Prototyping Innovation Policies with(in) cities

Innovation Areas:

Cultural Heritage Buildings for CCIS

Innovative Procurement for CCIS

Braga, Portugal



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.

Braga Context & Area of Focus

Braga's industrial heritage includes still-operating traditional factories, such as a pencil manufacturer and a historic bell factory. Their buildings, machinery and craft know-how are at risk of disappearing along with their often elderly workers.

The local CCIS are mostly small and solo actors who find public calls cryptic, bureaucratic and dependent on intermediaries, and there is strong mistrust between funding layers.

Funding exists, but strict rules and the way calls are designed limit both the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and CCIS access to public money.



Without action, the region risks derelict industrial sites, lost savoir-faire, and public funding that keeps going to the same type of companies.

AREA OF FOCUS

Group 1 (Cultural Heritage Buildings for CCIS) proposes "heritage in use": an owner-led consortium of around seven stakeholders that turns a working factory into a base for new media art, AI and UX innovation while passing knowledge from older workers to younger generations. The portfolio links heritage with health and social policy by engaging elderly people, mental health groups and youth, and it aims to scale the model to other industries.

Group 2 (Innovative Procurement for CCIS) shifts the focus from tenders to public calls, proposing a bottom-up, survey-based pilot call coordinated by the ICC Cluster with CCDR-N. The pilot would make CCIS mandatory consortium partners in calls on health, urbanism and other sectors, use accessible language, and value social as well as economic impact.

Portfolio sensemaking

PORTFOLIO 1: HERITAGE IN USE

An owner-led cooperative of around seven stakeholders turns a working industrial heritage factory into a base for new media art, AI and UX innovation. It preserves the building, machinery and workers' savoir-faire while involving elderly people, mental health groups and youth. The aim is to keep a traditional business viable through innovation and to create a model that can be transferred to other industries.

PORTFOLIO 2: A CALL TO CHANGE THE CCIS PROCUREMENT ECOSYSTEM

A pilot public call, designed from a bottom-up survey of artists and SMEs and coordinated by the ICC Cluster with CCDR-N, makes CCIS mandatory consortium partners in calls on health, urbanism and other sectors. The call uses accessible language, a broader pool of evaluators, and criteria that recognise social as well as economic value. The data from the pilot provides the basis for replicating the model in other calls.

Scope of the Innovation Portfolio

PORTFOLIO 1: HERITAGE IN USE

The portfolio works at site level, centred on a single working industrial heritage factory. CCIS run across it as a horizontal theme connecting heritage, mental health, elderly people and youth.



Time perspective

Short term: form the consortium, document the factory's know-how and start first activities with the target groups.

Medium term: set up workshops and meeting places, produce first creative and digital outputs, and introduce a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Long term: scale the model to other industries and industrial heritage sites.

Key dimensions

Heritage and cultural: the factory and its craft knowledge are kept in active use.

Social: community integration and exchange between generations.

Health and wellbeing: improved wellbeing of elderly people and mental health groups.

Economic: the business is preserved, gains new business models, and develops creative and digital products.

Spatial: the industrial building avoids becoming vacant or derelict.



Scope of the Innovation Portfolio

PORTFOLIO 2: A CALL TO CHANGE THE CCIS PROCUREMENT ECOSYSTEM

The portfolio works at regional level through a pilot call designed bottom-up and taken to CCDR-N. CCIS are a horizontal theme, and the subareas are health, sustainability, migrations and climate change.



Key dimensions

Economic: funding reaches beyond the usual companies and creates more jobs.

Social: broader social impact, more inclusion and a narrower socio-economic gap.

Systemic: more transparency and trust, and better communication between CCIS and policymakers.

Democratic and educational: a response to declining literacy and democracy levels.

Time perspective

Short term (6–12 months): design and implement one or two pilot calls.
Medium term: evaluate the pilot, develop the pilot framework and replicate the model in other calls.
Long term (7 years): embed mandatory CCIS participation in calls at EU, national, regional and city level.

Who was there?

A BROAD MIX OF STAKEHOLDERS CO-CREATED THIS CASE

CCI ORGANISATIONS

ICC Cluster; Faz Cultura Braga; Nu Boyana; BLEGH



ACADEMIA

University of Minho; ESAD IDEA; TU Dublin; UPTEC

BUSINESSES

VIARCO – Pencil Industry; EDIGMA; AEP; ANJE



OTHERS

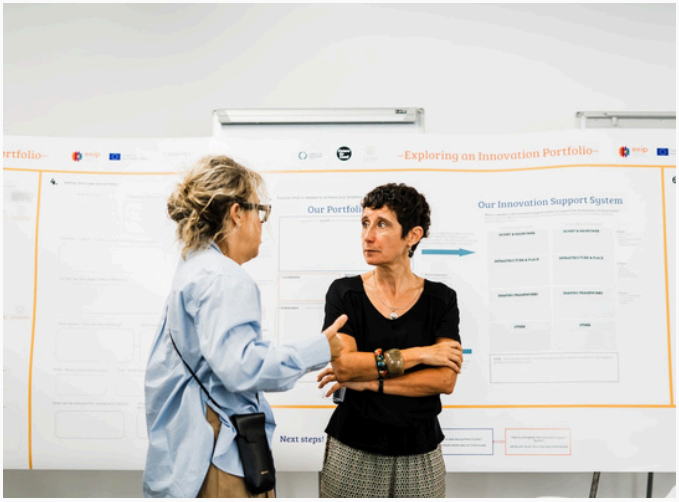
IAPMEI; AMP; Invest Braga / Startup Braga; Braga Youth Centre; Youth Foundation; Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Braga;

Analysis

THE LOCAL INNOVATION SUPPORT SYSTEM

In Braga, the support system for heritage innovation starts from what is already there: a working factory with its machinery, research labs at local universities, private funding, and a consortium team built around the owner. Smart specialisation strategies (S3) give this effort a policy anchor. Growing from a single site into a sustained portfolio requires regional and ERDF funding through CCDR-N, EU programmes such as AGORA and CERV, and workshops and meeting places inside the factory. It also requires a legal framework that allows heritage buildings to be adapted and used, and a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure participation and wellbeing. The municipality, health and social organisations, youth centres, universities and the creative industries cluster complete the system, and each brings access to the target groups, expertise or creative capacity.

For procurement, the funding largely exists through CCDR-N. The weak point is the design of calls, so the system focuses on changing how they are built. The ICC Cluster coordinates a bottom-up process of surveys, workshops, focus groups, interviews and tests. This process draws on good European practices, national and EU CCI strategies, and management tools such as PDCA and RACI. A new call to develop the pilot and a dedicated pilot framework are needed to turn this evidence into practice. Universities, hubs, incubators, Faz Cultura and UPTEC close the knowledge gap on calls and tenders, and the European Commission and national government can make CCIS participation mandatory at scale.



Conclusions

& RECOMMENDATIONS

PORTFOLIO 1: HERITAGE IN USE

Conclusions

Braga's working industrial heritage, its buildings, machinery and the know-how of often elderly workers, is an asset that will be lost if nothing is done, leaving vacant sites and broken knowledge chains. Keeping the factory in active use allows heritage preservation to create creative, social, health and economic value at the same time. The owner's commitment is the main driver. Strict funding rules and the lack of a suitable legal framework for heritage buildings are the main barriers.

Recommendations

- Form the owner-led consortium of around seven stakeholders now and agree on a governance model.
- Document the factory's savoir-faire and machinery together with its workers while they are still active.
- Open the factory to digital artists, UX developers and researchers to develop new media art and AI-based solutions.
- Run participation programmes with elderly people, mental health groups and youth, co-designed with health and social partners.
- Combine private, regional (ERDF via CCDR-N) and EU funding, such as AGORA and CERV, and set up workshops and meeting places in the factory.
- Advocate for a legal framework that allows heritage buildings to be adapted and used.
- Introduce monitoring and evaluation from the start, covering participation and wellbeing, so the model can be scaled to other industries and sites.

PORTFOLIO 2: A CALL TO CHANGE THE CCIS PROCUREMENT ECOSYSTEM

Recommendations

- Conduct a bottom-up survey of artists, SMEs and other CCI actors, coordinated by the ICC Cluster.
- Design and launch one or two pilot calls with CCDR-N within 6–12 months, supported by a pilot framework using PDCA and RACI.
- Make CCIS mandatory consortium partners in calls on health, urbanism and other sectors.
- Write calls in accessible language, reduce red tape, broaden the pool of evaluators, and recognise social as well as economic value.
- Strengthen capacity through hubs, incubators, Faz Cultura, UPTEC and university programmes in procurement and financial literacy.
- Evaluate the pilot by the number and diversity of applicants and consortia, and replicate the model in other calls.
- Work towards mandatory CCIS participation at EU, national, regional and city level over a seven-year horizon.



Conclusions

In Braga, the funding exists. The problem lies in how calls are designed. Complex language, red tape, reliance on intermediaries and mistrust between funding layers keep small and solo CCIS actors out, so money keeps circulating among the same type of companies. Treating CCIS as a horizontal theme and making them mandatory partners in calls in other sectors offers a structural way into public funding. A bottom-up, evidence-based pilot builds the trust needed to change the rules.



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 Ecodesign further? Visit the *Fashion Transition: Eco-Design for Circularity* 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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