



ABSTRACT

Title: A Culture-based innovation model for Textile and Clothing Innovation

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Extended Abstract: *(minimum 1200 words)*

1. Introduction and project objectives

CreativeWear is an Interreg MED project (2017-2019) aimed at revitalizing the crisis ridden Textile and Clothing (T&C) sector through the regional creative potentialities, by a new adoption of creative communities, cultural heritage and customers-oriented value chains. The challenge is to define, boost and evaluate the interaction between T&C sector and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) with the objective to produce changes in the innovation performance both, inside organisations and in the regional innovation ecosystem.

The project is carried out through the implementation of five regional pilots to explore the effects of culture-based creativity on T&C innovation in different socioeconomic contexts and territories in MED regions.

Our objective is to evaluate the activities and outcomes of these five pilots and test their capacity to play a role as regional creative hubs capable to boost changes into creative and textile organisations, in the regional innovation ecosystem and the transnational cooperation strategies.

To evaluate the activity of CreativeWear Hubs is necessary to adopt a methodology that provides a rigorous analysis



The method applied is the Theory of Change, an evaluation methodology that draws an ideal map of transformation process from the T&C conflicts to a successful scenario based in creative innovation. This methodology allows to understand both, the path of change and the emergent elements not considered in the beginning of the pilot actions.

The factors used to evaluate the CreativeWear Hubs are the following:

- a. Participants sectors
- b. Role of cultural and creative sectors on T&C innovation
- c. General perception of the process
- d. Type of hub services
- e. Role of intermediary organization
- f. Stakeholders analysis
- g. Communication and dissemination
- h. Prospective analysis

According to the methodology adopted, the key element of the model is the CreativeWear hub. It plays a core role in the development and change towards new innovation structures. The CreativeWear hubs pushes the creative innovation in two directions: bottom up approach (businesses) and top-down approach (regional policies).

2. Main evaluation aspects

From the results of CreativeWear project, we can observe that we're not talking about a normalised demand and supply market. We're talking about a micro-niche, where an increasing number of T&C companies know that they need to innovate in a different way, but they haven't quite figured out how.

The CreativeWear hub emerges as a key element to foster an innovative dynamic change, capable to links both parts of the market (supply and demand), develop activities to overcome the resistance to change of the stakeholders, promote new policies in the innovation ecosystem and facilitate regional and international interactions. The exchange of innovative services between T&Cs and CCIs does not occur naturally, necessitating the intermediation of creative hubs as catalysts. Creative hubs should play a dual role as promoters of T&C creative-based innovation demand and suppliers of CCIs. Simply put, Creative hubs should bridge this emergent market with the regional innovation stakeholders and capitalize the process through its inclusion into public policies.

About the possibilities of the public sector intervening to promote this kind of connections with textile industry, there are several options. First, direct intervention through bonuses to the textile companies to hire creative services. Secondly, non-direct interventions through taxation or fiscal incentives. Finally, mediation where the public sector simply acts as a facilitator of the connection between the industrial and cultural realities.

In this report we have seen how T&C enterprises are still reluctant to engage in culture-based innovation processes. The lower participation of T&C suggests that there are substantial obstacles to the internalisation of creative capital due to the rigidity of the



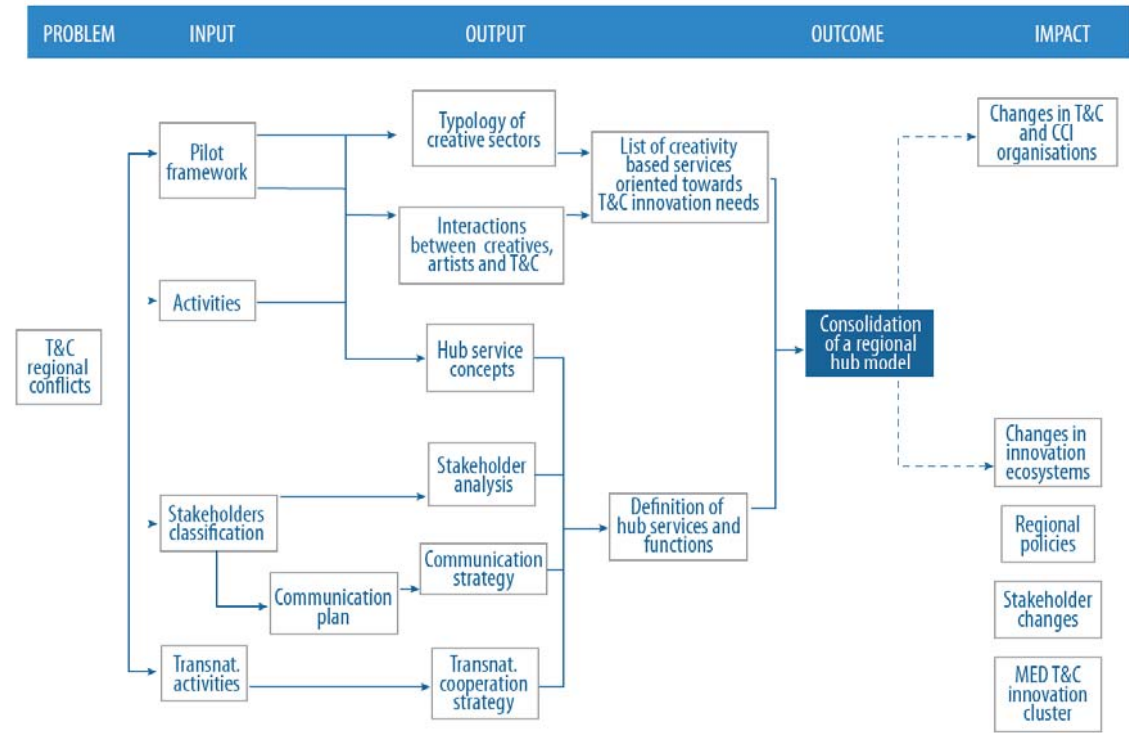
industrial technical processes. On the other hand, the high participation of the Cultural and Creative industries in the project can be explained by the structural precariousness of the CCI labour market. Culture and creative industries are increasingly aware that they need to surpass their own limits to add value in other contexts or sectors.

The T&C industry seems to be more interested in services oriented towards technological production processes: prototyping, symbolic territorial resources, creative competences, new materials and new business models. On their part, the Cultural and Creative Industries focus on services related to a new creativity-based model with territorial connections: symbolic territorial resources, prototyping, communication and marketing strategies and branding and trademark.

The organisations dedicated to promoting innovation need to foster new innovation methodologies. They have to show companies the possibility of working in a different way, facing their innovation challenges by taking unriden paths. This is the strategic goal for a CreativeWear Hub activity.

How can the Theory of Change help understand and design this process? Figure shows the main elements involved. Theory of Change as a methodology emphasises the steps of the process rather than the results, and the graphic presents a revisited version of the Theory of Change as a sequence of steps (input, output, outcome) needed to achieve the desired goals (impact) in order to overcome the identified conflicts (problem).

Figure 1. CreativeWear Theory of Change (Revisited)



Source: Own elaboration



The consolidation of a regional hub model is highlighted as the necessary precondition to achieve organisational changes in T&C enterprises and regional changes in policies and the innovation ecosystem (impacts).

The regional hub model is the result of a combination of creativity-based services oriented towards T&C innovation and the definition of hub services towards the prescription of creative services demand from T&C and the promotion of its supply from CCIIs. Both outcomes stem from the outputs of the five pilot experiences. As shown in Graph 7, the typology of creative sectors and the interactions between creatives, artists and T&Cs (outputs) are involved in the definition of services oriented towards T&C innovation (outcome). The hub service concepts, stakeholder analysis, communication plan/strategy and transnational cooperation strategy (outputs) are also involved in the definition of hub services and functions (outcome).

About the potential impacts of the CreativeWear Hub, we must consider the relevance of the institutional context. Different possibilities of intervention from the public sector can be identified to facilitate the strategy. First, direct intervention through bonuses to the textile companies to hire creative services. Secondly, indirect interventions through taxation or incentives. Finally, mediation where the public sector simply acts as a facilitator of the connection between the industrial and cultural realities

As Figure shows, we can resume two main action dimensions for the mediator role of CreativeWear Hub. On the one micro level, it shows how T&C and CCI interact, constituting a market in which services are exchanged and in which there is a niche for innovation related to textile processes. On the macro level, the aspects related to changes at territorial level have been the least valued, mainly due to the fact that the perception of these results are blurred in the long term, although the exchanges between stakeholders have already set in motion the first steps to achieve the changes in the regional innovation system.



Figure 2. Mediator role of the CreativeWear Hub





The evaluation results and conclusions evidence the capital role of the CreativeWear Hub as a mediator between the micro and the macro dimensions. From the pilot process it is possible to recognize the sequence of phases and actions necessary for the implementation of a CreativeWear Hub, as a means to interconnect both dimensions.

- 1) Identifying and mapping the regional creative and industrial potentials
- 2) Acknowledging the innovation trends of both sectors
- 3) Developing creativity-based services oriented towards T&C innovation needs
- 4) Defining the services that will support the process
- 5) Connecting its activity with the regional innovation system

The ongoing market relationship between T&C and CCIs benefits from the CreativeWear Hub, as it promotes the supply of creativity-based activities to businesses while facilitating the qualification of the innovation demand, thus improving its receptiveness towards innovation trends. CreativeWear Hubs also provide services to support the identified needs of T&C and CCIs at a sectoral level (meso level). These services must subsequently be capitalised at a territorial policy level, connecting them to the regional innovation system in order to enhance future results.

3. Approach from the different beneficiaries

Considering the interaction between T&Cs and CCIs, the pilot process has drawn the behavior of the beneficiaries, thus identifying their characteristics within the market. As seen, the cultural and creative sectors have proven to be more open to change. This is evidenced by the majority participation of cultural and creative organisations, the types of innovation tested and the valuation in terms of commitment and capacity to change. Although T&C sector is permeable to artistic and creative inputs by nature, the qualitative analysis of the project results has revealed that the types of creative sectors involved in CreativeWear are not limited to those that have traditionally been linked to the T&C industry, such as fashion design, advertising and marketing. Non-traditional agents and ideas deployed by the regional pilots, understood as a field for experimentation and a catalyst for social change, include conceptual artists (performers, visual artists, underground), social activism, artisan knowledge (tailors, sewers), creative communities (coworking spaces, Co-Factoring), the maker perspective and new forms of social innovation and entrepreneurship based on textiles.

As a counterpart to the open perspective of the CCIs, the T&C sector maintains a traditional perspective of innovation, due to its structured industrial processes and the concrete production of results and benefits for enterprises. Compared with this reality, the fragmented nature of artistic and creative processes and their long-term uncertain results seem difficult for the industry to accept. Innovation in the T&C industry is systematic, which means that the sector follows a technology-push or market-pull rationale. This dynamic can be gleaned from the quantitative results about the location of arts and creativity within the T&C innovation process. They are used in the production of materials, to enhance the skills of the labour force or as an input in product development (textile heritage), but they are not considered a constitutive issue in the user side of innovation. This is why customisation and culture and creativity as



drivers of sustainability-oriented social change received low valuations in the assessment of the expectations of T&C pilot beneficiaries.

When pilot managers were asked about the reasons for this apparently traditional concept of innovation in the T&C sector, they stated that although innovation is identified as a key demand, it is kept in a low-risk position to ensure concrete outcomes. Thus, hub managers acknowledged the potentials of arts and creativity for the innovation dynamics of T&C enterprises but highlighted the need to achieve long-term results. Regarding the changes at territorial level, the evaluation results point at the first steps towards a change in the regional innovation system, although it would be interesting to monitor how these changes develop in the long term. The international exchanges that took place among CreativeWear stakeholders during the second stage of the pilots suggested a series of elements that could be used to activate territorial creative potentials and incorporate them into an innovation strategy at the local and transnational level. These elements demonstrated how the different pilots tested the systemic approach required to transform the T&C sector, thus bringing attention to several characteristics of the innovation system.

The systemic logic means that instead of working in isolation, enterprises liaise with other economic and non-economic organisations, establishing trust and creating patterns for interaction. In addition, customers are an important component of system change. The rationale of the change is to generate new consumption patterns. Here, artists (and specially those who practice the core arts) play a central role as catalysts for social change, experimenting with new sensitivities and testing the relationships between nature and society. Artisans bring to life the natural relationship between work and human beings.

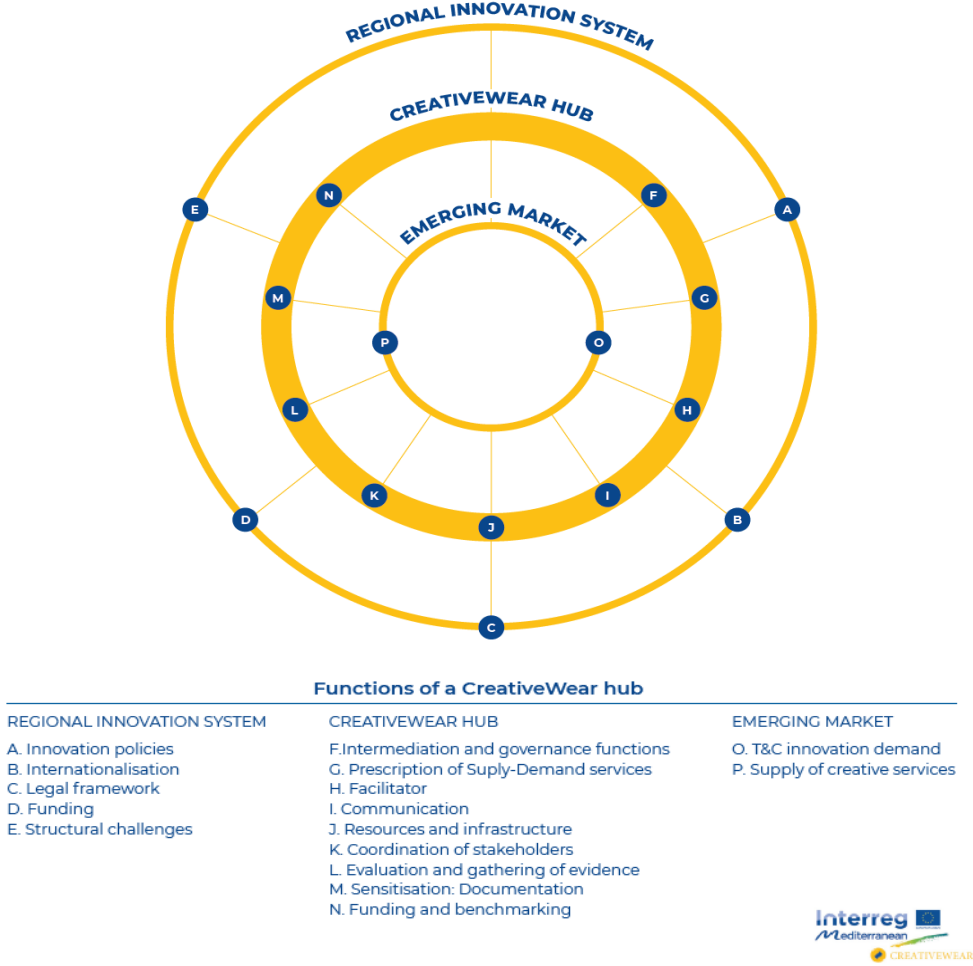
Finally, the T&C sector can be considered as a socio-technical system where technological innovations require social interpretation. Therefore, the expected transition in the T&C sector needs a social change to support it. Although collective change is likely to be a long and difficult process, this perspective provides analytic elements to develop it. One of the most relevant elements is the crucial role of culture and creativity as leads in a social transformation towards a smart and sustainable scenario.

4. Final comments: CreativeWear Hub functions

Based on the evaluation results and according to the previous comments, a review of the proposed CreativeWear hub functions is presented in Figure . The functions of the regional hub are intended to address the specificities of the creativity-based innovation supply, constituted by the creative sectors, and those of the demand, the T&C sector. As the final evaluation results indicate, T&Cs and CCIs have different interests and expectations about the possibilities of creativity and culture in the innovation dynamics of T&C.



Figure 3. CreativeWear Hub functions at different levels (Micro, Meso and Macro)



Source: Own elaboration

As shown in the figure, the core is made up of the interactions between T&C and CCI, which constitute an emerging market. The next layer is formed by the hub functions, which are established as a connection between the micro and macro levels. Finally, the regional innovation system is represented in the outer layer, involving innovation policies, funding and other factors with long-term implications.

As seen in the figure, the emerging market requires the prescription of services towards T&Cs as a demand for innovation, as well as facilitating the supply of these innovation services, providing support to the CCIs for this purpose. To do so, the hub must create the conditions for a market of services that brings together the innovation needs of T&C enterprises on the demand side and the offer of creative services geared towards these industrial innovation needs on the supply side. This aspect requires a deep knowledge of the industrial context of the territory, the conflicts in the textile sector and how global trends in innovation are reinterpreted at a local level.

