CYANOTYPES



IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS & INDIVIDUALS

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.

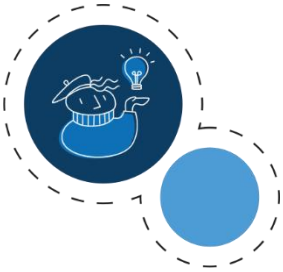
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[1] CYANOTYPES: Skills vs. Competence, https://cyanotypes.website/2024/07/30/skills-vs-competences/

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PATHWAY for Creative Professionals & Individuals



Purpose and orientation

This pathway is designed for individuals developing their professional lives across the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). It is relevant to freelancers, self-employed professionals, artists, designers, makers, producers, creative practitioners, early-career professionals and people moving between employment, projects, entrepreneurship, education and other forms of professional activity.

Creative careers are increasingly non-linear. People may move between projects, employers, professional roles, sectors, forms of employment and learning environments. Professional development therefore does not happen only through formal education or training. It also develops through professional practice, collaboration, peer learning, mentoring, experimentation, self-directed learning and transitions between different forms of work.

This creates an important challenge: competences developed through practice may be significant without always being visible, articulated or recognised. Individual professionals may know that they have changed or expanded their practice without having a clear language for describing what they have developed or where it may be relevant.

At the same time, creative professionals are navigating major changes in technology, artificial intelligence, sustainability, markets, professional identity and ways of creating value. Responding to these changes involves more than acquiring new technical skills. It also involves judgement, agency, reflection, collaboration and the ability to make informed choices in changing circumstances.

CYANOTYPES provides a framework for exploring these questions. It does not provide a standard professional profile or a checklist of competences that every creative professional should acquire. Instead, it can help individuals understand their own development, identify competences already present, explore emerging needs and decide where further learning or experimentation may be useful.

1. Creative careers at a point of transition

Creative professionals increasingly work across boundaries: between disciplines, sectors, organisations, technologies and forms of employment.

Digitalisation and artificial intelligence are changing how creative work is produced, distributed and valued. Sustainability is influencing professional choices and production processes. Markets and business models are changing, while collaboration increasingly takes place across sectors and geographical boundaries.

These changes can create new opportunities, but they can also make professional development more difficult to navigate. A person may recognise that something in their professional environment is changing without knowing whether the appropriate response is a new skill, a different way of working, a new relationship, a learning opportunity or a change in professional direction.

Creative careers also contain substantial learning that may remain invisible. A project can develop competences. A collaboration can change professional practice. Mentoring can strengthen judgement. Experimentation with a new technology can change how a person works. A period of self-directed development can generate knowledge that is not captured by a qualification.

The starting point is therefore not necessarily a course or a qualification. It is a real professional situation:

What is changing in my practice, what am I already learning through it, and what might I need to explore, develop or rethink next?

2. What needs to change

Professional development needs to fit the realities of creative careers.

For freelancers, self-employed professionals and people working project-to-project, conventional training provision may not always fit available time, income patterns, location or immediate professional needs. Learning opportunities therefore need to be sufficiently flexible to connect with different career stages and working situations.

This does not mean that formal learning becomes less important. Rather, it means recognising a wider learning ecology in which formal education and training can sit alongside professional practice, peer learning, mentoring, experimentation and self-directed development.

Individuals also need opportunities to understand and communicate what they are developing. A creative professional may have acquired substantial competence without having a formal credential that describes it. Making that learning visible can support career reflection, communication with clients or employers, transitions into new areas of work and decisions about further learning.

Recognition should not reduce creative careers to standardised checklists. Its purpose is to help people articulate what they can do, how they developed it, what evidence they can provide and where those competences may be relevant.

3. The CYANOTYPES contribution

For creative professionals and individual learners, the CYANOTYPES Framework can provide a language for reflecting on professional development and future capability.

It can help individuals:

- explore competences relevant to a current professional challenge or transition;
- identify competences already developed through professional experience;
- recognise connections between different areas of practice;
- articulate professional strengths and areas for further exploration;
- connect learning with real projects and professional situations;
- explore digital and AI developments while retaining creative agency and judgement;
- consider the economic, social, cultural and ecological value of their work;
- identify learning opportunities that fit their circumstances;
- document learning and professional experience; and
- consider whether formal recognition, validation or further learning may be useful.

The Framework can therefore support a shift from asking only:

“What course should I take?”

towards a broader question:

“What am I developing through my work, what is becoming important, and how can I make that learning visible?”

4. Learning through professional practice

For many creative professionals, the workplace, studio, project, community or professional network is already a learning environment.

Learning can happen through:

- undertaking a new project;
- working with people from another discipline;
- experimenting with a new technology;
- receiving mentoring or peer feedback;
- taking responsibility for a new role;
- working with a new client or audience;
- reflecting on completed work;
- participating in professional communities;
- undertaking formal education or training.

Not every experience automatically produces learning, and not every learning experience produces evidence that others can easily interpret. Reflection helps connect the three: what happened, what changed in the individual's understanding or practice, and what can demonstrate that development.

The challenge is to make this learning intentional and visible without turning professional practice into a training exercise. A simple learning reflection can ask:

What did I encounter? What did I have to learn, change or decide? Which competences were involved? What evidence shows how my practice developed? What might I explore next?

Recognition can then become part of the process. Where appropriate, professional experience and practice-based learning can be documented and connected to existing validation, qualification or recognition arrangements.

Micro-credentials may be useful where learning is sufficiently structured, learning outcomes are clearly defined and appropriate assessment and quality arrangements are in place. They are one possible mechanism for making learning visible, not a universal solution[2].

[2] 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. Digital and AI transformation: agency, rights and collective power

Digitalisation and artificial intelligence are changing how creative work is produced, distributed, commissioned, valued and recognised. For individual creatives and small organisations, these changes may create opportunities to experiment, reduce costs, reach audiences, and develop new forms of practice. They may also create significant risks.

Creative professionals may face:

- the use of their work, image, voice, style or personal data in AI training or synthetic content without meaningful consent;
- loss of control over authorship, attribution, professional identity and the conditions under which their work is reused;
- pressure from clients, employers or platforms to adopt AI without adequate time, information, negotiation or compensation;
- substitution or devaluation of creative labour, particularly where AI-generated outputs are treated as equivalent to professional work;
- increased legal and administrative responsibilities concerning copyright, data protection, disclosure and intellectual property;
- reduced visibility and bargaining power in markets shaped by platform algorithms and concentrated technology providers; and
- difficulty accessing independent advice, affordable tools, legal support and collective representation.

These risks are particularly significant for freelancers, self-employed professionals, micro-enterprises and early-career creatives. They may lack the legal, financial and technical resources available to larger organisations, while having limited ability to negotiate contracts or refuse harmful uses of their work. The European Parliament has identified risks linked to job displacement, loss of control, authorship, ownership, fair remuneration, deepfakes without

consent and deteriorating working conditions for artists and cultural and creative-sector professionals[3].

A human-centred approach to AI therefore requires more than digital literacy or individual experimentation. It requires the ability to understand the implications of a technology, ask who benefits, identify who bears the risks, negotiate conditions of use and act collectively where individual action is insufficient.

For individuals and small organisations, relevant questions include:

- What does this technology change in my practice, role or livelihood?
- What data, works, images, voice, likeness or professional knowledge are being used?
- Has meaningful consent been obtained, and can that consent be withdrawn?
- Who owns or controls the resulting outputs and data?
- What evidence exists concerning the source and training data of the system?
- How are authorship, attribution and remuneration addressed?
- What happens if an AI-generated output imitates, replaces or undermines my work?
- What contractual protections do I need before agreeing to use or provide AI-generated material?
- Which decisions should remain human-led?
- When is the most responsible choice not to use a particular system?
- Who can provide independent advice or collective support?

CYANOTYPES can help individuals and organisations develop the knowledge, judgement and confidence to ask these questions. It can also help make visible the competences involved in responsible AI use, including critical evaluation, ethical reasoning, communication, negotiation, risk awareness, collaboration and the ability to make informed choices.

However, the responsibility for ethical AI should not be placed on individual creatives alone. The European Union should ensure that creative professionals and small organisations have access to ethical infrastructure, including:

- clear and enforceable rules on consent, copyright, attribution, data use and remuneration;
- transparent and publicly accessible information about the data used to train and operate AI systems;
- practical mechanisms to reserve rights and opt out of training uses where appropriate;
- accessible procedures for complaints, redress and enforcement;
- model contractual provisions and guidance for freelancers and micro-enterprises;

[3] 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))

- affordable legal, technical and professional advice;
- support for collective licensing, collective bargaining and sectoral representation;
- independent testing and auditing of AI systems for bias, discrimination and cultural diversity;
- public-interest and European alternatives to infrastructure controlled by a small number of global technology companies; and
- funding for creative professionals and SMEs to experiment with AI on fair, sustainable and human-led terms.

The European Parliament has called for transparency and accountability of AI systems, safeguards against bias and discrimination, meaningful consultation with the cultural and creative sectors, and fair, appropriate and proportionate remuneration for authors and performers. The European Commission's Culture Compass also identifies copyright, unauthorised use of protected content, job displacement, fair remuneration, access to data and dependence on non-European technology as central challenges for culture and creativity in the context of AI[4].

Individual creatives should therefore not be addressed only as users who need to become "AI-ready". They should also be recognised as rights holders, knowledge producers, workers and participants in shaping the technological systems that affect their livelihoods.

The strategic question is not simply:

How can creatives adapt to AI?

It is also:

What rules, infrastructures and forms of collective power are needed so that AI develops with creatives rather than at their expense?

[4] Culture Compass https://culture.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-11/Communication%20-%20Culture%20Compass%20with%20cover_0.pdf

6. Value and professional positioning

Creative professionals often need to explain the value of their work to different audiences: clients, employers, funders, collaborators, communities and public institutions.

Value is not necessarily limited to immediate economic return. Creative work can also contribute cultural, social, public or ecological value. Developing the ability to articulate these different forms of value can support professional positioning, communication, negotiation and collaboration.

In practice, this may involve explaining not only what was produced, but also which problem the work addressed, who benefited, what changed, which knowledge or relationships were developed and what forms of value were created.

This does not require individuals to adopt one definition of value. It invites them to examine what their work contributes and how that contribution can be made visible to different audiences.

7. A practical implementation route

An individual does not need to begin with a complete competence profile. One current professional situation can provide a useful starting point.

The following sequence is a possible blueprint and should be adapted to the individual and context.

1. Start from a real situation.
2. Choose a current project, transition, opportunity, difficulty or change in professional practice.
3. Explore what is changing.
   Consider developments in technology, sustainability, markets, collaboration, professional identity or working methods.
4. Explore relevant CYANOTYPES competences.
   Use the Framework to identify competences that may help make sense of the situation.
5. Look at what is already present.
   Identify competences developed through previous projects, education, collaboration, experimentation, mentoring or self-directed learning.
6. Test your interpretation with others.
   Where useful, discuss your reflections with a peer, mentor, colleague, professional network, educator or sector intermediary. Other perspectives can help identify strengths or possibilities that are difficult to see alone.
7. Choose one area for development or exploration.
   This might involve learning, experimentation, peer exchange, mentoring or a change in professional practice.
8. Make the learning visible.
   Capture evidence through reflection, a portfolio, project documentation, learning record or another appropriate format.
9. Consider recognition.
   Where relevant, explore whether the learning can connect to an existing validation, qualification, micro-credential or other recognition mechanism.
10. Reflect and decide what comes next.
    Consider what changed, what was learned and whether this has implications for future professional practice.

8. Strategic directions

For creative professionals and individual learners, the CYANOTYPES approach can be explored through five connected directions:

1. Build learning around real professional situations

Start from current projects, transitions, opportunities, difficulties or changes in practice. Connect professional development to situations that matter to the individual rather than treating learning as separate from professional life.

2. Make practice-based learning visible

Identify and document competences developed through work, collaboration, experimentation, mentoring, peer exchange and self-directed learning. Use reflection and evidence to articulate what has been learned without reducing creative practice to a standardised checklist.

3. Build collective and human-centred digital and AI capability

Develop the knowledge and confidence to experiment with AI, evaluate its risks, negotiate fair conditions and decide when technologies should—or should not—be used. Strengthen the voice and bargaining power of individual creatives and SMEs, and support their demand for transparent, rights-respecting and publicly accountable AI infrastructure.

4. Strengthen the ability to articulate value

Develop the ability to communicate the economic, cultural, social and ecological dimensions of creative work to different audiences, including clients, employers, funders, collaborators and communities.

5. Build flexible lifelong-learning pathways

Connect formal education and training with professional practice, peer learning, mentoring, experimentation and self-directed development. Support transitions across changing roles, sectors, forms of employment and stages of a non-linear career.

These directions are not a personal development checklist. They provide areas for exploration in relation to an individual's professional circumstances.

9. Examples from the CYANOTYPES pilots

The CYANOTYPES pilots provide different examples of how individual competence development can relate to professional practice, career transitions, recognition, and emerging technologies. They are not models that individuals are expected to reproduce.

Lusófona — Professional Open-ended Narratives

Illustrates how professional experience and individual learning can be made more visible through narrative approaches.

Nimeto — Embedded Learning for Social Design

Illustrates how learning can be embedded in professional and project-based practice and connected with recognition.

YNFT — Cross-Border Skills Visibility

Shows how competence visibility can support professional mobility and make skills more legible across contexts.

THRYVES — KICK

Illustrates learning through experimentation around digital, sustainability and organisational change.

Angewandte — Microcredentials

Provides an example of connecting shorter learning experiences with more formal recognition structures.

Hogeschool Utrecht (HU) — Finding and Taking Chances

Illustrates the relationship between professional development, opportunity recognition and non-linear creative careers.

Together, these examples show that individual development can be supported through different combinations of practice, reflection, learning, visibility and recognition.

10. Looking ahead

Creative professionals will continue to work in environments where technologies, markets, professional roles, and expectations are constantly changing. For the CCSI, this is not a new development: the sector has been fragmented and continually evolving for decades, if not always. For other sectors and industries, however, this level of change is more recent—and it can therefore **give creative professionals a competitive advantage**.

At the same time, the future of creative work should not be understood simply as an adjustment individuals must make to technologies developed elsewhere. Creative professionals and small organisations should have a voice in determining how these technologies are designed, governed, and used. This includes the right to demand transparency, consent, attribution, fair remuneration, meaningful human involvement, and accessible mechanisms for redress.

EU action should therefore support not only individual upskilling, but also the ethical infrastructure and collective capacity that enable creatives to shape technological change. A skills strategy that asks people to adapt without strengthening their rights and bargaining power risks preparing them for a system over which they have little influence.

Within this broader context, an individual pathway should not be understood as a private adaptation exercise. It should support creative professionals in noticing and interpreting change, reflecting on their practice, developing relevant competences, and identifying how they might contribute to shaping the conditions in which they work.

A resilient approach to professional learning does not require individuals to predict every future skill requirement. Instead, it should provide opportunities to understand what is changing, recognise what they are already learning through practice, and explore what they may need or want to develop next. This is consistent with the CYANOTYPES approach, which presents competences as flexible and context-dependent, and supports individuals in creating adaptive learning paths suited to their professional realities.

CYANOTYPES can provide a language for this process. Its long-term value lies in helping to make professional learning more visible, flexible, and connected to the realities of creative careers. It can help individuals move beyond a narrow focus on acquiring predefined skills and instead consider how they act, decide, collaborate, create, and learn in complex environments.

For an individual, the process may begin with a small but meaningful question:

What is changing in my practice, what am I already learning through it, and what would I like to explore next?

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1. **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.*
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4. **CYANOTYPES**. *Skills vs. Competences.* https://cyanotypes.website/2024/07/30/skills-vs-competences/

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