

**Policy Brief Summary**

# **Arts & Design-Based Collaboration and Cross-Innovation**

Practices to be enabled, orchestrated  
and championed for systemic impact

**Lead Author and Chief Analyst:**  
Johanna Kouzmine-Karavaïeff, Artisans of Innovation

**Co-Author:**  
Krista Petäjäjärvi, Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture

# 1 Context

*This policy brief is a call to policymakers to become aware of arts & design-based collaboration and cross-innovation, and to champion and form policies that truly drive the practice forward. This is important not only to expand the possibilities of livelihoods for the arts or design professionals, not only for acceleration of new innovations for greater revenues – but due to the necessity to tackle the most complex societal issues of our time.*

The policy brief is an outcome of the NDPC led project “Creative Cross-Innovations for Sustainability” (2022-2023) funded by Finland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the funding instrument of co-operation in the Baltic Sea and Arctic regions with support from Finland’s Ministry of Education and Culture. One aim of the project was to contribute to knowledge gathering about the state of the practice. The project activities included a “small-scale benchmarking” of creative cross-innovations internationally.

In the project creative cross-innovations were defined as follows:

*Creative cross-innovations in terms of creative cross-overs is a cross-disciplinary process where professionals from the arts, culture, and creative fields share and exchange information, working methods, skills, competencies, creative approaches to other sectors and traditional industries to collaborate in new ways with professionals from other fields. The aim of this type of cross-sector collaboration is to tap into the potential of creative know-how, to promote new thinking, exploring new ways of doing, boost product - process - and business model innovation, creative co-creation and novel types of cross-innovations within society, e.g. in the fields of research & technology, health and well-being, business and industry, urban development, pedagogy, sustainability, peace and security, etc.*

The data gathering process consisted of an online survey (59 respondents from 27 countries), followed up with a round of interviews (60 professionals from 14 countries). This data gathering process (completed between January–August 2023) is referred to as “the study”, and is in the brief brought into conversation with other sources of information. Although the number of explored sources is limited, they contribute in a meaningful manner to the overall analysis concluding into policy recommendations. The study is not an academic research but is produced to serve as a knowledge base for the purposes of this brief.

The study process led to the shift from the initial project terminology using creative cross-innovations to using arts & design-based collaboration and cross-innovation. In essence, this shift is underpinned by the need to identify the driver of the practice, which consists of professionals from different art and design disciplines.

Arts & design-based collaboration and cross-innovation can be implemented with a variety of different approaches and objectives. In its widest sense, the practice is about new forms of collaborations which do not always lead to innovation, but often have some sort of novelty or innovativeness as an objective. Currently different terms are used by different professionals and scholars, giving these different meanings. It has become evident that clarity about the practice must be attained through the attention to discourse.

The data-gathering process was led by an external expert commissioned by the NDPC. Johanna Kouzmine-Karavaïeff, one of the founding partners of Artisans of Innovation (AOI), was appointed to develop the

methodological approach for the data gathering, analyse the results, and author this policy brief. The need to establish a policy brief stems from conclusions drawn in previous work related to the practice, both from the NDPC and the AOI.

In summary, efficient policy is rare, which results in a dearth of education, training and inter-sectorial outreach, failing, inadequate and disconnected ecosystems.

## 2 How can policy best drive the practice?

---

At national, regional, and local levels, the practice is still often driven by convinced professionals, individuals, who do not necessarily have any support from policy frameworks or strategies. This does not mean that the existing practice is not qualitative, just that it is not supported nor facilitated and orchestrated as it should be leading to slowing down of the overall establishment of the practice.

The diverse range of arts & design-based collaboration and cross-innovation poses challenges for policymakers. As a cross-sectorial topic, effective policies must extend beyond culture to encompass areas like economy, finance, environment, sustainable development, health, and more.

National-level policy orchestration is essential for success in the development of the practice. Efficient orchestration of the practice involves building inter-sectorial readiness, fostering cross-sectorial dialogue, and facilitating connections within the entire ecosystem. Key elements such as funding and financial instruments, education & training, intermediary functions, clusters, hubs, art institutions, pre-incubators, incubators, and accelerators, must be empowered.

The orchestration of arts and design-based collaboration and cross-innovation directly links to a functioning ecosystem that enables the practice on various levels, interacting with diverse sectors. The ecosystem model below presents a macro level view of needed components for the development of the practice.

**The ecosystem of the practice**  
(Arts and design-based collaboration and cross-innovation)



# Policy recommendations

---

## 01

Address the capacity for inter-sectorial policy readiness. Found an **inter-sectorial ministerial working group** to address what orchestrating, structuralising, and formalising the practice mean to the people involved, what it results in and how it will impact the different sectorial responsibility areas.

## 03

**Establish a national non-political entity** that champions and orchestrates the practice at national level.

## 05

Empower and enable **entrepreneurship** within arts and design and cultural management. Offer qualitative, high-level training on this topic.

## 07

Clearly address and explain the practice and expectations on outcomes in **funding instruments**. To acknowledge gaps in the available funding schemes and the need of support for micro-scale actors.

## 09

Enable the practice within **the clusters, hubs and art institutions** through awareness raising in collaboration with intermediaries.

## 11

Enable conditions for **production of useful evidence** of the practice to different stakeholders.

## 13

**Be explicit and clear with language and terminology** in your efforts to promote the practice. To have the practice explicitly and clearly included in strategy documents is a precursor for advancing in a more structured and formal way.

## 02

**Experience** and relate directly to arts & design-based collaborations and cross-innovation activities in policy-making contexts. Get further understanding of the practice in real life and training situations.

## 04

Launch **new educational opportunities** and build on existing ones.

## 06

Support the development of **intermediary functions** and advocate for the intermediary as a pivotal part of the ecosystem. Drive the strategic exchange between public and private intermediaries forwarding and ensuring a balanced relation between them.

## 08

Accelerate and scale up entrepreneurship through **financing instruments**.

## 10

Evaluate existing **pre-incubators, incubators and accelerators**. Ensure competency in, and understanding of, CCS and arts & design-based collaboration & cross-innovation.

## 12

**Address the narration gap** courageously and renew the value proposition of the practice. Eliminate boundaries between the now separated discourses on intrinsic value and art for art's sake and potentials of multiple values.

## 14

Boost the understanding of potential in sectors and fields beyond CCS. **Embrace a client- and market-driven perspective**. Support exploratory pilots to enable innovations and radically innovative examples of the practice.

Beyond policy recommendations the brief suggests

**several avenues for international cooperation and collaboration.**

Contexts like cultural relations and culture & development can support the practice's development and national-level orchestration. The areas include education, research, capacity building, instruments for networking and integration in technical agendas. Examples include:

- Identifying, networking and capacity building for intermediaries;
- Creating research partnership/s on skills stemming from arts and design processes;
- Establishing platforms for exhibition of best practices;
- Creating massive open online courses (MOOCs);
- Establishing networks for policymakers and governments;
- Embracing the practice in relation to the UN agenda on sustainable development;
- Embracing the practice in relation to shaping a comprehensive and integrated UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education.

Arts and health is one area of the practice which offers insights and can serve as a model due to its traction in the EU policy. The measures that should be implemented to support arts and design-based collaboration and innovation on a wide scale have already been implemented in the context of arts and health. This includes addressing mappings of initiatives, related policies, and stakeholders. The same mapping approach, seeking to identify operators and professionals with knowledge and experience in the field and understanding the current state of developments, should be considered as an important first step in the process of establishing the practice.

Comprehensive evidence is needed across different levels of the practice to understand the impacts and values that it generates, that further clarifies how to position the practice in other sectors. Reliable research is pivotal in establishing standardised criteria. This requires a balance and alignment between economic perspectives, innovation angles, process development, and artistic standpoints. Thus, collaboration is needed between these perspectives. The diverse stakeholders related to the practice have different needs for reliable research: practitioners engaged in the practice, clients and collaborators, creative and cultural sector developers, as well as experts within innovation, sustainability, and various other contexts. Moreover, evidence needs to be produced also to serve as a resource for policymakers and to support evidence-based policymaking.

•

The practice holds significant potential to address many current needs if orchestration from an inter-sectorial policy stage is activated.

# 4 Conclusion

---

Today, the practice finds itself in a state of limbo. Even if it is more accepted today than 15 years ago, and even if we can see development in discourse, policies, funding, service delivery and projects, this does not mean that the current action is structured and connects the dots needed. We find more knowledge and insights into it – but not enough traction. We find increased awareness – but no broad adoption.

Efficient policy is rare, leading to a lack of education, training, and inter-sectorial outreach, failing, inadequate and disconnected ecosystems. Factors such as the use of opaque language, the saturation of the term ‘creativity,’ and the evident lack of inter-sectorial preparedness at both macro and micro levels contribute to this situation.

It is important to recall that while the practice serves as a pathway to innovation, innovation itself is not the sole and ultimate objective. Failure to develop the practice means draining opportunities for art and design professionals, and for the wider economy and for society at large. To keep the practice unstructured and undeveloped would imply a potential loss of commitment from practitioners at various levels who have the interest and capacity to explore and contribute to the practice. This ‘brain drain’ would contradict sustainability.

We should ask ourselves what to expect from arts & design-based collaborations and innovation processes without efficient policy support, a clear educational and training framework, funding programmes to accelerate the practice and awareness, or international standards to refer to.

### More information:

#### Johanna Kouzmine-Karavaieff

Artisans of Innovation, an innovation consultancy partnership:  
johanna@ifa-laboratory.com

#### Krista Petäjärvi

Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture:  
krista@ndpculture.org

### Disclaims and copyright:

The fact that this project is funded by and the production of this publication is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland and the Ministry of Education and Culture Finland does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which solely reflect the views of the authors. The funder and supporter of project cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You can copy, download, or print this document, as well as include excerpts from the document with a reference to: "Arts & Design-Based Collaboration and Cross Innovation - Practices to be enabled, orchestrated and championed for systemic impact," Lead Author & Chief Analyst: Johanna Kouzmine-Karavaieff, Artisans of Innovation, Co-Author: Krista Petäjärvi, Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture 2023.

Any request for public or commercial use, or publication may be submitted to [info@ndpculture.org](mailto:info@ndpculture.org).

### Financed and supported by:



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland



MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
FINLAND