



# Greening the Creative Europe Programme

*Executive summary*



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# **Greening the Creative Europe Programme**

## **Executive Summary**

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## Executive Summary

### Aims, objectives and scope of the Study

This Final Report has been prepared by Ecorys in the context of the Request for Services titled: 'Greening the Creative Europe Programme' (EC/04/2021), commissioned by the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission (the Commission) and produced in partnership with Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT).

The study is a part of the Commission's effort to mainstream climate actions into the Creative Europe programme without changing the fundamental character and objectives of the Programme. The study is also part of a response of the Commission to the Resolution of the European Parliament that calls for effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps.<sup>1</sup>

The aims of the assignment were to:

1. Research what guidance should be provided to Programme applicants and beneficiaries in the design and management of their cross-border projects to limit their impact on the environment and integrate green practices;
2. Develop recommendations for monitoring and evaluating green aspects of project proposals (alongside other project objectives of artistic creation, cultural or creative expression);
3. Collect good practices that support raising awareness on the need for a green transition (as supported by the Programme, the sectors covered by it and beyond); and,
4. document progress made during the previous and current Creative Europe Programme towards programme greening (by mapping the main green initiatives and projects supported, as well as green practices, their results and impacts).

More specifically, the study also aimed to:

- explore the potential of the Programme to encourage European citizens to act sustainably and promote initiatives to raise awareness, educate and promote environmental practices;
- deliver a mapping of projects with 'green' objectives and research greening practices implemented by projects, actions and other initiatives supported by the predecessor Creative Europe Programme;
- develop a problem statement, outlining the impact of the Cultural and Creative sectors (CCS) on climate change and environment, a sector specific greening strategy, and a good environmental practice guide for greening the Programme;
- propose environmental, climate and sustainability indicators, as well as targets, benchmarks and baselines for the Creative Europe Programme, including for measuring its greening expenditure; and,

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211_EN.pdf)

- explore the possibilities to introduce a standardised approach for collecting data on CO2 emissions and other environmental indicators for the Creative Europe Programme by strand/sector covered.

This study covered the 'greening' of the previous Creative Europe Programme from 2014-2020 and the first two years of the current programme (2021 and 2022), its sub-programmes/strands, schemes, actions and projects. It looked at the Creative Europe Programme's impact on 'greening' of the CCS, structuring 'greening' support to the European cultural and creative ecosystem, and raising awareness of programme stakeholders, including potential applicants and audiences about the need for a green transition. It did not cover the 'greening' of Europe's CCS or cultural and creative ecosystem more generally.

This study and its recommendations are not the opinion of the European Commission, nor are they binding for the Commission. This study aims to support the ongoing efforts of Creative Europe Programme to become 'greener' in the light of the targets set by the European Green Deal.

## Overview of the method

The methodology used to gather data for this Study included:

- Three **scoping interviews** with representatives from DG EAC, DG CNECT and EACEA.
- A **comprehensive literature review** that identified, collected and reviewed programme and project-level documentation, literature on current and good greening practices in the CCS, those supported by Creative Europe as well as 'greening' practices beyond the Programme.
- A **desk-based mapping of green projects** that consisted of two parts: (1) mapping of all green projects; (2) in-depth analysis of a sample of 62 projects.
- A **beneficiary survey** that assessed the extent projects supported by the predecessor Creative Europe programme greened their activities (internal greening) and contributed to mainstreaming climate actions (external greening) by pursuing green objectives and promoting sustainable practices among their specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- **Consultations** with 68 stakeholders via 29 individual and 13 group interviews as well as four written contributions (46 interviews in total). In addition, 20 targeted consultations were undertaken, collecting a total of 14 written and two oral contributions.
- A **Policy Delphi** to collect the views of an Expert Panel on the study recommendations, namely the Programme greening strategy, Good environmental practice guide and Programme greening monitoring guide.
- Three **validation workshops** to validate with CCS stakeholders the three annexes presenting the recommendations of this study.

## Findings and conclusions of the Study

### Enhancement of Creative Europe Programme contribution to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

#### Predecessor Creative Europe Programme contribution to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

##### Greening requirements

The Creative Europe Programme between 2014 and 2020 did not include greening requirements in its legal basis. Consequently, there were no formal greening requirements or criteria specified in the calls for proposals launched under the programme. Nevertheless, since its adoption at the end of 2019, the European Green Deal was mentioned in the description of some of the calls for proposals released in 2020.

##### External dimension of greening

The desk-based mapping identified a total of 162 'green' projects in the previous programming period (3.4% of the total number of Creative Europe projects). The findings of the beneficiary survey among predecessor programme beneficiaries suggest a significantly higher share of projects that pursued green objectives. Around one third indicated that their projects increased awareness and promoted green practices within their sector, while 16% indicated that their project raised awareness and promoted green practices among their audiences.

The mapping showed that around one third (32%) of the projects defined greening as one of their core objectives, while in two thirds (68%) of the cases greening was addressed as a secondary objective. Moreover, almost half of the green projects supported under the predecessor Creative Europe Programme created awareness about climate change, followed by projects that created awareness about the beauty/ power of nature (43%), pollution (15%) and animal rights (4%).

##### Internal dimension of greening

Findings from the beneficiary survey and interviews showed that projects supported by the predecessor Creative Europe Programme took action to minimise the impact of their actions on climate change and the environment. This has particularly been the case in the last few years of the predecessor Programme, probably explained by the increasing attention on greening in policy and public debate.

However, no systematic information was available in documentation of projects supported by the predecessor Creative Europe Programme whether this delivered any activities to minimise impacts on the environment or climate. This was likely due to the absence of green requirements under predecessor programme for systematic monitoring and reporting on this supported project dimension.

##### Green methods

Findings from the beneficiary survey and the interviews with representatives of projects supported by Creative Europe pointed to activities aimed at minimising the impact of supported activities on climate change and environment. These included actions to reduce travel, green mobility options, reduce the use of energy and resources, waste

management, green procurement, compensation for CO2 emissions by planting trees and/or offsetting and development of green competences.

#### Dissemination of green practices

Survey and interview findings revealed that many beneficiaries of the predecessor programme have shared information on the activities they delivered to green their project, action or initiative with their audiences as well as within their sectors. Most of the time, dissemination concerned sharing of reports, handbooks or guidelines produced after the projects were finalised. In some cases, sharing of green practices was mainstreamed in the project design, especially within the Cooperation projects and European networks.

### **Contribution of the current programme to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming**

#### **Programme and the Green Deal objectives**

While the European Green Deal does not cover the CCS explicitly, the Creative Europe Programme needs to address the societal challenges of climate change and environmental sustainability. This has three implications: 1) reducing the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of the CCS until 2050 proportionally to achieve net zero emissions, 2) ensuring that Creative Europe contributes to halting environmental degradation, mainstreaming climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of 30 % of Union budget expenditure supporting climate objectives<sup>2</sup> respecting the 'do no harm' principle, while 3) balancing these aims with the main objectives of the Creative Europe Programme. While the Programme has to identify mechanisms to address the second point directly, the Programme can only influence the GHG emissions in the CCS indirectly, setting 'greening' requirements and incentivising programme applicants and beneficiaries through strategic allocation of its funding towards the European Green Deal objectives and target.

#### **Greening under the current programme**

The Regulation<sup>3</sup> establishing the 2021-2027 Creative Europe Programme states that the programme is to contribute to the mainstreaming climate actions and to the achievement of the overall 30% target for Union's budget spent on supporting climate objectives. To support these objectives, concrete actions were set out in 2021 and 2022 under the three strands of the Creative Europe Programme that should accelerate programme greening. Moreover, initiatives and discussions took place to frame particular aspects of this greening, including the three Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working groups of Member States' experts, the pilot projects to green mobility of artists and test more sustainable cross-border performing arts and the structured dialogue to support the recovery of the news media and audio-visual sectors and their green transition. The greening criteria introduced have remained specific to **particular**

<sup>2</sup> Recital 36 of the Regulation 2018/0190 stated 'Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union commitments to implement the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change and to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Programme is intended to contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of 30 % of Union budget expenditure supporting climate objectives. In line with the European Green Deal as a blueprint for sustainable growth, the actions under this Regulation should respect the 'do no harm' principle. During the implementation of the Programme, relevant actions should be identified and put in place without changing the fundamental character of the Programme, and should be reassessed in the context of the relevant evaluations and review process'

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/818, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0818>



**programme schemes and strands, taking into account** specific challenges of **greening various (sub)sectors supported** by the programme. There are no common, programme-wide greening criteria during this period.

### **Main challenges**

Across the strands of the Programme, similar challenges to greening were identified and categorised under horizontal challenges, challenges for beneficiaries and challenges for programme managing authorities and desks. Horizontal challenges include recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the need for the Creative Europe Programme to be reflective of the diversity of the cultural, regulatory and creative landscapes, as well as their different starting conditions.

The costs linked to greening create prohibitively high burdens for some parts of the CCS and the CCS generally lack relevant knowledge and expertise to green their activities. The main challenge for project beneficiaries was linked to the costs for ensuring greater sustainability on the one, and lack of sufficient funding for greening efforts on the other hand. For programme managing authorities and desks, lacking expertise, training, and capacity were the main challenges identified to green the Programme.

### **Main opportunities**

Findings suggest that there are several opportunities for the Creative Europe Programme to enhance its contribution to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming. The main overarching opportunities include using creative and cultural content to change and drive change towards more environmentally responsible CCS and society, enhancing the role of Creative Europe Desks<sup>4</sup> to raise awareness and disseminate information around green objectives, practices, and tools, enhancing the exchange and sharing good practices from Creative Europe projects and other CCS initiatives. In addition, evidence indicates that there are several sector-specific opportunities for the Creative Europe Programme to enhance the CCS' sustainability and its contribution to the Green Deal. A large number of good greening practices, including innovative tools and actions, instruments and initiatives that could be transposed and/or adapted under the current or potential successor Creative Europe Programmes were identified.

### **Creative Europe Programme contribution to the Green Deal objectives**

#### **The main possible and feasible ways to green the Programme design to enhance its contribution to the Green Deal objectives**

#### **Greening call requirements of the Culture, MEDIA and Cross-sectoral strands**

The Culture, MEDIA and Cross-sectoral strands included various greening requirements in their respective calls. In most MEDIA and Cross-sectoral calls participants were awarded five points for the quality of their application sections that described how they will manage and deliver the project activities in more sustainable and environmentally friendly way<sup>5</sup>. In the case of most Culture calls, applicants were also asked to present

<sup>4</sup> Creative Europe Desks are in place in every participating country for questions, assistance related to the programme and help cooperating with organisations in other countries

<sup>5</sup> Please find the MEDIA and Cross-sectoral Strands calls with greening requirements under heading: Greening requirements for schemes of the MEDIA and the Cross-sectoral Strand in section 4.1.3.

'adequate strategies<sup>6</sup> to ensure sustainable and environmentally respectful activities in the project implementation', however there were no points awarded for the quality of these descriptions<sup>7</sup>. For Culture Calls the requirements for greening under the overall relevance criterion were presented alongside other requirements such as relevance to the objectives and priorities of calls, presentation of strategies to ensure gender balance, inclusion, and diversity, in the project implementation, etc.

### **Greening projects, actions or initiatives**

Evidence suggests that some Creative Europe projects have contributed or are contributing to the Green Deal objectives. Around 4% of supported projects under the predecessor Creative Europe Programme pursue(d) green objectives of promoting sustainability and fight against climate change. Moreover, half of the projects consulted were implementing green practices as part of their projects.

### **Methods for project 'greening' evaluation**

Findings showed that for the first calls issued under the current Creative Europe Programme (in the period 2021 to first half of 2022), the 'green' aspects of project proposals were evaluated against two criteria: relevance and quality. Under the relevance criterion, applicants in their project proposals need to demonstrate how they have addressed the horizontal priorities of the Programme i.e., inclusion and diversity, reduction of environmental impact and gender equality. Applications responding to MEDIA strand calls can obtain up-to five points out of the total points for the relevance criteria by including strategies<sup>8</sup> to ensure project activities will be delivered in a sustainable and environmentally respectful way. In the case of applications responding to Culture strand calls, project evaluators considered whether and how the project aims to contribute to the green horizontal priority and this cross-cutting issue was evaluated as part of the total relevance scoring. In the quality criterion, projects applications need to demonstrate how applicants will address the horizontal priorities listed under the relevance criteria with their project objectives and concrete activities.

### **Sharing of best practices and mutual learning of environmental-related initiatives**

#### **Existing and planned mutual learning activities on greening**

Findings from the Stakeholder interviews and Literature review recognised that a limited number of mutual learning activities on greening are delivered with the support of the Creative Europe Programme. The results of interviews with programme managers indicate that most mutual learning activities were organised by Creative Europe desks, as well as European networks and Cooperation projects supported under the Culture strand of the programme that aim to build capacity and promote an exchange of practices in greening.

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<sup>6</sup> Here, the 'strategies' do not mean self-standing sustainability strategies that have been developed by programme beneficiaries, but rather a description of how an applicant proposes to minimise the environmental impact of their project if it is selected to be supported by the Programme.

<sup>7</sup> Please find the Culture Strand calls with greening requirements under heading: Greening requirements for schemes of the Culture Strand in section 4.1.3.

<sup>8</sup> Here, the 'strategies' do not mean self-standing sustainability strategies, but rather a description of how an applicant proposes to minimise the environmental impact of their project if it is selected to be supported by the Programme.

### **Potential focus and suggestions for ways to deliver on mutual learning activities on greening in the future**

Only a handful of interviewees consulted made concrete suggestions on the potential focus and ways to deliver mutual learning activities under the programme in the future. According to these interviewees it will be mostly the role of European networks and platforms as well as, especially, Creative Europe desks to organise greening training and capacity-building activities during the current programme.

### **Sector and sub-sector strategies and good practices / good practice guides**

Evidence collected indicated that there is an abundance of greening guides and good practice examples available. Survey respondents identified a multitude of different guidance documents and good practice examples they have relied on to inspire their greening efforts. This was confirmed in almost all interviews with representatives of European networks, as well as in interviews with the programme managing authorities and supported projects and participants of the validation workshops. Thus, the Good environmental practices guide for the Creative Europe Programme developed as part of the recommendations of this study provides an overview of existing good practice guides/documents and examples relevant to programme beneficiaries.

### **Targets and indicators to measure and monitor the contribution of the programme to the Green Deal objectives**

#### **Current indicators and areas of measurement**

Evidence collected shows that EU programmes such as Erasmus+, COSME or Horizon Europe are working towards identifying green indicators and methods to quantify and assess their programmes' contribution to the Green Deal objectives.

#### **Good practices and existing methods in green monitoring**

Findings showed that only a few programme beneficiaries monitor and measure their green activities and emissions, including a limited use of available carbon calculators. In contrast to the uptake among beneficiaries, a wide range of calculators are available to the CCS, which include several CCS and sub-sector specific calculators.

#### **Potential options and suggestions for green monitoring**

There are many tools available that projects can use to monitor their GHG emissions. While some of the calculators found online require registration, the use of the tools is usually free of charge. Many tools further allow a comparison of GHG emissions over time, enabling the users to track their GHG emissions over a longer period of time to identify progress made.

#### **Recommendations**

The recommendations of this study were prepared in the form of three separate documents: the Creative Europe Programme Greening Strategy, the Good Environmental Practices Guide for the Creative Europe Programme and the Creative Europe Monitoring Guide for Programme Greening.

#### **The Creative Europe Programme Greening Strategy**

The strategy identifies areas where actions are needed and put forward recommendations on what could be practically done to 'green' the Creative Europe

Programme in the foreseeable future. As such, the strategy aims to mainstream greening in the Programme itself by defining a problem statement, describing main greening challenges and opportunities, identifying the roles of the main programme stakeholders in programme greening, and providing a roadmap for this greening.

### **The Good Environmental Practices Guide for the Creative Europe Programme**

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of existing good environmental practices that are recommended to actual and potential Creative Europe Programme beneficiaries when applying for and/or implementing their supported projects. This guide may also be useful as a manual and as a source of inspiration for Creative Europe programme managers tasked with greening the Creative Europe Programme.

### **The Creative Europe Monitoring Guide for Programme Greening**

The monitoring guide includes a proposal for sustainability indicators (further 'green indicators') that could be used to measure the Creative Europe successor programmes' progress and contribution towards the European Green Deal objectives during a period after 2027 as well as the recommended categories of eligible green costs.



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