Green Digi Fash Tech Manager

Report



Pairing and Mentoring Methodology

Combining education, mentoring, interdisciplinary collaboration, and practical experimentation

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1. Introduction

The Green DigiFashTech Pairing and Mentoring Programme is an innovative learning methodology developed within the Erasmus+ Green DigiFashTech Manager project to support the green and digital transition of the European textile and fashion industry.

The methodology combines education, mentoring, interdisciplinary collaboration and practical experimentation. It enables participants to move beyond theoretical learning by applying their newly acquired knowledge to real sustainability and digitalisation challenges faced by the fashion industry.

The methodology follows the principles of the European S+T+ARTS initiative by encouraging collaboration between science, technology, creativity, design and entrepreneurship. Participants are encouraged to work together, exchange knowledge, experiment with new ideas and develop practical solutions that contribute to a more sustainable and digital fashion ecosystem.

Rather than focusing on individual learning, the programme promotes collaborative learning through carefully selected pairs that combine different backgrounds, experiences and competences. Throughout the programme, mentors guide the pairs while encouraging independent thinking, creativity and problem-solving.

The methodology builds upon the successful Train-the-Trainer Co-Creation Event and Fashion Hackathon organised in Athens, where participants first explored digital technologies, sustainability challenges and collaborative innovation before continuing their mentoring journey.

2. Objectives

The Pairing and Mentoring Programme aims to:

- strengthen digital and sustainability competences;
- encourage interdisciplinary collaboration;
- develop practical solutions for real industry challenges;
- connect education with business needs;
- increase confidence through mentoring;
- promote peer learning and knowledge exchange;
- stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship;
- develop prototypes that can be further tested or implemented.

3. Principles of the Methodology

The methodology is based on seven principles.

3.1. Challenge-based learning

Every pair works on a real challenge related to digital transformation and sustainability within the textile and fashion sector.

The challenge may originate from:

- a company
- an entrepreneur
- a designer
- an educator
- research findings
- a local community
- ideas developed during the DigiFashTech Hackathon

3.2. Co-creation

Participants work together rather than individually.

Each member contributes different experiences, perspectives and skills.

The emphasis is on learning from one another.

3.3. Interdisciplinary collaboration

Whenever possible, partners should combine participants with complementary expertise.

Examples include:

Fashion Designer + Digital Designer

Fashion Designer + AI Specialist

Pattern Maker + 3D Designer

Entrepreneur + Sustainability Expert

Researcher + Creative Professional

Maker + Digital Innovator

3.4. Learning by doing

Participants learn through experimentation.

Instead of preparing long theoretical assignments, they create something tangible.

Examples include:

- digital concepts
- prototypes
- business ideas
- services
- educational tools
- digital applications
- circular products

3.5. Mentoring

Mentors act as facilitators rather than teachers.

Their role is to:

- ask questions;
- guide discussion;
- provide technical expertise;
- suggest useful resources;
- encourage reflection;
- support problem solving.

Mentors should not develop the solution on behalf of participants.

3.6. Reflection

Reflection is integrated throughout the mentoring journey.

Participants regularly discuss:

- what they have learned;
- what difficulties they experienced;
- how their idea evolved;
- how collaboration improved the project.

3.7. Dissemination

The programme concludes with public presentation of the prototypes.

This may include:

- exhibitions;
- demonstrations;
- pitch sessions;
- networking events;
- publication on the Citizens Digital Science Hub.

The Fashion Beyond Waste exhibition in Athens demonstrated this final dissemination stage by allowing mentoring pairs to showcase their prototypes and discuss their solutions with businesses, retailers and policymakers in relation to emerging European requirements such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Digital Product Passport (DPP).

4. The Pairing Process

The pairing process consists of six stages.

4.1. Stage 1 — Participant Selection

Partners recruit participants who have successfully completed the DigiFashTech educational programme.

Participants should demonstrate motivation to collaborate and develop a practical solution.

4.2. Stage 2 — Pair Formation

Partners create complementary pairs.

The matching process considers:

- experience
- interests
- complementary skills
- motivation
- challenge selected
- availability

Each partner creates:

- PANSIK – 2 pairs
- AMFI – 2 pairs
- MFA – 2 pairs
- SOFFA – 4 pairs

4.3. Stage 3 — Challenge Definition

Each pair defines the challenge they wish to address.

Possible themes include:

- AI
- 3D Design

- Digital Fashion
- Circular Design
- Upcycling
- Repair
- Digital Product Passport
- Traceability
- Sustainable Materials
- Digital Manufacturing
- Circular Business Models

4.4. Stage 4 — Mentoring Journey

Each pair participates in:

- mentor meetings
- independent work
- peer discussions
- prototype development

Partners document at least three mentoring meetings using the Progress and Development Plan.

4.5. Stage 5 — Prototype Development

Each pair develops a practical outcome.

Examples include:

- physical prototype
- digital prototype
- AI application
- circular business model
- educational toolkit
- digital platform
- design collection
- service concept

4.6. Stage 6 — Presentation

Each pair presents:

- their challenge
- their journey
- their prototype
- their lessons learned
- their future plans

5. Role of the Mentor

Mentors facilitate learning by:

- listening actively;
- encouraging creativity;
- asking reflective questions;
- providing constructive feedback;
- connecting participants with useful contacts or resources;
- helping participants overcome challenges;
- supporting realistic planning.

The mentor should encourage participants to make their own decisions throughout the process.

6. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the programme each pair should produce:

- one documented case study;
- one completed Development Plan;
- one prototype or concept;
- photographs documenting the mentoring journey;
- reflections on learning;
- recommendations for future development.

These outputs contribute to the Citizens Digital Science Hub, enabling other learners and stakeholders to explore examples of digital and sustainable innovation generated through the programme. The Train-the-Trainer Co-Creation Event Report prepared after the Athens Hackathon also illustrates how prototype ideas can be translated into future mentoring pathways and Hub activities.





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