



Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship
2024-1-IS01-KA220-VET-000243941

Work Package 5 NICHE 2 Exploitation and Valorisation

BUILDING THE NICHE 2 COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Guidelines for a Sustainable Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage



Background & Purpose

The NICHE 2 project (Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship 2, Erasmus+ KA220-VET, 2024–2027) aims to strengthen the skills and competences of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) operators and entrepreneurs through innovative training in sustainability and green competences.

As a sustainability measure of the project, partners are committed to **laying the foundations of the NICHE 2 Network**—an **informal Community of Practice** that will connect practitioners, professionals, and stakeholders from across Europe engaged in the safeguarding, transmission, and sustainable development of ICH.

This document outlines the concept and preliminary plan for the NICHE 2 Network. It is a living document, open to feedback from all interested stakeholders during the project implementation period and subject to refinement before the project's closure.

This network will start to operate informally during the project implementation period and aims to evolve into a fully operational European community for ICH and sustainability after the project's completion.

Vision & Mission

Vision □ To make Intangible Cultural Heritage a living driver of sustainable development, community empowerment, and green transition across Europe.

Mission □ The NICHE 2 Network will:

- ✓ Foster **knowledge exchange and collaboration** among ICH practitioners, cultural organisations, training providers, policymakers, and entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Promote **sustainability and green competences** within the ICH sector, aligning practice with the **EU Green Deal** and **GreenComp Framework**.
- ✓ Serve as a **meeting point for cross-sectoral cooperation**, connecting culture, education, entrepreneurship, and sustainable innovation.
- ✓ Act as a **springboard for future EU cooperation**, encouraging joint initiatives under Erasmus+ or other EU funding streams.



Objectives

- ✓ **Empower ICH practitioners** and organisations through shared learning and peer support.
- ✓ **Enhance digital and green capacities** in the ICH sector.
- ✓ **Promote inclusive and sustainable practices** in cultural heritage management and transmission.
- ✓ **Facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration** between the public, private, and civil sectors around ICH.
- ✓ **Increase visibility of ICH** as a professional field contributing to the twin transition.
- ✓ **Ensure the long-term sustainability** and impact of NICHE 2 results.

Structure & Governance

Phase 1 – Setting the Stage

During the last phase of the project – starting from November 2025 until April 2027 - all partners commit to **promoting and co-creating** the network concept:

- ✓ Introducing the idea of the NICHE 2 Network during **co-creation sessions, testing and validation (T&V) activities, and valorisation events**.
- ✓ Sharing these Guidelines with stakeholders and collecting **feedback and expressions of interest** through an online form (<https://forms.gle/3rYNprAeREK5GAWa7>)
- ✓ Using that feedback to shape the identity, priorities and preferred activities of the future network.

This participatory approach ensures that the Network will grow organically around the needs, expectations and motivations of its potential members.

Phase 2 – Launch of the Permanent Informal Community of Practice

After the project's end, the NICHE 2 Network will **remain an informal, open and flexible Community of Practice**, with no legal personality or formal membership structure. This flexibility is intentional and beneficial: it allows members to collaborate freely, adapt to emerging opportunities, and keep administrative burdens to a minimum.



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Coordination and Communication □ To maintain regular collaboration and ensure the proper functioning of the network:

- ✓ **Húsavík Academic Center (HAC)**, as the **project coordinator and initiator**, will act as the **main facilitator** of the NICHE 2 Network. HAC will ensure continuity, oversee communication tools, and convene regular online meetings.
- ✓ All **NICHE 2 partners** will play an active supporting role, contributing to content, outreach, and coordination of activities within their countries and sectors.
- ✓ The coordination model remains **light and collaborative**, avoiding rigid structures while ensuring functionality and coherence.

Communication mechanism □ Communication among members will occur via a set of tools:

- ✓ **Annual online meeting** to discuss joint initiatives, share opportunities, and exchange experiences.
- ✓ **Regular email updates or digital newsletters** (every 2–3 months) coordinated by HAC with input from partners and members.
- ✓ **An open collaborative space** on the NICHE Platform for sharing resources, events, and funding opportunities.

The structure and functioning of the NICHE 2 Network are **inspired by established European Communities of Practice**, such as **EPALE** (the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe), and the **EU GreenComp Community**, which demonstrate how flexible, informal, and voluntary models can successfully foster long-term professional collaboration and knowledge exchange across Europe.

All processes will remain voluntary and self-organised, ensuring that the community stays accessible, dynamic, and responsive to members' needs

Activities & Engagement Opportunities

To achieve its mission, the NICHE 2 Network will promote:

- ✓ **Online thematic meetings** at least once a year, hosted by HAC or rotating members.
- ✓ **Exchange of experiences and best practices** on sustainable ICH safeguarding, green skills, and entrepreneurship.
- ✓ **Joint exploration of EU opportunities** (Erasmus+, Creative Europe etc).



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- ✓ **Peer learning and mentoring initiatives** among members
- ✓ **Collaborative events and campaigns** aligned with European heritage and sustainability agendas.
- ✓ **Visibility actions** through the NICHE Platform, newsletters, and social media.

Communication Tools

The upgraded **NICHE Platform** (www.nicheproject.eu) will serve as the **digital home** of the network, offering:

- ✓ A shared online **space for communication and knowledge exchange**.
- ✓ A **directory of members** and their initiatives.
- ✓ An **open repository** of materials and good practices.

Complementary tools (e.g., mailing list, digital newsletter, and social media channels) will support regular, low-threshold communication among members.

Sustainability of the Network

The sustainability of the NICHE 2 Network after the end of Erasmus+ co-funding will rely on:

- ✓ **Internal resources and voluntary commitment** of the NICHE 2 partners, who have agreed to continue facilitating and animating the community within their respective networks.
- ✓ **The NICHE Platform**, which will remain active as an online collaboration and dissemination space, **maintained by Internet Web Solutions (IWS)** — the project's IT partner — **for three years after the end of the project**.
- ✓ The network's role as a **platform for collaboration and new project design**, helping members to jointly develop proposals and secure additional funding.
- ✓ **Self-sustaining engagement**, where the value of shared learning and networking motivates continued participation and mutual support.

In this way, the NICHE 2 Network is conceived not as a one-off project outcome, but as a living and evolving community, continuously nourished by its members' collaboration, creativity, and shared purpose.



Joining the Network

Participation is open to all organisations and individuals interested in ICH, sustainability, and green competences. To express interest, stakeholders can complete the **NICHE 2 Network Expression of Interest Form**, available at this link: <https://forms.gle/3rYNprAeREK5GAWa7>

Through the form, potential members can also share ideas, expectations, and preferred topics for collaboration, helping co-create a network that truly reflects their interests. Membership is free and based on mutual exchange, collaboration, and shared commitment to the mission of the Network.





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Expression of interest in joining the NICHE 2 Network

By filling out this form, your organisation expresses its interest in joining the NICHE 2 Network, an informal European Community of Practice created in the framework of the Erasmus+ project NICHE 2 – Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship 2 (2024–2027).

The NICHE 2 Network aims to bring together practitioners, organisations, and stakeholders active in the fields of Intangible Cultural Heritage, sustainability, and green competences. It aims to create a collaborative space for knowledge exchange, networking, and co-creation of new ideas and EU projects.

Please share some information about your organisation and your interests so that we can better understand your profile and expectations for the network. Participation is free and informal; by completing this form you express interest in being kept informed and involved in the network's activities.

Thank you for your interest in being part of our community and for contributing to the transition of the Intangible Cultural Heritage sector.













