

FACT SHEET:

Creative Ecosystem Policy

Analysis



ECOCRIN

SUSTAINABLE AND
INNOVATIVE CREATIVE
ECOSYSTEMS

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Aims and methods

The goal of policy analysis is **to identify existing national, regional/local cultural and innovation** (including industrial) **policies** and **to examine how well they are aligned with the bottom-up needs of the creative ecosystems** (WP2/Fact Sheet 2).

For policy profiling a desk research is conducted on current policies to identify key topics, such as policy goals, target groups, measures and actions. Altogether **61 national and 28 regional/local policy documents from the last five years** were identified during the initial screening process. Further analysis focused on **around ten most relevant** policy documents in the fields of both cultural and innovation policy.

Value creation at the core of national policy – but different emphasis across policies

Many gradual and even radical **changes in society have influenced national policies** for the creative sectors in Finland.

- Diminishing working population, competition between countries and regions for attracting and retaining skilled workforce, Covid-19 as well as a shift in societal values towards sustainable development have put **creative economies in the fore of policy making at various levels in Finland**.
- **In line with European Union policies and funding**, creative sectors have features strongly in cultural policies in Finland and have started to have a stronger foothold in innovation policies.

National policies have been looking at the creative sectors in terms of value creation but **with an emphasis on different types of value** – possibly due to culture and innovation policies being traditionally seen as separate strands.

- In cultural policy, creative sectors have been viewed in terms of **intrinsic value but also as a transformative force in the society**. Creative sectors are considered as contributors to the wider human activity, also committed to building an ecologically, socially, economically and culturally sustainable future. Cultural heritage is seen as the foundation of the cultural value chain and a source of creativity and well-being.
- **Instrumental value** has been in the focus of innovation policy. Creative sectors have been seen as important providers of economic value added to society and there has been a desire to increase their share of GDP. The innovation policy has targeted primarily businesses with the aim of promoting their growth and internationalisation.

Cultural and innovation **policies have started to converge in their views** on the value creation of the creative sectors recently.

- Besides their economic impact, the creative sectors are seen as contributing to the social well-being, thus **highlighting creative sector's role in advancing sustainable development in society**.
- The targets group of the policies have been extended from businesses to individuals with the aim of enhancing artistic freedom and financial well-being of creative individuals and **advancing the overall vitality of the creative sectors**.
- The current difficult economic situation, with its list of cuts in the public funding for creative sectors cause **tensions between the aims and implementation of national policies**.

Regional/local policies – importance of context

Cultural and innovation **policies share similar views on the importance and value creation** of creative sectors regionally.

- **The importance of the creative sectors is widely recognised** in all regions in terms of economic (employment, growth) and social well-being
- All regional policies highlight the role of creative sectors **both in attracting (tourists) and retaining (habitants) people**.
- **All the four pillars of sustainable development** are present at least to a degree in both innovation and cultural policies with some regional variation in emphasis.
- **The internationalisation** of the creative sectors and the international visibility of the city are highlighted in all regional policies.
- All regions **promote creative sectors through several means**. For example, regions seek to advance collaboration within and across creative sectors through a range of events.
- Policies in all regions show **long term commitment to advancing creative sectors**. This is reflected in a city's vision (e.g., Kuhmo), in significant investments in cultural infrastructure (e.g., Turku) and in the Percent for Art principle (e.g., Pori).

The policies **differ in how they define and prioritize creative sectors and connect to the past**.

- Regions **prioritize creative sectors differently**. Turku emphasises sectoral plurality, whereas Pori profiles itself as a city of events, and Kuhmo focuses on music, dance, stories and (visual) arts.
- Regions differ in **how explicitly they identify policy target groups**. Turku specifically addresses not only businesses but also individual artists', and their employment, well-being and independence.
- In some regions creative sectors are seen to be at the heart of **local identity and values** (e.g., Kuhmo), whereas other regions view their role more in brand building.
- In some regions **creative sectors and nature are perceived inseparable** (e.g. Kuhmo), whereas other regions have only started to take more steps to this direction.

Lack of common definition and terminology

- **Creative sectors are not defined uniformly** across cultural and innovation policies nationally or regionally. In national innovation policy creative sectors are often divided into three categories, including creative content, creative services as well as creative products and culture. Especially the so-called **creative services** (e.g., design, architecture, advertising) **are not present in the national cultural policy or in regional policies**.
- **Terminologically all policies are equally diverse**, with creative sectors, arts sectors, cultural sectors, creative ecosystems and a creative economy forming an intertwined tangle.

Gaps between policies and needs

- The interview data revealed various needs of creative actors (WP2/Fact Sheet 2) and the policy analysis shows that many of them are only partly addressed nationally and regionally.
- The need for **breaking the unsustainable creative deal is addressed scarcely in national or regional policies through promotion of the livelihood of individuals** as the focus is more often on the growth of companies. Rare examples include the development of public procurement practices and the planned social security reform for freelancers at national level and increase in paid jobs for artists in the public sector regionally.
 - The need for more collaboration within creative sectors has been widely recognised and targeted in policies through events and workspaces promoting collaboration within single creative sectors or across several creative sectors. Also, the **need for more collaboration beyond creative sectors has gained significant attention in policies, but concrete policy measures to advance it are largely missing**.
 - The **need for lowering the threshold for entrepreneurial experimentation is not clearly reflected in policies**. The focus has been on existing companies and their business functions. However, there are some national measures to support entrepreneurial initiatives, such as incubators and seed as well as innovation funding. At regional/local level, measures include more flexible use of public spaces for artistic experiments and financial support for new types of cultural events.
 - As some regions openly prioritize some sectors in their regional strategies, those creative actors who do not consider ‘belonging to’ these prioritized sectors experience being **treated unequally and not being acknowledged in regional policy making**.

- The workshop data (WP2/Fact Sheet 2) revealed a wide range of skills needed in building sustainable and innovative ecosystems for the desired future.
- National and regional/local innovation and cultural **policies address collaboration skills, sustainability skills and entrepreneurial skills to some extent**.
 - However, a **wide range of sub-skills is largely not reflected in policies**. It is evident, that business skills as a part of degree programmes is included, but the promotion of entrepreneurial skills concerns more than learning e.g. sales, marketing or product development.
 - **Civic engagement skills**, which are important for a sustainable future for all, **are not clearly visible** in the current innovation and cultural policies. These skills are needed e.g., in 'The Growth Agreement' processes, where creative actors are in constant dialogue with the public sector about their needs and the role of different stakeholders in meeting the needs.

Towards participatory and long-term national policy making practices

- In Finland, national cultural and innovation policy processes involve **participatory approaches**.
- **Large number of stakeholders are involved** in policy making including cultural organizations, educational institutions, foundations, companies, individual artists, residencies, sectoral developers, associations, communities and municipalities.
 - **Bottom-up processes** are characterised by agency and a dialogue during which creative actors are consulted on their needs and actively participate in ideation of solutions.
 - **Concrete measures aim to strengthen long-term collaboration** in the local, regional, national and international context. For example, sectoral advisory councils are to be set up in "Growth Agreement" processes to support the monitoring of measures and to continue the multistakeholder dialogue.
 - The promotion of creative sectors is seen as falling under both innovation policy and cultural policy, and there is **a desire to build permanent cooperation practices between key ministries**.

Conclusions

- For many policy measures it is still a question of intentions and plans, so it is important to follow-up their implementation .
- Cultural and innovation policy processes have started to involve participatory elements and long-term structures, and it is therefore important to monitor their success.
- Permanent cross-ministry collaboration in cultural and innovation policy making has begun to emerge, and it is essential to collect feedback on this. Clarity in joined goals, target groups, measures and terminology would further support the collaboration.
- Need for collaboration beyond creative sectors is largely acknowledged in policies but require more concrete measures.
- Boosting entrepreneurial behaviour and skills warrants more attention in policies.
- Regional prioritization of some creative sectors may cause tensions between sectors. Such prioritization should be better justified and monitored as a natural part of strategic process.
- National policy plans see the promotion of the creative sectors as an investment that contributes to national prosperity. Ongoing cuts in public funding for the creative industries do not support this narrative.

Top national and regional/local policies

Business Finland (2023) Creative Business Finland -programme
Business Finland (2024). Consumer- and Brand-driven Textiles and Fashion in Finland 2030. Growth Agreement
Kainuun liitto (2022). Cultural programme of Kainuu 2022-2025
Kuhmo (2022). Kuhmo City Strategy.
OKM (2023). Government Resolution for the Cultural Heritage Strategy 2023–2030
OKM (2024). The Cultural Policy Report
Paimio (2022). Paimio City Strategy 2022-2026
Pori (2019). Growth and vitality programme 2019-2025
Pori (2022). Home city for smooth everyday life and sustainable growth. Pori Strategy 2030
Pori (2023). Culture Pori 2030. Treasure of Pori
Satakuntaliitto (2022). Cultural Strategy of Satakunta 2030
TEM (2020). Roadmap for creative economy
TEM (2022). Entrepreneurship Strategy
TEM (2023). Audiovisual Sector Growth Agreement
TEM (2024). Government Resolution on Entrepreneurship
TEM (2024). Growth Agreement on Scalable Creative Content
Turku (2023). City strategy: Turku in the 2030s
Turku (2024). Culture flagship project
Varsinais-Suomen liitto (2015). Creative Southwest Finland. Cultural strategy for Southwest Finland 2015-2025
Varsinais-Suomen liitto (2021). Sustainable partnerships. Southwest Finland Regional Strategy 2040+
Visit Pori (2022). Events Roadmap 2020-2025
VN (2020). Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland: recovery and resilience plan
VN (2023). A strong and caring Finland. Negotiation outcome on the Government Programme 16.6.2023

Further information

ECOCRIN website: <https://sites.utu.fi/ecocrin/>

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