

1. About Creative Ring

The Creative Ring is organised as a network of networks, unfolding at the intersection of the local and European level. By igniting relations between local creative actors, open creative ecosystems are encouraged to emerge, which then again are assembled within a European network of creative ecosystems.

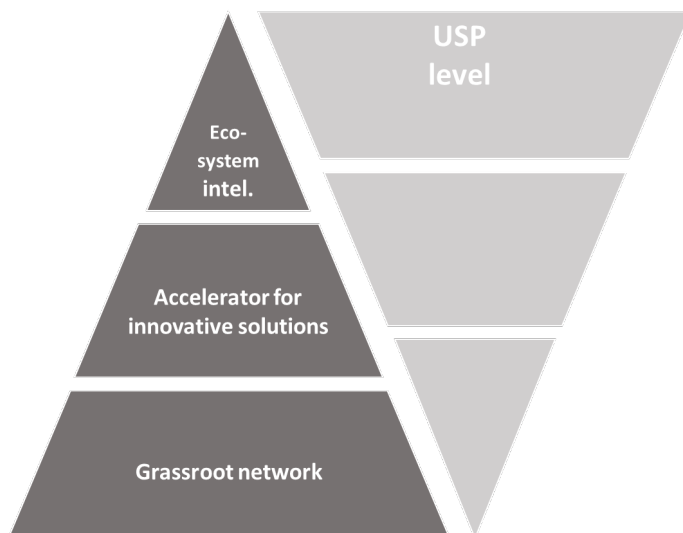
<http://www.creativering.eu/about/>

The Creative Ring has the ambition to:

- Boost the competitiveness and the digital transformation of the Creative Industries in Europe;
- Leverage urban innovation as a transformation engine towards a more inclusive and smarter society;
- Generate a mentality shift encouraging (social) entrepreneurship and transmit the start-up mentality into society;
- Establish a constant dialogue with politically, economically and socially relevant institutions across Europe.

2. Value proposition

Creative Ring bring value in three interdependent layers, all supported by online and offline instruments. From bottom to top:



a. Grassroot network:

Creative Ring will offer a dynamic map of projects and actors contributing to its ambitions and to those who are looking for innovation through crossovers between creative eco-systems.

b. Accelerator for innovative solutions:

Creative Ring will assemble a partner network and toolset that is available at little or no cost for member projects to accelerate them to their fullest potential. Other than startup accelerators, we not only value commercial startups but also societal and artistic projects.

c. Ecosystem intelligence:

By documenting its knowledge and gathering data from its activities and projects, Creative Ring builds a unique knowledge center for setting up and monitoring creative eco-systems. This can be especially valuable for policy makers in the quest for 'smart cities' and 'smart societies'.

3. ICT tools and platforms

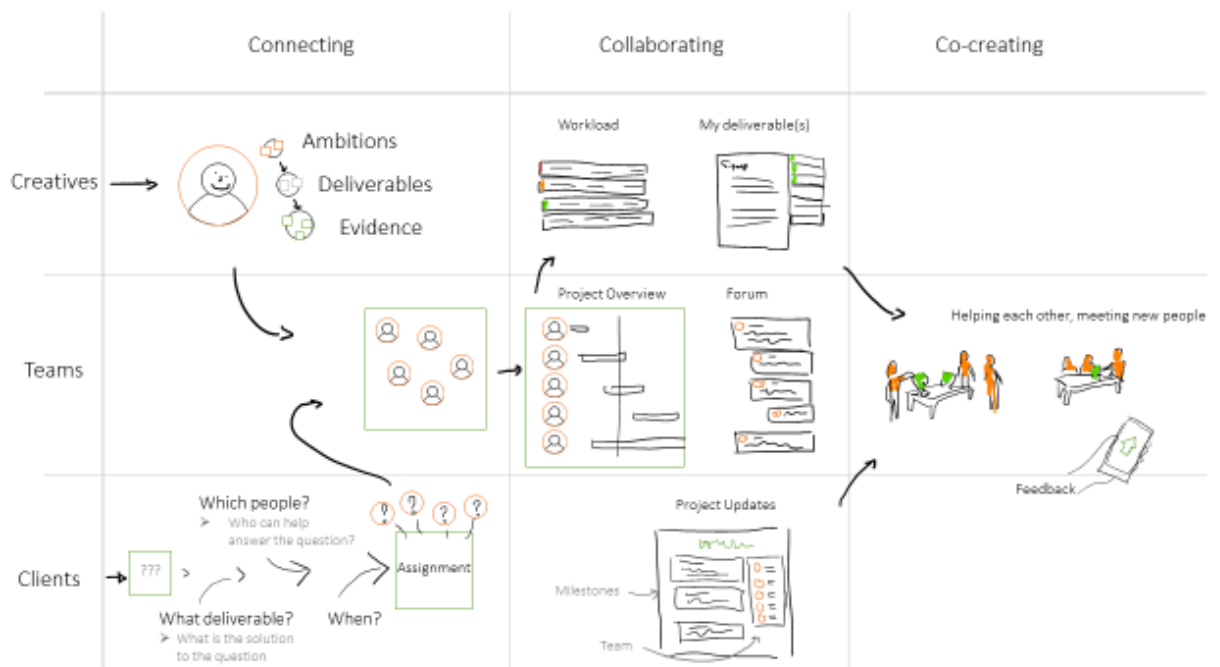


To support its ambitions, Creative Ring currently foresees three categories of online tools. From left to right:

- a. Operational tools:
“basic” digital tools to run the Creative Ring (document sharing, social media, direct mailing, (video) conferencing...). Most likely commercially available third-party tools.
- b. Tools facilitating collaboration / coproduction / co-creation: (focus of our current call for pitches)**
digital tools and platforms that directly support the core business and USPs of Creative Ring. For example: mapping, matchmaking, co-creation platforms... Preferably carry a Creative Ring signature and are setup in close dialogue with the needs of the Creative Ring and its stakeholders.
- c. Creative and innovative tools for and by creative industries:
a repository of apps, platforms, tools that in one way or another contribute to the ambitions put forward by the Creative Ring. For example almost all of the winners of the 2016 Creative Ring challenge: <http://www.creativering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Creative-Ring-Booklet.pdf>

4. Tools facilitating collaboration (category b)

In this category, we aim to support a list of topics resulting from our ambitions and way of working. Below is a first attempt to give insight in the matter, but it must be clear that this will continuously be subject to new and additional insights. Resulting in already the first technical demand: all candidate solutions must hold a great level of flexibility to develop according to the latest strategic and operational insights.



From left to right, the schematic indicates a possible path that starts from bringing together supply and demand, flows into a collaborative space and results into presentation (and feedback collection) of the developed project or solution. This is just one way of illustrating the broadness of the scope. Additionally, as already stated, Creative Ring aims to collect relevant data in all stages to get a relevant and dynamic map of its eco-system and its “heartbeat”.

A more textual summary:

- involve artists and creative individuals, entrepreneurs, academia and technologists to contribute, share knowledge and thus create a common language and understanding around urban innovation at the nexus of 'Science, Technology and the Arts'.
- facilitate (interdisciplinary) match making between trusted partners (creative professionals /technology providers / academia / hubs) across the different local ecosystems
- share a wide range of business opportunities, i.e. events, challenges, projects & encourage collaboration
- provide visibility of and advocacy around cross-disciplinary & cross-country collaboration incl. tools / methods / best practices and promote the fusion between Art, Science and Technology
- visualise the relationships between teams and/or communities of artists, researchers, scientists in terms of joint projects / creative hubs / adopted technology
- collect and publish in quasi real time information about the members of the Creative Ring, ongoing challenges & calls, technology adoption etc.

5. Some more background

Below are several elements that are not necessarily linked between them, but could be important to build your insight in the type of solutions we are looking for:

- Our preferred “unit of thinking” are projects and not “entities”. We feel it’s much more valuable to know what people are (or have been) up to than having an inventory of their capabilities. Once you have the projects, you automatically have the entities behind them as well. The other way around is less trivial.

- Creative Ring will be a network of members, meaning that we foresee a staged access into the network based on your active (and/or financial) contributions. The outer shell could thereby be public and free, but early in the process of true engagement, we want members to surpass a certain threshold. This can be quite low at the start but should be substantial to get to access to the deepest levels of the Creative Ring and its knowledge base.
- In line with the above, Creative Ring will have own initiatives and activities such as competitions, masterclasses, coaching sessions, expert meetings... for whom participants will need to have surpassed at least the first membership threshold. Also, Creative Ring will be a platform that communicates and announces likeminded activities and initiatives, which (?maybe to a certain extent?) will be made publicly available.
- In our accelerator (see part 2 b above), we foresee four main offerings:
 - o Pathways: qualitative and curated connections/references/leads that can help you to move your project forward.
 - o Coaching: introductory coaching sessions to fields of expertise unfamiliar to you. For example: an initiation in design thinking for engineers, an initiation on business models for creatives etc.
 - o Tools and equipment: an overview of easily accessible tools and equipment and the conditions under which they are available. (e.g. laser cutters, textile labs, electronics labs...)
 - o Spaces: an overview of spaces that are available at no cost for well-defined periods of time for member projects to work or reside in.

These offerings will be made available by in-kind partners and will be closed pocket (i.e. included in a tbd all-in fee paid by member projects). Potentially, in an extra layer, in-kind partners can also display or link to their commercial offerings in return for a publicity fee.

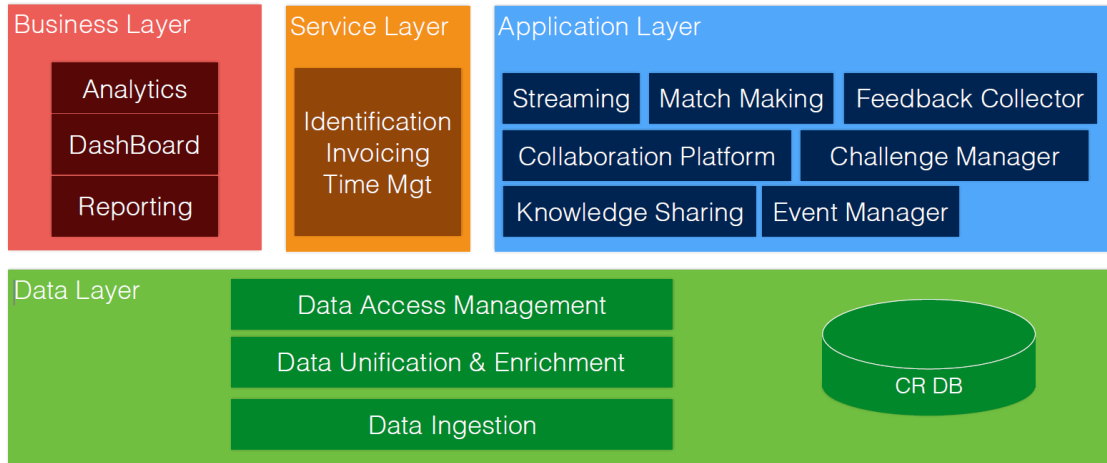
6. Our collaboration model towards suppliers for category b tools

Creative Ring is at this point a lean and mean network lead by motivated and active ambassadors in its member cities. Creative Ring has secured minimal funding from these member cities to accommodate for the essential operational costs.

To develop our backbone of tools and platforms, we are looking for ICT partners who are willing to join us in this adventure. Whereby we can jointly detail the exact further development steps, define the revenue and partnership models and pursue the budget that is needed to move forward. We understand that this requires a great deal of trust and considerable personal motivation and investment from our potential partners. We therefore foresee staged commitments and are confident that the journey we have already embarked on will make things worthwhile.

The opportunities, plans and ambitions behind Creative Ring are huge. Already, five leading creative cities are member and more will follow (also outside of Europe). During our pilot challenge in 2016, close to 800 projects across six cities submitted their plans for “apps for creative cities”. In 2017-2018 we plan a next Creative Ring Challenge on “Wearables” that will run in 9 cities and for which we foresee even greater quantity and quality in participating projects and boost the momentum with our in-kind partners.

7. Requirements



Creative Ring aims to provide to all partners an open services platform, allowing interoperability between multiple tools that enable cocreation & collaboration:

- one central data repository, allowing all Creative Ring tools & services to interact with the shared database, to allow for consistent service
- shared business intelligence, aiming to build common knowledge & tap into shared resources
- shared services, through Single Sign On, shared Profile Management, shared back office services (e.g. time management / invoicing)

Candidate partners should comply to the following requirements:

- Your plans and solutions are supported by a working demo that at least encompasses the basic levels of your offering.
- Your platform must enable interoperability (of integration potential) with other tools up- or -downstream in the process flow. Exact technical requirements for interoperability will be defined. We expect you to be open and flexible in thinking along with us to find (and implement) the best workable and most durable solution.
- At every stage, you openly communicate about your commitment and the expected return on investment in the partnership with the Creative Ring.

We warmly invite you to present us with your plans and solutions that could help us realise the ICT backbone for our core business so we can enter a partnership dialogue.

Practically

January 12, afternoon (exact time tbd)

5 minutes pitch + 5 minutes Q&A for the Creative Ring Management Team

Location: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/connected-smart-cities-conference-2017-registration-29274794699> or remote login (tbd)

Interested? Contact: koen@baltanlaboratories.org