

Prototyping Innovation Policies with(in) cities

Innovation Area:

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CCIS

Prague, Czech Republic



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.

Prague Context & Area of Focus

Prague has no shortage of one-off cultural venues, mostly concentrated in the centre and Old Town. What it lacks is coordination: the city looks at its property but cannot reach information about what its CCIS actors actually need, and long-term spatial planning is disconnected from the short-term needs of those actors. No one currently looks after the relationships between players, internal competition leads actors to guard ideas rather than share them, and Prague has no dedicated CCIS financing or agreed framework for funding infrastructure. Peripheral districts lack cultural infrastructure altogether and risk becoming a “social desert,” while culture remains a “black box” in negotiations with developers.



AREA OF FOCUS

Innovating the relationships and connections between Prague's CCIS actors and treating relationships, not just buildings, as infrastructure.

The vehicle is a coordinating working group with a “key account” function that maps, connects, and informs the players, supported by a written relationship-management strategy. The focus is the creative industry at the intersection of culture and business (B2B — incubation, studios, offices) rather than more one-off venues, and the use of infrastructure as a policy tool to bring culture and activity to new, peripheral districts in cooperation with developers.



Portfolio sensemaking

INNOVATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND ACTORS

Portfolio reframes infrastructure for Prague's cultural and creative industries beyond buildings to encompass the relationships between actors, data and information, financing instruments, management companies, legal conditions, and the people and platforms that connect the sector: buildings are the base, but the relationships between actors are themselves infrastructure.

Rather than building another one-off venue, the chosen angle is relational: innovating the connections that make it possible to deliver CCIS infrastructure across the city.

The vehicle is a coordinating working group with a "key account" function: an agent who maps the ecosystem, pulls actors together, collects information, and keeps everyone informed of what is coming, supported by a written relationship-management strategy.

The focus falls on the creative industry at the intersection of culture and business (a B2B level of incubation, studios, and offices rather than audience-facing venues) and on using infrastructure as a policy tool to bring culture and activity to new, underdeveloped peripheral districts in cooperation with developers, connecting long-term spatial planning with the short-term needs of actors and embedding CCIS within the city's wider strategic and spatial planning.



► Change Indicators

- A functioning coordinating working group and key-account function for CCIS relationships.
- A written relationship-management strategy and a completed mapping of actors, relationships, and needs.
- Empty buildings reduced; municipal (and state) property put to use.
- Talent and residents retained, and new talent attracted.
- Creative firms with good opportunities; presence of global firms and a major creative studio.
- An established CCIS investment fund combining city and private money.



Who was there?

A BROAD MIX OF STAKEHOLDERS CO-CREATED THIS CASE

CCI ORGANISATIONS

Creative Prague (Kreativní Praha)



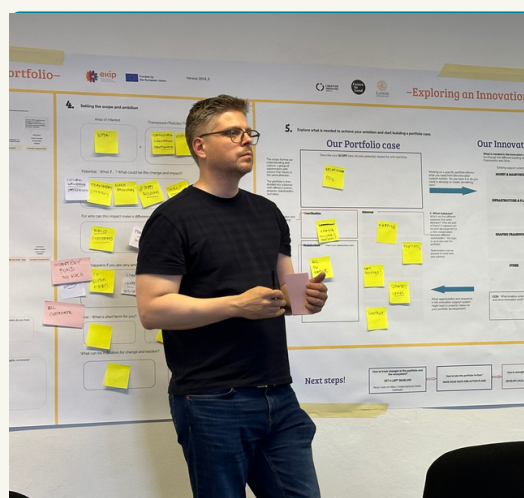
BUSINESSES

Trade Center Praha a.s.



LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Prague City Hall, Department of Strategic Support, Deputy Mayor of Prague, 6 Director of the Department of Culture and Tourism, Office for Spatial Planning and Strategic Development



Analysis

THE LOCAL INNOVATION SUPPORT SYSTEM

Existing Support Systems:

Prague has a dense institutional base: the City Council and Councillors for Culture, Property, and Finance; the Departments of Culture, Property, and Project Management; Creative Prague as the city's CCIS development body; IPR (the Prague Institute of Planning and Development); and the Prague Innovation Institute. Beyond the city sit universities, secondary schools, and Campus Dejvice as a CCIS-linked technical hub; trade and business associations and larger NGOs; national actors (CzechInvest / CzechTrade, state-property and railway administrators, the Ministry of Culture's analytical unit); and developers as potential co-funders. The City of Prague Strategy and networks such as Creative Czechia provide frameworks and mentoring. There is no shortage of one-off cultural venues.



Areas to be Developed:

The core gap is relational, not physical: no one currently looks after the relationships between players — there is no key-account function or coordinating group — and long-term spatial planning is disconnected from the short-term needs of actors. The city sees its property but cannot reach information on what actors need. Unnecessary internal competition leads actors to guard ideas rather than share them. There is no operationally neutral, innovation-oriented B2B space (as distinct from audience-facing venues), and cultural infrastructure is centralised, leaving peripheral districts without it.

Prague has no dedicated CCIS financing — some culture, some innovation — and no agreement on a framework for financing infrastructure. Culture remains a "black box" in negotiations with developers: the city does not yet know what to ask for when culture is on the table.



The institutions, property, and funding sources largely exist but are uncoordinated and competing. The system needs relationships treated as infrastructure — a coordinating working group and key-account function inserted into existing structures, a written relationship-management strategy, a dedicated financing framework and investment fund (city plus private money), and a clear agenda toward developers — rather than another building.



Conclusions

& RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Prague's situation is distinctive among the assessed cities: the problem is not a shortage of buildings, but a shortage of coordination.

Cultural infrastructure is treated narrowly as "we need a building," when the binding constraint is relational. The city can see its property but cannot reach reliable information about what its CCIS actors actually need, long-term spatial planning runs on a separate track from the short-term needs of those actors, and no one holds the relationships between players together. Internal competition leads actors to guard ideas rather than share them, there is no dedicated financing framework for CCIS infrastructure, and culture remains a "black box" in negotiations with the developers who are building the city's new districts.

The consequences of inaction are cumulative rather than dramatic: spaces for incubation, education, and meeting stay inaccessible; community fails to form and activity drifts online; talent leaves first, residents follow; and the periphery hardens into a "social desert." The city may not visibly degrade — but nothing develops, and the potential is wasted.

The opportunity is that almost everything needed already exists. The institutions, the property, the funding sources, and the strategy are in place; what is absent is the connective tissue between them. Treating relationships as infrastructure is a low-cost, high-leverage move that reframes a well-resourced but fragmented ecosystem into a synergistic one.

Recommendations

1. Map the ecosystem — establish what is happening where, and in what formats relationships occur (personal, institutional, defined by law, or through meetings).
2. Establish a key-account function — an agent who looks after the players, pulls actors together, connects them, and keeps everyone informed of what is coming.
3. Convene a coordinating working group (modelled on Brno) across the Departments of Project Management, Culture, and Property, and write a relationship-management strategy — useful as a guide even if not formally approved.
4. Connect spatial planning with actors' needs — link long-term planning (via IPR and the City Strategy) to the immediate needs of actors, such as rentals, and begin activating empty municipal and state property for incubation, education, and meeting.
5. Clarify the developer agenda — turn the "black box" into a clear, shared set of expectations about what the city wants from culture in new districts, and pilot cooperation on the periphery.
6. Build the financing framework — agree a framework for financing CCIS infrastructure and establish an investment fund combining city and private money, while translating the value a creative brings into property-management policy (offset against rent).





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 further? 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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Košice, 2026**

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



**Funded by
the European Union**