



## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

### **Redefining (ex-ante) evaluation processes**

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#### **Abstract**

There has is a deep structural crisis in the textile and clothing (T&C) sector along last years. The traditional T&C cost-based model has exposed a wide set of emerging needs: lack of digitalization, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, flexible organizational models and internationalization, among others. The cores of this situation of crisis are the global relocation of T&C production process, the end of price reduction competence and the reorientation toward specialized production.

Three points of economic change in T&C sector can be highlighted, according to ETP, 2016. First, the change from commodity to specialization; second, the appearance of new materials, fibers and textiles in new markets, like sports, job or medicine; and, third, the transformation from mass production to more flexible, consumer-driven integrated product. Moreover, other two aspects, very important in nowadays society, should be taken into account/incorporated/integrated in the process of change: some



social challenges, such as social responsibility, inclusive societies and job quality, and environmental sustainability, like circular economy, eco-innovation or resource efficiency.

The growth of relationships between artistic sector and organisations has started to attract attention from researchers last decade (Barry and Meisiek (2010), Berthoin Antal (2009), Berthoin Antal, Taylor, and Ladkin (2013), Styhre and Eriksson (2008), Taylor and Ladkin (2009)). World is changing very fast and with it the way to understand businesses and organisations. In general terms, the competence and the pressure from competitors, the globalisation, the problems in the natural environment and a long list are some of the reasons why organisations are considering alternatives to add value to their business and improve their internal organization.

Artistic interventions in organizations are carried on with high expectations of positive outcomes. These interventions can contribute to such strategic and operational factors as productivity, efficiency and reputation, finding high evidence of values-added.

Creative, cultural and artistic resources can contribute significantly to competitiveness and to the quality of working life. Moreover, more and more frequently, organizations are solving old problems by connecting artistic skills and processes to workplace issues (Bartelme 2005). Bringing people, processes, and products from the creative and artistic sectors into the workplace in organizations helps to stimulate new ways of thinking and acting, as well as challenges established mindsets and develops new skills.

In this way, the European Union tries to solve the structural crisis of the T&C sector by means of CreativeWear project (...).The main CreativeWear objective is to define and test a creative-based cluster model of innovation for T&C in the MED Region. This model helps to revitalize the sector through a new attention to creative competences, personalized design and artisan small-scale production of territorial specific value chains in customer-driven business models.

T&C is an important sector in the MED Regions, including the Valencian region, and creativity and culture are proposed as sources of innovation by incorporating regional heritage, design, an in general, own Mediterranean way of innovation.

CreativeWear holds that the T&C industry can only recover from this deep structural crisis through a new attention to design, quality and the human factor in a value-driven



and customer-driven approach. The opportunity to re-connect fashion and T&C creative clusters with emergent and innovative business models is strengthened by general trends that drive the re-emergence of the central role of design:

- the recent attention of the “maker economy” movement to clothing,
- a growing ecological consciousness with attention to the quality and origin of clothes,
- new materials and processes inspiring new approaches to design and production,
- internet marketplaces for global distribution of hand crafted items and personalised designs

To do that, a set of pilots in four MED countries are carried out and tested as a mean to test the CreativeWear model of innovation. Five piloted and tested CreativeWear hubs in 4 Member States are developed. The CreativeWear pilots carry out a concrete validation of the CreativeWear model, applying its general principles and frameworks to the specific realities in 5 pilot regions.

Each CreativeWear Hub is specialised in a thematic axis that defines its main line of intervention and the contents of its activities:

- Social Hub (Slovenia)
- Heritage Hub (Prato)
- Tech Hub (Valencia)
- Crowd Hub (Sicily)
- Art Hub (Athens)

From the different topics of specialization of the Hubs, we can draw a first categorization according to creativity (emergent or structure) and innovation (context or result) variables. Emergent creativity is associated with new forms of organization (open, social, non formal) and actors of creative development, while structured creativity is linked with institutional actors and formal models. By other side, context innovation is linked with the role of space (physical, virtual, symbolic, cultural) in the production of innovation and Process innovation is a dynamic approach, connected with the role of time (long term) and rhythm of evolution of the different systems involved (society, market, public institutions...)

Slovenian Social Hub rotates around a recent initiative of ETRI, a non-profit NGO, to build an open, community-oriented creative centre exploring new ways of working to design and produce clothing. This centre gathers equipment and skilled people from a



surrounding industrial district that has seen closure of several factories. The objective is to re-value the existing knowledge by mixing T&C skills with broader community creativity, to develop innovative ideas for T&C. The center will also connect with other creative hubs in Slovenia, notably in Ljubljana. eZavod will support business development for emergent creative enterprises.

Prato Heritage Hub involves the Prato Textile Museum as the creative hub, and the City of Prato whose role is to connect to the surrounding industrial district. The Textile Museum not only contains an extensive collection of fashion, but it also carries out didactic and creative activities involving the local community, such as the Texmedin project's Inspiration Lab. The CreativeWear pilot will extend the scope of these activities beyond the design and fashion schools to include specific digital creative communities, maker communities, etc., working towards eco-innovative & sustainable T&C products. These activities connect with the TCBL Design and Place Labs in Prato and from there to the different production facilities throughout the network.

Valencian Technology Hub involves the AITEX industrial association's activities related to research on Fashion, Textiles, Clothing, etc. to be extended through outreach initiatives managed by the Econcult unit of the Economics Faculty of the University of Valencia (based on previous work in the MED Sostenuto and CreativeMED projects). The CreativeWear pilot will consolidate this extended scope of the AITEX creative hub and explore the connections with the industrial clients who are AITEX members. These activities will then connect with the other CreativeWear pilots and the Business Labs and Pilots in the TCBL network.

Sicily Crowd Hub is built upon the CreZi business incubator recently initiated in a partnership between ARCA, City of Palermo, CLAC and NeXT. CreZi aims to apply the incubator method to the CCIs in general, and act as a hub for linking creativity to enterprise. It will be a reference point for many emergent activities (Sartoria Sociale, Palermo FabLab, etc) and reinforce CreZi's role as a hub for creativity in the T&C sector, aggregating new energies and experimenting new approaches and technologies. This will link to the T&C along several axes: a re-connection with local tailoring laboratories, re-construction of the ex-fasonista district in Bronte, and connecting with industries and manufacturing facilities throughout the CW network.



The Athens Art Hub involves CreThiDev as the creative hub, and HCIA whose role is to connect to the surrounding industrial district as well as the labs created in Athens by H2020 TCBL project. HCIA groups Greek clothing industries and cooperates with Technical Innovation Centers to offer them technical innovation solutions. CreThiDev involves experts of regional development and innovation projects in T&C and leather with a particular focus on social and eco-friendly innovation. Pilot activities will involve all the key actors of a quadruple helix approach to produce contributions for the next versions of RIS3 of the region (Attiki) for developing the creative and design based industries (one of the region's priority sectors).

All the CreativeWear Hub themes reflect some emergent strategies of innovation in T&C, unfolding both, local strategies of operation and transnational cooperation networking.

In this way, this multiple relationship between arts, culture, creativity and economy is what we are going to treat and analyse in this paper. This will be done by exploring new forms of collaboration between artists and creatives and the textile and clothing industry in five regions of the Mediterranean area. That is, we will explore and evaluate the artistic interventions in different textile organisations in the MED regions. Moreover, we will try to redefine and improve the ex-ante evaluation process.

In order to evaluate the short-, mid- and long- term effects of these interventions, we are going to use the Theory of Change as methodology. This methodology is designed for evaluation of complexity. It emerges the implicit theory in a specific problem and connects background with actions at short, mid and long term changes or impacts.

**Keywords:** *culture, creativity, innovation, smart regional development, textile and clothing sector, MED regions*

**JEL codes:**

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