



Funded by the European Union



GAMEHEARTS DTTHONS SUMMARY





- Project:** Games, Heritage, Arts, & Sport: the economic, social, and cultural value of the European videogame ecosystem. GAMEHEARTS
- Grant Agreement:** 101132543 - HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01
- Author(s):** Sylwia Wrona, Dawid Kościwicz, Patrycja Klimas
- Reviewer(s):** **GAMEHEARTS:** Charlotte Gislam (USAL), Oleksandra Gudkova (UNIVIE)
Industry expert: Michał Bobrowski (Webedia Polska SA, Polish Gamers Observatory)

Object	D3.2 - DTthons Summary
Work Package	WP3
Deliverable Lead	WUEB
Type	R
Dissemination Level	PU
Version	1.0

Cover photo taken at DTthon International Edition Wrocław





Metadata

Project	Games, Heritage, Arts, & Sport: the economic, social, and cultural value of the European videogame ecosystem. GAMEHEARTS
Acronym	GAMEHEARTS
Programme	Horizon Europe
Call	HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01
Grant Agreement No.	101132543
Licensing terms	CC BY 4.0
DOI	10.5281/zenodo.16812906
Author(s)	Sylwia Wrona, Dawid Kościewicz, Patrycja Klimas
Reviewer(s)	Charlotte Gislam (USAL) Oleksandra Gudkova (UNIVIE) Michał Bobrowski (Webedia Polska SA, Polish Gamers Observatory)
Title	D3.2 - DTthons Summary
Keywords	design thinking, cross-industry cooperation, strategic cooperation, cultural and creative industries, game developers, policy recommendations
Deliverable Lead	WUEB
Type	R
Dissemination Level	PU
Version	1.0





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the key findings of the GAMEHEARTS **Design Thinking Marathons** (DTthons), including insights into the current and desired dynamics of cross-industry cooperation between the European Video Game Industry Ecosystem (EVGIE) and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI). It also offers strategic recommendations for policymakers and practitioners, outlines idea cases - propositions for effective and successful cross-sectoral collaboration – as well as highlights additional insights and directions for future research. Given the role of DTthons as both an exploratory and verification research tool, the report also details the methodological framework underpinning the implemented marathons.

Across the broad spectrum of CCI, the video game industry stands out in terms of value generation, growth dynamics, employment creation, and social impact. One of the central research questions within the GAMEHEARTS project is whether, and to what extent, cooperation between the game industry and other CCI can foster mutual development - strengthening other CCIs while further accelerating growth within the VGI itself. As confirmed by the DTthons, while both sides share core values such as creativity, public engagement, and cultural relevance, their interactions have typically been parallel rather than cooperative. However, findings from the four innovative research events suggest that strategic cooperation between these sectors holds untapped potential to generate transformative value for European culture, economy, and society.

The report is structured around four thematic parts:

1. the rationale and context of the study within the GAMEHEARTS project (Chapters 1–2);
2. methodological framework and assumptions (Chapter 3);
3. presentation of empirical results (Chapter 4), and
4. key findings and conclusions (Chapter 5).

The empirical core of the report is Chapter 4, which discusses the outcomes of the four DTthon events - three national and one international - conducted with 72 participants from across the EVGIE and CCI spectrum, including a strong representation from game developers. Over those four three-day marathons, practitioners worked in interdisciplinary teams (three teams of 5–7 members per DTthon, yielding twelve teams in total), tackling a common research-business challenge: ***How can cross-industry cooperation be structured for mutual benefit?***

Their solutions emerged iteratively through a structured design thinking process addressing specific topics - from stakeholder and trend mapping, benchmarking, and diagnosing the current state of EVGIE-CCI cooperation, to envisioning ideal cooperation frameworks and formulating practical recommendations, including a 'cooperation decalogue'. The report synthesises these outcomes across several thematic clusters:





- Understanding existing practices and the ecosystem itself.
- Understanding the key relationships and industrial misalignments.
- Cross-industry cooperation – the current state.
- Cross-industry cooperation – the desired future and idea cases.
- Practice-driven decalogue of cross-industry cooperation and recommendations.
- Emerging issues and key insights for further exploration.

A concise **diagnosis of the current state of cross-industry cooperation is aptly captured as: fragmented but fertile ground**. While creative potential and shared values are present, systemic obstacles hinder the development of sustainable partnerships. These include **structural misalignments, communication barriers, cultural differences**, and – most notably – **a lack of orchestration and facilitation mechanisms** to support ecosystem-wide collaboration.

The research process adopted a **four-phase model of cross-industry collaboration (Establishment, Execution, Ending, Endorsement)**. These phases are not necessarily sequential, and their effective implementation appears critical to long-term success. Importantly, our analysis reveals that the Endorsement phase – focused on scaling, institutionalisation, dissemination, and long-term recognition – is almost entirely overlooked in current practices, despite being identified by practitioners as essential for sustained collaboration. Without strategic endorsement, even promising pilots risk dissolution, leaving behind fragmented outputs and unrealised systemic potential.

Looking at the desired state and ideal conditions for cross-industry cooperation, DTthon participants independently developed and iteratively refined **twelve original idea cases regarding successful cross-industry cooperation**. Each case details a cross-industry project concept between EVGIE and CCI, structured along the four-phase cooperation model and providing actionable blueprints for implementation.

In addition to these idea cases, DTthons yielded **five key insights** illustrating crucial observations and reflections made by participants, often identified by more than one team and/or indirectly emerging at various stages of the marathon:

1. ‘Babel tower’ – when translation fails, cooperation fails.
2. ‘You’ve got (no) match’ – without alignment, even the best idea won’t happen.
3. ‘Plan it, don’t just pitch it’ – results only grow when nurtured beyond launch.
4. ‘Human API’ – people are the interface between sectors, not tools.
5. ‘Build the bridge, not just the boat’ – we need infrastructure, not just isolated initiatives.





Lastly, the DTthon methodology enabled the synthesis of **strategic recommendations**, tailored for both policymakers and cross-sectoral practitioners:

For Policymakers:

- Recognise the cultural significance of games beyond entertainment (e.g., public awareness campaigns may be needed to shift perceptions of games as ‘low culture’).
- Streamline funding procedures to better accommodate mixed-sector initiatives.
- Design integrated funding models that support all four collaboration phases - not only the initial establishment.
- Most importantly, the European Commission should invest in developing a coherent, **orchestrated ecosystem rather than relying on ad hoc initiatives**. This ecosystem would include a suite of facilitation tools, innovation hubs, and support platforms to continuously stimulate, mediate, and sustain cross-sector collaboration. All DTthons pointed to the need for a systemic, facilitation-based ecosystem that goes beyond improving single-project performance, enabling a cultural landscape that is interactive, inclusive, and socially embedded - enhancing not only innovation but also democratic resilience and social cohesion.

For Practitioners:

- Develop shared communication tools, glossaries, and project management templates.
- Invest in ‘bridge profiles’ - professionals fluent in both creative and technical domains.
- Implement structured onboarding processes and clear expectation-setting protocols.
- Create ‘sandbox’ environments for safe experimentation and low-risk prototyping.

From a methodological perspective, it is important to note that DTthons represent a novel approach to scientific research. Their use in this project demonstrated that DTthon-based research design can be seen as a meaningful innovation, proving effective not only for generating insights but also for fostering trust and cooperation across industrial boundaries. Compared to more traditional methods - e.g. workshops or interviews - DTthons offer a more immersive, time-bound, and challenge-driven format that intensifies group dynamics and accelerates solution co-creation. Participants are not only informants but active co-designers, which leads to richer, more practice-oriented outcomes and a stronger sense of shared ownership. The DTthon format is highly replicable and shows strong potential as a research-based policy tool - applicable at both national and EU levels for cross-industry strategy development.

In a nutshell, the GAMEHEARTS DTthons findings demonstrate that with the right scaffolding, EVGIE-CCI collaboration can generate meaningful value for European competitiveness, cultural vitality, and societal well-being. The question is no longer whether these sectors should collaborate - but rather **how quickly Europe can build the infrastructure to make that collaboration systematic, sustainable, and impactful**. This report offers practice-based insights toward answering that very question.





Table of Contents

1. PROJECT SUMMARY.....	8
1.1. WP3 Summary.....	8
2. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT.....	10
2.1. Scope and Relevance of the Report.....	10
2.2. Structure.....	15
3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN OF DTTHONs.....	17
3.1. Research Approach.....	17
3.2. Methodological Characteristic.....	19
3.3. Organisation & Participants.....	24
4. RESULTS OF DTTHONs.....	30
4.1 Understanding Existing Practices and Ecosystem Itself.....	30
4.1.1. Trends, benchmarks and inspirations.....	30
4.1.2. Main actors and stakeholders in cross-industry cooperation.....	37
4.2. Understanding the Key Relationships and Industrial Misalignments.....	41
4.2.1. Mutual (mis)understanding between EVGIE and CCI.....	41
4.2.2. Cross-sector mutual understanding – key needs and challenges.....	45
4.3. Cross-Industry Cooperation - The Current State.....	46
4.4. Cross-Industry Cooperation - The Desired Future and Idea Cases.....	50
4.5. Practice-Driven Decalogue of Cross-Industry Cooperation and Recommendations.....	82
4.6. Emerging Issues and the Key Insights for Further Exploration.....	96
4.7. Application of DTthon - Feedback and Recommendations.....	104
4.7.1. DTthon formula and its potential improvements.....	105
4.7.2. DTthon formula as a framework for cross-industry co-innovations.....	108
5. SUMMARISING CONCLUSIONS.....	110
REFERENCES.....	119
LIST OF TABLES.....	121
LIST OF FIGURES.....	122
LIST OF PHOTOS.....	123





1. PROJECT SUMMARY¹

In line with its objectives, the GAMEHEARTS² project focuses on exploring the opportunities, potential, and pathways for enhancing the value of the European Video Games Industry Ecosystem (EVGIE³). This focus extends beyond economic value, incorporating broader social and cultural dimensions. Particular attention is given to identifying new, or better utilising existing, developmental trajectories for the EVGIE, with a central emphasis on fostering collaboration - specifically cooperation oriented towards co-creating value and co-innovation, as well as enabling value transfer both within the EVGIE and across the wider Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI⁴).

The **main goal** focuses on maximization of the value of the EVGIE within the broader social context of the CCI. Nonetheless, its achievement is based on reaching five, more detailed objectives (referred to in section 2.1.), which correspond to seven work packages (WP), including five research WPs: WP2: Stakeholder workshops, WP3: Videogames Industry Ecosystem, WP4: Governance challenges and opportunities, WP5: The impact of videogames in shaping a more inclusive society, and WP6: Ludic experiences build & audience research.

The project is run under a **consortium** of 5 universities (i.e., Universities of Salford (UK), Tampere (Finland), Vienna (Austria), Breda University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), and Wroclaw University of Economics and Business (Poland)) and four industry partners (i.e., Ubisoft (France), Imperial War Museum (UK), Manchester City (UK), and London Symphony Orchestra (UK)).

1.1. WP3 Summary

This report is the second deliverable developed under WP3: Videogames Industry Ecosystem (D3.2 DTthons Summary). According to the project's framework, WP3 concentrates on the identity, culture, as well as best practices established by EVGIE to understand how to encourage the growth of the entire videogame industry ecosystem. It aims to contribute to several areas such as economic growth, job creation, physical and mental well-being, and social and cultural cohesion. More specifically, WP3 encompasses research activities that

1 To maximize the coherence of documents, this section is the same for all deliverables prepared under WP3, namely: Deliverable 3.1. State-of-the-Art Report 1 (Kościewicz et al., 2025; available here: <https://zenodo.org/records/14882916>), Deliverable 3.2 DTthons Summary (this report), and Deliverable 3.3 Report & Recommendations for VGD (expected in November 2025).

2 Project's website: gamehearts.eu
Project's LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/gamehearts-research/>

3 EVGIE covers a wide range of actors: video game developers, game publishers, game distributors, hardware providers, software providers, influencers, NGOs, research organisations, policymakers, researchers, etc. (Kościewicz et al., 2025).

4 CCI covers the following industries: architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts, (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts (Regulation 2021/818, 2021).





integrate desk-based research with a wide range of fieldwork investigations. The results of desk research are available in D3.1. State-of-the-Art Report 1 (Kościewicz et al., 2025) while the results of the fieldwork activities are covered by this report (Del. 3.2. Summary of DTthons) and the D3.3 Report & Recommendations for Video Game Developers (planned to be published via ZENODO in November 2025).

Within the GAMEHEARTS project, WP3 adopts an industry perspective, focusing on the videogame ecosystem and CCI. The research process is structured into five - mixed sequential-simultaneous - stages:

1. **Exploratory Research:** Conducting a discussion panel to gather initial insights (implemented as a part of WP2).
2. **In-Depth Literature Review:** Analysing academic literature, industry reports, and case studies of successful cooperation linking games/videogame ecosystem with CCI to identify key trends, gaps, mechanisms of value co-creation, co-innovation, and value transfer related to cooperation within the videogames ecosystem and CCI.
3. **Quantitative Research:** Surveying European game developers to assess the extent to which co-creation relationships and co-innovation relationships are utilised by game developers as well as test the impact of co-innovation relationships on developers' innovativeness.
4. **Exploratory and Confirmatory Qualitative Research:** Conducting in-depth individual interviews with game developers, other representatives of the videogame ecosystem, and representatives of CCI as well as focus group discussions to deepen understanding in a given field, outline improvement recommendations, and validate findings generated earlier.
5. **Exploratory and Confirmatory Design Thinking Workshops:** Organising design thinking marathons to collaboratively explore and refine innovative solutions related to cross-industry cooperation linking game developers with other actors of EVGIE and representatives from other CCI.





2. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

This report refers to the fifth research activity focusing on presentation of research design as well as findings from four design thinking marathons organized to explore innovative ways to improve the mechanisms of cross-industry cooperation linking EVGIE and CCI.

This report **summarises the organisation and implementation of a series of design thinking marathons, presents the obtained research results** as well as **outlines methodological issues related to utilisation of DTthons as a research method**.

DTthons were held as part of the GAMEHEARTS project between February and April 2025 and implemented by the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business team. Among a wide range of common research methods and techniques applied under the GAMEHEARTS project, DTthons were originally designed and used to run exploratory investigation in a novel, creation-based-, participatory, and teamworking-based approach. Given the innovative nature of the adopted research approach, it is important to briefly explain what a design thinking marathon (DTthon) entails⁵.

A single **DTthon** is a multi-day intensive innovation sprint focused on designing solutions for a predefined business challenge.

From a scientific perspective, a DTthon represents an innovative approach to exploratory research in the social sciences, grounded in design thinking and employing a broad range of operational tools. These tools help uncover the structural nature of the challenge (e.g., stakeholder mapping, user profiling), identify key positive and negative trends (e.g., trend mapping), and detect relevant benchmarks (e.g., including benchmark mapping, case studies gathered through mini-interviews using the critical incident technique). They also serve to capture both the current and the desired state of practices related to the challenge at hand. From a practical standpoint, the DTthon format is similar to programming hackathons in that it relies on the involvement of experienced and knowledgeable key informants.

The business challenge underlying the implemented DTthons in the project was focused on effective and mutually beneficial cross-industry cooperation between the EVGIE and other CCI.

2.1. Scope and Relevance of the Report

GAMEHEARTS project perspective

Given the teleological perspective, DTthons contribute to achieving the objectives set out for the entire GAMEHEARTS project.

⁵ More information regarding the adopted research approach including the description of DTthons are provided in the methodological section of this report (Section 3).





First, regarding the main objective, GAMEHEARTS focuses on the EVGIE's development in terms of relevant benefits such as increased employment, development of mental well-being, and strengthened social and cultural cohesion. Given the above, DTthons as focusing on improvement and development of cross-industry cooperation allowed us to explore one of the possible paths for **EVGIE development, namely the relational path, which assumes that growth, competitiveness, and competitive advantage can be built through relational strategies focusing on strategic cooperation** (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Osarenkhoe, 2010; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2019). The considered relational path, assuming cross-industry cooperation, seems to be a good option⁶, as it makes it possible to leverage the growth not only of video game developers (the core of video game industry) and the industry ecosystem functioning around them, but also to accelerate the growth of other cultural and creative actors engaged in cooperation with partners from the video game industry.

Moreover, cross-industry cooperation can significantly enhance social and cultural cohesion - an objective central to the GAMEHEARTS project. Joint programmes, projects, and initiatives linking video game developers with other cultural organisations help make cultural offerings and communication more accessible to the wider public. At the same time, they contribute to greater coherence and effectiveness in shaping cultural identity, increasing cultural recognition, and promoting the popularity of culture in general.

Notably, besides the fact that DTthons provided the raw material on the specific topics, it should be noted that each event was attended by a diverse group of participants (representing various entities from EVGIE and different CCI sectors). The DTthons provided a practical opportunity for establishing contacts, engaging in discussion, and exchanging perspectives on cooperation-based development paths - both for the individual participants and the organisations they represented. It has been reflected particularly in participants' feedback as a highly application-oriented realisation of the objectives related to strengthening cultural cohesion and creating developmental opportunities for the broader Cultural and Creative Industries (see section 4.7 for details).

Second, implementation of DTthons also contributed to achieving the set of detailed objectives of the GAMEHEARTS project⁷. Particularly this research stage directly contributed to the objective focusing on the recognition of pathways for cooperation (mechanisms, practices, key relationships as well as verification of the 4E model of cross-industry cooperation: establishment, execution, ending, and endorsement) by identifying the current state and the desired approaches.

⁶ Reasoning for the focus on the relational path of EVGIE development is presented in one of the prior deliverables developed under the GAMEHEARTS project (Kościewicz et al., 2025 – look into Section 2.2).

⁷ Detailed objectives for the GAMEHEARTS project are as follows: (1) develop understanding the role of EVGIE, (2) running a policy analysis, (3) exploring pathways for collaboration between EVGIE and CCI, (4) improving accessibility to culture & heritage, (5) development of policy recommendations, and (6) development of strategic recommendations.





Moreover, DTthons allowed us to gather original and practice-based ideas and suggestions for policymakers as well as for game developers and representatives of other CCI, which fit directly into the objectives focused on the development of recommendations for improvements and development-oriented solutions that can support sustainable growth within the EVGIE and CCI.

Finally, in a more indirect way, DTthons added also to a better understanding of the role of EVGIE (especially in the context of its further growth and role in the growth of other CCI) and improvement of accessibility to culture and heritage as the investigated cross-industry cooperation phenomena is usually focused towards broadening the target audience (e.g. gamers as customers of symphony orchestra) and diversifying the cultural offer available to audiences (e.g. interactive and VR components of exhibition in museum).

WP3 Perspective

This report directly corresponds to Task 3.4 of the GAMEHEARTS project, which involved the organisation of four DTthons. Each DTthon assumed to include three working teams, diverse in both organisational and sectoral terms, tasked with proposing practical solutions in response to a defined business challenge. This challenge was directly aligned with the overarching objectives of WP3 stated in the grant proposal: Videogame Industry Ecosystem, namely: *'how EVGIE can transfer value (i.e., dissemination and transfer of games-related solutions like VR, MR, AR, project management approaches etc.) and co-create (i.e., initiation and/or engagement in co-innovation processes) with CCI including museums, live music, and sport to the greatest extent. Considering value transfer and value co-creation in a general context but also more specifically an increase in the reach and its diversity (e.g. in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability etc.) of cultural audiences. (...) Importantly the business problem to be solved in DTthons will be finetuned based on results from workshops organized as an integral part of WP2. T3.4. ref. to O3.1. and O3.3.'* Initially, considering the organisational structure of the GAMEHEARTS project (see Introduction to Section 1), it was assumed that the target group of informants would include video game developers (VGD), representatives of the sports, music, and museum industries, and potentially also regional and national policymakers.

Following the set of above-mentioned assumptions, four three-day marathons were organised (3 national and 1 international), each involving a different group of industrially diverse participants (72 practitioners in total).





Our business challenge posed to the 12 working teams (3 per DTthon) was the same in each event and centred on identifying **how VGIE can effectively co-create and transfer value with other CCI**. Its exploration was structured mainly around the originally developed four-phase model of cross-industry collaboration: (1) Establishment, (2) Execution, (3) Ending, and (4) Endorsement⁸.

The key informants were individuals from EVGIE and other CCI sectors, all of whom had prior experience with cross-sector collaboration. It should be noted that, (1) based on the findings from the systematic literature review (Kościewicz et al., 2025) which indicated that music, sport, and museums are the industries relatively often considered in the context of cross-industry cooperation and (2) considering a broad approach adopted in the GAMEHEARTS project focusing on a wide range of CCI, in the DTthons the representatives of practice were not limited to music, sport and museum industries as outlined in our initial assumptions. We believe that inclusion of a wider spectrum of CCI (e.g. publishing, animation, craft, theatre) allowed us to take a bigger picture of addressed phenomena and made our conclusions more coherent across heterogeneous cultural and creative industries.

Deliverable 3.2 Perspective

Given the assumptions of the scope of deliverable 3.2, this report provides the key findings of the organised DTthons. Besides the core focus on exploring the cross-industry cooperation paths addressed in the posed business challenge, it shows the current understanding of existing practices and cross-industry relationships, and how effective cross-industry cooperations can be shaped in the future.

Geographical Perspective

According to the assumptions, four DTthons were organised including 3 national and 1 international.

The national editions were purposefully organised in 3 different cities in Poland:

- In Wrocław, at the premises of Wrocław University of Economics and Business, which leads the research. Precisely – in the DT HUB space – a special space devoted to design thinking-based activities⁹.
- In Warsaw, the capital of Poland, chosen because it is the core location of Polish VGI, and the core location of public institutions supporting CCI. Noteworthy, the event was

⁸ Original model grounded in the results of systematic academic literature review and industry reports analysis presented in the Deliverable 3.1 (Kościewicz et al., 2025). Originally the model covered 3 phases (i.e., Establishment, Execution, and Ending), hence based on the brainstorming session it was supplemented with the fourth phase, namely Endorsement.

⁹ Website: <https://uew.pl/biznes/design-thinking/>





organised in cooperation with the Polish Creative Industries Development Center (at its premises) and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

- In Katowice, a city that for over a decade positioned itself as one of the key European capitals of e-sport championships, location of the most significant investment focusing on the development of video games-focused technology, innovation and business ecosystem¹⁰. Notably the event was organized under the patronage of the City of Katowice and with the support of the Municipal Business Incubator Rawa.ink (in its premises).

The final edition of DTthons was international, and it was organised in Wroclaw (Poland) at the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business and brought together participants from 7 European countries (UK, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, and Poland).

Considering the geographical perspective, it is essential to emphasise that although three of the events were organised as national ones - with the participation of entities formally registered in Poland - the cognitive context of the addressed business challenge and the results obtained are not strictly geographically limited. As indicated during the literature and industry report review phase (see Section 3.4.2. in our desk research report – Kościewicz et al., 2025), the video game industry (as well as the games themselves) is, by definition, a global sector - transcending borders - where company location is often influenced, for example, by tax considerations. Given that game developers constituted the dominant group of key informants not only at the national events but across all events, it is assumed that the cognitive perspective was not limited to a national (i.e., Polish) outlook. It is also worth noting that, from the perspective of both the process and the collected empirical material, no significant cognitive, informational, or other differences were identified between the national editions and the international one.

Practical Value Perspective

Besides the contribution in terms of addressing the research goals themselves, the implementation of DTthons provided **practical implications**, especially for the practitioners, who benefited from intensive cooperation, knowledge exchange, networking, and a highly engaging creative process.

Participants of each marathon worked in 3 diverse research teams. They collaborated intensively over three days (afternoon of day one, full day two, and the afternoon of day three). Working on the business challenge facilitated the direct exchange of knowledge, experiences (both positive and negative), and applied practices regarding cross-industry collaboration.

¹⁰ Currently the City of Katowice with European and national financial support develops Katowice Video Games and Technology Hub which is planned to be opened in the middle of 2027. It is planned that the Hub will be the biggest innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem related to video games, e-sport, and new technologies (finTech, AI, blockchain, big data, etc.) in Central and Eastern Europe.





Next, the adopted methodological approach - based on design thinking and participatory engagement - allowed practitioners, depending on their prior experience, not only to become familiar with or deepen their understanding, but also to develop practical skills related primarily to the DT methodology and the use of various tools for engaging group work (in particular, the numerous canvases used during the DTthons). Participants commented on the opportunity of skills development on site during/after the events and virtually when sending us the summarising feedback (see Section 4.7).

Finally, the marathon format created opportunities to build relationships and develop both formal and informal social capital (e.g., participants self-organised leisure time together and stayed after the DTthon sessions to discuss ongoing projects). At the request of participants, the organisers also created a shared cloud-based file to enable those interested to exchange contact details such as email addresses, phone numbers, or LinkedIn profiles.

2.2. Structure

The report is divided into three main sections dedicated respectively to the methodological approach, key results, and primary research findings. It is worth noting that the key content addressing the above-mentioned objectives (including the project objectives, WP3 objectives, and DTthons objectives) is covered by Section 4.

The core content begins with Section 3, Methodological Design, which outlines and justifies the adopted research strategy. This section details the research methodology based on design thinking marathons and includes an account of the organisation of four DTthons. Particular attention is given to the geographical diversity of the events, the varied target groups, participant diversity in terms of sectors represented, and the specific relevance of their activities to the CCI sector, especially the video game industry.

The following Section 4 presents the outcomes of the research activities as well as feedback collected from participants upon completion. The synthesis of findings is structured around six key areas:

1. **Understanding Existing Practices and the Ecosystem Itself** – including trend benchmarking and stakeholder mapping in cross-industry collaboration.
2. **Understanding the Key Relationships and Industrial Misalignments** – including mini-interviews and user-centred collaboration canvases conducted during the DTthons.
3. **Cross-Industry Cooperation** – the current state – analysis of the current cooperation paths using the Critical Incident Method (CIM), identifying what works and what does not.
4. **Cross-Industry Cooperation** – the desired future and idea cases – CIM-based desired-state cooperation paths, outlining what should be improved, potential pitfalls, and critical focus areas, propositions of 12 idea cases for cross-industry cooperation developed by working teams and following the 4E cooperation model.





5. **Practice-driven Decalogue of Cross-Industry Cooperation and Recommendations** – identification of recommendations for policymakers, EVGIE and CCI.
6. **Emerging Issues and Key Insights for Further Exploration** – identification of five emerging issues worth of interest in the future and key tensions worth of consideration.

This section closes with participants and facilitators' feedback on the DTthons, including their design, organisation, process, and perceived value – a subsection of particular importance for replicating this novel research method.

The final substantive section of the report synthesises the main findings and draws key conclusions from implementing the four design thinking marathons. Special focus is placed on the models and mechanisms underlying cross-industry cooperation, along with a summary of core policy recommendations for decision-makers, stakeholders in the video game industry, and other CCIs.



3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN OF DTTHONS

3.1. Research Approach

The DTthons introduced an **innovative approach to exploratory research** in the social sciences using both Design Thinking and Participatory Action Research (PAR)¹¹ approaches.

Conceptual Framework

DTthon is an intensive, participatory design event based on co-design and co-creation principles. Similar to a hackathon, it is based on the Human-Centered Design approach and the Design Thinking methodology. During the intensive two- to three-day workshops, interdisciplinary project teams are presented with specific challenges prepared by the ‘challenge owners’ (company/ institution stakeholders). With the support of facilitators, the design teams follow the Double Diamond Design Process model to identify the problems causing the challenge and design appropriate solutions.

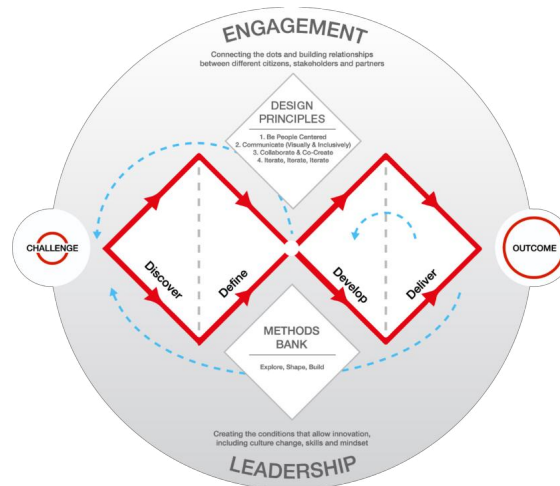


Figure 1. The Double Diamond by the Design Council

Source: The Double Diamond (2025)

Design Thinking is a systematic approach to creating innovative solutions that address real user needs. It emphasises empathy, collaboration and iterative problem solving. Through understanding users’ perspectives, defining problems, generating ideas, creating prototypes, and conducting tests, Design Thinking aims to generate meaningful, user-centred outcomes. It is an approach that balances analytical and creative thought processes within an interdisciplinary team, leading to solutions that are desired by users, economically justified, and technologically feasible.

¹¹ Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to action research emphasising participation and action by members of communities affected by that research. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection (Vaughn & Jacques, 2020).



The proposed approach involves key stakeholders in the solution design process, allowing different viewpoints to be considered and enabling the problem to be looked at from a broader perspective. This results in a natural transfer of knowledge and experiences, as well as continuous validation of assumptions against reality. It fosters innovation by enabling creative teamwork ('creating with people for people') and addresses a real-world problem relevant to the specific project. The focus is on the actual end users of the solutions, placing the human element at the centre and creating solutions that meet their real needs.

This approach combines competencies, integrating internal and external knowledge and skills. It enables the potential of all team members to be realised (providing deeper insights and a better understanding of the challenge and achieving synergy). It incorporates process-oriented thinking into the project, providing opportunities for solutions that are more refined, verified for usability, and ready for implementation.

The DTthon event uses Design Thinking approach and is based on the idea that complex business issues can only be solved by interdisciplinary project teams willing to experiment. The traditional business approach, which relies on timetables, Key Performance Indicators and hierarchical teams, often proves ineffective when the problem exceeds the organisation's scope and perception. Simultaneously, Design Thinking embraces innovation and creativity, as well as minor errors during the long and arduous process of solving a problem – iteration is demanded, not avoided. This methodology is a powerful intellectual tool for tackling so-called 'wicked problems', which can stifle growth in public and business organisations. One such problem is establishing common ground and synergies in the cooperation between VGIE and other CCIs.

Event Framework

In designing the GH DTthon series – exploratory-verification Design Thinking marathons dedicated to the collaboration between EVGIE and other CCIs, we used a process-oriented approach as our reference point (i.e., 4E model of cross-industry cooperation). Consequently, when establishing the overarching framework for the event, we used a proprietary tool analogous to the Customer Journey Map – **the Cooperation Path**. The objective was to replicate the cooperative process between EVGIE and CCIs by analysing individual activities (interactions) to improve, change or create them anew.





Photo 1. Post-its used to gather ideas and insights during the DTthons

The workshop activities were divided into two parts: **diagnosis** (examining the current state of affairs, understanding of experiences) and **creation** (formulating a desired future state; cooperation on solutions). In our study, the following four stages of cooperation between EVGIE and CCIs were considered (i.e., 4E model of cross-industry cooperation):

1. **ESTABLISHMENT**: the stage at which the partnership is formed.
2. **EXECUTION**: the stage at which cooperation is implemented.
3. **ENDING**: the stage at which cooperation is terminated.
4. **ENDORSEMENT**: the 'before' and 'after' stages of the cooperation process (promoting knowledge about cooperation, encouraging cooperation, sharing experiences, helping with initial steps, counselling, and networking).

3.2. Methodological Characteristic

Each edition of the GH DTthon addressed the same **research problem**: *How can the European video game industry ecosystem (EVGIE) transfer value (such as transferring and disseminating game-related solutions and technologies) and co-create it (initiate and engage in co-innovation processes) with other cultural and creative industries [CCIs], including museums, live music performances and sports?*

The key objectives set for each GH DTthon were as follows:

1. Identifying how the EVGIE and the CCI can work together more effectively to create added value for each sector. This includes understanding existing practices and mutual relationships (analysing the current state of affairs) and identifying ways to shape future cooperation (designing a model path).

2. Developing strategic recommendations and good practices for future cooperation between the EVGIE and CCI sectors. This includes recommendations for entities undertaking such cooperation (cooperators) and institutions formulating legal regulations at the national and European levels (policymakers), with the objective of ensuring sustainable and ethical growth of both sectors.

During each edition, participants worked in three different project teams and went through the following phases of **the Design Thinking process**:

1. **INITIATION**: building teams (integration) and entering the process (identifying the project framework and understanding the goal, explaining the methodology and expected results), analysing the context of the challenge and key stakeholders.
2. **EMPATHISATION**: data collection (interviews), saturation with knowledge, organising information and modelling based on interview results (EVGIE and CCI).
3. **DEFINING THE PROBLEM**: determining the essence of the problem/problems from the user's perspective and establishing the key assumptions for the designed solutions.
4. **IDEATION**: creating potential solutions to a defined problem using creative techniques (generation, ordering, evaluation and selection).
5. **PROTOTYPING and TESTING**: visualisation of the cooperation path, presentation and obtaining feedback, modification (improvement) of the concept and development of the final version.
6. **IMPLEMENTATION**: preparation of final presentations, including key recommendations (strategic recommendations and good practices for cooperation between EVGIE and CCI) and feedback.

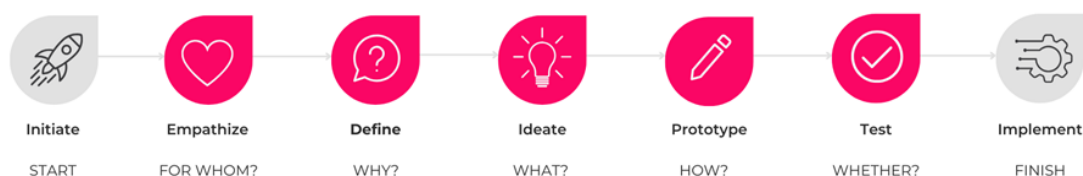


Figure 2. DT process by DT HUB CENTER

Source: Wrona & Kapitaniec (2022)

With the support of facilitators from the DT HUB Centre¹², the project teams addressed the following **challenge**: *How can the European video game industry ecosystem (EVGIE) collaborate more effectively with the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) for the benefit of all involved?*

¹² DT HUB Centre – Innovative Solutions Design Centre – an organisational unit of Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, specializing in designing valuable solutions to real problems that occur in organisations, based on the HCD (Human-Centered Design) approach, using the Design Thinking methodology. [<https://uew.pl/en/design-thinking/>].

The following **tools** were used during the process.

- **Trends and Benchmarks Card** – used to identify the most important socio-cultural, political and legal, economic, environmental and technological trends, trends in the EVGIE industry and benchmarks and good practices in the cooperation between the EVGIE industry and the CCI sector.

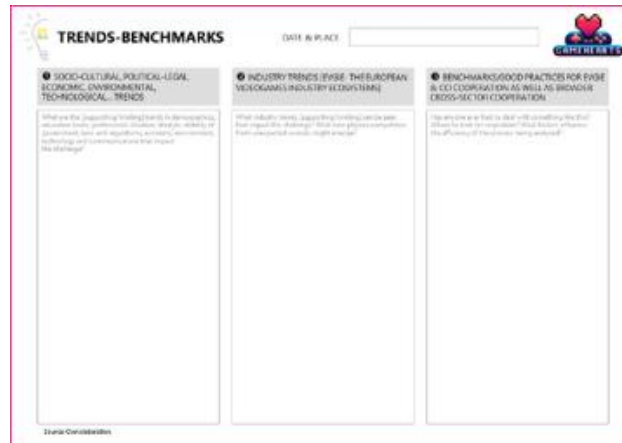


Figure 3. Trends and Benchmarks Card

Source: own materials

- **Stakeholder Map** – used to identify the most critical EVGIE and CCI stakeholders.

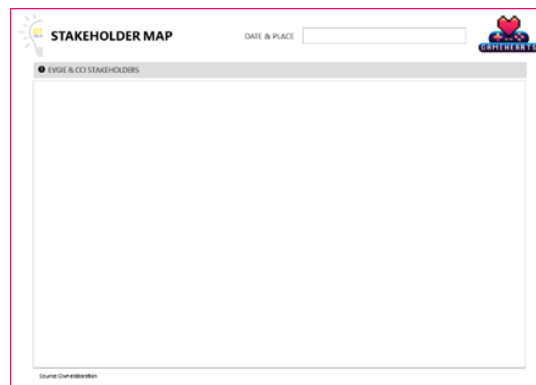


Figure 4. Stakeholder Map

Source: own materials

- Interview Card** – helpful in implementing the Critical Incidents Technique (CIT) research technique, which involves collecting so-called critical cases that users experienced. A crucial case (incident), the essence of this technique, is an event to which the user assigns great importance, causing specific – positive or negative – experiences or significantly impacting the user’s behaviour. This technique allows for including rare, unusual, but essential situations and events in the designed solution, which are difficult to capture using other research methods. It is beneficial when the research aims to identify system errors and how users deal with them.

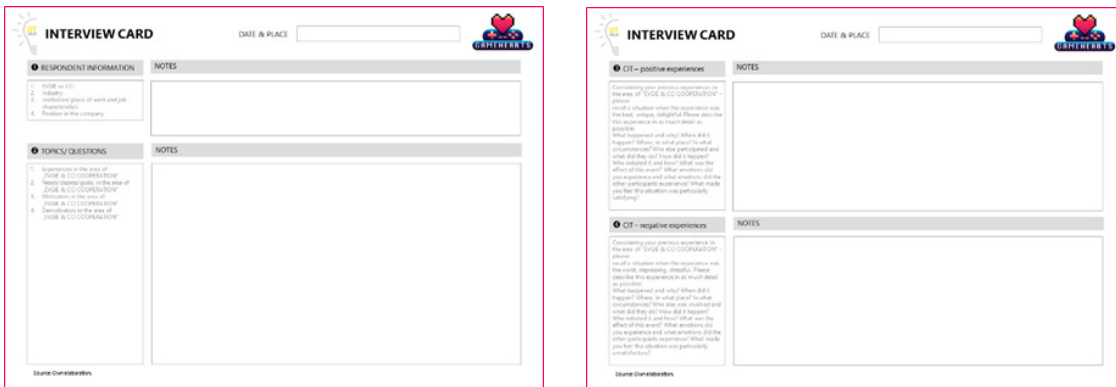


Figure 5. Interview Cards
Source: own materials

- Understanding the User Card** – used to define the user profile within the EVGIE and CCI sectors.

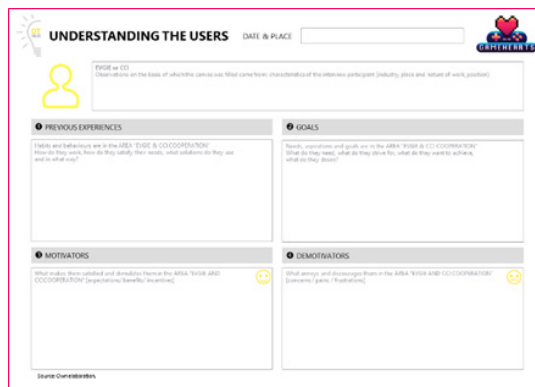


Figure 6. Understanding the Users Card
Source: own materials

- **CJM** – cooperation path (analogous to CJM) – used to reconstruct the cooperation process between EVGIE and CCI with the analysis of individual activities (interactions) to improve, change or create them anew. The process view was adopted covering 4 phases: establishing, executing, ending, and endorsing.

Figure 7. CJM – Cooperation Path Cards

Source: own materials

- **Feedback Matrix** – used to collect feedback on proposed solutions.

Figure 8. Feedback Matrix

Source: own materials

The **workshop participants worked for three days.**

- **Day #1:** On the first day, they focused on diagnosing existing trends and benchmarks by conducting interviews to determine user profiles.
- **Day #2:** The following day, they analysed the cooperation process between EVGIE and CCI before designing an ideal process. Based on these findings, the participants developed a solution and presented it to the other workshop groups for feedback.



- **Day #3:** On the final day, they refined their solutions and developed recommendations for the various target groups (EVGIE-CCI and European policymakers). These solutions were presented to all DTthon participants and to the participants of the hybrid session in the case of the international edition.

After each edition, participants were asked to complete a feedback form. The aim was to obtain information and recommendations arising from the meeting, to improve the next edition. Similar feedback was requested from facilitators.

Detailed reports on the work progress of each working team were prepared by coordinating facilitators from each DTthon conducted. A total of 12 individual reports were prepared by six facilitators. These reports (in the language version appropriate to the specifics of each event – the list in the reference section) were used (together with others) as documentary/raw materials to create this final report.

3.3. Organisation & Participants

The GH DTthons took place between February and April 2025. The series of four events was organised by the GAMEHEARTS team with the support of Innovative Solutions Design Centre (DT HUB). The summary is presented in Table 1.

The national editions took place in three cities: Wrocław (at the Wrocław University of Economics and Business), Warsaw (in cooperation with the Polish Creative Industries Development Center and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) and Katowice (under the patronage of the City of Katowice and with the support of the Municipal Business Incubator Rawa.ink). Each GH DTthon brought together EVGIE and CCI representatives. Organisation of national editions brought together fifty-six participants.

The final international edition was held at the Wrocław University of Economics and Business and brought together sixteen participants from seven European countries (UK, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria and Poland), representing European game developers and project beneficiaries, including City Football Group, Imperial War Museums, London Symphony Orchestra, Universität Wien, University of Salford, Breda University of Applied Sciences, Tampere University, and Wrocław University of Economics and Business.



**Table 1. Summary of GH DTthons¹³**

PARAMETRES	#1 GH DTthon	#2 GH DTthon	#3 GH DTthon	#4 GH DTthon
Location & dates	Wroclaw Feb 21-23	Warsaw Mar 7-9	Katowice Mar 21-23	Wroclaw Apr 9-11
Location	DT HUB Centre WUEB	Polish Creative Industries Development Center	Municipal Business Incubator Rawa.ink	DT HUB Center WUEB
Organiser and event partner/ patron	Innovative Solutions Design Centre DT HUB	Innovative Solutions Design Centre DT HUB & PCIDC with the support of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Innovative Solutions Design Centre DT Hub & the City of Katowice with the support of Rawa.ink	Innovative Solutions Design Centre DT HUB
Number of participants	17	20	19	16
Industries represented/ representation of project partners	VGIE/VGD, UXD, museum, music, publishing, theatre	VGIE/VGD, UXD, museum, sport, art studio, academics, regional development agency, creative industries support, policymaker (lobbying)	VGIE/VGD, UXD, publishing, architecture, music, sport, academics, cultural heritage, business incubator	VGIE/ VGD, policymaker (lobbying), City Football Group, Imperial War Museums, London Symphony Orchestra, UNIVIE, USAL, TAU, BUAS
Type of event	National	National	National	International

13 In the following sections, when presenting the results from each of the marathon, the colour scheme used in this table is maintained to help distinguish between the different events.

Wroclaw – green, Warsaw – blue, Katowice – orange, and International edition in Wroclaw – Purple.



In total, 72 participants took part in all editions of GH DTthon (20 VGD, 18 VGIE, 19 CCI, 4 SPORT, 8 ACADEMIA, 3 POLICYMAKER/LOBBING). To maximise engagement with a diverse community of stakeholders, project teams were composed of participants representing different industries during each DTthon.

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

The inaugural edition of DTthon was attended by 17 participants. The following table presents the composition of the individual project teams. In general, participants’ industry structure: 8 VGD, 4 VGIE, 5 CCI.

Table 2. #1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW – teams’ structure

Participants & Teams	Type of Stakeholder		
	WRO_1 Team	WRO_2 Team	WRO_3 Team
P1	VGD	THEATRE/CCI	VGD
P2	VGD	VGD	VGD
P3	GAMER/VGIE	VGD	VGD
P4	MUSIC/CCI	VGD	GAMER/VGIE
P5	DESIGN/CCI	PUBLISHER/VGIE	MUSEUM/CCI
P6	GAMER/VGIE	-	PUBLISHER/CCI



Photo 2. Photo relation from #1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

The Warsaw edition of DTthon was attended by 20 participants. The table below presents the composition of the individual project teams. The general participants’ industry structure was as follows: 3 VGD, 8 VGIE, 5 CCI, 1 SPORT, 1 ACADEMIA and 2 POLICYMAKER/LOBBING.

Table 3. #2 GH DTthon – WARSAW – teams’ structure

Participants & Teams	Type of Stakeholder		
	WAW_1 Team	WAW_2 Team	WAW_3 Team
P1	VGD	VGD	VGD
P2	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE
P3	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE	CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SUPPORT/PM (Lobbying)
P4	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE
P5	MUSEUM/CCI	MUSEUM/CCI	SPORT
P6	PERFORMING ARTS/CCI	REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY/PM (Lobbying)	MUSEUM/CCI
P7	DESIGN/CCI	-	GAMER/ACADEMIC RESEARCHER

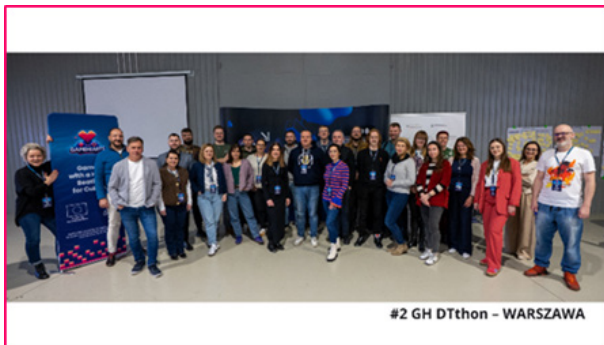


Photo 3. Photo relation from #2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

The Katowice edition of DTthon was attended by 19 participants. The table below presents the composition of the individual project teams. In this event we had the following participants' industry structure: 6 VGD, 5 VGIE, 5 CCI, 1 SPORT, 2 ACADEMIA.

Table 4. #3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE – teams' structure

Participants & Teams	Type of Stakeholder		
	KAT_1 Team	KAT_2 Team	KAT_3 Team
P1	VGD	VGD	VGD
P2	VGD	VGD	VGD
P3	GAMER/ACADEMIC RESEARCHER	GAMER/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE
P4	PUBLISHER/VGIE	BUSINESS INCUBATOR/VGIE	GAMER/ACADEMIC RESEARCHER
P5	DESIGN/CCI	MUSIC/CCI	SPORT
P6	DESIGN/CCI	DESIGN/CCI	GAMER/VGIE
P7	-	-	CULTURAL HERITAGE/ CCI



Photo 4. Photo relation from #3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

The international edition of DTthon was attended by 16 participants. The table below presents the composition of the individual project teams. The participants’ industry structure was as follows: 3 VGD, 1 VGIE, 4 CCI, 2 SPORT, 5 ACADEMIA and 1 POLICYMAKER/LOBBING.

Table 5. #4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL – teams’ structure

Participants & Teams	Type of Stakeholder		
	INT_1 Team	INT_2 Team	INT_3 Team
P1	CULTURAL PARTNER	CULTURAL PARTNER	CULTURAL PARTNER
P2	CULTURAL PARTNER	CULTURAL PARTNER	CULTURAL/SPORT PARTNER
P3	ACADEMIC PARTNER	ACADEMIC PARTNER	ACADEMIC PARTNER
P4	VGD	ACADEMIC PARTNER	VGD
P5	VGD	PM (Lobbying)/VGIE	GAMER/VGIE
P6	-	GAMER/ACADEMIC RESEARCHER	-

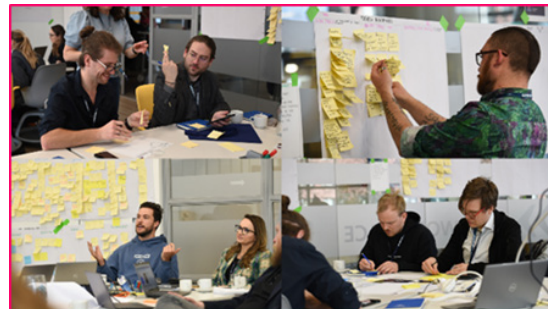


Photo 5. Photo relation from #4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL



4. RESULTS OF DTTHONS¹⁴

4.1. Understanding existing practices and ecosystem itself

This chapter offers a consolidated analysis of the current landscape of EVGIE–CCI cooperation, based on the GAMEHEARTS DTthons. As emphasised, each DTthon gathered interdisciplinary teams who explored the state of cross-sector engagement, identifying macro trends, inspiring practices, key stakeholders, and systemic challenges. The findings reveal both the diversity and convergence of experiences across locations, providing a foundation for understanding the broader ecosystem shaping future collaboration between the cultural and game development sectors.

4.1.1. Trends, Benchmarks and Inspirations

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

WRO_1 TEAM participants highlighted the accelerating pace of global and environmental change, with key megatrends observed in socio-cultural, political-legal, economic, environmental, and technological domains. These include the rise of mass culture, the growing impact of audiovisual and social media, a heightened focus on interpersonal relations, demographic decline, increasing platform streaming consumption, the spread of artificial intelligence (AI), and a shift towards more passive lifestyles. Within the EVGIE sector, industry-specific trends were identified, such as the development of Virtual Reality (VR)/Augmented Reality (AR) technologies, the integration of AI in game design, promotion of healthy habits, educational game-based formats, growing gamer expectations, rising production and operational costs, the dominance of streaming, and the monetisation of in-game purchases. As for benchmarks and inspirational practices, participants pointed to several cross-sector examples worth adapting, including the gamification of sports challenges, the integration of entertainment and macroeconomic narratives (e.g., Netflix + GDP), cross-media initiatives like Riot Arcane and Marvel Rivals, the Final Symphony video games concert, and other innovative forms of cultural convergence.

WRO_2 TEAM identified key macro-environmental trends impacting collaboration between the EVGIE and CCI sectors. These include insufficient integration, procedural barriers, and the isolation of game studios. Broader challenges such as migration, talent drain, and tensions

¹⁴ The results were developed based on a wide range of raw data and source materials, including solutions to the posed business challenge presented by 12 working teams, photographs of completed canvases and flipcharts, observation notes made by the research team, as well as reports prepared by facilitators coordinating particular working teams in all four editions of DTthons.

Internal materials in the form of reports presenting works of particular working teams (one report per one working team in particular DTthon) – were prepared individually and independently by: Ewa Szostak, Iwona Wochnik, Przemysław Wólczek, Niki Derlukiewicz, Aleksandra Kuźmińska-Haberla, Joanna Macalik. The list of these reports is presented in the reference list in the specific section labelled 'Internal materials used as one of the source materials to prepare this report, were the reports prepared by facilitators coordinating particular working teams in all four editions of DTthons'.





between global market priorities and local cultural identity were also noted. Emerging values in creative industries - sustainability, ecology ('econature'), diversity, locality, well-being, and heritage - are shaping project expectations. AI is becoming increasingly influential in both content creation and production workflows. In the EVGIE sector, notable trends included limited measurable benefits from cooperation, rare collaborative cases (e.g. Forever Skies), a focus on community-building and virality, and extensive use of AI. Studios prefer developing their own IP or drawing from other games rather than using cultural sector content. Inspirational practices include recognising games as a cultural form, fostering understanding of EVGIE workflows within CCI, and outsourcing creative components such as visual design beyond the core industry. The lack of knowledge commercialisation remains a key barrier but also a strategic opportunity for future cross-sector collaboration.

WRO_3 TEAM identified significant macro trends influencing EVGIE-CCI collaboration, including demographic decline, the rise of TikTok and visual-first culture, growing individualism, increasing cultural access costs, and global participation in digital culture. Additional factors included competition between entertainment and traditional culture, the need for multisensory experiences (especially for Gen Z and Alpha), the rapid processing of information, and the growing role of edutainment. Inclusivity, technological fatigue, and the shift from print to audio/video formats were also noted. Within the EVGIE sector, trends include digital and metaverse exhibitions, direct digital adaptations of cultural content, interactive VR exhibitions, and wider access to digital acting tools. Studios increasingly focus on narrative design and scene directing, while also navigating budget constraints, platform-related issues, and the double-edged impact of generative AI. Benchmarks and Good Practices revealed contrasting operational dynamics: mismatched timelines and funding models, limited tech fluency in CCI leading to poor tech adoption, and a growing demand for AI-led solutions. Promising examples include inter-city international partnerships, direct involvement of cultural professionals in game production, and shared promotion strategies. These underscore the importance of mutual understanding, cultural authenticity, and strategic tech integration.

Summing up, the WRO TEAMS concluded that **effective cooperation between the EVGIE and CCI sectors is limited by a structural imbalance**: EVGIE offers strong technological and production capacities, while CCI contributes cultural content and narrative expertise. This often leads to misaligned expectations, communication gaps, and unequal partnerships. Current **cooperation tends to be fragmented** and project-based, **lacking continuity or standardised frameworks**. A key insight shared across all teams is the **urgent need to recognise games as legitimate cultural products**, which requires the active inclusion of cultural professionals not as external consultants, but as equal co-creators. While technologies such as AI and VR are rapidly evolving within EVGIE, their application must be culturally anchored and value-driven to ensure relevance and impact. **Structural mismatches** - especially in funding models, timelines, and institutional priorities - remain major barriers, suggesting the **need for dedicated intermediaries, funding instruments, or innovation hubs** to support joint ventures. Finally, shared values like inclusivity, sustainability, well-being, and respect for local heritage were highlighted as common ground on which more strategic and meaningful cross-sector collaborations can be built.





#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

WAW_1 TEAM identified several macro trends affecting EVGIE–CCI collaboration, including bureaucratic inertia, policy inconsistency, and mistrust of technology. Younger generations show a clear shift toward instant gratification, online life, and visual-audio formats, especially through VR. AI and digital transformation are rapidly advancing, while societal issues such as inequality, ageing, multiculturalism, and global conflicts shape the broader context. Games still face negative perceptions outside the sector. In the EVGIE industry, key trends include gamification, interactive films, digital artefact creation, and the influence of global investment (e.g. from Arab markets). Content saturation, reliance on generic engines like Unreal, and survival-driven business models hinder originality. High costs and limited funding restrict small studios and reduce openness to cultural partnerships. Viewing games as entertainment rather than playing them is also on the rise. Good practices highlighted by the team include collaboration with historians and specialists, region-specific game localisation, cultural-marketing integration, public sector openness, grassroots initiatives, knowledge exchange at events, and partnerships with musicians and audio studios.

WAW_2 TEAM identified growing technological accessibility, a retro trend revival, and limited innovation due to sequels and prequels. Games are gaining recognition as cultural products, while budgets shift toward sustainability. Challenges include sectoral miscommunication, reduced attention spans, outdated regulations, and untapped potential of VR in training simulations. In the EVGIE sector, trends include younger and older players, more female consumers but low industry representation, AI integration, metaverse development, market saturation, digital resource underuse, and a missing mid-budget (AA) game segment. Mobile games grow, while remote work brings both flexibility and burnout. Polish studios lack access to international projects and suffer from weak global promotion. Good practices include fostering mutual trust, cross-sector cultural and educational cooperation, use of regional heritage, offline event professionalisation, grassroots initiatives, inclusive approaches, and interdisciplinary education focused on EVGIE.

WAW_3 TEAM identified key macro trends such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), viewed both as an educational tool and as a point of controversy in games, alongside the rise of metaverse, VR/AR, AI, and broader shifts like ageing populations, mental health crises, children's online presence, global political realignments, and reduced cultural funding. In EVGIE, internal trends include post-COVID game overproduction, declining innovation in mainstream titles, crisis in creative staffing, skill trading among gamers, and the rise of silver gaming and games-as-a-service models. There is growing use of games for consumer education and competition with other media for users' time. Good practices include serious games exploring cultural themes, concerts with game music, and cross-sector projects like CD Projekt with EC1 Łódź, Netflix, and Theatre Komedia. Games are seen as tools for intergenerational engagement, institutional image renewal, and platforms for cultural and educational outreach, as shown in Polish institutions' initiatives like Uncensored Library and the Polish Museum of Emigration's Crime Fridays initiative.



In general, all three WAW TEAMS identified strong macro trends shaping EVGIE–CCI cooperation. Common themes include **ageing populations, mental health concerns, digital immersion, and the growing influence of AI, VR/AR, and metaverse technologies**. Teams noted the increasing cultural legitimacy of games, though **hindered by regulatory lag, budget cuts, and intersectoral miscommunication**. Younger generations' preference for fast, visual content and the rise of consumer education through games were recurring points. In the EVGIE sector, teams highlighted **content saturation, declining innovation, post-pandemic overproduction, and overreliance on sequels and common engines**. Challenges include creative burnout, missing mid-budget (AA) titles, and financial and promotional barriers for smaller or local studios. Trends like **silver gaming, game-as-a-service models, and market consolidation** also emerged. All teams stressed the **importance of cross-sector trust, grassroots initiatives, and interdisciplinary education**. Good practices included serious games, game-music collaborations, regional heritage use, and flagship examples like CD Projekt's partnerships, the Uncensored Library, and cultural event integrations. These show clear potential for meaningful, culturally embedded cooperation - if structurally supported and more widely adopted.

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

KAT_1 TEAM identified several trends shaping EVGIE–CCI cooperation. In the broader socio-cultural, political, economic, environmental, and technological context, they noted the increasing use of AI in content creation, state funding for game development, job cuts in the industry, and a visible backlash from some gamer communities against inclusivity efforts. Within the EVGIE, key trends include rising production costs, increasing game prices, and an ageing player base. On the positive side, games are becoming more accessible and are increasingly used as tools for socialisation and therapy, reflecting their expanding societal role. However, barriers to entry for small or new developers remain high, and a decline in technical competencies among professionals is also a concern. As for good practices, the team highlighted initiatives like game jams, socially engaged projects such as Games for Change and Games for Peace, the use of games in education (e.g. This War of Mine as assigned reading), and collaborative platforms like the European Collaborative Cloud for Heritage, all of which illustrate the potential of games as cultural, educational, and socially relevant tools.

KAT_2 TEAM identified several macro trends influencing EVGIE–CCI collaboration, including increasing digitalisation through AI, remote work, and globalisation; the emergence of intergenerational gaming, such as the board game renaissance and diverse digital game formats; the growing appeal of the experience economy, where slow living, offline time, and personal connections are valued as new forms of luxury; and sociocultural polarisation marked by ageing populations and the search for belonging beyond borders. Within the EVGIE sector, they observed growing popularity of games driven by viral content, rising game output, and the accessibility of creation tools. Simpler game formats are gaining traction, alongside greater emphasis on UX and active community participation in the development





process. In terms of good practices, the team stressed the value of cross-sector synergies built on shared experiences and overlapping stakeholders. Effective cooperation was linked to project-based work grounded in clear roadmaps, realistic budgeting, and strong content preparation. Additionally, they emphasised the importance of ‘translators’ in cross-sector settings—specialists such as tech advisors, orchestrators, and project managers who can bridge gaps between sectors and disciplines.

KAT_3 TEAM identified numerous macro trends affecting EVGIE–CCI collaboration, highlighting both enabling and limiting factors. Positive trends include increasing digitalisation, Future Labs initiatives, greater affluence and access to technology, widespread mobile use, and the availability of funding. Mixed influences involve an ageing population, cultural polarisation (wokeism), youth interest in analogue tech, and uneven accessibility. Negative pressures include overstimulation, screen fatigue, insufficient public funding, lack of awareness among cultural sector clients, short-term political vision, resistance to tech in education, and politicisation of public institutions. In the EVGIE sector, positives include AI as a levelling tool, declining dominance of AAA titles, and maturing business culture. Ambivalent trends are subscription models, games-as-a-service, and age/access controls. Predominantly negative developments include a GameDev crisis, declining creativity, product inflation, derivative games, poor content in search engines, inflated AAA prices, layoffs, and AI-driven job displacement. Good practices include expanding public–private partnerships, the This War of Mine collaboration with the Polish Ministry of Education and acknowledging both sectors’ needs. Barriers include restrictive public procurement, weak marketing by public institutions, and the absence of a dedicated platform for EVGIE–CCI cooperation.

Summing up, across all three KAT teams, several shared conclusions and insights emerged regarding EVGIE–CCI cooperation. **Digitalisation** - through AI, remote work, and mobile tech - is both an enabler and disruptor: it expands creative capacity and access, but also causes job displacement, screen fatigue, and a decline in technical skills. Societal trends such as **ageing populations, cultural polarisation**, and the rise of **intergenerational and experience-based engagement** (e.g. socialisation, therapy, and education through games) are reshaping expectations. The EVGIE faces major internal challenges: rising production costs, entry barriers for new developers, inflated AAA pricing, declining innovation, and an overreliance on sequels and derivative content. While games are increasingly recognised as cultural tools, systemic obstacles remain, including **institutional unpreparedness, poor intersectoral communication, and underperforming public funding mechanisms**. Effective practices include serious games, game jams, public–private partnerships, and project-based models with clear planning, budgets, and expert content. A key insight shared by all teams is **the need for intermediary roles (‘translators’)** such as tech advisors and project managers to bridge sectoral gaps. Structural barriers such as **rigid procurement rules**, insufficient promotion by public institutions, and the **lack of a dedicated EVGIE–CCI collaboration platform** continue to hinder progress and must be addressed.



#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

INT_1 TEAM participants engaged in silent brainstorming and collaborative discussion to identify macro and industry-specific trends shaping EVGIE–CCI cooperation. They emphasised rising interest rates, the end of cheap capital, and growing economic instability as factors reshaping funding environments and institutional resilience. A generational shift towards Gen Z and Alpha - with their digital fluency, participatory behaviours, and values-driven engagement - was seen as transformative for both sectors. Concerns were raised about increased social isolation, remote work fatigue, and mental health deterioration, highlighting the urgent need for new forms of community-building. The digital skills gap emerged as a major barrier, particularly regarding equitable access and effective digital transformation. Technological change - especially AI and automation - was viewed as both a driver of innovation and a source of disruption. The group noted the emergence of hybrid cultural formats, the creator economy, and the declining availability of public funding for the arts. A positive example of non-commercial collaboration was the GAMEHEARTS project itself, praised for its mission alignment, open dialogue, and structured yet flexible implementation. Other good practices included regular working groups, iterative design methods, audience data sharing, and co-production models blending artistic and technological competencies. The German market was referenced as a strong benchmark. Participants stressed that sustained collaboration requires intentional design, long-term commitment, and trust built through reciprocal communication. They concluded that lasting cross-sector cooperation depends not only on financial instruments, but also on shared cultural goals, inclusive tools, and systemic frameworks that facilitate continuity and dialogue.

INT_2 TEAM began by mapping global challenges shaping the future of EVGIE–CCI cooperation. These included regulatory fragmentation, data flow restrictions, inflation, military conflicts, and trade disruptions. Democratic erosion, climate change, and demographic shifts (ageing, digital dependency) were also highlighted. Market uncertainty and rising social tensions were seen as compounding pressures on both sectors. Within EVGIE, participants noted growth alongside saturation, the expansion of SMEs, and increased production costs. A shift to digital distribution, changing player demographics, and rising use of AI tools were identified as key trends. While AI empowers smaller developers, it also introduces IP risks and accelerates formulaic design. Good practices included embedding CCI practitioners within game studios, co-developing educational materials, sharing creative assets such as music and design components, and collaborating across open platforms. Benchmarks featured public-private partnerships, EU projects, and small-scale innovation. However, several barriers were flagged: redirected public funding, risk-averse investors, underdeveloped mid-budget (AA) segments, and negative public perceptions of video games. Participants noted that meaningful cross-sector collaboration often emerged not from financial incentives but from shared missions and creative exploration. They concluded that resilient cooperation will rely on intentional structures, knowledge exchange, and the ability to adapt beyond commercial imperatives.





INT_3 TEAM addressed macro-level drivers such as inflation, regulatory fragmentation, cultural polarisation, climate crisis, and the erosion of democratic norms. They also pointed to economic decline and reduced disposable income as factors weakening Europe's innovation capacity. Social dynamics - such as ageing populations, declining cultural budgets, and uneven digital literacy- were seen as structural barriers to innovation. Within the EVGIE sector, the team observed rising production, global competition, saturated markets, and the dominance of digital distribution. AI was highlighted both as an enabler for small studios and a potential threat to IP security. Emerging game design trends included subscription models, open access formats, green design, and live services. The team expressed concern about declining player engagement, content redundancy, and overreliance on safe design formulas. Promising practices included public-private cooperation, EU-funded projects, and partnerships that embedded CCI elements directly into game narratives and production cycles. Notable examples included *This War of Mine* (with War Child), *11-11: Memories Retold* (with Aardman), and *The Last of Us* (with HBO), as well as cultural crossovers like Fortnite concerts, Gucci x Roblox, and NFL x Toy Story. Barriers included weak promotion by cultural institutions, lack of dedicated cooperation platforms, and persistent funding limitations. Participants concluded that agile processes, shared tools, and facilitation roles (such as project managers or intermediaries) are essential for translating goodwill into sustainable, cross-sector innovation. Trust and long-term vision, rather than short-term outcomes, were seen as the foundation of successful EVGIE-CCI cooperation.

Analysing the output from all three INT TEAMS, the workshop findings show that although EVGIE and CCI operate in different professional realities, they increasingly seek collaboration built on creative synergy and shared cultural values. **The most effective co-creation approaches identified include iterative, user-centred design, cross-sectoral dialogue, and openness to testing new formats.** Successful cooperation depends less on rigid structures and more on **flexibility and mutual respect** for different working styles. Both sectors rely on agile methods such as sprints, prototyping, and iterative testing, often supported by research tools like stakeholder interviews, user feedback, and data-driven decisions. CCI teams focus on audience insight, clear communication, and gamification to make cultural content engaging. EVGIE, meanwhile, uses modular project planning, creative pitching, and tools like design cards ('fiszki' in Polish) to shape collaboration. Key co-creation tools include collaborative platforms (e.g., Trello, Miro, Discord, Google Workspace) enabling both real-time and asynchronous work. Open-source repositories and shared toolkits further enhance knowledge exchange and problem-solving. Digital platforms such as educational games, streaming, and interactive exhibits serve not just commercial but also cultural and social goals. In everyday practice, **co-creation succeeds through clear facilitation, feedback loops, and shared workflow understanding. Intermediaries like hubs, incubators, and programme managers play a vital role** in bridging sectoral languages and goals. Ultimately, lasting cooperation depends not only on funding but also on aligned mindsets, flexible infrastructure, and long-term frameworks that support ongoing dialogue and iteration.





Conclusions and Additional Insights

Across all four events, teams observed accelerating technological change, demographic transitions, and evolving cultural consumption as defining forces in the EVGIE–CCI landscape. Despite a wealth of promising practices, meaningful collaboration remains hampered by fragmented processes, regulatory lag, and structural misalignment. A recurring insight is the need for culturally grounded, facilitated cooperation that leverages both sectors' strengths - technological agility and narrative depth - through adaptable formats and sustained strategic support.

4.1.2. Main actors and stakeholders in cross-industry cooperation

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

Across all three WRO teams, a comprehensive and interconnected ecosystem of stakeholders was identified as shaping the development of EVGIE–CCI cooperation. These actors span multiple sectors, functions, and levels of influence, forming a complex network of mutual dependencies.

- At the core are creative and production teams - game studios, indie developers, User Experience (UX) designers, directors, producers, and creative contributors like graphic artists, musicians, and actors - who directly generate content. They are supported by technical and distributional infrastructures, including platform owners, testers, distributors, and equipment manufacturers.
- On the CCI side, key institutional partners include museums, theatres, educational institutions, cultural heritage agencies (e.g. The Polish National Institute for Museums - NIMOZ, The National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland - NID), and ministries responsible for culture and education. These entities provide thematic content, expertise, and often serve as co-creators or hosts for cross-sector projects.
- Educational actors, such as art academies, technical universities, and vocational schools, contribute both talent and infrastructure, while regional and European networks (e.g. European Cultural Tourism Network - ECTN) link local initiatives to broader policy and funding contexts.
- Beneficiaries such as players, communities, and students form the end-users whose engagement drives demand and relevance.
- Financial and legal stakeholders - investors, sponsors, grant agencies, and lawyers - that affect feasibility, sustainability, and regulatory compliance.
- Media, business developers, and industry journalists play a key role in communication and visibility, while government administrations (both national and local) and regulatory actors (e.g. local censors) frame the legal, financial, and strategic conditions for cooperation.





The key insight is that **effective collaboration requires coordinated engagement** across all these groups, with particular attention to **bridging roles - such as project managers, cultural translators, or strategic facilitators** - who can align interests, translate expectations, and manage interdependencies.

The strongest potential lies at the intersections, where creative content meets cultural heritage, and where institutional legitimacy meets technological innovation. These relationships must be cultivated intentionally, with shared platforms, co-creation models, and transparent communication channels to ensure sustainable, inclusive, and culturally resonant outcomes.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

Across all three teams, a clear and consistent conclusion emerges: EVGIE–CCI collaboration involves a wide, multi-layered network of actors drawn from creative, technological, educational, economic, and regulatory domains.

The main groups of stakeholders fall into several interrelated categories.

- At the core are creative producers and developers - game studios, designers, artists (including actors, musicians, and digital creators), as well as board game and animation producers - who generate the content at the intersection of culture and technology. Closely tied to them are institutions and organisations from the CCI sector, including museums, cultural centres, libraries, historical institutions (e.g. The Polish Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – IPN), and NGOs, which act as both content partners and venues for dissemination and engagement.
- A second vital group is the education and knowledge sector, comprising schools, universities, vocational institutions, students, educators, and professional training centres. These actors contribute talent development, research support, and long-term cultural-technical integration.
- Cultural and video games audiences - including players, seniors, neurodivergent individuals, and people with disabilities - form a diverse group of end users whose needs and engagement patterns directly influence content relevance and accessibility.
- Technology and business stakeholders include hardware/software manufacturers, IT and gadget producers, and physical/digital distribution platforms, serving as enablers of both production and reach.
- Financial and economic actors, such as investors, individual sponsors, the stock exchange, and companies engaged in branding or product placement, play a crucial role in resourcing and market expansion.
- Policymakers and regulators - including national ministries (Culture, Education, Digital Affairs, Science), regulatory agencies, like the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK), as well as Office of Electronic Communications (UKE), and more





global World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO); local governments; legislators - shape the legal and funding environment for collaboration. These actors are often distanced from the creative process but crucial for enabling structural change and sustainability.

- Another key group includes amplifiers and intermediaries: media, influencers, event promoters, and industry associations, e.g. national bodies, like the Indie Games Polska, Krakow Technology Park (KPT), and The Centre for the Development of Creative Industries (Centrum Rozwoju Przemysłów Kreatywnych - CRPK), which connect actors, raise visibility, and shape public and industry narratives. The primary insight is that effective cooperation depends not just on identifying these groups, but on actively managing their interdependencies.

Considering the key actors, it seems that **cultural institutions need technological and business support to innovate; developers need regulatory clarity and funding; educators need access to practical applications and industry relevance. Intersections** - where creativity meets regulation, and education meets production - **require coordinated translation, often facilitated by intermediaries** like project managers, strategists, or cross-sector organisations. **Without intentional coordination, these rich actor networks risk fragmentation and underutilisation.** A strategic, systemic approach to stakeholder alignment is therefore essential to realising the full potential of EVGIE-CCI collaboration, especially in a culturally diverse European landscape.

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

Across all three KAT teams, a clear structure of EVGIE-CCI stakeholders emerged, highlighting a complex but coordinated ecosystem essential for effective collaboration. Three main intersecting groups were consistently identified.

- The first is education and academia - schools, universities, scientific centres, teacher training institutions, students, and academic communities - crucial for talent development, knowledge transfer, and long-term cross-sector capacity.
- The second group includes state institutions and public agencies, such as ministries (Education, Culture, Science, Digital Affairs), national archives, regulatory bodies, and policymakers, which shape the strategic and regulatory environment for cooperation.
- The third group consists of local government entities, including municipalities, regional authorities, and youth councils, acting as civic anchors and platforms for local implementation.

Two further shared stakeholder groups are museums and non-profit organisations, frequently engaged by both sectors as educational, thematic, or operational partners. Sector-specific actors were also mapped. On the CCI side, these include cultural venues (theatres, cinemas, philharmonics), event companies, translators, performers, and cultural consumers - reflecting



a content- and audience-focused dynamic. On the EVGIE side, the network includes game studios, developers, publishers, journalists, venture capital firms, business angels, incubators, industry associations, and informal gamedev communities - highlighting a production and innovation-driven structure. A third layer is formed by neutral enablers - UX teams, R&D centres, business support organisations, gamification platforms, and emerging entrepreneurs - who bridge sectors and provide infrastructure, funding, or coordination.

The key insight is that successful EVGIE–CCI collaboration relies not only on cooperation within sectors but on managing the interdependencies across them - between culture, education, governance, production, and innovation. This **demands the activation of intermediary roles** (e.g. project managers, strategic facilitators) capable of translating between institutional languages and aligning interests. The ecosystem is layered and interwoven, and further **policy or programme development must address coordination, resource alignment, and shared platform design to sustain long-term, high-impact partnerships**. Those results accurately correspond with the results of the GAMEHEARTS State-of-the-Art Report in the area of recommendations for the European Commission (Kościewicz et al., 2025).

#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

The workshop findings across all INT teams reveal a complex, interdependent ecosystem of stakeholders involved in EVGIE–CCI cooperation, with developers, players, and fans forming the central core around which other actors' orbit.

- Video game developers, technology providers, and digital platforms lead the production and technical aspects, while cultural professionals - musicians, curators, composers, and recording studios - contribute narrative and creative depth. Audiences play a dual role as both consumers and co-creators, influencing development through feedback, streaming, and community engagement.
- Funding flows from diverse sources, including private investors, banks, donors, public agencies, and advertisers, enabling project realisation and scale.
- Educational and research institutions - universities, students, and game clubs - legitimise playing games as a cultural and pedagogical tool, bridging knowledge creation and industry innovation.
- Museums, cultural preservation bodies, and tourist offices support heritage-driven projects, while media, influencers, and marketers amplify visibility and relevance.
- Governance structures - including EU bodies, national governments, and rights organisations - shape regulatory and ethical frameworks, particularly concerning IP, data protection, and sustainability.
- Peripheral but impactful stakeholders - crypto communities, asset distributors, testers, and design agencies - enhance the ecosystem's dynamism.





Considering this actor diversity, it is worth to note that participants noted **misalignments in language, expectations, and pace across groups**, often leading to fragmented cooperation. The **need for intermediaries** - such as innovation hubs, programme managers, or cultural translators - was consistently highlighted as essential for aligning workflows, fostering mutual understanding, and creating sustainable, value-driven collaboration models. As we see, the environment of actors is vast and complex, with a clear need of more active approach and understanding from the policymakers.

Conclusions and Additional Insights

The mapping of stakeholder ecosystems revealed a vast and multi-layered network of institutions, professionals, users, and intermediaries whose interactions shape the viability of EVGIE-CCI collaboration. The presence of content creators, cultural institutions, educators, policymakers, and funders was consistent across locations. Similarly, as found in all DTthons, the success of cooperation depends on the quality of alignment between and among the actors, while an **effective cross-sector collaboration demands not only shared strategic goals but also active coordination**, translation across institutional languages, and sustained engagement **through dedicated intermediary roles**.

4.2. Understanding the Key Relationships and Industrial Misalignments

This section focuses on the interpersonal, institutional, and cultural dynamics shaping the relationship between the EVGIE and CCI sectors. It explores how differing professional logics, communication patterns, and operational rhythms influence mutual understanding or misunderstanding between and among the actors. Through in-depth team analyses, persona development, and scenario modelling, below, we uncover both points of tension and the conditions under which meaningful collaboration becomes possible.

4.2.1. Mutual (mis)understanding between EVGIE and CCI

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

The analysis across all three teams reveals that collaboration between EVGIE and CCI is hindered by deep differences in institutional logic, operational pace, communication styles, and goals. EVGIE operates in a commercial, fast-paced, innovation-driven environment focused on product development, IP coherence, audience reach, and profitability, while CCI functions within slower, mission-oriented public frameworks aimed at cultural dissemination, education, and civic engagement.

These contrasting structures lead to recurring misunderstandings, particularly when EVGIE assumes a dominant project role and CCI is treated as a content provider rather than an equal partner. Motivations also diverge: EVGIE values technical innovation, audience hype, and creative ownership, whereas CCI is driven by cultural promotion, access to new audiences,





and institutional relevance. Also, demotivators reflect these structural mismatches - EVGIE actors cite licensing costs, fragmented workflows, and institutional inertia on the CCI side, while CCI representatives' express frustration over bureaucracy, politicised procurement, lack of financial support, and gamedev's unfamiliar terminology and logic.

The key challenge lies in the **lack of a shared language and mutual understanding** of each sector's constraints and drivers. However, all teams observed that cooperation becomes productive **when both sides engage in co-definition of goals, transparent planning, and patient clarification of tools and terms**. Where this was achieved - such as in discussions of VR as a cultural bridge or projects like Stalker and This War of Mine - collaboration shifted from tension to synergy. To move forward, the **sectors must invest in intermediaries, shared onboarding processes, joint planning frameworks, and facilitation roles** that can bridge their different rhythms and assumptions. The potential for co-creation is strong, but it depends on designing processes that respect distinct sectoral identities while building mutual trust and operational alignment.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

The combined findings from all three teams show a coherent and nuanced picture of mutual (mis)understanding between the EVGIE and CCI sectors, revealing fundamental differences in structure, motivation, pace, and communication.

EVGIE operates within a dynamic, decentralised, and innovation-driven environment, where professionals are adaptable, often neurodiverse, fluent in digital tools, and oriented toward growth, creativity, and societal relevance through technology. Their routines include constant learning, networking, and proactive outreach to new partners and funding sources. EVGIE's goals often blend commercial success with cultural legitimacy, and its motivations include agency, recognition, and impact. However, it faces barriers when engaging with CCI: fragmented knowledge, rigid bureaucracies, unclear institutional processes, and the feeling that video games are undervalued or misunderstood as a cultural medium.

In contrast, CCI actors work within structured, publicly accountable institutions that move more slowly, are underfunded, and operate with clear social and educational missions. These institutions value empathy, continuity, and meaningful public engagement but are often disconnected from digital production pipelines and intimidated by the technical language and speed of gamedev workflows. Motivated by ideals, audience expansion, and cultural enrichment, CCI is frequently held back by resource constraints, lack of technical capacity, and unclear entry points into gamedev collaboration.

Participants across all teams also identified **persistent stereotypes** - such as the '*flannel-shirted programmer*' or the '*typical museum lady*' - that reinforce misperceptions and feed into deeper divides in expectations, ambition, and professional norms. There was a shared recognition that while both sectors desire cooperation, **CCI remains the structurally weaker side of**



the partnership due to funding shortages, staff limitations, and outdated institutional frameworks. To bridge this gap, successful cooperation must go beyond shared interests and focus on building common ground through **translated communication, facilitation roles, longer timelines, and a conscious dismantling of biases.** Only then can complementary strengths – EVGIE’s agility and innovation, and CCI’s mission and audience trust - be activated in sustainable, co-creative ways.

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

The comparison across all three teams underscores a complex but coherent picture of mutual (mis)understanding between the EVGIE and CCI sectors, revealing divergent routines, values, and structural limitations that often inhibit effective cooperation.

EVGIE professionals, whether developers, creatives, or media representatives, operate in decentralised, entrepreneurial environments driven by passion, artistic identity, and a desire for both impact and income. Their routines include networking, event participation, prototype-building, and project pitching. Their goals centre on promoting games as cultural artefacts, expanding collaboration platforms, and integrating cross-sector insights. Motivators include creative freedom, recognition, access to funding, and the social relevance of games. However, they are often demotivated by grant failures, lack of recognition from traditional cultural institutions, poor communication with public-sector partners, and misunderstandings about the cost, value, and users of VGI’s products.

CCI actors, by contrast, tend to work in slower, more rigid institutional settings - museums, education, cultural NGOs - where public accountability, limited resources, and bureaucratic processes constrain their ability to innovate. Their routines involve research, outreach, and content design, often driven by a mission to preserve heritage, expand audiences, and integrate culture with new technologies. Their goals include building support networks, launching hubs, and promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration. Motivators include personal passion for games, fascination with technology, successful past experiences, and the promise of reaching younger, digitally fluent audiences. Yet they are hampered by lack of funding, excessive administrative burdens, institutional inertia, and a lack of technical knowledge or strategic capacity, especially at senior levels.

Importantly, both sectors identified **asymmetry in expectations and a lack of translation mechanisms**, from language and workflow differences to conflicting understandings of impact and **timelines** - as major obstacles. EVGIE often sees CCI as bureaucratic and underinformed, while CCI experiences EVGIE as fast-moving and commercially focused, with unclear pathways to collaboration. Despite this, all teams emphasised **strong shared values - creativity, impact, public engagement - and the potential of co-created, tech-enabled cultural storytelling.** Achieving this potential requires investment in shared frameworks, intermediaries (such as ambassadors or co-designers), clearer processes, and deliberate efforts to overcome stereotypes and operational divides through early, patient, and mutual onboarding.



#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

Across all three international teams, participants explored the needs, motivations, and barriers experienced by representatives of the EVGIE and CCI sectors through structured interviews and persona development.

The EVGIE persona consistently emerged as a senior figure in the video games industry - developers, CEOs, educators, or publishers - who combine academic and production expertise, often participating in cross-sector projects with health, education, or cultural partners. Their goals centre around building synergies with CCI, promoting cultural legitimacy for games, supporting new creators, and disrupting monopolies like Steam. They are motivated by peer collaboration, professional development, and passion-driven projects, but demotivated by institutional rigidity, lack of targeted funding, and insufficient government understanding of gamedev. Concerns also included ethical issues in youth-targeted monetisation and the dominance of major market players.

Conversely, the CCI user persona - typically operations managers, researchers, or cultural educators - has a strong record of innovation, audience development, and interdisciplinary work, often facilitated through video games. Their goals include fostering impact, promoting earlier cooperation, enabling career mobility across sectors, and embracing new technologies and investment models. Motivators for CCI users include pushing cultural boundaries, attracting new audiences, and achieving high professional standards, though they are often discouraged by fragmented policy structures, unclear gamedev jargon, resource limitations, and time constraints in cross-sector projects.

All three teams identified recurring structural obstacles:

- different operational languages,
- misaligned goals,
- mismatched expectations,
- the absence of shared platforms to support networking and partnership-building,
- stereotypes about sector identities and diverging institutional logics further complicate collaboration.

Yet despite these barriers, the workshops highlighted strong alignment in purpose: both EVGIE and CCI actors are driven by cultural impact, innovation, and relevance. **Participants unanimously called for dedicated intermediary roles, clearer cooperation frameworks, and tools that support long-term, iterative collaboration grounded in shared values.** Once again, they emphasised the urgent need for facilitation mechanisms, cultural translators, and networking platforms to unlock the full potential of sustainable EVGIE–CCI ecosystems.



4.2.2. Cross-sector mutual understanding – key needs and challenges

The workshops revealed that while the EVGIE and CCI sectors are united by a shared desire for impact, creativity, and cultural relevance, they are divided by significant operational, structural, and linguistic barriers.

EVGIE actors operate in decentralised, innovation-oriented, and commercially driven ecosystems where iteration, agility, and creative ownership are central.

In contrast, CCI professionals work within public-sector frameworks defined by slower rhythms, institutional accountability, and long-term civic missions.

This divergence manifests in misaligned expectations, sector-specific jargon, differing timelines, and mismatches in workflow logic. Stereotypes - like the *'rigid museum administrator'* or the *'reckless game developer'* - compound the difficulty in building trust and equal partnership.

Participants consistently identified the lack of shared onboarding processes, unclear collaboration platforms, and asymmetric access to funding and expertise as critical obstacles. Despite these gaps, there was widespread acknowledgement of mutual respect for each other's goals and a willingness to collaborate - provided structural and cultural mediation is in place. **To move from friction to fluidity, the workshops shown that co-creation must be supported by long-term frameworks and facilitation roles that translate between logics, reduce transactional fatigue, and cultivate mutual literacy.**

There are multiple implications and prospective recommendations stemming from the output:

- Cross-sector secondments and residencies: Embed game professionals in cultural institutions—and vice versa—to foster mutual understanding of workflows, expectations, and pressures.
- Support for hybrid professional profiles: Provide funding and institutional backing for individuals operating at the intersection of sectors (e.g. educators in gamedev, curators in digital experience design), recognising their bridging role and enabling long-term career development.
- Sector-neutral communication standards: Develop co-designed glossaries, shared visualisation templates, and common planning tools to facilitate clarity in goal-setting, timelines, and constraints across disciplines.
- Low-risk co-creation sandboxes: Fund experimental environments that allow for iterative collaboration without high stakes, reducing fear of failure and encouraging innovation.
- Curricular integration of intersectoral collaboration: Embed practical training on cooperation, negotiation, and ethical co-design in both cultural and technical educational programmes.





- Recognition of emotional labour: Acknowledge and support the trust-building and conflict-management work required in cross-sector projects, especially during early phases; develop protocols and safeguards.
- Joint evaluation frameworks: Design assessment tools that align artistic, cultural, and commercial success criteria, ensuring stakeholders across sectors feel their contributions are visible and fairly valued.
- Shadow advisory panels: Establish cross-sector advisory groups composed of EVGIE and CCI representatives to monitor collaborative project health, equity, and long-term alignment.

Together, these insights highlight that **mutual understanding is not a by-product of shared interest, but a cultivated practice**. It requires investment in human relationships, institutional empathy, and the creation of space - both physical and conceptual. Analysing all of these results, we may conclude that **there is a necessity for spaces where each sector can listen, learn, and lead together**.

4.3. Cross-Industry Cooperation – The Current State

This section analyses the current state of EVGIE–CCI cross-sector cooperation using the 4E framework (Establishment, Execution, Ending, Endorsement). Drawing on observations from the four GAMEHEARTS DTthons it explores practical mechanisms, recurring challenges, and enabling conditions in collaborative project lifecycles. The aim is to identify where cooperation flourishes, where it breaks down, and what structural interventions are needed to move beyond isolated successes.

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

The current forms of cross-sector collaboration between the EVGIE and CCI sectors, as assessed using the 4E framework, reveal a fragmented landscape marked by both promising practices and persistent obstacles.

In terms of Establishment, partnerships are often initiated informally or through funding opportunities, but a lack of clear decision-making structures and formalised cooperation models leads to confusion and delays. Shared goals are frequently only superficial, with misunderstandings emerging early due to differing expectations and sector-specific logic.

During the Execution phase, iterative processes - which are standard in gamedev - are often misinterpreted by cultural institutions as signs of poor planning, resulting in tension. Communication breakdowns, divergent paces of work, and mismatched evaluation criteria exacerbate these issues.

The Ending stage often lacks reflection or structured closure, making it difficult to evaluate outcomes or build on past experiences.





Finally, in the Endorsement phase, little is done to institutionalise learning or translate experience into long-term frameworks. While some collaborations succeed - especially those involving mutual respect, transparent co-design, and early clarification of roles - many are undermined by structural asymmetries.

Additionally, we found out that EVGIE studios often operate as self-contained ecosystems, bypassing external artists to reduce costs and avoid conflict, while CCI institutions are constrained by rigid procedures, bureaucratic hurdles, and outdated perceptions of gamedev. Common pitfalls include project 'burnout' due to maintenance costs of non-commercial game products, ego-driven conflict, and polarising narratives such as ART vs COMMERCE. The most pressing challenges stem from an absence of shared vocabulary, lack of sustained facilitation roles, and insufficient risk management strategies in an environment defined by rapid change. However, genuine curiosity and mutual learning were observed as key drivers of successful cooperation, highlighting the need for frameworks that enable co-creation without forcing premature consensus.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

The analysis of EVGIE–CCI cooperation by the three Warsaw-based teams presents a complex yet coherent picture of current practices and barriers within the 4E framework. Although the potential for innovation and mutual benefit is recognised, collaboration is hindered by structural gaps, cultural mismatches, and lack of systemic support.

In the Establishment phase, partnerships are typically reactive and triggered by external funding rather than strategic planning. Contacts are often informal and based on personal networks, with cooperation emerging by chance rather than through deliberate matchmaking. The EVGIE sector lacks clear institutional anchoring and policy backing, while knowledge about its value remains limited. This fuels stereotypes: cultural institutions see game developers as unserious, while developers perceive cultural bodies as rigid. Formal barriers - contracts, IP rights, unclear briefs - further complicate early cooperation.

Execution reveals deep operational incompatibility. Cultural and procedural differences create inefficiencies, distrust, and delays. Teams reported a lack of collaboration tools, poor documentation, and unclear processes. Museums' weak digital infrastructure causes friction, as do vague goals and a disconnect between decision-makers and creative teams. While EVGIE actors were generally motivated and open, the absence of joint planning and defined responsibilities undermined effectiveness.

The Ending phase is often abrupt and unstructured. Teams noted 'project fatigue,' missed opportunities for feedback, and a lack of follow-up or reflection. Dissemination is weak, with outputs sometimes reaching only internal audiences. Game developers expressed frustration over last-minute changes, budget constraints, and unmet expectations. Many projects conclude without institutional learning or continuity.





Endorsement is the weakest link. There is little infrastructure to promote or institutionalise results - no event calendars, weak media interest, and passive professional associations. Recognition tools like awards are rarely used for intersectoral projects. A lack of visible ambassadors and storytelling further weakens long-term impact. Still, all teams noted that new networks and individual growth were recurring positive outcomes.

Overall, Warsaw teams highlight that while the desire to collaborate exists, systemic frameworks are lacking. What works are interpersonal trust and moments of creative alignment. What fails is everything structural: education, planning, infrastructure, and continuity. Without these, cooperation remains ad hoc and unsustainable, regardless of potential.

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

Using the 4E framework, the teams conducted a detailed diagnosis of the current state of EVGIE–CCI cooperation, identifying both effective mechanisms and persistent barriers across each phase.

In the Establishment phase, initial cooperation is often fuelled by enthusiasm and a shared sense of potential. However, the absence of decision-makers, reliance on informal networks, and communication issues rooted in sectoral differences complicate this stage. Although contacts may be made at events, launching cooperation still depends on personal outreach and trial-and-error. Misunderstandings during contract negotiations and unclear channels often delay progress. Successful partnerships tended to emerge when parties had a shared mission, complemented each other's strengths, and engaged in early co-visioning.

During Execution, collaboration expands to include a broader set of actors. When communication is consistent and roles are well defined, teams experience alignment and satisfaction. Yet many projects suffer from micromanagement, uneven engagement, lack of neutral coordination, and inefficiencies in time and resource use. Misaligned expectations around agile principles - especially within public financing - further strain cooperation.

The Ending phase typically centres on administrative finalisation - reporting, evaluation, and closure—but this often feels rushed. Opportunities for reflection and scaling are limited. While outputs are delivered and learning occurs, the dominant feeling is relief rather than fulfilment. Insufficient support for post-project continuity remains a significant gap.

The Endorsement phase is critical but underutilised. Innovations are rarely promoted, documented, or carried forward due to missing feedback mechanisms, limited dissemination of good practices, and a lack of platforms for knowledge exchange. Political inertia, rigid regulation, and administrative barriers continue to suppress long-term impact. Still, effective examples - like shared development tools, passionate individuals, and strategic deregulation—were noted. Key obstacles include underfunding, inflexible financing, weak communication, and the mismatch between CCI's public mission and EVGIE's commercial drivers.



These findings reinforce the need for institutional support, adaptive funding schemes, educational outreach, and integrated infrastructure to turn isolated collaborations into durable frameworks. As shown in the GAMEHEARTS state-of-the-art report (Kościewicz et al., 2025), although cross-industry actors bear some responsibility, systemic support from industry, national, and EU policymakers - along with regulatory alignment - is essential to foster sustained cooperation.

#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

Using the 4E framework, the INT teams analysed the current state of EVGIE–CCI collaboration, identifying operational patterns, emotional dynamics, and recurring points of failure and success.

In the Establishment phase, challenges include scarce meeting opportunities, dependence on informal networks, and difficulty in identifying suitable partners. Mismatched expectations, differing professional languages, and sectoral speeds further complicate alignment. Although personal connections often spark collaboration, the lack of structured matchmaking and decision-maker involvement hampers planning. Still, creative energy, trust, and clear communication sometimes enable strong interdisciplinary teams. Systemic barriers such as bureaucracy, funding limitations, and misaligned KPIs were repeatedly cited, and teams called for neutral facilitators to bridge these gaps.

Execution is often disrupted by inconsistent timelines, mismatched budgets, and weak understanding of sector-specific realities. Technical limitations, poor onboarding, and inadequate communication channels compound the difficulties. However, when clear tools (e.g. Jira, Trello), regular meetings, and documentation are in place, teams report improved coordination. Trust and mutual respect remain crucial but are often undermined by micromanagement, shifting stakeholders, or vague leadership. Emotions run high—initial enthusiasm can give way to frustration. Iterative creative work thrives when properly supported, but unrealistic expectations and disengaged partners can stall progress.

The Ending phase focuses on final outputs, reporting, and reflection. Legal compliance, archiving, and post-mortems are valued but not always implemented. Emotions range from pride to disillusionment, often due to absent continuation strategies or unmet potential. Many projects, despite achievements, end as isolated efforts without mechanisms for follow-up. Obstacles include KPI alignment issues, reputational risk, and a lack of evaluation tools—resulting in underused knowledge and limited institutional learning.

Endorsement is critical yet frequently mishandled. While teams value storytelling, conferences, and media visibility (e.g. SXSW, GDC), public recognition is often lost to competitive anxieties, funding scarcity, and fragmented audiences. Cultural institutions often lack the capacity to promote game collaborations effectively. The tension between going viral and staying strategic is worsened by algorithmic opacity on platforms like Steam. Although endorsement could generate future momentum, missing structures and visibility frameworks prevent success from becoming sustainable impact.





In sum, the INT teams portray an ecosystem rich in potential but undermined by fragmentation, misaligned priorities, and lack of systemic support—brilliant, but broken.

Conclusions and Additional Insights

Across all workshops, the 4E framework revealed a landscape of fragmented, ad hoc cooperation marked by creative energy but systemic fragility. While Establishment often begins with enthusiasm and informal networking, it rarely involves strategic planning or decision-maker commitment. Execution phases expose deep procedural mismatches and weak project governance, while Ending stages lack proper closure, reflection, or evaluation. Most critically, the Endorsement phase is consistently neglected, leaving successful collaborations under-promoted and non-sustained. Despite these challenges, **examples of co-creation, trust-building, and iterative learning indicate that with proper facilitation and institutional support, a more coherent and resilient ecosystem is achievable. Nevertheless, strong institutional support is both necessary and expected.**

4.4. Cross-Industry Cooperation – the Desired Future and Idea Cases

One of the DTthons' key objectives was to determine how EVGIE and CCI could cooperate more effectively to create added value for each sector engaged. To focus on the understanding of existing practices and inter-sectoral relationships, the DTthons teams were tasked with designing a target/model path for future cooperation. Following the 4E framework, the teams proposed specific solutions, incorporating them into particular phases. **The proposed collaboration pathways for each project team are presented below as idea cases.** These include the key activities of the partners at each of the four highlighted stages (E1–E4), the tools they use, and advice on how EVGIE and CCI can cooperate effectively and in a mutually beneficial way. The proposed solutions are considered as idea cases which may be seen as experience-based ideas and suggestions for cross-industry cooperation. Below, 12 idea cases developed by 12 teams working in 4 DTthons are presented.

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW – Idea cases 1-3

Idea case 1

The WRO_1 TEAM decided to develop a cooperation pathway for smaller entities in both sectors. This decision emerged from discussions that revealed differences in activity complexity depending on the size of the organisations involved. The team concluded that collaboration between smaller entities would be equally valuable and impactful for all parties involved. The table below summarises the results of the WRO_1 TEAM's work.



**Table 6. Cooperation path - Idea case 1 by WRO_1 TEAM**

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>EVGIE: Presents the project's vision, objectives, and business analysis; identifies specific needs within the project and actively promotes it.</p> <p>CCI: Builds a professional portfolio and prepares a presentation of its capabilities (communicates its potential).</p> <p>Both parties actively seek partners, using a shared tool: the 'Great EVGIE & CCI Consortium' – an online platform funded by both the industry and public sources. This platform enables creator promotion and partner matching. It combines functionalities of LinkedIn, ArtStation, SoundCloud, and GoWork/job boards.</p> <p>The Great Consortium also organises cross-industry events and training sessions under the banner 'Understanding Game Dev / CCI', and provides legal support (contract templates, red flags in agreements).</p>	<p>The parties define a shared vision, clarify their roles within the project, and agree on a working model, including the tools they will use. They hold regular project meetings and cross-industry workshops, maintaining ongoing communication and updating project goals as needed (ensuring transparency around changes and effective risk management). They use tools such as calendar applications (e.g. Google Calendar), communication platforms (Slack, Discord, MS Teams), project management tools (Jira, Trello), knowledge bases (Confluence, Wiki). A key success factor is the presence of team members whose expertise bridges both EVGIE and CCI domains, as well as the involvement of a dedicated facilitator to support the process and ensure effective communication during meetings.</p>	<p>The creator (CCI) delivers the results, which are reviewed by the creative director (EVGIE), approved by the studio's management (EVGIE), and financially settled by the finance department (EVGIE). Final project documentation is then secured. Both parties evaluate the collaboration (project evaluation) and consider the potential for future cooperation. At this stage, marketing activities play a key role: engaging with media, publishing reviews, testimonials and online advertisements, promoting the production through influencers, and encouraging both creators and producers to participate in conferences and events. An added value comes from CCI institutions offering unconventional outreach opportunities for EVGIE to connect with broader audiences.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Both parties seek inspiration and new contacts, participate in mentoring and training sessions, and continue developing their portfolios. They submit projects to competitions, promote their outcomes (using platforms, news portals, industry communities, events, and social media), contribute to further product development and optimisation, and report good practices by building a shared knowledge base.</p>		





Activities at the ESTABLISHMENT stage help to shorten and simplify the ‘first contact’ process, enabling better alignment between potential collaborators. They also lay the foundation for more valuable and reliable cooperation at later stages. Using an online platform makes the initial process safer and increases mutual awareness between parties. The WRO_1 TEAM also offered a few recommendations for this stage: showcase your product early in its development, understand the other party’s needs and define clear expectations for the collaboration.

Actions undertaken during the EXECUTION stage ensure smooth cooperation and enhance flexibility and adaptability to change. The aim is to align the vision of all team members, establish priorities and decision-making boundaries, define management methods, create a shared language and streamline processes by communicating continuously throughout the product development cycle. Designers also emphasised several risks to watch out for at this stage, such as respecting agreed timelines, managing and storing information securely (ideally in the cloud) and being mindful of the constraints of the project triangle (scope, cost and time).

The goal of the ENDING stage is to deliver a high-quality product, promote it effectively and lay the groundwork for future collaboration. For CCI, this may entail developing a personal brand and upskilling. Particular attention should be paid to risks such as project delays, budget overruns and negative publicity.

Activities at the ENDORSEMENT stage aim to promote good practices, foster career development and market positioning, share knowledge, and encourage further EVGIE–CCI collaboration. However, it is crucial to remain vigilant about the credibility of potential business partners and the accuracy of reviews or testimonials from past collaborations.

Based on the proposed model and feedback from participants during the event, the WRO_1 TEAM identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

1. *A shared vocabulary and mutual onboarding* – a fundamental basis for effective communication.
2. *Monitoring trends and regulations* – essential to avoid legal pitfalls and support adaptability.
3. *Flexibility and appreciation of differences* – given that EVGIE typically operates in the private sector and CCI in the public sector, partnerships should be based on equality rather than client–contractor dynamics.
4. *A cooperation platform* – a central hub connecting tools, people, and knowledge.



Table 7. Cooperation path – Idea case 2 by WRO_2 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Either a game development studio is looking for a cultural work, or the owner/creator of a cultural work is seeking a game development studio. This can lead to meetings, networking, initial presentations or pitches, and the outlining of boundaries and exploitation rights, alongside a shared vision of the desired outcome. At this stage, the key objective is to clearly define the roles, with the support of mediators who understand the specific nature of both domains. The owner/creator of the cultural work becomes familiar with the game studio’s workflow and pipelines, and the two parties develop a shared language. Through joint consultations, the parties will draft a transparent agreement, determine the budget and identify sources of funding. Financing is secured (from private investors, the stock exchange or grant programmes) and focus group interviews (FGIs) are conducted to better understand audience expectations. The source material (or the IP ‘Bible’, if applicable) is then provided, after which either a partnership-based collaboration begins, or responsibility is handed over to the game development studio.</p>	<p>Both parties appoint their respective production teams, after which collaboration with the owner/creator of the cultural work begins in accordance with the previously agreed terms. This cooperation should be particularly intensive during the pre-production phase, involving regular feedback cycles. If creative conflicts arise, the role of cultural mediators - individuals familiar with both domains – becomes essential. Throughout this stage, project goals are updated regularly based on feedback gathered during playtesting, an iterative development and testing cycle. While the game development studio must retain creative independence and freedom, the owner/creator of the cultural work should demonstrate an understanding of the specific nature of the video game medium.</p> <p>Successful collaboration models: Robert Kirkman (The Walking Dead), Dmitry Glukhovsky (Metro) and Andrzej Sapkowski (The Witcher 3).</p> <p>Playability takes precedence over strict adherence to the narrative methods of the original material. It is also important to establish a joint marketing strategy targeting a broad audience.</p>	<p>The collaboration concludes with a post-mortem analysis to draw out the key lessons learned and the distribution of profits in accordance with the agreement. If applicable, the game development studio and the owner/creator of the cultural work will provide post-launch support for the adaptation. After presenting the final deliverable, the project is formally closed and its success is assessed based on how well the original objectives were met. The risks associated with this phase - namely, the degree of project refinement - should be managed by regularly reviewing milestones and sharing collaboration results with the community (Community-Driven Development).</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Both parties develop clear and transparent collaboration standards. They participate in networking events and talent hubs to help build cross-sector contact networks. This stage also involves accurately valuing the IP’s worth and usability, and, if necessary, redefining its value and goals. The time is right for promotional activities, both online and offline, including distribution, outreach and cross-promotion involving game developers and cultural institutions. The creation of promotional and/or educational materials based on the previously defined strategy is also involved, as well as efforts to elevate a local brand to the global stage. Crucially, this stage reflects the synergy made possible by engaging multiple sectors.</p>		



The WRO_2 TEAM began their design process by identifying three of the most common collaboration models observed between EVGIE and CCI:

- **M1. EVGIE (client) → CCI (contractor)**

A game studio needs to expand its resources and seek collaboration with creators of visuals, music, and other elements (recognised artists whose works function as independent ‘creations’ embedded in the game), or with individuals who possess specialist knowledge or assets (e.g. source materials, models, etc.).

- **M2. CCI (client) → EVGIE (contractor)**

An institution or organisation holds a resource it wishes to disseminate through the medium of video games (e.g. to promote a cultural phenomenon or heritage element) and commissions a game studio to co-create the product.

- **M3. EVGIE (partner) ↔ CCI (partner)**

A meeting of ‘brands’ or ‘universes’ – conscious artists seeking to promote their creative IP (intellectual property) across platforms and game studios looking for strong IP foundations on which to base a game.

At the same time, the team emphasised that effective collaboration depends on a mutual understanding of the differences, needs and limitations of both parties. However, if the end goal is for the video game to be successful in the market, the EVGIE side should ultimately make the key decisions within the development process. The table below presents the WRO_2 TEAM’s proposed target cooperation pathway.

According to the WRO_2 TEAM, the ESTABLISHMENT stage is particularly important for defining the principles of collaboration in creative and business contexts. Key aspects include developing standardised contract templates and funding models (e.g. grants, investment funds and the stock exchange), clearly outlining each party’s responsibilities and establishing a shared language.

During the EXECUTION stage, it is essential to ensure that game development studios have sufficient creative freedom. The top priority should be playability, which means that not all elements of the source material need to be faithfully replicated. As one workshop participant noted: ‘The player is not a passive content consumer – interactivity requires a flexible approach to the original narrative.’

At the ENDING stage, evaluation mechanisms, retrospective tools, post-launch support, sharing outcomes with the community and further development through community-driven approaches become particularly important. This is also the phase in which plans for continuing the collaboration may emerge.



At the ENDORSEMENT stage, the focus should be on building synergy between sectors and promoting the outcomes of their collaboration. This includes organising networking events and educational workshops to raise awareness of the specifics of each sector, as well as mentoring programmes to share experiences and highlight good practices and job shadowing initiatives to improve understanding of game development processes. This stage also provides an opportunity to initiate new partnerships for future EVGIE–CCI projects.

In summary, **the key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration, as identified by WRO_2 TEAM members, are as follows:

1. *Interdisciplinary consultants ('cross-sector translators')* – individuals with expertise in both game development and the cultural sector.
2. *Games as a cultural medium* – understanding their narrative potential.
3. *Openness to diversity, global reach, and commercialisation as added value.*
4. *Mutual trust and flexibility* – collaboration built on partnership, not subcontracting.

Idea case 3

The WRO_3 TEAM chose to focus on developing a more universal cooperation pathway. Their approach is based on formalised structures and systemic support, with the aim of providing stable and repeatable conditions for collaboration on diverse EVGIE–CCI projects. Drawing on institutional standards and expert knowledge, the team has proposed a model that ensures transparency and balanced recognition of contributions, as well as the scalability of results. The table below illustrates the outcomes of their efforts.

According to the WRO_3 TEAM, it is important to pay close attention to the conditions of the tender process (gaining clarity on formal requirements) and the differing levels of experience among partners (knowledge asymmetry) during the ESTABLISHMENT stage. For this reason, seeking support from external experts is strongly recommended.

During the EXECUTION stage, potential risks include a lack of mutual understanding of the Production Document's content, different work and decision-making paces between parties, and an absence of an internalised iterative approach, which is crucial for projects of this nature.

At the ENDING stage, special attention should be given to securing both parties' intellectual property rights.

Risks associated with the ENDORSEMENT stage include: an overconfidence effect within the CCI sector (a false sense of competence) following EVGIE-led training sessions; excessive formality and complexity in financial settlements; a lack of balance in recognising project success, with one side monopolising the narrative.

**Table 8. Cooperation path – Idea case 3 by WRO_3 TEAM**

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>The parties use a systematic tendering and consultation platform, with standards defined by the Ministry of Digital Affairs in consultation with EVGIE. The platform is designed to assess project feasibility and announce calls for proposals. The platform enables live pitching, which involves quickly presenting ideas and collaboration opportunities, as well as verifying compatibility between EVGIE and CCI partners. Meetings are conducted online and recorded, and the platform ensures that the entire process is fully documented, including technical reports and expert analyses.</p> <p>When applying for public funding, both parties must engage a certified EVGIE expert to support the project development process by providing technological expertise to help ground proposed solutions. Funding acquisition specialists also provide additional support.</p>	<p>The parties establish the basis of their collaboration in the form of a ‘Production Document’, which clearly identifies the members of the team and defines their roles within the project. The document also outlines the chosen methodologies and work schedule, meeting frequency, preferred communication channels and rules for accessing documentation. The parties agree on a standardised documentation structure (shared by EVGIE and CCI), along with protocols for cloud-based storage and editing. The parties also agree on a shared glossary of terms to ensure mutual understanding, and adopt an iterative approach to the project, involving regular testing and external consultations with target user groups and key stakeholders.</p>	<p>At the end stage, project teams tend to grow. For this reason, it is crucial to deliver the project in line with the assumptions outlined in the production document and to maintain a small, focused decision-making group until completion. It is essential to document the entire process, including recordings, artefacts and testing results. At this stage, both parties focus on transforming the project outcomes into a scalable product to demonstrate their readiness to enter new markets. They also work to safeguard the interests and authorship of both parties (i.e. protect intellectual property), bearing in mind the investment potential of the proposed solution.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Activities at this stage include training sessions organised by EVGIE, knowledge exchange between EVGIE and CCI, and inviting CCI representatives to EVGIE industry events, as well as inviting EVGIE representatives to CCI sector events. Another element is establishing a standardised project settlement model, meaning a unified set of financial documentation regardless of the funding operator or project type. Furthermore, all project documentation, materials and analyses should be publicly accessible. Financial settlements must be conducted via the systemic platform. This stage also focuses on developing expertise and a portfolio of best practices for EVGIE–CCI collaboration, thereby contributing to a shared knowledge base.</p>		





In summary, the WRO_3 TEAM identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

1. *Mutual understanding and respect for differences, recognising the distinct goals of each sector* (EVGIE is driven by innovation and profit, while CCI is guided by a socio-cultural mission and heritage promotion), and valuing the unique competencies and experience that each side brings.
2. *Transparent communication and clearly defined collaboration rules*, including well-defined roles, timelines, communication protocols, a shared vocabulary and a centralised knowledge repository.
3. *Partnership and mutual benefit* – the project must deliver value to both sectors, with equal recognition of authorship and contributions (a partner is a co-creator of value, not a competitor).
4. *Long-term thinking about cultural, social and market impact and knowledge sharing* are also important, as is promoting collaboration even before it begins (through training, events and networking), sharing outcomes after project completion (through publications, portfolios and recommendations) and strengthening relationships and good practices as a foundation for future projects.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW – Idea cases 4 - 6

The three teams in Warsaw followed a similar approach to their counterparts in Wrocław.

Idea case 4

The WAW_1 TEAM proposed a collaborative approach based on mutual learning, clear communication and cross-sector integration. Their model emphasises systemic support, accessible resources and shared responsibility, while promoting a culture of openness, partnership and innovation. The table below summarises the results of their work.



**Table 9. Cooperation path – Idea case 4 by WAW_1 TEAM**

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>The parties begin by identifying each other's needs in relation to the planned collaboration. They then define the project's purpose and target audience. Through cross-sector mentoring, training sessions and webinars, they develop a mutual understanding of creative processes, with the aim of increasing technological awareness within CCI and awareness of cultural creative workflows within EVGIE. A shared glossary is developed to facilitate communication between the sectors. Together, they define common goals and values, creating a cooperation strategy that is aligned with cultural policy and the needs of the video games market. In doing so, they consciously reject stereotypes about video games and promote their positive image as a form of art, education and cultural communication. During this stage, they make use of open, public knowledge repositories (digital archives) and collections of best practices that can be implemented throughout the production process.</p>	<p>The parties agree on clear rules for collaboration and project management, including a clearly defined division of roles. They implement a specific work methodology based on clearly defined KPIs. Shared tools are used for communication, scheduling and budget management. Throughout the project, the partners engage in continuous knowledge exchange and mutual learning, gaining insight into production stages and applied techniques. This enhances their competencies and expands their skill sets. They operate as a multidisciplinary team, led by individuals with a solid understanding of both sectors. Special attention is given to ensuring stable working conditions through effective risk management, providing financial and resource predictability.</p>	<p>The parties conduct a retrospective, jointly reviewing the project to analyse what worked well, what could be improved and what conclusions can be drawn for future collaboration. They celebrate their successes, highlight the achievements of both parties, and compile a shared portfolio. The project outcomes are documented and made available for further use or educational purposes. The project is promoted through events, exhibitions and publications.</p> <p>The next steps are also defined, whether that involves continuing the collaboration, developing the existing project further, or initiating a new venture based on emerging trends.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Activities at this stage include promoting the valuable practice of EVGIE–CCI collaboration. The parties share their experiences, including both successes and failures, to encourage learning from mistakes. They actively engage in networking and community-building activities and participate in cross-sector conferences. They also provide mentoring and guidance for newcomers, supporting them as they take their first steps and helping them to pitch their projects effectively.</p>		





According to the WAW_1 TEAM at the ESTABLISHMENT stage, it is crucial to open up public resources and make content available for production use, ideally through a single standardised knowledge source. Effective legislation and clearly defined areas of competence within public institutions are also important in ensuring that creators know whom to approach with specific requirements.

During the EXECUTION stage, integrating project teams representing both sectors is particularly important. The competencies of those involved are key, so partners should implement mechanisms for continuous education and knowledge transfer (e.g. in-project training cycles on game technologies or cultural production). Maintaining mutual flexibility and adapting actions to industry realities and a changing environment is essential.

At the ENDING stage, proper documentation of the project and promotion of its outcomes must be ensured. It is also important to celebrate the work, acknowledge each team member's contribution, analyse emerging trends and lay the groundwork for new ideas.

During the ENDORSEMENT stage, it is worth investing in project incubation systems and support programmes for small start-up teams. Supportive public policies are also crucial, such as tax incentives, increased prototype budgets and funding for conference participation, as well as European and national award systems that recognise the contribution of the CCI sector.

The WAW_1 TEAM proposed an interesting solution: **the creation of a central operator for EVGIE–CCI collaboration, named the Culture Reactor**. This entity would:

1. map competencies and contacts;
2. maintain a central repository of resources and events;
3. initiate and support cross-sector projects;
4. offer mentoring to entities starting collaboration;
5. connect experts from EVGIE and CCI in 'virtual labs';
6. act as an ecosystem integrator, source of inspiration and advocate for innovation.

In conclusion, the **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration, as identified during the WAW_1 TEAM workshop, are as follows:

- *Mutual understanding and cross-sector education* – creating a shared vocabulary; training in creative processes, technologies and operational models in both sectors; educating cultural institutions about the specifics of game production and vice versa.
- *A culture of partnership and openness* – building trust, curiosity and a willingness to understand one another; promoting diverse perspectives as a driver of innovation; adapting collaboration models to the realities of both sectors (flexibility, iteration and cross-sector leadership skills).



- *Access to resources and data* – opening public repositories of cultural content and data; enabling the shared use of digital archives, libraries and artefacts; and supporting the legalisation and institutional recognition of game preservation.
- *Strong institutional backing and systemic support* are also crucial, including easing legal and administrative barriers, providing tax incentives, grant programmes and dedicated funds, and establishing central support entities such as the Culture Reactor to act as a cross-sector integrator.

Idea case 5

The WAW_2 TEAM developed a structured, reflective cooperation model based on shared goals, empowered decision-making, and iterative processes. Their solution emphasises inclusivity, professionalisation, and the long-term use of project results, thereby encouraging continuity and development beyond the initial collaboration. The table below outlines their proposed pathway.

According to the WAW_2 TEAM at the ESTABLISHMENT stage, it is particularly important to ensure that the project includes competent individuals who have the authority to make decisions.’ This prevents stagnation in later phases. It is also essential to engage with established project management methodologies, such as PRINCE2 or SCRUM, from the outset and apply them deliberately throughout the process.

During the EXECUTION stage, critical analysis of the initiative is vital, including regular reviews of completed work combined with reflection and improvement implementation. An iterative approach to the production process is also key. Participants emphasised the importance of inclusivity, particularly involving potential users in the process. The team also recommended developing a shared repository of document templates, including various contracts and licences, for use at all stages of collaboration.

In the ENDING stage, the team suggested appointing a dedicated project closure lead - someone who is not overburdened by previous implementation work - to take responsibility for this final stage. The project should conclude with both a tangible result and a form of celebration to honour the collaboration to date.

During the ENDORSEMENT stage, the team recommended defining a clear framework for the use of project outcomes from the beginning to ensure that neither party is restricted from building on the results. Both parties should retain the right to use the outcomes in a mutually agreed and approved manner. Openness to continuation is essential. Participants also suggested establishing a joint representation of both sectors - ambassadors who would advocate for the interests of both EVGIE and CCI - as well as creating a shared calendar of industry events.



Table 10. Cooperation path – Idea case 5 by WAW_2 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>The partners identify the key stakeholders and clearly define the goals and motivations of everyone involved. They explain why they are entering into the collaboration and what they expect from the project. Each party ensures that decision-makers who are knowledgeable about the subject and committed to the process are involved. The project is planned to use a specific methodology and set of tools chosen for collaboration and mutual communication. Where necessary, relevant training is provided. A shared vision of the project’s conclusion is also defined, with the desired final outcome agreed in advance.</p>	<p>Knowledge and competencies are transferred between the partners in a process of mutual learning, whereby CCI gains insight into the realities of the video games industry and EVGIE becomes familiar with the language and context of the cultural sector. The parties implement their chosen project management system with clearly defined roles and tasks and a structured timeline. They also secure expert support in areas such as law, finance and promotion, and they actively involve various stakeholder groups in project delivery (e.g. user testing and open consultations). Regular feedback loops are maintained, and progress is monitored through retrospectives and recurring reviews, with improvements being introduced on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>The partners secure the necessary budget and resources to conclude the project properly, considering all key elements related to project closure, post-launch maintenance, archiving of outcomes, communication and promotion. They also consider the potential to expand the initiative, using it as a springboard for future activities. A dedicated project closure lead is appointed – someone who has observed the project without being operationally involved, understands the context and is focused on the quality of the outcomes and how they are presented to the public. The project then undergoes a final review and validation, after which there is a shared celebration of the collaboration.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Activities at this stage include raising awareness of the cultural and artistic multidimensionality of games, communicating their significance as a cultural medium and reflecting the language and values of the target audiences. The partners define transparent collaboration rules and consistently follow them. They engage in active communication with future audiences and continually foster their involvement. They also use the project’s outcomes as a launchpad for developing new ideas, leveraging what has been achieved to inspire and initiate future initiatives.</p>		





The WAW_2 TEAM has identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

- *Mutual understanding and recognition of video games as part of the culture*, moving beyond the perception of games as mere entertainment. This involves educating the CCI about the potential of games and educating the EVGIE about the logic and values of the cultural sector.
- *Availability of decision-makers* – responsible individuals must have the authority, knowledge and readiness to act. True partnership is not possible without empowered decision-makers on both sides.
- *Professionalisation of collaboration and openness to iteration and reflection* – adopting project management tools, conducting regular reviews and ensuring expert support is available throughout all project stages.
- *Continuation and development* – projects should not end on the final day of collaboration and outcomes must not be left unused. It is essential to clearly define the terms of use, such as who can access the results and under what conditions.





Idea case 6

The WAW_3 TEAM focused on designing a flexible and well-supported cooperation model in which early networking, detailed planning, and structured project execution play a key role. The team's approach values empathy, clarity and the broad dissemination of results, with the aim of building lasting connections and inspiring future partnerships. The table below illustrates the outcomes of their efforts.

Table 11. Cooperation path – Idea case 6 by WAW_3 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators take part in events that bring both sectors together, serving as platforms for exchanging ideas, presenting case studies and sharing best practices. These meetings act as a kind of marketplace for talent, facilitating skills transfer and inspiring participants while helping to 'match' partners across sectors. Each event concludes with a report prepared by the organisers to stimulate further cross-sector engagement. This includes market analysis, trends, case studies, best practices, an expert database with contact information and practical tools for participants, such as proposal templates and project briefs.</p>	<p>The parties prepare a detailed project brief including key elements such as partner information, an initiative overview, challenge description, available resources and conditions for completing joint activities. The project's objectives, scope, mutual expectations regarding outcomes and shared values underpinning the collaboration are defined. The process is divided into phases, with clearly defined milestones and task assignments. Tools for collaboration are selected based on the specific needs and working styles of both parties (e.g. Trello, Asana or Discord). Regular summary and feedback meetings are held to monitor progress. Knowledge exchange and mutual learning are actively encouraged throughout the partnership.</p>	<p>The parties finalise all the formal aspects of the collaboration, including intellectual property rights, licences, access to code, data archiving and financial settlements. They then conduct a project evaluation, assessing what worked well and what could be improved, as well as identifying any barriers encountered. Together, they promote the collaboration's outcomes – pooling promotional resources and sharing the success. They also disseminate best practices and consider continuing the partnership through a new project or joint publication.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>At this stage, activities include participating in industry events, panels, trade fairs and conferences, where the parties promote the value and necessity of EVGIE–CCI collaboration. They also share their experiences and case studies publicly. Other efforts include offering advisory and mentoring support to other teams and building a network of contacts and relationships with the media and influencers, who act as project ambassadors and help to increase visibility. Finally, the parties advocate for the creation of awards that recognise excellence in cross-sector collaboration.</p>		





According to the WAW_3 TEAM at the ESTABLISHMENT stage, it is particularly important for both parties to adopt an open and empathetic approach rooted in mutual respect for potential partners' differences. Understanding the other party's perspective, including their pace of work, language and operational style, is essential. The team believes that potential collaborators should initiate contact by participating in industry events to create opportunities for spontaneous encounters and shared inspiration.

During the EXECUTION stage, it is crucial to structure the project workflow through a detailed brief, defined milestones and a clear timeline, supported by an unambiguous division of responsibilities and a progress-tracking system. Project management tools such as Trello, Asana or Discord can be helpful in this regard. Special attention should also be paid to documenting the process and handling formalities appropriately.

At the ENDING stage, the team emphasised the importance of properly managing all closing formalities and conducting a joint project evaluation. They also highlighted the value of initiatives that promote ongoing collaboration.

For the ENDORSEMENT stage, the team recommended building relationships with media outlets, industry organisations and influencers, advocating for sector awards that recognise EVGIE–CCI collaboration, and organising cross-sector events, fairs and conferences, as well as inter-industry masterminds and hackathons. Broad promotion, including campaigns across industry and social media channels, was also highlighted as a priority. According to the participants, success at this stage of the collaboration can only be ensured by combining all these elements.

In summary, the WAW_3 TEAM has identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

- *Mutual understanding and cross-sector empathy* – building relationships based on respect and openness, breaking down stereotypes and differences in work culture, and understanding the needs, motivations and constraints of the other party.
- *Clear expectations and a well-prepared brief* – setting goals, scope, costs and completion conditions from the outset; acknowledging real resources and limitations; and documenting all key arrangements early in the project.
- *Structure and tools that support collaboration* – breaking the project down into phases and defining milestones and a detailed timeline, using project management tools, and ensuring clear communication and role allocation within the team.
- *Promotion of outcomes and systemic support* – jointly promoting project results, highlighting the role of industry organisations, competitions, events and influencers, and advocating for grant-related facilitation and structural support mechanisms.



The Katowice edition followed the same framework as previous editions.

Idea case 7

The KAT_1 TEAM proposed a cooperation model based on shared values, transparent communication, and the strategic use of resources. Their approach emphasises the importance of trust-based partnerships, legal and institutional support, and continuous learning in order to ensure long-term, scalable impact. The table below illustrates the outcomes of their efforts.

Table 12. Cooperation path – Idea case 7 by KAT_1 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators participate in trade fairs, conferences and industry meetings, which provide an opportunity for collaboration with decision-makers from both sectors. They map the EVGIE-CCI ecosystem by identifying stakeholders and understanding the needs of audiences and partners, as well as assessing available resources. They also conduct a competitive analysis. Introductory meetings are held to build mutual understanding and establish a shared communication framework, including developing a joint glossary to help overcome language barriers.</p>	<p>The parties implement the project using a flexible, iterative approach with clearly defined KPIs and established milestones. They hold regular status meetings, conduct expert consultations (e.g. on copyright law or PEGI/ESRB rating systems) and carry out user testing. They adapt the solution to user needs, considering the diversity of target groups. At the same time, they strive to optimise the project in terms of cost, technology usage and environmental impact. Project promotion and community engagement are also prioritised throughout the process.</p>	<p>The partners carry out a final evaluation of the project, identifying what worked and what didn't, and outlining the key takeaways. They document the project outcomes and create a data repository. They share knowledge and expertise with other teams and sectors to help disseminate best practices. The partners actively promote the developed solution and prepare a roadmap for future actions, including continuation, scaling up, or launching new initiatives.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>At this stage, activities include creating and sharing a knowledge base on projects, including case studies and best practices, as well as identifying areas where existing tools have been effective. Partners also engage in educational and outreach activities using formats such as webinars, networking platforms, infographics and comics. They also involve opinion leaders and well-known brands to promote EVGIE-CCI collaboration. Finally, they share insights from completed projects and track the long-term outcomes of the collaboration, including financial, social, and cultural aspects.</p>		



As part of the ESTABLISHMENT stage, the KAT_1 TEAM strongly emphasised the need to develop a collaborative partnership-based model, using clear, mutually understandable communication. It is necessary to continuously update legal knowledge, and appropriate legislation regarding the use of AI tools may prove crucial. The team also warned against overestimating or underestimating the availability of resources.

During the EXECUTION stage, the team highlighted the importance of flexibility, transparent actions and regular status meetings. Attention should be paid to data security, budget overruns and legal differences in international projects. It is also critical to continuously refine project requirements and specifications.

At the ENDING of the project, the team cautioned against drawing premature conclusions about its success or failure. In this regard, external validation institutions may be helpful. A potential challenge lies in the lack of preparedness for scaling up or adapting the project to new contexts.

At the ENDORSEMENT stage, the team recommended seeking support from ambassadors, patrons and opinion leaders who can champion new initiatives. They also emphasised the importance of financial redistribution programmes (e.g. EU funding and participatory budgets) as key support mechanisms.

The KAT_1 TEAM has identified the following as the **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

- *Shared frameworks and a common language for collaboration* – building mutual understanding by recognising the cultural differences, values and motivations of both sectors; agreeing on a shared glossary of terms; and establishing clear rules and standardised tools.
- *Partnership- and trust-based relationships* – creating space for dialogue and openness to experimentation; involving decision-makers, ambassadors and intermediaries who support and legitimise the partnership; and promoting equal treatment of all parties, including NGOs and smaller organisations.
- *Systemic and institutional support* – ensuring stable legal and financial conditions, engaging public institutions, grant providers and certifying bodies, and developing communication platforms, contact points and knowledge repositories.
- *Learning, iteration and knowledge sharing* – continuously updating legal and technological knowledge (including topics such as AI and IP); evaluating project outcomes and openly sharing best practices and lessons learned (including failures); and fostering a culture of mentoring to strengthen the long-term impact of collaboration.



The KAT_2 team focused on establishing structured, goal-oriented collaborations supported by clear agreements, sector translators, and iterative development. Their model emphasises the importance of solid project foundations, mutual understanding, and practical knowledge sharing as the basis for future partnerships. The table below illustrates their proposed approach to cooperation.

Table 13. Cooperation path – Idea case 8 by KAT_2 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators conduct market research and map the sector with which they wish to partner (EVGIE ↔ CCI). When selecting a partner, they enlist the help of a ‘sector translator’ – such as an orchestrator, technology advisor or legal expert – to help overcome potential barriers between the parties and ensure compliance with the legal frameworks of both sectors. Together, they organise workshops to analyse each side’s needs, limitations and resources, and to jointly define the project’s vision and development direction. They also select a collaboration model (e.g. partner-partner or client-provider) and establish key terms of cooperation. This includes division of responsibilities between partners; assembling the project team and assigning roles; defining milestones and drafting a timeline; agreeing on communication standards; developing a risk mitigation plan. The partners then formalise the arrangement by signing a contract.</p>	<p>The parties begin working on the product. They hold regular project status meetings to monitor the schedule, budget and product quality, updating their mutual agreements as necessary. They carry out iterative user testing and implement adjustments based on feedback. Effective and ongoing communication is prioritised, and both parties strive to maintain a positive, collaborative atmosphere and an openness to compromise. Milestones are delivered according to plan, with appropriate risk management measures in place.</p>	<p>The project has been formally closed and settled, including budget reconciliation, milestone delivery and KPI assessment. The collaborators gather feedback from end users and produce a final report that provides a thorough evaluation of the entire process. This involves analysing successes and challenges, identifying what worked and what didn’t, and outlining key take-aways for the future. They then deliver the final value and assess the project’s profitability and monetisation potential.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>Activities at this stage include researching and compiling lists of potential partners; seeking out benchmarks and best practices; assessing the readiness of one’s own organisation to collaborate; preparing tailored collaboration proposals that take into account the payment structures, expectations and work rhythms of potential partners; engaging with a collaboration coordinator. Parties also promote the outcomes of their collaboration, share knowledge and actively seek new partnership opportunities. They plan future actions, such as follow-ups and event invitations. They expand their network of trusted partners to include new collaborators and document their experiences for use in future initiatives.</p>		





During the ESTABLISHMENT stage, the KAT_2 TEAM emphasised the importance of conducting thorough research on potential partners, establishing a shared vision for the project and defining the terms of collaboration clearly. They also emphasised the key role of orchestrators - experts who facilitate communication and align goals by acting as translators between sectors. They also emphasised the need for proactive risk management, including creating a mitigation plan.

In the EXECUTION stage, the focus shifts to the practical implementation of the project, including monitoring the schedule, budget and quality of activities. An iterative approach is essential, involving regular user testing and adjusting plans based on ongoing results. The team emphasised the importance of avoiding micromanagement by establishing a clear division of tasks and responsibilities and fostering trust between partners. They also saw creating a working atmosphere that welcomes change as crucial.

In the ENDING stage, the team emphasised the importance of a 'lessons learned' phase - a structured retrospective to draw conclusions that can inform and improve future cooperation mechanisms.

In the team's view, the ENDORSEMENT stage applies both before and after collaboration. Its focus is nurturing partner relationships and updating cross-sector collaboration strategies systematically. This involves building a database of potential partners, setting up platforms for sharing experiences (e.g. best practices) and appointing a cross-sector collaboration coordinator.

The KAT_2 TEAM has identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE-CCI collaboration:

- *Mutual understanding and cross-sector communication* – successful collaboration begins with creating a shared language and mutual understanding of each sector's work, values, and realities, supported by orchestrators, advisors, or facilitators.
- *Clear vision, structure and division of responsibilities* – every partnership should be based on a well-defined vision, shared goals, a timeline, communication principles and a clear distribution of roles from start to finish, while avoiding micromanagement.
- *Iterative approach and user engagement* – flexibility, testing solutions, incorporating user feedback and being open to adapting the plan increases the likelihood of creating relevant and useful outcomes.
- *Long-term relationships and knowledge sharing* – collaboration should not end with a single project. Maintaining relationships, building lasting partnerships, promoting achievements, mentoring and supporting future cross-sector initiatives are all key to sustained success.





Idea case 9

The KAT_3 team designed a cooperation pathway centred on the use of a shared European digital platform for matchmaking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Their proposal addresses the challenges of fragmentation and trust by combining smart digital tools with community building and advocacy of the public mission. The table below outlines their model.

Table 14. Cooperation path – Idea case 9 by KAT_3 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators search for partners using a central European communication platform dedicated to cross-sector collaboration. The platform serves as a repository of knowledge and inspiration, offering materials, document templates and tools, as well as aggregating collaboration offers, partner profiles and contact information.</p> <p>The platform facilitates automated partner matching and helps to structure and standardise networking between EVGIE and CCI at European, national and local levels. The platform fosters shared contexts and facilitates the development of long-term relationships.</p>	<p>The platform is used by the parties as a central hub for project management. It leverages modules such as institutional and individual profiles, an AI assistant (Woytek – the community manager), dynamic glossaries, content repositories, event cards, notifications, filtering tools, and reporting, evaluation and peer review tools. The platform is integrated with the grant application process and access to funding depends on registration, active participation and reporting activities via the platform. In parallel, the parties engage in offline community-building events such as conferences, jams and workshops, fostering hybrid networking. They also draw on the support of consultants, incubators, innovation centres and academic institutions to strengthen their collaboration.</p>	<p>The project is finalised using simple, universal evaluation templates that are available on the platform. These templates are designed to enable effective assessment, even by individuals without prior expertise in the field in question. Parties gather and share post-project resources on the platform, including case studies, reports and concise summaries. Transparent user profiles facilitate long-term relationship building and encourage continued collaboration long after the project has ended.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>At this stage, activities include promoting the EVGIE–CCI collaboration as a public mission and raising awareness among senior decision-makers of the need for efficient networking and a centralised source of information, where CCI requirements and EVGIE capabilities can be accessed in one place. Parties engage industry leaders as change agents and ambassadors of collaboration, actively promoting best practices and educational content, such as podcasts, webinars and training sessions. They also work to build a community of practice through forums and expert groups. A key objective is to create a European alternative to commercial American platforms: a public tool with an integrated expert component designed to serve the sector as a shared, non-commercial resource.</p>		





During the ESTABLISHMENT stage, the KAT_3 team emphasised the importance of providing open access to onboarding support materials, including guides, project management tools and terminology glossaries. The team also identified risks related to implementing a central (European) communication platform, including a lack of trust in the new solution, users being attached to existing social media platforms and information becoming fragmented. A key question raised was who should be responsible for initiating contact between potential collaborators.

One of the main challenges during the EXECUTION stage is ensuring the protection of sensitive data in compliance with GDPR. The team also noted the risk of system overload, misalignment with the needs of diverse user groups and low platform visibility without strong promotion. Proactive promotional efforts, such as endorsements, sub-events and an increased social media presence, were therefore identified as essential to building awareness and engagement. At the ENDING of the project, the team pointed to the risks of inconsistent data collection, a lack of incentives for documenting activities and partners losing contact with each other after the project ends. To address these issues, they suggested creating a sense of prestige around platform participation and generating social pressure to engage ('if you're not on the platform, you're missing out').

At the ENDORSEMENT stage, the key issue identified was breaking out of industry silos, encouraging knowledge sharing and fostering European networking to reduce dependence on non-European communication platforms. However, the team also acknowledged several risks at this stage, such as the dominance of private interests, insufficient resources for long-term community moderation, and the challenge of scaling up best practice.

In summary, the **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration, as identified by the KAT_3 TEAM, are as follows:

- *Shared infrastructure dedicated to collaboration* – a European platform integrating EVGIE and CCI that serves as a central hub for partner matchmaking, access to resources and knowledge (including repositories, templates and case studies), project management and activity evaluation. This platform should be user-friendly, cost-effective, and managed by a public institution or accredited partner network to ensure stability and credibility.
- *Mutual understanding* – breaking down communication barriers through cross-sector advisor involvement, shared glossary creation, good communication practice use, facilitated project meetings and cultural onboarding.
- *Human relationships and networking* – cross-sector integration events (e.g. game jams, conferences, and workshops); spaces for informal meetings and collaboration building; and mechanisms to promote participation (e.g. incentives and certificates).
- *Flexible institutional environments and political support* are also crucial, including the simplification of grant procedures and public procurement laws, the adoption of agile approaches in public policy, and the provision of funding for tests, prototypes, and experimental initiatives.





#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL – Idea cases 10 - 12

As the final and most complex of the four editions, the international GAMEHEARTS DTthon built on the insights gained from the previous national events and engaged a wider range of stakeholders. The length of this section has been extended to reflect the breadth and depth of the analytical material generated.

Idea case 10

As the four stages of the collaboration process identified are closely interlinked and interdependent, the INT_1 TEAM proposed a comprehensive solution: an AI-powered innovation **coordination platform named G(AI)ME HEARTS**.

Designed for creative professionals, studios, investors, and supporting institutions, **G(AI)ME HEARTS** is an advanced, AI-supported platform. It connects creators with suitable partners, funding sources and cross-sector collaboration opportunities, automating the matchmaking process and simplifying access to grants and potential investors.

By integrating tools for market trend forecasting and intellectual property management, **G(AI)ME HEARTS** facilitates the efficient development and scaling of creative projects. It also supports personalised learning based on data analysis, helping creators and studios to anticipate market shifts and adapt their skills to a fast-changing, technologically advanced environment.

The platform's key functionalities include:

1. The Network Intelligence Engine, which is at the core of the platform and combines the capabilities of social networks with personalised recommendations. Powered by AI, it matches creator profiles with investors, publishers, partners and collaborators. Users receive dynamic suggestions regarding events, projects, grants, co-productions, mentors, and acceleration programmes.
2. The Opportunity Radar is an intelligent system that identifies current funding opportunities tailored to specific projects. Powered by AI, it creates personalised channels showcasing EU grants, local competitions, innovation vouchers and private investment and publishing opportunities. It also identifies market gaps based on popular genres, regions or sectors.
3. The Creative Intelligence Dashboard is a personalised business analyst that forecasts the market potential and performance of content such as games, visual projects or music. It provides advanced audience analytics, segments user bases, identifies emerging subcultures and analyses competitors in terms of trends, formats and platforms.
4. The Adaptive Learning Studio is an educational module offering micro-courses that are tailored by AI to each user's role and development goals. It enables the rapid acquisition





of new skills, such as AI-assisted animation, and provides business-oriented learning on topics such as intellectual property, project valuation and monetisation.

5. The IP Vault & Royalty AI: advanced tools for protecting and monetising intellectual property. They enable copyright registration and the creation of smart licensing contracts, as well as the automatic monitoring of rights infringements across digital channels. It also visualises royalty flows and supports legal compliance.
6. The Cross-Sector Collaboration Hub is a feature designed to break down traditional boundaries within the creative sector and foster new synergies and partnerships beyond conventional limits. It suggests projects such as VR games for museums and AI-generated poetry for the healthcare sector, and curates missions with open calls from brands, NGOs and public institutions.

This tool integrates creators, institutions and investors into a single, intelligent system that supports the development, growth and inclusivity of the European creative economy. Initially based solely on AI, the concept evolved through iterative development to include a human element - a collaboration coordinator.

The **G(AI)ME HEARTS** platform provides the technological foundation for the EVGIE-CCI collaboration model, offering comprehensive support throughout: from intelligent partner matching to collaborative project implementation and the evaluation and dissemination of results.

The table below shows the results of the work carried out by INT_1 TEAM on the target collaboration pathway.





Table 15. Cooperation path – Idea case 10 by INT_1 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators create pro-files on the platform where they pre-sent their project ideas and outline their requirements. They then participate in intelligent matchmaking to find suitable partners. Once they have found a suitable partner, they agree on shared project goals and develop collaboration proposals. They can access advisory support in areas such as law, intellectual property and funding opportunities. They also take part in training sessions on business, production and sector-specific culture, and organise decision-making meetings with CEOs from both sectors.</p>	<p>Partners form interdisciplinary working teams and actively co-create projects using shared templates, licensing tools and an IP manager. They manage their collaboration via the platform, exchanging information and materials. They regularly monitor progress, analyse trends and refine solutions. They also participate in workshops and receive educational support tailored to their roles and goals. Together, they develop shared resources.</p>	<p>Partners conduct project evaluations (assessing KPIs and ROI), prepare final reports, organise and archive data, and secure budgets and resources for communicating results. They share resources, tools and project outcomes with other platform members, developing a continuation pathway and using the experience gained to initiate new collaborations.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>The activities carried out by the parties include the following: promoting good practices and the outcomes of collaboration (e.g. case studies, webinars and publications); networking; mentoring newcomers; encouraging further cross-sector initiatives; and building an ecosystem of knowledge and support tools.</p>		





At the ESTABLISHMENT stage, the INT_1 TEAM emphasized the importance of human consultants and cooperation coordinators when taking first steps. Open benchmark databases - offering access to examples of successful collaboration - were also identified as crucial. However, attention should be paid to language and mindset differences.

During the EXECUTION stage, valuable support is provided by the Community Manager, who helps users navigate the platform. Key tools for collaborators include co-production templates as well as drafts of agreements and letters of intent available on the platform.

At the ENDING stage, report templates and access to investment opportunities with built-in due diligence processes proved particularly useful, allowing for safer and more efficient decision-making. Nevertheless, there is a risk of losing the value created once the project is completed.

The team's ENDORSEMENT stage recommendations included extensive use of the platform's key features and ensuring support from industry ambassadors and expert consultants.

In summary, the INT_1 TEAM believes that **effective collaboration between EVGIE and CCI requires technological support in the form of an intelligent and inclusive space, such as the G(AI)ME HEARTS platform**, which connects partners, facilitates access to funding and manages collaboration at every stage. Effective collaboration also depends on soft interpersonal skills, stable sources of funding (such as support programmes for cross-sectoral projects that enable testing, development and scaling without the pressure of immediate commercialisation) and a systemic approach to fostering innovation. Intermediaries and coordinators are also key to success, as they can bridge cross-sectoral gaps and enhance communication.





Idea case 11

The INT_2 TEAM began developing their concept by summarising the main challenges and needs of both sectors.

From the CCI sector's perspective, the key challenges are:

- Workload and limited time/resources, which hinder the ability to engage in external projects without adequate funding.
- Difficulties in implementing innovation processes - employees often show resistance to change and are reluctant to take the risks associated with testing new solutions.
- A lack of clarity regarding the interest of EVGIE entities in collaboration and uncertainty about how to initiate such conversations.
- From the EVGIE sector's perspective, the most important challenges include:
- A desire to collaborate with representatives from other industries and working methods, while also expecting a tangible return on investment.
- Difficulties in understanding the time constraints and bureaucratic limitations faced by the CCI sector.
- Problems establishing clear and professional communication with the right CCI representatives.
- Managing realistic expectations regarding the capacity of independent developers.
- Motivational discrepancies, such as profit-driven approaches versus creating art for art's sake.

In response to the identified challenges, the team developed a multi-component solution, consisting of a facilitator/moderator to oversee collaboration or projects; a matchmaking system in the form of the '**GAME, SET, MATCH**' platform; and a shared experience journal to record lessons learned.

A facilitator/mediator acts as a liaison between the European Video Game Industry Ecosystem (EVGIE) and the Cultural and Creative Sector (CCI). To effectively understand the needs, language and limitations of each side, this individual should have experience in both areas. Their main tasks include facilitating cooperation between cross-sector partners, resolving conflicts, preventing misunderstandings and supporting the smooth implementation and conclusion of projects. They are also responsible for collecting data and feedback during and after the collaboration. This person must be genuinely committed to bridging the EVGIE and CCI communities and actively supporting the formation of effective and equitable partnerships.





The team also outlined the **key responsibilities of the facilitator** in supporting the collaboration between EVGIE and CCI:

1. Supporting initial conversations and helping to define the project's goals.
2. Assisting in understanding the mutual expectations and working methods of both parties.
3. Identifying available resources and potential outcomes of the collaboration
4. Estimating the project's timeframe.
5. Facilitating mutual understanding and helping each sector grasp the other's context.
6. Assisting in identifying and resolving legal issues.
7. Developing a realistic, achievable, yet flexible timeline that works for both parties.
8. Helping to plan online calendars and maintain partner engagement in the project without excessive control (i.e. micromanagement).
9. Organising and coordinating the exchange of resources (e.g. video, music, scans, gameplay recordings and expert knowledge) through dedicated online services.
10. Managing documentation, such as meeting notes, agreed actions and decisions, to prevent misunderstandings and ensure consistent communication.
11. Supporting joint promotional activities carried out by the partners.
12. Facilitating reflection on the process and results of the collaboration.
13. Assisting in securing funds for project continuation or development.
14. Archiving key data and materials generated during the collaboration.
15. Documenting the process for the benefit of future cross-sector initiatives.
16. Analysing partner compatibility and identifying the successes, challenges and strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration.
17. Overseeing the creation and updating of the 'lessons learned' knowledge base.

The '**GAME, SET, MATCH**' matchmaking system is a collaboration tool developed at the level of the European Union. It is designed to support partnerships between EVGIE and CCI. Its primary aim is to facilitate the formation of connections and the development of lasting relationships based on shared objectives, an understanding of industry specifics, values, organisational and financial capabilities, vision and ethical principles. The tool supports not only the initial stages of collaboration, but also the maintenance of partnerships. It helps parties adhere to agreed terms, enables the evaluation of completed projects and collects data on the factors that influence the success or failure of cooperation. Consequently, the matchmaking process provides insight into the quality of partnerships, emerging challenges, and positive aspects.

The Experience Journal is an AI-powered tool for managing experiences and archiving data. The platform supports the storage of all outcomes for future use. It provides a structured overview of the entire collaboration process, and the marketing materials collected during the publication phase. The final software ensures easy access for all stakeholders. The primary purpose of this tool is to store and share all materials, outcomes and lessons learned. However, the public accessibility of these materials - and therefore the sharing of knowledge and its application to future projects - depends on the decisions made by the involved parties.





The table below shows the results of the INT_2 TEAM's work on the target collaboration pathway.

Table 16. Cooperation path – Idea case 11 by INT_2 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>With the support of a facilitator and the 'GAME, SET, MATCH' platform, potential collaborators define their expectations (goals, scope and outcomes). Based on shared values, vision and objectives, they then identify suitable partners. Clear rules of collaboration and communication guidelines are established. They then develop a collaboration plan and sign a formal agreement, including milestones, responsibilities, and potential risks. Available resources and funding opportunities are identified. The target audience is defined through research and brand guidelines are agreed upon, including what is and isn't permitted. The partners ensure the transparency and accessibility of information.</p>	<p>Partners carry out tasks in line with the schedule and the signed agreement using system solutions (the platform, facilitator support and the lessons learned journal). They conduct regular user testing, collect feedback and implement partial outcomes of the collaboration. They organise feedback sessions, monitor project progress and document the entire process. The outcomes of the collaboration are communicated externally.</p>	<p>The partners conduct a final evaluation of the project (post-mortem) using system solutions. They finalise all formalities (IP transfer, the final report and budget closure) and archive documentation (results, code, visuals and data). They organise a public project closure event (such as an official game release, exhibition or showcase) to promote the outcomes, build their portfolios and nurture positive relationships and potential future collaborations.</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>The parties' activities include collecting user feedback and recommendations (e.g. through focus groups); creating open knowledge resources; publishing case studies and reports documenting the collaboration; contributing to and updating a central EU-level knowledge base; sharing successes and failures (lessons learned); participating in industry events as speakers; providing mentoring and support to new partnerships; maintaining relationships and supporting future partnership initiatives.</p>		





As part of the ESTABLISHMENT phase, the INT_2 TEAM recommended using a facilitator and the '**GAME, SET, MATCH**' platform. A list of frequently asked questions about EVGIE–CCI collaboration, together with an information pack detailing the characteristics of both sectors (what they are, how they differ and what they can offer each other), as well as the tools they use and the resources available, may be useful.

During the EXECUTION phase, it is important to appoint a permanent project team and designated contact persons on both sides, ensure transparent and regular project status updates, and avoid excessive bureaucracy and unnecessary formalities. Facilitator support should also be considered as a potential resource.

In the ENDING phase, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the collaboration and its outcomes to learn from experience and properly document the process for future cross-sector initiatives. The facilitator can be particularly valuable in this area.

The team's recommendations for the ENDORSEMENT phase focused on making broad use of the proposed system solutions, especially the AI-based Lessons Learned Journal, to ensure continuous knowledge updating and sharing. The aim is to promote good practice, increase the visibility of EVGIE and CCI as partners, and encourage more cross-sector partnership initiatives.

In summary, the INT_2 TEAM identified the following **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration:

- *Understanding and partner matching* – effective collaboration starts with accurate matchmaking based on shared values, goals, resources, and working styles. Managing expectations and building mutual understanding between sectors with different cultures and operating dynamics is essential.
- *Structure and systemic support* – a clear yet flexible collaboration framework is needed, including an action plan, formal agreements, a timeline and a division of roles, but without micromanagement. At the same time, the support of a facilitator is crucial: an independent figure who is familiar with both sectors and can moderate the process and strengthen communication.
- *Resources, funding and technical conditions* – without available funding, time and infrastructure, collaboration cannot be sustained. Dedicated financial support for cross-sector projects is necessary, as are tools that facilitate project management, documentation and communication.
- *Learning and knowledge sharing* – effectiveness grows through reflection and the systematic sharing of experience (including failures). Formalising the 'post-mortem' process, publishing results, developing open knowledge bases and participating in industry events helps to build a culture of collaboration and supports future initiatives.





Idea case 12

The INT_3 TEAM emphasised the importance of a shared vision, relationship building, and small, agile project teams that are supported by clear processes and iterative work cycles. Their solution emphasises mutual respect and complementary competencies, as well as practical ways to celebrate and communicate the value of EVGIE–CCI partnerships. The table below presents their proposed cooperation pathway.

Table 17. Cooperation path – Idea case 12 by INT_3 TEAM

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT	[E2] EXECUTION	[E3] ENDING
<p>Potential collaborators identify the key needs and motivations of both parties, establishing the reasons for initiating the cooperation. They then discuss mutual limitations and opportunities in terms of budget, time and organisation. They align their project vision and adjust their goals to ensure they are realistic. Relationship-building workshops and meetings are conducted to foster mutual understanding and trust. Together, they develop coherent KPIs, identify potential risks and establish methods for monitoring them. A collaboration model is agreed upon that accommodates the differing pace and communication styles of both sectors, as well as a method for measuring the effectiveness of the cooperation.</p>	<p>The partners establish a small, flexible, multidisciplinary working group (a strike team) composed of representatives from both sectors, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The group agrees on the frequency of meetings, deadlines and an action plan, as well as a shared glossary of key terms. During mutual workshops, they exchange knowledge, resources, experience and creative ideas. They collaborate using shared workspaces and tools, regularly monitor progress and introduce improvements based on testing and user feedback. The project is promoted from the outset of the product development stage.</p>	<p>EVGIE finalises the product, secures all documentation and conducts an internal analysis. CCI documents the process, compares it with benchmarks and assesses public reception. Together, the partners conduct a project post-mortem (analysing KPIs, identifying successes and failures), determine potential next steps and celebrate the project's completion together (e.g. with a team gathering or a symbolic toast).</p>
[E4] ENDORSEMENT		
<p>CCI conducts PR and marketing activities through industry and social media channels and participates in cultural events. EVGIE engages with player communities, collaborates with influencers and updates the game through live operations. Both parties demonstrate the value of collaboration at industry forums and conferences through publications and presentations, and by participating in panels. They share case studies, know-how and inspiration with others, and engage in networking, mentoring and advisory activities. They also encourage new actors to embark on similar initiatives.</p>		





As part of the ESTABLISHMENT stage, the INT_3 TEAM emphasised the importance of formally documenting mutual agreements. This includes developing a kind of contract or project brief that aligns both sides' visions, confirms KPIs, and identifies potential risks. At the same time, the team highlighted the value of relationship-building between participants from both sectors – through facilitated workshops as well as informal meetings.

At the EXECUTION stage, it is crucial to understand each other's processes. For example, the CCI explains to game developers how a museum operates and what its resources and educational needs are, while the EVGIE shows cultural institutions how game development works, including sprints and MVPs. Finding a common language and recognising what each party brings to the project is essential.

CCI contributes:

- Expertise and experience in cultural heritage, the arts, education, and audience engagement.
- Access to cultural and institutional resources, including collections, archives, venues and established communities.
- Creative input, including unique narratives, aesthetics, cultural contexts, and artistic values.
- EVGIE contributes:
- Knowledge and experience in designing interactive solutions, gamification and user engagement.
- Access to technical skills, including programming, game engines, UX/UI, animation, and testing.
- We deliver a technological outcome – a finished digital product, such as a game, app, or immersive experience.

At the ENDING stage, the team's main recommendations were to secure a final budget to properly close the project and organise a closing meeting. They emphasised the importance of celebrating the completion of the collaboration in some way, even *'if it's just going out for a drink together'*.

During the ENDORSEMENT stage, the team suggested that each party leverage their own promotional assets: cultural institutions should collaborate with media outlets, and developers should engage with influencers. Participants also emphasised the importance of creating spaces for sharing expertise, showcasing joint best practices and inspiring other organisations to pursue similar cross-sector initiatives.

The INT_3 team has identified the **key success factors** for effective EVGIE–CCI collaboration, which can be summarised as follows:



- *Shared vision, goals and clear rules of cooperation* – it is essential to align the objectives and expectations of both parties and develop a shared project vision from the outset. Concrete KPIs and success indicators should be adopted alongside clearly defined roles and responsibilities, identified risks and secured resources.
- *Understanding differences and building trust* – acknowledging the different working cultures, professional languages and paces of both sectors is crucial. Openness, empathy, and a willingness to learn from one another are key, as is building relationships through workshops, dialogue, and both formal and informal meetings.
- *Collaboration-supporting structures, tools, and processes* – success relies on setting up dedicated project teams and using appropriate collaboration tools (e.g. glossaries, platforms, and feedback channels). The project should follow an iterative approach involving testing, adjustments, and progress monitoring, supported by clear communication and shared creative spaces.
- *Disseminating knowledge and fostering a lasting impact* requires long-term partnerships, strengthened through sharing results, best practices and experiences (including failures), and public and industry-wide promotion of projects. Systemic enablers such as collaboration networks, simplified procedures, and policy support are also vital.

Conclusions and Additional Insights

In conclusion, and drawing on the diverse reflections and insights provided by the participating teams, it is pertinent to ask how the desired model of cross-sector collaboration should be shaped across the successive phases of the 4E framework.

[E1] ESTABLISHMENT – Initiating Collaboration

At this stage, it is important to create an environment that encourages mutual understanding and trust and helps to identify potential partners. This should be a process based primarily on shared actions and experiences rather than formal declarations alone. It is particularly important to recognise shared values, a common language and compatible working rhythms. Professionalising the partnership-building process is essential. Collaboration should be defined structurally.

[E2] Execution – Project Implementation

At this stage, teams emphasised the importance of flexible frameworks that actively support innovation rather than limiting it. Effective collaboration should be based on synergy - the combination of complementary skills and resources - as well as transparent communication focused on shared goals. Iterative project delivery and ongoing cross-sector facilitation are key. Collaboration should be agile and transparent throughout execution.

[E3] Ending – Closure and Continuity

The aim of this stage is to formally conclude the project and secure its outcomes, while also maintaining relationships that could be a springboard for future initiatives. It is an opportunity to reflect on what proved effective and how to ensure the long-term continuity of collaboration.





Post-mortem sessions involving all partners are essential for documenting not only the results, but also the lessons learned and the best practices. The closure of collaboration should be conscious and strategic.

[E4] Endorsement – Context for Collaboration

This stage was initially underestimated by participants, but its importance was recognised during the workshops as a key component within the 4E framework. It is now crucial to promote EVGIE–CCI collaboration as a new standard and to foster a culture of knowledge sharing. Cooperation must be acknowledged not only to achieve market goals, but also as a value in itself - an act in service of the common good. The outcomes of collaboration should be visible and enduring.

During the DTthons, participants emphasised that the ability to build a shared language, a structure or framework for cooperation, and meaningful relationships is as important as the willingness to collaborate. Collaborating with EVGIE and CCI requires intentionality, time and flexibility – a willingness to adapt.

Effective collaboration begins with trust and shared action, not just on paper but in practice. It involves recognising that communication is not just about language; it is also about understanding each other’s goals, values and working rhythms. It requires acknowledging that EVGIE–CCI collaboration needs frameworks that enable innovation, rather than constrain it.

Finally, partnership-based collaboration between EVGIE and CCI is integral to the ecosystems of both sectors, not incidental or reliant on chance encounters. With shared languages, tools and values, it becomes possible to design cultural experiences that are both innovative and socially grounded, benefiting creators, institutions, and audiences alike.

4.5. Practice-Driven Decalogue of Cross-Industry Cooperation and Recommendations

One of the main tasks for participants in the DTthons was to formulate strategic recommendations and best practices for future collaboration between the VGIE and CCI sectors. The results of the project teams’ work in this area are presented below.

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

As part of the above-outlined task, project teams participating in the first edition of the DTthon were asked to develop a set of ‘words of advice’ for representatives of both sectors, with the aim of supporting effective collaboration. The tables below present the detailed recommendations developed by the teams that participated in the Wroclaw edition of the DTthon. A synthesis of these recommendations is provided below.

**Table 18. Recommendations coming from #1 GH DTthon****WRO_1 TEAM - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI**

- Be proactive and initiate contact – seek collaboration opportunities via online platforms, creative hubs, social media, events and conferences.
- Monitor trends by regularly following news and developments in the EVGIE and CCI sectors to better understand the context, needs and potential areas for cooperation.
- Promote yourself by preparing an attractive portfolio tailored to the expectations of the other sector. It should be clear and up to date, showcasing relevant projects.
- Define your vision and communicate it to your partner. Know your strengths and clarify what you expect from the collaboration.
- Agree on a shared direction – clearly define the aim of your cooperation to avoid discrepancies and misunderstandings.
- Build a common language (shared glossary) – understanding each other’s terminology improves communication and builds trust.
- Take part in workshops held during the collaboration to develop a shared working model and better understand your partner’s challenges.
- Prioritise communication – meet regularly with partners, share progress, address difficulties and propose solutions (transparency increases effectiveness).
- Be aware of legal aspects and keep up to date with local and global legal changes (e.g. copyright, plagiarism and contracts) to avoid unnecessary risks.
- Map shared risks – work with your partner to identify potential risks to both sectors and the project and develop a joint risk management plan.
- Stay flexible and be prepared for change, as adaptability is key to both resilience and success.
- Support each other and nurture the relationship to ensure the collaboration is mutually beneficial during and after the project.
- Celebrate success – once the collaboration ends, apply for awards, update your portfolio and share your outcomes to boost your brand and visibility.
- Make it easier to find partners by supporting the development of platforms and portals that facilitate networking, portfolio sharing, event announcements and access to contract templates.

WRO_2 TEAM - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI

- Do not be afraid to hand your work over to professionals. When adapting a non-interactive work into a playable game, the rights holder or creator should recognise the necessity of deviating from the original narrative.
- Match the game genre to your IP – the genre must be tailored to the intellectual property being adapted. We do not recommend adapting literature in the ‘classic’ form of visual novels, as text is only one layer of narrative in a video game.
- Remember that players want to play, not just consume your work. A video game must be entertaining above all else, only secondarily should it serve educational or promotional purposes.
- When creating games, remember that you are competing for engagement. The success of a video game hinges on engaging gameplay, and sometimes this requires viewing the IP primarily through the eyes of the audience.
- Promote yourself globally through the game. A local brand does not guarantee success in the USA, Western Europe or China. Video games are a global medium and must be globally intelligible. Nationality can be an asset, but it should not form the foundation.



**WRO_2 TEAM - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI [CONTINUED]**

- There is nothing wrong with earning money from your art. The commercialisation of activities, often associated with game studios, should not be viewed negatively. It is possible to create art that achieves commercial success while maintaining high artistic quality. Video games are part of the entertainment industry and culture, and many can be considered works of art.
- Game creators are artists in their own right. Adapting a piece of art results in a new work. Using another's IP as source material means recognising that the new work and its means of dissemination will differ from the original. At the same time, the potential for globalisation that comes with commercial success may also boost the popularity of the source material.
- If you don't understand the other side, find a translator. Institutions or organisations should be established to support EVGIE-CCI cooperation ('translators'), along with dedicated roles to facilitate modelling this collaboration and enhance mutual understanding across sectors.
- Let's advocate for systemic support for cooperation. EU institutions should foster EVGIE-CCI synergy by creating dedicated collaboration funds, establishing cooperation standards and best practices, and organising educational resources and events focused on collaboration, such as networking opportunities, talent hubs and funding the participation of EVGIE and CCI representatives in industry events.
- While working, take breaks and care for your well-being. Attend to your own needs, encourage the free flow of thought, and take regular breaks. EVGIE-CCI collaboration should be informal and based on mutual trust, enabling open discussion about needs and limitations. Set shared standards and healthy boundaries but do so with HEART!

WRO_3 TEAM - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI

- Enter the project assuming that your partner can contribute something new to your experience.
- Communicate openly and avoid taking shortcuts in your discussions.
- Show trust and respect towards your partner to fully understand their perspective – try to see things from their point of view.
- Adhere to the agreed rules of the 'game' and avoid changing them midway through the joint undertaking.
- The benefits of collaboration should be mutual – the partnership must not favour one party and should follow clearly defined success criteria.
- Maintain project discipline to ensure agility in execution, especially when working with entities from both the public and private sectors.
- Avoid creating 'secret knowledge' – document and clearly communicate the stakeholders and their interdependencies.
- Conduct a post-project review to identify good practices and avoid repeating mistakes in future initiatives.





Summarising the recommendations from the three Wrocław-based teams, the ten commandments of collaboration for effective cooperation between EVGIE and CCI representatives are as described below.

- *Initiate contact* – make use of events, platforms and industry media to connect.
- *Speak clearly and respectfully, building a shared language and seeking ‘translators’ between sectors.*
- *Establish shared goals and rules* – clearly define the vision, roles and principles of collaboration.
- *Trust your partner, assuming goodwill and striving for balanced mutual benefits.*
- *Adapt wisely* – a game is a new creation, not a faithful copy (respect the medium).
- *Think globally* – a game is a global product, so local identity is a strength, but not a foundation.
- *Combine art with the market* – creation and commercial success can go hand in hand.
- *Learn as you go* – act, reflect and draw conclusions for future collaborations.
- *Care for wellbeing and flexibility* – speak openly about needs and adapt to changes.
- *Show your results* – share outcomes, update your portfolio and celebrate successes.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

As in the first edition, the project teams were asked to develop good practice guidelines for collaboration between EVGIE and CCI during the second edition of the DTthon. This time, however, the recommendations were categorised into two levels: for the European Commission (EU-level policymakers) and for representatives of both sectors (EVGIE and CCI actors themselves). Each group of recommendations focused on actions tailored to their respective levels of influence and responsibility, with the aim of fostering a more effective, inclusive and structured cross-sector collaboration ecosystem.

**Table 19. Recommendations coming from #2 GH DTthon**

WAW_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the protection of digital cultural heritage, i.e. game preservation. • Legalise hardware emulation as a means of preserving older games. • Define what constitutes a game developed within the European Union and what qualifies as a game made in individual Member States. • Increase funding for early-stage development projects (prototypes). • Introduce European industry awards that recognise the contribution of the CCI sector. • Establish a ‘Culture Reactor’ – an interdisciplinary group of specialists (rather than promoting individual ‘one-man shows’). • Increase budgets for integrative activities within creative projects (e.g. brainstorming sessions). • Restore funding for participation in industry conferences.
WAW_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that gameplay is the core language of video games. • Learn how to pitch projects to game developers – every collaboration should begin with an agreement on goals and scope. • Create a list of CCI sector experts available for consultation with the video games industry. • Prepare presentation decks that showcase a studio’s competencies in working with cultural and educational institutions. • Develop virtual collaboration laboratories.
WAW_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Definitions] Develop an agreed terminology for the video games sector, which bridges culture and technology. This should include a catalogue of professions and competencies. • [Cultural environment] Identify cultural institutions and organisations whose activities intersect with the video games sector and the creative industries (recommendation for national policymakers). • [Legislative Environment] Develop a map of the key legal frameworks relevant to the video games sector and the creative industries (recommendation for national policymakers). • [Educational Environment] Map educational institutions at all levels, including public bodies and commercial initiatives (recommendation for national policymakers). • [Financial Environment] Create a database of funding programmes, including EU-level schemes such as Horizon and Creative Europe, as well as national and regional programmes. The database should be categorised by grants, tax incentives and areas of support, such as R&D, IP and innovation.



**WAW_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE & CCI**

- [Definitions] Develop an agreed terminology for the video games sector, which bridges culture and technology. This should include a catalogue of professions and competencies.
- [Business environment] Create a map of the business ecosystem, including commercial entities, industry organisations, distribution networks, e-commerce platforms, event organisers and the media.
- [Legislative Environment] Develop a map of the key legal frameworks relevant to the video games sector and the creative industries.
- [Educational Environment] Map educational institutions at all levels, including public bodies and commercial initiatives.
- [Tools] Develop a repository of project management tools for EVGIE–CCI collaboration with training materials, such as short instructional videos.
- [Office] Provide ready-to-use layouts, documents, contracts, forms and guidelines to support daily collaboration.

WAW_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)

- Adapt grant programmes to the specifics of game production by extending the funding period to five or six years and increasing funding to €5 million per project.
- Include game sector professionals in the list of recognised cultural and creative industry occupations.
- Develop protective mechanisms to mitigate the negative impact of US tariff changes and dollar exchange rate fluctuations (given Steam's dominance in PC game sales and the industry's reliance on USD revenue).
- Introduce tax relief schemes for creators of cultural works.
- Define the video game sector (game development) as a distinct category within national legislation.
- Facilitate IP licensing for game developers to enable easier access to cultural content.
- Promote educational initiatives for the CCI and EVGIE sectors to raise awareness of the potential and benefits of cross-sector collaboration.

WAW_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE & CCI

- Empathise: focus on the needs of both sides, seeking to understand the motivations and intentions of project audiences.
- Base decisions on facts and learning: use data and knowledge from both sectors to ensure content is meaningful and rooted in high-quality, verifiable sources.
- Trust: respect and rely on your partner's skills and expertise and acknowledge and value their contribution to the project.
- Document: Co-create a clear, structured brief including both strategic and operational elements.
- Plan: develop a detailed timeline, define project milestones, and prepare risk scenarios and response strategies.
- Target: Align all actions, resources and processes towards achieving clearly defined outcomes.
- Monitor: Set up systematic procedures to track progress in terms of deliverables, competencies, budget, human resources and tools.
- Emergence: Aim for synergy at every stage by combining diverse competencies, resources and experiences to generate added value.
- Promote: involve all participants in project promotion and design an effective communication strategy for target audiences.
- Culture: recognise games as part of the broader cultural ecosystem, influencing and being influenced by cultural contexts.





In summary, the recommendations received from the three Warsaw teams regarding the creation of conditions for effective cooperation between EVGIE and CCI can be summarised as described below.

Recommendations for the European Commission (EU-level decision-makers):

- Strengthen heritage protection, including for games, by ensuring the legalisation of emulation and taking action to preserve games (game preservation). Clarify the definition of ‘European games’.
- Adjust funding systems to allow for longer and higher-value grants (up to 5–6 years and €5 million per project), and provide support for prototype development.
- Formally recognise the games sector by ensuring that game developers are listed among creative professionals and that the games sector is distinguished in legal frameworks.
- Increase synergy between EVGIE and CCI by establishing a ‘Culture Reactor’ and initiating European-level awards that recognise the cultural and creative sectors.
- Stabilise the market by safeguarding projects against currency fluctuations and potential tariff-related risks.
- Develop education and support infrastructure by providing information campaigns and creating an accessible database of funding opportunities.

Recommendations for EVGIE and CCI:

- Start with empathy and trust, focusing on understanding the other side’s needs, values and motivations. Recognise the expertise that your partner brings to the table, and build relationships based on mutual respect.
- Make decisions based on knowledge and facts, using reliable sources such as research and expert insight. Remember that combining knowledge from both sectors improves the quality and credibility of outcomes.
- Plan and document your collaboration together, agreeing on shared foundations such as objectives, tasks, milestones, timelines, budget, communication, and monitoring methods, and record these in a clear and detailed brief. Transparent documentation helps to ensure smooth implementation and facilitates an adaptive response.
- Focus on goals and outcomes – define specific goals and align your efforts accordingly. Pay attention to the quality of both the product and the process, including the efficient use of resources and the budget.
- Build shared tools and knowledge – create expert directories, share resources such as contract templates, guides and project archives, and develop tools to support collaborative project management.
- Recognise games as part of culture – understand that games carry cultural meaning. Promote projects jointly and showcase the unique value that emerges from combining the two sectors.



#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

As in the Warsaw edition of the DTthon, the project teams in Katowice were also asked to formulate practical advice on collaboration between EVGIE and CCI. This advice was divided into recommendations for EU-level decision-makers as well as for representatives of both sectors.

Table 20. Recommendations from #3 GH DTthon

KAT_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a communication platform to encourage collaboration between EVGIE and CCI. • Appoint communication ambassadors to facilitate dialogue. • Define the key objectives of the collaboration and identify the tools needed to implement them. • Provide legal and administrative support for joint initiatives. • Facilitate access to and management of financial resources. • Develop a map of the EVGIE–CCI ecosystem, including analytical tools. • Design a support policy for cooperation between EVGIE and CCI.
KAT_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing best practices and lessons learned from past mistakes. • Consider how the public will receive it, and its impact on the socio-economic and political context. • Update your legal knowledge relevant to your field. • Educate yourselves and policymakers in your environment. • Identify potential areas for collaboration. • Seek to understand the needs and expectations of all parties involved in the cooperation. • Avoid drawing hasty conclusions based on previous cross-sector experiences. • Reach out to the right people and institutions. • Develop a shared language and glossary of terms.
KAT_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower project leads to make decisions during project implementation. • Simplify and reduce project documentation by minimising the number of required forms. • Launch a dedicated call to support cross-sector collaboration, rewarding partnership efforts. • Adapt application requirements to the specific characteristics of each sector. • Coordinate efforts at the European level and support programmes such as Creative Europe. • Introduce permanent instruments to support public–private partnerships, such as tax incentives, subsidies and recognition schemes.





KAT_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE & CCI

- Understand the needs and expectations of your partner.
- Learn the 'language' of the sector you're collaborating with.
- Create realistic, achievable timelines.
- Seek advice from experts, tech advisors and collaboration facilitators when needed.
- Foster a positive working atmosphere.
- Use benchmarks and draw on relevant case studies.
- Manage risks proactively and minimise them where possible.
- Avoid staying in your own bubble.

KAT_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)

- Allocate funding to initiatives that aim to improve collaboration between EVGIE and CCI (e.g. projects such as GAMEHEARTS).

KAT_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE & CCI

- Director: Send your employees to conferences and events – they will be rewarded for taking part.
- Employee: Expand your network and gain knowledge by attending EVGIE–CCI integration events and conferences.
- University Rector: Reward academic staff for engaging in cross-sector events and secure funding to support their participation.
- Lecturer/teacher: Encourage pupils and students to attend events that bring the sectors together.
- Students/pupils: Take part in conferences, hackathons and game jams to meet industry professionals and gain hands-on experience.
- Minister of Culture and National Heritage: Establish a European platform offering collaboration opportunities, in-person events, standardised resources and tools for cooperation. Appoint a community manager to foster and energise relationships between the sectors.
- NGO representative: Collaborate with business and education partners to deliver joint projects.
- All of the above: Actively use the platform to integrate the sectors.





The key proposals outlining the recommendations from the three Katowice-based teams regarding the creation of conditions for effective collaboration between EVGIE and CCI can be summarised as presented below.

Recommendations addressed to the European Commission (EU decision-makers):

- Simplify and reduce project documentation while increasing flexibility in decision-making during implementation.
- Secure dedicated budgets for initiatives that support collaboration between the EVGIE and the CCI (e.g. GAMEHEARTS).
- Coordinate actions at the European level and support programmes such as Creative Europe.
- Launch calls for proposals that promote cross-sector cooperation and have sector-specific requirements.
- Introduce permanent instruments to support public–private partnerships, such as tax incentives, subsidies and awards.

Recommendations addressed to representatives of EVGIE and CCI:

- Try to understand the needs, expectations and language of partners from other sectors.
- Develop a shared vocabulary to improve communication.
- Use expert knowledge and analytical tools to create realistic action timelines.
- Foster a positive working atmosphere, ensure project quality, and manage risk effectively.
- Use benchmarks and learn from best practices and past mistakes.
- Don't remain isolated – actively seek contacts and opportunities for collaboration.

Recommendations addressed to the academic and educational community:

- Encourage teachers and students to participate in events that integrate the EVGIE and CCI sectors.
- Motivate and reward academic staff for their active involvement in cross-sector initiatives.
- Provide opportunities for young people to gain experience through conferences, hackathons and game jams.
- Promote knowledge exchange and build networks between education and the EVGIE and CCI sectors.
- Identify and develop funding opportunities for participation in sector-related events.
- Recommendations addressed to NGOs and third-sector organisations:
- Build relationships with business and education stakeholders to implement joint projects.
- Actively use platforms that integrate the EVGIE and CCI sectors.
- Support the development of cross-sector initiatives through coordination and community building.
- Promote knowledge exchange between industries through engagement activities.



#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

In the same vein as in the national editions, the teams participating in the international edition of the DTthon were asked to develop recommendations for fostering effective collaboration between EVGIE and CCI at the level of the European Commission and among representatives of the two sectors. Their ideas are presented in Table 21. Notably, those recommendations are the most international and cross-national, as developed by international teams, representing different institutional environments.

Table 21. Recommendations from #4 GH DTthon

INT_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of smart, inclusive digital infrastructure to underpin the future of Europe’s creative sector. • Launch a pilot programme and implement a grant mechanism for ‘AI for Creativity’ projects. • Ensure funding for cross-sector innovation labs. • Integrate AI training into European upskilling policies for the cultural and creative sectors. • Establish a pan-European centre for intellectual property and royalty settlements. • Strengthen ethical and legal frameworks, with a particular focus on AI-based solutions.
INT_1 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch cross-sector funding programmes at the intersection of games, art and culture to unlock new markets and enhance the cultural relevance of projects. • Create a Joint Innovation Hub, a pan-European laboratory for the collaborative development of prototypes that combine game technology (e.g. engines, XR and real-time rendering) with other fields such as art, cultural heritage, music and design. • Support the exchange of skills and talent mobility by enabling artistic residencies, exchange programmes and bootcamps between cultural and creative professionals (CCIs) and game developers, thereby supporting the cross-fertilisation of creative and technological skills. • Develop shared IP and licensing frameworks to facilitate transmedia licensing of assets, characters, stories, and experiences via a trusted European IP exchange system. • Build shared AI infrastructure: support the development of open-source AI tools and datasets for both sectors, such as multilingual speech synthesis, motion capture libraries and procedural content generation models. • Create a shared business analytics platform and develop a joint analytics dashboard to monitor trends, audiences, and funding sources across both sectors, enabling data-informed collaboration.



INT_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)

- Regularly bring together industry leaders to strengthen cross-sector collaboration.
- Create an open-access database of best practices to inform future initiatives.
- Provide intuitive tools to promote mutual understanding of workflows and sector-specific challenges in CCI and EVGIE.
- Increase funding to foster innovation and collaboration between the culture, creative, and video game sectors.
- Strengthen mechanisms that support cross-sector cooperation, including facilitation processes.
- Promote a culture of learning from failure by recognising the value of setbacks in innovation.
- Increase recognition of the significant impact of video games on culture, education and wider society.
- Ensure structural support for initiatives that reinforce dialogue and partnerships between sectors.

INT_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE

- Understand the limitations posed by the organisational structures of CCI.
- Acknowledge differences in project pace and priorities within the CCI sector.
- Seek effective ways to inspire and share knowledge with CCI professionals.
- Demonstrate mutual flexibility in cross-sector collaboration.
- Clearly define what is achievable and within what timeframe.
- Use clear and accessible language and avoid sector-specific jargon.
- Account for potential disparities in technological resources and digital skills.

INT_2 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CCI

- Adopt a flexible approach.
- Avoid using jargon when communicating with EVGIE representatives.
- Maintain open-mindedness and a willingness to collaborate.
- Prepare a clear, internally approved action plan before the project begins.
- Acknowledge your partner’s resources and potential.
- Set realistic goals.
- Involve the right people with the necessary knowledge and skills.
- Define a transparent timeline and project deadlines.
- Avoid excessive decision-makers and unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Identify potential risks and develop a risk management plan.
- Be open to constructive criticism.
- Bring faith, commitment and passion to the project.



INT_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EU POLICYMAKERS)

- Maintain a unified, open, regularly updated and easily accessible digital platform - a database mapping key actors, projects, institutions and funding opportunities in the EVGIE and CCI sectors.
- Promote cross-sector research into the social value of video games by providing financial support for interdisciplinary research initiatives that explore the educational, cultural and societal impact of games. Use the findings to inform public policies that recognise games as legitimate cultural and educational media.
- Establish clear and fair public procurement pathways for CCI projects, standardising and simplifying application procedures, ensuring transparent evaluation criteria and developing pilot funding mechanisms to support cross-sector experimentation and improve access to public contracts.
- Develop guidelines for EVGIE–CCI collaboration, providing a set of good practices and operational recommendations for partnerships between cultural institutions and game creators. These guidelines should address IP rights, project management models, funding alignment, evaluation criteria and communication strategies.
- Encourage public CCI institutions to engage with the EVGIE sector by introducing financial incentives (e.g. grants and awards) to encourage cultural institutions to collaborate with game developers and promote games as valuable tools for social engagement and knowledge dissemination.
- Create spaces for networking and knowledge exchange by regularly investing in initiatives (such as workshops, conferences and think tanks) that bring together professionals from the CCI and EVGIE sectors to connect, learn from one another and co-create.

INT_3 TEAM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVGIE AND CCI

- Predefine budget and resource commitments – ensure that all partners are financially engaged and have allocated resources before the project launches, to secure its feasibility and long-term sustainability.
- Clarify the project scope early – define shared goals, roles, and expectations from the outset, in order to establish a solid basis for collaboration.
- Align vision and agree on KPIs and risks – develop a shared project vision, define KPIs, and identify potential risks to promote clarity and accountability.
- Implement a transparent collaboration toolkit – select and deploy user-friendly digital tools to support communication, co-creation and project management.
- Test, gather feedback and adapt – introduce regular testing phases and feedback loops to assess progress and adjust strategies as needed.
- Host joint workshops – organise collaborative sessions that foster learning, creativity and relationship-building between professionals from both sectors.
- Conduct a joint evaluation – carry out a comprehensive review of project outcomes and processes with all stakeholders involved.
- Celebrate project completion together – mark the end of the project with a shared recognition of efforts and achievements to strengthen team morale and professional ties.
- Share knowledge with the broader ecosystem – disseminate insights, outcomes, and best practices to a wider community across both sectors.
- Promote in-person engagement – host live events that deepen trust, build relationships, and facilitate informal knowledge exchange.
- Showcase the use of new technologies – demonstrate how innovative technologies were integrated into the project to inspire and inform future cross-sector collaborations.





In summary, the key recommendations of the international edition teams regarding the creation of conditions for effective cooperation between EVGIE and CCI can be summarised as described below.

Recommendations addressed to the European Commission (EU policymakers):

- Simplify and increase cross-sector funding by providing grants for experimentation, innovation labs and projects involving cultural institutions and game developers. Most importantly, streamline public procurement procedures.
- Develop a shared digital infrastructure for knowledge and skills by creating open databases, digital tools, AI training, and platforms that map the potential of the EVGIE and CCI sectors (including projects, best practices, and contacts).
- Establish cooperation frameworks and ethical standards by defining guidelines for intellectual property, project management models, communication and collaboration standards, and legal frameworks for AI as a working tool.
- Promote games as cultural and educational media by supporting interdisciplinary research into the cultural and educational impact of video games and by integrating the findings into public policy.
- Support dialogue and knowledge exchange continuously – organise leadership meetings, workshops, and think tanks and provide institutional support for cross-sector partnerships.

Recommendations addressed to representatives of EVGIE and CCI:

- Define goals, roles and resources jointly – aligning expectations, responsibilities, KPIs, timelines, budgets, and risk management approaches during the planning phase.
- Build shared structures and collaboration tools, such as a Joint Innovation Hub, digital platforms, communication systems, analytical tools and shared AI infrastructure (open-source tools, data and models).
- Organise residencies, exchange programmes, boot camps and workshops that foster an understanding of different sectoral perspectives, languages and working methods. Exchange skills and learn from each other.
- Communicate effectively and inclusively – avoid jargon, be flexible in your communication, clearly define expectations and be ready to adapt to different working styles and paces.
- Regularly evaluate and celebrate outcomes by jointly assessing progress and results, introducing feedback loops, sharing best practices, and celebrating milestones together.
- Create and strengthen collaboration networks by hosting regular networking events, showcasing new technologies, publishing outcomes and promoting successful models of cooperation.





Conclusions and Additional Insights

The recommendations from the four editions of the GH DTthon, developed by teams in Wrocław, Warsaw and Katowice, as well as during the international edition, form a coherent and detailed set of proposals to support effective collaboration between the EVGIE and CCI. Key overarching guidelines include establishing mutual trust and a shared vocabulary, defining clear goals, roles and collaboration principles, developing joint tools and sharing knowledge and project outcomes.

At a systemic level, the recommendations emphasise the importance of streamlining processes, securing consistent funding, acknowledging the cultural significance of games, and establishing shared frameworks for support, education, and dialogue - fostering an atmosphere that encourages innovation and the sustainable expansion of both industries.

4.6. Emerging Issues and the Key Insights for Further Exploration

With each successive edition of the GH DTthons, new layers of complexity and potential relationships between the EVGIE and the CCI have emerged, extending far beyond the original framework of cross-sector collaboration. Those evolving issues reveal deeper systemic tensions, structural gaps and untapped opportunities that influence the relationship between the video game industry and other cultural and creative industries.

The following section summarises key insights that highlight recurring barriers and point to strategic directions for further research, public policy development and building a resilient, sustainable collaboration ecosystem. The insights were developed based on the following structure:

- Extended name of the insight.
- Brief description of the insight.
- Consideration of who does the insight concern? What type of user?
- Consideration of what behaviours, practices, routines, difficulties, or experiences underpin the insight.
- Consideration of what facts or observations confirm it.
- Consideration of what are the causes of the observed situation.





- Consideration of why the insight is strategically important, and how it can affect future cooperation between EVGIE and CCI.
- Recommended actions stemming from the insight.
- Consideration of research inspirations – potential directions for exploration.

The last point (Consideration of research inspirations) assumes that research is useful and should provide real value to practice rather than merely serving academic publication.

In total, DTthons allowed us to gather five key insights. These are as follows:

1. 'BABEL TOWER' – When translation fails, collaboration falls
2. 'YOU'VE GOT (NO) MATCH' – Without alignment, even the best idea won't happen
3. 'PLANT IT, DON'T JUST PITCH IT' – Results only grow when nurtured beyond launch
4. 'HUMAN API' – People are the interface between sectors, not tools
5. 'BUILD THE BRIDGE, NOT JUST THE BOAT' – We need infrastructure, not just isolated initiatives



The first insight (Table 22) addresses one of the most fundamental challenges of cross-sector collaboration: communication. Despite having shared goals, the EVGIE and CCI teams often operate within different linguistic, procedural and symbolic systems. Without a shared framework that includes consistent tools, terminology and roles dedicated to translation, even the most promising initiatives risk misalignment, misunderstanding and failure. This insight is echoed consistently across all four DTthons and underscores the urgent need for communication infrastructure and ‘translators’ who can bridge these gaps.

Table 22. Insight 1: Babel tower

‘BABEL TOWER’ – Collaboration without translation ends in silence	
Expanded insight title	Lack of a shared language means lack of collaboration; A communication gap; Absence of tools, and missing cross-sector translation.
Brief insight description	EVGIE and CCI operate in different languages, both literal and symbolic. Without translation, differences in concepts, working styles, values and processes mean that even the most promising projects end in misunderstanding and lost potential for synergy. There is a lack of shared communication interfaces, glossaries, rituals and individuals who can translate meanings and working styles.
Who the insight concerns	Project teams (EVGIE–CCI), grant providers, policymakers, tool designers, and educators
Insight foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic, procedural and cultural differences between EVGIE and CCI • Lack of shared tools, such as briefs, glossaries and repositories • Stereotypes, communication chaos and an absence of connections • The need for ‘translators’ and ‘ambassadors’ of collaboration
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This observation emerged as one of the key themes in at least eight project teams • Tools proposed by the teams included canvases, decalogues, platforms and glossaries • The roles proposed by the teams were cross-sector advisor, facilitator and community manager
Causes	Silo mentality, lack of cross-sector education, absence of intermediary standards and infrastructure
Strategic importance	Without shared languages and communication interfaces, collaboration cannot survive or be scaled up. Overcoming this fundamental barrier unlocks the full potential of EVGIE–CCI synergy.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the role of an intersectoral translator and communication platforms • Develop cross-sector education through podcasts, comics and webinars • Standardise communication tools such as briefs, glossaries and collaboration canvases
Research inspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the quality of cross-sector communication be measured? • Which tools and rituals are the most effective for synchronising different sectors?

The second insight (Table 23) draws attention to the important issue of misalignment between partners, which often undermines the success of cross-sector collaboration. Often, EVGIE-CCI partnerships are formed accidentally rather than strategically, without sufficient time or tools to assess mutual compatibility. Teams at the DTthons emphasised the importance of structured matchmaking processes, including intermediary roles, compatibility tools, and dedicated pre-alignment phases, as the foundation for building trust, managing expectations, and enabling long-term cooperation.

Table 23. Insight 2: You've got (no) match

'YOU'VE GOT (NO) MATCH' – Without alignment, even the best idea won't happen	
Expanded insight title	Successful matchmaking is a process, not a coincidence; The lack of a system (tools) for matching partners and pre-alignment
Brief insight description	EVGIE-CCI partnerships are often formed by chance. There is a lack of systematic matchmaking, which involves a structured process of mutual discovery, alignment checks and open dialogue about values, risks and goals. This step is crucial for building trust and establishing long-term, intentional collaboration. Without such pre-alignment, cooperation is like a blind date with an incompatible partner – it may be spectacular, but it usually ends quickly.
Who the insight concerns	Project teams (EVGIE-CCI), creators, operators, public institutions, funders, policy designers
Insight foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of tools for assessing compatibility • Low-quality collaboration due to unresolved differences • Absence of a shared vision, goals and ground rules leads to tension
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This insight emerged in at least seven project teams • Tools proposed by the teams: GAME SET MATCH, pre-alignment canvas and partner profiles • Processes proposed by the teams: onboarding, AI-assisted matchmaking and treating the preliminary phase as a separate project stage
Causes	Lack of matchmaking infrastructure, intermediaries, and sufficient time and resources to properly prepare partnerships.
Strategic importance	Without proper partner alignment, it is impossible to establish either a high-quality or a lasting collaboration. Matchmaking forms the basis of the relationship infrastructure for EVGIE-CCI cooperation.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement matchmaking platforms with both AI and human support • Introduce a mandatory pre-alignment phase in grants and project frameworks • Provide education on work styles and compatibility assessment (e.g. checklists)
Research inspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What partner traits predict successful collaboration? • How can a systemic pre-alignment process be designed that can be implemented across different sectors?



Insight 3: Plant it, don't just pitch it

The third insight (Table 24) focuses on the Endorsement phase of the 4E model, which is often overlooked in both literature and practice (Kościewicz et al., 2025). During the DTthons, practitioners repeatedly emphasised the importance of post-project reflection, documentation and dissemination, particularly for publicly funded initiatives. In order to facilitate learning at an ecosystem level, it is crucial to formalise 'aftercare' practices, ensure the visibility of outcomes and establish structures that capture both successful and unsuccessful aspects. Without such continuity mechanisms, valuable knowledge and relationships are lost and collaboration efforts remain fragmented.

Table 24. Insight 3: Plant it, don't just pitch it

'PLANT IT, DON'T JUST PITCH IT' – Results only grow when nurtured beyond launch	
Expanded insight title	The project is not the end – it's just the beginning; Lack of continuation strategy and visibility of outcomes
Brief insight description	Too many EVGIE–CCI projects culminate in a 'premiere'. There is insufficient space for reflection, documentation, promotion of outcomes, knowledge sharing and continuation planning. The system fails to learn from projects because there is no structure or opportunity to do so. Without nurturing relationships and results after a project ends, a shared ecosystem cannot be built. We need 'aftercare' to become standard practice in collaboration.
Who the insight concerns	Project teams (EVGIE–CCI), funders, operators, support institutions
Insight foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge repositories, post-mortem documentation and follow-up pathways • Project outcomes often disappear after funding ends • The 'Endorsement' phase is often underestimated and underfunded
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This insight was identified by at least ten project teams • Tools proposed by the teams: development logs, journals, celebrations, reports on return on investment (ROI), and repositories • Suggested solution: provide funding for post-project activities to ensure the visibility of outcomes
Causes	Short-term grant model, lack of roles and policies for continuity, and low perceived value (prestige) of documentation and reflection.
Strategic importance	Without visibility and knowledge sharing, we end up with isolated islands rather than a true ecosystem. A systemic approach to collaboration must consider the sustainability of relationships and outcomes.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an 'after care' component as a mandatory project stage • Create public repositories (lessons learned) and casebooks • Promote (and reward) knowledge sharing as a project quality indicator, and allocate funding for the Endorsement phase
Research inspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What follow-up systems ensure long-term impact? • How can we measure project outcomes six months, one year and three years after completion?





The fourth insight, titled ‘Human API¹⁵’ (Table 25), highlights the critical role of internal coordination in cross-sector collaboration. Unlike Insight 2, which focuses on external matchmaking and partner alignment, this insight emphasises the need for dedicated individuals, such as facilitators, translators and advisors, who can actively support collaboration dynamics throughout the project. Once implementation is underway, these ‘human interfaces’ are essential for maintaining trust, resolving conflicts and bridging the gap between professional cultures. Without them, even the most advanced tools and platforms are insufficient.

Table 25. Insight 4: Human API

‘HUMAN API’ – People are the interface between sectors, not tools	
Expanded insight title	Collaboration needs people – technology and tools are not enough; The role of facilitators, advisors and brokers as a condition for success.
Brief insight description	Cross-sector collaboration doesn’t just happen. It requires people who can translate, facilitate, manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and direct the flow of information. Facilitators, advisors and relationship stewards are the invisible yet essential links that en-able sustainable cooperation. Without them, tools are useless, and teams fall apart.
Who the insight concerns	Project teams (EVGIE–CCI), funders, policymakers, educational institutions
Insight foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a dedicated person overseeing the quality of collaboration • Tensions arising from differences in work styles, pace, and core values • Absence of shared standards for work and communication in cross-sector teams
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This insight emerged in at least nine project teams • Solutions proposed by teams: training and certification of facilitators; ensuring a facilitator is present at every stage of the collaboration pathway (E1–E4) • Tools proposed by teams: conflict matrices, caretaker roles, relational evaluations
Causes	Lack of recognition for soft skills and underfunding of relational and intermediary functions
Strategic importance	Without ‘bridge people’, real collaboration is impossible. Facilitators play a core role in the relational infrastructure, which is just as essential as tools and platforms.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the role of facilitator as a permanent element of collaborative projects • Provide funding, training and certification for EVGIE–CCI collaboration facilitators • Integrate soft skills into project evaluation through relational assessments
Research inspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What competencies and tools are essential for cross-sector facilitators? • How can the impact of this role on project success be effectively measured?

15 In the world of technology, an API (Application Programming Interface) is a system that enables different programmes to ‘understand’ each other, even if they were developed separately. In the context of cross-sector collaboration, a Human API is a metaphor for a person who acts as an interface between different systems, languages, cultures and working styles. They could be a facilitator, cross-sector advisor or relationship broker – someone who enables collaboration where technology or procedures alone are insufficient. A Human API is not a technical function, but rather a relational and strategic role that is essential to the success of EVGIE-CCI cooperation.





The fifth insight (Table 26), titled ‘Build the bridge, not just the boat’, emphasises the importance of establishing shared infrastructure that transcends individual projects or transient alliances. Unlike Insights 2 and 4, which focus on interpersonal coordination, this insight addresses the systemic level, highlighting the absence of dedicated platforms, cohesive policies, and intermediary institutions to support EVGIE-CCI collaboration. Project teams consistently emphasised the value of integrated digital environments enhanced by AI to facilitate matchmaking, streamline application and implementation processes, and safeguard shared interests such as intellectual property. Without such infrastructure, collaboration remains fragmented and short-lived.

Table 26. Insight 6: Build the bridge, not just the boat

‘BUILD THE BRIDGE, NOT JUST THE BOAT’ – We need infrastructure, not just isolated initiatives	
Expanded insight title	There is a lack of an ecosystem, not just projects; EVGIE-CCI collaboration requires supportive infrastructure and policies
Brief insight description	A partnership requires more than just goodwill. Ad hoc initiatives are insufficient for building a lasting EVGIE-CCI collaboration. There is a lack of platforms, policies and intermediary institutions, as well as a lack of a shared map – a systemic framework. While the video games sector and the cultural and creative industries often head in the same direction, they do so independently. It’s time to build a bridge – a trusted, systemic infrastructure that will connect them physically, digitally and organisationally for good.
Who the insight concerns	Policymakers, programme operators, funders, and both EU and national institutions
Insight foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a shared platform – no common space, policy, or point of contact • Fragmented projects, difficulty in finding partners, information, and funding • Need to integrate tools such as AI, matchmaking systems, and knowledge repositories
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the teams diagnosed it as: ‘Brilliant but broken’ • Suggested solutions by teams: integrated educational systems, ‘AI for Creativity’ policies and EU innovation hubs • Proposed solutions: ‘Platform of all platforms’, G(AI)ME, HEARTS and an IP Clearinghouse*
Causes	Lack of cohesion policy between sectors, fragmentation of existing systems, insufficient investment in cooperation infrastructure
Strategic importance	Projects without an ecosystem cannot grow. We need policies and institutions that support ideas and build an environment in which they can develop.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a European collaboration platform for EVGIE-CCI • Integrate funding, tools, knowledge, and partnerships within a single space • Establish an AI for Creativity policy • Ensure continuous presence and funding for intermediary institutions
Research inspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which governance models best support the sustainable development of creative ecosystems? • How can policies be designed to encourage long-term, cross-sector collaboration?

* The **IP Clearinghouse** is an institution that acts as an intermediary and registry for intellectual property (IP) rights, facilitating circulation, licensing and sharing. It is a platform that registers copyrights and licences, verifies the legal status of creative assets (e.g. visuals, narratives, and musical works), mediates the granting of licences and sub-licences or rights transfers, and simplifies legal formalities between partners from different sectors.





Map of Tensions: EVGIE – CCI

The key insights outlined above indirectly or directly refers to or results from some significant differences (cultural, organisational, and operational) between VGI and other CCI. These differences represent potential sources of conflict, necessitating the establishment of a systemic buffer.

Table 27 below presents a map of tensions between EVGIE and CCI. Each axis illustrates distinct working styles, values and practices that are characteristic of the two realities. These are often the source of misunderstandings, false assumptions and conflicts in decision-making.

Table 27. Map of tensions between EVGIE and CCI

EVGIE	TENSION AXIS	CCI
Iterative, flexible, agile	Pace and rhythm of work	stability, planning, sequentially
Scalability, market efficiency	Motivations	Cultural values, social mission
Technological, task-oriented, short feedback loops	Communication style	Narrative, reflective, deep contextual approach
Flat structure, team-based	Decision-making structure	Hierarchical organisational structure
Final product, game version, release	Visibility of outcomes	Process documentation, report, exhibition
Measurable success (sales, KPIs, growth)	Definition of success	Cultural impact, social transformation

The first axis relates to the **pace and rhythm of work**. The VGI operates within a fast-paced cycle of sprints, updates and testing. It works quickly and flexibly, constantly refining and optimising its products before releasing the next version. It's a 'beta' environment, open to experimentation and rapid feedback. By contrast, other CCIs tend to work at a much slower pace, tied to institutional calendars, application procedures and long-term planning. It is a world of curatorial schedules and formal processes, where a premiere is often preceded by months of negotiations.

The second axis concerns **motivation**. In the EVGIE, the driving force is the market. Success is defined by a product that works, sells well, engages users and can be scaled up globally. In other CCIs, the meaning is the point of reference: the message, mission, cultural value and social impact. Success is not solely measured by clicks or metrics, but by the change that the project brings to culture, education or a specific community.



The third axis is **communication style**. Game developers often communicate in their own kind of code, using short iterations, schemes and pitches. Their communication is concise, pragmatic and goal-oriented, focusing on tools and tasks. In the culture and creative sectors; however, narratives dominate, with stories, context, emotions and values taking centre stage. Conversations tend to be longer and richer in historical, ideological and identity-based references.

The fourth axis is **decision-making structure**. EVGIE teams usually have a horizontal structure, meaning that everyone contributes to the process, decisions are made collectively, and tasks often overlap. By contrast, cultural institutions tend to have more hierarchical structures, with clearly defined roles and decision-making power assigned to specific positions, such as curators or directors. When these two approaches come together, tensions often arise around the question of 'who gets to decide'.

The fifth axis is **visibility of outcomes**. In game development, the focus is on the end result: a finished product, version or release. The important thing is what works - what can be measured and seen, ideally as soon as possible. However, in many cultural projects, the value lies not in the final outcome, but in the process itself: working with participants, shifting perspectives and fostering dialogue. The 'work' may be a shared experience, even if it leaves behind no tangible 'product'.

Finally, the sixth axis is the **definition of success**. For EVGIE, success is measured in numbers: users, growth, retention, and ROI. This is data that can be presented to investors. For other CCIs, however, success is about the impact: social, educational and cultural. This is more difficult to quantify but is often more deeply connected to long-term societal development.

When viewing the big picture of the highlighted tensions, it is important to note that to establish lasting, inclusive and values-driven partnerships, it is crucial to address all these issues through systemic support. The work of the project teams from the four editions of the GH DTthon provides inspiration and practical solutions to the presented problems (as for instance the idea cases presented in section 4.4 and recommendations covered by section 4.5).

4.7. Application of DTthons – Feedback and Recommendations

This section evaluates the DTthon format as a methodological and strategic tool for research as well as for cross-sector collaboration between the EVGIE and CCI sectors. Drawing from four editions the analysis focuses on the strengths and limitations of the adopted format as reported by participants and facilitators. The insights gathered highlight the design thinking workshop's unique capacity to combine practical co-creation with analytical depth, while also suggesting areas for refinement in future iterations. The second subsection also highlights the potential of the DTthon formula for future use in fostering cross-industry innovation.



4.7.1. DTthon formula and its potential improvements

#1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW

The DTthon workshop format employed within the GAMEHEARTS project represents a process-oriented and research-informed approach to fostering cross-sectoral cooperation between the EVGIE and CCI. A distinctive research feature of the DTthons was their capacity to simultaneously produce analytical outputs (diagnosis, trends, barriers) and practical frameworks (tools, models, prototypes) within a tightly coordinated group process.

Teams often worked in subgroups (2–3 persons), which enabled focused deep-dives while maintaining horizontal exchange. Moreover, the **interdisciplinary character** of each team contributed to a rich cross-pollination of knowledge. Key insights - such as the need for shared lexicons, the value of informal networking infrastructure, and the dual necessity of commercial viability and cultural mission - emerged organically through facilitated discussion.

Facilitators played a pivotal role in maintaining workshop integrity, adapting timing to group dynamics while ensuring that outputs met both methodological rigour and relevance criteria. However, due to their operational role, they were not tasked with capturing the full nuance of participant insights. This revealed a methodological limitation: critical reflections often remained undocumented unless a member of the research team was present during key group phases.

#2 GH DTthon – WARSAW

Across all three teams working in the Warsaw edition of DTthon, participants consistently highlighted the exceptional value of the event in terms of **networking and initiating dialogue between sectors** that rarely meet in such structured formats. The opportunity to exchange perspectives, especially between unfamiliar or previously disconnected stakeholders, was cited as a unique and highly desirable feature in both the game development and creative industries.

However, many participants arrived without a clear understanding of the workshop's goals, expecting to design a game or unaware of the GAMEHEARTS project's scope. Furthermore, **unclear role definitions** - especially regarding facilitators, who were often mistaken for content experts - contributed to misunderstandings. While well-structured timetables, prepared canvases, and responsive facilitation were appreciated and facilitated focused group work, some teams encountered internal friction stemming from strong individual perspectives or differing interpretations of the project premise—highlighting the creative tension inherent in interdisciplinary collaboration.





In contrast, teams marked by mutual respect, balanced participation, and openness to process-based exploration achieved smoother cooperation and more satisfying outcomes. The event's formula - structured yet flexible, with visible process design - was widely praised for enabling productive co-creation. However, participants recommended improvements such as stronger onboarding materials, clearer facilitator introductions, visual aids for each DT step, and more inter-team engagement opportunities. Feedback phases were sometimes too brief or lacked expert input, limiting prototype refinement. Participants also noted logistical issues like the visibility of name badges and the abrupt clean-up at the end, which some felt disregarded their work. Suggestions for future iterations included earlier integration activities (e.g., 'speed dating'), adding short lectures on the EVGIE and CCI, and preloading calendar invites. Importantly, critical reflections emerged regarding the tools used - some canvases required adjustment for clarity and relevance, particularly those addressing stakeholder mapping and user personas. Overall, the Warsaw DTthon affirmed the effectiveness of the format in **sparkling interdisciplinary engagement and producing concrete results, but also emphasised the need for more precise framing, user-friendly tools, and structural respect for participant contributions** to fully harness the potential of such collaborative workshops.

#3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE

Drawing on lessons from prior editions, the Katowice teams benefitted from more mature facilitation strategies, improved toolsets, and increasingly nuanced team configurations. Across all three teams, a consistently **high level of participant engagement** and mutual respect fostered an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue, creative problem-solving, and shared ownership of outcomes. **Interdisciplinarity** played a key role - participants brought diverse sectoral, generational, and experiential backgrounds, leading to enriched discussions and a palpable synergy that elevated the overall process.

Facilitators introduced a meticulously prepared schedule, incorporating both macro-level timelines and micro-level task planning, while remaining flexible to group dynamics. This enabled teams to maintain momentum even under time pressure, adjust to moments of fatigue, and still produce coherent and valuable solutions. Dedicated canvases - some newly refined - were used to structure group thinking and streamline complex discussions, limiting tangents and guiding attention to key stages. Though logistical imperfections were noted, including noise from catering equipment and imbalances in gender or sectoral representation, they were outweighed by the effectiveness of the methodological approach and the participants' adaptability.

Importantly, the workshop environment proved not only productive but also relational - **networking and informal exchanges** emerged as integral to the DTthons' success. The Creative Interview Technique (CIT) stood out as particularly effective in helping participants understand perspectives from the 'other' sector, breaking down abstract concepts into





relatable narratives. This was further strengthened by the opportunity to build relationships in a low-pressure setting, often identified by participants as equally valuable as the formal work. The event participants highlighted the importance of having a shared glossary of terms - particularly due to the sector-specific language used by EVGIE representatives, which was at times difficult for CCI participants to decode. Overall, the Katowice DTthon modelled a workshop format in which co-creation, mutual respect, and facilitator-led process scaffolding combined to create both immediate value and the potential for sustained intersectoral cooperation. It affirmed that when well-structured and thoughtfully implemented, **such workshops serve not only to generate prototypes and tools, but also to reshape communication habits and open long-term channels for strategic collaboration.**

#4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL

The international DTthon, as part of the GAMEHEARTS project, was widely recognised as a **professionally conducted and intellectually engaging event** that offered a rare opportunity for cross-sectoral and cross-border dialogue between representatives of the EVGIE and CCIs. Participants consistently emphasised the event's high organisational standard, particularly the clearly structured schedule, well-prepared tools such as customised canvases, and the overall process design which balanced facilitation with flexibility. The event environment - ranging from the quality of the venue and technical equipment to the accessibility of catering and workspace materials - contributed significantly to participant comfort and creativity, supporting a dynamic and collaborative atmosphere throughout.

One of the most frequently highlighted strengths was **the opportunity to exchange perspectives in a mixed international setting**, with participants benefiting from the diversity of languages, experiences, and professional backgrounds. The process was enriched using tools such as collaborative digital platforms (e.g., canvas) and design thinking materials, which enabled a shared visual language and allowed teams to co-create ideas more effectively.

However, despite the overall success, the event exposed certain operational gaps, particularly regarding the role of the research team. It became evident that while facilitators were responsible for managing the flow of activities, they could not be expected to document the depth of discussions or extract critical insights emerging in real time. Participants expressed a clear desire for **researchers to be more actively involved**: not only during the workshops to provide contextual framing and feedback but also before and after the event, as part of a more continuous and dialogic knowledge loop. Suggestions included providing facilitators with the same briefing materials sent to participants, involving researchers in team-level discussions, and ensuring their presence during testing and evaluation moments.

Furthermore, the **need for improved communication mechanisms** was noted, such as clearer participant identification (e.g., name tags at visible height) and an enhanced approach to digitising and sharing workshop outputs.





From a strategic perspective, the international DTthon validated the utility of the format as a bridge between sectors and countries, allowing the emergence of shared values, complementary goals, and mutual understanding. The event demonstrated the feasibility of building interdisciplinary alliances based on co-creation, informal learning, and joint problem-solving. Future editions should formalise this dual structure: facilitators ensuring process integrity and researchers ensuring epistemic depth and strategic synthesis. In doing so, the DTthon model could evolve into a more comprehensive mechanism for policy experimentation, stakeholder empowerment, and sustainable ecosystem design.

Conclusion and Additional Insights

The GAMEHEARTS DTthons proved effective in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and delivering both conceptual and practical outcomes. By extending the traditional cooperation model with a fourth stage (i.e., Endorsement), they **addressed the often-neglected need for continuity, visibility, and institutional learning**. Iterative refinement across events strengthened facilitation, toolkits, and participant engagement, though challenges such as unclear researcher roles and uneven onboarding persist. To fully realise the DTthons' potential, **future editions should integrate structured feedback loops, enhance the co-presence of facilitators and researchers, and formalise support for post-workshop dissemination and policy relevance**.

4.7.2. DTthon formula as a framework for cross-industry co-innovations

DTthon events showcased a refined, process-oriented format for facilitating collaboration between the EVGIE and CCI realities. A hallmark of the DTthon method was its simultaneous production of analytical findings and practical tools through structured, interdisciplinary teamwork.

The events **confirmed the need to expand the prevailing three-phase model of cooperation to a four-phase framework** by adding the 'Endorsement' as a stage dedicated to sustaining cooperation beyond project completion. Across all workshops, this phase proved essential for mutual evaluation, strategic reflection, and maintaining long-term partnerships.

Methodologically, the events relied on modular tasks, custom canvases, and flexible schedules that allowed both depth and adaptability, supported by facilitators who ensured cohesion and responsiveness to team dynamics. Participants consistently recommended **better onboarding, clearer facilitator roles, and stronger research support during ideation and testing**.

From a technical standpoint, success hinged on well-prepared environments, digital-physical hybrid tools, and access to resources such as real-time support and functional workspaces.





From a strategic perspective, the **DTthon format stands as a valuable policy tool** - capable of informing national and EU innovation strategies by modelling how structured collaboration can bridge distinct sectoral cultures. Future programmes should not only adopt the four-phase model of collaboration analysis proposed and tested via this research but also recognise the dual importance of facilitation and research, integrating both roles to optimise learning and sustainability.

The recommendations emerging from this experience are twofold. First, the DTthon model should be understood not merely as a participatory method but as a **research-anchored policy instrument**, capable of informing cross-sectoral strategy design at both national and EU levels. It should be resourced and scaled accordingly. Second, future iterations must institutionalise the dual role of facilitation and embedded observation. Facilitators ensure procedural rigour and team coherence, but researchers are essential to epistemic depth, critical reflection, and post-hoc analysis. From a policy standpoint, **the inclusion of the Endorsement phase is a transformative insight**: it reflects a maturity model of cooperation that does not end with the delivery of outputs but continues into capacity building, knowledge dissemination, and long-term relational investment. Consequently, public programmes aimed at fostering innovation ecosystems - especially across CCI and gamedev - should structurally incorporate this fourth phase into their funding models, KPIs, and evaluation criteria. DTthons thus stand not only as experimental spaces for research investigation but as a creative tool to design the concepts for resilient, reflexive, and mission-oriented cross-industry cooperation in Europe.

An essential factor underpinning the success of the DTthon workshops was the **presence of well-prepared facilitators** who not only steered the process with clarity but also acted as key intermediaries bridging diverse sectoral cultures and professional languages. Their ability to maintain focus, adapt to group dynamics, and support equitable participation enabled teams to co-create meaningfully across disciplinary lines. Particularly in settings marked by initial uncertainty or power asymmetries - such as when EVGIE participants used technical jargon unfamiliar to CCI representatives - facilitators provided interpretative scaffolding, often helping translate concepts and refocus conversations on shared goals. This mirrors the broader finding from workshop discussions that intermediaries, when equipped with both soft and structural competences, play a vital role in sustaining momentum, unlocking trust, and supporting long-term collaboration. Facilitated teams were able to bypass early-stage friction and engage more deeply in ideation, testing, and reflection, ultimately producing outputs that were more integrated and viable. The GAMEHEARTS DTthons demonstrate that **facilitation is not merely a logistical function but a strategic enabler of cross-sectoral cooperation**, deserving greater recognition and institutional support within similar EU-funded innovation and cultural programmes. **Future policy design would benefit from embedding facilitation roles more structurally**, with dedicated training and methodological support, especially where ecosystem gaps or intersectoral asymmetries threaten collaboration quality.





5. SUMMARISING CONCLUSIONS

This chapter brings together the key findings and strategic insights emerging from the GAMEHEARTS DTthon workshops. Particularly, it synthesises lessons learned across all events, highlighting structural challenges, shared values, and practical recommendations for enhancing cooperation between the EVGIE and CCIs. By focusing on both systemic conditions and human dynamics, it outlines how meaningful collaboration can evolve from episodic encounters into sustainable, policy-relevant ecosystems. Nevertheless, beyond the specific thematic findings, it is worth highlighting one relatively general but important issue - not only from the perspective of the GAMEHEARTS project and WP3: Videogames Industry Ecosystem - but also in terms of contributing to the advancement of knowledge on cross-industry cooperation, particularly the modelling of such collaboration.

(The General) Model of Understanding Cross-Industry Cooperation

One of the key objectives not only of the DTthons but more broadly of the entire WP3 was to establish a model of cross-industry cooperation. An in-depth analysis of existing scientific literature, supplemented by industry reports, revealed **a three-stage model of such cooperation, encompassing the phases: Establishment, Execution, and Ending** (Kościewicz et al., 2025). An additional finding was the relative asymmetry of knowledge regarding the course of individual phases, including a particular research focus so far on the execution phase and, in fact, a lack of knowledge concerning the ending phase. It was also established that only in relation to the execution phase is it possible to identify mechanisms supporting partners in cooperation, namely the mechanism concerning static-adaptive management, the mechanism concerning proximity, and the mechanism concerning knowledge management (Klimas et al., 2025).

Building on previous findings but also aiming for a more comprehensive understanding of the cross-industry cooperation model, the framework assumptions of the DTthons adopted that each of the initially identified three phases would be subjected to detailed exploration to complete their picture and verify the validity of their inclusion in the final model. Additionally, based on brainstorming within the research team and the insights gathered from simultaneously conducted in-depth interviews with representatives of EVGIE and CCI, it was decided to expand the model with an Endorsement phase, drawing attention to ongoing stimulation, communication of successes and failures, as well as learning from these successes and failures. The conducted design thinking marathons positively validated the four-dimensional cross-industry cooperation model, thereby **justifying the need for a strategic extension of the 3E model into a 4E model by inclusion of Endorsement phase**.

Regarding the 3E, DTthons proved that successful cooperation is not merely project-based but relational, requiring ongoing trust, strategic alignment, and shared learning. They showed also that the Ending phase usually remains unrecognised by practitioners.





Concerning the expanded 4E framework, DTthons support our claims that it reflects the full cycle of sustainable cross-industry cooperation while the (newly added) Endorsement phase seems to be crucial. Given DTthons, the Endorsement phase addresses the critical requirement for long-term institutional, regulatory, and political support. It involves formal recognition of intersectoral cooperation as a strategic goal; the creation of dedicated funding instruments and innovation pathways; the integration of EVGIE–CCI projects into cultural, educational, and digital policy agendas; and the facilitation of systemic enablers such as intermediary organisations, shared platforms, and long-term programming cycles. The workshops revealed that many promising collaborations falter not at the creative or technical level, but due to a lack of structural continuity. Without endorsement, efforts remain ad hoc, siloed, or dependent on isolated champions. This is particularly pronounced in contexts where public procurement frameworks, rigid legal interpretations, and under-resourced institutions act as barriers rather than facilitators.

Across all DTthons, practitioners expressed a shared frustration with the absence of mechanisms to scale, replicate, or sustain cross-sector partnerships beyond the initial project lifespan. Considering this, the Endorsement stage is not a theoretical add-on but a pragmatic necessity, already latent in the grassroots practices, frustrations, and aspirations voiced throughout the GAMEHEARTS process. **We therefore recommend the 4E model as a validated framework for structuring cross-industry cooperation between digital and cultural sectors**; establish dedicated funding lines and innovation schemes that specifically support EVGIE–CCI partnerships across all four stages, with particular emphasis on post-project continuity and institutional scaling; support intermediary structures (such as cultural-tech hubs, programme managers, or cross-sector platforms) that can bridge institutional silos and coordinate long-term efforts; incentivise the development of joint training and educational programmes that prepare professionals to work across cultural and technological domains, embedding cooperation into the talent pipeline; integrate cross-industry collaboration into existing policy strategies, including Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, and digital transition initiatives - ensuring that co-creation between culture and technology is not peripheral, but central to the European cultural and innovation agenda. By embracing this four-phase model, policymakers can move beyond episodic project thinking and instead cultivate a strategic environment where games and culture converge meaningfully, inclusively, and sustainably - not just in pilot projects, but in Europe's long-term development architecture.

Understanding Existing Practices and the Ecosystem Itself

The GAMEHEARTS workshops reveal that while the EVGIE and CCI sectors operate within distinct institutional cultures and professional logics, they increasingly seek collaboration based on shared values such as creativity, public engagement, and cultural relevance. **These sectors bring complementary strengths** - EVGIE contributes technological and production capabilities with agile, iterative workflows, while other CCIs offer cultural depth, storytelling, and public legitimacy rooted in long-term civic missions. However, the cross-industry collaboration is still hindered by fragmentation, short project cycles, and the absence of lasting strategic frameworks.





Effective cooperation arises in contexts where flexible, user-centred methodologies are matched with mutual respect and deliberate facilitation. Agile development practices - sprints, rapid prototyping, user testing - are widely used, often combined with simplified communication tools and modular planning methods. Digital platforms such as Miro, Trello, Discord, and Google Workspace support asynchronous and real-time collaboration, while open-source resources and shared toolkits enable low-barrier co-creation. These approaches allow teams to engage diverse stakeholders and generate solutions that reach beyond entertainment - such as educational games, interactive museum exhibits, and social impact-driven digital experiences.

Nevertheless, **substantial challenges faced mainly by VGDs** remain relevant. The EVGIE faces rising production costs, talent shortages, and market saturation, particularly affecting smaller studios. Risk aversion across the industry, overreliance on familiar formats, and monetisation pressures (subscriptions, live services, microtransactions) often sideline artistic or educational goals. At the same time, institutional mistrust linked to AI-generated content, data privacy, and screen time is growing. These tensions reduce opportunities for experimental or civic-oriented initiatives unless clearly supported by funding and policy mechanisms.

Intermediaries - such as incubators, programme managers, innovation hubs, and cultural translators - **play a vital role in facilitating understanding, managing cross-sector expectations, and scaffolding cooperation.** Without their involvement, mismatches in terminology, pace, and process logic often lead to early breakdowns or fatigue. Importantly, shared values such as inclusivity, cultural sustainability, and mental well-being emerged across workshops as strong foundations for future collaboration. These values can help shift sectoral mindsets from transactional interaction to long-term partnership and trust-building.

To move from episodic cooperation to sustainable ecosystems, structural conditions must change. Participants consistently highlighted the need for cross-sector facilitation bodies, digital platforms for continuous engagement, hybrid funding schemes, and reforms that accommodate mixed-sector projects within procurement and legal frameworks. Educational investment is equally critical - not only to train 'bridge profiles' who understand both cultural and technological contexts, but also to embed collaboration literacy into university curricula, professional development programmes, and civic institutions. Audience development was also recognised as a strategic issue: introducing co-created content into schools, museums, and public spaces fosters both innovation and societal legitimacy.

Across all workshops, it became clear that successful co-creation is not the result of shared vision alone, but of **aligned infrastructure, well-managed workflows, and clearly defined roles.** Common frustrations stemmed from vague onboarding, misaligned expectations, and a lack of clarity around success metrics. Shared glossaries, sandbox environments for experimentation, and joint evaluation frameworks were among the most cited remedies.



Ultimately, fostering meaningful EVGIE–CCI cooperation requires political will, institutional support, and a shift in mindset. Based on DTthons it seems that the **shift is needed from viewing co-creation as an output-driven event to recognising it as an ongoing process**. Without strategic endorsement, even the most promising partnerships risk fading after pilot stages. But with the right scaffolding, these collaborations can serve not only cultural innovation but also social resilience and democratic renewal.

Understanding the Key Relationships and Industrial Misalignments

The GAMEHEARTS DTthons revealed deep-rooted differences in how the EVGIE and CCIs operate, collaborate, and perceive each other. EVGIE professionals tend to work in decentralised, innovation-driven settings, valuing agility, creative autonomy, and technological impact. In contrast, CCI actors' function within structured public-sector frameworks - museums, educational institutions, NGOs - focused on cultural preservation, audience engagement, and long-term civic missions. This divergence manifests in **misaligned workflows, sector-specific language, and differing expectations, often causing friction**. Gamedev actors may perceive CCI institutions as rigid and slow, while CCI professionals often struggle with the pace, commercial orientation, or jargon of EVGIE collaborators.

Despite these divides, participants across all contexts identified **strong shared values: creativity, cultural innovation, and public impact**. They agreed that successful collaboration requires more than goodwill - it needs translation mechanisms, facilitation roles, and mutual onboarding. Practical recommendations included investing in intermediaries (e.g. innovation hubs, cultural translators), establishing shared collaboration platforms, and reforming funding mechanisms to better accommodate mixed-sector initiatives. Education and training were also highlighted as strategic: developing professionals fluent in both cultural and technical domains is key to bridging gaps.

Beyond structure and process, **the emotional and relational dimension of cooperation emerged as critical**. Trust, mutual respect, and intentional communication were consistently cited as prerequisites for sustainable cooperation. To support this, the design thinking marathons proposed cross-sector residencies, funding for hybrid professional profiles (e.g. educators in gamedev), and the creation of shared communication tools such as glossaries or project visualisation templates. Sandbox-style environments were also recommended to foster experimentation without high stakes.

Curricular reforms could play a long-term role, embedding intersectoral collaboration training in both cultural and technical education. At the same time, emotional labour - especially in early stages of cooperation - must be acknowledged and supported through protocols for trust-building and conflict navigation. Lastly, **shared evaluation frameworks and balanced advisory panels** were suggested to ensure that both cultural and commercial contributions are recognised and aligned.





Ultimately, the organised events pointed out that mutual understanding is not automatic. Indeed, **mutual understanding must be deliberately cultivated through institutional empathy, long-term frameworks, and spaces where both sectors can listen, learn, and lead together.**

Cross-industry Cooperation – The Current State

The analysis of cross-sector cooperation between the EVGIE and CCIs across the four DTthons using the 4E framework reveals a landscape both fragmented and fertile, shaped by local practices and **shared systemic weaknesses.**

In terms of differences, the Wroclaw workshop highlighted structural asymmetries and the effects of procedural rigidity and lack of shared vocabulary, along with early-phase tensions and risks of ‘burnout’ from poorly sustained outcomes.

The Warsaw teams offered the strongest institutional critique, portraying cooperation as unstructured and reliant on personal initiative, with minimal formal support or strategic scaffolding. A major issue was the lack of consistent policy backing for the EVGIE, alongside stereotypes and a near-total absence of endorsement infrastructure.

In Katowice, participants stressed practical barriers - cold calling, unclear contracts, misaligned pacing - yet also highlighted success in cases of shared vision and complementarity. Unique to Katowice was the emphasis on micro-level factors such as leadership and iterative communication.

The International workshop stood out for its meta-perspective, offering detailed insights into emotional dynamics, coordination tools, and the potential of facilitation and post-mortem analysis.

Despite differing details, the DTthons revealed **universal challenges and opportunities.**

1. The ESTABLISHMENT phase suffers from unstructured matchmaking, absence of decision-makers early on, and dissonant work cultures.
2. The EXECUTION phase is marked by misaligned workflows, unclear leadership, communication breakdowns, and financial volatility.
3. The ENDING phase is often rushed, with limited evaluation, no scaling strategy, and emotional fatigue.
4. Most crucially, **the ENDORSEMENT phase is almost entirely neglected** - though it holds the greatest transformative potential. Wroclaw noted the lack of post-collaboration learning; Warsaw identified a void of events, awards, or storytelling to ensure visibility; Katowice showed gaps in dissemination and political will; the international teams discussed PR opportunities missed and the strategic power of platforms like SXSW or GDC. Without endorsement, outcomes remain siloed, partnerships dissolve, and institutional memory fades.





Where taken seriously - through conference participation, network-building, or even informal storytelling - endorsement becomes the only realistic path for scaling isolated successes into lasting ecosystems. A renewed focus on this phase is essential: ambassador roles, promotional calendars, outreach funding, embedded evaluation tools, and legacy frameworks must be prioritised. **Only by reclaiming endorsement as a strategic core can the fractured but promising EVGIE-CCI collaborative landscape be empowered to deliver durable impact.**

Cross-Industry Cooperation – The Desired Future and Idea Cases

As visible in all 12 idea cases, the effective and lasting cooperation between EVGIE and CCI requires a structured, consciously designed pathway, as well as a willingness to act. The proposed 4E model - ESTABLISHMENT, EXECUTION, ENDING and ENDORSEMENT - has proven to be a logical and practical framework for analysing and designing partnerships between the two sectors. Collaboration should begin with shared action and real-life engagement rather than paperwork – relationships come first, contracts second.

1. The ESTABLISHMENT stage is critical for building trust, developing a shared language and creating professional structures, such as matchmaking platforms, communication tools and mentoring schemes. It is also important to have the presence of intersectoral translators who can interpret the needs and realities of one sector in terms that the other can understand.
2. The EXECUTION phase should be flexible, iterative and transparent, with a clear division of roles, mutual respect for differing work rhythms and a strong feedback culture. For collaboration to succeed, it must support innovation, not stifle it.
3. The ENDING phase is not just about closing a project; it is about consciously completing it. This involves summarising and documenting the process and transforming outcomes into a foundation for further initiatives, either through dissemination or by planning follow-up activities. A culture of reflection and learning from experience is key here.
4. Initially underestimated, the ENDORSEMENT phase has proven to be the cornerstone of systemic, long-term change. The goal is for EVGIE-CCI cooperation to become the norm rather than the exception. This stage is about scaling up good practices, promoting outcomes and enhancing the visibility of projects and their contributors - not just for marketing purposes, but as an investment in shared knowledge and trust.

All 12 working teams emphasised unanimously that success depends not only on understanding the differences between sectors, but also on utilising these differences to create complementarity. They stressed that success hinges not only on managing projects, but also on jointly shaping their cultural and market relevance. **The presence of facilitators and systemic support, such as platforms, funding and support networks, is essential for building lasting partnerships and achieving scalable results.** In the context of support, it is important to emphasise the role of the human factor. While instrumental support (e.g.,





programs and funding pathways) or technological support (e.g., digital platforms) proves to be virtually necessary, facilitative support of the human factor is also essential. In other words, it seems that support should be comprehensive, in which **experts and cross-sector knowledge brokers** (providing support at European and national levels) will play an important role.

The desired future state of EVGIE–CCI cooperation is the ecosystem based on mutual respect, understanding and shared values, which will enable the design of next-generation cultural experiences that are interactive, inclusive and socially embedded. **Notably, the ecosystem surrounding and stimulating the EVGIE-CCI cooperation should not be a self-driven ecosystem, but rather an orchestrated ecosystem based on continuous and systemic (both external and internal) facilitation support.**

Practice-Driven Decalogue of Cross-Industry Cooperation and Recommendations

The recommendations developed during the GH DTthons and compiled in the section 4.5 clearly demonstrate that - **at the level of engaged actors** - the effective and sustainable cross-industry cooperation must be based on shared values, tools and mutual responsibility. Project emphasised the importance of mutual understanding, empathy, flexibility and respect for the differing work rhythms and organisational cultures of both sectors. The cross-industry cooperation decalogue highlights the importance of proactively establishing connections, maintaining clear and open communication, defining shared goals and roles, fostering trust and mutual benefit, and adapting collaboration formats consciously to the specific nature of games as a medium. Cooperation should be planned, monitored and documented, with briefs, schedules, milestones, shared glossaries and project management tools facilitating the process and serving as essential elements of professional practice. Furthermore, many recommendations focused on practitioners emphasise the importance of fostering a culture of learning from both successes and failures, and of promoting the outcomes of collaborative efforts in professional and public spheres

At the same time, **at the level of decision- and policy-makers**, the Decalogue emphasises the importance of recognising the cultural significance of games, streamlining grant and legal procedures, setting up specialised support institutions (such as the Culture Reactor or the Game Institute), increasing funding for cross-sectoral projects (including the prototyping stage, projects prepared by newcomers) and developing open databases, tools and resources to encourage collaboration. Of particular importance are the calls for the creation of digital infrastructure, such as matchmaking platforms, shared analytics dashboards, joint innovation hubs and IP and licensing management systems. It should be noted also that games should not only be viewed as a form of entertainment, but also imbued of educational, cultural and social value. This highlights the importance of integrating games more strongly into cultural, educational and research policies. This highlights also the need for undertaking actions and awareness-raising campaigns, as games and the video games industry are still often perceived by the broader public as less *'cultural'* (Purhonen et al., 2023), not necessarily having a positive impact on culture or being even a culture-forming.



Taken together, the recommendations - ranging from operational guidelines for daily cooperation to systemic recommendations for policymakers - affirm once again that EVGIE and CCI should not operate in parallel. Instead, they should co-create an integrated creative ecosystem based on mutual trust, knowledge sharing, innovative tools and long-term partnerships. And again, considering a wide range and specificity of recommendations for policymakers, this ecosystem should be however orchestrated.

Emerging Issues and the Key Insights for Further Exploration

Twelve working teams engaged in successive editions of the GH DTthon identified not only surface-level challenges, but also deeply rooted structural and cultural tensions influencing the quality, durability and developmental potential of cross-sector partnerships. These challenges and tensions are reflected in and may be addressed by operational application of **six insights which emerged from four DTthons**.

As described in section 4.6, many challenges stem from the absence of a shared language, both literally and organisationally. Without tools to help bridge differences in values, working styles and communication, even the most promising projects can fall apart due to misunderstandings (see *Insight 1: Babel tower*). Moreover, sound collaboration requires 'human interfaces' – facilitators, brokers and advisors who act as bridges between technology and culture but also helps in everyday communication (see *Insight 4: Human API*).

Effective matchmaking processes are also lacking – many partnerships arise by chance, without properly aligning values, needs and resources (see *Insight 2: You've got (no) match*), which undermines the long-term durability of relationships and initiatives. Another key issue is the tendency to treat a project's launch as its endpoint, rather than the beginning of its dissemination and continuation phase. Without mechanisms for knowledge sharing, documentation, repositories and post-project support (see *Insight 3: The end is a new beginning*), the outcomes of projects often disappear from view.

At a systemic level, the most pressing challenge is the lack of long-lasting collaborative infrastructure, both technological and institutional (see *Insight 5: Build the Bridge, Not Just the Boat*). Ad hoc initiatives, even when successful, are insufficient to build a resilient ecosystem. What is needed are platforms, public policies, integrated funding mechanisms and designated contact points.

The tension map (Table 27), developed based on the experiences of project teams, highlights six key axes of difference between EVGIE and CCI: pace of work (agile vs planned), motivation (market vs mission), communication style (task-oriented vs narrative-driven), organisational structures (team-based vs hierarchical), approach to presenting outcomes (product vs process), and definition of success (metrics vs socio-cultural impact). Each axis represents a potential source of conflict – but also an opportunity for mutual learning.



The strategic challenge lies in creating a systemic ‘buffer’ - a set of tools, roles, processes and policies that ease tensions and transform them into drivers of innovation. The identified insights, along with operational recommendations and research questions, should serve as a starting point for designing policies, funding schemes, training programmes, and tools that support and enable EVGIE-CCI collaboration and help to sustain and scale it up.

DTthon Formula – Worthy of Replication?

The GAMEHEARTS DTthons introduced a significant methodological innovation in both academic research and preliminary EVGIE-CCI cooperation. Besides the scientific value (described in section 4.7.1.), a wide range of collected ideas, shared insights and experiences, fierce discussion as well as the positive feedback show DTthons as a valuable approach, worthy of replication, not only to explore but also initiate cross-industry cooperation.

Methodologically, DTthons featured process-oriented design, enabling teams to produce both analytical outputs (e.g. barriers, trends) and practical tools (e.g. canvases, prototypes) through structured facilitation and modular, co-designed workspaces. Each edition refined the approach - Katowice and the International DTthons, for instance, used tools like the Creative Interview Technique and Canva. A consistent shortcoming; however, was the lack of embedded researchers to capture group dynamics and deepen learning.

Considering the replication of DTthons, some key recommendations emerged. First, the DTthon should be seen not just as a participatory format but as a research-based policy instrument, scalable and suited to national and EU-level cross-sectoral strategy. Second, future editions must institutionalise the dual roles of facilitator and researcher: facilitators ensure coherence, while researchers offer critical depth and post-hoc analysis. Importantly, the Endorsement phase represents a shift to maturity - moving from one-off delivery to long-term investment, capacity building, and knowledge transfer. Public programmes supporting innovation across CCI and gamedev should structurally include this phase in funding models, KPIs, and evaluation.

A crucial factor in DTthon success was the role of facilitators. More than process managers, they acted as cultural and linguistic intermediaries, ensuring clarity, inclusion, and momentum. Especially in contexts of asymmetry - such as EVGIE’s use of technical jargon - facilitators translated, aligned goals, and helped bypass early friction. **Teams supported by skilled facilitators produced more viable, integrated outputs.** The DTthon experience shows that facilitation is not a logistical add-on but a strategic enabler of cooperation. This supports our prior claims that **the ecosystem surrounding EVGIE-CCI cooperation should be externally and institutionally orchestrated through a wide range of facilitation-based solutions.** Noteworthy, those facilitation-based solutions require systemic **engagement of facilitators**, namely experts taking the role of knowledge and experience brokers. Simultaneously, considering projects and grants, future EU-funded programmes should treat **facilitation as core infrastructure under every single project**, with investment in training and structural inclusion - especially where intersectoral gaps risk undermining collaboration.





REFERENCES

- Dyer, J. H., & Singh, H. (1998). The relational view: Cooperative strategy and sources of interorganizational competitive advantage. *Academy of management review*, 23(4), 660-679.
- Klimas, P., Radomska, J., Kościwicz, D., Strzelec, G., & Wrona, S. (2025). What are the Drivers, Barriers, Mechanisms, and Anchors of cross-industry cooperation? The Perspective of the Video Game Industry Ecosystem. *Games and Culture*, 15554120251317276
- Klimas, P., Radomska, J., Wrona, S., Kościwicz, D., & Strzelec, G. (2024). Game On! Unlocking Synergies Between Video Games & Creative and Cultural Industries. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14038801>
- Kościwicz D., Klimas P., Strzelec G., Radomska J. (2025). State-of-the-art report. Developed by the Horizon Europe project GAMEHEARTS (Games, Heritage, Arts, & Sport: the economic, social, and cultural value of the European video game ecosystem – GAMEHEARTS), funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101132543. [access: D3.1 State-of-the-Art Report 1].
- Osarenkhoe, A. (2010). A study of inter-firm dynamics between competition and cooperation–A coopetition strategy. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management*, 17, 201-221.
- Purhonen, S., Verboord, M., Sirkka, O., Kristensen, N. N., & Janssen, S. (2023). Definitely (not) belonging to culture: Europeans’ evaluations of the contents and limits of culture. *Poetics*, 101, 101840.
- Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (Text with EEA relevance); <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32021R0818>
- The Double Diamond (2025). The Double Diamond. A universally accepted depiction of the design process, access: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-resources/the-double-diamond> (accessed: January 12, 2025).
- Vaughn, L. M., & Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory Research Methods – Choice Points in the Research Process. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.13244>
- Wrona, S., Kapitaniec, K. (2022), ZPDT MANUAL – manual dedykowany zespołom projektowym DT (DT PROJECT TEAM), publikacja w ramach projektu Nowa jakość – nowe możliwości. Zintegrowany program rozwoju uczelni, Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny we Wrocławiu, Wrocław, ISBN: 978-83-7695-908-5
- Zakrzewska-Bielawska, A. (2019). Recognition of relational strategy content: Insight from the managers’ view. *Eurasian Business Review*, 9, 193-211.





Internal materials

One of the source materials to prepare this report there were the reports prepared by facilitators coordinating particular working teams in all four editions of DTthons, namely:

- Derlukiewicz N. (2025). GH DTthon #2 Warsaw – Report (WAW_1 TEAM) [in Polish].
- Derlukiewicz N. (2025). GH DTthon #4 International – Report (INT_1 TEAM) [in English].
- Kuźmińska-Haberla A. (2025). GH DTthon #2 Warsaw – Report (WAW_2 TEAM) [in Polish].
- Kuźmińska-Haberla A. (2025). GH DTthon #3 International – Report (INT_2 TEAM) [in English].
- Macalik J. (2025). GH DTthon #2 Warsaw – Report (WAW_3 TEAM) [in Polish].
- Macalik J. (2025). GH DTthon #4 International – Report (INT_3 TEAM) [in English].
- Szostak E. (2025). GH DTthon #1 Wrocław – Report (WRO_1 Team) [in Polish].
- Szostak E. (2025). GH DTthon #3 Katowice – Report (KAT_1 TEAM) [in Polish].
- Wochnik I. (2025). GH DTthon #1 Wrocław – Report (KAT_2 Team) [in Polish].
- Wochnik I. (2025). GH DTthon #1 Wrocław – Report (WRO_2 Team) [in Polish].
- Wołczek P. (2025). GH DTthon #1 Wrocław – Report (WRO_3 Team) [in Polish].
- Wołczek P. (2025). GH DTthon #3 Katowice – Report (KAT_3 TEAM) [in Polish].





LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of GH DTthons.....	25
Table 2. #1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW – teams’ structure.....	26
Table 3. #2 GH DTthon – WARSAW – teams’ structure.....	27
Table 4. #3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE – teams’ structure.....	28
Table 5. #4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL – teams’ structure.....	29
Table 6. Cooperation path – Idea case 1 by WRO_1 TEAM.....	51
Table 7. Cooperation path – Idea case 2 by WRO_2 TEAM.....	53
Table 8. Cooperation path – Idea case 3 by WRO_3 TEAM.....	56
Table 9. Cooperation path – Idea case 4 by WAW_1 TEAM.....	58
Table 10. Cooperation path – Idea case 5 by WAW_2 TEAM.....	61
Table 11. Cooperation path – Idea case 6 by WAW_3 TEAM.....	63
Table 12. Cooperation path – Idea case 7 by KAT_1 TEAM.....	65
Table 13. Cooperation path – Idea case 8 by KAT_2 TEAM.....	67
Table 14. Cooperation path – Idea case 9 by KAT_3 TEAM.....	69
Table 15. Cooperation path – Idea case 10 by INT_1 TEAM.....	73
Table 16. Cooperation path – Idea case 11 by INT_2 TEAM.....	77
Table 17. Cooperation path – Idea case 12 by INT_3 TEAM.....	79
Table 18. Recommendations coming from #1 GH DTthon.....	83
Table 19. Recommendations coming from #2 GH DTthon.....	86
Table 20. Recommendations from #3 GH DTthon.....	89
Table 21. Recommendations from #4 GH DTthon.....	92
Table 22. Insight 1: Babel tower.....	98
Table 23. Insight 2: You’ve got (no) match.....	99
Table 24. Insight 3: Plant it, don’t just pitch it.....	100
Table 25. Insight 4: Human API.....	101
Table 26. Insight 6: Build the bridge, not just the boat.....	102
Table 27. Map of tensions between EVGIE and CCI.....	103





LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Double Diamond by the Design Council.....	17
Figure 2. DT process by DT HUB CENTER.....	20
Figure 3. Trends and benchmarks card.....	21
Figure 4. Stakeholder map.....	21
Figure 5. Interviews cards.....	22
Figure 6. Understanding the users card.....	22
Figure 7. CJM – cooperation path cards.....	23
Figure 8. Feedback matrix.....	23





LIST OF PHOTOS

Photo 1. Post-its used to gather ideas and insights during the DTthons.....	19
Photo 2. Photo relation from #1 GH DTthon – WROCLAW.....	26
Photo 3. Photo relation from #2 GH DTthon – WARSAW.....	27
Photo 4. Photo relation from #3 GH DTthon – KATOWICE.....	28
Photo 5. Photo relation from #4 GH DTthon – INTERNATIONAL.....	29





DISCLAIMER

This document was published thanks to the support of the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 101132543. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect any collective opinion of the GAMEHEARTS consortium, nor do they reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the European Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the following information.

COPYRIGHT



Under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence, all rights are reserved for the material presented here. Nevertheless, reproduction and distribution of the material for research, educational or other non-/commercial purposes is permitted without the written consent of the rights holders, provided the source is properly acknowledged.

DECLARATION OF NOT USING GENERATIVE AI IN SCIENTIFIC AND CONCEPTUAL WRITING

We did not use generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies in the writing or subsequent stages of the research process. We used Chat GPT and Grammarly as technical tools for some proofreading (the main focus on checking grammar and improving transparency) and some translations as English is not our native language. Such kind of use AI tool fits the above declaration of not using generative AI in scientific and conceptual writing. After using Chat GPT/ Grammarly for proofreading/translation purposes, we reviewed and edited the content if needed and take full responsibility for the content of this report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our highest gratitude to the representatives of VGIE and CCI participating in DTthons for sharing their knowledge, experience and insightful ideas. Special thanks go to the facilitators: Ewa Szostak, Iwona Wochnik, Przemysław Wołczek, Niki Derlukiewicz, Aleksandra Kuźmińska-Haberla, Joanna Macalik who facilitated the teams working during the DTthons. The authors thank the above-mentioned facilitators also for the preparation of detailed team-working reports that were used as documentary/raw materials to create this final report.

CITATION

Wrona, S., Kościewicz, D., & Klimas, P. (2025). DTthons Summary. Horizon Europe project GAMEHEARTS (Games, Heritage, Arts, & Sport: the economic, social, and cultural value of the European videogame ecosystem – GAMEHEARTS), funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101132543. [10.5281/zenodo.16812906]

CONTACT

Website: <https://gamehearts.eu/>
Email: info@gamehearts.eu





GAMEHEARTS Partners



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

