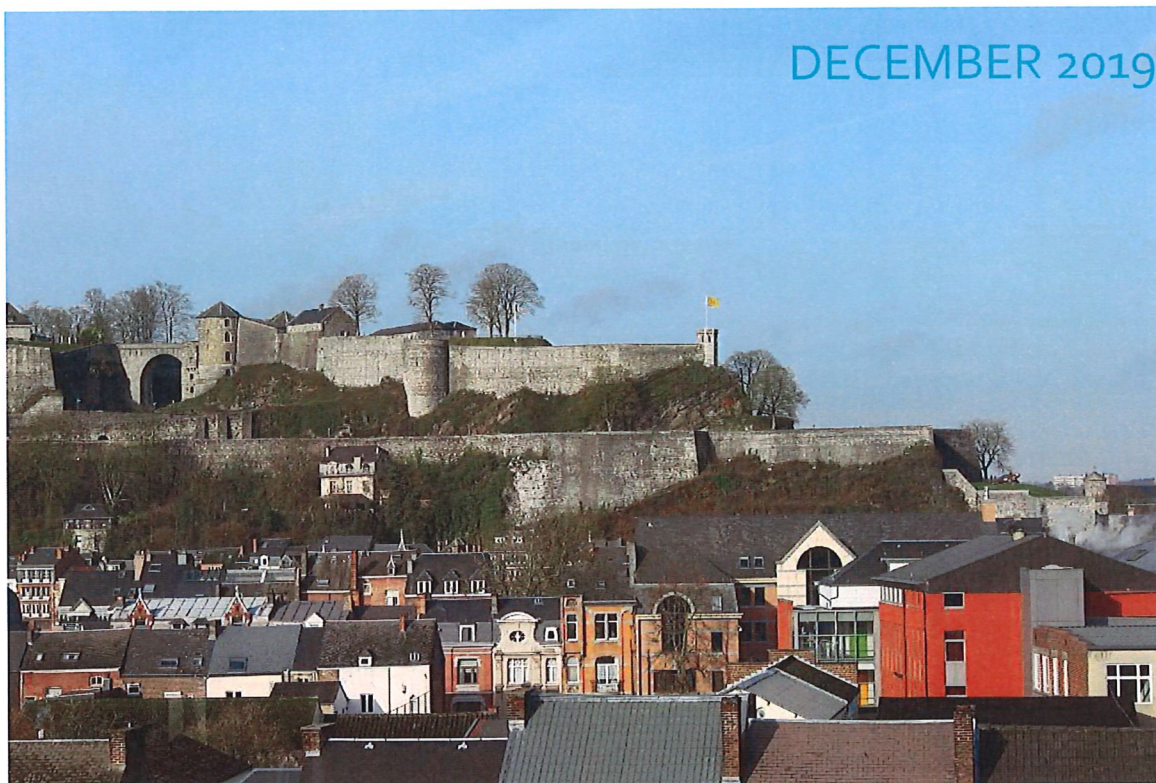


DECEMBER 2019



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

RCIA : ACTION PLAN

PUBLIC SERVICE OF WALLONIA



INDEX

1. GENERAL INFORMATION	2
2. POLICY CONTEXT	3
A. The action plan aims to impact:	3
B. Name of the policy addressed:	3
3. ACTION PLAN VISION	6
A. CONTEXT	6
B. FIELDS OF ACTION	7
C. OBJECTIVES	8
D. METHODOLOGY	8
E. ENDORSMENT	9
4. DETAILS OF THE ENVISAGED ACTIONS	10
ACTION 1 – Creation of a CCI incubator inside the Creative Hub of Charleroi	10
ACTION 2 – Develop further the new model of creative hubs: Evaluate the impact of the Creative hubs policy on the Walloon territory	12
ACTION 3 –Develop further the new model of creative hubs: Elaborate a new proposal for creative hubs in Wallonia	14

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project RCIA – Regional Creative Industries Alliance – From European recommendations to better regional CCI policies for a more competitive economy

Public Service of Wallonia

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2. POLICY CONTEXT

A. The action plan aims to impact:

- Regional Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs ERDF 2014-2020
- Others regional development policy instrument:
- the Walloon Smart Specialization Strategy

B. Name of the policy addressed:

- Regional Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs ERDF 2014-2020, Regional (ERDF) – Transition zone (Provinces: Hainaut, Namur, Luxembourg, Liège) Regional Operational Programme ERDF Wallonia 2014-2020 – Most developed zone (Walloon Brabant Province).

Priority or measure concerned: support to the installation of creative hubs in university city and/or city with more than 50 000 inhabitants.



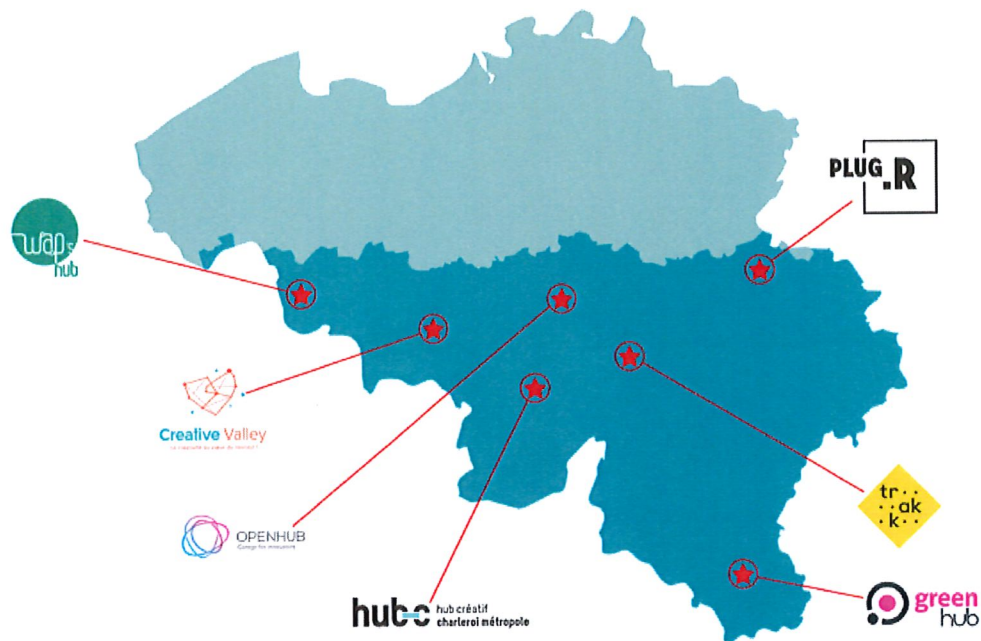
In 2014, within the framework of its Creative Wallonia programme, Wallonia stimulated the emergence of 7 Creative Hubs disseminated among the territory. They aim to impulse at the local level new creative economy dynamics by fostering collaborations between CCIs and “traditional” industries. The goal is to stimulate creativity and cross-collaborations in order to generate innovative projects and enterprises. They act simultaneously as idea generators, as service providers (co-working spaces, Fab Labs, training, coaching) and as binders (between CCIs themselves, between CCIs and the classical industry world). These Creative Hubs are based in cities and managed at a local level but within a global regional strategy.

Their partnerships include private and public local actors such as cities, inter-municipal cooperation bodies, universities, innovative companies... After the pilot phase under the Creative Wallonia programme in 2014 and 2015 (1,700,000 €), Creative Hubs are now funded by the European Regional Development Fund for a global amount of 52.000.000 €, infrastructures included.

The Creative Hubs are meant to offer the following services even if they specialized according to their territorial forces, opportunities or weaknesses:

- Inspiring, raising awareness about the creative economy in order to stimulate the innovation process by informing and giving networking opportunities (conferences, public events, exhibition etc.)
- Coaching and training in creative and digital methodologies in order to enable creative ideas to emerge and to boost projects
- Supporting enterprises and innovative projects thanks to creative methods and processes, either collectively or individually
- Testing, prototyping, creating a product or a service (Fab Labs)
- Offering spaces to creative communities to foster unexpected meetings between various publics and to exercise its creativity (coworking infrastructures, office rental, creativity rooms etc.)
- Passing on, reorienting towards other actors (business centres, funds, local development agencies, innovation centres, export agencies etc.)

7 Creative Hubs	Location	Main territorial specificity	Mixed Governance (project led by...)
OpenHub	Louvain-la-Neuve	Essentially university town, important student audience, deep connexion with enterprises, strong entrepreneurship spirit, high technological potential	University
Waps'Hub	Tournai	Semi-rural area at the very west of Wallonia, cultural and historical city connected to the North of France and Flanders	Territorial development agency + a non-profit organization created specially to manage the creative hub
TRAKK	Namur	Capital of Wallonia, at the junction of road and rail tracks linking Brussels to Luxembourg and Liège to Tournai, university town, peaceful, historical heritage	Territorial development agency + University + non-profit organization organizing cultural and digital events
Creative Valley	Mons	Focus on cultural heritage and creative sectors in line with Mons 2015 (European capital for Culture)	City + University + Territorial development agency + non profit organization for the Fab lab
Plug-R	Liège	Dynamic city ("burning city"), economic capital of Wallonia, industrial past, university town, entrepreneurial spirit	University + local investment agency + non profit organizations specialized in (1) design and (2) creative training
GreenHub	Arlon	City anchored in a large rural and agricultural area close to attracting Luxembourg, focus on sectors such as wood, agri-food industry and tourism	University + territorial development agency
Hub créatif de Charleroi Métropole	Charleroi	Industrial town, coal mines history, regional airport, technological centres	University + Business Centre + Territorial development agency + Research centre



The Government of Wallonia is the Managing authority for ERDF. The Public Service of Wallonia (DGO6/Economic Policy Directorate) is the administration in charge of Economy. In the Operational Programme ERDF 2014-2020, the Walloon Government has nominated the Public Service of Wallonia/DGO6/Economic Policy Directorate as responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Creative Hub Action under ERDF. We have therefore the capacity to influence the policy instrument.

3. ACTION PLAN VISION

A. CONTEXT



Since 2010 the **Creative Wallonia programme** has considerably impacted the whole CCIs sector. Creative Wallonia is a framework programme that puts creativity and innovation at the centre of the Walloon project and its regional development. Even if the Creative Wallonia programme is a holistic programme not focusing only on CCIs (because creativity concerns all types of industries, and also students, citizens, institutions...), it is the first economic programme in Wallonia that takes into account the CCIs as a relevant sector; a sector that can really boost the economy because creativity is already its core business.

It is also the first economic programme in Wallonia that considers non-technological innovation as relevant for developing a more competitive economy. The main philosophy of Creative Wallonia is to break down the traditional barriers between sectors, to establish a crosscutting dynamic between regional stakeholders (businesses, public sector, general public, educational institutions...) and to offer a large panel of services. The Creative hubs policy was somehow a territorial output that came out from the Creative Wallonia before being included in the ERDF programming period in 2014.

Creative Wallonia has known two programming periods (2010-2014 and 2015-2019). In between, three important facts generated impact on the current programming period:

- In 2012, Wallonia joined the European Creative Industries Alliance (ECIA) platform. The ECIA is an integrated policy initiative that combines policy learning with 8 concrete actions on innovation vouchers, better access to finance and cluster excellence & cooperation. Thanks to the involvement in this network, Wallonia has deepened its knowledge of the CCI sector.
- In 2013, after three years of implementation of the Creative Wallonia programme, Wallonia started the “**Wallonia European Creative District**” (**WECD**) project according to the label it has received by the European Commission. WECD was not an action programme but a study programme with pilot actions. It enables the Walloon Region to experiment a governance model and some useful tools in order to demonstrate the role of the creative economy and the creative industries in the regeneration of the regional economy in a given period of time and in the European context. The WECD project analyzed and tested what could be the most relevant to boost the creative sectors in four domains: improving creative skills and education, improving business support, improving access to finance and facilitating clusters and networking activities, using a four points methodology: integrated approach, policy mix, collective intelligence and iterative process.

- In 2015, Wallonia has adopted its **Smart Specialization Strategy**. Even if the Walloon S3 strategy is mostly focused on its competitive clusters¹, it also emphasizes on four transversal axes: digital&ICT, SME internationalization, resources efficiency and creative economy. Thanks to the launch and success of the Creative Wallonia programme in 2010-2014 followed by the WECD project in 2013-2015, the Walloon S3 Strategy included the creative economy in its scope and therefore identified the CCI's sector as an important sector with a strong innovation potential.

The WECD project's conclusions were used to improve and enlarge the Creative Wallonia programme in 2015-2019. It is now defined by a four-axis framework: stimulate creativity; training on creativity; support creative and innovative people in their projects or new practices; scale up the entrepreneurs with strong potential.

Regarding this history, one can notice that a new era is coming in Wallonia in the field of creative economy. Indeed, the second Creative Wallonia programming period is coming to an end in 2019 and the Walloon S3 Strategy needs to be revised in order to define the next Structural Funds programming period for 2021-2027. It is thus in that context that peer learning and action plans are needed in order to give new inputs and guidelines to Wallonia's innovation and creativity sphere, especially regarding the Creative Hubs policy.

During the learning phase of the RCIA project, the partnership exchanged good practices in order to foster the competitiveness of CCI and reinforce the cross-collaboration between CCI and traditional companies. The Study Visits organized in the RCIA partner regions has permitted to explore different kinds of structures and discover different good practices. The Policy Roundtable was another important aspect of the project as we could invite some international experts in order to have their inputs on our policy instrument and see how to improve it in the future. Thanks to these learnings, we decided to participate in two staff exchanges where we could really explore the good practices which were transposable in our region. It is now time to take actions regarding that benchmarking.

B. FIELDS OF ACTION



As the policy instrument addressed is the Creative Hubs, Wallonia's action plan will not be focused on particular sectors. Indeed, the role of Creative Hub is to generate innovative projects by stimulating creativity and non-technological innovation regardless of the sectors. The actions developed will mostly concern the improvement of the current instrument and aspects related to cross-collaboration. Now that each Creative Hubs has settled, it is needed

¹ The Walloon competitive clusters are groupings of companies, training centres and public or private research units in a leading sector of the economy, for instance logistics&transport, aeronautics&space, sustainable chemistry&materials, biotechnology&health, agro-industry and mechanical engineering.

to work further on their specificities and to push forward the collaboration among them and with other actors of the Walloon ecosystem.

C. OBJECTIVES



According to the initial plan, this new policy instrument should be improved, thanks to the RCIA project, on aspects related to:

- **Mapping and improving the support for creative SMEs** by among others evaluating the action of the Creative Hubs especially on CCI's spillovers and cross-over collaborations
- **Refining the strategy on the stimulation of cross-over collaboration between CCIs and traditional companies**

The Action Plan proposed hereunder is clearly in line with those initial concerns. The RCIA project will really help Wallonia to improve its Creative Hubs policy and the cross-collaboration between CCI and other companies and to diffuse this state of mind into the entire economic ecosystem.

D. METHODOLOGY



The Economic Policy Directorate of the Public Service of Wallonia is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Creative Hub Action under the ERDF. It can therefore already take actions regarding this policy instrument. All the actions described in the RCIA action plan will be supervised by the Economic Policy Directorate in order to ensure the achievement and the completion of the action plan, as well as the coherence between the different actions. The other operators involved have been informed and intensively support the activities. For each action, the Economic Policy Directorate will work closely with them. Relevant materials, mails and achievements will be kept.

The Economic Policy directorate will also keep the Lead Partner informed of the overall implementation progress of the Walloon action plan.

E. ENDORSMENT



Most of the steps of the implementation of these actions do not require a political endorsement by the Walloon Government. The Economic Policy Directorate has already some competences regarding the implementation and the monitoring of the Creative Hubs policy. Nevertheless, it seems important that the Walloon Government be aware of the RCIA action plan and supports the activities. For that purpose, the Walloon action plan will be presented to the Ministry of Economy.

4. DETAILS OF THE ENVISAGED ACTIONS

ACTION 1 – Creation of a CCI incubator inside the Creative Hub of Charleroi

A. The background

The city of Charleroi is currently implementing a strategic regeneration plan² in order to accelerate the employment growth. This Catch plan defines 4 strategic axis: advanced manufacturing, health and bio, airport and logistics and **Creative and Digital**. Thanks to this plan, new energy has been injected into the city.

Originally, the creative hubs are not focused on a CCI audience. Thanks to the RCIA project, we discussed the advantage of the integration of the CCI sector inside their hubs with the stakeholders. After each study visit, the Public Service of Wallonia team wrote the minutes of the study-visit addressed to the wallon stakeholders with the good practices presented during the visit. One of them was the ***CCI incubator that has been created in Riga*** (*Creative Industries Incubator, administered by the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia*).

The Creative Hub of Charleroi was having difficulties finding his audience. After many discussions inside the hub but also informally with the local stakeholder group, the Creative Hub of Charleroi decided to specialize in this CCI public. And from there, it generated the idea of creating a specialized incubator inside their hub. The possibility to create specific programs (like in Riga) developed for CCI public is a real added-value as the needs of this public are indeed different from the other entrepreneurs's need. Moreover, in Riga, the CCI incubator will be established in a tobacco plant to create a real ecosystem. The same dynamic is foreseen in Charleroi in implementing the hub at the Quai 10 which is already a vibrant cultural place of the city and a former factory. In addition to this inspiration, we also informed the person in charge of the Creative Hub of Charleroi that other incubators were created under the ERDF frame. We had the chance to visit during our staff exchange in Barcelona, the ***3D incubator from Barcelona***, which is also funded by the ERDF and uses experts (research centre) to develop its methodology around the theme of 3D. The creative hub of Charleroi is also funded by ERDF fund. We were able to discuss what was directly financed by the ERDF fund and how they built their indicators. It was interesting for the Economic Policy Directorate of the Public Service of Wallonia, which is the responsible body for the implementation and the monitoring of the creative hub action under the ERDF fund.

² Commissioned by the Walloon Government on the 10 November 2016 : https://www.catch-charleroi.be/index_en.php

B. Action

The idea will be to develop a CCI incubator inside the creative hub of Charleroi in order to offer specific services. The use of this incubator will enable the Hub:

- to provide specific coaching with high added value to entrepreneurs, project owners, VSEs (very small enterprises) and SMEs that will be hosted there. It is a question of developing a methodology adapted to collective support, alongside experts in CCI, in order to offer qualitative incubation programmes.
- to give them access to companies and experts at the forefront of their field. This incubator will provide a leading-edge coaching in the cultural and digital industries such as: music, audio-visual, digital cultures, design, etc.

C. Steps:

Steps already done:

- To modify the ERDF project of the Creative hub of Charleroi piloted by Heracles
- The project was accepted by the Walloon Government

Steps to be done:

- Selection of the external provider to create the incubator
- Effective implementation of the incubator

D. Players involved

- SPW EER
- Charleroi NEntreprendre (ERDF beneficiary)
- Creative hub of Charleroi Metropole

E. Timeframe

From June 2019 to December 2021

F. Costs

The costs foreseen for the project are 255.000 €. It will be covered by the ERDF fund (40% European Union, 50% Walloon region, 10% by their own funds) and the entire ERDF fund of the creative hub of Charleroi, which is 6.336.679,00 €.

G. Expected impacts

Due to the involvement of an experienced actor (CCI incubator), it will boost the activities of the creative hub and ensure a leverage effect at the local, national and international level. This service will aim to incubate 20 profiles per year, with a renewal rate of 50% per year.

ACTION 2 – Develop further the new model of creative hubs: Evaluate the impact of the Creative hubs policy on the Walloon territory

A. The background

The creative hubs policy is our instrument to address in this Interreg project. Thanks to the different learnings of the project, which will be further explained, we would like to improve the model. The Walloon creative hubs were created in 2015. We are now at a turning point in this policy. We should evaluate the model to validate the success on the territory and to reinforce the crossovers between sectors.

During the RCIA Policy Roundtable in Wallonia, we focused on four topics with the experts: governance, visibility, services and impact measurement. The evaluation of the creative hub program was highlighted as an essential challenge to demonstrate the added value of such an initiative. Indeed, to stay high on the political agenda, the creative hubs need to showcase their added-value.

The RCIA project gave us the opportunity to organize a **staff exchange in Barcelona**. At this occasion, we were inspired by their set of indicators reflecting their creative economy initiatives. This learning led us to develop an external evaluation of the creative hubs. In the framework of this evaluation, a set of additional indicators to better measure the impact of creative hubs on the Walloon territory will be built and implemented (*Inspiration: visits of the first European 3D printing Incubator and Fabra i Coats Art Factory (multidisciplinary hub to support entrepreneurs on performing arts, music, audiovisual, visual arts, multimedia)*).

B. Action

Evaluate the impact of the Creative hubs policy on the Walloon territory and build additional and complementary indicators that will measure crossovers between sectors and audience. One of the suggestions of the experts at the RCIA Policy Roundtable in Wallonia was to have alternative indicators to the ERDF and we, in Wallonia, feel that it is crucial. For the moment, we only have indicators coming from the ERDF monitoring that are very restrictive: the number of companies supported by the creative hubs and the number of creative hubs created. To better understand how the creative hubs are functioning, we need to assess them more adequately and catch all the dimensions they should address. It is why, in this evaluation, we will focus, for this RCIA action plan on these dimensions: audience and sectors. It will help us to highlight the powerful instrument that creative hubs could be on the territory for the different partners.

As RCIA project insisted on the crossovers between sectors, we think that it could be very useful to measure it concretely.

C. Steps

Steps already done:

- Drawing-up of a public procurement and selection of a provider that will be in charge of the whole evaluation (including building the additional indicators and creating the permanent tool). That step has already been achieved and the consortium REID Consulting & INNO-TSD was selected in June 2019. A kick-off meeting took place on the 3rd of September 2019.

Steps to be done:

- The provider will have to work in co-creation with the Creative Hubs and will be supervised by the Economic Policy Directorate and the SOWALFIN³. He will produce an intermediary report and a final report.
- To present this evaluation to the Cabinet of the Minister of Economy

D. Players involved

- SPW EER
- Sowalfin
- Creative hubs
- External provider for the evaluation : The provider (REID Consulting & INNO-TSD)

E. Timeframe

From March 2019 to December 2020

F. Costs

Internal budget: HR costs: 0.2 FTE + costs of the evaluation (20.000 € HTVA funded on our own budget).

G. Expected impacts

To obtain a better view of how the creative hubs affect the SMEs and other audiences in order to reinforce their visibility on the territory.

³ The SOWALFIN is a public structure that is responsible for the horizontal coordination of all the Walloon operators providing support to companies; whereas the Economic Policy Directorate of the Public Service of Wallonia is responsible for the vertical coordination between European, national, regional and local economic policies.

ACTION 3 –Develop further the new model of creative hubs: Elaborate a new proposal for creative hubs in Wallonia

A. The background:

In order to develop this action, we used the recommendations from the RCIA **Policy Roundtable** that was organized on the 29th January 2019 in Wallonia as our basis. The focus question of the RCIA Policy Roundtable was: “*What should be the positioning and role of creative hubs in the Walloon policy mix in order to strengthen their specificity, visibility and thus avoid competition with other actors?*”. We mainly discussed four topics during the RCIA Policy Roundtable: governance, visibility, services and impact measurement.

After the RCIA Policy roundtable, we therefore decided to explore these four topics during our **staff exchange in Barcelona** and by adding the different good practices presented by the other partners during the project. Different learnings could be directly transferred from what we learned during our staff exchange.

We will develop a future proposal for the functioning of creative hubs, for example by reinforcing a public-private management model (*Inspiration: visits of the first European 3D printing Incubator and Canodrom Creative Research Park*). Thanks to our participation to the RCIA Policy Roundtable in Bolzano, we also had in mind **the survey that the Italian partners** did for the matchmaking services. The purpose of this survey was to better assess the needs of companies.

B. Action:

As the ERDF programming ends in 2023, as we will have a new Cabinet of Economy in Wallonia in 2019, it is the moment to propose some improvements at the model of creative hubs. Institutional actors agree on the fact that the creative hub model needs to be remodeled to improve its effectiveness. What is the new model? What kind of business model should be implemented? All these questions need to be answered.

C. Steps:

Steps already done:

- To send a survey to the creative hubs to better assess their positioning in terms of services and ecosystem in 5 years (work-in-progress). (For your information, the survey is in annex).
- To analyze the answers
- Discuss with the team leaders of the creative hubs in order to have more feedback.

Steps to be done:

- Organize a conference with all the stakeholders of the open innovation ecosystem in Wallonia in order to present them the work in progress and to strengthen a dialogue between them.
- To write a position paper in collaboration with Solwafin related to the new model of Creative Hubs
- To present this position paper to the creative hubs and to the Cabinet of the Minister of Economy.

D. Players involved

- SPW EER
- Sowalfin
- Creative hubs

E. Timeframe

From March 2019 to December 2021

F. Costs

Budget: HR costs: 0.5 FTE SPW (internal budget) + 0.2 FTE SOWALFIN.

G. Expected impacts

To affine the model of creative hubs by writing a position paper in order to prepare the next ERDF programme or to find alternative source of funding, to clarify the policy mix in Wallonia for the beneficiaries, to improve the effectiveness of the creative hubs, stimulate cross-over collaborations between CCI and traditional companies and to raise awareness among policy makers and officials about creative hubs and the creative economy.



DATE

16th of December 2019

NAME

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POSITION

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SIGNATURE



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