



D2.4

Report: Recruitment Missions

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1. Introduction

1.1 Fashion for Change Summary

The Fashion for Change project aims to accelerate and scale up SMEs, designers and start-ups in the fashion sector to help them become more sustainable and turn their business models circular. The consortium involving 5 partners (Civitta Eesti AS, Estonian Academy of Arts, Ecopreneur, Katalista Ventures, Singleton Group) from 3 countries (Estonia, Lithuania and Belgium) is built to combine the expertise of experienced players of the sustainable fashion, business support and innovation management in circular economy and fashion.

The project consists of the following activities and phases:

1. building a circular fashion hub and defining the capacity needs;
2. methodology development for the circular fashion Growth Programme “Fashion for Change”;
3. implementation of the Growth Programme.

The project will select 35 most promising SMEs, designers and start-ups at different stages of the fashion value chain to present their ideas at Fashion Sprint. As a result, 25 ideas will be selected to join the Growth Programme accompanied with financial support of 10 000 EUR per team.

The programme includes circular fashion, business and design development training through lectures, workshops, team mentoring and study visits. 5 outstanding teams out of 25 will be awarded with additional 5000 EUR to increase their investment readiness – investor meetups will be organised and additional business support will be provided to revise the business plan.

As a part of the project, the Fashion For Change Growth Programme will be promoted amongst the main stakeholders (SMEs, startups and designers) to recruit them to participate in the project activities as well as to seek synergies with other supporting stakeholders in the industry and to raise general awareness around the project.

1.2 D2.4 Recruitment missions Report Summary

This deliverable presents the strategy and outcomes of the Recruitment activities for the project Fashion for Change as a part of the Work Package 2: Development of the circular fashion support programme. The report introduces the objectives and activities set up for T2.3. Recruitment Missions execution together with the methods, results and KPIs.

This document outlines:

- the objective of the Recruitment Missions and the webinar
- references to key performance indicators (KPIs)
- the target audiences and main methods
- description and outcomes of the missions

Consortium partner	Role	Responsibilities
Civitta	Lead partner/executing partner	Coordinating the task and activities, networking and seeking collaboration opportunities with events and external partners, arranging, and organising the recruitment missions and the webinar.
Entrepreneur.eu	Supporting partner/industry expert	Participating in the mapping of events Participating in online events to promote Fashion For Change, communication activities lead. Speaker at the webinar.
EKA	Supporting partner/industry expert	Participating in shortlisting of the events. Participating in the recruitment missions as industry experts, speakers at the webinar.
Katalista Ventures	Supporting partner/industry expert	Participating in the mapping of events. Participating in the recruitment missions as industry experts, speakers at the webinar.
SG	N/A	N/A

Table 1: Consortium partners' roles and responsibilities

In addition, the document also provides an overview of challenges met during the task execution.

2. Objectives and KPIs

The objective of the Fashion For Change Recruitment Missions was to ensure maximum outreach and SMEs, designers and start-ups engagement in parallel with the Open Call preparation and launch. The recruitment team focused on raising general awareness around Fashion For Change activities as well as creating further direct contacts with the Growth Programme target groups and with the potential collaboration partners (fashion industry stakeholders, support organisations, investors and sponsors).

Two activities were conducted during the Recruitment missions:

- 1) Participation at physical and online events - fashion weeks, startup events, conferences.
- 2) Recruitment webinar together with a live Q&A session

The recruitment activities were led and organised by Civitta. Fashion For Change partners Estonian Academy of Arts, Katalista Ventures and Ecopreneur.eu advised and participated in the recruitment activities: planning the missions, participating in the missions and in the recruitment webinar.

The agreed-upon KPIs with the actual outcomes are presented in table 2.

Performance Indicator	Description	Outcome Recruitment Missions
Number of networking activities, workshops, events organised	For recruiting participants for the open call and facilitating the application preparation process, the Fashion for Change will host 3 recruitment events in collaboration with relevant conferences/fashion weeks/start-up days.	Fashion For Change hosted 4 physical recruitment events in collaboration with Who's Next IMPACT (France), Riga Fashion Week (Latvia), Dutch Fashion Week (Netherlands) and Future Fashion Hackathon (Estonia).
Number of SMEs, designers, startups and other European fashion industry stakeholders reached out via the organised events	For recruiting the participants of the open call and facilitating the application preparation process, Fashion for Change will host 3 recruitment events in collaboration with relevant conferences/fashion weeks/start-up days. At each recruitment event at least 20 direct contacts, in total 60 contacts will be made.	In total 97 direct contacts were collected during recruitment activities. In addition, direct scouting was done via research and emails for the Open Call, where consortium contacted 117 startups, 97 designers and 24 SMEs to invite them to apply to the Fashion For Change programme - in total 238 SMEs/designers/startups were contacted.

		In total 335 SMEs/designers/startups were contacted directly by the consortium.
Recruitment webinar	1-2 hours live session (with 20 participants as minimum).	Recruitment webinar was recorded and uploaded to the website on 31st of January 2022, since then 759 users have visited the website. Recruitment webinar was followed by a live Q&A session for the interested parties with 24 participants (18 startup designer and SME representatives + 6 FfC team members).
Open Call results	100+ applications	173 applications received

Table 2: KPIs and outcomes

Overall, all the set KPIs were met and recruitment results were successful. The maximum outreach and SME/designer/startup engagement were achieved. The Fashion For Change open call attracted 173 applications. Further information regarding the Open Call results is presented in D3.1 Report of the results of the Open Call.

3. Partners and audience

3.1. Planning and networking with potential partners

In the recruitment missions **planning phase** (July 2021 to August 2021) the Fashion For Change consortium made a list of relevant events in Europe. In total 55 events were mapped. Civitta (task lead) and the Estonian Academy of Arts (industry expert) shortlisted ten events based on the event's timeline, target group, and relevance. Targeting emerging Europe was kept in mind when shortlisting the events.

The selection of the events was based on the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the event's target audience for FfC activities - (a) startups, designers, SMEs, (b) interest and potential for sustainability and circularity.
2. Relevance of the location and reach - (a) an EU or COSME country with a special focus on the Fashion For Change consortium members' countries and emerging Europe, (b) international reach.
3. Relevance of the event time - event time to be in line with the Open Call activities between September 2021 to April 2022.

After the validation of the short list by the Project Management Board, Civitta started networking with the organisers of the shortlisted events.

Between July 2021 and April 2022, the following events were contacted:

- Who's Next IMPACT
- Cracow Fashion Week
- Ukrainian Fashion Week
- Kiev Fashion Exhibition
- Riga Fashion Week
- Lviv Fashion Week
- Dutch Design Week
- Frankfurt Fashion Week
- Feeric Fashion Week
- Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week
- Future Fashion Hackathon and fashion Startup Pitching event (Estonia)

Representatives of these events were contacted by Civitta via email and phone to agree on collaboration opportunities.

3.2. Partners for recruitment

In the **networking phase** synergies and collaboration opportunities were sought and agreed with the 11 potential partners via email and telephone conversations by the task lead Civitta. Partnering up with the following events was agreed:

1. Who's Next IMPACT, France
2. Riga Fashion Week, Latvia
3. Dutch Design Week, Netherlands
4. Additionally, two Estonian local events were visited due to high interest from the Estonian partners and COVID restrictions to travel internationally.

The details regarding the specifics of the Recruitment missions are outlined in Chapter 3.

3.3. Supporting Partners

The rest of the shortlisted events were informed about the Fashion For Change website, Open Call and encouraged to share the information about the Fashion For Change Growth Programme within their networks, to raise general awareness around the programme and spread the Open Call. Communication packages with the Fashion For Change visual identity, social media and newsletter text and visuals were shared to the event communication teams.

In addition to the shortlisted events, the consortium contacted more than 200 supporting organisations to contribute to the Fashion For Change Open Call. Many included FfC Open Call information in their social media or newsletter, including United Nations Environmental Programme, World Resources Institute, European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, WRAP UK, NexTextileEU and others.

3.4. Audience

The main audience of the Fashion for Change Recruitment Missions were fashion and textile designers, startups and SMEs. The format, structure and methods for recruitment were chosen keeping in mind the needs and interests of those target groups. After each recruitment mission improvements and adjustments were made to ensure that Fashion For Change would reach the desired target groups and achieve maximum engagement.

The following methods for specific target groups were used:

SMEs: approaching and engaging companies individually at sustainable fashion and textile fair, engaging in individual conversations regarding their products, collecting emails, business cards and sending direct emails with Fashion For Change information. Connecting with the representatives of the SME supporting organisations at the fair.

Startups: Fashion For Change representatives participating in startup pitching events as jury members, visiting startup and crowdfunding areas at fairs, approaching startups at fairs to discuss their services.

Designers: participating at fashion shows for scouting talent, exhibiting Fashion For Change activities at fashion and design weeks, collaborating with fashion week organisers and Baltic Fashion



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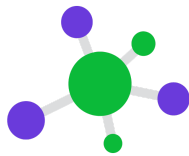

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rigafashionweek_official Fashion For Change invites fashion designers, start-ups and SMEs to apply... more

Federation for receiving promising fashion designers contacts.

4. Recruitment activities

4.1. Mission 1: Who's Next IMPACT, Paris



Date: 03.09-05.09.2021

Audience: Industry (mainly SMEs, but also a start-up and crowdfunding area)

Method: talent scouting at fair grounds, FfC merchandise (sustainably made tote bag) for promotion and raising general awareness around the brand

Contacts collected: 24 direct contacts of potential participants from 5 EU/COSME countries, 4 direct contacts for dissemination of the Open Call, future collaboration and 2 direct contacts of the organisers of Who's Next Paris. **Total 30 direct contacts.**



Photo: FfC representatives (Civitta) in Paris at Who's Next 2021

In September 2021 Civitta and EKA representatives visited [Who's Next IMPACT](#) in Paris. Who's Next IMPACT is an initiative dedicated to fashion, sustainable design, and positive action within the fashion industry which contributes towards the ecological transition of the sector. Impact presents brands, manufacturers, solutions, collectives, associations, exhibitions and talks. All these committed players are brought together to promote new ways of producing and consuming fashion. In September 2021 IMPACT brought together approximately 117 fashion industry representatives - designers, SMEs, startups and others. Fairground of

the IMPACT also included a crowdfunding area for emerging innovative initiatives and a startup area for technical and support services for the fashion industry.

4.2. Mission 2: Riga Fashion Week, Riga



Date: 14.10-15.10.2021

Audience: Industry (mainly designers, fashion bloggers and influencers)

Method: Booth with Fashion for Change visual identity integrated to the Riga Fashion Week main ground. Presentation with FfC information.

Contacts collected: 11 direct contacts of fashion industry professionals. In addition, contact was made with the event organiser who provided further 9 direct contacts of the most promising sustainable fashion designers in Latvian market. **In total 21 direct contacts were collected.**

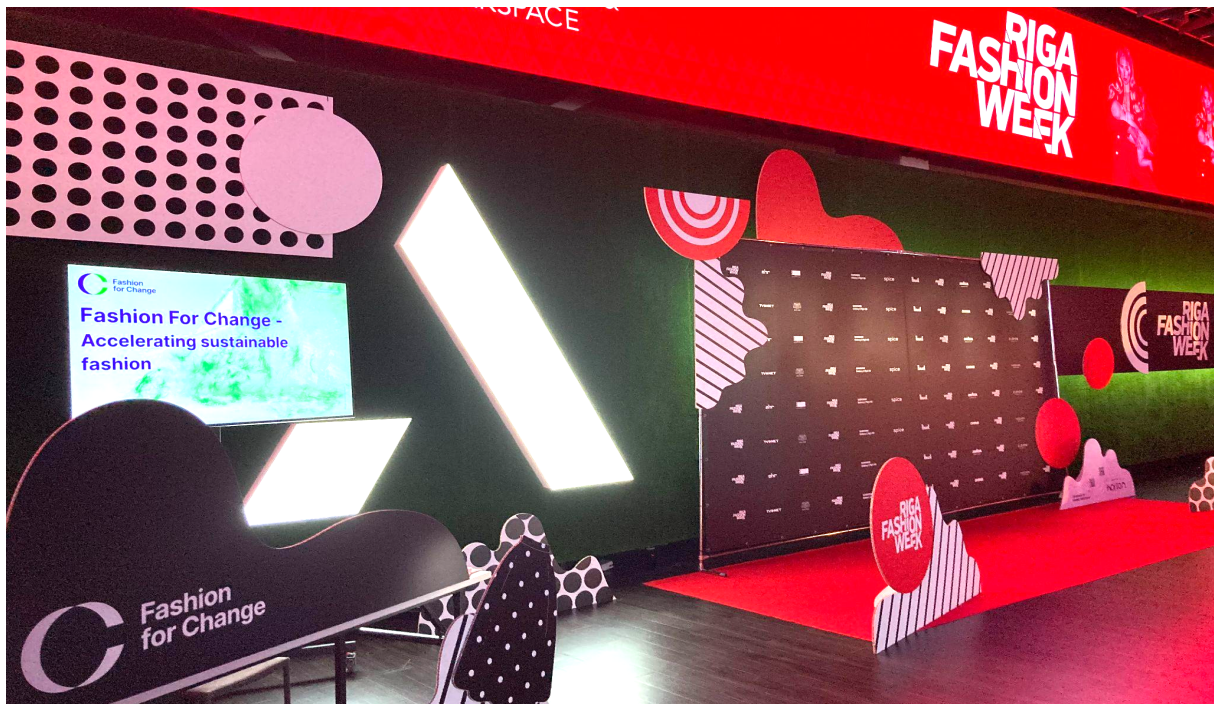


Photo: Fashion For Change booth at Riga Fashion Week 2021

In October 2022 Civitta visited [Riga Fashion Week](#) in Latvia. Riga fashion week is a major fashion event in the Baltic region organised by the Baltic Fashion Federation. The estimated audience for the 2021 event was 3000 fashion professionals and interested parties. However, the turnout was lower than expected due to Covid-19 influence in Latvia.

4.3. Mission 3: Dutch Design Week



Date: 18.10-19.10.2021

Audience: Industry (SMEs, startup, designers and other industry representatives)

Method: In-person recruiting. Attendance of DDW showcases, including DAE - Design Academy of Eindhoven, The Swedish School of Textiles - Borås, LUCA School of Arts, and HKU Design graduates' DDW presentations – to build relationships with

potential FfC candidates and introduce them to the premises of the FfC Growth Programme.

Contacts collected: in total 22 direct contacts from 5 EU/COSME countries.

[Dutch Design Week](#) is Northern Europe's largest design event, attracting over 2.600 designers – including some of the most notable Fashion, Textiles, and Accessory Design graduates from the Netherlands and the region – to showcase design and innovation across Eindhoven and online.

In 2021 DDW hosted around 350,000 international and Dutch visitors.

4.4. Webinar and Q&A session

The Fashion for Change consortium planned and recorded a webinar for the potential Open Call applicants. Civitta, Katalista, the Estonian Academy of Arts and Ecopreneur.eu participated in the webinar production process. The agenda for the webinar is presented in the below illustration.

 <p>Fashion for Change</p>		<p><small>fashionforchange.eu info@fashionforchange.eu</small></p>
1	Webinar agenda and opening words	
2	Reet Aus: How design turned out to be a solution for global problems	From min 6:00
3	Ecopreneur.eu: Key findings from the FfC market research	From min 21:00
4	Fashion For Change Open Call: Accelerating the Future of Fashion	From min 27:00
5	More about Partnerships and Matchmaking	From min 41:20

Illustration: Webinar agenda

Fashion For Change included inspirational speech by a successful circular designer Reet Aus to motivate and inspire potential participants to apply for the programme.

Short inspirational video clips were produced from the webinar for promotion and communication activities.

Webinar is available on Fashion for Change website:

<https://www.fashionforchange.eu/events/>

In addition to the webinar, the Fashion For Change consortium held a live Q&A session for the potential Open Call applicants to answer any questions and provide any clarifications that the session participants might have. In total 18 SMEs, startups and designers and 6 Fashion for change members participated in the Q&A session.

4.5. Other activities

In addition to the 3 main recruitment missions, Fashion for Change Recruitment missions, lead Civitta Estonia and startup experts from Katalista, presented project activities at local and smaller startup pitching events:

- Katalista expert participated in EKA's fashion startup pitching event and collected further 12 potential participants and 3 jury contacts. **In total 15 contacts.**
- Civitta participated in local Future Fashion hackathon as a jury member and collected 3 warm contacts of potential participants and 6 contacts of experts and mentors. **In total 9 contacts.**

Communication lead Ecopreneur.eu presented and promoted project activities in several online events with an aim to engage more SMEs, startups, designers and other industry stakeholders as well as to raise awareness around the FfC brand:

- Textile ETP in May 2021
- Circular Textiles in May 2021
- Prospex workshop on textiles in June 2021
- Responsible Fashion Series in October 2021
- NexTextile EU in December 2021

These additional activities supported recruitment missions by bringing visibility and general awareness around the Fashion for Change activities.

5. Challenges and Difference between planned and achieved outcome

Fashion For Change recruitment missions reached the planned and desired goals and KPIs. However, the consortium experienced some challenges that can be categorised as per below:

1) COVID-19 impacts

The consortium experienced COVID-19 impacts when selecting the events, making agreements with the events and when participating the events. It was challenging to make agreement with the events as the organisers did not want to commit to a specific date, format, or agenda in advance due to rapid changes in COVID-19 rules and regulations. Most events only confirmed their dates and formats a couple of weeks before the event occurred. This made it challenging for Fashion for Change to organise the details, topics and experts for the recruitment missions. The consortium had to be very flexible in terms of the recruitment mission format and content and react quickly. In addition, due to the COVID-19 impacts the participation rate at the events was lower than most of the event organisers estimated.

2) Challenges due to the current political situation in Europe

None of the recruitment missions that were planned to occur in March and April 2022, did not happen (for example participation at Cracow Fashion Week) due to the war in Ukraine. Events' organisers efforts were focusing on supporting Ukraine and collaborating with Fashion for Change at this stage was not their priority.

In addition, Fashion For Change has found it very challenging to include investors and sponsors to the Fashion For Change activities. One of the planned activities was to involve investors in recruitment missions and webinars with the purpose of raising the interest of startups to participate in the Fashion For Change activities. Fashion for Change was not able to include investors in the recruitment missions. Despite that, the missions were successful and the Open Call received 173 applications in total of which 117 met the project requirements.