



Prototyping Innovation Policies with(in) cities

Innovation Area:

Cross-innovation with(in) Performing Arts

Stockholm, Sweden



How does “prototyping...” work?

This City Case Description is the outcome of a policy prototyping exercise within a city ecosystem. Once the ekip research team has explored a policy area and its connection to cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and innovation, we ask: what would this mean in a local city context?

Together with local stakeholders, we test how a draft policy recommendation might stimulate innovation. Using Portfolio Sensemaking, stakeholders simulate an innovation portfolio, analyse the strengths and gaps of the local support system, and identify what resources are needed to realise the portfolio.

Stockholm & Cross-Innovation WITH PERFORMING ARTS

Stockholm is an innovation leader with cutting-edge technology companies, world-class academic institutions as well as a vibrant performing arts scene. Yet these actors rarely meet in sustained, structured ways that enable genuine cross-innovation.

Budget cuts in culture are affecting not only cultural organisations but also the specialised tech companies that serve performing arts. In insecure times, everyone plays it safe. What about sharing ideas, knowledge, resources - and risks together instead? How can an Innovation Hub for the Performing Arts support cross-innovation and development across Sweden?



“The Canterville Ghost” by Riksteatern Crea. Photo: Søren Vilks

AN INNOVATION HUB FOR PERFORMING ARTS?

What role can an Innovation Hub play in a context where:

- Cultural professionals need time, space and expertise for R&D.
- Tech companies are shifting from products to user-focused innovation.
- Cultural institutions and artists seek new and sustainable income streams.
- Audiences demand more accessible, immersive and participatory experiences?
- Performing arts seeks a position as an innovation space in a broader ecosystem.

How do we move from bilateral project collaborations to a sustainable ecosystem for cross-innovation with(in) performing arts?



Portfolio sensemaking

A HUB THAT CONNECTS EXISTING RESOURCES & EXPERTISE

Riksteatern – a Swedish civic movement with 40,000 members and one of Europe's largest performing arts producers and touring institutions – hosted the workshop. The initiative to explore what an Innovation Hub for the performing arts could be comes from them.

After analyzing the context of Stockholm (and other Swedish regions) and sharing needs of both performing arts professionals, companies, and academic institutions, participants worked in four teams that converged on similar conclusions. The team emphasized that an Innovation Hub is not about building new institutions or agencies, but about connecting existing resources in new ways.

The Innovation Hub idea responds to a strong need for cross-disciplinary collaboration, exploration and innovation with the performing arts. The cross-sectoral work in the hub will challenge and expand the performing arts sector and build innovation capacity and skills.

- “
- *We need a patchwork of what we already have. Let's stitch it together, describe the potential, and start with tests.*
- ”



➤ The Innovation Hub Portfolio

Main idea/ Scope:

The purpose of the Hub is to enable practical cross-innovation emerging from the encounter between culture, research, academia, entrepreneurs, companies, and the public sector.

The Hub increase collaboration and makes it easier for different actors to meet, test ideas, develop shared methods and start innovation journeys together.

It enables space and time for cross-disciplinary work where people with different needs group

together for certain periods to find new ways, rewarded by input from various sciences and expertise areas. It also provides an early stage testbed, paving way for new projects.

The hub connects labs, other innovation hubs, researchers, cultural organisations, entrepreneurs, companies, public institutions and audiences/end-users.

Those who involve themselves in the hub seek cross-disciplinary exploration, are solution- and task-oriented and eager to move into action and testing.

What the Hub enables

- **Networks & Connections:** Creating space where relationships can grow organically across sectors.
- **Experimental Joint Space:** Physical and digital environments for testing and prototyping.
- **Methods & Shared Terminology:** Developing common language and processes that work across art, technology, and business.
- **Open Knowledge Exchange:** Breaking down silos and sharing knowledge in a structured way.
- **Connected Testbeds & Labs:** An ecosystem of existing facilities made accessible through the hub.
- **Residency Formats:** Providing time and space for deeper, sustained collaboration.
- **'Innovation by Production':** Where solutions and inventions coming out from the production process, for example within the repertoire of a performing arts institution, are captured and nurtured to scale innovation.
- **Prototyping Funding:** Support for early-stage experimentation.
- **Continuation Pathways:** Set-up for projects to scale and potentially become viable businesses.

How the Hub operates

The hub works with multiple entry points:

- Artistic ideas and visions as well as performing arts challenges and cases.
- External challenges where performing arts could play a role.
- Playful exploration of new technology boundaries (offering valuable skills development in win-win collaborations).
- Cross-sector actors with challenges and possibilities seeking collaboration.

The hub's working methods are designed around experimentation and iteration, with clear frameworks aligned with the production process that enhance a qualitative participation for all involved, from freelancers to large institutions and companies.

Task forces are created based on specific challenges, bringing together the right mix of competences.



Key aspects of the Portfolio

The hub encompasses multiple and interconnected areas:

Legal & Rights: IP frameworks, remuneration models, shared intellectual property.

Revenue Models: Distribution and scaling models for performing arts innovation.

Tech Experimentation: MR/AR/VR, spatial sound and visuals.

Immersive Experiences: New forms of audience engagement.

Participation & Audience Innovation: Democratizing access and interaction.

Method Development: Creating cross-sector innovation processes.

Access to infrastructure: Access models for experimentation and testing.

'Innovation by Production': Capturing learnings from artistic production and scale.

Stage Innovation: Materials, lighting, sound, scenography, digital twins.

Multimodality: Language, accessibility, global reach.

Sensory Transfer: Emotion and experience design.

Sustainable Materials: Database of reusable stage materials (LFM30 model).

Hub Development: Access models for diverse actors, from institutions to freelancers.

What happens if we do nothing?

Silos will be maintained and only bilateral collaborations on small challenges will remain.

We will have several solutions from cultural productions that remain inventions, not scaled for innovation.

Companies will continue to innovate, but without cultural input.

Smaller actors have no access to innovation hubs that enables them to participate in advanced innovation work.



'Innovation by Production' – a concept developed by ekip

Interesting solutions and inventions are often the fruit of artistic processes and cultural production. Yet, since the focus is on the presentation of the work, these solutions and inventions serve only this need and are not nurtured to be scaled into innovations.

ekip recommends the combination of cultural support (rooted in cultural policy) with innovation support (rooted in innovation policy) for those productions where there is potential and interest for scaling innovation so called 'Innovation by Production'. A win-win.

Who was there?

A BROAD MIX OF STAKEHOLDERS CO-CREATED THIS CASE

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Riksteatern, Riksteatern Crea,
Malmö Opera



COMPANIES

Sony, Karnell, BIG Image,
IDEA consult

Performing Arts

Robin Jonsson, Peder Bjurman, Nea Landin,
Annie Tadne, Lisa Färnström, Tove Berglund,
Mattias Lindström, Charlie Åström



ACADEMIA

Lund University,
Royal Institute of Technology
(KTH Lab)



LOCAL AUTHORITIES

City of Stockholm,
Region Skåne



OTHERS

Harald Hartung
Future by Lund Innovation



Analysis

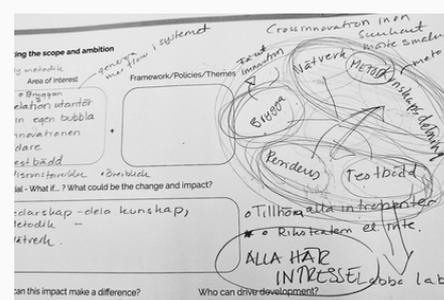
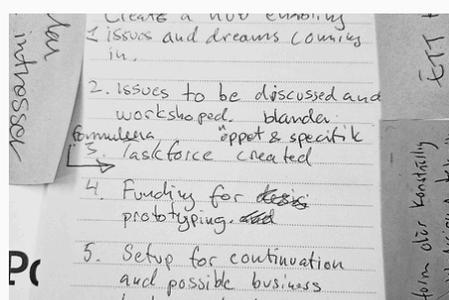
THE INNOVATION SUPPORT SYSTEM: A FRAGMENTED LANDSCAPE

What exists:

- Excellent artistic and academic infrastructure.
- Tech companies with advanced capabilities.
- EU funding opportunities (Horizon, Creative Europe)
- Cultural funding connected to research and "excellence".
- Individual networks and relationships
- Existing innovation support uses TRL (Technology Readiness Level) scales focused on product development, not on purpose-driven innovation that combines performance with audience interaction
- No support for systemic innovation or new types of measurement that reflect CCI values.
- Cross-sector labs don't exist at scale.
- Different organizational logics (cultural institutions vs. companies) create barriers.

What's missing:

- Performing arts and cultural institutions are not recognized or equipped to be part of the innovation infrastructure.



Conclusions

& RECOMMENDATIONS

1. System Innovation, Not Isolated Projects

The hub must connect diverse actors, resources and competences in an adaptive, decentralized model. This is about:

- Creating a "mini-innovation ecosystem" with complementary expertise.
- Building bridges to existing support systems rather than duplicating them.
- Enabling flexible access models for actors of all sizes.
- Supporting both focused exploration and scaling mechanisms.

Recommendation: Establish the hub as a coordination function that stitches together existing resources through clear partnership agreements and provides early stage testbed opportunities.



The transformation needed is towards an integrated ecosystem where performing arts is recognized as a core driver of innovation—for its own development and for society at large.



Ami Malmros, Riksteatern



2. Balancing Cultural Processes & Production and Innovation Logic

A critical challenge is managing different perspectives simultaneously: technical opportunities, collaboration needs, logistics, resources, financing, IP, user needs, and artistic integrity.

Key tension: Cultural professionals often focus inward on their own production and can be resistant to change, while companies need fast value creation.

The hub must:

- Ensure that artists/cultural organisations are not just content providers but have a share in results and revenues.
- Balance cultural production needs with innovation needs and timeframes.
- Clarify purpose (e.g., being transparent about "dual use" applications).

Recommendation: Develop shared frameworks and principles that respect cultural processes & production while enabling commercial viability. Create explicit agreements about IP, benefit-sharing, and decision-making in multi-stakeholder environments.

3. Making Support Systems Accessible

Current innovation funding is designed for tech product development, not for the purpose-driven, audience-focused innovation characteristic of performing arts.

Gaps identified:

- Cultural funding supports artistic excellence, social impact etc – but not innovation.
- Missing: support for building the connective tissue and lab support between sectors and expertise.
- No recognition of performing arts infrastructure as innovation infrastructure.

Recommendation: Creative sectors to be included in regional Smart Specialisation to unlock structural funds, create accessible "bridge funding" for early-stage cross-sector experimentation, develop innovation support adapted to CCI logics that measures impact beyond TRL scales and introduce performing arts venues, festivals, and institutions as potential innovation infrastructure.

4. From Talking to Doing

Participants emphasized action over endless planning: "Start small and aim for bigger."

Immediate next steps identified:

- Map and visualize existing success cases and willing actors.
- Organize follow-up meeting to explore concrete cases, tech, and ideas.
- Agree on outline for terms and core principles.
- Recruit any missing key actors.
- Secure coordination resources for the first 6-12 months.
- Launch pilot tests that demonstrate value.

Conclusion: Begin with a "Coalition of the Willing" pilot phase (6-12 months) focusing on 2-3 concrete test cases that demonstrate the hub's value across tech, artistic, and audience dimensions.





Our methods

THE INNOVATION PORTFOLIO POLICY CANVAS

The Prototyping Workshop Methodology and the Innovation Portfolio Policy Canvas guide local stakeholders to analyse their local ecosystem, make an inventory of actors and resources, identify and create a potential innovation portfolio and analyse their local innovation support system.

THE OPSI MODEL

The OPSI-model (Open Public Sector Innovation OECD) is adapted to analyze the innovation character of the policy area. Participants explore whether the policy involves new legislative measures or is more exploratory in nature, allowing for a deeper understanding of how the policy might influence the local ecosystem

THE LIEPT MODEL

The Lund Innovation Ecosystem Portfolio Tracking (LIEPT) model is a tool that provides a framework for tracking changes in innovation portfolios in ecosystems where impact and growth happen not in one organisation but in many. This relies on collaborative efforts by many stakeholders.

What is ekip

The ekip partnership funded by the European Commission consists of 5 universities, 4 consultancies, 4 creative and cultural organisations and 4 cities. Together we develop innovation policies for the cultural and creative industries in Europe. We do that in various ways: through research, consultations and interaction with people in the sector at policy labs and focus groups and assessments in city ecosystems.

Want to know more? Want to do it in your city?

Would you like to explore the topic of Performing Arts further? Visit the [Cross-Innovation with Performing Arts](#) on ekip website, where you'll find relevant policy posters, presentations, videos, and articles.

You can even host your own session in your city! It's an empowering and insightful way to bring together local stakeholders across sectors and disciplines for a focused discussion on a topic of shared importance. The ekip method and approach are open for anyone to use including a Facilitator's Guide and templates available in the ekip Knowledge Bank under [Tools and Methods](#).

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Disclaimer:

Each City Case Description reflects the views of workshop participants. It is a perspective from one city context, intended to inspire and ignite action



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