



a creative  
momentum  
project

**CREATIVE TRAILS:**  
CONNECTING CREATIVES WITH VISITORS ACROSS EUROPE'S  
NORTHERN EDGE

**SUMMARY**

**JULY 2018**

CONNECTING CREATIVITY ACROSS  
EUROPE'S NORTHERN EDGE  
[www.MyCreativeEdge.eu](http://www.MyCreativeEdge.eu)



Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme  
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION  
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mycreativeedge 



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**this is:  
a creative  
momentum  
project**

**we are:  
a creative  
momentum  
project**

**part of:  
a creative  
momentum  
project**

**made by:  
a creative  
momentum  
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**funded by:  
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**research for:  
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## SUMMARY

The Creative Trails activity of 'a creative momentum project' aimed to develop creative routes/trails to facilitate tourists, visitors and locals to identify and visit artists and other creative businesses. In turn increasing their opportunities to make sales to the tourist and domestic market. The activity was led by two of the project partner organisations – Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (on behalf of South East Economic Development) and the Cultural Council of North East Iceland.

This activity developed four new Creative Trails, two in North East Iceland and two in South East of Northern Ireland. It also identified and promoted existing Creative/Art/Craft Trails in all project partner regions.

As a starting point, each of the project partners compiled a listing of examples of such Trails in their own region. This contributed to the development of a new [Trails](#) section on the re-developed [www.MyCreativeEdge.eu](http://www.MyCreativeEdge.eu). There are two types of content in the [Trails](#) section:

- a. New Creative Trails developed by 'a creative momentum project' have a detailed Profile page to showcase the Trail.
- b. Existing Creative Trails in the regions are included in a directory listing containing: Trail name; location; short description; feature image; link to website for the Trail.

### DEVELOPING NEW CREATIVE TRAILS

Following an examination of best practice examples, the process began to develop new Creative Trails in Iceland and Northern Ireland. It was decided to develop a Creative Trail mobile app. One overall mobile app would be developed as a template that could house four individual apps, one for each of the four new Creative Trails. It was felt that an app, supported by promotional brochures, would be the most effective way to communicate and deliver the new Creative Trails to visitors.

The first stage was to clearly define the functionality of the app. The following questions were addressed and clarified:

**Question 1: What should the app do and why should it exist?** The app will connect creative businesses with a previously unconnected market – the tourist market. It will inform users where creative businesses (that are open to the public) are located, where they are located in relation to the user's current location and what each can offer.

**Question 2: Who will use the 'Creative Trails' app?** The app will be aimed at tourists, walkers, day trippers and people interested in the creative industries. It will also be used by organisations to promote the regions. Using the app should be as intuitive as possible and the user should not require a high level of comfort with technology. Once downloaded, the app should be able to operate without having an online connection as these regions are quite rural.

**Question 3: What will be the typical user experience?** The visitor will arrive at a tourist office, the app will be promoted to them (by staff or a brochure) and the visitor can download it on the premises. They select the relevant Creative Trail and are

brought to a visual user interface. An arrangement of the 'profiles' of the creative enterprises featured on that Creative Trail is displayed, the user can opt to get more details by clicking on each profile and can also build an itinerary to visit a number of locations.

**Question 4: Who can participate in Creative Trails?** Creatives in North East Iceland and South East of Northern Ireland, who meet certain criteria, can participate in the new Creative Trails. The criteria depends on each region and what kind of Trail is being developed as the two regions developed slightly different types of Trails. The main criteria were:

- Creative businesses: Open for visitors – open studio; Regular opening hours/ open on request; Product to sell.
- Other types of trails (e.g. outdoor art work, museums, events etc): Informational; A recreational value; Visitor friendly, good accessibility; Easily accessible online.

The next stage was to contract an app developer to build the Creative Trails mobile app. Throughout the app development process the creative profiles of enterprises and venues to be featured on the apps had to be sourced. This information was fed back to the app developer who used it to both populate and test the app.

**Recruiting creatives to join the Creative Trails app in Northern Ireland:** In May 2017, a call for applications from creative businesses to be featured on the new Creative Trails app for Northern Ireland was published on MyCreativeEdge.eu. Applications were requested based on developing two geographically-based Creative Trails for Co. Down and Co. Armagh. The article proved to be the most viewed News item published on the re-developed MyCreativeEdge.eu. Considerable promotion of the opportunity took place though social media and other channels.

**Recruiting creatives to join the Creative Trails app in Iceland:** Instead of geographically-based Creative Trails, the Cultural Council of North East Iceland decided that their two Trails would be for Museums and for Design and Craft businesses. Museums were mainly recruited through direct e-mails to Museum Cluster Co-operations in the region. An open call for design and craft businesses to join the app opened in June 2017 through an article in Icelandic published on MyCreativeEdge.eu. It was advertised in the local media, on social media and through direct e-mails to potential participants.

In total 53 creative enterprises, galleries and museums are featured in the four new Creative Trails. The mobile apps were launched for Android and iOS on Google Play and the App store on 28 June 2017.

#### **Iceland Creative Trails App**

- Google Play <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mytourtalk.icelandcreativetrail>
- App Store <https://itunes.apple.com/mt/app/iceland-creative-trails/id1245630121?mt=8>

#### **Northern Ireland Creative Trails App**

- Google Play <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mytourtalk.nicraigavoncreativetrail>
- App Store <https://itunes.apple.com/mt/app/northern-ireland-creative-trails/id1245578332?mt=8>

## PROMOTING THE NEW CREATIVE TRAILS

The app was officially launched in Northern Ireland with a Creative Exchange event at F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio on 28 June 2017. The app was promoted in Northern Ireland in the following ways:

- Posters and leaflets designed to inform and engage potential users of the app, as well as creative businesses that could potentially be featured on the app.
- Plaques for installation onsite for featured businesses.
- Engagement with local press and radio.
- Inviting tour guides to the launch event, as well as elected representatives and businesses featured on the app.
- A commissioned [video](#) to motivate businesses to apply to join the app and to instruct potential users on how to use it.

Following the launch the app received considerable media coverage and the prominent Northern Ireland tourism blogger “NI Explorer” reviewed the Creative Trails apps. Over the course of one Saturday he visited a number of the featured businesses and blogged his experience here <http://niexplorer.com/blog/creative-trail>

In Iceland the Creative Trails were promoted to design and craft businesses at a Creative Exchange event on 22 June 2017. North East Iceland Cultural Council also designed a brochure to promote the Creative Trails app in tourist information offices. A challenge in promoting the app however was that many of the featured design and craft businesses only open to the public during the summer months and not the full year. Therefore it was not possible to promote the app during the winter of 2017 and promotion began in earnest for summer 2018.

In cooperation with the North Iceland Marketing Office it was decided to widen the area covered by the Creative Trails app to the whole of the North of Iceland (not only the North East). The North Iceland Marketing Office felt this was necessary for them to be able to promote the Creative Trails on their website.

A Creative Exchange event was held in Iceland in April 2018 to present the Creative Trails app to creatives in the region. While ten designers and seven museums in North Iceland have already signed up, the aim is to get all the museums, designers and handicraft groups in North Iceland to be participants in the app. Along with a presentation about the app, its future was discussed, such as marketing, maintenance costs and who would be responsible for the app in the future. The Cultural Director of North East Iceland also introduced the Creative Trails app to other Cultural Directors around the country who showed great interest in the project. It is a possibility that in future, the whole of Iceland will be involved in developing similar Trails.

Download the full report '[Creative Trails: Connecting Creatives with Visitors Across Europe's Northern Edge](#)'. (PDF, 2.3MB)







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