

**CRAFTS CODE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**  
Topic 4 How to Access Finance





# ABOUT CRAFTS CODE

**CRAFTS CODE** is the acronym of:

**C**reative **A**ctions **F**or **T**ailoring **S**mes' **C**Ompetitive **D**Evelopment

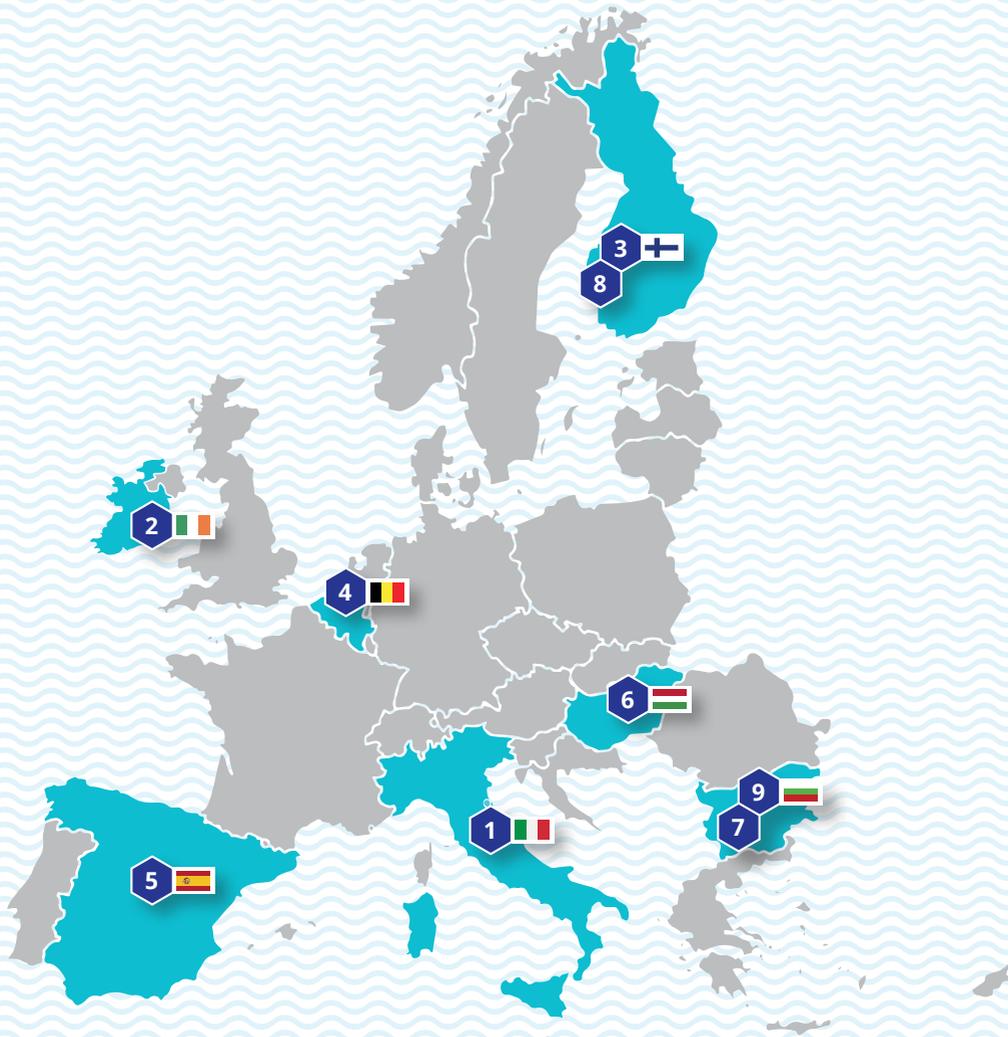


**CRAFTS CODE** aims to make craft SMEs more competitive.

## HOW?

**CRAFTS CODE** aims to enhance the competitiveness of craft SMEs by developing a framework to stimulate policy learning and build capacity to improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes. The project will identify the barriers to SMEs working in the craft sector and will improve access to supports for business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises.

# PARTNERSHIP



**1** ITALY



**Lead Partner**  
**MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE (LP)**

The Municipality is directly involved in the support of the local crafts economy providing opportunities and funds for artisans and SMEs.

**2** IRELAND



**Partner**  
**DESIGN & CRAFTS COUNCIL IRELAND (DCCI)**

DCCI is the main champion of the design and craft industry in Ireland, fostering its growth and commercial strength.

**3** FINLAND



**Partner**  
**VAASA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

VAMK is an international University of Applied Sciences which provides high level theoretical & practical oriented education in Finnish & English.

**4** BELGIUM



**Advisory Partner**  
**ARTESIS PLANTIJN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ANTWERP**

Artesis Plantijn University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp (AP) is a higher education institution located in Antwerp, Flanders, Belgium.

**5** SPAIN



**Partner**  
**EOI FOUNDATION**

Fundesarte is the leading institution in the promotion and development of Spanish craft enterprises as part of the EOI Foundation.

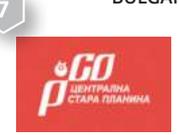
**6** HUNGARY



**Partner**  
**BUDAPEST FOUNDATION FOR ENTERPRISE PROMOTION**

Budapest Enterprise Agency develops and promotes micro, small and medium enterprises of the Hungarian capital.

**7** BULGARIA



**Partner**  
**RAM CENTRAL STARA PLANINA**

RAM Central Stara Planina recognises culture and creativity as a main driver for sustainable development.

**8** FINLAND



**Partner**  
**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF OSTROBOTHNIA**

The Regional Council aims to build up the necessary conditions for a balanced development & economic growth and serves the welfare of the Ostrobothnian people.

**9** BULGARIA



**Partner**  
**MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, EUROPEAN FUNDS FOR COMPETITIVENESS DIRECTORATE GENERAL**

The main priority of the Ministry of Economy is to create conditions for sustainable economic growth in the Republic of Bulgaria.

## CASE STUDIES: Good Practices Identified

Between May 2021 and November 2021, CRAFTS CODE partners hosted local stakeholder group meetings to research and find good practices relating to the topic ‘How to help the crafts sector access finance’ for craft SMEs. These meetings, which were held online in most partner countries as a result of COVID-19, better informed partners and key stakeholders on the good practices available in their country. Particular attention was paid to good practices that could still be effective, despite of and in some cases, because of, the pandemic. Emphasis was placed on digital and online resources, examples and programmes that can be easily transferred and shared between countries, both during and after COVID-19.

The meetings and research allowed for exchange of experiences and learnings that were then collated and presented at the fourth Interregional Thematic Seminar (ITS) on the 18 and 19 November 2021, hosted

in hybrid form by our Spanish partner Fundesarte in Madrid. This two-day online seminar included presentations from the project partners in Ireland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, and Spain on their good practices which responded to this topic on accessing finance. There were also some special live presentations by the local stakeholders and an informative introduction on ‘crowdfunding’ by the Belgian advisory partner. The presentations were followed by a hybrid discussion on the specific approaches of partners’ stakeholders towards getting their business funded.

### **About Topic 4: How to help the crafts sector access finance**

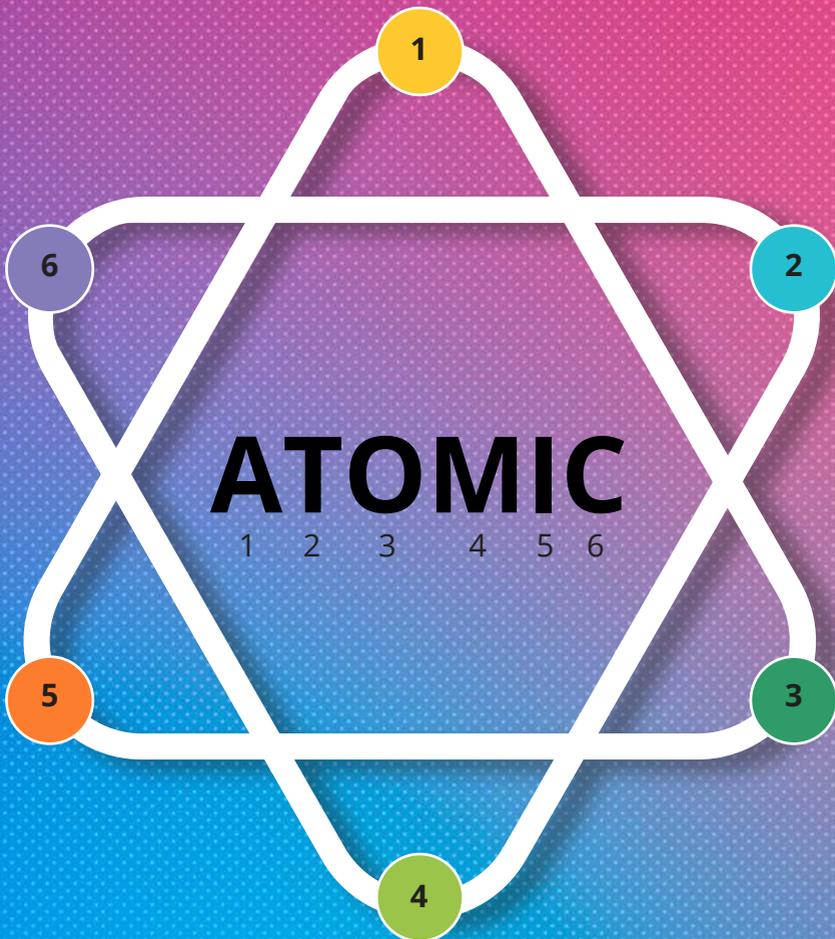
Investigating ‘how to help the crafts sector access finance’ was an important topic for the project partners of CRAFTS CODE. ‘Finance is considered to be a difficult topic which is always on the mind of the entrepreneur. There is a clear necessity to offer craft businesses an adequate

supports network which provides vital financial aids. The three clear common themes which arose from the good practices presented, included:

- **Funding and awareness**
- **Cross-sector collaboration and training**
- **Business skills and mentoring**

The two-day meeting made for a wide range of different possibilities, either governmentally or privately funded, to get access to finance. Huge learning was acquired from the Finnish partner’s stakeholders in Kvarken who prefer to opt for ‘collaboration’ as opposed to ‘competition’. The event was recorded and uploaded to YouTube and social media to allow even more audiences to engage with the project.





**CRAFTS CODE** partners were asked to try and keep their selected good practices in line with the following criteria:

A good practice should be: **ATOMIC**

- 1

**AMBASSADOR** it functions as a 'forerunner' in its field
- 2

**TRANSFERABLE** it can be 'translated' to other fields and situations
- 3

**OBJECTIVE-ORIENTED** it needs to have a specific and well - described goal
- 4

**MEASURABLE** it has led to positive results and a clear added value
- 5

**INNOVATIVE** it differentiates itself from what is currently seen as daily practice
- 6

**COMPLETE** possible matters of attention and problems are mentioned

Partner	Good Practice	
Design & Crafts Council Ireland	1. Hard Cash and Soft Supports - Building Resilient Businesses	
EOI Fundesarte, Spain	2. Co-Working spaces & Go-To-Work Programme	
	3. Aids for the Spanish crafts sector	
RAM Central Stara Planina Ministry of Economy - European Funds for Competitiveness Directorate General	4. Craftsmanship for the future	
Municipality of Florence, Italy	5. CALLforCRAFT	
	6. Artistic Crafts Call for Proposals	
Budapest Foundation for Enterprise Promotion, Hungary	7. Mittersisters Studio	
Regional Council of Ostrobothnia and Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, Finland (VAMK)	8. Starttiraha income support for aspiring entrepreneurs	
	9. UKKO.fi light entrepreneurship online platform	





## PRACTICE 1 Ireland Hard Cash and Soft Supports – Building Resilient Businesses

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

Local Enterprise Office

### Short summary of practice

The recent report 'Design Practice in Ireland' highlights the necessity to "provide the right training, for the right people at the right time" (Skillnet Ireland, 2021). Craft businesses require a sufficient supports network which provides not only financial aids but vital softer supports such as education and training provided by appropriate mentors and advisors.

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) provides accessible financial supports for businesses in each local authority in Ireland. Their priming and business expansion grants can offer grant aid of up to €150,000. The Trading Online Voucher offers up to €2500 to help businesses with the establishment of web shops or similar activities. LEOs work closely with other bodies such as the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland in support of craft businesses.

LEOs also offer high-quality training and mentoring programmes, all of which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. LEOs assist creative businesses in gaining access to trade shows and innovation workshops, designed by Design+

Technology Gateways, which guide businesses through a strategic design process utilising a specific design tool kit. Engaging with such supports demonstrates commitment, increases viability and rigor of process for businesses, ensuring a greater chance of accessing financial supports. It can shape a network of supporting expertise for craft SMEs, building resilience, adaptability, innovation, and strategy.

### Evidence of success

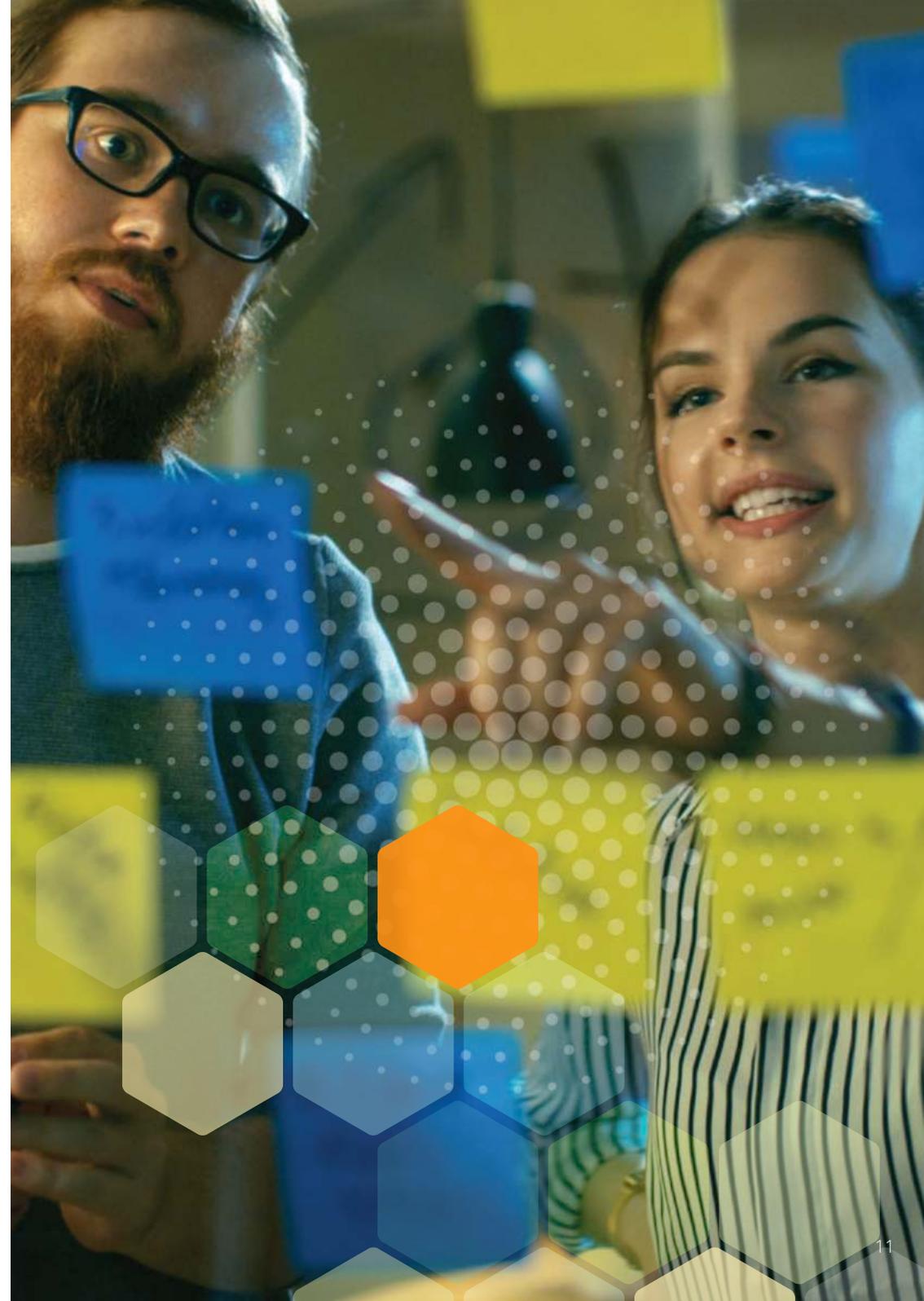
Success of financial supports: measured by examining current and projected metrics such as employment numbers, turnover, and profit.

Training and mentoring: examining the success of supports on social media by a comparison of pre and post support engagement.

Topics such as leadership skills, which are not as quantifiable, can be measured through surveys of the participants.

### Find out more

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Discover-Business-Supports/Financial-Supports/>





## PRACTICE 2 Spain Co-Working spaces & Go-To-Work Programme

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

The project is developed by EOI Foundation, a public institution attached to the Spanish ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, in the framework of the OPERATIONAL PROGRAM ON EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND EDUCATION of the European Social Fund.

### Short summary of practice

The EOI Foundation's main aim is to boost entrepreneurship. EOI Foundation, together with local Spanish institutions all around the country (townhalls, councils...), have created more than 50 coworking spaces where entrepreneurs can spend the day working in their projects with all the necessary services, meet other entrepreneurs and receive a 5-month training and personalised mentorship, based on EOI's Agile methodology for entrepreneurs.

Every sector is welcome (circular economy, fintech, handcraft and creative industries, energy, blockchain, digital marketing, videogames, sustainable tourism...).

At the end of each mentoring programme, a demo day takes place, where the entrepreneurs pitch their projects and receive meaningful feedback from mentors and peers. Moreover, two transnational programmes have been launched: The European Coworking Programme (together with partners in almost all the EU countries) and the "Womenpreneurs for Change" (together with the University of Oulu, in Finland).

Just click "Espacios coworking eoi" on Youtube to find out more.

### Evidence of success

So far, almost 3,000 entrepreneurs have benefited from the programme in almost all Spanish regions, with a business creation rate of more than 75%.

### Find out more

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=espacios+coworking+eoi](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=espacios+coworking+eoi)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGGaC5SBD2Q>

<https://www.eoi.es/empresas/emprendedores/espacios-coworking>





## PRACTICE 3 Spain Aids for the Spanish crafts sector

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

Public organisations and regional governments in Spain.

### Short summary of practice

Public institutions in charge of supporting enterprises and craft companies in Spain offered online programs to help craft businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19. EOI have issued personalized mentoring services; the EXPRESS ADVICE focuses on helping with the financial and legal management of the business. The SME ADVICE is a bespoke advisory service which involves group workshops and mentoring between professionals in the sector and companies, to develop a strategic plan for promotion and improvement, tailored to their needs.

Furthermore, most of the regions of Spain developed their own specific measures to support the sector. In Catalonia two programs were designed; one to reactivate the economy of crafts companies and the other was devoted to supporting municipalities in the field of commerce and crafts. In the region of Galicia, a free training on online sales and digital marketing was

offered. In Valencia, aids were provided to those self-employed whose activities were reduced by 75% or stalled completely.

### Evidence of success

The General Directorate of Industry and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises has issued the Dynamic guide with grants and incentives for the crafts sector, which is permanently updated and contains information on aid and incentives provided by the European Union, the General State Administration, Autonomous Administrations, Local Administrations, and other public bodies.

### Find out more

[http://www.ipyme.org/\\_layouts/15/ipyme/guiaayudassector.aspx?sector=4](http://www.ipyme.org/_layouts/15/ipyme/guiaayudassector.aspx?sector=4)



## PRACTICE 4 Bulgaria Craftsmanship for the future

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

Regional Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, "Etar"

### Short summary of practice

Due to COVID-19, it has been impossible for cultural and tourist businesses to carry out their activities. Masters of traditional crafts, many of whom are owners of small family firms, have found themselves in serious financial difficulties. Several municipalities in Bulgaria, who have open-air museums and ethnographical complexes of national importance in their territories, appealed to the Ministry of Culture for support.

In 2021, grants of €2,500 were allocated to every keeper of traditional craft from the Regional ethnographic open-air museum "Etar" - Gabrovo, from the old market street "Samovodska charshiya" in Veliko Tarnovo, from Ethnographical complex "Stariyat (Old) Dobrich" in the town of Dobrich, from the Craftsmen's old market street in Plovdiv and from Ethnographical complex in Zlatograd.

The first Bulgarian museum of skansen type "Etar" used the grant to promote each of the masters working in the museum, presenting their skills to preserve traditions and highlight the talent of creators and authors of original works of art. The masters used part of the financial resources for repairs in the workshops and at the facilities, for purchase of materials and tools. In accordance with the project "Craftsmanship for the Future" every craftsman received a fee for sharing their skills.

### Evidence of success

- An advertising trailer and 17 short films for each artisan was produced by Etar and promoted on the communication channels of the museum, presented at tourist exchanges, conferences, craft exhibitions, in the network of the UNESCO creative cities and the Creative tourism.

### Find out more

[www.etar.bg](http://www.etar.bg)



## PRACTICE 5 Italy CALLforCRAFT

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

SSATI – SCUOLA SCIENZE AZIENDALI E TECNOLOGIE INDUSTRIALI “Piero Baldesi”.

### Short summary of practice

The aim of the CALLforCRAFT is to boost and support the development of Florentine Traditional Artistic Craftsmanship, which has suffered a huge blow due to COVID-19, with special attention to training and to sharing the know-how for the creation of a new generation of Innovative Digital Artisans. The digitalization and innovation of the artisan tradition are fundamental for the recovery and relaunch of this branch of the market.

CALLforCRAFT will be conducted by the “Piero Baldesi” School of Business Sciences and Industrial Technologies, through its Incubator Murate Idea Park, under the supervision and coordination of the Municipality of Florence, leader of the European project CRAFTS CODE, co-financed by the Interreg Europe program. The Partners of the initiative, involved by MIP and SSATI in the project, to deliver a complete and transversal support service to the Artisans, are: ARTEX

- Center for Artistic and Traditional Crafts of Tuscany, Florence Chamber of Commerce, CNA Firenze and Confartigianato Firenze, ISIA - Higher Institute for Artistic Industries, Studio Marangoni Foundation and Me-We srl which is an innovative startup already incubated in MIP.

Artisan SMEs will not be funded directly but will benefit from tailored support services provided as part of the training and mentoring program to increase their competitiveness. The program will lead to developing a new communication strategy, combining tradition, know-how, skills, and new methodologies. A new business model will be developed, and artisans will be offered the chance to improve or develop their virtual shop and market research will also be provided.

### Evidence of success

12 Florentine artisans have been selected for 3 months of services and support. A path that will lead them to improve their online presence by optimizing the use of e-commerce and social networks.

### Find out more

[www.ssati.it](http://www.ssati.it)

[www.murateideapark.it](http://www.murateideapark.it)





## PRACTICE 6 Italy Artistic Crafts Call for Proposals

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

OMA - Associazione Osservatorio dei Mestieri d'Arte

### Short summary of practice

"Rinascimento Firenze" gives oxygen to the numerous projects that were thriving prior to the pandemic but are now suffering. There has been a drop in tourist flows which have always been a driving force for the development of the local territory.

Over a maximum period of 18 months, "Rinascimento Firenze" is generating both a direct and indirect social impact in the territory. OMA, as the implementing body, is disbursing 1 million euro in non-repayable grants and Intesa Sanpaolo is making impact loans from 60 to 500 thousand euro available for each individual subject chosen, for a total of 5 million euro. The first call for proposals is open to micro and small enterprises within the artistic crafts sector, based in the Metropolitan City of Florence. This includes artisan businesses and workshops, also organised in the form of non-profit organisations (such as social enterprises and cooperatives), which stand out for the high quality

of their products and materials, for their non-standardised production processes, and for the use of traditional techniques, but also for the introduction of innovative technologies that represent the productions and activities historically identifying the territory.

### Evidence of success

The Artistic Handicrafts call of Rinascimento Firenze was a success: 33 applications have been submitted, of which 16 have been processed as eligible by the Implementing Body. Rinascimento Firenze intends to accompany the upturn of the individual company for recovering the sector until there is a spill-over in the entire territory of reference. The fact of focusing on the solidity of the projects and their long-term viability is undoubtedly a new way of disbursing contributions.

### Find out more

[www.rinascimentofirenze.it](http://www.rinascimentofirenze.it)  
[www.osservatoriomestieridarte.it](http://www.osservatoriomestieridarte.it)





## PRACTICE 7 Hungary Mittersisters Studio

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

Mittersisters Studio.

### Short summary of practice

Due to digitalization and industrialization, the fashion industry is becoming extremely fast-paced and the value of goods are decreasing rapidly. Mittersisters, established by Anna Róza Mitter along with her two partners in 2015, responded to the fast fashion industry by creating an exclusive and unique experience incorporating sustainability and awareness. Mittersisters workshop is based on a unique system: the core conviction that nothing in life beats the mutual support that comes with the power of being part of a community, even a community that emerges during one of the one-day workshops Mittersisters holds, where participants can create the bag of their dreams and accessories. Customers are educated to become conscious buyers. Workshops have helped develop solid relationships between the founder and costumers, giving the founder an indication of the type of concepts customers are open to.

### Evidence of success

- 1,200 people participated in long type workshops e.g., bag making workshops (big commitment)
- 10,000 people participated in smaller workshops e.g., short type workshops, wallet making, etc. (small commitment)
- 25% of the participants are coming from foreign countries
- people were coming from 43 countries since 2017 as at that time Airbnb started its activities in Hungary and their specific website experiences was launched as well where Mittersisters workshop service was uploaded and can be chosen by tourists coming to Budapest
- customers are between age 12-78, women-men, creative minded and non -creative minded
- 70% of the participants come back another time or suggest the workshop to friends/colleagues/ family

### Find out more

[www.mittersisters.com](http://www.mittersisters.com)





## PRACTICE 8 Finland Starttiraha income support for aspiring entrepreneurs

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

TE-Services under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

### Short summary of practice

Craftspeople have very few channels and opportunities for funding as most funding and development, e.g., start-up funding is addressed to high-ROI companies, e.g., technology. Hence, other options must be sourced.

Starttiraha income support grants for craftspeople and other aspiring individual entrepreneurs. The Starttiraha grants encourage new businesses and promote employment. The grant provides an entrepreneur a secure income for up to 12 months while getting the business up and running. Starttiraha provides EUR 33.78 a day for new businesses as an 'income'. This can be especially helpful to craftspeople and others starting individual enterprises with limited resources. There are some preconditions for receiving the grant including being a full-time entrepreneur and having adequate capabilities for the intended business.

Due to COVID-19, the maximum duration of the Starttiraha income support grant has been temporarily extended from 12 months to 18 months. Individuals first contact Enterprise Finland where they are offered guidance in applying for the grant and developing their business. TE Offices, ELY Centres and other organizations offer free training to assist individuals who wish to become entrepreneurs. The Starttiraha grant is granted by the TE Office, or municipalities that have pilot employment programs once the enterprise is considered a suitable option for the applicant to employ him/herself.

### Evidence of success

Customer Information System (URA) of the Employment and Economic Development Offices: 2011-2018, Starttiraha was granted to 35,516 people. Total amount of funding granted was EUR 223 million; the average funding per beneficiary was ~ EUR 6 290.

### Find out more

<https://yrityksen-perustaminen.net/starttiraha/>



## PRACTICE 9 Finland UKKO.fi light entrepreneurship online platform

### Organisation in charge of the good practice

UKKO.fi; a website enabling light entrepreneurship.

### Short summary of practice

Most craftspeople in Finland have a main occupation and practice craftsmanship in addition to fulfil their passion. Some craftspeople continue towards full entrepreneurship in the creative sector, but funding can be a challenge. In addition, craftspeople may be better to first trial whether they want to be full time entrepreneurs or not and to practice becoming entrepreneurs without taking full risks of going solo just yet.

UKKO.fi provides one solution to this issue as a light entrepreneurship website platform is provided without having to start a business or obtain a business license or commit to long-term contracts. Light entrepreneurship can be part time, a side job. This can benefit craftspeople who may not want—and/or may not find it profitable—to put the time, energy, and money into establishing a company.

With UKKO.fi services, billing, collections, insurance, prepayments, VAT and other paperwork and red tape are all handled by UKKO.fi for the light entrepreneur. For craftspeople, this allows more time for making handicrafts and frees the individual from having to know and do a lot of accounting. Because the services are available online, a craftspeople can access this practice no matter where they live or how remote or rural.

### Evidence of success

- Founded in 2012
- Market leader since 2016
- Net sales exceeded EUR 100 in 2019
- Over 100,000 users in 2020
- Recognition/awareness level 67% in 2021
- In 2012-2021, UKKO.fi users paid a total of EUR 115 million in taxes, executed more than 500,000 orders, and paid a total of EUR 377 million in fees.

### Find out more

<https://www.ukko.fi/ukko-yhtiona/medialle/>



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## CRAFTS CODE

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 [www.instagram.com/craftscore/](https://www.instagram.com/craftscore/)

 @code\_crafts

### Project Partners

