NeW.Sp. Toolkit

Policies & Planning Tool

COST ACTION - CA18214

The Geography of New Working Spaces and the Impact on the Periphery

Acknowledgements

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COST ACTION CA18214

The Geography of New Working Spaces and the Impact on the Periphery

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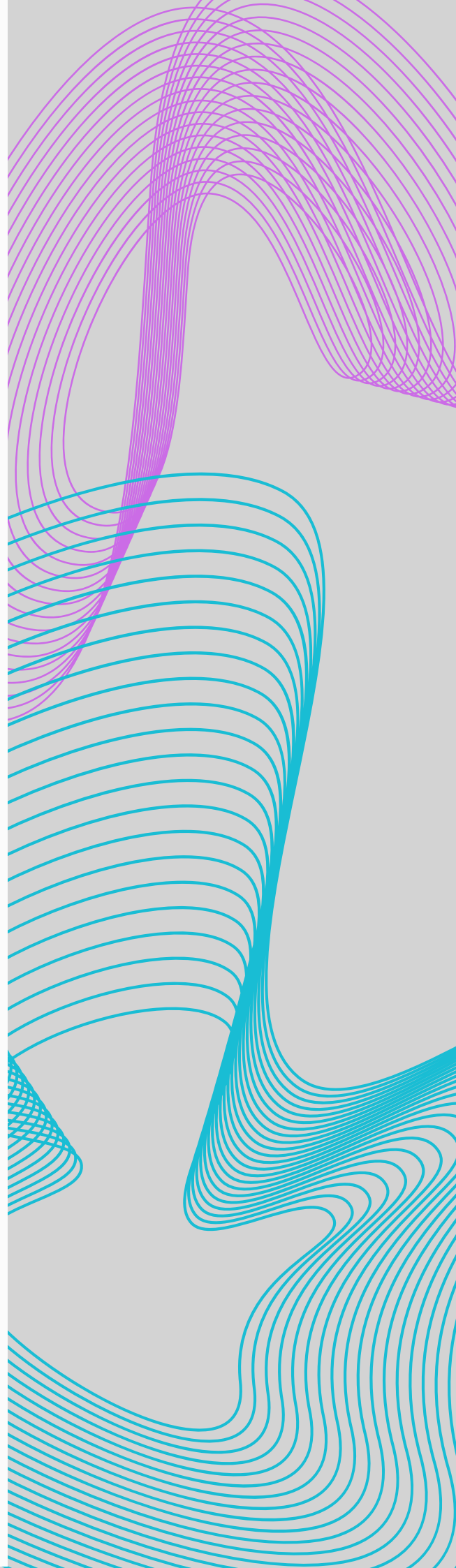Science Communication Manager
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Executive Summary

THE TOOLKIT SUPPORTS POLICY MAKERS IN THE ELABORATION OF STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS AIMED AT ENHANCING THE POTENTIAL OF NEW WORKING SPACES (NEWSP).

This **Toolkit** follows up on a previous European Workshop Report (2022) **(free for download here)**, which describes:
i) the research types and models of New Working Spaces,
ii) the direct and indirect effects and mechanisms that the Action is going to promote, as well as
iii) the conditions for the transferability of supporting policies to different European contexts.

This work **focuses on policy and planning tools** that could be favorably considered to **foster** the development of NeWSp and **mitigate** the potential negative effects, especially concerning their diffusion in peripheral and rural areas.

Consultation with **experts in the field** was crucial to prepare this toolkit.

A 3-hour **workshop** took place in Brussels on February 5th, 2024. Four tables were organized to discuss complementary topics moderated by 5 COST members. 31 participants, among whom **researchers**, **policymakers**, and **practitioners**, discussed the effects of NeWSp on individuals, organizations, and territories, trying to elaborate on how these can be tackled from a policy point of view.
As a result of such a **participatory approach**, this Toolkit proposes multiple actions bound on **six key objectives**.

In the following, we present six objectives and several action suggestions to address different identified problems.

We conclude the report by introducing a methodological instrument for tackling the challenges and developing suggestions forward.

Enjoy the reading!

Message from our CHAIR

The Cost Action CA18214 was established before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020, **the issue of new workplaces has been more relevant than ever**, as these workplaces have become increasingly <u>attractive</u> to **remote workers and digital nomads**, and have begun to locate outside urban areas in peripheral and rural areas.

In this toolkit, we provide data for evidence-based policymaking, useful to inform the future work of several EC bodies, and professional associations. The CA18214 has composed a comparative study of current policies and planning tools that support the development of New Working Spaces and their activities, which are summarized in this document.

> The CA18214 has been successful. Its results have been cited in several publications and have inspired research projects, and policy tools.
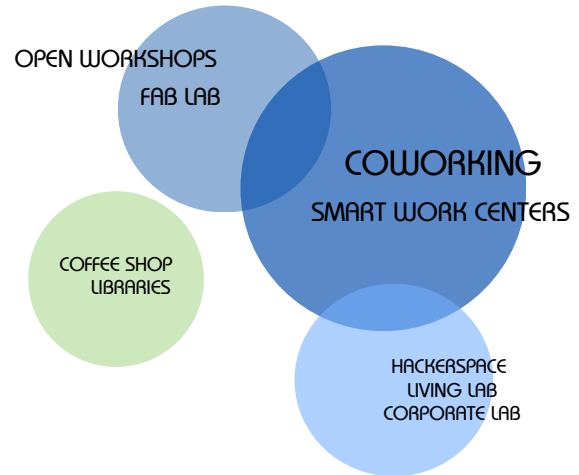>
> **Ilaria Mariotti**
> **Action Chair**

defining

Collaborative
Spaces

Collaborative Spaces defining

New Working Spaces

Taxonomy

OPEN WORKSHOPS
FAB LAB

COWORKING
SMART WORK CENTERS

COFFEE SHOP
LIBRARIES
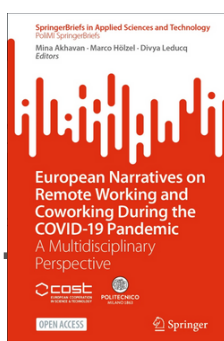
HACKERSPACE
LIVING LAB
CORPORATE LAB

Definition

"Permanent or temporary (both formal and informal) **spaces for working**, which enable **collaboration**, mutual **learning**, **knowledge sharing**, as well as social and spatial **relationships** among users. These knowledge-related interactions are organized in a work-friendly environment."
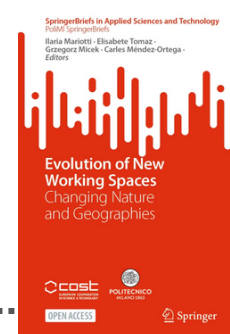
In this document, we use the term **collaborative spaces** as an umbrella term for all the **New Working Spaces (NeWSp)** that host autonomous workers (e.g. freelancers), firms, and employees, and support flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote workers, digital nomads, and more).

These include urban, peripheral, and rural spaces managed with various business models evolving before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

READ MORE:

SpringerBriefs in Applied Sciences and Technology
PoliMi SpringerBriefs
Mina Akhavan · Marco Hölzel · Divya Leducq
Editors

European Narratives on Remote Working and Coworking During the COVID-19 Pandemic
A Multidisciplinary Perspective

cost POLITECNICO

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THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE FUTURE OF WORKING SPACES

RSA Regional Studies Association

REGIONS AND CITIES

EDITED BY
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AND PAVEL BEDNÁŘ

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Priority
GOALS

Priority
GOALS

As a result of such a participatory approach, this Toolkit proposes multiple actions bound on 6 key objectives.

01 Creating awareness and literacy by developing **education governance**

02 Fostering resilience and sustainability by embracing systemic approaches to **territorial cohesion**

03 Creating advanced and sustainable job profiles by supporting **professional upskilling**

04 Guaranteeing long-lasting and stable operations by simplifying **access to funding**

05 Protecting user safety and security by advancing **legal frameworks**

06 Promoting effective use of available space by providing **new standards for utilization and management**

COST
EUROPEAN COOPERATION
IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NeW.Sp.
NEW WORKING SPACES

IDENTIFIED NEED

There is still limited education around the topic of collaborative spaces (including coworking and other terms) for different stakeholder categories: End-users - Operators - Public actors

GOAL

CREATING **AWARENESS AND LITERACY** BY DEVELOPING EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Create and disseminate a clear **taxonomy**, distinguishing the different models of collaborative spaces (NeWSp) with advantages and disadvantages.
2. Create an **education platform** (campaigns, workshops, or other) to disseminate the concept of collaborative spaces.
3. Institutionalize a "**Chamber of collaborative spaces**" as an intermediary public-private entity mediating between the instances of urban and peripheral providers on a European level, as an aggregation of more local associations and organizations (e.g., coworking associations, and more).

02

IDENTIFIED NEED

A number of initiatives aiming to foster the expansion of collaborative spaces in peripheral and rural areas still require infrastructure to attract workers to remote areas, which tend to exploit the environment intensively and disrupt the very practices they are to nurture.

GOAL

FOSTERING **RESILIENCE** AND **SUSTAINABILITY** BY EMBRACING SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO **TERRITORIAL COHESION**

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Promote public **consultations to evaluate the best alternatives for creating infrastructures** for internet connection, sustainable transportation solutions, and others in rural and peripheral areas while maintaining natural resources and respecting the existing local ecosystems.

2. Provide schemes to develop **collaborative spaces as hubs for training** on different skills, especially regarding shared and circular economy practices, particularly dedicated to young people and people Not [engaged] in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs).

IDENTIFIED NEED

Collaborative spaces are essential players in the innovation and entrepreneurial scene, acting as catalysts of ideas and initiatives. Staff members are required to develop skills to facilitate relationships, identify business opportunities, and foster points of contact.

GOAL

CREATING **ADVANCED AND SUSTAINABLE JOB** PROFILES
BY SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL **UPSKILLING** FOR STAFF MEMBERS

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Develop **upskilling opportunities** for staff members via:
   a. digital programs;
   b. Identifying educational institutions that exist in the vicinity of collaborative spaces. These institutions are usually linked to regional and local governments. Collaborative spaces can establish cooperation with them so that those educational institutions can provide training for specific skills currently needed (e.g., community managers, innovation facilitators, etc.)
2. Provide specific **ESCO (European Skills, Competences, and Occupations)** for professionals in the field and promote programs for training and mentoring to teach how to:
   a. Match demand with supply;
   b. Develop collaboration models between regional and local providers;
   c. Leverage best practices (e.g., universities hosting collaborative and hybrid workspaces).

O4

IDENTIFIED NEED

Collaborative spaces act as talent development opportunities for people.
Nevertheless, there is still a fear from companies (especially, small- and medium-sized) to "miss" their people if they work remotely from collaborative spaces while, at the same time, corporate space is underutilized or empty. Moreover, other users (e.g., startups and digital nomads) have an irregular presence in collaborative spaces, which entails a high risk for their ecosystem.

GOAL

GUARANTEEING LONG-LASTING AND STABLE OPERATIONS
BY **SIMPLIFYING ACCESS TO FUNDING**

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Simplify **access to funding programs for meetups and other networking** occasions.
2. Provide specific and facilitated schemes for collaborative spaces' applications to promote and curate **calls to attract new members** working on projects for the local community.
3. Incentivize companies with a remote workforce to **enable employees to use collaborative spaces**, at least occasionally.
4. Foster **partnerships between companies/universities/training centers and collaborative spaces providers** to promote courses/activities for talent development, culture and community creation, and knowledge sharing.

IDENTIFIED NEED

Safety and security issues concern companies that are dealing with a dispersed workforce. Moreover, decentralized models are not for all companies as they depend on the industry.

GOAL

PROTECTING USER SAFETY AND SECURITY
BY **ADVANCING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS**

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Frame **industry-sensitive legal rights to protect both companies and workers** while adopting flexible work modes.
2. Release **new labor policies** to support stakeholder (including individual workers and solopreneurs, startups, small and medium-sized companies, large organizations, etc.) relocation from the metropolitan areas to peripheral and rural areas, reducing brain drain and promoting brain gain and circulation.
3. Develop **youth policies for peripheral and rural areas** by leveraging the potential of digital and green transition, e.g., following up on the Startup Villages as recognizable ecosystems.

Read more

European Startup Village Forum.

A startup village is a place (or a network of small places) that embraces innovation and ambitious entrepreneurship to unlock development potential and support wellbeing in rural areas.

06

IDENTIFIED NEED

Within the private market, no scheme or model exists to help companies understand how much space and what kind of space they need. At the same time, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting will progressively encourage companies to develop more holistic perspectives on their business, including how they use space.

GOAL

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE USE OF AVAILABLE **SPACE** BY PROVIDING NEW **STANDARDS** FOR **UTILIZATION** AND **MANAGEMENT**

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) ratings: Council and Parliament reach agreement
14 February 2024

The Council and the Parliament clarified the circumstances under which ESG ratings fall under the scope of the regulation, providing further details on the applicable exclusions. The agreement also clarifies the territorial scope of the regulation, by setting out what constitutes operating in the EU.

Read more

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023
10 July 2023

According to the report, the impacts of the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, a weak global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the Goals. The report further warns that while lack of progress is universal, it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable who are experiencing the worst effects of these unprecedented global challenges.

Read more

SDGs

06

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE USE OF AVAILABLE **SPACE** BY PROVIDING NEW **STANDARDS** FOR **UTILIZATION** AND **MANAGEMENT**

SUGGESTED ACTIONS PART I

1. Develop **new spatial standards and territorial planning regulations**, leveraging SDG and ESG schemes, to support private companies in defining the needed/usable space, including available space in the collaborative space market.

These may include:

a. Restrictions on the number of sqm/person (e.g., by taxation);

b. New standards/indicators to calculate utilized space;

c. New obligations to measure and report on fixed costs VS flexible costs related to space;

d. Certifications including indicators about how space is used (e.g., leverage on Bcorp, which already fosters higher social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability);

e. Impact assessment of people's behavior within the space and how space is used.

Certified

B
®

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Make Business a Force For Good

B Lab is the nonprofit network transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet.

Read more

06

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE USE OF AVAILABLE **SPACE** BY PROVIDING NEW **STANDARDS** FOR **UTILIZATION** AND **MANAGEMENT**
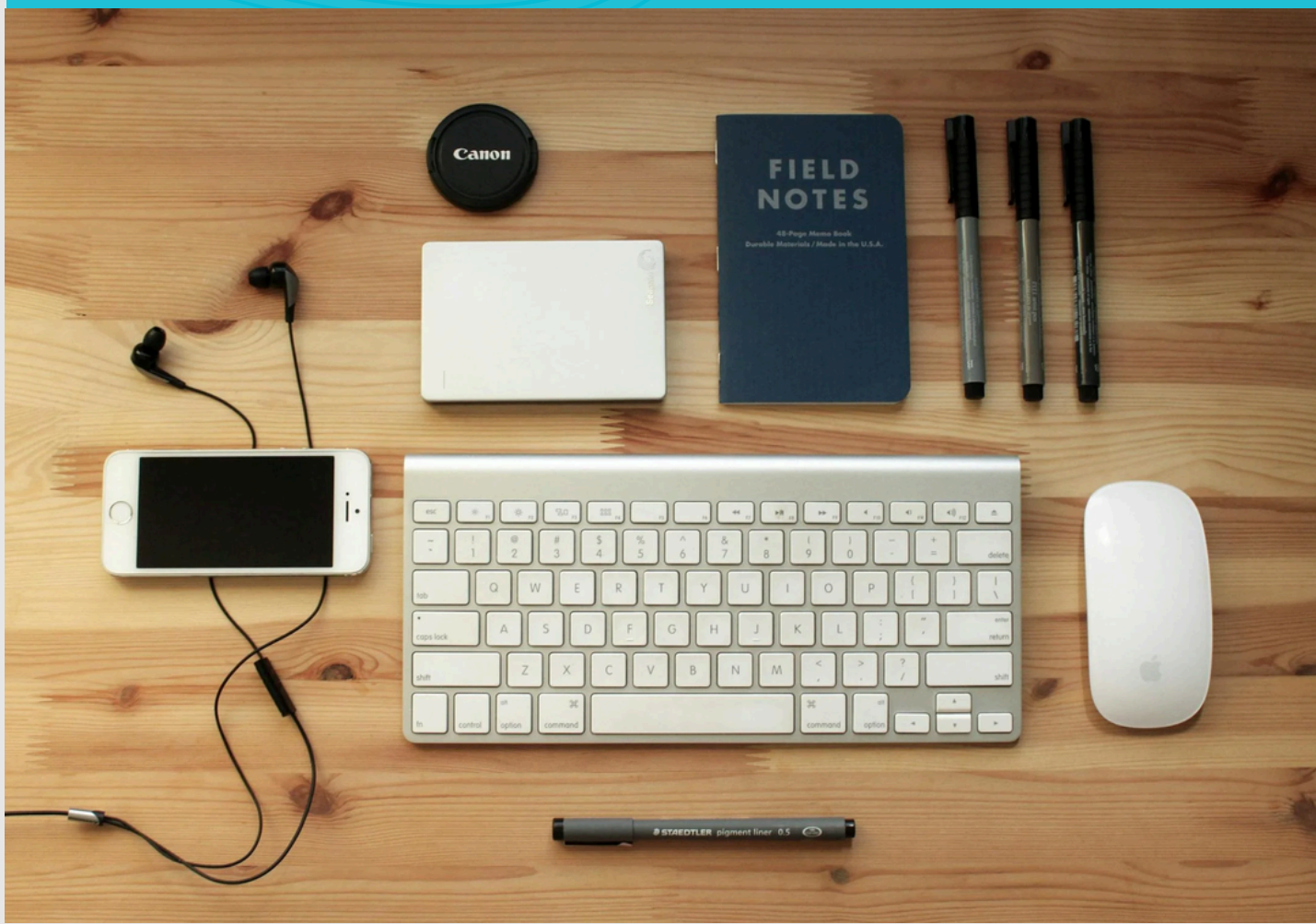
SUGGESTED ACTIONS Part II

2. **Incentivize the utilization of empty space in public buildings** to create community and training initiatives (e.g., learning centers), fostering encounters between collaborative space providers and end-user organizations.

3. **Analyze the infrastructure** (i.e., already available or still empty and to be re-functionalized) in each European country on a territorial scale, including privately supplied space (note that the certifications mentioned in point 6a would help).

4. **Map the demand for space both within and outside the big cities** (AI technologies may aid) by (i) identifying company needs, (ii) defining a set of goals, and (iii) creating a **clear European vision** (e.g., connection with the New European Bauhaus initiative).

The New European Bauhaus initiative connects the European Green Deal to our daily lives and living spaces. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls.

New European Bauhaus

Read more

Methodological
TOOL
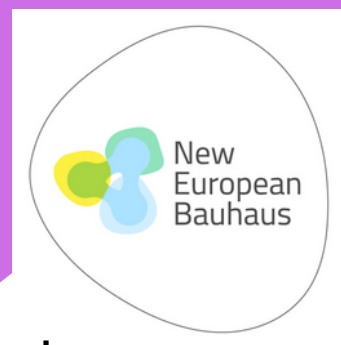
Methodological
TOOL

To progressively implement the actions suggested above, our consultation allowed us to identify a couple of key aspects, which are recommended for smooth and tailor-made translation of general objectives into concrete projects.

01

A participatory approach was underlined as necessary to design and implement policies that would affect peripheral and rural ecosystems, following the quadruple helix model. ●

In the course of our Action, we recognized a complex network of stakeholders that should be all engaged in the policy development and implementation process, as each can bring complementary contributions coherently with the links shown in Figure 1.

Nguyen, H. T., & Marques, P. (2022). The promise of living labs to the Quadruple Helix stakeholders: exploring the sources of (dis)satisfaction. European Planning Studies, 30(6), 1124–1143. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1968798

02

All efforts should involve a multi-level governance combining local niches with regional settings.

Cross-fertilization across geographical scales is fundamental to guarantee coordination and consistency of actions on different territorial areas, from local, to regional, national, and supra-national. As we aim to create a Europe-wide harmonic ecosystem of collaborative spaces, we recommend focusing on scalable policies relying on strategic, tactical, and operational competencies of multiple stakeholders at different scales. This will contribute to territorial cohesion and more inclusive and equitable working conditions for all.

Methodological TOOL
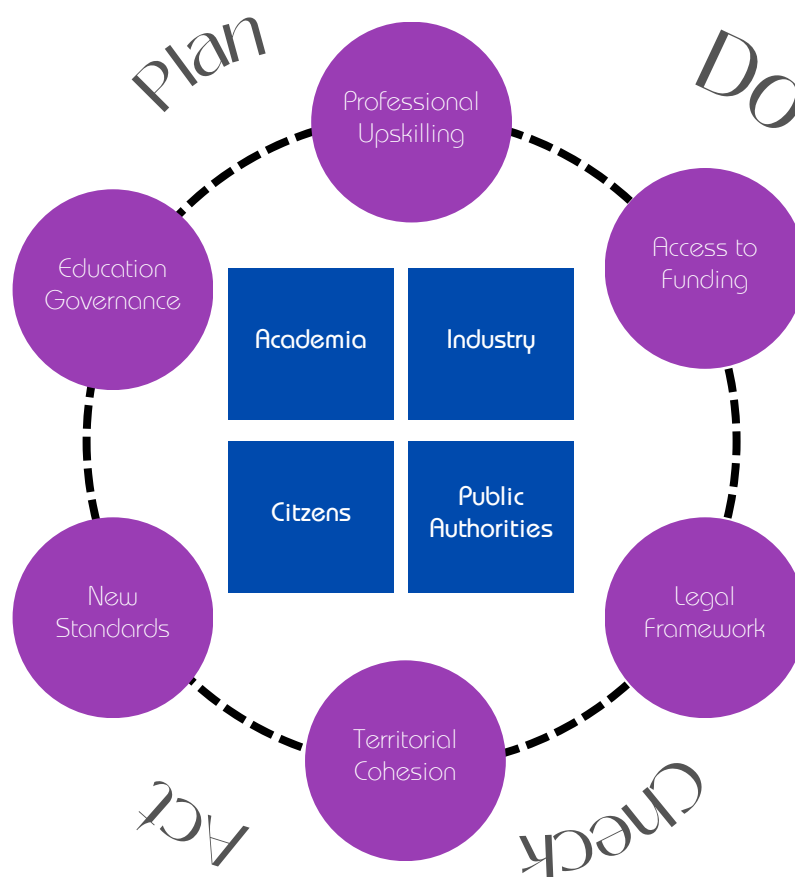
Actors in the quadruple helix model

Industry	Large corporations, SMEs, Practitioners
Public Authorities	EU Commission, National gov, Municipalities
Academia	Universities, Publishers, Research Associations
Citzens	Civil associations, Unions, Media, NGOS

Closing Remarks

01 This toolkit covers topics that emerged from a knowledge-sharing initiative following the format of a learning workshop. Thus, it covers an agenda relevant to a network of stakeholders devoted to strengthening collaborative spaces.

02 While the focus of several actions proposed in this toolkit focus on the development of new working spaces in peripheral and rural areas, the core interest is on facilitating connections with urban areas to foster knowledge circularity among stakeholders.

03 Proposing policies to regulate the growth of new working spaces presents a stage surrounded by contradictions. While it is crucial to provide mechanisms to educate people about new ways of working and future social, economic, and environmental demands, it is also vital to invest in new products and services based on European values.

ABOUT CA18214

The COST Action CA18214 'The geography of New Working Spaces and the impact on the periphery' involves **160 research partners** from **35 European Countries** – from October 1, 2019 to March 31st, 2024.

The COST Action CA18214's methodology is based on <u>networking</u> and <u>collaborative learning</u> that will play a core role in **producing innovative knowledge** within the Action, as well as enhancing cooperation between different academic and research institutions, policy makers and stakeholders at the European level.

Involvement with stakeholders
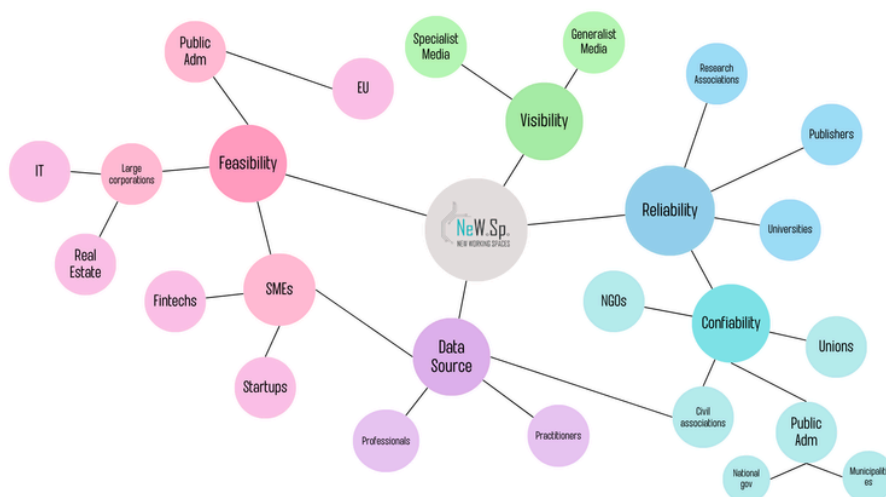
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