

Article

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Innovation and Growth: Can Creative Industries Support Traditional Sector Innovations?

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Abstract: At the turn of culture and economics, cultural and creative industries (CCIs) stimulate business, technology, and society and drive innovations within individual regions, as well as on a cross-border level. This makes CCIs and thus culture, creativity, and design significant elements of the modern, post-industrial, and knowledge-based economy. The purpose of the paper is to outline the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs in both the creative and traditional sectors for the future cooperation and implementation of cross-sectoral innovations. It is assumed that there are no guidelines on establishing a cross-sectorial process for the efficient transfer of knowledge for innovation between the two sectors, establishing a strong platform of international cooperation for innovations in the region. To obtain information in this area quantitative and qualitative research was done. A series of expert interviews were conducted, and empirical expert observations were made in the form of qualitative surveys and expert assessments. The presented results are based on the summary reports of empirical research activities. The results of the analysis allowed us to determine that the assumption was true and that representatives of both the traditional and creative sectors lack proven models of cooperation and commercialization for joint innovations.

Keywords: cross-sector partnership; cross-sector innovation; creative industries; traditional sector; innovations

1. Introduction

As one of the most important vehicles of the regional and national economy, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have become a topical issue for policy and business agendas. The key aim of this research is to increase the strategic focus of SMEs by making them more innovative, thus contributing to competitiveness and growth, as innovation is key to both [1]. Cross-sector partnerships are one of the most dynamic areas of research and practice within business and social relations. Partnerships that bridge different sectors such as public, private, and nonprofit are thriving around the world [2]. Cross-sector partnerships can also take the form of cooperation between the creative and traditional sectors. However, there is a very deep gap in the collaborative work between sectors [3].

Work should be done to reduce this gap because the more diverse the environment is that creates innovations, the better and more groundbreaking those innovations will be [4]. The central aim of many cross-sector partnerships is to solve economic, social, and environmental problems through collaboration [5]. In the current difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation between the traditional and creative sectors may be a way to maintain the good condition of both sectors. The idea that cross-sector partnerships are a new strategic paradigm across different sectors is manifested in their growing empirical pervasiveness. Large companies have come to appreciate the potential for

cross-sector partnerships to contribute to long-term competitive advantages [6]. Nevertheless, as the authors of this article indicate, there is little research on this type of cooperation. Moreover, there is lack of information on the concepts showing how to improve their effectiveness. Stakeholders of both sectors constitute a significant group; improving the cooperation of both sectors would mean not only the improvement of the activities of the entities themselves and people working in them, but also local communities and business support institutions.

Considering the above, the main purpose of this study is to outline the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sector for the future cooperation and implementation of cross-sectoral innovations. During the authors' research work it turned out to be particularly important to define expectations and needs, so that the tools for cross-sectoral facilitations could be valuable and useful. The concept of the aim of this paper resulted from the fact that the authors of the paper were also the authors of the "Creative Traditional Companies Cooperation" seed project, which received funding from INTERREG, before the actual project. Thus, the authors, when starting work on the tools and workshops in the proper project, already had some information that determined the goal of the paper. The respondents and experts shared the opinions that the definitions of various expectations and needs are important; it is relevant to identify them. The analysis presented in this paper also provides guidelines on how to establish a cross-sector process for the efficient transfer of knowledge to facilitate innovation between the two sectors on an international level.

To acquire information in this area, a case study of the INTERREG project was used. To embed creativity and design-driven innovation and culture in traditional SME practices (maritime and green economy SMEs) contributing to sustainable blue and green development, the regional and European level cross-border INTERREG project "CTCC—Creative Traditional Companies Cooperation" (CTCC) within the South Baltic Programme 2014–2020 was launched by 10 partners from Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark. This partnership of cross-sector consortium universities, SME associations, business intermediaries, and policy stakeholders aims to solve the real-life problems of SMEs, namely, strengthening their innovation capacity via creative industries acting as innovation facilitators and enablers of knowledge and innovation.

The case of the INTERREG project was enriched with qualitative research. During the frame of this project a series of expert interviews were conducted, and empirical expert observations were made in the form of qualitative surveys and expert assessments. The presented results are based on the summary reports of the empirical research activities.

The results of the analysis allowed us to determine that the assumption was true and that representatives of both the traditional and creative sectors lack proven models of cooperation and commercialization for joint innovations. This study extended previous research on an overview of the creative industry in the South Baltic region conducted with managers from the creative industry (CI) entities sector [7]. Furthermore, this study supplemented publications on the subject of boosting the innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems in various regions [8] and the practical aspects related to supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the regional level.

In this paper, the first section discusses the origin and concept of cross-sectoral cooperation in the context of partnerships for innovation and growth in traditional and creative companies. The second part discusses the cooperation determinants of the creative and traditional industries. The third part discusses the methodological aspects related to measuring cross-sectoral cooperation in enterprises. The fourth part discusses the research results related to the implementation of cross-sectoral cooperation among the surveyed enterprises in different Baltic Sea countries. Finally, based on the case study method, the process of cross-sectoral cooperation implementation is discussed.

2. Literature Review

In the last few years, creative industries (CIs) have experienced an increasing number of related studies in the field of economics. This increase could be a result of the fast growth of the creative industry over the past three decades, as well as the role that CIs play in regional development [9].

Studies have focused on different aspects of the creative industry: Some focus on the contributions of the creative industry to the economy, especially in terms of employment, regional development, and urban dynamics [10–13]. More detailed studies were conducted on the role of innovation in creative industries, focusing on innovation activities in organizations that belong to creative industries [14–16]. Other studies explored the role of creative industries in contributing to innovation in the wider economy, particularly the inputs from creative industries that can be used in innovation processes in other industries [17].

When considering a theoretical approach for the creative industry, it should be noted that “creative” activities are difficult to categorize rigidly with classification criteria. This unclear definition causes ambiguity and errors in the proposed approaches in the literature. Originally, the term “cultural industries” was used in English literature [18]. However, with the development of research, there was a shift in emphasis towards the concept of “creative industries”. This change is described in [19].

Moreover, the development of information and communication technology (ICT) has had an ongoing impact on the theories of the creative industry, which has led to the introduction of such concepts as “digital and copyright industries” into the literature [20].

The definitional differences, as well as the very broad scope of the creative sector, are due to three main issues:

- (1) Determining the scale of activities—Companies and players in the creative sector are very diverse. Some are involved in the production and/or distribution of products and services on a massive scale (e.g., films, video games, radio and television broadcasts, and publishing houses); others are artistic/craft activities of a more unique nature, reaching a smaller audience.
- (2) The value-added criterion—According to some definitions, antique trades or cultural tourism, for example, do not fall within the category of creative activities as they do not provide a new quality protected by copyright (intellectual property).
- (3) The economic conditions of the activity—The method of classifying enterprises according to their economic conditions of operation is the third contentious issue. Some enterprises operate by receiving support from various sources, while others operate on market principles [21].

The creative sector is characterized by considerable uncertainty in the demand for manufactured products and services. This is because these products are largely experimental goods, which are based on the subjective, intangible perception of the recipient—the so-called user experience. Another feature of this sector is its almost limitless variety of creative products and services, which require extremely polar skills to produce and deliver. This means that the market has high growth potential, and its development will not be based on standardization or lowering production costs, as in traditional industrial sectors, but rather on increasing and meeting the cultural needs of consumers who have different interests and expectations for the final product [22]. The creative sector operates on a system of four interlinked components, as shown in Figure 1.

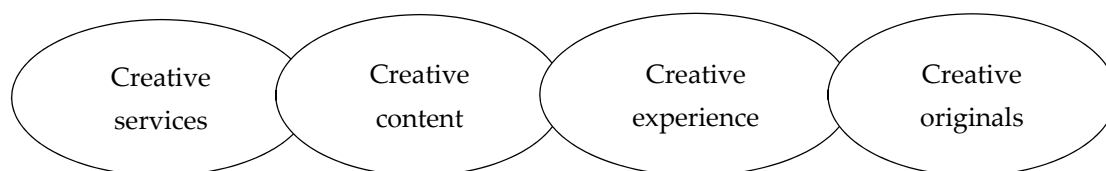


Figure 1. Components of creative sector operation [22].

Difficulties in such diversified, specialized creative activities include the internal coordination of activities based on short lead times, reaping the benefits of the work done, and the protection of intellectual property. The limitations for the creation of many cultural products is the inability of their producers to continue to pay royalties (e.g., copyright levies) in the long term after production [23]. The most frequently indicated determinants for the development of creative sector entities include:

- Innovativeness;
- Globalization and new business models;
- Technological change as a driver for the development of creative industries;
- Convergence and user-driven innovation;
- Knowledge transfer between sectors; and
- Increasing the importance of environmental issues.

The factors influencing the development of the creative sector are divided into hard and soft factors. Hard factors include objective and easily measurable factors, such as the size of an urban center, transport accessibility, and the level of wages in the region. Soft factors, on the other hand, include factors that are subjectively identifiable and difficult to measure, such as the accessibility and quality of housing, the attractiveness of the natural environment, security, and the atmosphere of tolerance [24].

The creative industry influences main four areas [25]:

1. Economic potential. The area experiences a measurable, direct impact from the creative sector on the city/region. In this range, the quantitative impact is considered, i.e., the direct participation of the creative sector of the economy. These include, among others, the number of entities, the employment rate, the export index, and added value.
2. The innovativeness of the economy has been defined as an intangible, direct impact. Because they are located between art, business, and technology, the creative and cultural sectors have a strategic position and importance and can influence external branches of industry.
3. The call spillover effect. For example, the creative sector is often not the creator of certain products or solutions, but it can significantly affect their attractiveness. Creative activities are not the core of the product, but they can create added value thanks to which the client will choose such an offer. The creative and cultural sectors increase the tourist capacity of regions and generate new tourism trends through so-called creative tourism, thanks to which the same number of tourists can generate higher revenue. These sectors are also part of the value chain of the luxury goods sector (according to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions).
4. All factors mentioned above influence quality of life and cultural identity. In general, the cultural and creative sectors have an impact on the innovation of other related industries. The Innovation Union strategy paper considers innovation stimulated by non-technological factors such as creativity, design, new processes, and business models. Supporting the potential of the creative and cultural sectors is also important for social innovation and thus for solving the largest challenges facing modern society. These challenges include climate change, demographic change, and cultural diversity.

According to the Hidden Innovation report, creative sector entities are among the most innovative sectors of the economy [26]. According to research conducted in the United Kingdom, as many as 32% of companies from the creative sector introduced product innovations, compared to 21% reported in other areas of the economy. In total, 16% of entities implemented process innovations, while entities from other sectors implemented only 11%. This disparity is highlighted when considering breakthrough innovations defined as being “at the market level”. The introduction of such innovations was declared by 14% of companies from the creative sector, while only 7% of the remaining companies declared such innovations.

The essence of the creative sector is to create new ideas that fall within the category of innovation. However, innovation in the sector is understood differently than that in traditional sectors of the economy. In this case, one cannot talk about investments in research and development or patents, which is a measure of the innovativeness of traditional enterprises. The creative industry is defined by mobile and dynamic enterprises, which often organize themselves online and produce goods of an original or unique nature.

Previous innovation literature has focused on either radical technology-driven innovations or incremental market-driven innovations. Today, there is talk of design-based innovation. Design-based innovations do not come from the market but instead create new markets, do not introduce new technologies, and facilitate the adoption of new meanings.

The report on the transformational power of design-based innovation highlights the high potential for improving Europe's competitiveness through this type of innovation [1]. At the same time, this report highlights the role of design-based innovation in the context of today's societal challenges, such as climate change, the pressure to reduce and select resources, and an ageing population.

The working document on innovation—The Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions—“A strategy for growth and the Green Paper on Europe 2020, and the Green Paper—Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries” concluded that the full potential of creativity and design should be identified and exploited, as should the link between design, innovation, and competitiveness [1]. To this end, the European Innovation Initiative on Design (EDII) was launched. The objectives of this initiative are in line with the identified needs: to raise awareness of design and creativity as a driver for innovation and to identify and strengthen the role of design as a key discipline in delivering ideas and transforming them into user-friendly (citizen) products, processes, and services provided by organizations, businesses, and public institutions. Successive initiatives, institutions, and fora at the European level advocate a growing need to address design and its applications to research, enterprise, and innovation.

3. Materials and Methods

The purpose of this study was to outline the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for the future cooperation and implementation of cross-sectoral innovation. In practice, however, these enterprises will meet quite rarely, and rarely will these meetings end in cooperation. This issue additionally makes it difficult to examine the specifics of this type of cooperation.

Analyzing the available materials, we noted that companies rarely meet because they do not know:

- Where to meet representatives of other sectors;
- How such cooperation could take place; or
- How to obtain real benefits from such cooperation.

For this reason, there are no detailed guidelines or models on how to establish a cross-sectorial process for the efficient transfer of knowledge to facilitate innovation between the two sectors, thereby establishing a strong platform of international cooperation for innovations in the region.

To obtain information and to reach entrepreneurs and experts from different countries, INTERREG project activities have become a place for data gathering. Three forms of research took place: desk research, quantitative research with entrepreneurs, and consultations with experts in the form of qualitative research. The research concept based on CTCC project applications and information about respondents and samples are presented in Figure 2.

The CTCC project aims at establishing a creative–traditional cooperation network of companies across the Baltic Sea to strengthen the innovation ecosystem, thereby creating and implementing new products and services, as well as business models that integrate both sectors (i.e., creative and manufacturing enterprises). Thus, representatives of the traditional and creative sectors participated in the quantitative study. The specificity of entity samples is shown in Figure 3 below.

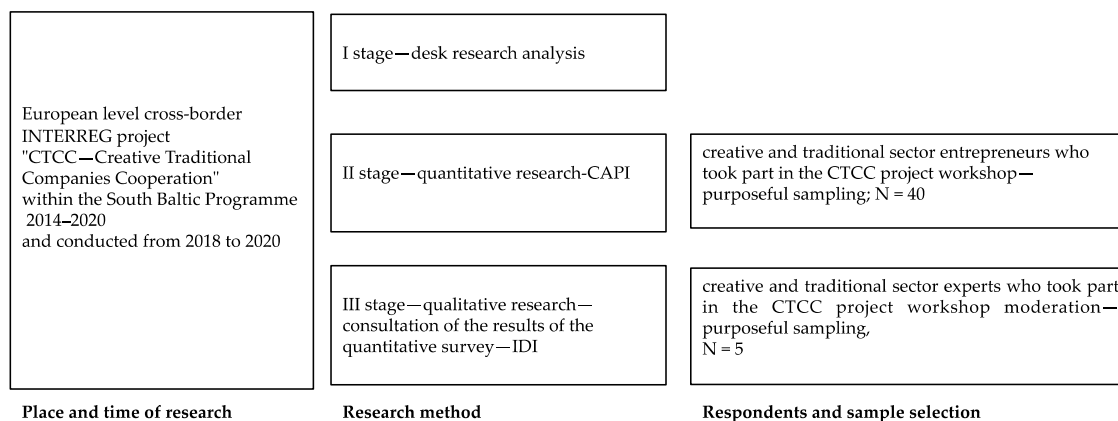


Figure 2. Research concept.

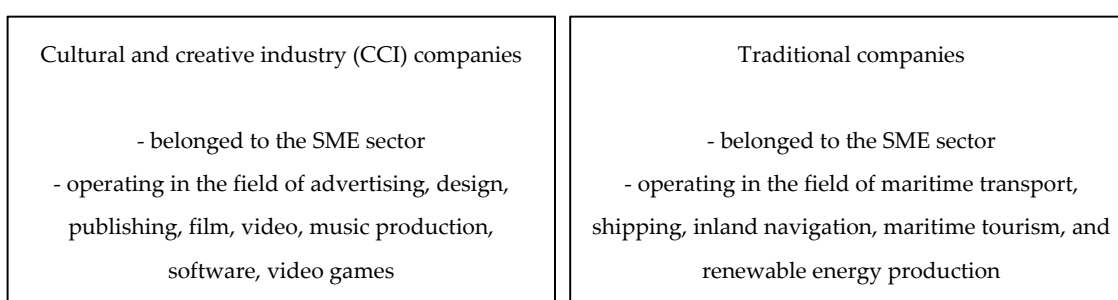


Figure 3. Companies that took part in the quantitative survey.

For developing realistic and feasible business models and practical collaboration mechanisms between creative and traditional manufacturing/service business arrays from the maritime and green technology fields for entrepreneurs, special SME-suitable implementation concepts are scarce. To solve these issues, this project undertook the following actions presented in Figure 4 below. The presented group of activities can serve as a model for facilitating cross-sector cooperation. The authors note that this cooperation must take place in stages; it is good for the stage of joint work to be preceded by a workshop, training, or briefing on what the work will look like, and then on what results are expected. On the basis of the implemented concept, it is also noticed that it is important to periodically present the developed prototypes.

The research activities and results of the CTCC project yielded a collaborative approach that can encourage both industries—creative and traditional—to cooperate and develop new products and services that are more sustainable, innovative, and user-friendly. The role of design and cultural and creative industries (CCIs), as well as the cultural contributions with which CCIs are associated, highlights a key economic issue. The real challenge lies not just in designing better products, services, and processes but also in designing entirely new business models. Not only Europe as whole, but specifically the South Baltic Sea region needs a creativity- and design-driven policy to help its member states to initiate mature policies for development and offer arguments to support appropriate investments in SME businesses, smart growth, and sustainable living.

The specifics of cross-sectoral partnerships for innovation and growth are complex. Thus, authors of this paper decided to use a case study and quantitative survey to explore the phenomena accompanying these issues in enterprises. Computer assisted personal interviews (CAPIs) were chosen as an appropriate technique given the specifics of the respondents, who were managers of enterprises belonging to the creative sector (e.g., IT, advertising, and media), as well as traditional enterprises (e.g., maritime and agriculture).



Figure 4. Creative Traditional Companies Cooperation (CTCC) project process, which was a framework for research activities.

Respondents came from various European countries (Poland, Germany, Sweden, and Lithuania) and mainly from the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector (the employment size rule was applied). Information about the research sample, that is, the size of the companies that took part in the survey based on number of employees in the companies, is presented in Figure 5 below.

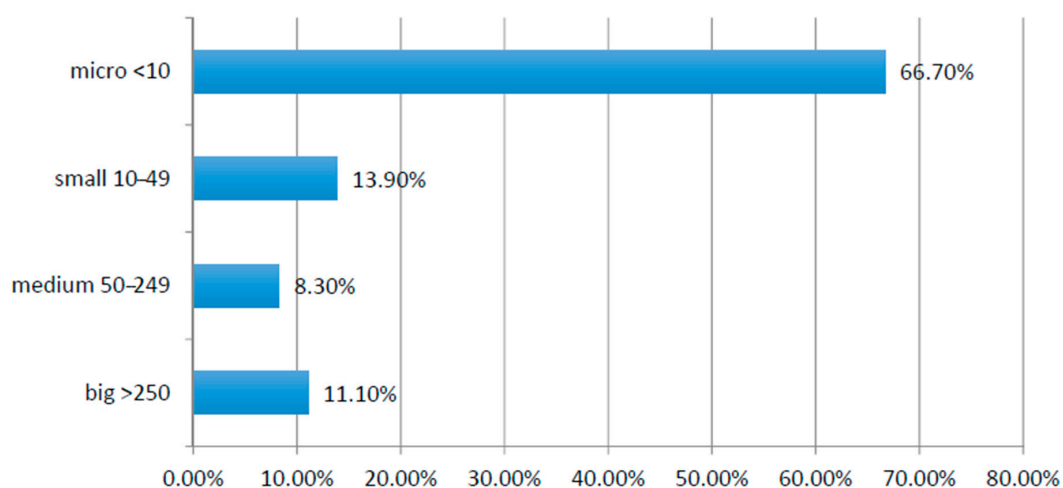


Figure 5. Information about research sample—the size of the companies that took part in the survey (by number of employees in the companies).

The presented sample is not proportional to the structure of enterprises in general. Companies were recruited on purpose to meet the criteria of entities operating in specific areas of the creative and traditional sectors.

Interviews were conducted by the authors of this paper. Interviews lasted about 40 min and were recorded on a computer while ensuring the anonymity of the interviewees. The research problems presented to the respondents were as follows:

- Deficits of information on cross-sectoral partnerships for innovation in practice, especially between creative companies supporting the traditional sector;
- Deficits of information on whether employees are able to prepare and implement cross-sectoral solutions in their companies; and
- Deficits of information on the factors that support or make difficult the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations.

These problems determined the design of the interview questionnaire and the research questions. The interview began with an introduction to the general assumptions of the conversation and ended with a summary of the main conclusions. The main part was divided into three areas:

- The first concerned the innovation policy;
- The second focused on management methods; and
- The third covered issues of cooperation between the traditional sector and the creative one.

The interviews were aimed at verifying the hypothesis that there are no guidelines on how to establish a cross-sectoral process for the efficient transfer of knowledge for innovation between the two sectors, thereby establishing a strong platform of international cooperation for innovations in the region. The study allowed us to verify this hypothesis positively and indicated that both the traditional and creative sectors care about the high quality of the products and services they offer and would like to go beyond the scheme and seek help in this regard. Nevertheless, entities from both sectors stated that they do not have much experience in cross-sectoral cooperation and lack good practices or models for implementing innovation based on such cooperation.

To provide more detail, we used triangulation methods combining the desk research method, quantitative interviews, and qualitative research in the form of individual in-depth interviews (IDIs). The interviews were moderated by the paper's authors, lasted about 30 min, and were registered to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees. Transcriptions of the interviews were carried out and transcripts were analyzed. The interviews focused on three main research issues:

1. Deficits in information on how to conduct cross-sectoral cooperation, especially in entities as different as traditional and creative sector entities, and what the reasons for these deficits are;
2. Deficits in information on the determinants of cross-sectoral cooperation between the traditional and creative sectors;
3. Deficits in information on how to increase the implementation of cross-sectoral cooperation between the traditional and creative sectors to build partnerships for innovation and growth, and whether creative industries can support traditional sector innovations.

The interviews were intended to explore patterns and verify the assumption that there are no guidelines on how to establish a cross-sectoral process for the efficient transfer of innovation knowledge between the two sectors, thereby providing a strong platform for international cooperation for innovation.

4. Results

To outline the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for future cooperation and the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations, it was crucial that company representatives be convinced of the impact of innovation implementation on the company's competitiveness. Of course, this factor seems obvious. For example, in Poland, the level of innovation is still low, including in the West Pomerania region of the Baltic Sea region, where some of the respondents came from. The majority of respondents believed there is a connection between business success and innovation (Figure 6). According to the entrepreneurs' answers, this connection manifests itself as increasing the productivity and effectiveness of the company.

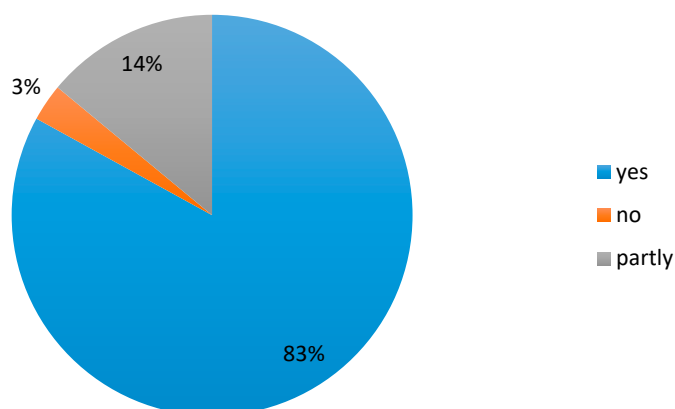


Figure 6. Convictions about the connection between business success and innovation.

Innovation also helps improve problem-solving processes and allows companies to adapt to unpredictable events. As the results show, being the first to market with a new product or service provides a significant advantage in terms of building a customer base.

Since business representatives are convinced of the benefits of implementing innovation, they also introduce innovations in their entities. The implementation of process innovations was the most commonly declared (78%):

- A new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment, and/or software.

In second place, product innovations were declared (74%):

- A product or service that is new or significantly improved. This includes significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, software in the product, user friendliness, or other functional characteristics.

Organizational innovations, however, were introduced less frequently (71%):

- A new organizational method for business practices, workplace organization, or external relations.

Marketing innovations—a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion, or pricing—were the least frequently described (55%). Thus, the potential for marketing innovations should be highlighted more frequently, given its non-technological, creative nature.

Innovation was developed mainly by the enterprises themselves (64%). Secondly, many enterprises developed and implemented ideas together with other enterprises or organizations (60%). The least popular activity was adapting or modifying a product or service originally developed by other enterprises or organizations.

Both creative and traditional enterprises desire to be active in the field of innovation, which is why respondents noted the training conducted by their entities that specifically aims at the development and/or introduction of new or significantly improved products and services (66%). Activities for the market introduction of new or significantly improved goods or services, including market research and launch advertising, was also done by 61% of the respondents. In-house research and development (R&D) activities undertaken by enterprise to create new knowledge or solve scientific or technical problems (including software development) were noted by 51% of respondents.

Some activities were less popular, such as:

- The acquisition of advanced machinery, equipment, software, and buildings to be used for new or significantly improved products or services (41%);

- The acquisition of existing knowledge, copyrighted works, patented and non-patented inventions, etc. from other enterprises or organizations for the development of new or significantly improved products and services (41%); and
- Outsourcing R&D to other enterprises or public/private research organizations (35%).

Thus, the activities related to activities between companies were the least popular. This study confirmed that enterprises primarily introduce innovations using their own funds, but if they use external sources, they use funds from various European Union (48%) and local government (45%) agencies.

Focusing on the management methods used to implement innovations, the respondents mainly noted:

- Market research (56%),
- Creative thinking methods like brainstorming (46%),
- Business model-canvas (40%),
- Service design (40%), and
- Management through goals (31%).

Project management methods like Agile (21%) and Prince2 (15%) were less popular.

As the main approach for the implementation of innovation, respondents identified a repeatable process of improving the solutions (products) of the company (50%). This approach explains why project management is not often used, given that this approach is more of an ongoing action.

The cooperation between the traditional sector and the creative one is complex and ambiguous, as indicated by the respondents' answers: 51% of those surveyed admitted that during the past three years, their enterprises cooperated on at least one innovation activity with other enterprises or organizations. For 42% of this group, the model for cooperation involved supplying equipment, materials, components, or software.

In terms of cooperation, the respondents admitted that their companies were strong and had qualified staff but suffered from the weakness of a lack of time. Likely for this reason, the cooperation that took place was mainly based on operational aspects and supplies.

Thereby, some assistance is needed for this cooperation. Unfortunately, the role of government regulations in cooperation was rated as somewhat obstructive by 40% of respondents.

When asked about willingness to cooperate, those surveyed from the traditional sector said that they wish to cooperate (or cooperate more closely) with the CCI sector (58%). However, 37% of respondents said that they did not know (Figure 7).

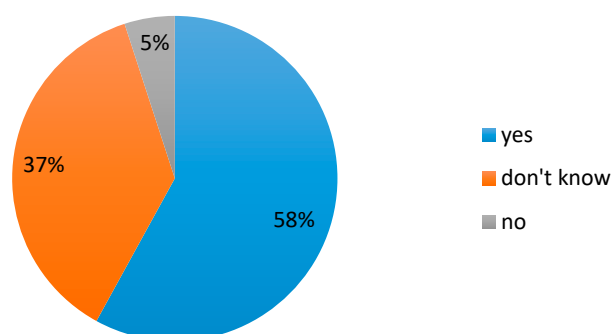


Figure 7. Willingness of the traditional sector to cooperate with the creative sector.

In response to the question of willingness to cooperate, representatives of the creative sector mainly said "yes, we would like to cooperate" (60%), while 34% said they were not sure (Figure 8).

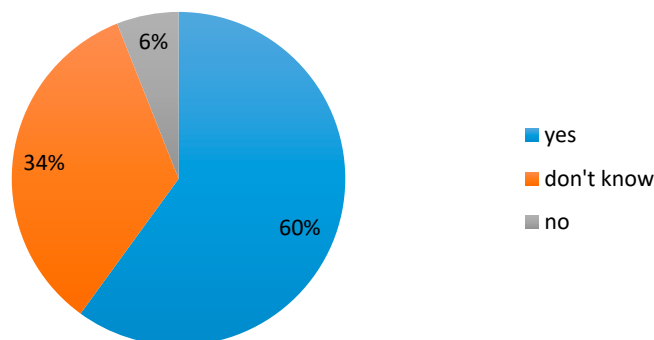


Figure 8. Willingness of the creative sector to cooperate with the traditional sector.

These answers assume a different context when considering that over 70% of respondents declared that they are aware that CCIs can enrich and enhance their business' value creation capacity and that, for this reason, it is worthwhile to adopt some specific cultural and creative dimensions.

Moreover, 91% of respondents declared that their creative partners could contribute to the conceptualization and development of new products/services. Thus, the common awareness of the importance of cooperation and benefits is high. However, in the context of the current activities, this concept loses its importance and is not a priority.

Representatives of the traditional sector said that the most significant barrier for traditional businesses to engage with cultural and creative industries is a difficulty in forecasting the benefits that such relationships can generate for the business (66%).

This answer also demonstrates that in the creation of a cross-sectoral cooperation model, profitability should be emphasized.

For representatives of the CCI sector, the most significant barriers to engagement with traditional businesses are a lack of contact, proximity, and opportunities to work with traditional businesses (47%).

A promising observation for future cooperation is that respondents from the traditional sector see a need to improve their knowledge and skills related to creativity and innovation (72%). Nevertheless, when representatives of the traditional sector noted participating in knowledge-based training, this training was related to occupational health and safety (45%) or a foreign language (75%).

Fortunately, the respondents stated that training in cooperation with other sectors is useful when they seek to be more creative and think outside the box (88%). Thus, to establish cooperation, there is a need to present such cooperation realistically. Thus, it is advisable to conduct training on various business topics, guaranteeing the participation of experts from both the creative and traditional sectors.

The experts in the qualitative research highlighted several key aspects related to cross-sectoral collaboration. First, they emphasized a lack of understanding of the specifics of the work of representatives from the other sector. The experts emphasized that they often encounter misunderstandings related to what role design can play in an enterprise:

“Design can be understood differently from company to company, and this is the biggest problem with communicating what the design is and what benefits could be gained from using the design. Clue is design led. The design is understood differently, and there are many design areas. Unfortunately, companies usually implement some random design solutions, like, for example super expensive brochures that they never use, websites that are never updated, or gadgets that clients do not need and throw into the trash. They don't know that design is about focusing on clients and user experience, that design connects what you want to do with who you want to do it with and for.” (Expert 1)

The experts noted that managers in companies quickly become accustomed to following the beaten track, which means that they are not looking for innovative solutions. This opinion applied to representatives of both sectors. According to the interlocutors, when the representatives of the creative sector find their area of activity, they focus on it and do not look for significant changes for fear of losing their hard-won position. This will appeal to representatives of the traditional sector, who often

face difficulties in carrying out their business under current conditions, are afraid that significant changes will further aggravate their situation, and focus on maintaining the status quo rather than on development. The experts consider this a decisive mistake, indicating that new solutions and new opportunities should be constantly sought.

“Any company of any size should start by knowing the answer—please don’t jump to solutions. You should start with questions, start by engaging, by understanding what the world needs. If you understand what the world needs, you can go and create it. Start by connecting, start by going on, how you can leverage, as a company, your talent and bring it into the world based on what the world needs right now.” (Expert 2)

“Traditionally, innovation has been linked to the technology side. That is: ‘what else can we do?’, while understanding human needs was in the marketing realm and thus more linked to selling—things that are already done.” (Expert 3)

“Companies need to learn how to capture needs and changes on a regular basis as part of their usual activities.” (Expert 4)

Trans-sectoral cooperation can significantly support management reorganization approaches. Education is always an important aspect—e.g., in the post-mining range. Experts noted that, for many people, prototyping is another factor to consider, so it is necessary to establish a common framework of action and the results that are desired.

“Prototyping isn’t a single stage, but a cyclical and iterative process. Prototyping, however, has more than one name and depends on what and what means we want to achieve.” (Expert 5)

When defining the objectives of cooperation, it is also important to determine which benefits are to be achieved by both parties.

“I think a lot of companies or businesses could benefit from working with artists on and off. In the companies where mostly engineers are working—they are so much concentrated on their routines, that they don’t think too much outside of the box.” (Expert 2)

The authors divided the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for future cooperation and the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations into three areas: factors important for the creative sector, those important for the traditional sector, and those important for both parties, as illustrated below (Figure 9).

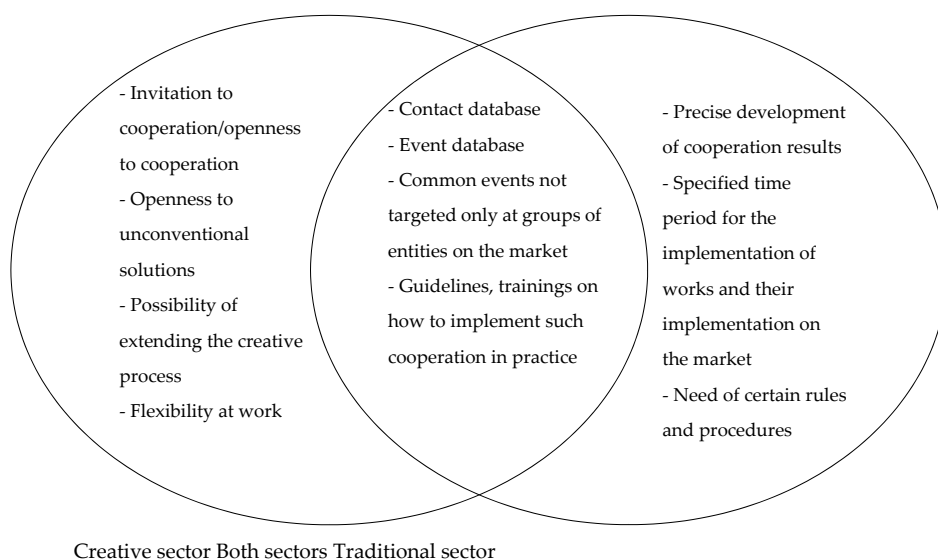


Figure 9. Expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for future cooperation and the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations by sectors.

Thus, the factors that are particularly important for representatives of the creative sector are not crucial for representatives of the traditional sector. Aspects that are the same for both groups are associated with facilitating networking and establishing cooperation. It is assumed that there are no guidelines on how to establish a cross-sectorial process for the efficient transfer of knowledge for innovation between the two sectors, thereby establishing a strong platform of international cooperation for innovations in the region. As the study indicates, this supposition was positively verified. Moreover, the representatives of both the creative and traditional sectors suggested that there is no possibility to establish cooperation in practice, as such cooperation is very difficult with no experience in the area due to the lack of guidelines in this regard. These potential guidelines were understood by the respondents as:

- Describing good trans-sectoral cooperation practices;
- Training in the implementation of design and design-based thinking in enterprises; and
- Short guides on implementing innovation in cross-sectoral cooperation.

As stated there is also no detailed information on how to implement international cross-sectoral initiatives. Thus, as part of the research activities, a series of workshops was carried out, and useful tools were created. However, this is an area that requires further attention and exploration. The need for further work results from the fact that representatives of the creative and traditional sectors, as well as their stakeholders, must implement the developed guidelines and recommended tools. Cross-industry innovation is becoming more relevant for firms, as this approach often results in radical innovations. However, firms can only benefit from cross-industry innovation if they are open to external knowledge sources and understand how to explore, transform, and exploit cross-industry knowledge [27]. Firms must establish certain structures and processes to facilitate and operationalize organizational learning across industry boundaries. Exploratory, transformative, and exploitative learning can enhance a firm's outcome through cross-industry innovation.

5. Discussion

Cooperation between sectors was assessed to be particularly important in the context of implementing innovative solutions. However, despite the benefits, cooperation between enterprises is not yet widespread. Why is this? On the market, in the process of customer care, there is intense competition. Managers are afraid of sharing their ideas with people from outside the company, and even more so with the competition. Therefore, if the managers of entities are afraid of cooperation with the competition, cooperation with non-direct threats may be easier, i.e., cooperation with partners with whom there is no competition—intersectoral cooperation.

Intersectoral cooperation is one strategy among many to address basic developmental problems. Because of its unique nature, drawing on the assets of different sectors, there may be certain circumstances when intersectoral cooperation is a particularly well-suited strategy for solving a complex problem. Some of these circumstances include frustration with past attempts to resolve an issue mono-sectorally, the need for resources that are dispersed among the various sectors, and a history of relations that encourages new intersectoral endeavors [28].

Cross-innovation is innovation based on cooperation, which takes place across sectoral, organizational, technological, and geographical borders. Cross-innovation can be defined as a process in which creative industries share information, cooperate, and support the development of other sectors to promote a new way of thinking. Cross-sectoral innovation is based on the philosophy that a company's needs have already been met somewhere else, and any problem that a company is facing has long since been solved by another industry.

Knowledge exchange can increase competitiveness by creating valuable business relationships, enabling specialization, increasing cost efficiency, ameliorating the activities of suppliers and other industries, and accelerating knowledge spill over throughout industries. This means that cross-sectoral collaboration is needed to improve innovation, which is key to competitiveness and growth.

The contribution of the creative sector to innovation in other economic sectors is strongly linked to the concept of open innovation [29]. For the innovation process to succeed, it is usually recommended to combine a company's own innovative resources with an external contribution.

External input can be, for example, external knowledge (technologies developed by other organizations) or specialized R&D services, as well as innovation ideas generated by suppliers, competitors, or customers [30] and in cooperation with partners for the development of innovations. Creative industries produce intellectual property and can, therefore, be a particularly attractive source of external knowledge for companies [31]. Such industries offer a diverse range of creative products and services that can be integrated into the innovation processes of other companies to support innovation. Moreover, products accompanying innovation can include innovation ideas, R&D support, and product design.

Despite the many techniques and methods available for designing products and services, it is still not possible to satisfy all customers. How can one improve service provisions or the functionality of sold products to increase customer satisfaction? The answer may lie in the field of cooperation between the creative and traditional sectors.

The implications for companies from both sectors in this study are as follows:

1. Entrepreneurs should be open to cross-sectoral cooperation for the development of innovation and solidify an approach through which a more diverse environment provides greater opportunities to develop innovation.
2. Internal staff and competences are important for implementing innovation. However, cross-sectoral cooperation can significantly facilitate the acquisition of new competences.
3. The creative sector can be included in cooperation for various types of innovations—not only marketing but also product or organizational innovation.
4. In-house research and development (R&D) can be enriched by the creative sector.
5. The creative sector need not be afraid of the traditional sector as a competitor, as both have much to offer each other due to the many types of innovation.
6. Cross-sectoral cooperation may be supported by external funds for implementing innovations since internal funds for innovation are mainly directed to internal resources.
7. Cooperation between enterprises is based on current factors, such as deliveries, rather than developmental factors, so this kind of cooperation should be changed to one that can also significantly contribute to the current state of the enterprise.
8. Enterprises from both sectors should look for opportunities to cooperate in local markets during various business events because, as research shows, both groups are open to cooperation but do not know where to start. Thus, managers should focus on various types of household events (not only in their industries) to find entities to cooperate with.
9. Due to the difficulties in predicting the effects of cooperation, it is necessary to prepare accurate documentation on the projected requirements and results of the cooperation by specifying what tools and timeline will be achieved.

Those implications for practice can significantly affect the creation of guidelines, as well as training or other content on how to implement cross-sectoral cooperation in practice.

Cross-sectoral cooperation needs holistic support also on a regional level, with a modern view on cultural policy as well as on the traditional sector. This involves linking the cross-sectoral cooperation actors to different policy areas like entrepreneurship, market access, development and territorial attractiveness, education and skills development, internationalization and exports, innovation, and using ICT. This multidisciplinary approach also means pooling stakeholder resources, sharing, and collaborating. The authors recommend, based on involved expert's know-how, creation of financial support through a dedicated bidding process to encourage cross-collaboration between the creative industry and traditional industry sectors to promote non-technological forms of innovation. Due to the fact that networking is particularly important, the development of clusters and professional

services of business-environment institutions by stimulating actors to create cross-sectoral links between market participants should be implemented. It is also important to shape and stimulate the relationship of knowledge and experience exchange between designers and entrepreneurs by organizing conferences, study visits, training, and workshops that enable crossing the border of comfort and undertaking new cooperation between sectors, shaping interdisciplinary consortia undertaking to solve this problem. Shaping cross-sectoral cooperation at a regional level through institutions supporting this cooperation is particularly important. This may take many forms, such as cooperation of creative industries in tourism by building tourist offers and leisure time of the region's inhabitants through the development of current tourist routes, designing and promoting regional creative products, and promoting micro-tourism in the region. Therefore, it is particularly important to shape regional and national policies supporting directly or indirectly the development of cross-sector cooperation.

Cross-sector cooperation requires further research. This type of cooperation can be understood as a cross-sectoral partnership or strategic alliance between organizations representing various sectors to achieve common goals, to which all partners bring their own competences and resources and share not only risk and costs but also the benefits of achieving the common partnership goals and objectives of the individual organizations in the partnership [32]. Since this cooperation is multidimensional, it needs certain rules and procedures, which should be described more frequently and clearly. Indeed, the published models relate to only a specific segment of cooperation across sectors—for example, the platform entitled the “Models of cross-sectoral cooperation of the employment agencies and training institutions CSOs employers”, whose information mainly focuses on work–life balance issues [33]; or the CTCC project [34], which focuses on companies representing the traditional green (the sector related to agriculture, forestry, and ecology) and blue (the maritime sector) sectors. Some research focuses on CSR (corporate social responsibility) activities due to changing conditions in the business environment that force organizations to apply the concept of corporate social responsibility, which offer the potential to enhance the partnership between the business community and other sectors. This collaboration will bring a positive synergistic effect to the participating groups. This synergistic effect of the mutual cooperation between sectors using CSR emerges when competent managers join the system solution, thereby increasing its credibility, efficiency, and effectiveness [35].

Cross-sector collaborations are relationships involving two or more sectors who work cooperatively to address societal issues [36]. Such relationships draw on each partner's strengths and resources to fulfill the mutual objective of building a competitive position. The benefits of cross-sectoral cooperation are multidimensional (as also noted by the participants of the research), so it is important to think outside the box. One of the challenges in creating a cross-sectoral partnership lies in connecting two companies from completely disparate industries without such a collaboration appearing forced [37] and determining how to effectively bring the partners on opposite sides of the economy closer together [38]. Some businesses can fit together, even if their products and markets are wildly different. This kind of cooperation is innovative and, therefore, risky. However, as the literature and practical experience indicate, it is worth taking this risk to build a strong market position. Moreover, strong cross-sectoral partnerships can harness the competencies and qualities of different organizations and sectors and thereby help solve complex societal challenges while creating shared value for all [39].

6. Conclusions

European policies must address new industrial logic with new global value chains at all levels alongside the emergence of new industries and the transformation of existing industries. The relevant policy framework must support both “places” and “issues”, such as the promising focus on the cross-sectoral value chains that interlink companies of different branches. When new global value chains are developed, new capabilities become increasingly important—specifically, innovation culture, innovation infrastructure, and innovation speed, as well as the ability to integrate complementary knowledge and skills from other areas. Another aspect is the growing importance of cross-border, macro-regional, and transnational cooperation [39].

Thus, common awareness of the importance of cooperation and benefits is high. However, in the context of current activities, the concept loses its importance and is not a priority. This aspect should be changed to increase the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation. Nevertheless, for enterprises, convincing managers to undertake this type of cooperation is primarily related to profitability. Thus, in cross-sector cooperation models, particular emphasis should be placed on the profitability of these activities and a quick return on investment. Profitability can be also seen in cross-sector partnerships as initiatives that aim to deliver or improve knowledge production through the facilitation of exchange relationships and processes between actors associated with different sectors [40].

Enriching training with the presence of trainers representing the creative sector would be desirable. In this way, representatives of the traditional sector could learn about the potential of CCIs. This aspect would also work the opposite by inviting traditional sector experts to train for the CCI sector. This would bring the two worlds closer together and show the potential benefits for both sides.

This paper focused on the expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for future cooperation and the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations. Based on the present research, we conclude that both parties are willing to cooperate but know each other poorly. This low awareness translates into a lack of knowledge of how to implement this kind of cooperation in practice. The main expectations of both sectors are the following:

- A contact database;
- An event database;
- Common joint events; and
- Universal guidelines and training on how to implement such cooperation in practice.

These are not isolated postulates. The European Cluster Observatory also noted that many cluster organizations still struggle with the facilitation of cross-sectoral collaboration across the boundaries of the industrial sector [41]. Conclusions drawn up by the authors concerning expectations and needs of entrepreneurs from both the creative and traditional sectors for future cooperation and the implementation of cross-sectoral innovations can be used by both sectors' stakeholders, especially for better facilitation.

The hypothesis that there are no guidelines to establish a cross-sectorial process for the efficient transfer of innovation knowledge between the two sectors (thereby establishing a strong platform of international cooperation for innovations in the region) was confirmed. Both sides need support for this kind of cooperation. According to our results, it would be worthwhile, for example, at the regional level to support this kind of cooperation, as such cooperation can significantly contribute to bolstering innovation at the regional level.

Moreover, the concept of cross-sectoral cooperation fits into the concept of industry 4.0, which refers to the fourth industrial revolution (the digital revolution), which is moving towards the highly flexible mass production of strongly customized products making use of new automation technology based on internet technology and new methods for the self-configuration and self-optimization of products and production environments [42]. Building a cross-sectoral value chain is crucial for the development of industry 4.0.

Despite the swift and comprehensive policy response at both the EU and national levels, the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have a more significant impact on economic activity in 2020, as the lifting of lockdown measures is proceeding at a slower pace than predicted. The scale and duration of the pandemic, as well as potential future containment measures, remain essentially unknown. The forecast assumes that containment measures will continue to ease and that there will not be a "second wave" of infections. The EU economy is forecasted to contract by 8.3% in 2020 and grow by 5.8% in 2021, while the euro area economy is set to contract by 8.7% in 2020 and grow by 6.1% in 2021 [43]. This paper's scientific contributions can also help overcome economic slowdown through unconventional cooperation between various entities, which can be stronger together in both local and global markets.

In the future, cross-sectoral partnerships for innovation and growth should continue to be analyzed. CTCC projects will continue their activities in Yearly Entrepreneurship Contests, which will provide self-running sustainable mechanisms for cross-innovation over the long-term (minimum 5 years) operation of the CTCC project. Trained SME representatives acting as knowledge ambassadors, together with triple-helix actors, will gather once yearly for the CTCC Entrepreneurship Contest (EC), which will include developing joint prototypes in the product, service, or process fields, as well as integrating new educational and training courses on creative entrepreneurship via continuing education through universities or employment agencies. Nevertheless, the need for further work results from the fact that representatives of the creative and traditional sectors, as well as their stakeholders, must implement the developed guidelines and recommended tools, materialize them, and monitor their effects.

This research has limitations. First, the research was conducted only on South Baltic countries using a specific sample (not proportional to the structure of enterprises in general, companies were recruited on purpose to meet the criteria of entities operating in specific areas of the creative and traditional sectors). Since further verifications would require long-term research, additional research should be done in other EU countries. This aspect of further research is particularly important given the change wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic for both entrepreneurs and their clients. The research results presented in this work supplement the current knowledge in the field of cross-sectoral partnerships in Baltic countries through the prism of corporate management staff.

In these extraordinary times, cultural and creative industries have extraordinary importance, and are of necessity, as they shape values that determine our future, notably in relation to powerful disruptive technological and scientific development (linked to progress in biotechnology, genetics, or data processing), as well as political upheavals threatening democracy [44]. Modern cross-sectoral partnerships policy should also be designed to help creative industries work as a stimulant, an agent of transformation steering a new enlightenment and collective will.

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