MARKETING

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CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS A DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rapid economic and technological change is reshaping traditional approaches to regional development. In an increasingly digital and knowledge-based economy, human capital, innovation, creativity, and the ability to generate new ideas have become important sources of regional competitiveness. These factors underpin the development of the creative economy and open up new opportunities for regions seeking sustainable and inclusive growth. Creative industries comprise economic activities in which creativity, knowledge, cultural resources, and intellectual capabilities play a central role in generating economic value. This sector includes design, architecture, advertising, publishing, music, the arts, fashion, crafts, digital content, software development, video games, and other creative activities. Beyond their direct economic contribution, creative industries can stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation, employment, and the diversification of local economies.

The growing importance of creative industries is reflected in recent international research. According to the UNESCO Global Report on Cultural Policies 2025, cultural and creative industries account for 3.39% of global GDP and 3.55% of global employment on average. The report also shows that 93% of countries providing relevant information recognise culture as an important component of national sustainable development strategies [1].

The development of creative industries has a strong territorial dimension. Cultural traditions, historical heritage, architecture, crafts, gastronomy, and local identity can be transformed into economic assets

and used to support tourism, entrepreneurship, and place branding. At the same time, human capital remains one of the sector's most valuable resources. This makes investment in education, digital skills, and professional development an important prerequisite for building competitive creative ecosystems.

Creative industries can also contribute to the emergence of new sources of regional economic growth. Creative businesses interact with tourism, trade, education, information technology, and other sectors, generating additional economic value and creating employment opportunities. Such cross-sectoral cooperation is particularly relevant for regions seeking to diversify their economies and reduce their dependence on traditional industries.

Digital transformation is further expanding the potential of the creative sector. Digital platforms, social media, e-commerce, multimedia technologies, and artificial intelligence are changing the ways creative products are produced, promoted, distributed, and consumed. A 2025 report by the European Commission, “Unleashing the Potential of the Cultural and Creative Industries,” highlights the economic importance of cultural and creative industries and their contribution to growth, innovation, and competitiveness. The report also draws attention to the opportunities and challenges associated with new digital technologies and artificial intelligence [2].

Digitalisation also makes it easier for small creative businesses and individual professionals to reach customers beyond their local markets. Online platforms allow them to promote products and services internationally, build their own brands, and establish direct relationships with consumers. This can be particularly valuable for regions with limited industrial capacity or those undergoing significant economic restructuring. At the same time, the rapid development of artificial intelligence increases the need for new digital skills, flexible business models, and effective protection of intellectual property. From a sustainable development perspective, the importance of creative industries extends beyond their economic contribution. They can simultaneously generate economic, social, and cultural benefits by supporting employment, entrepreneurship, professional development, cultural heritage preservation, and social cohesion. Creative activities can therefore contribute to strengthening local identity while creating opportunities for economic participation and self-realisation.

For Ukraine, the development of creative industries is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing war and future post-war recovery.

Regional recovery requires more than the reconstruction of physical infrastructure; it also involves creating conditions for entrepreneurship, employment, innovation, and human capital development. In this context, creative industries can become an important element of economic diversification and provide new opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. A promising approach is the development of regional creative ecosystems that bring together local authorities, businesses, educational institutions, cultural organisations, civil society, and creative professionals. Such cooperation can improve the use of local resources, strengthen entrepreneurial and professional skills, support young people, and create favourable conditions for the development of creative businesses.

Therefore, creative industries can be regarded as an important driver of sustainable regional development. By transforming human, intellectual, and cultural resources into economic and social value, they contribute to economic diversification, employment creation, entrepreneurship, and regional competitiveness. For Ukraine, integrating creative industries into regional development strategies and recovery policies can help build more diversified, resilient, and sustainable regional economies.

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