CYANOTYPES



IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

CREATIVE ORGANISATIONS & BUSINESSES

CYANOTYPES IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

INTRODUCTION: Different entry points into the same ecosystem

The CYANOTYPES Creative Agency Framework is designed to help people and organisations to address their skills needs, explore change, connect perspectives and develop their capacity to act. It does not prescribe one way of working. Different actors face different needs, questions, challenges and opportunities, and may therefore enter the CYANOTYPES ecosystem from different starting points.

To better address the variety of different up and re-skilling contexts and the diverse needs of the CCSI, CYANOTYPES provides six specific implementation pathways:

1. **Creative Professionals & Individuals**
2. **Creative Organisations & Businesses**
3. **Creative Sectors & Networks**
4. **Learning Organisations — Higher Education**
5. **Learning Organisations — Vocational Education (VET)**
6. **Policymakers**

The six pathways correspond to five CYANOTYPES perspectives: Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) are two distinct entry points within the single Learning Organisations perspective. The pathways therefore expand the five perspectives into six practical routes without introducing an additional perspective or changing the underlying framework.

These pathways are not six independent strategies, nor a fixed sequence; they are interconnected entry points that lead the different actors to the same, wider, ecosystem. Individuals may begin with their own **learning and development**; an organisation may start with workforce or **organisational change**; a learning organisation may focus on **changing their curriculum** or **revising teaching methods**; a sector network may focus on **collaboration and skills intelligence**; and a policymaker may begin with **the conditions that enable learning and innovation**. These starting points can connect with each other and will likely develop further over time.

The pathways translate the CYANOTYPES policy recommendations and the experience of the pilots into **possible routes for action**. They help users move from a real situation or question towards exploration, experimentation and learning. They can be adapted to different professional, organisational, regional and policy contexts rather than followed as fixed implementation plans.

A shared way of working

No matter what your context is, start with a real situation. Explore what is actually needed. Make competences, assumptions and existing strengths more visible. Choose an area for exploration or experimentation, develop or adapt a response, and then reflect on what has been learned, before deciding what should happen next.

This process also creates space to question the starting point. A challenge that appears to require new skills may instead reveal an organisational barrier, an existing but unrecognised competence, or a different way of understanding the situation. CYANOTYPES therefore encourages users not only to ask "What do we need to do?", but also "**Are we asking the right question?**" and "**What is the assumption here?**" This creates space to reconsider the problem, the approach and the conditions around it before deciding what needs to change.

CYANOTYPES is therefore **not a fixed solution, but a structured framework for reflection and informed experimentation**. Its pathways provide direction, while the context, experience and learning of the people involved determine what happens next.

Terminology: skills and competences

The pathways use the terms *skills* and *competences* in related but distinct ways.[1]

Skills are abilities to apply knowledge and know-how to carry out tasks, processes or activities and achieve results. They may be cognitive or practical and are generally described in relation to a particular task, activity or context.

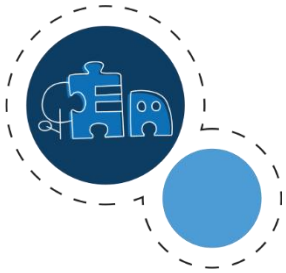
Competences refer to a broader combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to a context, including the ability to apply learning across different situations. Within CYANOTYPES, the term refers specifically to the 25 transversal competences defined in the Creative Agency Competence Framework.

[1] CYANOTYPES: Skills vs. Competence, https://cyanotypes.website/2024/07/30/skills-vs-competences/

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PATHWAY for Creative Organisations & Businesses



Purpose and orientation

This pathway is designed for creative organisations and businesses, including SMEs, micro-enterprises, cultural organisations, creative enterprises, studios, production companies, creative hubs and other organisations working across the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI).

Creative businesses operate in a context of rapid technological, economic and social change. Digitalisation, artificial intelligence, green transition, changing markets and new forms of production and collaboration are reshaping how creative work is organised and how value is created.

The CCSI is not one homogeneous business environment. It brings together sub-sectors and industries with distinct production processes, markets, technologies, professional roles, value chains and working conditions. The needs of a games studio may differ substantially from those of a fashion company, design practice, audiovisual producer, cultural organisation or creative technology business.

This diversity matters for competence development. Industry-specific knowledge remains essential, but organisations increasingly also need to work across professional and disciplinary boundaries. Technologies, business models and organisational challenges rarely remain within one discipline. Digital transformation, sustainability, artificial intelligence, new forms of collaboration and changing expectations from audiences and clients can connect questions that were previously treated separately.

CYANOTYPES offers a way of looking across these boundaries. It does not replace industry-specific expertise or propose one competence profile for all creative businesses. Instead, its transversal competence framework can help organisations connect perspectives that may otherwise remain separated: creative practice and business development, technology and human judgement, professional expertise and organisational learning, individual development and collective change.

This is particularly relevant in a CCSI, which, as estimated by the European Commission, employs around 8 million people across approximately 1.2 million firms, more than 99.9% of which are SMEs and micro-enterprises[2].

[2] Council of the European Union (2025), Council document 17023/25 ADD 1, Cultural and Creative Industries ecosystem.

For micro and solo creative enterprises in particular, conventional professional-development provision may assume time, budget and organisational training functions that are often not available, while learning needs to run alongside professional practice.

This creates a particular relationship between **learning, competitiveness and working conditions**. Learning cannot resolve wider structural conditions by itself. Creative businesses need to remain economically sustainable and responsive to changing markets. At the same time, people need realistic opportunities to develop their competences while working.

European policy work has highlighted atypical and project-based work, unpredictable incomes, weaker bargaining power and gaps in social protection in parts of the cultural and creative sectors. It has also stressed the importance of fair and adequate remuneration and decent working conditions[3].

For this reason, learning cannot be considered separately from the conditions in which creative work takes place. Sustainable organisational development requires attention not only to what people need to learn, but also to whether they have the time, resources, support and professional conditions needed to develop and apply their competences.

CYANOTYPES does not provide a business-development model or replace existing approaches to organisational strategy, workforce development, professional development or quality assurance. It offers a competence framework that can help businesses explore emerging competence needs, make existing competences more visible, connect learning with organisational development and consider where changes in practice may be needed.

The pathway can be used at different levels, from a particular project or team to organisational strategy, workforce development, partnerships with learning providers or wider ecosystem initiatives.

[3] European Parliament (2023), European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2023 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors (2023/2051(INL)).

1. Creative businesses at a strategic crossroads

Creative businesses are facing several transitions at the same time.

Technological change is altering production processes, distribution, communication and business models. Artificial intelligence is creating new possibilities while also raising questions about authorship, data, professional identity, intellectual property and the changing division of creative work.

Sustainability is changing production practices, resource use, supply chains and expectations from clients, audiences and funders.

At the same time, creative businesses operate within competitive and often fragmented markets. Many organisations combine commercial income with public funding, partnerships, project-based work or other revenue sources[4]. Economic pressures can make it difficult for micro-enterprises and organisations to invest in learning, especially when people are tied down to current projects.

The European Commission's Competitiveness Compass places competitiveness alongside innovation, investment, skills and quality jobs. The Union of Skills similarly presents education, training and lifelong learning as central to Europe's response to changing labour-market needs and to the development of a more competitive economy[5].

For large companies, investment in learning is often supported through dedicated training budgets, HR functions and structured professional-development programmes. For many small creative businesses, however, these assumptions do not hold. Time, financial resources and organisational capacity are limited, while learning needs to take place alongside ongoing projects and professional commitments. The challenge is therefore not simply whether people need to upskill, but **how competence development can be made possible within the realities of small-scale creative business.**

How can investment in people and competences become part of organisational adaptation rather than something separate from it?

[4] European Commission, Creative FLIP (2021), So You Need Money: A Guide to Financing Cultural and Creative Organisations, IDEA Consult et al., Brussels; Creative FLIP (2026), Strengthening Resilience in Europe's Cultural and Creative Sectors: Final Study.

[5] European Commission, (2025), *A Competitiveness Compass for the EU*, COM(2025) 30 final, Brussels, 29 January 2025; European Commission (2025), *The Union of Skills*, COM(2025) 90 final, Strasbourg, 5 March 2025.

The answer will not be the same across all creative industries. The competence needs of a games company may differ from those of a fashion business. A design studio may face different challenges from an audiovisual producer or a cultural organisation.

At the same time, the changes facing these businesses increasingly intersect. AI can affect design, games, fashion, film and cultural production. Sustainability can affect production, procurement and business models across industries. Collaboration and new forms of value creation can cross traditional professional boundaries.

CYANOTYPES can provide a transversal perspective across these different contexts, and it raises a second question: **Which competences connect the different challenges we are facing, and where do disciplinary or organisational boundaries prevent us from seeing these connections?**

2. What needs to change

If competence development is to become part of organisational adaptation, learning needs to connect more closely with organisational practice. For creative SMEs and micro-enterprises, it means connecting more closely with the work itself: through projects, collaboration, experimentation, peer exchange, mentoring and reflection on professional practice.

This does not mean that formal training is no longer relevant. Rather, organisations may need to consider a broader range of ways in which learning can happen, depending on their size, sector, resources and immediate challenges.

The question is therefore not simply how organisations can provide more training, but **how learning can become part of everyday organisational development and decision-making, without becoming an additional burden on already limited time and resources.**

Creative FLIP's work on finance and business sustainability similarly highlights the importance of organisational conditions, business models and access to appropriate support for creative enterprises. **Learning therefore needs to be considered alongside wider questions of organisational sustainability and value creation**.

Competitiveness in the CCSI is not only a question of adopting new technologies or increasing productivity. It also concerns how organisations create and contribute to value, develop new forms of value, collaborate across boundaries and respond to changing markets and societal expectations. This broader understanding of value is consistent with the work of several economists, including Mariana Mazzucato on collective value creation, as well as wider approaches that question narrow definitions of economic value and emphasise more sustainable, inclusive and shared forms of value creation[6].

For creative organisations, this raises a further question: **What kinds of competences enable people and organisations not only to adapt to economic change, but to participate in creating new forms of value?**

[6] CYANOTYPES, Crombie D. (2026) *Recontextualising Innovation*; Mazzucato, M. (2019), *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy*, Allen Lane.

3. The CYANOTYPES contribution

For creative businesses, the **CYANOTYPES Framework can provide a shared language for connecting organisational challenges with competence development.**

Its value is not in prescribing a standard competence profile or a single model of professional development. Rather, it can help organisations explore which competences are relevant to a particular situation, make existing competences more visible, and connect individual learning with team and organisational development.

This is particularly relevant to continuing professional development, as many creative businesses, as previously mentioned, find that learning cannot be neatly separated from professional practice.

The CYANOTYPES approach therefore suggests looking at four elements together: **how learning is provided, whether it is accessible within people's working realities, how learning can be recognised, and who or what can support its delivery.** These elements are more useful when connected than when treated as separate solutions.

This can help organisations move beyond the question of what training is available and consider how competence development can become part of organisational practice.

CYANOTYPES can support creative organisations and businesses to:

- identify competences already present in the organisation;
- identify competences relevant to emerging challenges;
- connect competence development with current projects and work practices;
- recognise learning that takes place through professional experience;
- work with learning providers, mentors, facilitators and other partners to strengthen learning opportunities;
- explore appropriate forms of documentation or recognition;
- create a shared language for conversations about future-oriented competence needs.

The Framework can therefore act as a **common reference point between organisational needs, professional practice and learning provision**, while leaving the specific format and delivery arrangements to the context.

4. Learning in practice

For many creative organisations, the most relevant learning opportunities are already close to the work. Projects, client assignments, collaboration, experimentation, mentoring, peer exchange and reflection can all create opportunities to develop competences. The challenge is to make this learning more visible and intentional without turning everyday creative work into a separate training programme.

Learning can take different forms depending on the organisation and the context. It may involve a short learning activity, a project-based intervention, peer learning, mentoring, experimentation with a new process or technology, or reflection on completed work. What matters is the connection between the learning and the professional reality in which it is applied.

This also raises the question of **how competences developed through work are recognised**. In the CCSI, professional experience, project work, self-directed practice and informal learning can contribute substantially to competence development, but these forms of learning are not always visible in conventional learning or qualification structures. Recognition of prior learning and experience can help make such competences more visible and, where appropriate, connect them to further learning or professional progression.

For organisations, this does not necessarily mean creating their own certification systems. It can mean documenting learning and experience more deliberately, using portfolios, project evidence, learning records or other appropriate forms of documentation, and working with learning providers or sector partners where formal recognition is relevant.

Micro-credentials may be one possible mechanism, but only where the learning is sufficiently structured, and the relevant quality, assessment and recognition arrangements are in place[7].

The question for creative organisations is therefore:

How can the competences developed through our work become more visible, and where appropriate, recognised?

[7] Council of the European Union (2022), *Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability*, 2022/C 243/02.

5. A practical implementation route

A creative business does not need to begin with a complete review of its workforce or learning provision. A focused organisational challenge can provide a practical starting point.

The following sequence is a possible blueprint and should be adapted to the organisation's size, sector, resources and decision-making context.

1. Start from a real organisational challenge.
Choose a current issue affecting the organisation, its work or its future development.

2. Identify what is changing.
Consider developments in technology, markets, sustainability, professional practice and organisational priorities.

3. Explore the relevant CYANOTYPES competences.
Use the Framework to identify competences that may help understand or respond to the challenge.

4. Look at existing learning and practice.
Identify where relevant competences are already being developed through projects, collaboration, mentoring, experimentation or formal learning.

5. Choose a focused development opportunity.
Select a manageable learning activity, workplace experiment or organisational change to explore.

6. Involve the relevant people and partners.
Include staff, practitioners, managers and, where useful, external learning providers, mentors, sector organisations or other partners.

7. Make the learning visible.
Capture what has been learned and which competences were involved. Where appropriate, consider suitable forms of recognition.

8. Reflect and decide what comes next.
Consider what changed, what was learned and whether the experience has implications for wider organisational practice.

6. Strategic directions

For creative organisations and businesses, the pathway points towards several areas for further exploration:

1. **Connect competence development with organisational strategy and adaptation.**
2. **Recognise learning that already takes place through professional practice and work.**
3. **Develop learning opportunities that fit the realities of creative SMEs and micro-enterprises.**
4. **Use the CYANOTYPES Framework to connect sector-specific expertise with transversal competence needs.**
5. **Strengthen the role of mentors, facilitators, learning providers and other intermediaries.**
6. **Make practice-based and other forms of learning more visible and, where appropriate, recognised.**
7. **Use organisational experimentation to explore how emerging competences can contribute to sustainable value creation and changing professional practice.**

These directions are not a prescribed organisational model. They provide areas for organisations to consider in relation to their own circumstances and priorities.

7. Examples from the CYANOTYPES Pilots

The CYANOTYPES pilots provide practical examples of how the Framework and competence development can connect with organisational, professional and sector realities. Their value is not that they provide models to reproduce, but that they show different ways of starting from a real professional or sectorial question and using competence-based exploration to understand and test possible responses.

More examples can be found on the CYANOTYPES Pilot showcase.

Fashion Innovation Center

Fashion Innovation Center developed the open Train-the-Trainer course "Sustainability and Digital Skills for Fashion Industry & Education", three modules covering EU policy tools, the Digital Product Passport, and future scenarios for fashion manufacturing in Europe, designed against the CYANOTYPES Framework using the Blueprinter and mapped to Triple Loop Learning, Boundary Spanning, Anticipatory Innovation, Data and Digital Literacy, Socio-Technical Systems and Ethical and Sustainable Thinking. The course is hosted on DigiFashHub as "Future of Fashion Industry in Europe" (3 modules, 9 lessons).

Screen Skills Committee Sweden (YNFT)

The Screen Skills Committee Sweden pilot **CYANOTYPES in Action** illustrates how competence development can be connected with changing sector needs and professional realities. It shows the role of sector organisations in translating between emerging competence needs, professional practice and learning provision.

THRYVES KICK

THRYVES KICK illustrates how competence development can be connected with digital, sustainability and organisational change. It provides an example of using experimentation and practice to explore emerging competence needs rather than treating them only as future training requirements.

Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart (WRS)

The Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart pilot *Empowering Facilitators* illustrates the role of intermediary organisations in connecting businesses, learning and regional development. It highlights how external facilitators and ecosystem partners can help organisations access learning and respond to emerging needs.

These examples show different entry points into the same broader question: **how can creative organisations identify emerging competence needs and create conditions in which people can develop and apply those competences through their work?**

8. Looking ahead

Creative organisations will continue to operate in conditions where technologies, markets, professional practices and expectations change. Their ability to respond will depend not only on access to new tools or information, but also on how people and organisations learn, collaborate, experiment and create value.

CYANOTYPES provides a transversal competence framework that can help organisations make emerging competence needs more visible and connect individual development with organisational learning and wider ecosystem relationships.

The longer-term opportunity is to make competence development a more connected part of organisational practice: **close to the work, responsive to change, supported by relevant partners and, where appropriate, visible and recognised.**

The starting point is not simply what training should we provide, but what is changing in our organisation—and what do we need to learn, explore or rethink in response?

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7. **CYANOTYPES**. *Skills vs. Competences*. https://cyanotypes.website/2024/07/30/skills-vs-competences/

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Lead author: Barbara Revelli (ELIA)
Contributors and reviewers: CYANOTYPES partners, Supervisory Board and external reviewers
Special thanks to the following contributors: John Butler (EQ-Arts), David Crombie (HKU – Utrecht University of the Arts), Gerin Trautenberger (CreativeFed), Susana Nogueira (EfVET), Christoph Weckerle (ELIA Board, ZHdK Zurich University of the Arts)
Project Management: Gitta Nyolczas (ELIA)
Design: Max Niederschick

Project Coordinator: HKU (University of the Arts Utrecht)
Partners: ALL DIGITAL • CIKE (Creative Industry Košice) • Creative FED (European Federation for Creative Economy) • ECHN (European Creative Hub Network) • EfVET (European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training) • ELIA (Globally connected European network for higher arts education) • EQ-Arts • Fashion Innovation Centre (FIC) • Lusófona University • Materahub • Mediarte • MyData Global • Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) • Saar University of Fine Arts (HBKS) • Screen Skills Committee Sweden (YNFT) • The Swedish Games Industry (SGI) • UAAV (University of Applied Arts Vienna) WIFI International (Austria's Economic Chamber (WKO)) • WRS (Economic Development Agency Region Stuttgart)
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Contact & further information: https://cyanotypes.website • info@cyanotypes.website

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