

CCI POLICY PAPER FOR STEBO, PROVINCE OF LIMBURG

English Summary

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0. Abstract

The Regional Policy Paper developed by Stebo (partner in the InduCCI project) maps what is needed to reinforce the position of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in the long term in the province of Limburg (Belgium) and describes the cooperation network that is needed to reach this ambition. It highlights the potential of CCI for regional development, pleads for a more structural cooperation between CCI and companies, inspires on setting up a breeding ground for CCI, and defines a key role for CCI in the empowerment of industrial communities. Policy makers, support organizations and CCI can benefit from the Policy Paper which can serve as a blueprint for other peripheral industrial regions and/or complement existing strategies.

1. Introduction

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) is a growing sector in the province of Limburg, and its potential for supporting innovation processes in the many producing companies in the region is recognized by policy makers. It is also underscored by several projects where CCI and companies have joined forces to develop new products and designs. POM Limburg (the Regional Development Company) has set up the Creative Limburg Innovation Platform. The platform unites CCI and companies, and gives them a voice in the policy making process. Regarding the latter the province has initiated strategic think tanks for SALK Turbo - a strategy aiming at maximum regional development which is currently being developed in Limburg as an answer to the closure of the Ford plant. Closing the gap between producing and creative companies is one of the spearheads of SALK Turbo, along with innovation and stimulating dynamic talent. Initiatives on this potential are however not yet structurally coordinated, and the present cultural and creative mindset is mostly considered an economic advantage with less perspectives for community development.

The Regional Policy Paper, which combines our experiences (Stebo services) and lessons learned in the InduCCI project, wants to create awareness on these 'gaps'. It communicates on the main challenges for CCI in the province of Limburg, and proposes accordingly actions which will allow a more coordinated approach for cooperation and innovation, both in economic and social segments of the region. The actions are defined as advice, and are to supplement existing regional strategies.

The Regional Policy Paper maps what is needed to reinforce the position of CCI in the long term in the province of Limburg, and describes the cooperation network that is needed to reach this ambition.

2. Main Policy Contents

The Policy Paper focuses on four main valuable actions and connections:

Firstly there is **the potential of CCI for regional development**. Cooperation between CCI and producing companies is increasing, but could be enforced when CCI are acknowledged as a full player in business modelling, development of new technologies and socio-economic strategies. In order to reach this vision, existing hiatuses need to be filled by: **1) promoting the added value of CCI in innovation processes, 2) creating crossovers** between CCI and other policy sectors (e.g. education, health, environment,...).

Secondly the province of Limburg would benefit from **a more structural cooperation between CCI and industry** in order 1) to make sure that CCI graduates do not move to the metropolises and 2) to strengthen the economic and innovative potential of the region. Companies need to have better insights in the creative process and mindset of CCI, and visa versa. A structural, and locally anchored funding combined with coaching trajectories for both companies and CCI is a second must for fundamental cooperation.

Thirdly, there should be **a bigger role for CCI in the empowerment of industrial communities**. Today there are many small-scale bottom-up initiatives, largely unknown to policy makers. Awareness raising on the potential of CCI in social challenges, would result in creating the space and capital for these initiatives to scale-up to larger community empowering projects.

In order to facilitate setting up these connections, the **growth potential of the CCI sector** should be stimulated by maximally developing the province of Limburg as a fertile breeding ground. This means 1) the development of **a (lobby) platform** for the CCI sector, 2) **enhancing the entrepreneurial skills** of CCI via customized coaching trajectories, and 3) promoting the Limburg **pull factors** for attracting CCI to the region. This aspect is defined as a fourth programme line in the Policy Paper.

Each objective is defined by four bullets: 1) definition of the opportunity/existing gap, 2) strategic proposals/advise on how to fill the gap, 3) description of the (inter)national stakeholder network for putting the proposals effectively into practice and 4) best practices and exemplary measures as a source of inspiration and as a basis for setting up actions on the long term (incl. InduCCI test cases as action proposals).

The main target group of the Policy Paper are the policy makers. It will raise awareness on the challenges not yet fully stressed in existing strategies. A second target group concerns the broader CCI field. The ambition is to gather policy makers, supporting organizations and CCI in a long term network.

3. Applied Approach and Transnational Value

A number of InduCCI project deliverables served as a basis for the development of the Regional Policy Paper: Main ‘gaps’ and according policy recommendations emerged while describing the status of CCI in Limburg in a Regional Policy Analysis. In a second phase we were inspired by peering with our InduCCI partners, and by the European CCI Policy Analysis - summarizing relevant European CCI policies, along with an overview of actors and trends. The project meetings and thematic workshops have proven to be valuable exchange moments for further developing our paper both content wise and strategically.

Additionally to the ‘desk study’ we have set up a participatory process for getting input from our main stakeholders. The goal of our 1st focus group meeting was to gather input for the Policy Paper: listing chances, needs and initiatives for CCI as well as asking about the mindset and level of awareness of policy makers and administration staff on these topics. This participative approach is also used in our InduCCI test cases in the field. Input for shaping the test cases was collected from our target groups and stakeholders - e.g. via questionnaires and brainstorm sessions. The Policy Paper also hints towards the challenges of other (European) projects on CCI developed in Limburg (e.g. Wonderful Stream). Though these projects do not have a strong policy focus their results are now also integrated in our Policy Paper and therefore also in next years’ Limburg policy agenda.

The strategy was adopted by the board of directors of Stebo in February 2022 and additionally acknowledged by the regional development company POM Limburg.

4. Expected Impact and Benefits

Most important effect will be a more structured approach for cooperation between CCI, economy and society - reached by the presence of a central lobby and coordinating platform.

As the policy describes chances for all CCI, both starters and more experienced, and as it pleads for more specific guiding services and offers, its adoption will offer CCI the chance to grow as a sector with the same level of acknowledgement and value as the economic sectors it 'supports' today. CCI will become an important player for regional development on its own, not only as a 'side-kick'.

Policy makers will be (more) convinced of the empowering role CCI can take up in society. This will benefit the local community, which is on the one hand better armed with insights in industrial transition, and on the other learns how to take position in that transition (e.g. raising their voice, setting up a business, developing necessary competences, shaping their living environment...). But signature community projects will benefit regional development as well, while they help to put a peripheral industrial municipality on the map, both nationally and transnationally (e.g. Capital of Culture).

The policy recommendations will be integrated into the larger picture of SALK Turbo, a strategy aiming at maximum regional development which is currently being developed in Limburg. The Policy Paper complements the plan as it brings cooperation with CCI on regional development and community building as a key topic.

5. Sustainability and Transferability

Through adoption by its board of directors, Stebo ensures implementation via its own organization.

The acknowledgement by the regional development company POM Limburg (Regional Development Company) also adds considerably to the strategy's sustainability. POM Limburg participated in our focus group and training for administration staff and invited us to present InduCCI at the Creative Limburg Innovation Platform (CLIP). They gained a good view on the project, its ambitions and the key outcomes. This ensures their engagement in forwarding the policy recommendations into the SALK Turbo plan which has reached its implementation phase in 2021. The plan brings together Limburg stakeholders to develop actions on strategic programme lines (the CCI sector being one of these). These stakeholders can benefit from the paper as well as it guides the way to new cooperation networks and strategic projects.

The Policy Paper defines specific objectives for further promoting and developing the CCI sector in peripheral industrial regions. They can serve as a blueprint for other such regions and/or complement existing strategies at these locations.

When developing the recommendations it is important to take the region, its stakeholders, its needs and ongoing strategic processes as a starting point. It allows anybody to work on

what already works well to further shape what needs to be improved. As a result there is a set of feasible policy recommendations available along with a strong network of stakeholders to actually implement them.

6. Annexes

Regional Policy Paper in national language