



Report:

Virtual Exchange /

Piloting the Digital

Toolbox

101193474 — DigiCreate — ERASMUS-EDU-2024-VIRT-EXCH

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**Funded by
the European Union**

Published in the framework of:

Project: DigiCreate - Intercultural Digital Dialogue and Networking in Cultural and Creative Industries for Young People

Program: Erasmus+ Programme - Virtual exchanges in higher education and youth

Reference Number: 101193474 — DigiCreate — ERASMUS-EDU-2024-VIRT-EXCH

Deliverable Name: D3.3 Virtual Exchange/Piloting the Digital Toolbox

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20141615

Authors: Francesca Landi, Jorge Machado, Dovile Imbrasaite

Contributors: Nedim Micijevic; Daniel Almeida; Milica Dedić; Luka Popović; Maja Dimić; Olja Arsenijević; Sara Zubić; Katharina Haberl; Nektar Baziotis.

Revision and History Chart:

Version	Date	Editors	Comment
1.0	31/03/2025	Francesca Landi; Jorge Machado; Dovile Imbrasaite	Develop the initial structure and table of contents, then complete the final review, language editing, and layout.

Consortium

The DigiCreate consortium is a dynamic partnership of eight organisations spanning both EU member states and the Western Balkans, united by a shared commitment to fostering youth empowerment and driving innovation within the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) sector.

- Youth Power Germany e.V. - Germany
- Nevladina Organizacija GLAS (NVO GLAS) - Montenegro
- Udruzenje Okret (SPIN) - Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Univerzitet Union Nikola Tesla (UniTesla) - Serbia
- Javna Ustanova Univerzitet Crne Gore Podgorica (UoM) - Montenegro
- Contextos - Cooperativa para o Desenvolvimento e Coesão Social, CRL - Portugal
- Evolutionary Archetypes Consulting SL (EAC) - Spain
- Fakultet Za Poslovnu Ekonomiju I Pravo Bar (FPEP Bar) - Montenegro



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Introduction & Methodology

1. Introduction & Methodology

1.1 Purpose and scope of the report

This report presents a **comparative analysis of the pilot testing activities** carried out across six countries within the **framework of the DigiCreate project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union**. The primary purpose of this document is to consolidate, compare and interpret the findings gathered during the pilot sessions conducted in Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Spain in March 2026, to assess the effectiveness of the DigiCreate platform and, in particular, one of its core features: **the Digital Toolbox**.

The **DigiCreate platform** was developed to support and connect professionals and young aspirants working in or entering the cultural and creative industries. At the heart of the platform is the Toolbox, a curated repository of digital tools and resources designed to assist users in carrying out tasks typical of the cultural and creative sectors.

The pilot testing phase represented a critical step in the development cycle of the platform. Rather than simply verifying whether the platform functioned from a technical standpoint, the pilot was designed as a structured learning and feedback exercise, aimed at generating insights directly from the platform's target users.

The pilot testing phase was conducted in March 2026 across all partner countries, and each session was organised and facilitated by the respective national partner organisation and involved a target group of 15 participants per country, selected through open calls disseminated via social media, partner networks and institutional channels. The sessions were designed to test the platform and Toolbox under realistic conditions, engaging participants in scenario-based tasks that simulated actual CCI workflows based on pre-prepared guidelines in order to standardise the tests and consequently make the comparison of the results meaningful.

More specifically, the pilot testing activities were designed to pursue three interconnected objectives.

The first was **to evaluate the usability of the Toolbox**: whether users could navigate it intuitively, identify the tools relevant to their needs, and apply them effectively within a structured workflow.

The second was **to assess participants' ability to complete tasks using the tools** available through the platform, measuring both the rate of successful task completion and the level of autonomy with which participants were able to operate.

The third was **to collect structured feedback from participants regarding their experience**, the perceived relevance of the tools, the clarity of instructions and workflows, and the overall

quality of the platform as a learning and professional development resource, with a view to informing the next development iteration.

The comparative dimension of this report adds a further layer of analytical value. By bringing together data from six distinct national contexts, each involving different implementing organizations, participant profiles and facilitation approaches, the report is able to identify not only what worked and what did not within individual sessions, but also which findings are consistent across contexts and therefore likely to reflect structural features of the platform itself, and which findings are more contextually specific and therefore indicative of the need for adaptive or locally tailored implementations.

The findings presented in this report are based exclusively on the data collected and documented in the six national pilot reports produced by the respective implementing organisations. The report is therefore intended as a synthesis and interpretive document, designed to support the project partners in making evidence-based decisions for the further development and scaling of the DigiCreate platform, and to contribute to the broader body of knowledge on digital capacity building in the cultural and creative industries within the Erasmus+ framework.

1.2 The DigiCreate toolbox: features, pilot objectives and Erasmus+ partnership context

DigiCreate - Intercultural Digital Dialogue and Networking in Cultural and Creative Industries for Young People - is a 36-month partnership project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union under the call ERASMUS-EDU-2024-VIRT-EXCH (Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth).

The project responds to a clearly identified need: young people, particularly those engaged in or aspiring to enter the cultural and creative industries (CCI), face significant gaps in digital and entrepreneurial competencies, combined with limited access to intercultural learning opportunities and persistently high unemployment rates. DigiCreate addresses these challenges through a structured programme of online virtual exchanges, designed to reach at least 2,500 young people aged 18 to 30 across six participating countries: Germany, Spain, Portugal, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The virtual exchange model was selected to ensure that high-quality, international and cross-cultural non-formal education could be delivered without the need for physical mobility, thereby maximising accessibility and inclusion.

The project is structured around six Work Packages (WPs): WP1 covers project coordination and management, WP2 focuses on the validation of the DigiCreate Methodological Framework, WP3 addresses the mapping of digital tools and the creation of the DigiCreate Online Creative Hive Open Digital Toolbox, WP4 covers the development of the online platform, online courses and DigiCreate products, WP5 manages virtual exchange scheduling and event management, WP6 is dedicated to impact assessment and dissemination. Among the key deliverables foreseen are the DigiCreate Methodological Framework, the ICC Digital

Toolbox, the DigiCreate Digital Online Platform, an Online Course and 2500 Youthpass certificates of completion for participating young people.

Central to this report is the ICC Digital Toolbox, developed under WP3 and integrated into the DigiCreate online platform as a core feature. The Toolbox is a curated repository of digital tools and resources specifically selected to support users in carrying out tasks relevant to the cultural and creative industries, including content creation, campaign development, collaborative workflow management, visual design and digital communication. It is designed to serve a heterogeneous user base, spanning from young people with no prior experience in digital environments to more seasoned ICC professionals already active in the sector.

1.3 Overview of participating countries and profiles, and note on data comparability

The consortium brings together eight partner organisations across these countries, each contributing specific expertise and outreach capacity. Youth Power Germany e.V., based in Berlin, serves as the project coordinator.

Partners include Evolutionary Archetypes Consulting S.L. (Spain), Contextos - Cooperativa para o Desenvolvimento e Coesão Social, CRL (Portugal), Univerzitet Union Nikola Tesla (Serbia), Udruženje Okret (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Nevladina Organizacija GLAS (Montenegro), the University of Montenegro, and the Faculty of Business Economics and Law Bar (Montenegro).

The table below presents the key data describing the participant profiles recruited by each partner that joined the pilot testing phase of the Digital Toolbox:

N*	Recruiting Country	No. Participants	Age Range	Nationality	Professionals / Aspirants
1	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15	19-30	Bosnia and Herzegovina	53,3% Beginners, 46,7% Professionals
2	Germany	15	Not provided	Germany	26,7% Beginners, 73,3% Professionals
3	Montenegro	15	17-36	Montenegro	87% students 13% early-career professionals

4	Portugal	15	20–43	Portugal, Italy, Brazil	7 Beginners; 8 Professionals
5	Serbia	15	Not provided	Serbia	Heterogeneous group (no further detail provided)
6	Spain	15	Not provided	Spain	53% Beginners; 47% Professionals;

Note on data comparability: while all six pilot sessions share the common objective of testing the DigiCreate platform and Toolbox, it is important to note that they were not entirely homogeneous in design. The sessions in Germany, Montenegro, Serbia, Spain and Bosnia followed a workshop format centred on scenario-based learning activities, in which participants engaged directly with CCI tasks using the platform's tools. The session conducted in Portugal by Contextos was more explicitly structured as a usability test, with a stronger emphasis on operational testing of the Toolbox and collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, the level of quantitative detail varies across the four national reports: Germany and Montenegro provide precise aggregate data for most indicators, while Serbia's report is more qualitative in nature, and Portugal applies a partially different assessment scale. These differences are acknowledged throughout the comparative analysis and do not undermine the validity of cross-country comparisons, but they do require that findings be interpreted with appropriate contextual sensitivity.

Comparative Results Across Partner Countries

2. Comparative Results across Partner Countries

2.1 Key Performance Indicators

Below is a summary comparative table of the most relevant data reported by the partners regarding the key evaluation indicators of the pilot test. The data presented here will serve as the crucial quantitative foundation for the qualitative reflections and analyses presented in the following sections.

KPI	Germany	Bosnia	Montenegro	Portugal	Serbia	Spain
N° participants	15	15	15	15 (8+7)	15	15
Task completion rate	93% (14/15)	The majority completed both tasks	87% (13/15) delivered results	45.5% completed all 4 tasks	Lower than average, high dropout among beginners	100% (12/15 within session; 3/15 shortly after)
Full autonomy (no support needed)	40% (6/15)	Minority	Group 1: ~100%; Group 2: low	36.4%	Low, most needed continuous support	73% (11/15)
Support required (1+ interventions)	60% (9/15) once only	Majority (some multiple times)	87% (13/15) once	~45% needed 3+ interventions	Moderate to high	27% (4/15) occasional
Technical tool functionality	100%	100%	100%	100%	Issues reported (missing software, unprepared environments)	100% (minor friction switching platforms)
Correct attribution/ referencing	100%	Partial, not fully consistent	80% (12/15)	27.3% only	Not fully internalised, critical gap	Applied for the majority

Outputs rated "effective"	93% (14/15)	The majority "effective"; none "ineffective"	73% "effective"; 27% "promising"	18.2% "effective"; 36.4% "promising"; 45.5% "not effective"	Mixed, motivation is high, but completion is low	High, none rated ineffective
Intent to reuse tools	100%	100%	80% "Yes"; 20% "Maybe"	82% (45.5% yes + 36.4% maybe)	Strong interest reported	100%
Workshop duration	60 min	60 min	60 min	60 min	60 min	60 min
Delivery format	Online (Zoom)	Online	Online (MS Teams)	Online (Google Meet)	Online (MS Teams)	Online
Tools used	Trello, Canva, Google Drive, Padlet	Trello, Canva, Google Drive, Padlet	Trello, Canva, Google Drive, Padlet, CapCut	Trello, Canva, Google Drive, Padlet, CapCut	Trello, Canva, Google Drive, Padlet	Canva, ChatGPT, CapCut, Google Drive, Asana

2.2 Facilitation approaches and methodology variations

While all six partner countries followed the same core DigiCreate pilot structure, defined in a set of guidelines drafted by Contextos, facilitation approaches varied meaningfully across implementations, reflecting both local context and deliberate methodological choices.

Session structure and duration

All workshops were delivered online within approximately 60 minutes. Spain stood out for adopting the EAC 7-step non-formal learning methodology, providing the most explicit and replicable progression from orientation to reflection. Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Portugal, structured the session around dedicated breakout rooms for each scenario group, enabling clearer separation and differentiated support. Bosnia and Germany followed a more linear structure without systematic group separation.

Moderator role and intervention levels

The degree of moderator intervention varied considerably. In Germany, 60% of participants required no support at all, reflecting a largely enabling facilitation role. In Portugal (Session B), approximately 45% of participants needed three or more interventions, indicating high facilitator dependency. Serbia presented the most challenging facilitation context, with highly heterogeneous competence levels among participants that exceeded the capacity of the

facilitation model applied. Montenegro deployed dedicated moderators per breakout room, enabling more targeted and continuous support.

Scenario differentiation and toolkit flexibility

All countries implemented the two standard scenarios (sprint campaign creation for CCI professionals and promotional post creation for young aspirants), but with varying degrees of flexibility regarding the tools used compared to those suggested in the guidelines. Montenegro allowed the advanced group to replace Canva with Adobe Photoshop based on participant request, explicitly adapting the toolkit to professional competence levels. Spain introduced Asana as an alternative to Trello and integrated ChatGPT as an additional content creation tool. Bosnia and Germany followed the standard guidelines more closely.

Data collection and evaluation methods

Most partners used a structured standard pre-prepared Google Form with a 0–2 self-assessment scale and open questions combined with a Moderator Observatory Sheet. Spain collected feedback verbally through moderator observation, producing primarily qualitative data. These methodological differences are relevant for cross-country interpretation.

2.3 Country-specific insights

This section presents a synthesis of the most significant findings from each national implementation, highlighting distinctive outcomes, contextual factors and key observations that complement the comparative analysis.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Bosnian pilot test engaged 15 participants with mixed but generally functional digital competencies. The workshop achieved a high rate of task completion, with the majority of participants delivering the expected outputs. The main challenges identified were related to task initiation, since several participants reported uncertainty about how to begin, and group dynamics, with uneven participation and dominant individuals affecting collaborative balance. Time constraints were also frequently cited. Despite these difficulties, overall satisfaction was high, and all participants expressed willingness to reuse the tools introduced. The Bosnian implementation highlights the importance of clearer onboarding and more structured facilitation of group roles.

Germany

The German pilot test showed the highest level of participant autonomy among all implementations. 60% of participants completed the workshop without any moderator support, and 93% confirmed full task completion. All participants successfully applied attribution practices and confirmed that all tools functioned correctly. The main challenges were concentrated in task initiation and group coordination, particularly around uneven contribution levels. Creative production in Canva was identified as the easiest and most engaging component. Germany's results confirm that the DigiCreate workshop design is well-suited for participants with moderate to good prior digital experience and suggest that the

framework can function with minimal facilitation when the participant profile is sufficiently prepared.

Montenegro

The Montenegrin pilot test stands out for its detailed documentation and the clear differentiation between the two scenario groups. Group 1 (CCI professionals) demonstrated high autonomy, technical proficiency and effective coordination, requiring minimal moderator intervention. The group proactively requested and was granted the flexibility to use Adobe Photoshop instead of Canva, reflecting confidence and adaptability. Group 2 (Young Aspirants) required significantly more structured support, particularly for online communication, role distribution and tool navigation. The reflective exercise at the end confirmed that creative production was perceived as easy, while coordination and collaboration remained the main challenge for beginners. Montenegro's implementation offers a strong model for differentiated facilitation and adaptive toolkit management.

Portugal

The Portuguese pilot test, conducted by Contextos, differed from the other implementations in its primary focus: rather than evaluating participant learning outcomes, it specifically tested the usability and effectiveness of the DigiCreate toolbox itself. This makes it the most methodologically distinct session of the entire pilot. Session A involved ICC professionals in an open qualitative discussion, generating 12 structured recommendations for platform improvement. Session B tested the toolbox operationally with 7 participants, revealing a polarised distribution of results: approximately half completed all tasks independently, while nearly a third completed nothing, primarily due to tool-related barriers. The toolbox itself was identified as the main obstacle by most open-ended respondents, with attribution practices being the weakest dimension across all participants. In this frame, Portugal's findings provide the most actionable and design-oriented feedback for toolbox development.

Serbia

The Serbian pilot test was the most challenging in terms of implementation. The significant mismatch between participant competence levels and the independence required by the workshop design led to higher dropout rates and lower completion rates compared to other countries. Participants, predominantly beginners, reported difficulties with task initiation, cognitive overload and insufficient step-by-step guidance. However, motivation and interest remained consistently high throughout, suggesting that dropout was caused by pedagogical misalignment rather than lack of engagement. Serbia's pilot provides the most critical evidence for the need for scaffolded learning pathways, differentiated entry points and structured pre-session onboarding within the DigiCreate framework.

Spain

The Spanish pilot test achieved strong results across all key indicators, with 80% of participants completing tasks within the session timeframe and the remaining 20% finalising outputs shortly after. The adoption of the EAC 7-step methodology provided the most structured learning progression of all implementations. Notable distinctive features included the integration of ChatGPT as a content creation support tool and the use of Asana as a task

management alternative. Participants demonstrated awareness of attribution principles and the ability to critically evaluate AI-generated content, including fact-checking and proofreading. The main challenges were concentrated in the initial phase, with approximately 33% of participants experiencing uncertainty at task onset and 47% noting that additional time would have improved output quality. Spain's results confirm the effectiveness of experiential, non-formal learning methodologies when applied within a clearly structured digital workflow.

Cross-Country Pattern Analysis

3. Cross-country Pattern Analysis

3.1 Common strengths

Despite significant differences in context and facilitation approaches, several consistent strengths emerged across all six national implementations:

1) **High participant motivation and engagement:** across all countries, participants demonstrated strong motivation and willingness to engage with the tasks, even when facing difficulties. In Serbia, where completion rates were lower, moderators explicitly noted that dropout was caused by pedagogical misalignment rather than lack of interest. In Spain, 93% of participants expressed a strong desire to further develop digital and creative competencies. This cross-country pattern confirms that the DigiCreate workshop format is effective at generating genuine engagement among youth participants.

2) **Successful task completion and output delivery:** the majority of participants across all countries produced the expected outputs within the scheduled time. Germany achieved the highest completion rate (93%), followed by Spain (80% within the session, 100% shortly after), Montenegro (87%), and Bosnia, where the majority also completed both assigned tasks. Even Portugal's Session B, which was specifically designed to stress-test the toolbox, saw over half of the participants deliver full outputs despite significant technical barriers.

3) **Positive perception of digital tools:** all participants across all countries expressed willingness to reuse the tools introduced during the workshop. In Germany, Spain, and Montenegro, this was unanimous (100%). In Bosnia, all participants confirmed interest in future use. In Montenegro, 80% answered yes and 20% maybe. This consistent finding indicates strong perceived relevance and transferability of the digital toolkit, regardless of prior experience level.

4) **Canva as a consistently accessible and engaging tool:** Canva was identified as the easiest and most engaging component of the workshop in every country where it was used. Participants with no prior design experience were able to navigate templates and produce visual outputs, confirming its suitability as an entry-level creative tool.

5) **Google Drive as a reliable sharing infrastructure:** across all implementations, Google Drive functioned reliably as a repository and sharing tool. Portugal's moderator explicitly noted it as the element that worked best technically. No significant access or usability issues with Google Drive were reported in any country.

3.2 Recurring challenges

Several challenges appeared consistently across countries, regardless of participant profile or facilitation approach:

1) Uncertainty about how to start the task: task initiation was the single most frequently reported challenge across all six countries. Participants consistently reported uncertainty about where and how to begin, even after the introductory session. This pattern was present in Bosnia, Germany, Montenegro, Serbia and Spain, and was observed structurally in Portugal's test results. It suggests a systemic gap between instruction delivery and the clarity of the entry point into the workflow.

2) Time constraints: the 60-minute format was frequently cited as insufficient. In Germany, Spain and Bosnia, time pressure was among the top reported challenges. In Portugal, 36.4% of participants identified running out of time as their primary blocker. In Spain, 47% indicated that additional time would have improved output quality. While the time constraint is partially intentional, thought to simulate real-world pressure, the data suggests the current balance between task scope and available time needs recalibration.

3) Group coordination and uneven participation: collaboration difficulties were reported in all countries that involved group work. Issues included uneven contribution levels, dominant individuals, unclear role distribution and communication gaps. This was particularly visible in Bosnia, Germany, Montenegro (Group 2) and Spain. Portugal's qualitative data noted that attribution and coordination were the two weakest collaborative dimensions.

4) Attribution and licensing practices: attribution was a consistent weak point across all implementations. Portugal's data showed that only 27.3% of participants applied attribution independently, making it the lowest-performing dimension of the test. In Montenegro, 20% of participants did not apply attribution fully. In Bosnia and Germany, it was applied, but not always with full confidence. Serbia's self-assessment identified legal literacy as a critical knowledge gap. The cross-country pattern confirms that attribution is not yet sufficiently integrated into participants' digital workflow.

5) Difficulty navigating multiple tools simultaneously: using several platforms within a single 60-minute workflow generated cognitive overload in various cases, particularly among beginners. Serbia, Portugal and Montenegro reported this explicitly. The challenge was not with individual tools, but with the multi-tool coordination required to complete the full workflow.

3.3 Context-specific variables influencing the outcomes

While the common patterns above apply broadly, several country-specific factors significantly shaped outcomes and should be considered in future planning:

Country	Key context variable	Impact on outcomes
Bosnia Herzegovina	Mixed competence levels, online-only format	High completion but uneven group dynamics; need for stronger facilitation structure

Germany	Higher average digital competence, small focused group	Highest autonomy and completion rates; minimal moderator intervention needed
Montenegro	Strong competence differentiation between groups; 2 dedicated moderators	Best practice model for differentiated facilitation; Group 1 is highly autonomous, Group 2 needed full support
Portugal	Focus on the toolbox usability test, not participant learning	Unique polarised results; provides most actionable design feedback for platform development
Serbia	High proportion of beginners, limited onboarding	Highest dropout; confirms need for scaffolded entry and pre-session preparation
Spain	EAC 7-step methodology, integration of AI tools (ChatGPT)	Clearest learning progression; best documentation of responsible AI use practices

Toolbox Testing: Implications & Recommendations

4. Toolbox Testing: Implications & Recommendations

4.1 Features to maintain

The following elements demonstrated consistent value across implementations and should be preserved in future iterations of the DigiCreate testing or eventual learning path structuring:

- 1) **Google Drive**, as the primary sharing and repository tool, is reliable, simple and universally familiar, making it the most stable element of the entire workflow.
- 2) **Canva**, as the default visual creation tool, has a low entry barrier, template-based structure and engaging interface, making it suitable for all competence levels for visual production tasks.
- 3) Regarding the workshop, the two-scenario structure (ICC professionals/aspirant workers) proved effective in all countries that implemented it with dedicated facilitation. **It should be maintained and strengthened, suggesting the organisation of the tools into areas of expertise as a potential improvement to the toolbox.**
- 4) The scenario-based, task-oriented learning format as an approach consistently generated engagement and motivation, even among participants who struggled with execution. **The experiential learning methodology is the core strength of the workshop design.**
- 5) **Padlet**, despite occasional technical issues, proved effective as a shared conceptual workspace. Its visual and flexible format supports group ideation and should be retained, with technical reliability improvements.

4.2 Friction points and corresponding Toolbox gaps

The following elements were identified as common friction points:

- 1) **Uncertainty about how to start tasks:** the participants often did not know where or how to begin tasks, even after introductory sessions. This indicates that a lack of structured, step-by-step starter guidance and clear workflow mapping would confuse or hinder the use of the toolbox, especially for beginners.
- 2) **High reliance on moderator support:** most participants required at least one intervention from moderators, especially beginners, showing again the importance of competence-based pathways or guided workflows to support independent use.
- 3) **Time pressure and task completion challenges, and difficulty managing multiple tools simultaneously:** participants struggled to coordinate Canva, Google Drive, Trello, Padlet, and CapCut within the workflow. This suggests that the absence of an integrated workflow logic can cause cognitive overload.

4) **Weak attribution and responsible practice integration:** participants inconsistently applied attribution and responsible digital practices, suggesting the need for a specific tool to address the task.

5) **Group coordination issues:** uneven participation, unclear roles and collaboration difficulties were reported. In this frame, the toolbox does not provide structured guidance for collaborative use itself, although the DigiCreate platform offers additional features to address this gap, such as the Community Map.

4.3 Recommendations for future toolbox tests

Taking into account the feedback received from partners, any future tests of the toolbox's effectiveness should consider the following points:

1. **Onboarding:** all implementations revealed the need for a more structured onboarding phase. Future sessions should include a dedicated opening segment covering a brief walkthrough of all platforms to be used, confirmation that all tool links are functional, a visual overview of the full workflow, and a short example of expected outputs. For participants with no prior experience, a pre-session preparation guide should be distributed before the workshop. This reflects the need for the toolbox itself to incorporate clearer onboarding mechanisms, embedded guidance, and explicit workflow visualisation, reducing dependence on external facilitation.

2. **Time structure:** the 60-minute format is valuable for simulating real-world time pressure but is insufficient for the current scope of tasks, particularly for beginner participants. Two adjustments are recommended: either extend the workshop duration to 75-90 minutes or reduce the scope of required deliverables within the 60-minute format, focusing on quality over quantity. Intermediate check-in moments would also help participants self-regulate pacing.

3. **Task complexity:** the current task design assumes a level of autonomy that does not reflect the full range of participants. Tasks should be modularised, with a core deliverable achievable by all participants within the time frame and optional extensions for more advanced users.

4. **Group facilitation:** group coordination was a challenge in every country. Future implementations should introduce simple role distribution within teams at the start of the group work phase (e.g., coordinator, content creator, visual designer, reviewer). Dedicated moderators per scenario group should be adopted as the standard facilitation model. This reflects a broader need for the toolbox to better support collaborative workflows, supported by other DigiCreate platform's features like the Community Map.

5. **Technical infrastructure and multi-tool workflow improvements:** all tool links should be tested by the moderator before the session and provided as a single consolidated document or landing page, the number of tools used within a single session should be reviewed since the current workflow (Padlet + Trello + Canva + CapCut + Google Drive) generates significant

cognitive load, video creation (CapCut) should be treated as an optional advanced task rather than a standard requirement, given that it was rarely completed within the time frame.

6. Monitoring and evaluation improvements: a standardised evaluation instrument, already partially implemented, should be adopted across all partner countries to ensure comparability of results; the self-assessment scale (0–2) should be retained and expanded.

Moderator observation sheets should be standardised and expanded, with a common template covering: intervention frequency and type, technical issues encountered, group dynamics observations, and time allocation per phase.

7. Post-workshop follow-up (30–60 days) should be introduced to assess whether participants have applied the tools and competencies acquired in a real-world context, supporting longer-term learning outcome measurement aligned with Erasmus+ reporting requirements.

Conclusions

5. Conclusions

5.1 Overall effectiveness of the pilot test

The DigiCreate pilot test, conducted across six European partner countries between March 16 and March 29 (2026), demonstrated that the workshop model is fundamentally capable of delivering meaningful feedback to gain a broader understanding of the toolbox's utility, its internal structure, and the potential improvements that could be incorporated to ensure that it serves as a valuable resource for the global community of current and aspiring workers in the ICC sector.

Across all implementations, participants engaged with digital tools, collaborated on scenario-based tasks, and produced concrete creative outputs within a structured time-limited environment. Completion rates ranged from strong (Germany: 93%, Spain: 100%, Montenegro: 87%) to more challenged (Serbia, Portugal Session B), with the lower results directly attributable to identifiable and addressable factors: primarily insufficient onboarding, competence-level mismatch and toolbox usability barriers. Identifying these barriers is a crucial step toward improving the efficiency of the toolbox provided.

The pilot confirmed three core findings.

First, the experiential, scenario-based learning format is highly effective at generating engagement and producing outputs.

Second, the current design is well-calibrated for participants with moderate prior digital experience, and requires structured adaptation to be equally effective for complete beginners.

Third, the toolbox in its current state functions as a usable but not yet intuitive platform: it delivers value but introduces friction that limits its full potential, particularly for less experienced users.

Support needs were significant across all countries, since a majority of participants required moderator assistance at least once, but this did not prevent task completion in most cases. The overall satisfaction with the workshop experience was high across all six countries, and the unanimous willingness of participants to reuse the introduced tools confirms the relevance and perceived value of the competences developed.

The most significant area for improvement remains the transition from instruction to action: providing clearer entry points, embedded examples and structured starter guidance would address the single most frequently reported challenge across the entire pilot.

5.2 Critical analysis and recommendations for the Toolbox

Based on observations across different national contexts, the DigiCreate Digital Toolbox demonstrates clear potential to support the development and application of digital competences. Its effectiveness, however, is strongly dependent on users' prior experience and on how the toolbox is integrated into practical workflows. For beginners or users with emerging competencies, the toolbox provides a structured entry point to tools and practices typical of the cultural and creative industries, facilitating guided exploration, understanding of digital workflow logic, and the development of initial operational autonomy. Yet, even within this target group, challenges persist, particularly in task initiation, multi-tool coordination, and translating instructions into concrete actions, highlighting the need for stronger scaffolding, clearer guidance, and more explicit workflow structuring.

For more experienced ICC professionals, the toolbox currently functions more as a resource repository than as an integrated environment that enhances productivity. Without advanced pathways, personalised guidance, or task-specific applications, the toolbox struggles to meaningfully support process optimisation or innovation. Across all user levels, the clarity of the connection between tools, tasks, and expected outputs is critical: where guidance is explicit, users complete activities effectively; where it is fragmented, operational blockages arise, reliance on external support increases, and overall effectiveness is reduced. These observations, combined with pilot evidence of frequent moderator intervention and the need for structured onboarding, underscore the necessity of improving the toolbox as a coherent, enabling system rather than a collection of disconnected tools.

Key recommendations for toolbox improvement include:

1. **User-level tool classification:** clearly label each tool by skill level (beginner, intermediate, professional), difficulty, and required learning curve, enabling users to select resources appropriate to their competence.
2. **Structured learning pathways:** develop pre-defined tool sequences and scenarios tailored to different competence levels. This would reduce initiation uncertainty, lower cognitive load, and support autonomous task completion, addressing pilot findings of beginner dependency on moderator support.
3. **Practical guidance and learning materials:** integrate step-by-step instructions, video tutorials and targeted online courses for each tool, moving beyond mere naming to active skill-building support.
4. **Enhanced tool metadata:** Provide transparent information on pricing models (free, freemium, paid), a standardised hashtag per tool for searchability and clear technical requirements for use.
5. **Language accessibility:** ensure tools and resources are available in multiple languages or clearly indicate limitations, increasing usability for a broader international audience.

6. **Explicit connection to tasks and project goals:** clarify how each tool supports specific scenario-based tasks and aligns with project objectives. Establishing guided pathways would help users understand the purpose of tools and workflows, directly addressing pilot observations of fragmented task execution.
7. **Scaffolding and workflow support:** embed step-by-step starter guides and visual examples of expected outputs, particularly for beginners, to reduce entry-point uncertainty and enhance operational autonomy.

In conclusion, the DigiCreate toolbox is more effective as an entry-level digital competence environment, particularly for beginners, but requires enhancements in tool classification, structured learning pathways, practical guidance, metadata transparency, language accessibility and workflow clarity. Implementing these improvements would transform the toolbox from a collection of resources into a coherent, enabling system that supports autonomous, fluid and transferable application of digital competences across different user profiles.

