local experts from Wallonia, BCC was inspired especially by the programme “Fast&Plug”, promoted by the Creative Hub of Liège, which finally led BCC to the decision of transferring this practice to the Chamber as a pilot programme (see further details in the action description).

BCC did moreover organise two staff exchanges for participants from Belgium (19-20 February 2019) and Austria and Latvia (6-7 May 2019). Both staff exchanges were customised to the specific interests of the participants. Belgian participants were especially interested in the Catalan support to the Gaming industry and different indicators (quantitative and qualitative) used by Creative Hubs and Incubators to measure the impact of their services on companies. To provide specific information on this regards, participants visited the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies, concretely its departments for Digital Culture and Business Development to get to know the GameBcn programme.

They furthermore visited the first 3D Factory Incubator in Europe, Fabra i Coats Art Factory (managed by the City Council of Barcelona) and the Canòdrom - Creative Industries Research Park, whose patron is the city of Barcelona likewise, whereas it is managed by a private company.

For the second staff exchange, the Latvian and Austrian partners, as public development banks, were especially interested in financing instruments used for CCIs. To this end, they received individualised presentations and Q&A sessions from three mayor Catalan institutions, who provide financial services and instruments to companies, being: ACCIÓ, the Agency for Business Competitiveness of the Catalan Government, the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies (ICEC), where they were explained the Repayable contributions for cultural companies and the ICF - Catalan Finance Institute of the Government of Catalonia. There they could likewise get to know about specific financial products and instruments for cultural companies. As two further interesting initiatives in Catalonia, participants were given the opportunity to visit the Pier01 - Barcelona Tech City, a pioneer Tech hub at European level, and the 3D Factory Incubator.

Through the organisation of these two staff exchanges, BCC could enable the transfer of experiences and Catalan GPs, pioneer projects and policies to other partner regions.

#### **d) Policy Roundtables:**

BCC did furthermore provide expert experience to other regions through the participation of Catalan representatives to three other partner's policy round tables. Concretely, BCC arranged the participation of the Director of Business Development of the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies at the policy round tables of Austria on 1 October 2018 and Latvia on 26 February 2019 and the participation of the Chief Operating Officer of the Canòdrom - Creative Industries Research Park (managed by the private firm Pensinsula - Corporate Innovation) at the Belgian policy round table on 29 January 2019.

#### **Catalonia's policies as inspiration for other regions:**

As showed in the above explanations of BCC's implication in RCIA activities, it becomes clear that the exchange of experience process is not a one-way street, meaning that Catalonia did get inspired and benefitted from the knowledge provided by other RCIA partners, but did also and most prominently inspire other partner regions by its practices and policies. The project showed that Catalonia is a reference region throughout Europe and a source of inspiration when it comes to CCI policy development. Through the intense process of exchange of experience, our participation and contribution led to a number of 5 Good practices shared with partners (out of 21 in total by 8 partners).



Counting on the experience shared through good practices, staff exchanges and policy round tables, Catalonia did provide inspiration for the action plans of 4 partner regions.

These are:

- Austria: inspired by the policies of the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies (ICEC) and content of the staff exchange,
- Belgium: inspired by the GP Art Factories and 3D Factory Incubator and the content from the staff exchange and policy roundtable,
- Latvia: inspired by Repayable Contributions GP and content from the staff exchange and policy round table with Catalan expert participation, and
- Romania: inspired by GP Canòdrom - Creative Industries Research Park.

# PART III – CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN CATALONIA: STATE OF THE ART

## Cultural and creative industries as catalysts for innovation

*"Being at the crossroads between arts, business and technology, cultural and creative sectors are in a strategic position to trigger spill-overs in other industries. They fuel content for ICT applications, creating a demand for sophisticated consumer electronics and telecommunication devices. Culture and creativity have also direct impacts on sectors such as tourism and are integrated at all stages of the value chain of other sectors such as fashion and high-end industries, where their importance as key underlying assets is increasing"<sup>2</sup>.*

<sup>2</sup> European Union: European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU, 26 September 2012, COM(2012) 537



## The strengths of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in Catalonia

The Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialisation of Catalonia RIS3CAT<sup>3</sup> defines the framework for research and innovation policies in Catalonia for the 2014-2020 period.

It describes a vision of Catalonia as a region with an industrial base and an open, competitive and sustainable economy that combines talent, creativity, a diversified business fabric and its own excellent research system within the framework of a dynamic, enterprising and inclusive society. The country is home to both multinational enterprises and local companies, both consolidated industries that have become international leaders and emerging technological sectors.

RIS3CAT revolves around four pillars of action:

- Pillar 1. It focuses on seven leading sectoral areas that, due to their importance and potential, can help to generate economic recovery and reorient the Catalan economy towards a growth model that is smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive: food and beverages, energy and resources, industrial systems, **design-based industries**, industries related to mobility, health, and **cultural and experience-based industries**.
- Pillar 2. Identifying new economic opportunities in emerging sectors, based on technological capabilities (new activities generated by technological change and cutting-edge innovation) and synergies between related sectors.
- Pillar 3. A commitment to cross-cutting enabling technologies as the main tool to transform the production system and generate new scientific, technological and economic opportunities. The six priority cross-cutting enabling technologies in the RIS3CAT strategy are: ICT, nanotechnology, advanced materials, photonics, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing.

<sup>3</sup> <http://catalunya2020.gencat.cat>

- **Pillar 4. Improving the innovation environment.**

According to the classification done by RIS3CAT, the cultural and creative industries in Catalonia are to be found in two leading sectors: The Design-based industries and the Cultural and Experience-based industries. The latter includes four subgroups: Cultural and communication industries, Creative services to companies, Tourism and Sport services.

### **RIS3CAT Communities**

RIS3CAT Communities are public-private sector associations formed by different entities (companies, technology centers, universities and other agents in the R&D system) with the aim of developing during 3 years transformative technology projects with high impact for the Catalan economy.

The Catalan Government has financed 13 RIS3CAT Communities that, from 2015 to 2022, will have completed 72 projects between 480 companies and entities in strategic sectors for the Catalan industry such as food, health, energy, sustainable mobility, design and the cultural industries. When it comes to defining the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), the most commonly used definition in European policy making, the sector comprises the following fields: architecture, books and publishing, design, advertisement, film business, music business, radio and TV, software and games, and performing arts. As opposed to this commonly applied sectors, the Catalan classification includes also the tourism sector.

From the statistical perspective, mapping these industries therefore is rather difficult because the official figures produced by the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) do not correspond to the classification made under the RIS3CAT strategy in 2011. Therefore, some further elaboration had to be carried out based on the Official Survey of Service Companies published by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia ([www.idescat.cat](http://www.idescat.cat)).

According to this source, in 2016 the total turnover of the activities mentioned above represented €32,537 Million, employing nearly 440,000 people. Tourism services account for 50% of the total turnover and represent more than 56% of the employees.

The CCI represent an important part of the Catalan industry in terms of turnover and employment likewise. On account of the economic crises and new challenges faced related to the rapid transformation due to new technologies, new formats, new distribution channels, demanding clients etc. creative SMEs in Catalonia do however seem to register a decrease. Therefore, an important issue appears: Are they addressing the new challenges with the right strategies? Are there the right public instruments in place to support them grow?

In the light of this situation and the context of the addressed policy instrument, the BCC proposes the following two actions:

1. Design&Plug - support programme to foster creative processes in shaping entrepreneurs' project ideas.
2. InnoCámaras - support to SME growth and competitiveness through a technical and financial support scheme for innovation.

## CULTURAL INDUSTRIES BASED ON EXPERIENCE CATALONIA. 2016

	Number of companies	Number of employees	Turnover (thousand €)
<b>Tourism services</b>			
Accommodation	4,595	52,093	4,674,736
Food and restaurants	44,890	187,497	8,319,585
Travel agencies and tour operators	2,513	10,607	3,103,966
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,998</b>	<b>250,197</b>	<b>16,098,287</b>
<b>Cultural and communication industries</b>			
Libraries, heritage and museums	806	4,763	160,486
Books and press	2,279	12,687	1,836,266
Movies and video	1,671	6,830	1,453,927
Radio TV	236	4,959	207,633
Performing arts	5,523	15,481	596,365
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,515</b>	<b>44,720</b>	<b>4,254,677</b>
<b>Creative services to companies</b>			
Architecture and engineering	19,811	47,548	3,809,339
Other professional activities (design, translation, photography...)	14,494	23,235	1,288,639
Advertising	9,674	26,518	3,826,925
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,979</b>	<b>97,301</b>	<b>8,924,903</b>
<b>Sport services</b>			
Sports and entertainment	6,144	43,334	2,627,044
Gaming and lottery	344	3,927	633,072
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,488</b>	<b>47,261</b>	<b>3,260,116</b>
<b>Total cultural industries based on experience</b>	<b>112,980</b>	<b>439,479</b>	<b>32,537,983</b>

## PART IV – ACTIONS IN DETAIL

The below presented actions are designed to respond to the necessities and challenges of CCI SMEs within the Catalan support ecosystem. Both of the actions are directly transferred from partner regions within RCIA project or inspired by them, namely by the Austrian and Belgian partners and their respective good practices and policies.

Two major necessities for Catalan CCIs were detected. The proposed actions (Design&Plug and InnoCámaras) respond to one of them respectively.

### **Creativity as a means to growth:**

➤ Related action: Design&Plug

Creativity is a proven means to innovation and ultimately to growth. Locally available public instruments are focusing on support for start-up creation, financing creativity and local diversity, linking creativity to territory, but they are not providing clear incentives to help SMEs (particularly those from other sectors) to change their strategies and adopt/use creative services and methodologies as a measure to increase their competitiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to bring creative approaches closer to SMEs and make them benefit from this powerful tool at early stages of their development in order to introduce it as a method inherent to their way of doing.

### **Innovation as a means to competitiveness:**

➤ Related action: InnoCámaras

It is known that innovation has positive effects on the productivity and profitability of businesses and thereby secures employment and raises competitive advantages. Innovation in most cases requires previous diagnostics (external input and support) and investment of which SMEs and especially CCIs often lack both. Due to their high risk of mortality, they often have difficulties to get access to financial schemes including those for innovation purposes. At the same time, they are less aware of the necessity to innovate in order to remain competitive in an economy of constant transformation. Therefore, it is necessary to make CCIs aware of innovation pressure, allocate or give them access to knowledge, external support services and financial support schemes.



## **ACTION 1. Design&Plug (Pilot Action)**

### **Background**

The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce (BCC) has always supported the creation of companies by providing individualised advice to entrepreneurs, conducting training sessions for entrepreneurs in the initial phases of their project, as well as financial assistance.

BCC has a broad experience with regards to actions promoting entrepreneurship, some notable efforts are the Integral Programme of Qualification and Employment (Spanish acronym PICE), the Business Support Programme for Women (Spanish Chamber of Commerce, ESF and the Spanish Secretariat of State for Social Services and Equality) and the Youth Employment Operational Programme (Spanish acronym POEJ), aimed at young people under thirty. Under the Training and Employment Programme, BCC implements specific trainings counting with a labour insertion commitment made by the participating companies; while also supporting the participating companies craft formative plans for the students. These are in harmony with their needs, selecting the best professionals to act as tutors and assessing student performance in the internships, so the company can offer employment contracts to the most appropriate ones.

### **Inspiration**

BCC participated in the staff exchange done in Wallonia (Belgium) from 30 October until 1 November 2019, organised within the framework of RCIA. During the study visits, the Creative Hub of Liège presented the initiative Fast&Plug, a programme for entrepreneurs that introduces creative methodologies to help them shape their projects to better fit the market needs, to introduce a new business line or undertake a strategic business rethinking process.

The introduction of creative methodologies to help entrepreneurs in the creative industries to develop and launch their projects and future businesses has proven to be a very successful initiative in Wallonia, as is the case of Wap's Hub<sup>4</sup>, the creative hub of the city of Tournai, another very inspiring good practice published under Interreg Europe Policy Learning platform.

BCC is currently working on the definition of new services to support entrepreneurs to add up to its current services, which are:

- Information and guidance
- Advice on business plan, idea and viability of the project
- Consolidation and support
- Procedures to start the business

Design&Plug is a step forward to the actual support to entrepreneurs and it introduces a more advanced support/approach than the initial individual assessment offered until now, as it focuses on the consolidation of new companies.

The economic value of the creative industries includes not just the production of creative products and services or the employment of creative people, but also a more general role in driving and facilitating the process of change across the entire economy. Creativity is an essential ingredient of social and business success.

To create new services and products in an ever-changing context, relevant and appropriate creativity methods must be made available. That is why it is so important to introduce creative methodologies into new businesses, to help them be more flexible and open their minds to collaborate with other creatives to boost competitiveness, productivity, sustainable growth and ultimately, work opportunities.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/1176/the-creative-hubs-policy-the-example-of-wap-s-hub-the-creative-hub-of-the-city-of-tournai/>

The main improvements offered by Design&Plug for BCC are:

- Work with a group of cross-disciplinary entrepreneurs that interact among them, learn from each other and find opportunities of collaboration across industries.
- Introduce new creative methodologies in the development of projects, such as Brainstorming, improvisation, scripting, gamification, and Design Thinking.
- Offer the possibility to entrepreneurs to pitch their projects in front of other consolidated entrepreneurs or businesses that might be able to help them to generate commercial partnerships or new business relations.

## Action



**Description:** Programme to foster creative processes in shaping entrepreneurs' project ideas.



**Objectives:** Through **creative methodologies**, support entrepreneurs in initial phases (0-5 years) to accelerate their companies and help consolidated companies (> 5 years) to gain competitiveness.



**Duration:** 4 sessions of 6h each one of them, plus a final pitch session of 2h in front of a series of partners (consolidated companies or organisations of the enterprising ecosystem of Catalonia). Before starting the programme, a preliminary meeting with a staff member of the Chamber will take place to explain the methodology and objectives of the programme.

Preliminary  
meeting



24h on-site training  
(4 sessions of 6h)



2h  
Pitch session



**Participants per session:** minimum 4 and maximum 6 companies. It is compulsory to participate with 2 members per team/company.



**Methodology for the sessions:** creative processes based on Design Thinking.



## Design&Plug Programme Contents

DAY	DURATION	CONTENTS
1	6h	<p><b>Inspiration and presentation</b></p> <p>Each team introduces its project. The facilitator presents business cases from different sectors to serve as inspiration to the participants.</p>
2	6h	<p><b>Market</b></p> <p>The participants work on their target audience and receive support to prepare empathic interviews with potential clients.</p>
3	6h	<p><b>Business model definition</b></p> <p>This session takes place 10 days after session 2. Based on the content of the interviews conducted, a Canvas is prepared and the most relevant ideas emerge through a Brainstorming process.</p>
4	6h	<p><b>Elaboration of the commercial proposal</b></p> <p>The participants develop their product (prototype) or service and present it to the rest of the participants.</p>
5	2h	<p><b>Pitch session in front of the partners</b></p> <p>Each participating team presents its company and its product in elevator pitch format. The partners will be, as far as possible, consolidated companies or organisations of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Catalonia. The purpose of the presentation is to generate commercial partnerships between participants and partners.</p>



### Key players involved:

- 1 trainer/facilitator specialised on Design Thinking.
- 1 Chamber staff member to undertake the previous selection and the follow up of the programme.
- 4-6 relevant *partners* for the selected projects (for example: SMEs from the Chamber Commissions or organisations from the catalan start-up and entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as Barcelona Tech City or Canòdrom Creative Industries Research Park).



**Logistics:** the sessions will take place at the training rooms located at the BCC premises.



**Budget foreseen to run the programme:** 19,425€ (includes staff costs, costs related to the trainer/facilitator for 24+2 hours, costs related to communication and dissemination activities).



**Timeframe:** 1 January 2020 - 31 December 2021

## Transfer and improvement process

BCC intends to transfer the good practice Fast&Plug from Wallonia to the Catalan context. The good practice will be transferred following a similar approach as the one used by the Creative Hub of Liège. The main steps to be followed in this transferring process are:

1. Collect information on the good practice Fast&Plug from Wallonia (contents of the sessions, methodologies, price of the programme, etc.)
2. Adapt the Fast&Plug programme to the Catalan context (number of sessions, contents, etc.). The programme in Catalonia will be named Design&Plug.
3. Identify possible creativity experts as facilitators of the sessions, contact them and check availability and fees.
4. Prepare and conduct a selection process for the candidates to participate in the programme.
5. Explore possibilities of collaboration with *partners* from the Catalan start-up ecosystem with interest to participate in the final pitching session.
6. Prepare an evaluation survey for all participants after the end of the programme to evaluate their level of satisfaction, as well as a follow-up methodology to evaluate the impact of the programme on the entrepreneurs' projects.
7. Start running the programme as a pilot project.

## Policy context

### Comprehensive support programme for entrepreneurs included in the Catalunya Emprèn programme

The *Catalunya Emprèn* network was created in 2013 and is led by the Ministry of Business and Knowledge of the Catalan Government. *Catalunya Emprèn* is a public-private cooperation network that wants to align entities, services and resources available to entrepreneurs to offer comprehensive support for the creation of companies in the whole territory. It is structured through a public-private network of collaborating entities, formed by local administrations, professional associations, social and economic agents and universities. Collaborating entities offer advisory services and integral support to the projects of entrepreneurship, specific training, awareness programmes, and specialised services on social economy, business transmission and business incubators, among others. Within this framework, the **Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020 of the European Social Fund** promotes public-private initiatives throughout the territory, promoted by the Catalan Government, local administrations, economic and social agents and private agents, to boost and energise entrepreneurial projects.

The maximum amount allocated to the granting of subsidies under the *Catalunya Emprèn* programme is €3,004,365, with a maximum amount of €2,403,492 for the 2018 annuity and €600,873 for the 2019 annuity.

The actions are eligible under the Operational Programme of Catalonia 2014-2020 of the European Social Fund, approved under the objective of investment in growth and employment, with a co-financing of 50%.

BCC has a collaboration agreement with *Catalunya Emprèn* to develop two lines of services to support entrepreneurs:

1. **Early stage entrepreneurship.** It comprises group trainings to sensitise entrepreneurs about risk-taking and business planning. It also covers individual counselling, support for obtaining a microcredit, and the legal set-up of the company.
2. **Corporate entrepreneurship.** It includes actions that seek to promote open innovation - the relation of technological start-ups with consolidated companies. With this service, BCC encourages synergies that allow the development and growth of collaborative projects.

The budget for these actions amounts to €117,550 in 2019, and is subject to performance indicators. As of 10 November 2019, BCC has assisted 608 entrepreneurs, providing either of the services listed above.

## Advisory Committees and Working Groups of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce

The Advisory Committees and the Working Groups of BCC are advisory bodies of the Plenary, the Executive Committee and the President. Their mission is to regularly inform the governing bodies about the issues that the Chamber considers relevant.

The Advisory Committees are composed by members of companies that due to their experience, are considered to contribute in a useful way to corporate tasks. Its purpose is to promote studies and projects to defend the interests of businesses, make contributions that favour the strategic development of the region, be a reference in the Catalan economy and present new initiatives to the Catalan Government. BCC has 13 Advisory Committees devoted to: Internationalisation, Legal and Fiscal affairs, Commerce, Sports, Entrepreneurship and Start-ups, Space and Aeronautical, Business financing, Training, Industry and Energy, Infrastructure and Transportation, Social Responsibility, Health, Sustainability and Environment.

In this sense, the Design&Plug pilot will be presented for endorsement to the Entrepreneurship and Start-ups Commission of BCC as a new initiative to help entrepreneurs to consolidate their projects using creative methodologies.

One of the main challenges of transferring the Fast&Plug initiative to Catalonia is to secure the necessary financing to make the initiative viable and sustainable in the future. BCC intends to run a first pilot during the first semester of 2020 with a planned budget of 19,425€. The pilot project will also be submitted as a Pilot Action within Interreg Europe. The results of this first pilot will be analysed, revised and improved with the aim of having a successful model to be endorsed by the Entrepreneurship and Start-ups Commission of BCC and presented as an additional service for the *Catalunya Emprèn* programme to secure ESF funds for the action.

## **ACTION 2. The InnoCámaras programme**

### **Background**

The Spanish Chamber of Commerce, together with the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, have launched the InnoCámaras programme under the axis 3 of the Multi-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014-2020, with application in the national territory, being co-financed by 50% by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This Programme has as main objective to contribute to the improvement of the competitiveness of SMEs of the participating regions, through integration of innovation in their business strategies as a key competitiveness tool to achieving a sustained economic growth. To this end, SMEs are given the possibility to develop plans of implementation of innovative solutions consisting in the development of a plan of sensitisation and tutored support that includes two sequential and progressive phases: Advice to SMEs (1) and Individual Plan for the implementation of innovative solutions (2).

Nowadays, the largest share of enterprises which make use of this service and the related financial support schemes, come from the industrial and technological sectors. The proportion of CCI companies is negligible, which probably goes back to a lack of information of the existence of such services among those enterprises and a reluctance to make use of them.

For this reason, the BCC is committed to bring such services closer to CCIs, increase the share of CCI companies among the recipients and make them benefit from the knowledge and financial support available.

## Inspiration

The inspiration to develop and share methodologies addressed to target specifically CCIs within the InnoCámaras Programme (both as beneficiaries and as service providers) comes from the good practices presented by the partners of Austria (AWS) and Belgium (Public Service of Wallonia). Both partners have several specific programmes addressed to support innovation in cultural and creative SMEs, such as:

- AWS Impulse (Austria): grant for projects of SMEs involving the Creative Industries (CI) marked by a high level of innovation.
- Creative vouchers (Austria): voucher worth up to €5,000 to be used by any kind of SME based in Austria for cooperation with a creative service provider from anywhere in the world.
- Creative Industries Strategy Austria, which consists of 22 measures which are based on 3 complementary pillars: empowerment (strengthen the competitiveness of Austria's CI), transformation (exploit the transformative effect the CI have on other sectors) and innovation (strengthen the innovation system by innovation taking place in the CI).
- Creative Wallonia Policy Instrument (Belgium): promotion of a culture of creativity (e.g. by raising awareness of CCIs among various audiences: SME's, students (master on co-creation), clusters, finance sector (specific training), etc.)

The experience of Austria and Wallonia promoting creative industries has been very successful so far and has demonstrated the economic and competitive impact of CCIs in the overall economy in terms of growth and innovation. Creative Industries contribute to the generation of sustainable jobs (especially in small and medium-sized enterprises), improve the appeal of cities and regions as business locations, and strengthen regional innovation systems.

## Action



### Participants:

The programme InnoCámaras is directed at SMEs (up to 250 workers/employees: up to € 50 million turnover), micro-enterprises and self-employed to help them identify and implement innovative solutions through a methodology that combines advice and direct financial support to innovate.



### The programme phases:

As mentioned above, it consists of two phases:

- Phase I: Advice to SMEs. Consists in the realisation of a free assisted diagnosis, performed by specialised Chamber tutors that enables them to assess the level of competitiveness of the company in its economic and market environment, identifying possible improvement actions. The tutors produce a report with recommendations on product and service development, production process, marketing methods or business management, laying the foundations for an innovation plan.
- Phase II: **Individual Plan for the implementation of innovative solutions.** It is a process that will support the implementation of practical recommendations regarding innovation identified in the previous phase and that are key in improving the company's competitiveness. In this phase, external experts (service providers) freely selected by the beneficiary companies, will support the carrying out the implementation of the innovation solutions that companies wish to implement after the recommendations made in the previous phase, during an estimated period of 8 months from the date of admission in Phase II. The Chamber tutors will carry out the monitoring of these implementations, coordinating the actions between the beneficiary company and the service provider. The financing of the eligible expenses of this phase with up to a maximum of €7,000 per company is covered up to a 40% with ERDF and the rest by the beneficiaries themselves, with a maximum grant obtainable of €2,800.

In parallel, within this programme, awareness-raising workshops, forums, business meetings and other actions are organised to promote innovation.



### Financing sources:

The maximum budget for the execution of the programme for the year 2020 is € 312,620. The budget is divided as follows: Phase I - Support services to foster innovation among SMEs: € 67.620; and Phase II - Economic support to innovation: € 245,000. The InnoCámaras programme envisages a multi-year horizon within the framework of the Multi-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014-2020.

For Phase I, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce co-finances 50% of the Programme with ERDF of the Multi-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014-2020 The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce co-finances the remaining 50% with own resources.

For Phase II, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce co-finances 40% of the Programme with ERDF of the Multi-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014-2020. The beneficiaries of the grants (SMEs, micro and self-employed) co-finance with 60% the services received.



#### Key players involved:

- Spanish Chamber of Commerce (intermediary organisation for ERDF funds)
- Barcelona Chamber of Commerce



Calendar: 1 January 2020 - 31 December 2021

### Transfer and improvement process

BCC intends to transfer the knowledge and expertise from Wallonia and Austria to reach out and communicate their programmes with CCIIs to the Catalan context. The main steps to be followed in this transferring process are:

1. Analyse and collect the most effective marketing and communication activities done in Wallonia and Austria to disseminate and communicate their programmes to reach CCIIs (interesting topics to address, communication channels, target groups segmentation, etc.)
2. Adapt the most successful marketing strategies to the Catalan context.
3. Prepare a specific marketing and outreach strategy to attract CCIIs to apply for the InnoCámaras programme.
4. Establish a collaboration with the recently approved RIS3CAT MEDIA Community, together with other partners from the Catalan innovation ecosystem with interest to promote the InnoCámaras programme. The RIS3CAT MEDIA Community is funded with ERDF funds and has the goal to foster the growth and change of business models in the cultural and creative industries and in other areas related to tourism, sport activities and educational services. BCC has the role of associated partner in this regional project.
5. Prepare an evaluation survey for all participants after the end of the programme to evaluate their level of satisfaction, as well as a follow-up methodology to evaluate the impact of the programme within the CCIIs.

## PART V – INDICATORS AND SOURCES OF VERIFICATION

In order to achieve the indicated activities, the Action Plan has to be monitored, controlled and evaluated. Therefore, measures or indicators have to be addressed. For this action, we address self-defined, compulsory indicators. Self-defined indicators are mandatory and defined in the RCIA application form. A series of further indicators have been added to directly refer to the actions outlined in the action plan. They are dedicated to increase the quality of the monitoring and general assessment.



## **ACTION 1. Design&Plug**

Using surveys, the satisfaction of the participants regarding their needs and expectations will be analysed after the programme ends. Also, some specific questions will be asked before starting the programme and after 6 months after the end of the programme, such as number of clients, turnover and capital raised.

Specific indicators to be measured will be:

1) Response towards to programme:

- Number of entrepreneurs addressed, response rate to email campaigns
- Number of applications received for the programme
- Number of selection interviews held
- Number of participants to the programme

2) Satisfaction of participants with the service (expectation vs. reality)

- Survey on programme expectations at the beginning of the programme
- Satisfaction survey with participants at the end of the programme (and possibly after 6 months after the programme end)
- Contrast analysis expectations vs. reality

3) Impact of the programme:

- Number of companies launched or consolidated after the programme (within 6 months)
- Number of companies entering into incubation programme after end of the programme
- Increase of revenues, clients, employees and capital of the company after programme completion
- Number of projects that finally did not succeed. In this case, the reasons for not succeeding will be analysed (lack of funding, lack of an appropriate team, business idea not mature enough, etc.)

## ACTION 2. The InnoCámaras programme

Self-defined indicators in relation to the OP:

- Number of impacted SMEs by awareness actions and business support activities. Target value for the Catalan OP for 2023.

Additional indicators for the InnoCámaras Programme:

- Number of SMEs that receive financial support (Phase I) within the InnoCámaras programme.
- Number of SMEs that receive grants (Phase II) within the InnoCámaras programme.
- Number of SMEs from Creative Industries sectors supported within the InnoCámaras programme.

Indicators for the InnoCámaras Programme	Achieved 2018	Self-defined target value for 2019	Self-defined target value for 2020	Self-defined target value for 2021
Number of impacted SMEs by awareness actions and business support activities (ERDF OP indicator for Catalonia)	134	60	90	90
Number of SMEs that receive financial support (Phase I)	45	55	55	55
Number of SMEs that receive grants (Phase II)	32	55	55	55
Number of SMEs from Creative Industries sectors supported within the InnoCámaras programme	1	3	8	15





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