

PROGRAMME: Co-Work Greifswald
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1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

▪ Overview & Aims

Launched in April 2012, the **Co-Work Greifswald programme is a small business support instrument set up to strengthen/raise awareness of the Creatives sector.**

Made up mostly of microenterprises, (87% of businesses), the Creatives sector is the **fourth most important sector** in the German economy. Despite the significance of the sector and a GVA of €61.4M in 2010, (just after the financial sector), the make-up of the businesses involved has meant it has attracted little support. Key challenges include:

- Insufficient opportunities for networking;
- No **nationwide approach/policy** concerning the players in the market and often no overview or consistency about the players in the same town/local area;
- No resources/options available for large scale support or projects.

These national problems, together with the challenges faced by the local habitants in Greifswald, (a largely rural area with a relatively small population), meant that businesses and stakeholders 'came up against a brick wall' re support for creative industries.

Launched in response to these challenges, **the aims of the pilot phase** of the Co-Work programme were to:

- ✓ **Bring together and strengthen** the creative industries in Greifswald;
- ✓ **Raise the profile of the industry**, adopting a collaborative approach to provide marketing and promotional opportunities for the businesses involved;
- ✓ **Provide knowledge transfer opportunities.**

▪ Key Resources

- **Programme Partners** Associated partners include the City of Greifswald, Graf-Fisch (Design Agency) and Rapid Rabbit (IT Service)
- **Funding:** €50K. **Funding Body & SME Contribution:** Financed with Regional and Private Funds. Businesses only have to pay for the time they actually use the co-working workspace.



- **Eligibility Criteria:** Any SMEs from 11 different branches of the creative sector who have **desk based business activities**. (The programme **does not support** handicraft activities).
- **Terms and Conditions:** N/A. The Co-Work programme is not a financial instrument.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

A business support rather than a financial instrument, Co-Work Greifswald provides tailored support for small companies in the sector; offering **'pay as you go' work space** located in the town centre for businesses who want to come out of their home office, access to networking events and the opportunity to find new project partners.

Now operating for more than a year the pilot programme has **created a contact/focal point**, providing businesses in the sector with a community building and a flexible model for working space. There are no waiting times for businesses who want to access the co-work facilities, who only pay for the time they use.

Businesses using the scheme can also access start up and business/consultancy support available from the main Vorpommern Technology Centre of which Co-Work is part.

Next steps for the next phase of the programme include:

- More networking i.e. throughout the region and the state
- Partnerships; looking for other regional, national and possibly international partners
- Evaluating the project and its impact on the creative sector.
- Expanding the scheme to other Technology Centres, providing a co-work opportunity for other businesses in the sector.

- **Key Stats.** No statistical business information available/reported for this pilot phase.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

The scheme has raised the visibility of the creative sector, now acknowledged by municipal and regional government and also resulted in improved sales/revenue from **local businesses in the supply chain now aware of local skills/expertise**, avoiding the need for them to source expertise from Berlin.

- **What worked well**
Networking events work very well, (low effort with maximum results).
- **Challenges/Weaknesses**
 - Can be difficult to convince people to work in a 'new way' i.e. in a co-working space, who may be hesitant and concerned about wasting time. They have to "learn" to work in a Co-working space.
- **Transferability**
 - Opportunities: The creative industries face similar problems in most areas/regions. Easily transferable/good opportunities to transfer the idea to other regions.
 - Threats: No financial support for companies

FURTHER INFORMATION:

DIFASS You Tube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8L6u9qqUMxA&list=UUrlaP8IZYMWpRbob8_XCUbw