

**Creative Hubs are third places designed to spread creativity on a local level.
Creative Valley is the hub of the city of Mons that mostly focuses on CCIs.**

The Creative Hubs were created following a call for projects launched by the Walloon Government as part of the "Creative Wallonia" programme in October 2014. The aim of the Walloon hubs is to encourage the transition from our traditional economy to a creative economy by bringing together creative minds, CCIs, public institutions, cities, innovative companies, universities, innovation centres, local development actors... and by implementing the notions of open innovation, trans-disciplinary hybridization, design thinking and collective intelligence in a local context.

Following the CCIs-focused event "Mons2015: European Capital of Culture", Creative Valley reinforced its partnership and applied to the Structural funds (ERDF). The main partners are: the city of Mons, the University of Mons, the Business and Innovation Centre "La Maison de l'Entreprise" and the co-working space Co-nnexion. Other partners including companies complete the Creative Valley ecosystem clearly focusing on CCIs, especially video gaming and audiovisual. The hub addresses all kinds of publics: students, entrepreneurs, companies, local actors, citizens... Creative Valley has launched several projects: a Fab Lab, Café Europa (European connected social place offering tools and services to understand the technological revolution), Creative Jam (artists' gathering during 1 weekend to end up with new projects ideas), and recently the CLICK living lab (user-oriented, open-innovation ecosystem around CCIs).

Resources needed

*Pilot phase 2014-2015: €235,000 - Walloon financing

*ERDF phase 2014-2020: €13,541,859 (1st call) + €795,790 (3rd call) - EU-Wallonia co-financing

Evidence of success

Creative Valley emerged during "Mons2015, European Capital of Culture" that was internationally recognized as a major and successful event. The CCIs, especially the digital arts, were clearly highlighted and most of the CCIs-actions conducted during Mons2015 are

being continued with Creative Valley.

In 3 years, the hub has already achieved to promote creativity in its local ecosystem. More than 30,000 people, starters or enterprises were sensitized to creativity through the hub's activities.

Difficulties encountered

*Risks regarding efforts dilution because Creative Valley addresses a large panel of target groups.

*Challenges in gathering public/private actors under the same project.

*Difficulties to include the area around the city of Mons with smaller cities and rural municipalities in the project.

Potential for learning or transfer

Creative Valley is a good illustration of a multilevel project: initiated by a local authority (city of Mons) in the context of a regional policy (Creative Wallonia) and co-funded by the EU (ERDF and European Capital of Culture). It could be interesting to watch the convergence and divergence effects produced by this reality and the implications in terms of governance. Regarding the CCIs, Creative Valley is a place as well as an association that structures the whole CCIs' ecosystem in the Mons area. The partnership of Creative Valley includes public administrations, the university, applied research centres, private companies, local development actors... all of them running the hub together. Such a model has a strong potential to develop the CCIs in the whole value chain: Creative Valley proposes simultaneously training, third places to meet and network, programmes to launch projects or develop ideas, advice to innovate or to access financing... More info:
<http://www.creativevalley.be>

Main institution

Creative Valley Hub

Location

Prov. Hainaut, Belgium (Belgique-België)

Start Date

January 2014

End Date

Ongoing