

MATERALiA®

Empowering Tomorrow



Domain:
Climate action &
Environment



Place:
Metz, France



Duration:
Half-a-day workshop



Target audience:
Students and
professionals

Mission

This interaction addressed the urgent need for innovative skill development in response to climate action and environmental challenges. By bringing together professionals from across Europe and students from ICN Business School Nancy, the interaction fostered diverse perspectives on tackling sustainability issues. With a strong focus on circular and low-carbon solutions, it provided actionable ideas to drive industrial sustainability and enhance the Grand-Est region's economic attractiveness.

Engagement activities

The interaction was structured around key presentations and a collaborative creative workshop, encouraging participants to explore new approaches to sustainability and industrial transformation. Through dialogue and exchange, the workshop facilitated the emergence of fresh perspectives on the challenges and opportunities faced by industries in the Grand-Est region.

Artistic activities

A live painter played a pivotal role in stimulating creativity and self-reflection among participants. By observing the artistic process, asking questions, and engaging with visual interpretations, attendees were encouraged to trust their instincts and share their insights, deepening their understanding of sustainability through an artistic lens.

IMPACT

Interdisciplinary exchange

Fostered holistic perspective

Increased creative confidence

Development of innovative approach to industrial sustainability



WHAT HAPPENED?

As a key industrial hub in France, the Grand-Est region faces the dual challenge of navigating the digital and environmental transformations. To succeed, it is crucial to anticipate skill needs, adapt training offerings to local employment demands, and enhance the attractivity of innovative solution developers.

The seed "Empowering Tomorrow" was chosen as a response to this pressing needs, to support Maternalia's members in addressing the complex forces redefining competitiveness and industrial innovation.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The event was designed around two key presentations, followed by a design-thinking workshop, all enriched by a live painting performance that brought an artistic dimension to the interaction.

First Presentation: Kamel MNSRI - Unlocking Creativity and Leadership

Kamel MNSRI, professor at ICN Business School Nancy, set the tone by emphasising the importance of skills in transforming ideas into actionable outcomes. His presentation provided a comprehensive overview of the innovation process—from the initial spark of an idea to its real-world application—and explored how organisational culture can either foster creativity or stifle it.

He notably presented real-life examples that illustrated how a combination of innovation and leadership can lead to transformative change, both within organisations and beyond.

Kamel's relatable and engaging approach made the session impactful, leaving participants inspired to think critically about bridging technology with humanity.

Second Presentation: Jean-François CAMUS - Innovation Through Art

Jean-François CAMUS, leader of EDF's innovation, presented how the company leverages art to address pressing challenges related to climate change, regional ties, and organisational culture. His insights shed light on the intersection of art and industry, with a focus on how creative initiatives contribute to EDF's mission, e.g. for strengthening territorial connections, promoting safety, enhancing the employer brand, and engaging communities.

Jean-François demonstrated how integrating artistic interventions into the company's operations not only conveys its values and vision but also inspires innovative solutions to complex challenges.

After the icebreaker, participants engaged in three key collaborative steps aimed at developing concrete solutions to enhance the skills needed for the industrial transitions. This group dynamic encouraged the exchange of diverse experiences and perspectives, fostering rich and inclusive discussions. At the end of the session, each group selected a representative to present their outcomes and share key insights with the rest of the participants, creating a shared vision and actionable ideas.




Artistic activities

Following the presentations, an icebreaker activity was organised using Dixit-cards on the theme “The Skills of the Future.” Participants selected an image that resonated with them and connected it to the topic, sharing their reflections within their table groups of six. This exercise encouraged participants to explore the meaning behind the images collaboratively and discuss how they related to the interaction’s theme, fostering thoughtful dialogue and setting the stage for deeper engagement.

CHECK IN

NAME: _____
BACKGROUND: _____



How do I connect this card
with the skills of the future?

During the workshop, a live painting performance was carried out by Vera IVANAJ, a Franco-Albanian artist and academic. As a self-taught painter specialising in abstract art, Vera’s creations delve into complex philosophical themes such as life, energy, and movement. Her work explores the unity and uniqueness of being, achieving a dynamic balance between thought, action, and emotion.

During the presentations, Vera simultaneously created a dynamic artwork on over 12 meters of craft paper displayed on the wall. Using the InteractionSeeds project’s color palette, she unfolded a story that grew and evolved as she painted. Participants were amazed to witness her in action—completely absorbed in listening to the presentations and letting her creativity flow freely, unrestrained by mental barriers.

At the end of the session, participants were invited to view Vera's artwork up close and engage in a discussion about her creative process. They explored her choice of colors, the inspirations behind her decisions, and were encouraged to identify which parts of the artwork corresponded to the themes presented by each speaker. This interactive dialogue deepened participants’ connection to the topics discussed and provided a unique perspective on how creativity and abstract expression can convey complex ideas.



Find the artist,
Vera Ivanaj, on
Instagram!





Exchange with others about what I was seeing on the fresco after the presentations and the workshop allowed me to rethink the interactions we just had and again share a new light on the whole interaction.

A participant

Impact of the interaction

The workshop fostered collaboration between professionals, students, and experts from different disciplines, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange. Strengthening connections between academia and industry will facilitate future research partnerships and enhances employment prospects.

Through the stimulated discussions, participants gained a deeper understanding of climate challenges and the role of innovation in driving sustainability. By increasing awareness of circular economy principles and low-carbon solutions, professionals and students are better equipped to integrate these concepts into their work and studies.

Finally, by blending technical expertise with artistic creativity, the interaction encouraged new ways of thinking, leading to innovative approaches to industrial sustainability. Through interactive discussions and creative exercises, participants were prompted to explore unconventional solutions to environmental challenges.

The interaction fostered a stronger commitment to the topic through a dynamic and thought-provoking journey, sparking creativity and actionable solutions to meet the demands of a sustainable future.

Engaging in artistic activities, such as the live painting session indeed enhances creative confidence, encouraging participants to trust their intuition and articulate ideas visually. By incorporating artistic expression into the discussion on sustainability, attendees develop a more holistic perspective, balancing technical knowledge with emotional and creative insights.



When I paint, I get carried away and find it hard to stop.

Vera Ivanaj, painter.



Looking to replicate this impactful experience? Materalialia has identified a few key ingredients to ensure success:

- **Collaborate with Open-Minded Organisations:** Partnering with innovative and forward-thinking organisations creates a dynamic and inspiring atmosphere. Their willingness to experiment and host such events plays a significant role in the interaction's success.
- **Transparent Communication with Speakers and Artists:** Clear discussions about expectations with speakers and artists are essential for alignment. In this interaction, the speakers and artist participated without remuneration, driven by a shared commitment to innovation. Mobilising Materalialia's network ensured their enthusiastic involvement.
- **Tailor Workshop Materials for Creative Engagement:** Adequate preparation of workshop materials and methodology is critical. Aligning tools with the workshop's goal—to encourage reflection, equal-footing dialogue, and creative thinking—helps participants fully engage and explore ideas collaboratively.
- **Showcase Speakers and Artists Early:** Recognising the contributions of speakers and the artist from the beginning sets the tone. Highlighting their expertise and relevance immediately boosts participant engagement and establishes credibility.
- **Manage Time Effectively:** In a two-hour timeframe, careful time management is key. Start promptly and ensure that no single activity consumes excessive time, leaving space for all planned interactions to unfold smoothly and without rushing.



Ressources

The majority of the costs were allocated to the venue and catering, amounting to approximately €4,000. No additional financial support was provided beyond the voluntary contributions of the speakers and the artist, who generously offered their time and expertise without remuneration. Their participation was made possible as their respective organisations are official members of Materalialia.