

Response to the Green Paper :

“Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries”

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Preamble

As clusters within the European Digital Think Tank, with thousands of SME, research and corporate industry members across Europe, our work is dedicated to both “unlocking” the potential of the cultural and creative industries, and ensuring that this potential is subsequently realized to the full. In this context, we welcome the opportunity to share our views and ideas with the Commission in this response to the Green Paper.

I. Background

The European Digital Think Tank (“Think Tank”) comprises a “core group” of leading European Digital Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) clusters: Cap Digital Paris, IIP Create of the Netherlands, Digibusiness Finland, Barcelona Media, the South East Media Network UK, FILAS Rome and the Berlin “Project Future”. Non-cluster organisations are admitted as associate members, if they are deemed to offer relevant industry expertise and access, for example research institutes, facilitators, and funding specialists.

Given the scope and size of our membership across Europe, we consider the Think Tank to be the strongest de-facto ongoing strategic representative alliance within the European Digital CCIs.

The group’s strategic principle is to support the growth of innovative CCI SMEs and to maintain collaborative freedom, creativity, flexibility and continuity in responding to the needs of its members on a national and European level. Alongside close involvement of its members with EC Creative Industry organizations and funded projects, the Think Tank emphasizes its role as a long-term, independent industry platform, which can integrate the results of individual European collaborative projects to produce sustainable and structural trans-national value.

Such an approach, without initial funding support, demands a common purpose and strategy, perceived collaborative benefits, and resource commitment. Moving forward on these values, the Think Tank has been successful in creating a common platform of excellence for supporting the members’ own community and European initiatives, and finding funded collaborative project opportunities for its SMEs and cluster members. The partners work on the basis of proven trust and platform sustainability, thus providing secure high-level European connections and a “shoe-in” to other European markets and consortia for their membership.

2. Introduction

Though an independent organization, the Think Tank views itself as a close partner of the Commission, particularly as we share a common objective: the provision of an optimum creative environment, supportive framework and targeted tools to enable European CCI actors to flourish.

We believe that our experience as leading European clusters can significantly inform the strategies and policies of the Commission with regard to the future of the European CCIs. In this context, members of the Think Tank were already asked on the occasion of ICT-2008 by the then European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding to submit a concrete proposal for a platform to support the creation of tools and policies to counter the fragmentation of the European Creative Industries effort and to produce sustainable growth, especially for innovative SMEs. This proposal was subsequently submitted to the Commission in March 2009¹.

¹ Proposal for a European ICT/Media Industry (SME) support platform, March 2009

Our purpose in writing this response is threefold:

- To describe the Think Tank's approach in creating the optimum environment for the European CCIs and to list a number of key factors in unlocking and fulfilling potential in the CCIs
- To inform the Commission as to how the Think Tank is already responding to the central "questions" within the Green Paper.
- To restate further infrastructural measures which the Think Tank believes are necessary to create the optimum CCI development and growth environment.

3. The Think Tank approach for CCI prosperity: Proximity, Scalability and Trust

The Think Tank considers the following factors to be key requisites to ensure the optimum development of European CCIs in the coming years.

3.1 Proximity to the creative actors on a regional and European level

Particularly in such areas as creative digital content, SMEs, working on a local level, are generally the driving force behind innovative solutions and services in the CCIs. Business clusters work closely with their SMEs, and help them to reach regional or national level by bringing them together with larger corporations, research establishments and academics. In the light of the considerable success achieved with this approach, the Think Tank has now connected leading regional European business clusters effectively so that their members can achieve the same level of success on the European and international markets. In this way, the competitive advantage and quality of the European Digital Creative Industries are heightened and driven forward on a European and global level by collaborating regional leaders.

This form of creative collaboration, illustrated by Think Tank cluster cooperation, and an essential basis for CCI prosperity and growth, demands several key factors, which must be provided, if creative potential is to be "unlocked" and fulfilled:

3.2 Critical mass, "cultural" scalability and interoperability

One particularity of the CCIs is the very small size of the average creative organization, with a resource size of three or less². Particularly if such organizations are to use the power of digitization to distribute content internationally, it is essential they gain critical mass, and additionally test and integrate scalability into their products. CCI organizations have a particular challenge: not just technical scalability, the ability to satisfy the demands of more users and heightened performance, but also "cultural" scalability, the ability to design and distribute innovative cultural solutions – whether in film, video games, or social media - across different societies and cultures. Cultural diversity is a European strength, but, at the same time, European CCI creatives have to work together in learning how to market and adapt this cultural diversity across the European and beyond.

² Cf. Business demography and business dynamic, in European SMEs under Pressure, European Commission annual report on EU small and medium-sized Enterprises, 2009. ec.europa.eu/enterprise/.../sme/.../dgentr_annual_report2010_100511.pdf. It should be noted that the CCI company resource average, at 3 or under, is considerably below the EU industry average

In this sense, the Think Tank can provide a real-life “testing ground” across the member countries, in which CCI organizations can work together with like-minded organizations in other countries, test their products on both a technical and cultural level, scale and adapt their solutions to the more complex cultural requirements of an international market. It will be seen within section 4. The Think Tank’s Response to the Green Paper “Questions”, that the Think Tank has taken significant measures to bring SMEs from across Europe together in joint test-beds or events, in order to promote and test cultural and technical scalability.

3.3 Trust and Quality

“Trust” is a concrete and driving force which must be actively promoted to unlock creative potential. Again, this is particularly true within the European CCIs. In order to develop and distribute their innovative products or services, small CCI organizations must work together with large multi-national corporations or financial partners. In such situations, different lifestyles, mentalities and expectations often clash, and mutual mistrust can prove to have a negative and damaging effect. This mistrust is heightened by fears around intellectual property and overall creative direction. Evidence suggests that many SMEs would like to expand with creative partners from other European countries. The main hindrance seems to be the lack of a trusted creative partner³.

The Think Tank promotes mutual trust across all levels of the organization. An ongoing European cluster relationship, as opposed to a consortium which merely comes together for point projects, creates an “organic” relationship of trust, complementary skills and perspectives, and shared vision across the partners within the close network of clusters. This relationship of trust is extended to the level of small creative SMEs, which can be sure to find a trustworthy European partner SME from a Think Tank member country.

In addition, the Think Tank is exploring means to set up an accreditation procedure and “label” to assure all present and potential partners of the quality of a project and its creators, with particular regard, for example, to funding within a cross-border voucher scheme. This measure, too, is an essential factor in building a creative relationship of trust within diverse members of the European CCIs.

4. The Think Tank’s direct response to the Green Paper “Questions”

The following chapter describes the activities within the Think Tank agenda, which are in line with the needs of its CCI members across Europe and which respond directly to the questions posed by the Green Paper. These activities are either carried out by the Think Tank members as a whole, or within subset groupings, to suit the needs of the various member clusters.

4.1. New spaces for experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector

Q:

How to create more spaces and better support for experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship. More particularly, how to increase access to ICT services in/for cultural and creative activities and improve use of their cultural content? How could ICTs become a driver for new business models for some CCIs?

A:

To answer the need for new spaces for experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship in the CCIs, the Think Tank has started work on shared activities within an international, high-

³ An extensive evaluation of the needs and wishes of CCI SMEs, carried out within the scope of the ImMediaTe project, provides ample evidence for this conclusion cf. <http://www.europe-innova.eu/web/guest/innovation-in-services/kis-innovation-platform/immediate/about>

speed test-bed environment/network for SMEs. Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, and Barcelona are already involved in proposed projects around such a test-bed.

As is recognized in the Digital Agenda⁴, the development of high-speed digital networks is an essential factor in bringing European CCI products to the fore internationally. Such a high-speed network test-bed environment can be critical in ensuring cultural and technical scalability. Here, CCI organizations can not only test the technical performance of their products, but also receive detailed feedback from users on their products in a different national, social and cultural setting.

The Think Tank is aware of the value of participative and “grass-roots” design and experimentation environments for CCI innovation, and is working together, and individually, on the development of such environments, for example, in the Helsinki “Living Lab”, or the Amsterdam “FabLab”. In Paris, the experimental PANAMMES district has been created, as an “in situ” lab, directly next to the world-renowned Les Quinze-Vingts ophthalmic hospital, in order to facilitate the development of innovative CCI solutions for the mobility and comfort of visually impaired citizens.

In addition to the “fixed” test-bed scenario, Think Tank members also organize international events and festivals (Futur en Seine@Paris, PICNIC@Amsterdam etc.) which are increasingly geared towards the “in vivo” creation of collaborative experimental spaces for the creation and testing of scalable digital solutions for by a mass audience. Indeed, Cap Digital’s Futur en Seine festival has been proposed by a European consortium with strong Think Tank participation, as the focal test area for scaling innovative, individual “smart” and participative city solutions to a much wider European dimension⁵.

4.2. Better matching the skills needs of CCIs

Q:

How to foster art and design school/business partnerships as a way to promote incubation, start-up and entrepreneurship, as well as e-skills development? How could peer-to-peer coaching in the CCIs be encouraged at the level of the European Union?

A:

The advantages of peer-to-peer coaching, in order to tap into the knowledge and expertise of partner European CCI clusters, are well recognized by the Think Tank. The wealth of complementary skills across the Think Tank, for instance in the Audiovisual sector, has recently inspired the submission of the “Digital Horizons” application, initiated by Think Tank member SEMN, as a peer-to-peer based Training Program for Professionals in the Audiovisual Industry. Building on the highly successful UK based program, the Think Tank has provided the mechanism to share best practice with European partners, in this case with Cap Digital, IIP Create and Digibusiness. The Think Tank is committed to the peer-to-peer approach as the most efficient means of identifying the availability of key skills within the network, and sharing this knowledge on a targeted basis.

European CCI clusters such as the Think Tank members incorporate both creative cultural business, and art/design oriented school and research organizations. Indeed, one of the central tasks of such European CCI clusters is to bring art, science, and business together to foster innovation.

In addition to “traditional” professional training formats, Think Tank experience, particularly with European University partners, has also indicated the value of a more “grassroots” approach to the sharing of information and best practices. Classically compiled case studies may be viewed as material that is both “highbrow” and difficult to digest. In order to address

⁴<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/245&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

⁵ Movable Practices, Open Innovation in Smart Cities, ICT PSP Fourth Call for proposal 2010

this issue, it is interesting to employ audio and video podcasts, forums, blogs, newsgroups and other information sharing systems to allow information to be exchanged in a more direct and user-friendly manner.

4.3. Access to funding

Q:

How to stimulate private investment and improve CCIs access to finance? Is there added value for financial instruments at the EU level to support and complement efforts made at national levels? If yes, how? How to improve the investment readiness of CCI companies? Which specific measures could be taken and at which level (regional, national, European)?

A:

The Think Tank believes in the urgent necessity for the set-up of a European level finance network for CCI digital content start-ups, in order to facilitate cross-border creative collaborative on a bi- and multi-lateral level. To this end, the Think Tank has started discussions with partner Media Deals to create a dedicated funding network to support innovation within the Think Tank's members across Europe. SEMN has been supporting Media Deals and the creation of a European angel investment network following on the launch of the Creative Arts Investment Network (CAIN) with over 100 angel investors and hosted a workshop with Media Deals for both digital content companies and investors to bridge the gap between the industry and the investment community.

Here, too, the critical mass of such an organization as the Think Tank brings significant advantages for the European clusters, innovative CCI organisations and potential investors or finance providers. The cost of pitching and financing events is lowered per member organization if shared, the creatives are provided with a high level European platform and visibility, and potential investors are guaranteed diverse, high quality European projects from across the Think Tank member countries.

Such ongoing collaboration between CCI representatives and trusted funding experts with expertise on a European level is also a firm basis for building up investment readiness among start-up companies. Think Tank member FILAS, with significant experience in the funding of innovative CCI projects, is also leading the present EC ImMediaTe project to improve CCI SME funding opportunities and investment readiness. In particular, FILAS is focusing on new forms of risk-based investment that finance projects rather than equity, rather than grant-based funding.

Several Think Tank members have also considerable experience with regional voucher systems, and are also involved in the EC ImMediaTe project to develop a cross-border voucher funding system. The Think Tank would welcome such a system for urgently needed, short time finance. In this context, too, the Think Tank is exploring the potential of a targeted accreditation system to inform and support such a cross-border voucher system.

4.4. Local and regional dimension

Q:

How to strengthen the integration of CCIs into strategic regional/local development. Which tools and partnerships are needed for an integrated approach?

A:

Sustainable urban regeneration is a key issue for the majority of European cities. In this context, CCIs can be particularly effective in stimulating physical redevelopment, economic growth, and social inclusion. Think Tank members have been working together with local municipalities and regions, for example in Paris and Amsterdam, to explore new methodologies and tools for sustainable development. Indeed, Cap Digital's Futur en Seine festival in Paris actively promotes new digital prototypes for "grass-roots" participation and

urban sustainability. This form of collaboration between the CCIs and municipality environmental and sustainability departments is particularly recommended by the Think Tank, and can be especially effective in such areas as ICT to improve city mobility, ICT to increase citizen initiatives and urban design and densification. One key aspect here is that Think Tank partner cooperation between Cap Digital and IIP CREATE actually helped bring major European city municipalities together, in this case Paris and Amsterdam, in raising regional development issues on to a shared European level. This is a good example of the potential of European CCIs partnering with regional municipalities and regions to create an integrated approach to urban regeneration.

4.5. Mobility and the circulation of cultural and creative works

Q:

What new instruments should be mobilised to promote cultural diversity through the mobility of cultural and creative works, artists and cultural practitioners within the European Union and beyond? To which extent could virtual mobility and online access contribute to these objectives?

A:

The Think Tank believes strongly in the exchange of cultural and creative practitioners within the European Union and beyond, both as a way to open up new markets for the creative practitioners, and as a means of inspiring new and innovative cross-border collaboration. Within the relationship of mutual trust and quality between the Think Tank members, the Think Tank is particularly suited to promote the exchange of CCI SMEs, either within the Think Tank organization itself or within EC projects, such as INNET and ImMediaTe, in which Think Tank members are actively participating.

The Think Tank emphasizes that, if such exchanges are to be a success, it is essential to prepare and profile the participating organizations well. Exchanges should never be based solely on a “data-base” matching selection or a superficial knowledge of the participating parties through a European network. This can lead to disappointment, frustration, and potential waste of finance and talent.

Also within the context of mobility and the circulation of cultural and creative works, the Think Tank believes that cross-border voucher schemes, previously mentioned under the rubric “Access to Funding”, can also provide an efficient means of circulating both tangible and intangible assets amongst European nations and regions.

4.6. Cultural exchanges and international trade

Q:

Which tools should be foreseen or reinforced at EU level to promote cooperation, exchanges and trade between EU CCIs and third countries worldwide?

A:

The same premise applies to cooperation and exchange between EU CCIs and third countries worldwide. Within a global perspective such exchanges are essential, if European CCIs are to compete as a “mainstream” cultural international force. Such exchanges must be well targeted and profiled.

The Think Tank members have agreed to share information and activities, and together explore opportunities to facilitate the entry of our members into non-European markets. Areas already targeted within Think Tank cluster initiatives include Singapore, Malaysia, India, Hong Kong, Japan, U.S. and Brazil. Again, this activity is based on trust in sharing complementary strengths within the Think Tank; individual members can open up markets and networks to trusted fellow members.

4.7. Towards a creative economy: The spillovers of the CCIs

Q:

How to accelerate the spillover effects of CCIs on other industries and society at large? How can effective mechanism for such knowledge diffusion be developed and implemented? How can “creative partnerships” be promoted between CCIs and education/business/administration? How to support the better use of existing intermediaries and the development of a variety of intermediaries acting as an interface between artistic and creative communities and CCIs on the one hand, and education institutions / businesses and administrations, on the other hand.

A:

The Think Tank considers the spillover or “catalyst” effect of CCIs on other industries and society at large as a critical function to be promoted and developed. In this context, the Think Tank has placed high on the annual agenda the gathering of information and promotion of best practices of partners with the aim of eventual practical projects or events by the Think Tank in this area.

As mentioned above, Think Tank members such as Cap Digital and IIP Create are involved in cross-over initiatives with the sustainability and local government sectors, two obvious areas where CCI innovation and the “smart”, participative power of digital media can be leveraged for social and economic progress. In this context, too, the Park Barcelona Media at 22@, Barcelona’s knowledge economy district, must also be cited as an internationally recognized project, with demonstrable success in leveraging the socially regenerative power of CCIs.

In addition, the Think Tank promotes international festivals, such as Futur en Seine and PICNIC, with grass-roots participation in “designing the digital future” as a means to improve the quality of life, well-being and social responsibility.

5. Additional key factors in creating the optimum environment for the European CCIs

In addition to the fundamental factors, described above, to integrate critical mass, scalability, interoperability and quality into European CCIs, and the measures described and recommended above in answer to the questions posed by the Green Paper, the Think Tank would also like to restate its belief, first expressed in the above mentioned proposal requested by Ms. Reding, that the following infrastructural measures must be implemented, with the support of the EC, in order to invigorate and sustain the innovative strength of European CCIs and to heighten their market potential:

5.1. To create a European market platform for the CCIs with the ambition of overcoming European market fragmentation

It is essential to create a true unified market which can mimic the advantages of the single market place in the USA, and which would deliver on the promise of the EU Trade block. To promote innovation, scalability and interoperability among European CCIs is one essential side of this process; the other equally critical side is the provision of effective measures to create a market platform to overcome European Market fragmentation:

- To provide financial support for translation and localisation of innovative products, together with information and expertise exchange with regard to cultural and regulatory factors which might impact local product introduction
- To stimulate CCI innovation in the procurement process

Particularly on a European regional level, there is now much discussion around the potential use of targeted public procurement, particularly to support “responsible” innovation and sustainability. The EC could lead this process by earmarking 7,5 % of the European public budget to be used for buying solutions from innovative CCI SMEs. This could be used to accelerate the uptake of innovative ICT and new media solutions, particularly in areas of social urgency and public inclusion,

For example, EU level innovative public procurement could include the following measures:

- To use innovative new media solutions from CCI SMEs to improve the climate footprint of all EU buildings (energy efficiency, electricity, insulation, etc.)
- To improve the health of EU citizens, for example with the use of serious games in training people with social & health issues
- To improve access to all European heritage, from an innovative educational and entertainment perspective.

These are all areas in which the spillover or “catalyst” power of the CCIs can have significant cultural and social impact for society at large.

5.2. To create a common regulatory and legal framework to facilitate and simplify the European CCI approach

- One key barrier that must be addressed in any new business model concerns Intellectual Property Rights and the effective implementation of safety features to defend these rights. This means a common policy, addressing digital piracy, enforcing copyright and providing the right fiscal regime to attract flows of risk capital that can be really sustainable.
- A joint European approach to taxation issues around new CCI business sectors is also critical for joint market development. For example, VAT at present levied on ebooks – a rapidly expanding CCI sector with huge future revenue potential – varies greatly within the EU.⁶

5.3. To create a European platform which best utilizes the power of SMEs to drive innovation in the CCIs

As already mentioned, SMEs, often very small in size, are generally the driving force behind innovative solutions and services in the CCIs. In addition to supporting their needs, and creating optimum growth conditions, it is essential to listen to, and empower, their creative vision as a driver for innovation. This measure is not self-evident; the creative organizations themselves must be involved in important decision and policy-making procedures. The clusters of the Think Tank have a close relationship with the CCI SMEs at local and regional level; they can ensure representation of their “voice” at European level. In this work, they request the support of the EC in the following activities:

- To support regional clusters in their role of identifying and promoting key innovative SMEs
- To coordinate this activity through the clusters and across Europe to ensure most effective representation of SME vision and needs at EC level, providing ongoing input and consultancy with regard to future innovation direction and requirements for the industry as a whole
- To ensure that innovative SMEs are linked to suitable international company partners to promote most effective creative partnerships.

⁶ For an overview of the problem and solution proposal from within the CCIs, see “Proposition de Loi: Indexer la TVA des oeuvres numeriques sur l’usage” by SME Actialuna

5.4 To sustain the growth of digital media sub-sectors that are aligned with new and strategic international market trends (video games, mobile applications etc.)

6. Conclusion

In submitting this response to the Green Paper, the Think Tank welcomes the opportunity to place its European CCI experience and expertise at the disposal of the EC. The coming period will be a critical time in defining priorities for CCI development in Europe, and the Think Tank looks forward to active involvement, on behalf of its members across Europe, in future deliberations with the Commission.

The Think Tank realizes that this is very much a transitional stage for the Commission in focusing complementary activities within the various Directorates-General with respect to the development and promotion of the European CCIs. Many aspects within CCI development – particularly in the digital arena - apparently overlap the mandates of the individual DGs. The Think Tank would welcome an overarching strategy or clarity as to the relevant DGs to be approached for specific aspects of cluster support, as the creation of an ongoing and focused dialogue with the EC is essential for effective progress. The Think Tank has already made known its willingness to seek dialogue with the “European Creative Industry Alliance”, proposed by DG Enterprise and Industry on the occasion of the Amsterdam Declaration on creative industries in February 2010, and would welcome information on complementary initiatives from other DGs.

In conclusion, the Think Tank would like to reaffirm its commitment to active collaboration with the Commission in defining the priorities for European action in the effective development of innovative CCIs. Within this process, the Think Tank would appreciate the support of the Commission in realizing its ambitious plans and objectives for its members throughout Europe.

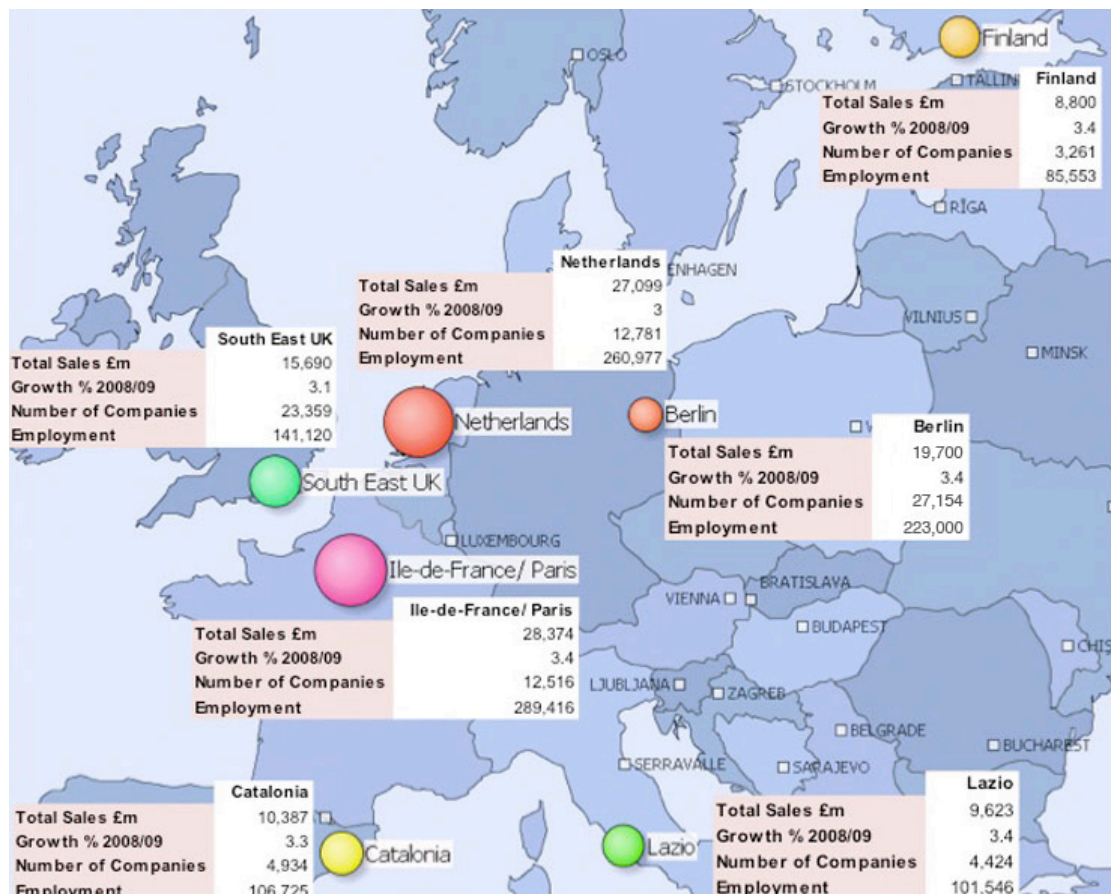
Appendix 1

The European Digital Think Tank

The Independent Association of Major European Clusters in the Digital Creative and Cultural Industries

The European Digital Think Tank comprises a group of major European Digital Creative and Cultural Industries clusters: Cap Digital Paris, Barcelona Media, IIP CREATE of the Netherlands, Digibusiness Finland Culminatium Innovation, South East Media Network, UK, FILAS, Rome and The Berlin Communication, Media & Creative Industries cluster. These partners, representing many thousands of SMEs, research and corporate creative and cultural industry members across Europe (see graphic below), have come together to create a shared platform of excellence on the basis of a common purpose and strategy, perceived collaborative benefits, and resource commitment.

The clusters share a common goal: to create an ecosystem for their members, which fosters cross-platform alliances and partnerships between start-ups, SMEs, corporations, research and education. This environment not only promotes innovation, but also provides scalability and critical mass to benefit the individual players within the sector, and creates access to wider international markets and partnerships. Activities of the Think Tank include the exchange of market and strategic information, joint industry initiatives and advocacy in areas such as skills provision and access to finance, match-making among SMEs and other Creative and Cultural industry organizations, and the preparation of industry publications.



The group's strategic principle is to maintain collaborative freedom, creativity, flexibility and continuity in responding to the needs of its members on a national and European level. Alongside close involvement of its members with EC Creative Industry organizations and funded projects, the Think Tank emphasizes its role as a long-term, independent industry platform, which can integrate the results of individual European collaborative projects to produce sustainable and structural trans-national value.

The European Digital Think Tank welcomes inquiries from other major Digital Creative and Cultural Industry cluster. Non-cluster organisations can be admitted as associate members, if they are deemed to offer relevant industry expertise and access.

The Think Tank Cluster Members



Cap Digital, Paris / Ile de France Region

<http://www.capdigital.com>

Cap Digital is the business cluster for digital content and services in Paris and the Ile de France region. The cluster has expanded rapidly since its foundation in 2006, and now represents over 600 industry members - primarily innovative SMEs but also major universities, higher education establishments, research labs, and corporations.

Cap Digital's members represent the regional creative and cultural industry's most active players in digital content. Nine vibrant member communities make a vital contribution to the strategy and direction of the cluster: Image, Sound and Interactivity, Video Games, Knowledge Engineering, Culture, Press, and Media, e-Learning and e-Training, Collaborative Technology & Intelligence, Mobile Lifestyle & Services, Robotics and Communicating Objects, and Digital Design.

Cap Digital provides members with essential information, networks, and resources. These include ongoing competitive intelligence, training, partnerships, funding solutions, and project reviews. Partnerships with other leading European clusters, at a structural and project level, are an essential element of Cap Digital's strategic activities.

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Barcelona Media

<http://www.barcelonamedia.org>

Barcelona Media has grown rapidly from a knowledge transfer project at the Universitat Pompeu in 2001 to an internationally renowned cluster and innovation centre, serving business and research within the digital creative and cultural industries in the Barcelona and wider Catalan region, and employing some 150 professionals. Situated within the renowned

@22 “Knowledge District”, Barcelona Media is dedicated to applied research in the area of communications and digital media, and to the transfer of this knowledge and technology to the businesses in this industry, thus fostering competitiveness and innovation in the region.

On a practical level, the organisation has the following objectives:

- Act as a neutral point for encouraging joint R+D projects
- Act as a bridge between academic and industrial research
- Promote and execute collaborative projects funded by EC and national institutions
- Develop specific R+D projects for the industry.
- Provide industry services from innovative service Labs (Virtual Visualisation, Culture and Tourism, Audio, Experimental Media, User Interaction)

Barcelona Media focuses on the following digital content / communications research areas:

- Voice and Language
- Audio / Sound and Music
- Graphics and Image
- Information Storage and retrieval
- Interactivity, Intelligence and Perception
- Information, Design and Creativity
- Communication, Technology and Society

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“Project Future”, Berlin Senate

<http://www.projektzukunft.berlin.de>

There are more than 24,000 companies and 170,000 people alone in Berlin working in the creative sector. The initiative “Project Future”, which has been run by the Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Women’s Issues since 1997, is heading the capital’s cluster “Communication, Media, Creative Industries”. It serves as the largest network in Berlin, interlinking companies with science, culture, institutions and politics, and optimizing growth conditions for incubation, start-up, financing, marketing, and internationalization. The missions of “Project Future” include developing strategies and master plans, providing information, establishing networks, sub-clusters, platforms, and projects, organising events, and strengthening cooperation within the whole cluster from local to international level.

The focus of “Project Future” is on a broad range of fields of excellence within the cluster to strengthen Berlin’s innovation system. These include design, software, games, book & press, film & broadcast, music, advertising, open source and wireless technologies.

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Digibusiness Finland Culminatum Innovation

<http://www.digibusiness.eu>

Around 2000 of the digital content and services companies in Finland have already participated since January 2007 in the projects of Digibusiness, the Finnish digital content cluster. Digibusiness has a project portfolio of 27ME, with around 110 projects running at the moment. 50% of these are national.

The vision of the Digibusiness cluster is to “turn digital content expertise into world-class product and service business” with a clearly defined mission statement to concentrate on “the development of content business expertise by offering high-quality services regarding product and service development to target businesses.”

DIGIBUSINESS Finland is built on collaboration between five regions – Helsinki, Hame, Kouvola, Tampere, and Vaasa. The strengths and focal points of the cluster regions supplement each other, contributing to a strong national entity. The operating field of the cluster is geared towards the games and entertainment business, eLearning and new job description in the digital world, social media, multilingual communications and related content management and horizontal business areas. Cluster activities focus strongly on internationalization, business competence and new business opportunities, digital sector PR and events and networking.

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FILAS, Rome

<http://www.filas.eu>

FILAS is the financial development agency of Lazio, Italy, the Region of Rome. It has been entrusted by the regional government of the financial management of all the regional clusters and is about to launch the new DTD, the Digital Media and ITC cluster, for which the regional government has already earmarked a budget of 32.8 MEUR. It already manages an important regional seed-fund for Audiovisuals and is member of CINEREGIO, the network of European audiovisual funds.

Filas is currently implementing, on behalf of the Lazio Region, a strategy to relaunch the Lazio audiovisual industry. Filas' initiatives in the audiovisual industry are aimed at:

- developing the Lazio audiovisual industry and its reference market
- promoting Filas audiovisual instruments in Italy, in Europe, and internationally
- developing and supporting film and audiovisual co-production at the local and international levels
- promoting the regional territory through the audiovisual industry in Italy, in Europe, and internationally

As part of a global strategy, the Regional Council has established a fund for early VAT recovery to foreign producers and Venture Capital operations to support small and medium-sized enterprises in Lazio's audiovisual industry

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IIP CREATE, Netherlands

<http://www.iipcreate.com>

IIP Create is the representative cluster and platform for the Dutch Digital Creative and Cultural Industry Community, at the interface of creativity, technology and entrepreneurship. Major stakeholders within the cluster include large industry corporations such as Logica and Philips research, the University of Amsterdam, Creative Industry Knowledge Institutes such as Waag Society, and government-sponsored agencies such as ICT Regie.

IIP Create sees its mission as the creation of a successful ecosystem, consisting of creative SMEs, knowledge and research institutes, and large-scale industry.

IIP Create has clearly defined its strategy as follows:

- Give the sector visibility and profile with regard to governance, entrepreneurship, research, training and the political landscape. Be a pro-active player with the other parts of the Creative Industries.
- Create and maintain a Strategic Research Agenda which reflects the expertise and needs of its members
- Address obstacles within the SRA which limit the creation of the ecosystem. Enhance the value resulting from research.
- Initiate and stimulate R&D and Innovation programs within the Netherlands and EU to the benefit of the IIP members.

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South East Media Network, UK

<http://www.semn.org.uk>

The South East Media Network was set up 2005 as a cluster association to “grow the global market share of the large-scale digital content sector in the South East of England”, funded by SEEDA, the regional development agency. The central remit of the cluster is geared towards the formation of a digital creative industry eco-system, with focus on the following activities:

Collaboration:

- Facilitating collaboration via structured networking at themed workshops

Global business Opportunities

- Providing opportunities for global networking at international events
- Developing a collective regional strategy
- Creating a global network of partner regions and countries

Innovation

- Establishing a digital content knowledge network for commercializing innovation
- Working with the games sector to explore the value of a dedicated knowledge network for computer games

Information

- Gathering sector knowledge to inform strategic decision making

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