Creative Media Labs

2020 - 2023

Summative Assessment Report

NORTHERN POWERHOUSE
HM Government

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

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Executive Summary

This Summative Assessment is focussed on the Creative Media Labs project (initially known as the Creative Media Labs) which ran from 1st April 2020 to 30th June 2023. The project had a total budget of £1,296,130 with £648,065 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project has been independently evaluated by Thrive Economics and key findings are:

- **The project's design was effective** and the project had a clear rationale to help businesses develop new products, services and processes for the screen industries sector using immersive and interactive technologies.

- The project has **operated effectively against a challenging backdrop**. When the project was designed pre-Covid 19 business confidence (last Quarter 2019) across the United Kingdom was +2.5% and in Quarter 4 2022 confidence had dropped to -23.5%[1].

- Given the challenging backdrop it is impressive that **the project is on track to exceed many of the contractual output targets.** By March 2023 the project had achieved 29 enterprises assisted against a target by June 2023 of 30. The project is forecast to assist 56 enterprises in total by June 2023.

- **Businesses are highly satisfied with the support they received**. 88% of businesses were highly satisfied, or satisfied overall.

- **Businesses were positive about each component of the customer journey.** 84% of businesses were satisfied or highly satisfied with the networking events; 83% with equipment loan; 80% with workshops and webinars; and, 75% with one-to-one support. Stakeholders were also highly positive and 100% of stakeholders felt that the following areas were effective or highly effective: diagnostic; equipment loan; and one-to-one support.

- **78% of businesses had not previously used immersive and interactive technologies to develop new products, services or processes**, or had only done so in a minor way. The main barriers identified by businesses were a lack of information on the technologies (30% of all responses); uncertainty about the benefits (20%); and, a lack of finance (15%).

- Businesses identify a **range of benefits** from engaging with the project. 91% of businesses identified that they gained a '*better understanding of the capabilities of immersive and interactive technologies*.' 88% agreed that they now had a '*better understanding of how to exploit immersive and interactive technologies*'; and, 88% agreed that they had made '*new valuable connections.*'

- **From 2021/22 to 2023/24 businesses supported by Creative Media Labs are forecast to create 1.17 gross jobs on average.** Applying this to the 56 businesses assisted leads to 65 jobs. Based on the Gross Value Added (GVA) per filled job in Leeds City Region, Creative Media Labs **will have facilitated gross GVA of £1.2 million.**

- 42% of supported businesses had gone on to invest further in immersive and interactive technologies to develop new products, services or processes following support. On average they have spent £16,250 which equates to £0.382 million across the 56 businesses assisted by Creative Media Labs.

[1] UK Business Confidence Monitor: National | ICAEW

Chapter 1 – Context

1.1 – Project overview:

This section of this Summative Assessment outlines the Creative Media Labs project as articulated in the Full Application which was submitted in February 2020. The project was originally called the Creative Media Labs (CML) and it began on 1st April 2020, and was set to conclude on 31st March 2023. The project was supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and was led by the University of York.

The project covered the whole of the Leeds City Region which consists of the following Local Authority areas: Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield and York.

The application confirmed that the University of York as the lead applicant sought financial support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of £648,065 from the Priority Axis 1 Promoting Research and Innovation. The funding was related both to Priority 1a focused on '*enhancing research and innovation infrastructure and capacities to develop research and innovation excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest*' and 1b *'promoting business investment in research and innovation'*.

The project aimed to help Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) **operating in the screen industries (film, TV and games) sector** in the Leeds City Region to increase levels of Research and Development (R&D) and innovation in responding to the opportunities offered by new immersive and interactive technologies for digital storytelling. Creative Media Labs formed a vital part of a wider initiative called XR Stories. XR Stories is a £15 million project including £5.5 million from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as well as match-funding from the University of York and Screen Yorkshire.

The Full Application set clear **objectives** which were to:

- Enhance the innovation potential of the sector;
- Enhance the sector's ability to engage with the next generation of digital storytelling;
- Grow the sector's economic and commercial strength; and
- Create a sustainable collaborative partnership.

Evidence of **market failure** was provided in the Full Application, drawn from a range of sources including the 2017 Innovation Survey commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The Application states that there are *'clear market failures at play in relation to innovation and R&D by SMEs across the UK'.* It summarises these market failures as:

- Externalities: if firms cannot fully capitalise the value of their discoveries and prevent competitors or users from benefiting from spill-overs, they will invest in R&D less than would be socially optimal.

- Uncertainty: uncertainty is to a large extent embedded in the nature of innovation, which relies on the exploitation and generation of information asymmetries. However, risk perceptions may lead to under-investment in R&D compared to the socially optimum level and in particular constrain firms' access to external financing.

- Indivisibilities: R&D is typically characterised by indivisibilities and economies of scale that create strong incentives for firms to monopolise markets

The Full Application went on to summarise the available research as follows:

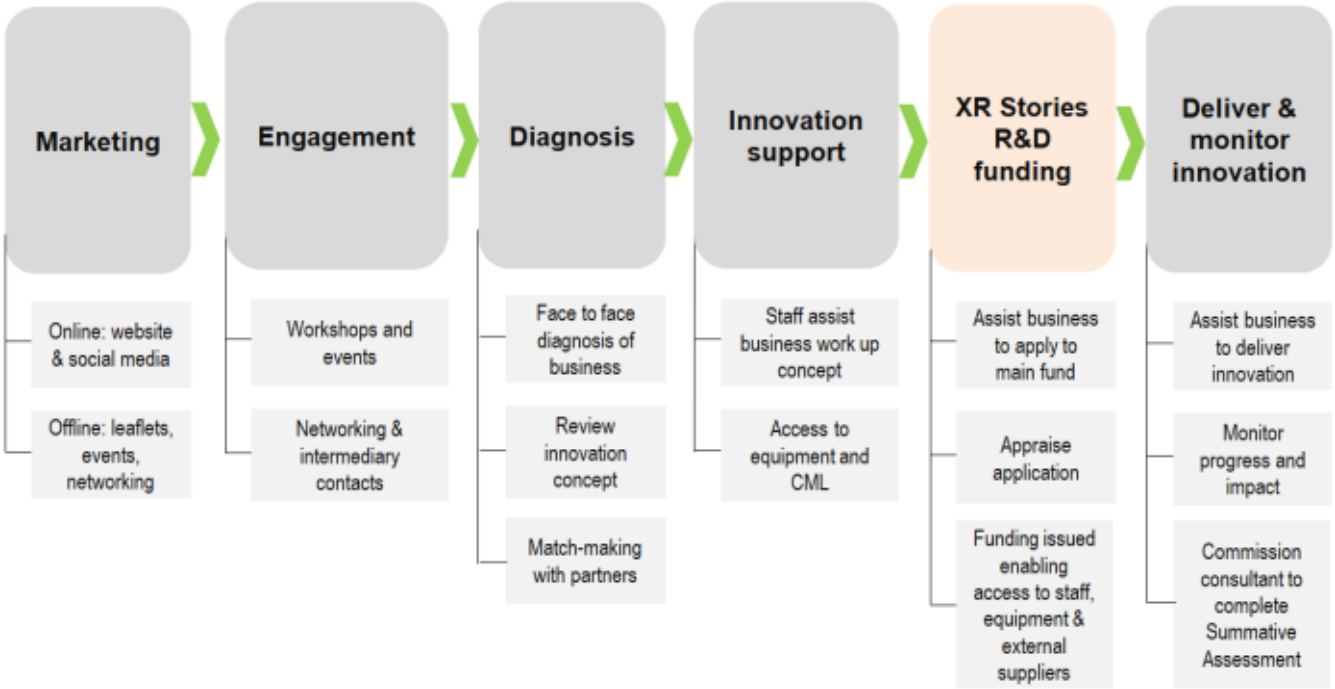
- There are inherent market failures in play which constrain innovation and R&D and necessitate public sector intervention;
- The most significant barriers to innovation for SMEs across the UK relate to costs of innovation, the availability of finance, and perceived economic risks; and,
- SMEs in the screen industries sector in Yorkshire have bucked some national trends and have experienced the fastest rate of growth in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2009-2015.

The Full Application cited Nesta's Creative Nation research which found that at a national level 94% of businesses in the sector are micro enterprises. At the City Region level this equated to 554 of the 590 screen industries businesses being micro enterprises. The Application stated that the project '*will enhance: the screen industries sector's capacity and ability to innovate; and, the number of sustainable SMEs with the ability to scale-up and contribute to the UK's productivity challenge.'*

The project was initially intended to be delivered from King's Manor, in the centre of York with the following staff: a Creative Producer (1 FTE); Creative Technologist (1 FTE); Communications Officer (0.4 FTE); Monitoring Officer (1 FTE); and Administrator (1 FTE). These reported to a Director, already in post for XR Stories. The main **project activities** identified in the Full Application were as follows:

- '*Create an immersive and interactive media lab for SMEs to access state-of-the-art equipment to enable them to undertake R&D and innovation activities;*
- *Create an R&D support team at the lab to assist SMEs in addressing technical challenges and help them access funding once their ideas have been tested;*
- *Engage 55 SMEs and provide 12 hours of support to 30 SMEs over 3 years;*
- *Demonstrate that support provided to SMEs enables them to introduce new to firm and new to market products, processes and services'.*

A **customer journey** was envisaged, in accordance with the diagram below:



Marketing activity was planned to make SMEs in the screen industries sector aware of Creative Media Labs, using online and offline marketing channels, utilizing a 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (0.4 FTE) Communications officer, with an appropriate marketing budget.

Engagement was to convert interest raised through the marketing efforts into registrations onto the project through workshops and events on relevant topics, across the Leeds City Region. At the time of the FA, the University of York were developing a series of challenges for SMEs and the notion was to mirror these in the workshops. These 'challenges' included:

- Narrative experiences for 'second screens', complementing major film or TV productions;
- Storytelling in VR, as an example of a second screen experience that has the capacity to develop into a primary experience;
- Development of second screen experiences into coherent interactive and immersive story-worlds;
- Interactive and responsive narratives; the development of dedicated tools for creating producing and delivering narrative experiences; and using big data analytics and artificial intelligence to shape narrative content creation and delivery.

SMEs were encouraged to develop innovative ideas to address these challenges.

As part of the **diagnosis** stage Creative Media Labs staff met SMEs, reviewing their business and innovative ideas, with brokerage of support (if required) and production of an Action Plan. **Innovation support** was to be provided to SMEs that completed the diagnosis stage and Action Plan, free of charge and including staff time and access to equipment. Those completing 12 hours of support were recorded as a project output.

Those completing the innovation support were then to be referred to the **XR Stories R&D fund** with the Creative Media Labs project helping SMEs to articulate their R&D and innovation activity so as to be able to access further support, which may include external support via collaboration with academics, researchers, internships and studentships funded by XR Stories.

There were six significant changes from the original funding agreement:

- Project end date and timeline – this extended the original project end date from 31st March 2023 to 29th September 2023 to enable impact to be achieved over a longer period and to enable delivery in the new physical base of York Guildhall after a long period of delivering support virtually. The budget for the requested extension came from the existing salaries cost heading.
- Project location – the University of York had planned to carry out the project from King's Manor, York. As outlined in their Full Application, refurbishments were due to begin December 2019 and end June 2020. However, due to indefinite delays with King's Manor, the project was approved by the Managing Authority to be delivered from The Guildhall, York. This enabled lab refurbishments to be complete by December 2021.
- Procurement – initially procurement exercises were planned, and this was increased to 23. Importantly, the project no longer included the 360º demonstration cylinder as the dimensions of the new lab in the Guildhall did not allow hosting of this piece of equipment. Instead, the Creative Media Labs procured a higher number of lower cost equipment items which turned out to be advantageous for the project.
- Targets – the expenditure profile was amended. Please see Chapter 2 for more details.

- Staff structure - the University of York hired a Project Manager and an additional Creative Producer since the initial funding agreement. The Monitoring Officer left the project 15th September 2021 and their responsibilities were then covered by the Administrator. This also brought project delivery advantages.

The Project Change Request (PCR) was approved by the Managing Authority, 17th November 2021. A smaller PCR was made on 6th February 2023, which the applicant was able to make via email rather than through the forms process. This brought John Rose-Adams (from XR Stories) into the Creative Media Labs team and made some other minor adjustments, approved by the Managing Authority.

1.2 – Project logic model:

The project's logic model provides a useful overview of the project's objectives, activities, outputs and forecast outcomes, and is replicated below.

Context and rationale

At the time the project was developed independent research indicated that the screen industries sector in Yorkshire & Humber had experienced the fastest rate of growth in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2009-2015 (Source: Screen Yorkshire Growth Plan 2017-2022). The sector generated an annual turnover of £424M across 590 creative businesses (an increase of 247% against the UK average of 118%) with Gross Value Added (GVA) increasing 242% in comparison to a UK average growth of 120%. A separate source, based on Companies House data, identifies 777 screen industry firms in the Leeds City Region alone. The area's assets include one of only 3 ITV production centres; True North which produces around 500 hours of TV content annually and Rockstar, one of the world's largest game developers. Both firms are based in Leeds. This provided considerable opportunity to support the growth of the screen industries in the Leeds City Region.

Market failure

The project responds to: *'clear market failures at play in relation to innovation and R&D by SMEs across the UK' (Innovation Survey, 2017).* There are inherent market failures in play which constrain innovation and R&D and necessitate public sector intervention. The market failures include:

- Externalities: firms not fully capitalising on the value of their discoveries or preventing competitors or users from benefiting from spill-overs, leading to under-investment in R&D;
- Uncertainty: which is embedded in the nature of innovation, which relies on the exploitation and generation of information asymmetries. Risk perceptions may lead to under-investment in R&D
- Indivisibilities: R&D is typically characterised by indivisibilities and economies of scale that create strong incentives for firms to monopolise markets

The most significant barriers to innovation for SMEs across the UK relate to costs of innovation, the availability of finance, and perceived economic risks. However, SMEs in the screen industries sector in Yorkshire had bucked some national trends, experiencing the fastest rate of growth in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2009-2015.

Objectives

1) Enhance the innovation potential of the sector
2) Enhance the sector's ability to engage with the next generation of digital storytelling
3) Grow the sector's economic and commercial strength
4) Create a sustainable collaborative partnership.

Inputs

- £648,065 from the ERDF
- £648,065 Match-funding from University of York
- Staff time at University of York (XR Stories)
- Access to venues

Activities

Create an immersive and interactive media lab for SMEs to access

Create an R&D support team at the lab, to assist SMEs in addressing technical challenges and help them access funding once their ideas have been tested;

Engage 55 SMEs and provide 12 hours of support each, of £1,000 of value, including use of the media lab, to 30 SMEs over 3 years

Output targets

30 Enterprises receiving support (C1)
30 Enterprises receiving non-financial support (C4)
4 New enterprise supported (C5)
18 Employment increase in supported enterprises (C8)
6 Researchers working in improved research facilities
6 Enterprises supported to introduce new product to market (C28)
15 Enterprises supported to introduce new to firm products (C29)

Outcomes

Increase in SME turnover
Increase in SME staffing levels

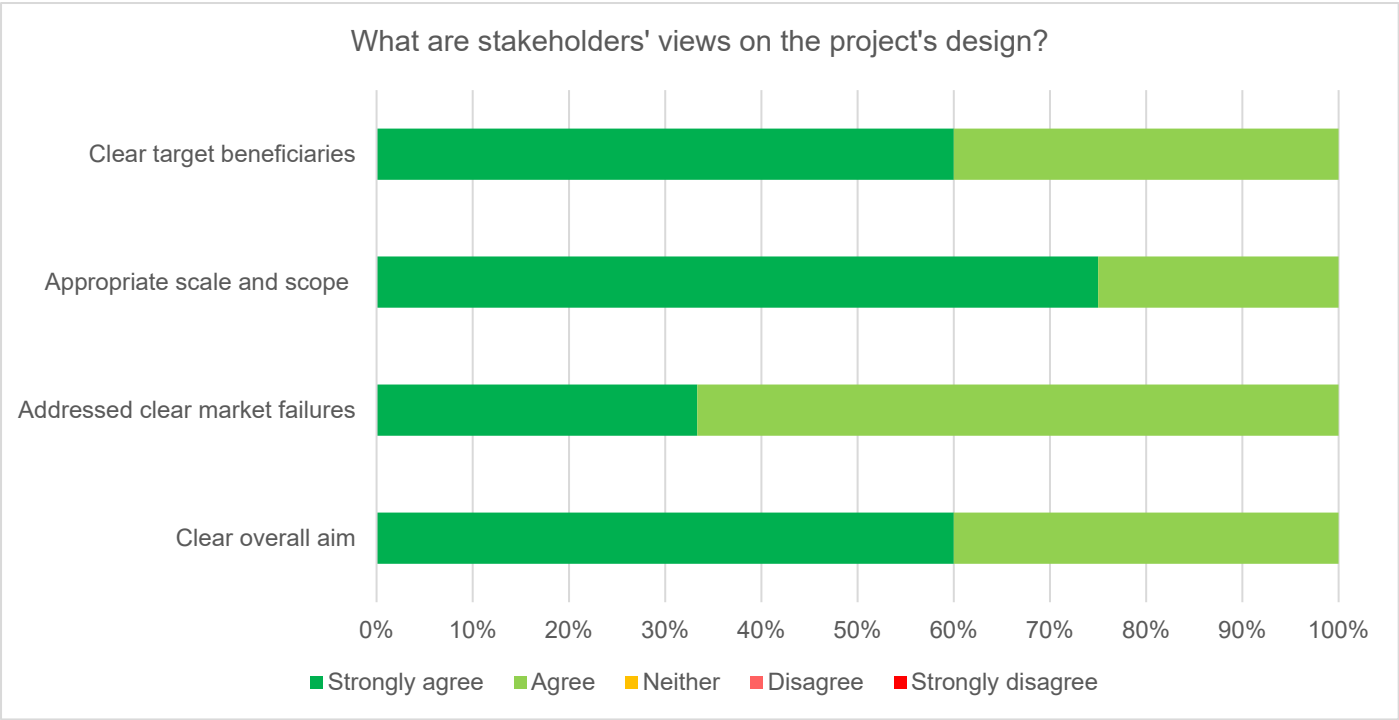
Overall impact

- Increase in (net) Gross Value Added

Stakeholders were asked for their views on the project's design and were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The scheme had a clear overall aim.
- The scheme was designed to address clear market failures.
- The scale and scope of the activity was appropriate.
- It was clear which types of beneficiaries the scheme was designed to support.

The analysis of stakeholders' responses is provided in the chart below.



As shown above, stakeholders are very positive about each aspect of the project's design, and either agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

1.3 – Policy and economic context:

1.3.1 – National policy context:

The macro level strategic and policy context over the course of the project, from April 2020 to 2023 has been highly turbulent. We have identified three broad and quite different phases of context within this period and discuss the key factors in each affecting the city region's economy, new businesses and business support.

2020 to mid-2021:

March 2020 saw COVID-19 hit the UK and immediately changed the context for the project conceived and developed pre-pandemic. This means the whole project delivery period has therefore been impacted to some extent, from the first national lockdown in March 2020 to mid-2021 when restrictions eased, with economic, employment, social and psychological impacts which are still yet to fully play out.

This context substantially affected the conditions for businesses, and the practicalities of running the Creative Media Labs project, notably in respect to a shift from face-to-face to online delivery. Clearly this was a major change to what was anticipated when the programme was designed and initiated, and the University of York as lead had to navigate a shifting landscape around which they had very little control. The pandemic instigated a shift from a reasonably healthy, if sluggish, pre-pandemic economy with relatively low unemployment, to a context of high unemployment, large numbers of people on furlough, and major impacts on business and communities, with some sectors and places especially badly hit.

This created a tough setting for start-ups and young businesses, key groups within the Screen Industries, and in particular for sole traders. At one level, it emphasised the need for the Creative Media Labs project and the support it offered to sole traders in the sector. However, the Covid-19 lockdowns caused uncertainty and inertia, as well as practical challenges included not being able to access labs and equipment, an immediate pause in some activities (including Screen-related business) and an inability to source suppliers and staff similarly affected by lockdown restrictions. As a University of York report commented '*the screen industries are suffering with the impact of lockdown halting the majority of work. The impact will last into the long-term in places with less buoyant creative sectors. Businesses will disappear never to re-open. Individuals will leave the sector, with their skills lost*.'[2]

Mid-2021 to early 2022:

The easing of COVID restrictions from mid-2021 and into early 2022 saw an opening up of opportunity for Screen Industry sector businesses and sole traders, with greater confidence, less uncertainty and relative calm in the political landscape in comparison to the preceding period. In practical terms, this period opened up more opportunity for face to face meetings, and a new environment in which both these and online meetings were possible according to what would be most effective. This was helpful in fostering collaboration between Screen Industry sector businesses (networking became a stronger part of the Creative Media Labs project) and for the delivery of one-to-few workshops, rather than 1-1, as suppressed demand started to materialise.

[2] The Impact of COVID-19 on the Screen Industries - Written Evidence Submitted by XR Stories and Screen Industries Growth Network, University of York to UK Parliament in response to their call for evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors, White Rose Research online

February 2022 to now:

This period has seen a return to the substantial upheaval in the political environment, at home and abroad, that will undoubtedly have impacted on the context for businesses seeking to grow and develop.

From February 2022 onwards, while the labour market has remained buoyant, the context has been increasingly dominated by factors related to the conflict in Ukraine and the economic impact of the resulting sanctions and trade boycotts. This was most obviously the case in terms of soaring energy prices, as well as fuel, resource and food prices, contributing to high and increasing levels of inflation overall. The resulting cost of living crisis has been all too obvious, with large rises in energy price caps and increasing day to day costs for many other items hitting businesses and consumers hard, especially those on low incomes for whom basics such as energy, fuel and food make up a greater proportion of household costs. For businesses too, increasing energy and resource costs present a major challenge and risk to growth or survival, especially as consumers (and other businesses) seek to economise.

Another round of political crises has also played out. Boris Johnson resigned in July 2022, to be replaced by the UK's shortest serving Prime Minister, ousted in the aftermath of September's 'mini-budget' that focused on growth but instead sent the financial markets into frenzy. With the Bank of England expecting consumer price index inflation to be around 11% by the end of 2022, it has in response set UK interest rates at their highest level since November 2008. This is exacerbating the squeeze on households, particularly through mortgage and loan repayments. And for businesses, many of whom are already struggling and increasingly concerned about an impending recession, it weakens their ability or confidence to invest.

It remains to be seen how the path taken by the new Prime Minister and his Chancellor will play out. But it is reasonable to assume that the economic backdrop may have dampened appetite to start a business in the Leeds City Region.

In 2017, the Screen Industries were very much part of the Government's Industrial Strategy with its aspiration to '*create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK.*' At this time, the Industrial Strategy has singled out immersive technologies as a key opportunity for the creative industries to '*help pioneer the next generation of products, services and experiences*', investing £33 million into the Audiences of the Future fund to support this work, closely linked to the AHRC Creative Industries Clusters Partnership Programme, also funded from the Industrial Strategy, of which XR Stories is one such project. Hence the Creative Media Labs was well aligned with the national strategy in support of the creative industries, of which the screen industries are a key part.

1.3.2 – Regional policy context:

In terms of national economic policy and its reach to regions, the period in question has seen shifts and instability, with the 2017 Industrial Strategy replaced by the 2021 Plan for Growth and a backdrop of evolving regional policy centred on devolution and 'levelling up'.

Locally this has meant Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) moving from Strategic Economic Plans, to Local Industrial Strategies, to COVID recovery plans and increasingly to setting mayoral priorities as set out in devolution deals. That has also happened against a backdrop of LEP reviews, examining how these partnerships should integrate with local democratic institutions. In Leeds City Region, that has played out geographically in a separation of West and North Yorkshire, despite the Creative Media Labs project retaining coverage of the full geography based on its contractual obligations set out in its funding agreement with the EU.

This changing context for regional economic strategy has in reality had little impact on the delivery of the Creative Media Labs project. It retains its strong linkages to the objectives of business support and growth set out in the West Yorkshire Mayor's pledges and in the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, with the attendant focus on maximising the opportunities from major inward and related investment in the Creative Industries and from Screen Industries within this. In doing so it is tackling market failures around low innovation and R&D rates and indirectly access to finance and business advice,

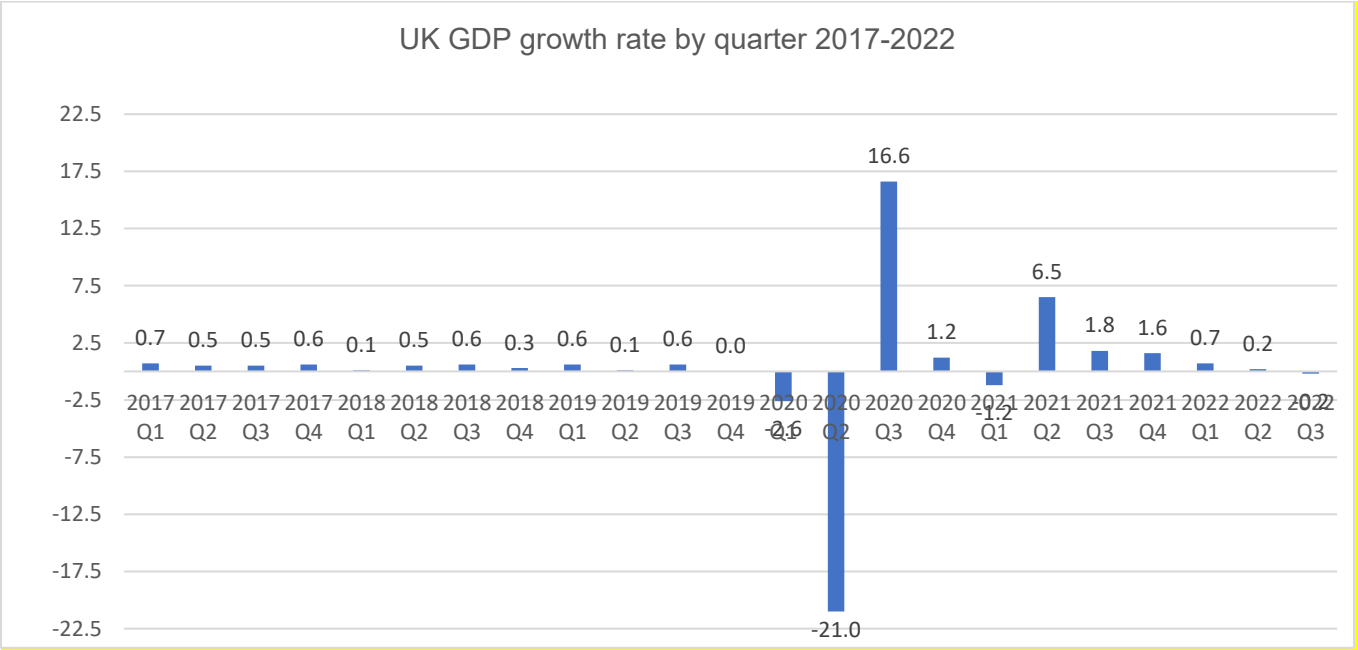
The Creative Media Labs project is firmly embedded in and aligned with the strategic economic policies of the Leeds City Region. For example, Screen Yorkshire's Growth Plan was backed by the British Film Institute's Creative Clusters Challenge Fund, which was showcased in the Industrial Strategy's Creative Industries Sector Deal as one of 'five prominent creative industries cluster projects'. Screen Yorkshire and the British Film Institute are core partners on XR Stories.

1.3.3 – National economic context:

The economic context for running and seeking to grow a business is linked to the macro-level context that has been described. Here we set that out in terms key indicators that reflect that economic and business climate, focused on 2020 to 2023 (or as near to that as data allows), although some pre-2020 data is incorporated to indicated longer-term trends (and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 when compared to the previous period).

Economic Growth and GVA

GVA is a good indicator of the general health of the economy and the business environment in terms of level of demand and consumer activity, whether business-to-consumer (B2C) or business-to-business (B2B). Higher growth clearly indicates a more buoyant economic climate, which usually translates into more opportunities for businesses to start and grow. As regional GVA data has a considerable time lag before it is published (and hence we do not have recent regional data), we have instead used more recent UK GDP growth rate data to show a national context and the trend that is also likely to apply in the city region, although clearly precise numbers will be different.

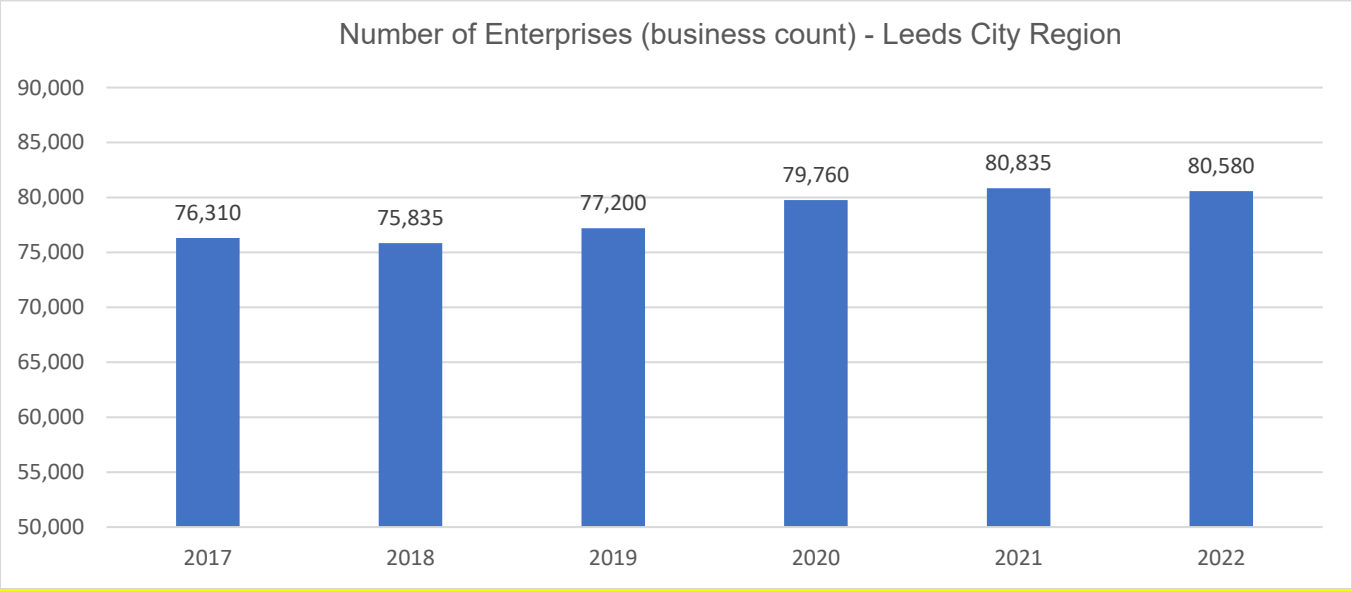


The chart shows sluggish but positive growth between 2017 and 2019, with a huge fall then bounce back in 2020 as COVID first hit the UK before lockdown measures began to be lifted in summer 2020. A similar but less exaggerated pattern was evident in Q1 and Q2 of 2021. That links to the policy context of COVID as already discussed and highlights the importance of business support during 2020 and 2021 in a context of businesses surviving through (or starting during) the pandemic. The chart also shows low and declining growth in 2022, linked to inflation and cost of living pressures, which is likely to foreshadow recession and a context in which business resilience will be crucial.

Business Count and Survival

Arguably the most direct measure of how the economy is affecting businesses is change in the total count of businesses operating locally each year. The chart below shows that data from 2017-2022 and indicates a rise in business numbers across the 2018 to 2021 period (despite the pandemic), although with growth more muted between 2020 and 2021 and then a slight decrease in 2022. This suggests a reasonably healthy context for screen industry sector businesses when the Creative Media Labs project was being developed (despite the turbulence around Brexit). Whilst conditions for business clearly became much more difficult in 2020 and 2021, there was no net decrease in businesses, with this likely to have been greatly aided by the various business

support on offer. A slight tailing off in business numbers in 2022 mirrors the falling growth in this year and tough trading conditions already noted.



Source: IDBR (ONS)

It is also useful to look at business survival rates since the Screen Industries sector is characterised by micro-businesses and businesses forming and closing (there is always a degree of churn in the sector). Business survival rates can be indicator as to the contextual environment for running and growing a business These are described in the table below for those starts that happened in the years covered above as far as data is available.

Area	2 year survival rate (%) for businesses started in				Percentage points change 2016-2019
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Bradford	69.8	72.4	75.3	76.9	7.1
Calderdale	73.6	75.6	74.8	77.7	4.1
Kirklees	70.4	74.6	76.1	78.0	7.6
Leeds	70.0	74.2	73.6	76.3	6.3
Wakefield	72.0	73.2	73.8	75.0	3
York	77.2	76.0	77.2	83.5	6.3
Craven	58.1	68.5	81.3	83.7	25.6
Harrogate	77.7	78.9	79.0	80.6	2.9
Selby	74.5	84.1	79.2	78.9	4.4
West Yorkshire Total	70.6	73.0	74.6	76.8	6.2
England	70.8	72.6	74.3	74.3	3.5

Source: ONS

The table shows that the two-year survival rate for businesses started in 2016 was typically between 70-77% across the city region (with the very low figure of 58% in Craven probably a statistical anomaly reflecting a small population based data set in that district), and with survival rates for areas in North Yorkshire (except Craven) higher than in West Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire area-wide total[3] of 70.6% was marginally below the England figure of 70.8%.

[3] Please note that data is only available at West Yorkshire and district level, not at Leeds City Region level. 2019 is as far as data goes up to and is based on the latest data release in November 2022.

There was a trend of increasing survival rates in all areas, however, this did vary by district. The most marked increases were in bigger urban areas such as Kirklees (7.6%), Bradford (7.1%) and Leeds (6.3%) which had lower baselines in 2016, as well as in York. The increase in survival rate was also more marked locally than nationally. Overall, seven of the nine areas in Leeds City Region saw a greater increase in two year survival rates than for England, and whilst survival rates for businesses started in 2016 were below England average in four out of the five West Yorkshire districts, for 2019 starts all nine areas of the city region were above the England level. This suggests there was an improving context for the survival of new businesses in the period prior to the Creative Media Labs project, which has been severely challenged in the period since March 2020.

1.4 – Context conclusions:

The section below addresses the specific prompts issued by the Department (DLUHC) in the Summative Assessment guidance relating to programme context.

1.4.1 - What was the project seeking to do?

The Creative Media Labs project sought to increase the levels of R&D and innovation in SMEs across the Leeds City Region through helping them respond to the specific (but nationally recognized) opportunities offered by new immersive and interactive technologies for digital storytelling. The project sought to build on the expertise of the University of York and national and regional partners developed through the wider XR Stories project. The project sought to overcome Screen Industry sector barriers to innovation through a programme of engagement, diagnosis/Action Plan and 1-1 Innovation Support. It was hoped that the project beneficiaries would graduate to larger XR Stories project activity and further R&D.

1.4.2 - What was the economic and policy context at the time that the project was designed?

The project was designed in 2019 and commenced in April 2020, just at the Covid-19 pandemic impacted global communities and economies. This proved a challenging delivery environment for the University of York and some significant changes were required, including the move to the Guildhall following the substantial and insurmountable delays to the refurbishment of the originally intended location of King's Manor. The Creative Media Labs project had to move to online delivery (and without access to lab space) and the new location, once occupied, meant a re-think in the kit businesses could access (no longer the 360 degree immersive cylinder).

Nonetheless, whilst the economic context has been challenging during the delivery period, the context at the time of project conception meant the initial project design and approaches were sound. The policy context nationally at the time of the project's design was also favourable, seeking to maximise the opportunities in the immersive technology sector, and regionally too the policy context at the time of project design was strongly supportive of further investment in the Screen Industries sector.

1.4.3 - What were the specific market failures that the project was seeking to address? Was there a strong rationale for the project?

The Full Application included a strong assessment of the performance of the screen industries sector and the barriers to innovation that businesses face. The application identified the following sources of market failure:

- Externalities: If firms cannot fully capitalise the value of their discoveries and prevent competitors or users from benefiting from spill-overs, they will invest in R&D less than would be socially optimal.
- Uncertainty: Uncertainty is to a large extent embedded in the nature of innovation, which relies on the exploitation and generation of information asymmetries. However, risk perceptions may lead to under-investment in R&D compared to the socially optimum level and in particular constrain firms' access to external financing.
- Indivisibilities: R&D is typically characterised by indivisibilities and economies of scale that create strong incentives for firms to monopolise markets.

There was a strong rationale for the project in addressing these market failures and the barriers to innovation in the Screen Industries, dominated as it is by sole traders, freelance businesses and micro-enterprises. The project was well designed to address these challenges, recognising the strong benefits in helping businesses to develop and test ideas in a supportive environment, and

of increasing access to R&D funding for sector businesses (via the wider XR Stories). This 'ladder' of support is entirely appropriate in seeking to bring new products to firms and then to market.

1.4.4 - Was the project appropriately designed to achieve its objectives? Was the delivery model appropriate?

Project design was appropriate to the objectives for the project, with a clear customer journey from initial awareness raising to engagement, to 1-to-many to 1-1 support, with the prospect of follow-on support. The project utilises the expertise of University of York, a strong and credible lead organisation already with the trust and support of national and regional partners in the Screen Industries through the wider XR Stories project. The University of York already has well established networks across the local authorities in the Leeds City Region which it has been able to utilise. The Director of the Creative Media Labs project is the Director of XR Stories.

1.4.5 - Were the targets set for the programme realistic and achievable?

As outlined in the Full Application the project originally had a total budget of £1,296,130 and the output targets shown in the table below.

Outputs	Target
C1, enterprises assisted	30.0
C4, non-financial support	30.0
C5, new enterprises	4.0
C8, Employment increase	18.0
C25, Improved research infrastructure	6.0
C28, new to market products	6.0
C29, new to firm products	15.0

The targets do appear realistic and achievable with the exception of the employment increase target (C8). It is perhaps unrealistic to expect businesses to create new jobs as a result of receiving 12 hours of support. This is a particular issue for smaller businesses in the screen industries sector as they are more likely to increase work allocated to sub-contractors rather than take on new staff in the short-term. A more appropriate output measure may have been increase value of work in the supply chain, but this is not an area that the European Regional Development Fund measured. As will be explored in the Chapter 2, the changes in the economic context made it even harder for the project to achieve the employment increase output.

1.4.6 - How did the context change as the programme was delivered and did this exert any particular pressures on delivery?

The policy context remained stable and supportive during delivery, but the economic context was volatile and highly challenging as summarised in the table below.

Context period	Dominant contextual factors	Impacts on the programme and its target beneficiaries
2018 to March 2020	▪ Brexit uncertainties ▪ Steady if sluggish economy	▪ Operating conditions largely as may have been predicted
March 2020 to mid 2021	▪ COVID onset, waves and lockdowns of varying intensity ▪ Furlough and business support schemes in place	▪ Major impacts on ability to trade and on incomes for many businesses ▪ Shift to virtual delivery for businesses and the programme ▪ Complex and fast-moving business support environment ▪ Opportunities for online-centred businesses

Mid 2021 to spring 2022	▪ Post-COVID bounce back ▪ Staff shortages	▪ New start and business growth opportunities ▪ Recruitment challenges ▪ Blended working
Spring 2022 onwards	▪ Energy crisis and inflation ▪ Political upheaval ▪ Economic slowdown starting	▪ Increasing costs – especially energy, food, resources ▪ Recruitment challenges persist, plus added wage pressures ▪ Higher cost of borrowing ▪ Falling demand, recession likely ▪ Uncertainty and tough conditions for new businesses

Overall one can conclude that:

- The project was designed and delivered in a period characterised by uncertainty and low business confidence.
- During the delivery period there was a significant reduction in the number of businesses accessing support nationally, but it is not possible to identify whether this trend occurred locally.
- The outbreak of Covid-19 presented considerable operational challenges for the project and businesses across Leeds City Region.

The changes in context exerted considerable pressures on delivery as will be explored in Chapter 2. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic led to all delivery becoming virtual and the programme responded to the rapidly changed needs of businesses. As outlined in Chapter 2, the programme has performed very effectively against output targets despite the considerable changes in context.

Chapter 2 – Progress

2.1 – Expenditure targets:

2.1.1 – Original spend targets:

The table shows the total expenditure profile from the original Grant Funding Agreement (GFA).

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
GFA	£577,597	£344,762	£302,285	£71,486	**£1,296,130**

The GFA included capital and revenue funding and the original split is shown in the table below.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Capital	£327,813	£44,174	£0	£0	**£371,987**
Revenue	£249,784	£300,588	£302,285	£71,486	**£924,143**
Total	**£577,597**	**£344,762**	**£302,285**	**£71,486**	**£1,296,130**

The initial ERDF award was £648,065 with public match-funding of the same amount. The table below shows the agreed cost headings from the GFA.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Capital					
Equipment	£327,813	£44,174	£0	£0	**£371,987**
Revenue					
Salaries	£118,325	£241,382	£246,210	£62,162	**£668,079**
Indirect costs	£17,749	£36,206	£36,930	£9,324	**£100,209**
Professional fees	£12,500	£2,500	£12,120	£0	**£27,120**
Marketing	£12,500	£18,000	£7,025	£0	**£37,525**
Totals	**£577,597**	**£344,762**	**£302,285**	**£71,486**	**£1,296,130**

2.1.2 – Final expenditure targets:

A Project Change Request (PCR) was submitted in September 2021 and requested the following changes:

- Extension to delivery period: the project was originally forecast to end 31st March and an extension was requested to September 2023.
- Amendment of cost headings: introduction of two new cost categories: Office Costs and Other Revenue (Workshops). These new cost categories were resourced with underspend from the equipment budget and professional fees.
- Reduction in employment rise output: to reflect the challenges in the economy and reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first two requests were approved, though the third was not. The below outlines the re-profile of expenditure targets.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Capital					
Equipment	£18,429	£129,885	£142,173	£50,000	**£340,487**
Revenue					
Salaries	£97,929	£188,565	£248,649	£192,684	**£727,827**
Indirect costs	£14,688	£28,284	£37,296	£28,903	**£109,171**
Professional fees	£0	£0	£0	£17,120	**£20,120**
Marketing	£0	£0	£34,500	£12,525	**£47,025**
Office costs	£0	£16,500	£7,000	£0	**£23,500**
Other revenue	£0	£0	£22,300	£5,700	**£28,000**
Totals	**£131,046**	**£363,234**	**£491,918**	**£306,932**	**£1,296,130**

As can be seen, the variation did not increase the overall project cost but simply re-profiled expenditure.

2.1.3 – Performance on expenditure targets:

The table below shows the expenditure profile from the original Grant Funding Agreement, the agreed variation and the actual and forecast spend. The actual spend is up to the end of March 2023, with forecast spend from the final period from April to June 2023.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Grant Funding Agreement	£577,597	£344,762	£302,285	£71,486	**£1,296,130**
Agreed variation	£131,046	£363,234	£491,918	£306,932	**£1,296,130**
Actual & forecast spend	£131,049	£240,911	£500,300	£305,950	**£1,178,209**

As can be seen, actual and forecast spend totals £1,178,209 which is just £117,921 short of the target (from the agreed variation). Actual and forecast spend is therefore 91% of the target. The table below provides analysis by cost category to explore the source of the projected underspend.

2.2 – Output targets:

2.2.1 – Original output targets:

The table shows the original output targets taken from the Grant Funding Agreement .

Outputs	Target
C1, enterprises assisted	30.0
C4, non-financial support	30.0
C5, new enterprises	4.0
C8, Employment increase	18.0
C25, Staff in improved research infrastructure	6.0
C28, new to market products	6.0
C29, new to firm products	15.0

The Project Change Request sought to amend the employment increase target but this was not accepted.

2.2.2 – Performance on output targets:

The table below shows the project's actual performance on outputs from 2020 to the end of March 2023, and forecast performance from April to June 2023.

Outputs	Final target	Actual (2020 to March 2023)	Forecast (April to June 2023)	Difference	Percentage of target
C1, Enterprises assisted	30.0	29.0	56.0	+26.0	187%
C4, Non-financial support	30.0	29.0	56.0	+26.0	187%
C5, New enterprises	4.0	5.0	8.0	+4.0	200%
C8, Employment increase	18.0	0.0	2.0	-16.0	11%
C25, Staff in improved research infrastructure	6.0	0.0	0.0	-6.0	0%
C28, new to market products	6.0	2.0	11.0	+5.0	183%
C29, new to firm products	15.0	7.0	19.0	+4.0	127%

As can be seen, the project is forecast to exceed all but 2 of the output targets by June 2023. The project is forecast to substantially over-achieve the enterprises assisted (C1) target and similarly the new enterprises (C5) and new-to-market product target (C28).

The enterprise assisted (C1) target is a main driver of output performance and the table below shows the actual cumulative delivery of this output against the target profile.

	Enterprises assisted target	Actual and *forecast performance*	Difference
2020	4	0	-4
2021	18	16	-2
2022	30	29	-1
2023	30	56	+26

As shown above, the project did not achieve any enterprises assisted in 2020, but got close to target in 2021 and 2022. There was no target in 2023 but the project achieved an additional 27 enterprises assisted.

2.3 – Performance summary:

The table below summarises the project's performance on spend and output targets.

Indicators	Targets		Performance up to 31/03/2023		Project performance by 31/06/2023		RAG rating
	Original GFA	Latest variation	Number	% of target	Number	% of target	
Total Expenditure	£1,296,130	£1,296,130	£1,011,900	78%	£1,178,209	91%	Green
C1, enterprises assisted	30.0	30.0	39.0	130%	56.0	187%	Green
C4, non-financial support	30.0	30.0	39.0	130%	56.0	187%	Green
C5, new enterprises	4.0	4.0	6.0	150%	8.0	200%	Green
C8, Employment increase	18.0	18.0	0.0	0%	2.0	11%	Red
C25, Staff in improved research infrastructure	6.0	6.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	Red
C28, new to market products	6.0	6.0	4.0	67%	11.0	183%	Green
C29, new to firm products	15.0	15.0	9.0	60%	19.0	127%	Green

As shown above, the project is forecast to achieve 91% of the total target expenditure, and exceed many of the output targets. The only areas where there is forecast to be significant under-performance are outlined below.

C8, Employment increase:

The project did not include this output in the original Full Application, and were asked to add it by the funder. As outlined in Section 2.4, the project delivery team do not believe that this is a realistic output given Creative Media Labs's focus. In their experience assisted businesses are more likely to provide extra work to suppliers in Leeds City Region as a result of developing new products, services and processes, rather than take on staff. The project did not provide any financial support to businesses and it was perhaps unrealistic to expect supported businesses to take staff on following support of at least 12 hours.

C25, Staff in improved research infrastructure:

As outlined in the next section, the project delivery team have not been able meet the very technical guidance associated with this output. However, in practice the project has indeed created new research infrastructure and the University employs staff that directly perform R & D activity.

2.4 – Factors that explain performance:

A workshop was held with the project's delivery team to explore the factors that have impacted on the programme's spend and output performance.

Firstly in relation to **spend**, as highlighted earlier the main source of underspend is in the salaries cost category. There are various factors behind this position:

The initial budget for salaries was larger than required.
The Full Application sought funding for 5 roles which equated to 4.4 full-time equivalent (FTE), including a full-time Administrator and a full-time Monitoring Officer. In practice the delivery team found that these two roles were better combined into a single joint role.

There were periods where posts were vacant.
Early in the delivery period there was a higher level of staff turnover, and periods where posts were vacant contributing to the underspend. For example, there was a gap from April to November 2022 where there was no Administrator or Monitoring Officer in post.

Underspend in the salaries cost category led to underspend in the indirect costs category.
Indirect costs were calculated as a percentage of salaries and hence underspend in the salaries led to even greater underspend given the linked indirect costs.

Over time the staffing structure has evolved and the project concluded with the following posts in place: 1 x Project Manager, 1 x Senior Producer, 2 x Creative Producers, 1 x Technician and 1 x Administrator and Monitoring Officer.

In relation to **outputs** the project has over-achieved on many of the targets. Firstly, the project team is on track to assist 56 enterprises (C1) against a target of 30. Whilst the Full Application assumed that most support would be delivered on a one-to-one basis, in practice the delivery team introduced a range of one-to-many sessions. Some of these sessions were based on funding themes developed in partnership with XR Stories. The Creative Media Labs was able to assist businesses develop their ideas for new products, services and processes and get them to a point where they had a viable concept to present to XR Stories. As will be highlighted in Chapter 3, businesses valued these one-to-many sessions and the networking opportunities they provided.

In relation to the target for new enterprises assisted (C5), the delivery team followed this themed approached and delivered some group sessions specifically focussed on people seeking to become self-employed or form a new business. The delivery team enjoyed working with this target group and are on track to have supported 8 new enterprises against a target of 4. The delivery team reported that the pandemic may have accelerated individuals' plans to become self-employed or create new businesses.

The project team also took a pro-active approach on the target for new-to-firm and new-to-market products. The team actively sought entrepreneurs and business owners with viable concepts that needed support to get them to the point of launch. It is clear that the team were effective at identifying and supporting the type of beneficiaries that needed support, and could ultimately deliver the desired outcomes.

The outputs that have proven more challenging are employment rise (C8) and staff in improved research infrastructure (C25). In practice, the delivery team have found that very few businesses do create new staff posts in the short-term following the delivery of at least 12 hours of support. The nature of the sector is likely to have played some role here, as is the wider economic context which has led businesses to plan cashflow carefully, and perhaps be more cautious when making investment decisions. It should also be noted that the project has helped place interns in businesses and this service may have reduced the need for businesses to employ new staff.

The staff in improved research infrastructure (C25) is very tightly defined, and whilst in practice the project has delivered new research infrastructure which is accessible to University researchers it has proven impossible to meet the detailed guidance.

There are then the wider economic factors which have provide particularly challenging. The national and international supply chain issues have had a direct impact on the project with the delivery team unable to order some equipment for a period of time. There were also delays in receiving equipment as a result of the container ship blocking the Suez Canal in Spring 2021.

The delivery team found that it was harder to get businesses up to 12 hours of support when delivering assistance virtually, making the enterprises assisted (C1) target more challenging. However, there is a feeling that the pandemic increased the awareness of, and appetite for, using Virtual Reality technology to provide services. The virtual working in place because of the lockdown restrictions opened up the possibilities for partnerships across larger geographies.

It is also worth noting that the Full Application was based on the project having a physical base in Kings Manor by June 2020. In practice, Kings Manor did not become available for the project team and instead the project moved into the Guildhall in May 2022. The project therefore did not have a physical base for nearly two years later than initially planned. During the pandemic it was much harder to provide equipment to businesses in a COVID-safe manner, and it clearly was not possible to deliver the face-to-face group sessions that businesses have valued in the later stages of the project's delivery.

2.5 – Performance conclusions:

The section below addresses the specific prompts issued by the Department (DLUHC) in the Summative Assessment guidance relating to programme performance.

Has the project delivered what it expected to in terms of spend and outputs?

The project has delivered the expected level of expenditure and the expected activities to an appropriate mixture of beneficiaries, exceeding the majority of output targets.

What are the factors which explain this performance?

The main driver of the modest underspend is the salaries cost category and the main factors here are that the initial budget for salaries was larger than required; there were periods where posts were vacant; and, underspend in the salaries cost category led to underspend in the indirect costs category.

The strong performance on outputs reflects the pro-active, targeted approach that the delivery team has adopted. A major factor was the introduction of a one-to-many support including workshops and cohorts. This enabled the delivery team to support a higher number of businesses than forecast, and over-achieve on related outputs including new enterprises assisted and new-to-market and new-to-firm products.

When the project draws to a close, is it expected to have achieved what it set out to?

The project is forecast to have exceeded the majority of output targets, but with a slightly lower overall spend than forecast. Stakeholders were asked 'overall in your view, as the scheme draws to a close has it delivered what it set out to?' 4 of the 5 stakeholders that answered this question stated that the project has set out what it achieved to, with the fifth stakeholder stating that they didn't know.

Chapter 3 – Delivery and management

3.1 – Provision of business support:

This Chapter draws primarily on data gathered through two online surveys designed as part of this Summative Assessment:

- Beneficiaries – a survey was issued to 65 beneficiaries that received at least 5 hours of support from the Creative Media Labs. 33 responses were received equating to a response rate of 51%.
- Stakeholders – a survey was issued to 6 internal and external stakeholders and 5 responses were received.

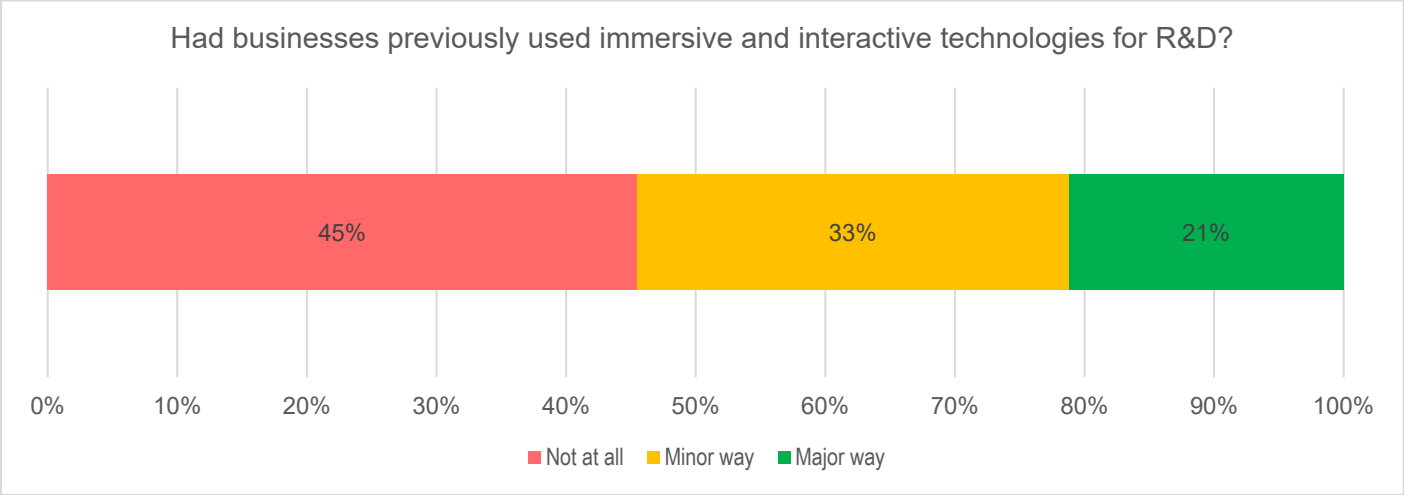
3.1.1 – Business profile:

Businesses that completed the online survey were asked to confirm where they are located, and the table below provides the results.

Sector	Count of responses	Percentage of total responses
Bradford	3	9%
Calderdale	1	3%
Craven	3	9%
Leeds	9	27%
York	15	45%
Other	2	6%

Businesses were asked to confirm whether then they first engaged with the scheme the business was: already operating in the screen industries sector (film, games, TV, performance, arts & live events); or seeking to enter the screen industries sector? 19 businesses (58% of the total) confirmed that they were already operating in the screen industries sector, with the remaining 14 (42%) seeking to enter the sector.

Businesses were also asked whether, when they first engaged with the scheme they had previously used immersive and interactive technologies to develop new products, services or processes? The chart below shows responses to this question.

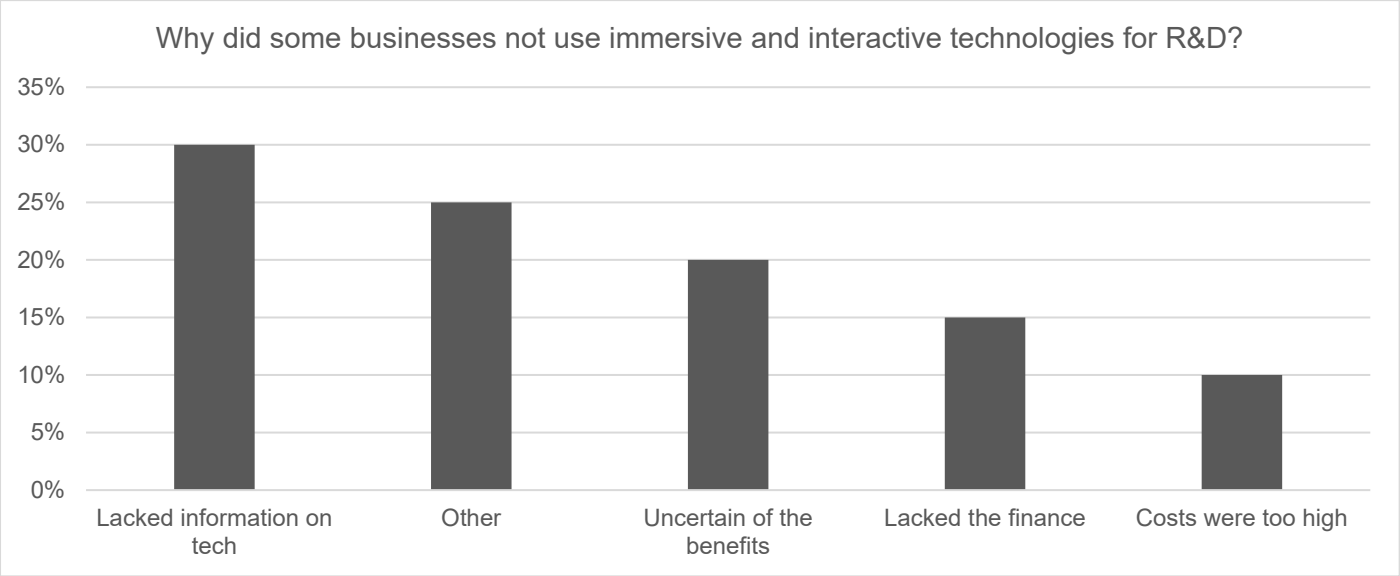


As shown above, nearly a half of businesses that completed the survey had not used immersive and interactive technologies at all to develop new products, services or processes, and a third had only used them in minor way. 8 out of 10 businesses supported then had very little prior experience of using the technologies offered by the project to support Research and Development (R&D) activities.

The businesses that had not previously used immersive and interactive technologies to support R&D activities were asked why this was the case, and were presented with the five following options:

- The costs were too high.
- We lacked the necessary finance.
- We lacked the information on technology.
- We were uncertain of the benefits.
- We found it hard to find a suitable supplier.

14 businesses answered this question, and between them selected 20 barriers. The chart below contains analysis of their responses, and confirms that the main barrier was a lack of information on the technologies (30% of all responses).



This finding supports existing research that businesses face a range of barriers to adopting complex technologies to support efforts to develop new products, services or processes.

3.1.2 – Engagement:

Businesses were asked how they heard about the project and their responses are summarised in the table below. Businesses were able to select more than one option from a pre-set list.

How did businesses hear about the project?	Count of responses	Percentage of total responses
University of York	11	28%
Another organisation	10	26%
Another business	5	13%
Scheme marketing	4	10%
Scheme event	3	8%
Can't recall	3	8%
Other	3	8%
Total	**132**	

As shown above the University of York was the most common source, which when combined with marketing and events equates to 46% of responses. This suggests that the University were effective in making businesses aware of the support.

Businesses also heard about the project from other organisations (26%) and businesses (13%). This suggests that the delivery team were effective at making partners aware of the support available, and that partners were sufficiently confident of the quality of the support to refer their clients to it.

Businesses were asked to confirm what support they accessed from the project and the following options were available:

- Attended workshops or webinars.
- Attended masterclasses.
- Attended networking events.
- Attended courses offered by the Lab with other businesses.
- Received one-to-one support from a Creative Technologist.
- Received one-to-one support from a Creative Producer.
- Accessed equipment provided by the Lab.
- Accessed an intern through the Creative Media Lab.
- Registered but then did not access any support.

Businesses were encouraged to select all the options that applied. All 33 businesses answered this question and the table below confirms the number of support elements that businesses accessed.

How many support elements did businesses access?	Count of responses	Percentage of total responses
1 element of support	2	6%
2 elements of support	3	9%
3 elements of support	11	33%
4 elements of support	7	21%
5 elements of support	4	12%
6 elements of support	1	3%
7 elements of support	3	9%
8 elements of support	2	6%
Total	**33**	

As shown above, 85% of businesses accessed three or more elements of support, suggesting that the University offered a coherent package of support and that businesses valued the range of support of offer.

Analysis of the support elements selected by businesses shows that workshops or webinars represented the most commonly accessed support element (18% of total); followed by networking events (16%); then equipment loan (14%).

How many support elements did businesses access?	Count of responses	Percentage of total responses
I attended workshops or webinars	24	18%
I attended networking events	21	16%
I accessed equipment provided by the Lab	18	14%
I had one-to-one support from a Creative Technologist	17	13%
I had one-to-one support from a Creative Producer	17	13%
I attended courses offered by the Lab with other businesses	14	11%
I attended masterclasses	13	10%
I accessed an intern through the Creative Media Lab	8	6%
Total	**132**	

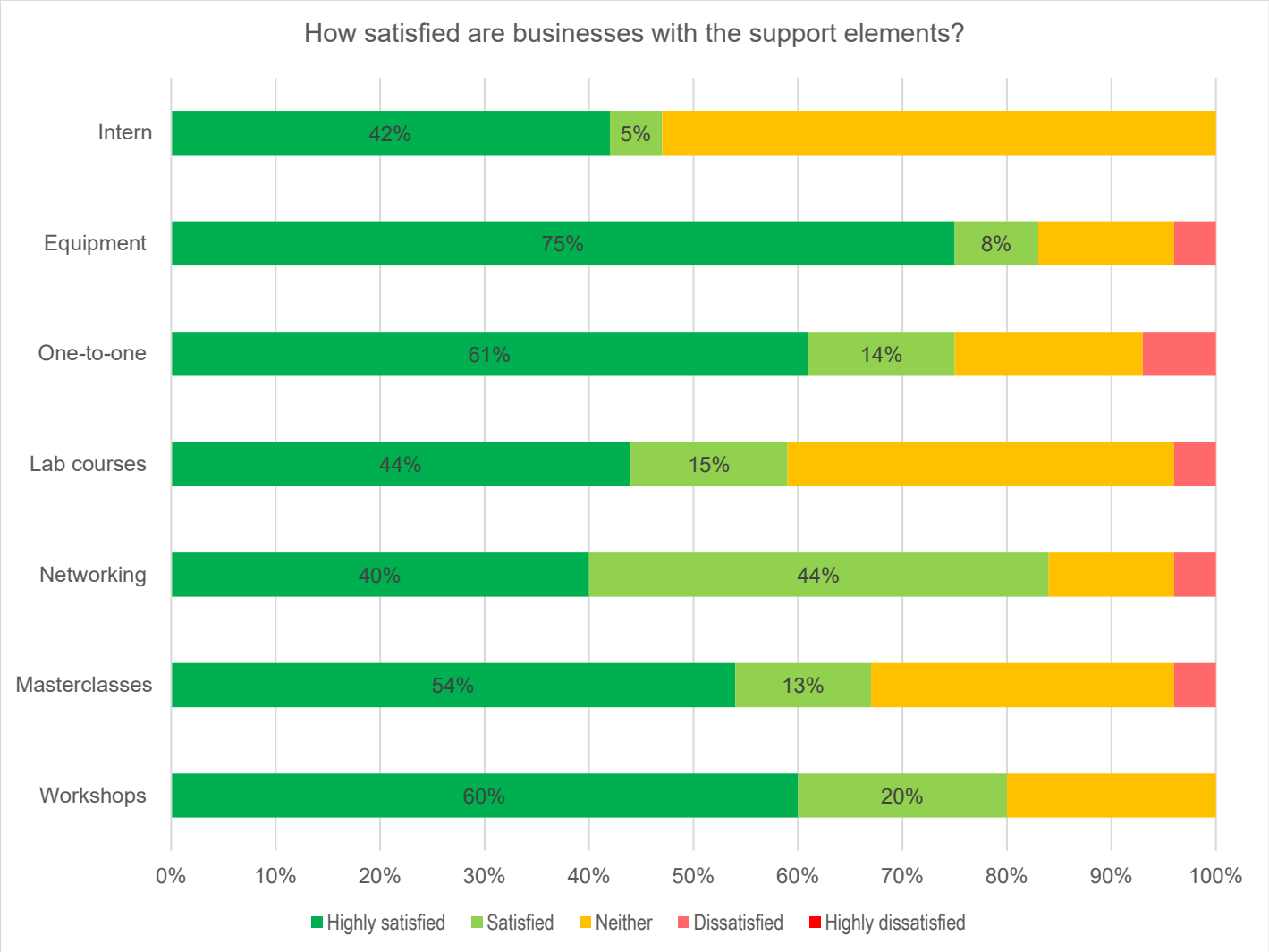
3.1.3 – Satisfaction with support:

Businesses were asked to identify their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following seven elements of support:

- Workshops or webinars
- Masterclasses
- Networking events
- Courses offered by the Lab
- One-to-one support
- Equipment loan
- Intern

The table and chart below provides analysis of responses received.

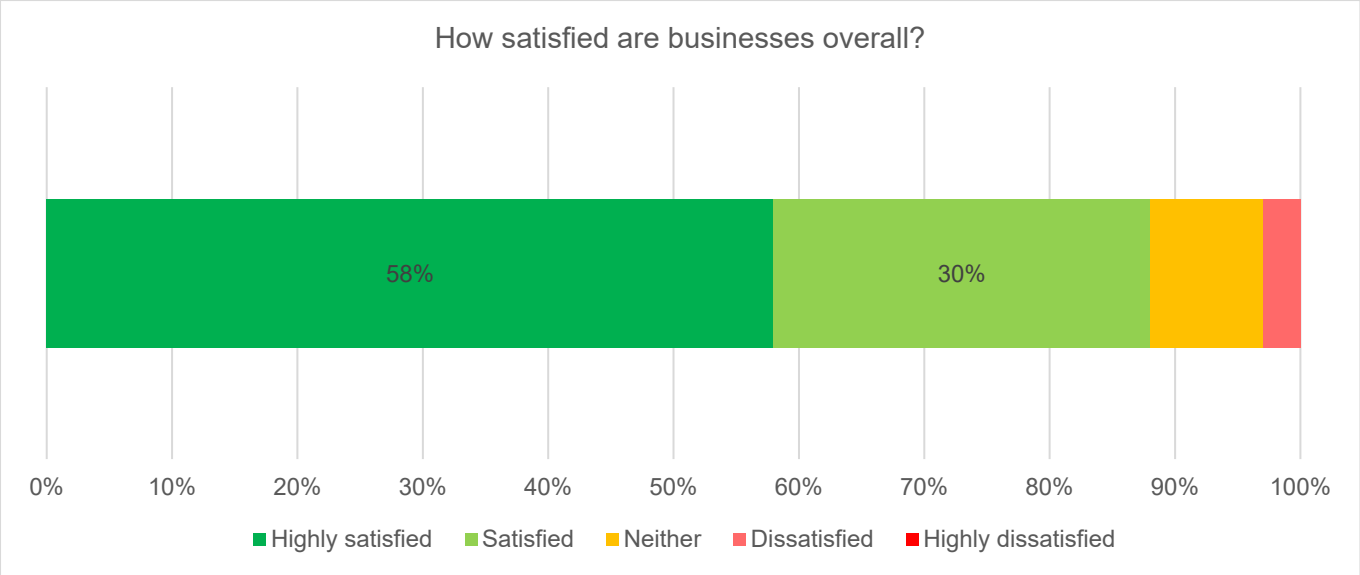
Support element	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
Workshops or webinars	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%
Masterclasses	54%	13%	29%	4%	0%
Networking events	40%	44%	12%	4%	0%
Lab courses	44%	15%	37%	4%	0%
One-to-one support	61%	14%	18%	7%	0%
Equipment loan	75%	8%	13%	4%	0%
Intern	42%	5%	53%	0%	0%



As shown above, satisfaction levels are high across each of the support. When the highly satisfied and satisfied options are combined the following support elements have the greatest satisfaction rating:

- Networking events: 84% satisfaction rating;
- Equipment loan: 83% satisfaction rating;
- Workshops or webinars: 80% satisfaction rating; and,
- One-to-one support: 75% satisfaction rating.

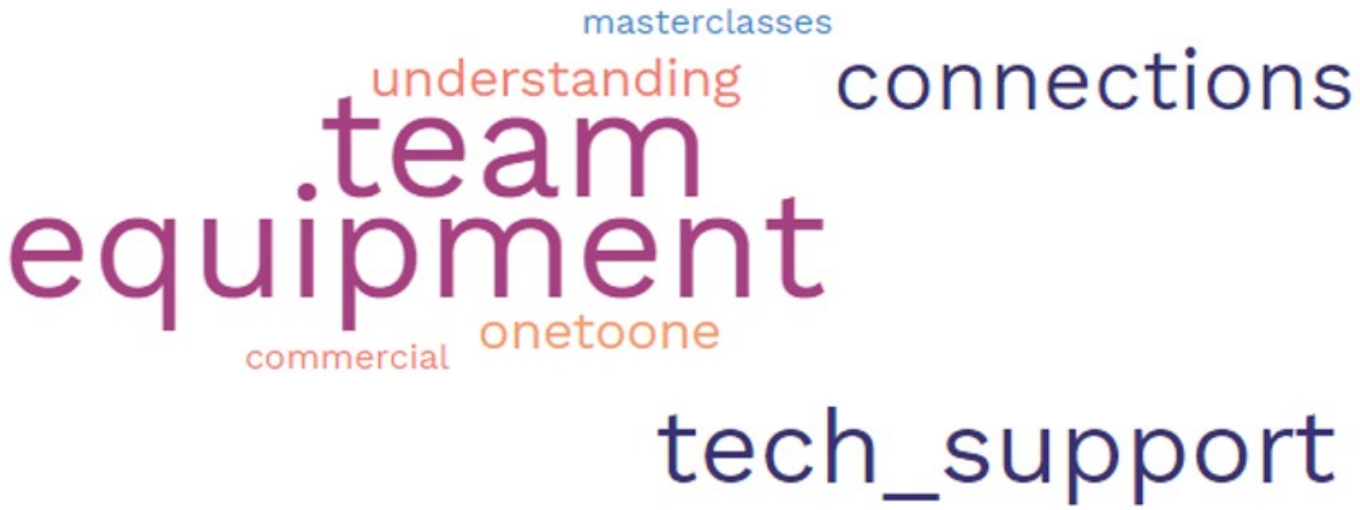
Businesses were also asked to reflect on the support they received in the round and confirm their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction. As shown below, 88% of businesses reported that they were either satisfied or highly satisfied with the support they received. This is an exceptionally high level of satisfaction and is testament to the relevance and quality of support offered by the Creative Media Labs.



Businesses were given the opportunity in the survey to highlight any aspects of the support they particularly valued, and any aspects that could have been improved.

29 businesses provided a response to the question on aspects of support that they found particularly valuable. 13 specific areas were identified by these businesses, and 8 of them were identified by 3 or more businesses as shown in the table below, and word cloud on the following page.

What aspects of support were particularly valued?	Count of responses	Percentage of total responses
Team	10	18%
Equipment	10	18%
Technical support	7	13%
Connections	6	11%
One-to-one	4	7%
Understanding	4	7%
Commercial	3	5%
Masterclasses	3	5%



Comments made that highlight how valuable businesses found the **project delivery team** include:

- '*The one-to-one access to members of the XR Stories team was one of the best parts, sharing ideas and supporting development, it was great.*'
- '*Love how helpful and proactive the team are in nudging you to do things and connecting dots between organisations.'*
- '*The support from the Creative Producer assigned to our project was particularly helpful - they were incredibly knowledgeable and informed and supported the development of our project significantly.*'

Comments in relation to **equipment loan and access** include:

- '*The loan of equipment has been invaluable to us and enabled us to showcase our work where we otherwise may not have.*'
- '*The opportunity to gain practical experience with the equipment and broaden my knowledge of the potential uses of XR within my work.'*
- '*Time in the lab with the Creative Technologist.*'

There were some wider comments which indicate just how valuable businesses found the Creative Media Labs support:

'*For me, the development through Storymode was incredibly valuable - it really built upon story telling skills, and dived deeper into how this technology can be paired with a story to create something more immersive. The one-to-one access to members of the XR Stories team was one of the best parts, sharing ideas and supporting development, it was great.'*

'*I enjoyed seeing the possibilities of the technology (Unity Engine) and exploring/learning the vocabulary of trans media/VR/XR. I appreciated the one-to-one time with the trainers and I enjoyed being with a cohort of people from comparable backgrounds (marginalised communities) to myself.*'

'I loved the story-mode workshops and being able to connect with the others on the programme and discuss ideas. It was a supportive space for exploring ideas which I found very useful. Our Advisor's enthusiasm and engagement with each of our ideas was also really valuable, and I enjoyed the 1:1 sessions we had with her to discuss ideas.'

25 businesses provided a response to the question on aspects of **support that they felt could have been improved**, but 7 of them (28% of the total) simply stated that they couldn't identify anything that could be improved.

10 specific improvement areas were identified, but only 2 suggestions were made by 3 or more businesses which suggests that on the whole respondents were identifying minor issues not experienced by many other businesses. The two areas for improvement identified by more than 3 businesses were:

<u>Easier access to the team:</u>

Comments made that typify this suggestion include:

- '*The support after the initial workshop was difficult to access.*'
- '*More open access to equipment and people.'*
- '*I got a lot out of the course because I actively contacted my tutors outside of the course. To those that struggle with social anxiety etc I'm not sure if they would of got the full benefits of the course.*'

<u>More structure:</u>

Comments made that typify this suggestion include:

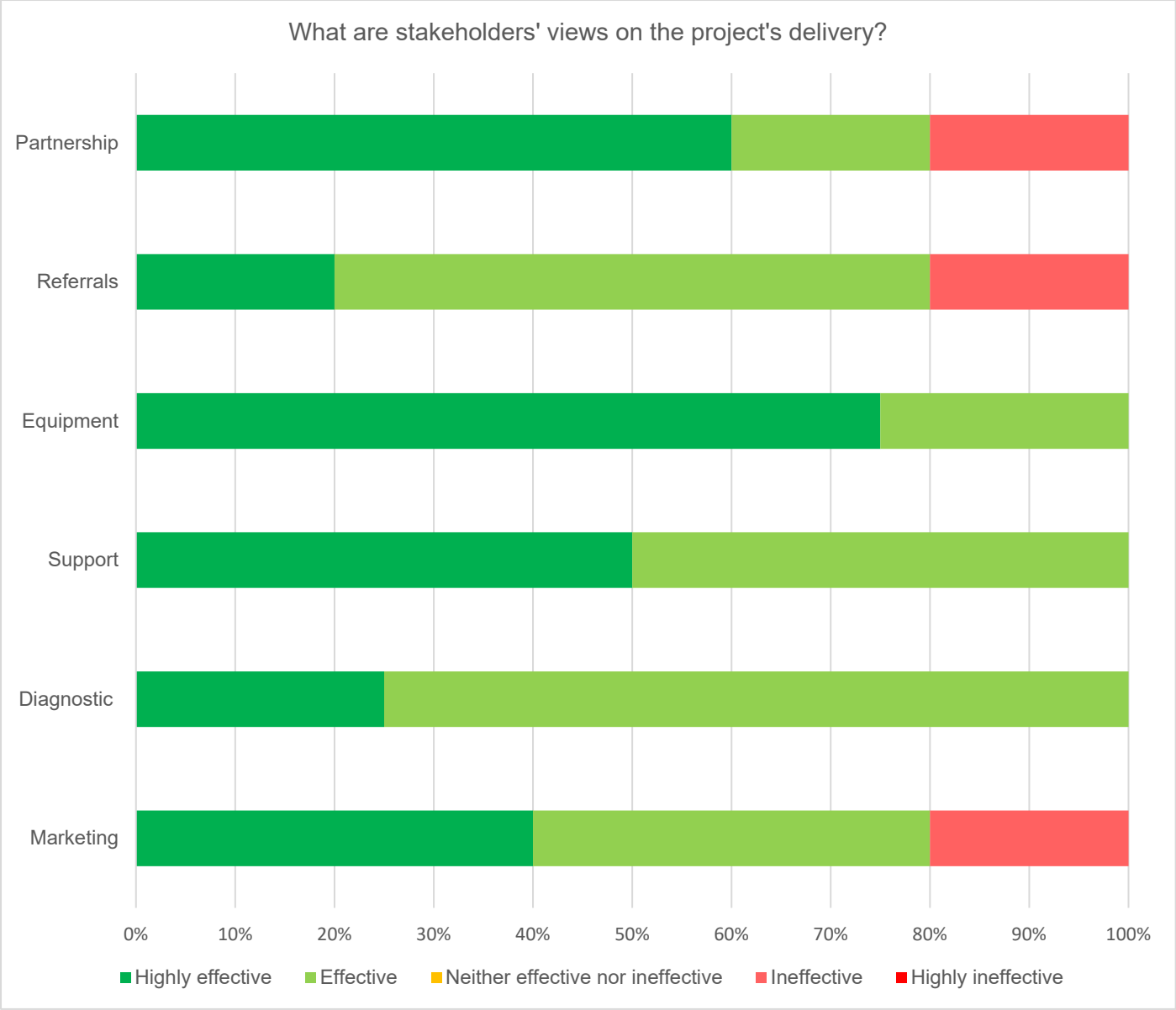
- '*I felt like the networking sessions could have led to more 'getting to know you' opportunities. Some of that happened organically, and some via direct introductions, but I would have likes a more structured scenario along the lines of 'meet these companies and chat for 5 minutes to see if you need to stay in touch.''*
- '*A few of the classes could have been a bit more structured- when learning about specific XR skills there was a lot of time to 'play around' with the equipment but it was hard to try things out with so many others doing the same.'*

These suggested improvements need to be seen in the context of the exceptionally high overall satisfaction rate, and are offered as considerations for future similar schemes.

Stakeholders were asked for their views on the project's delivery. Specifically, they were asked whether they thought the following aspects were effective or ineffective:

- Marketing;
- Initial diagnostic and engagement;
- Delivery of business support;
- Provision of equipment;
- Referrals to other sources of support; and,
- Partnership working with other organisations supporting similar beneficiaries.

Stakeholders' responses are presented in the chart on the following page.



As can be seen, stakeholders were most positive about the following aspects of delivery:

- Initial diagnostic and engagement – 100% of stakeholders felt it was effective or highly effective.
- Delivery of business support – 100% of stakeholders felt it was effective or highly effective.
- Provision of equipment – 100% of stakeholders felt it was effective or highly effective.

There were only three aspects of delivery where any stakeholders felt it was ineffective, namely: marketing; referrals to other sources of support; and, partnership working with other organisations supporting similar beneficiaries.

3.1.4 – Benefits from accessing support:

Businesses were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that they had received benefits as a result of engaging with the project. The benefits are shown in the table below.

Potential benefit	Short description
We have entered or increased our exposure in the screen industries sector.	Increased exposure
We have made new valuable connections.	New connections
We have a better understanding of the capabilities of immersive and interactive technologies.	Understand technologies
We have a better understanding of how to exploit immersive and interactive technologies.	Exploit technologies
We have been helped to overcome barriers to innovation and Research & Development.	Overcome barriers
We have begun to develop new products, services or processes.	Begun R&D
We have launched new products, services or processes (for example a first prototype).	Launched new products
We have created assets which will generate additional revenue in the foreseeable future.	Created assets
We have been signposted to extra funding.	Signposted to funding
We have secured extra funding.	Secured funding

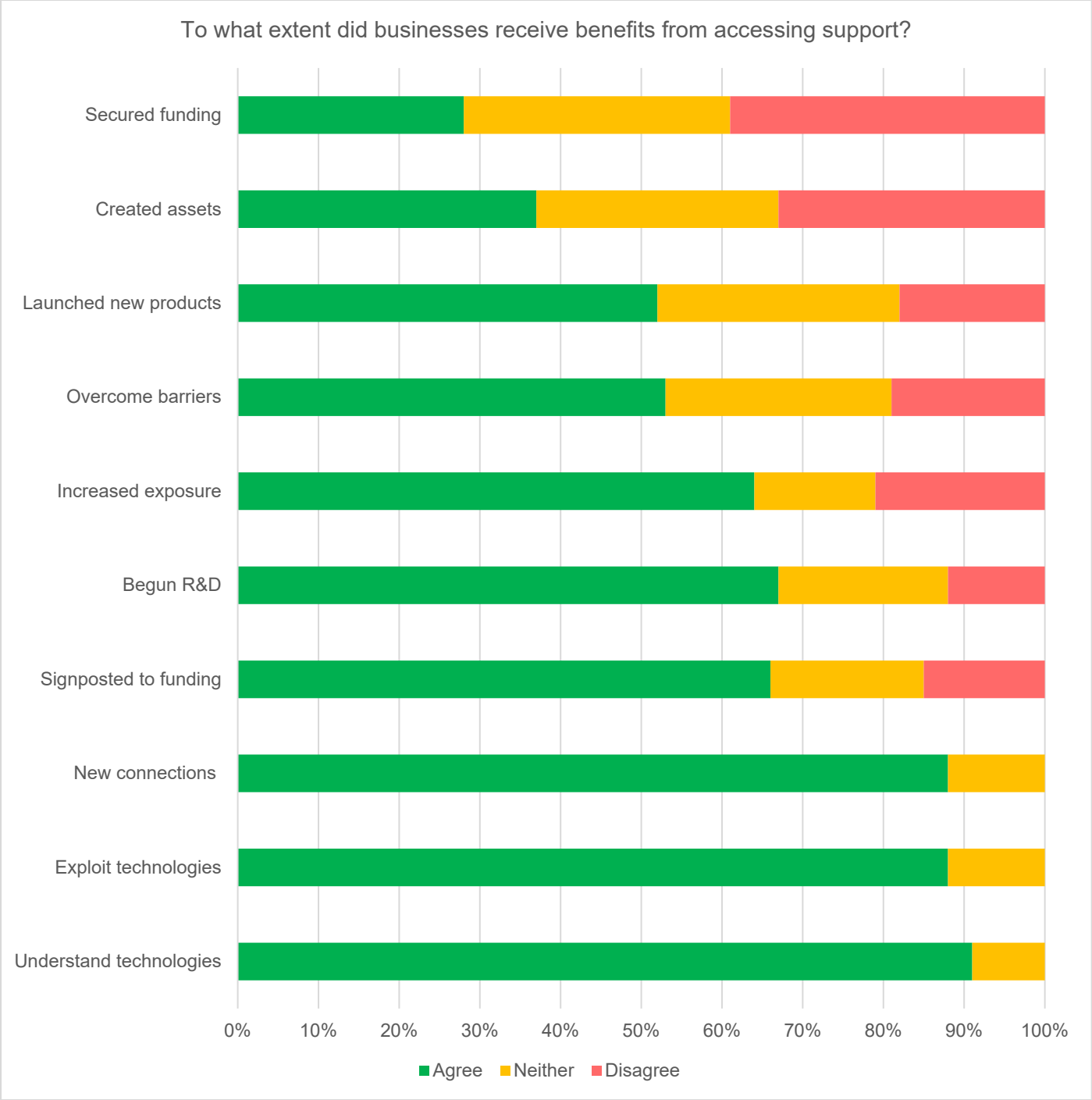
The table below shows the results with agree and strongly agree combined and similarly disagree and strongly disagree combined, to make the data easier to review. The results are ranked by the agree column with the most commonly cited benefit at the top of the table.

Potential benefit	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Understand technologies	91%	9%	0%
Exploit technologies	88%	12%	0%
New connections	88%	12%	0%
Signposted to funding	66%	19%	15%
Begun R&D	67%	21%	12%
Increased exposure	64%	15%	21%
Overcome barriers	53%	28%	19%
Launched new products	52%	30%	18%
Created assets	37%	30%	33%
Secured funding	28%	33%	39%

Over half of businesses agreed that they received all of the benefits listed with the exception of creating assets which will generate additional revenue (just 36% agreed); and, secured funding (just 27% agreed). As shown in the table above, the top 3 benefits identified by businesses are:

- 91% agreed that 'we have a better understanding of the capabilities of immersive and interactive technologies.'
- 88% agreed that 'we have a better understanding of how to exploit immersive and interactive technologies.'
- 88% agreed that 'we have made new valuable connections.'

These findings highlight that Creative Media Labs has delivered a wide range of deep benefits for supported businesses. The chart on the following page provides a visual representation of these results.


To what extent did businesses receive benefits from accessing support?
Secured funding
Created assets
Launched new products
Overcome barriers
Increased exposure
Begun R&D
Signposted to funding
New connections
Exploit technologies
Understand technologies
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Agree
Neither
Disagree

3.1.5 – Change in turnover and employment levels:

The survey asked businesses whether their turnover and employment levels had risen following support from Creative Media Labs. Businesses that indicated that either turnover or employment levels had already risen, or were expected to rise, where asked to provide actual figures for 2021/22 and forecast figures for 2023/24.

Firstly, in relation to **turnover**, 33 businesses answered the question asking whether their turnover had risen. 4 (12% of the total) stated that their turnover had already risen, and 17 (52% of the total) expected that their turnover would rise in the future. 15 businesses provided turnover data for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and on average these businesses forecast a turnover rise of £55,206. On average they attribute 27% of this rise to the support they receive, this equates to £14,906 of turnover rise.

In relation to **employment levels**, 33 businesses answered the question asking whether the number of staff they employ had increased. 2 (6% of the total) stated that their employment levels had already risen, and 10 (30% of the total) expected that the levels would rise in the future. 12 businesses provided employment data for 2021/22 and 2023/24 and on average these businesses forecast a rise of 1.17 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff over this period. On average they attribute 11% of this rise to the support they receive, this equates to 0.13 FTE.

In a related question businesses were asked the following question: '*in terms of the turnover and staff level impacts detailed above, which of the following statements best describes your opinion of the scheme's impact?*' Businesses were given 5 options and the 19 responses received are outlined in the table below.

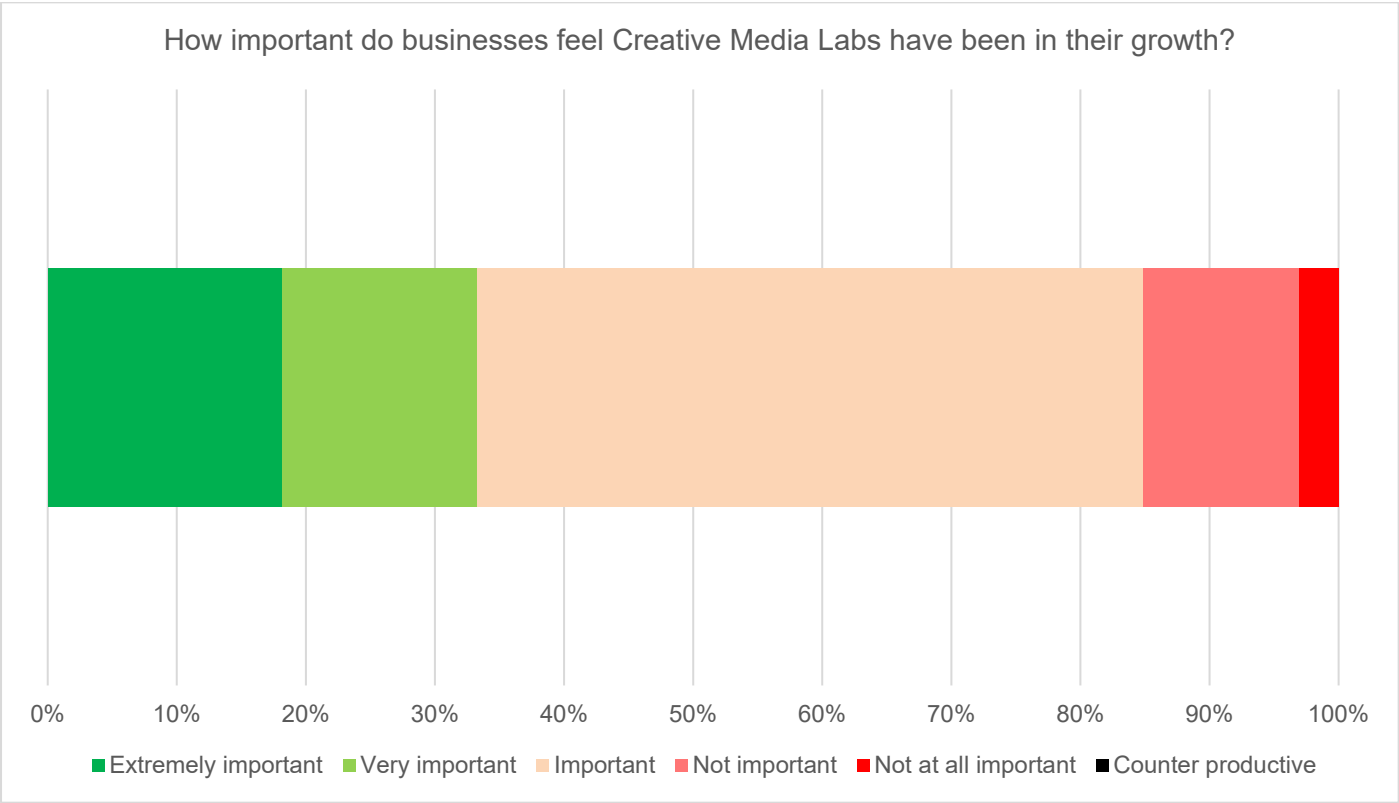
Additionality of impact	Count	Percentage of responses
We would have achieved similar results anyway (without the Creative Media Labs).	1	5%
We would achieved similar results (without Creative Media Labs), but not as quickly.	6	32%
We would have achieved some but not all of the outcomes (without Creative Media Labs).	6	32%
Probably would not have achieved similar outcomes (without XR Stories).	6	32%
Definitely would not have achieved similar outcomes (without XR Stories).	0	0%

As can be seen, the majority of businesses feel that they would have achieved some similar results, but perhaps not as quickly (64% of total when option 2 and 3 are combined). However, nearly a third of businesses selected the fourth option and confirmed that they would probably have not achieved similar outcomes without the support they received.

A related survey question asked businesses to indicate 'how important or unimportant has the Creative Media Labs been for the growth of your business?' Businesses were given the following options to select:

- Extremely important;
- Very important;
- Important;
- Not important;
- Not at all important; or,
- Counter productive.

The chart below provides analysis of the responses received from the 33 businesses that completed the survey. As indicated below, 85% of businesses selected either the important (52%), very important (15%) or extremely important (18%) option.



Finally, the survey asked businesses whether following support from Creative Media Labs they had gone on to invest further in immersive and interactive technologies to develop new products, services or processes. 33 businesses answered this question and 14 of them (42%) had gone onto invest more. These 14 businesses had collectively gone onto invest £227,500, which equates to £16,250 per business.

3.2 – Business case studies:

This section provides case studies based on one-to-one interviews completed by the evaluation team.

Business name:	Lást Maps	
Business overview:	Lást Maps was incorporated in September 2018 and is a design studio that specialises in heritage style ink. The business produces work celebrating adventure and the natural world, and telling the stories within these spaces. It specialises in drawing maps, creating custom artwork and brand identity. Lást Maps' mission is to capture the magic of a place, the excitement of adventure and to raise conservation awareness. They also work closely alongside environmental charities to engage their supporters and raise money for their mission, including The Nature Conservancy and Wildfish.	
Engagement:	Lást Maps' founder Thomas Moore became aware of Creative Media Labs through earlier networking with XR Stories Senior Creative Producer, John Rose-Adams. Thomas was interested in delivering an immersive experience in a British vineyard tour and taking the business in the screen industries sector, using technology to deeply enhance a story. At the point that he engaged with Creative Media Labs Thomas lacked information on the latest technology and access to finance represented a further barrier.	
Support:	Thomas attended Creative Media Labs's Storymode initiative taking part in 4 round table masterclasses with 10 other beneficiaries. At the end of these masterclasses Lást Maps was given the opportunity to pitch for funding to take its project idea forward to research and development and was awarded £5,000 to complete 3 months of Research and Development for a concept to develop an interactive pirate treasure hunt experience focussed on the centre of York. Equipment was made available to help Thomas gain first-hand experience of working with a range of technologies including Virtual Reality equipment, access to the camera suite and lighting. Thomas reported that he benefitted hugely from experimenting with this equipment and technology. Thomas reported that the Storymode masterclasses were incredibly valuable to him and profoundly influenced his thoughts on how to take the new product forward. The direct access to Creative Media Labs team was a key part in developing and delivering the new project. Thomas highlighted that he was supported by a Creative Technologist who brought many ideas to the fore and fully supported the development of an interactive pirate treasure map around the City of York. Thomas highlighted that that Nikki Stearman, Creative Producer, played a huge part in bringing the concept to fruition. Thomas could not fault the Creative Media Labs project design and delivery in any way. His idea developed from a sparkle of a wish into an ever more ambitious project with an immersive 12 point pirate treasure hunt through York, following the main character Bonny, with 3 treasure points successfully trialled using 30 participant testers to achieve proof of concept. Thomas was highly satisfied with all aspects of the Creative Media Labs support.	
Impact:	With proof of concept successfully complete there is now need to convert the proposal and data into a purpose designed app which will bring the treasure hunt to life.	

	Thomas is in discussions to procure a developer and app development finance is under way. Through the Creative Media Labs programme Lást Maps has increased its knowledge and exposure in the screen industries sector, made significant connections, and increased understanding of capacity of immersive and interactive technologies and how to exploit them. When completed the treasure hunt app will be an asset to the business as well as visitors to York, local businesses and the area's visitor economy. Whilst turnover and staff levels have not changed to date, turnover is forecast to rise by at least 10% once the app is fully launched.
Follow-on support & investment:	Thomas is still receiving support from the University of York and the XR Stories team through introductions to app developers, businesses, organisations, York Civic Trust and York Business Improvement District team, initiating collaborative opportunities and invites to networking events.
'*Engagement by Lást Maps in the Creative Media Labs programme, particularly the Storymode masterclasses, was incredibly valuable - it really built upon my story telling skills, and took me deeper into how technology can be paired with a story to create something more immersive giving it greater impact. One-to-one access to the Creative Media Labs team was one of the best parts, with reciprocal sharing of ideas and supporting development, it was great.*' **Thomas Moore** – *Director, Lást Maps*	

Business name:	Sustainable Arts in Leeds C.I.C (SAIL)	SAIL
Business overview:	SAIL was incorporated as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) in March 2020, following the formation of a member network of Leeds based creative and cultural sector organisations, individuals and students in 2018, with the purpose of sharing sustainability challenges and opportunities as a network. SAIL members work together to take action on the climate emergency as a collective, with a vision of creating a zero carbon and zero waste future for the cultural and creative industries of Leeds.	
Engagement:	Looking to exploring a new avenue of work, SAIL applied for the XR Stories R&D Climate Change Challenge with the concept of developing an immersive R&D experience based around their Carbon Literacy Training: merging immersive storytelling and climate education. SAIL was successful in this funding bid, and was one of 3 organisations awarded £25,000 to deliver a proof-of-concept. The XR Stories R&D fund provided SAIL with an opportunity to explore a new avenue of work through an experimental process, taking an initial idea and creating a finished proof of concept product. As an output, SAIL produced an R&D Climate Challenge Project between May 2022 and November 2022, delivering one zone of its Home Planet feature titled, 'The Future We Choose', an immersive climate change education experience. Through this project, SAIL hoped to achieve deeper understanding of possibilities for delivering its mission and assistance with so doing and delivering further zones of its Home Planet series.	
Support:	SAIL's Project Coordinator, Helen Brook attended workshops organised by the Creative Media Labs team with topics including fundraising. Helen attended networking events such as the Beyond Conference, supported by the Creative Media Labs team. Helen and SAIL were supported by John Rose-Adams and Melodie Ash, and Helen highlighted that the support is on-going and highly valued. SAIL accessed equipment provided by the Creative Media Labs including headsets, gaming laptops and VR technology. Support from the Joe Rees-Jones, Creative Technologist, and Melodie Ash, Producer, was particularly helpful and crucial. Helen highlighted that John and Melodie were incredibly knowledgeable and informed offering significant support and bringing value to development of the project. In every regard SAIL was totally satisfied with all aspects of the support offered by the team. Helen could not identify any aspect that could be improved, and confirmed that the Creative Media Labs support absolutely met SAIL's needs.	
Impact:	Through the R&D project, SAIL developed 'Zone 3: The Future We Choose', just one zone of 'Home Planet', a multi-zonal climate education experience. Zone 3 blends eXtended Reality (XR) and creative storytelling, backed by evidence-led research to create an interactive VR experience that explores the potential impacts of flooding. Following engagement with the Creative Media Labs, SAIL is in the process of showcasing and rolling out the immersive experience whilst looking for a funder to facilitate delivery of the full multi-zonal experience. Showcasing extends as far as attending the OECD Global Forum on Technology in Paris in June 2023. SAIL successfully completed a key R&D project, increased its exposure in the screen industries sector, made valuable connections, gained knowledge of capabilities and	

	ways to exploit immersive and interactive technology, developed and delivered new products and created an asset to generate revenue and increase capacity to take the SAIL mission forward. Turnover has already risen and further growth is forecast. Helen indicated that SAIL would not have achieved similar outcomes without Creative Media Labs support. Engagement has grown SAIL's profile in the region and beyond, opening up opportunities and potential for future collaborations. SAIL raised its profile through being invited to attend the BEYOND 2022 conference and being asked to feature on a panel and convey its experience of communicating climate change using innovative sustainable technologies. Following successful R&D SAIL completed its proof of concept, showcasing that engaging audiences through creativity can produce powerful emotions and lead to behaviour change.
Follow-on support & investment:	Support has not stopped since the end of the Creative Media Labs programme with SAIL regularly in contact with the XR Stories team regarding relevant funding and project opportunities. SAIL's goal is to find further funding to take completion of the Home Planet series to a conclusion, and begin roll out to a public audience, to educate audiences with what it would mean to take no action now.
'Engaging with Creative Media Labs was a brilliant experience for our development, giving us the opportunity to experiment with developing a proof-of-concept XR experience aligned with our core purpose. We were able to showcase the concept that creative communication can have significant strengths in communicating climate change effectively with audiences. The legacy of these initiatives has strengthened us as we seek funding to develop the full zonal experience of Home Planet and physical installation elements to complete an immersive creative experience that communicates climate change in an impactful, engaging and empowering way.' **Helen Brook** – *Project Co-ordinator, SAIL*	

Business name:	Skipton Camerata Ltd	SKIPTON BUILDING SOCIETY CAMERATA Professional music Made in Yorkshire
Business overview:	Skipton Camerata Ltd was incorporated in September 2009 as a charitable company limited by guarantee. Skipton Camerata is North Yorkshire's only professional orchestra and it is the Orchestra in Residence at Skipton Town Hall. Since 2004 Skipton Building Society has been the orchestra's main funder which included support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, project funding is raised to deliver productions and events. Skipton Camerata's primary purpose is delivery of live classical music of a national standard, particularly in areas of limited provision across Yorkshire with aims remove barriers that preventing, or restrict engagement by its diverse community with classical music.	
Engagement:	Ben Crick, the founder of Skipton Camerata was made aware of the Creative Media Labs through engagement with Tanya Vital Digital Producer of Vital Culture UK through engagement with Bradford City of Culture 2025 in early 2019. Being a keen Dales runner, climber and underground explorer Ben had the idea of taking Skipton Camerata's orchestral music, paired with filming in the Yorkshire Dales and delivering an immersive experience to those who unlike him were unable to access one, or both of his passions. Ben did not have the technological knowledge, expertise and equipment to convey the joy he experienced of adventure in the Dales, enhanced by the Orchestra's performances, and sought assistance from Creative Media Labs.	
Support:	Ben attended 2 workshops reflecting his needs, they were: Unity Design delivered by Brightblack with XR Stories; and, 360 degree filming. Ben had some photography skills, and in-depth skills in music and sound recording, but needed support in other critical areas. He was assisted by Joe Rees-Jones who indicated what equipment could be accessed through the programme, and provided detailed hands-on training. Joe also advised on cameras best suited to the project which Skipton Camerata then purchased. Skipton Camerata accessed a range of equipment through the project to enable them to develop a proof of concept for the Classical Dales project, including 4 virtual reality headsets and high-definition 360 recording equipment. Ben highlighted that he was entirely satisfied with the support received through the Creative Media Labs and its delivery team. Ben highlighted that Joe took a deep professional interest in the project, and was always on hand with technical advice and support. Ben stated that Joe excelled in delivering expertise, ideas and enthusiasm in an easily understandable manner. Ben most valued the technical advice, and expertise, production skills and equipment availability. If anything could have been improved from Ben's point of view it would have been in relation to improving his basic knowledge at the outset. Ben felt that he had a large gap in his knowledge compared to other beneficiaries of the project. Ben feels that he would have benefitted from a pre-workshop tutorial to raise his knowledge starting point.	
Impact:	Creative Media Labs support enabled Skipton Camerata to create its Classical Dales project and achieve proof of concept status. The need is now for funding to purchase equipment to deliver the production across Yorkshire's communities.	

	To this end Skipton Camerata has applied to XR Stories for a £20,000 award to roll out the Classical Dales programme in effect taking as an immersive experience a full symphony orchestra production, set to Yorkshire Dales visuals to the public across the County to encourage participation by all to access the beauty of music and Yorkshire. Skipton Camerata has a booking to showcase the Classical Dales production for 3 months in March 2024 in Skipton Town Hall before taking it around Yorkshire in venues such as care homes, schools and workplaces. It is anticipated that Classical Dales will become an income stream for the business. With a better understanding of the capabilities of immersive and interactive technologies Classical Dales could be mirrored to cover other orchestral and video productions to increase cultural engagement at low cost, thereby producing a growing asset base that will make the Orchestra more sustainable and resilient giving rise to further employment opportunities in the Yorkshire music production sector. With support from Creative Media Labs, Skipton Camerata has moved into a totally new field of engaging with audiences and making orchestral music available to many in a transformational way. Immersive delivery also gives the opportunity to compose particular works for the orchestra to deliver to suit different audiences, thereby creating more cultural experiences for listeners and orchestra members alike. Music and nature individually and together deliver improved well-being and health outcomes at many levels.
Follow-on investment:	Since they first engaged with the project Skipton Camerata has invested, or plans to invest, around £10,000 in technology including camera equipment, headsets, recording gear, tripods and more to facilitate taking the orchestra to people rather than getting people to the orchestra. Ben attributes 25% of forecast rise in turnover to the support received from the Creative Media Labs.
'Our engagement with Creative Media Labs was transformational. It resulted in our orchestra being able to be virtually taken to audiences rather than them come to us in Skipton. The project has removed barriers presently limiting engagement. Creative Media Labs support has been superb. Success of our Classical Dales production will enhance our growth and resilience for future generations to enjoy.' **Ben Crick** – *Founder, Skipton Camerata*	

Business name:	York Civic Trust	York Civic Trust
Business overview:	York Civic Trust was founded in 1946 to preserve, protect and advise on the historic fabric of York including encouraging participation in cultural activities. The Trust operates the historic museum, Fairfax House, and has 13 members of staff, 5 of which are full-time. The Trust benefits from several hundred engaged volunteers and a membership of over 1,000 people.	
Engagement:	Duncan Marks, York Civic Trust's Civic Society Manager attended a Digital Creativities workshop at the Guildhall in June 2022, and in a round table discussion outlined the idea to enhance delivery of the Trust's heritage aims using digital technology. Duncan was made aware of the Creative Media Labs and immediately made contact. The Trust has been fixing commemorative plaques in memory of historical places and people on buildings since the late 1940's. There are well in excess of a hundred plaques spread around the city the majority marking buildings, or places of interest, but there are many recognising influential people with York connections. Plaque installation is on-going at a rate of around every year. The Trust's website has details of each plaque. The descriptions are detailed and contain in some cases around 2,000 words. Duncan's inspiration was to convey the importance of each plaque to an observer standing in front of it using digital technology, but he had no idea of how to achieve this aim.	
Support:	Following initial meetings between York Civic Trust and the Creative Media Labs team it was agreed that an intern from the University of York, would be placed with the Trust for 12 weeks to help them develop the idea. The intern, Edmond Wei was key to the successful outcome of the plaque digitisation project. His creativity, innovation, enthusiasm and knowledge fused with that of the wider Creative Media Labs team to deliver a unique product. The Trust indicated the 4 key messages they wanted conveyed for each plaque, and the project goal was to complete digitisation for 2 prototype plaques conveying the story behind each to someone standing in front of it using their mobile phone. Edmond and Duncan were closely supported by Nikki Stearman and Joe Rees-Jones from Creative Media Labs. Duncan was very satisfied with the support received through the plaque digitisation project. Many obstacles were overcome using the combined team's technical expertise, knowledge, skills and innovative approach. Duncan reported that THE Trust benefited immensely from the Creative Media Labs pre-application meetings, imparting of grant possibilities, project scoping, submission of the application and assistance with selection of the intern. Creative Media Labs gave tailored support to the intern, including induction, access to equipment and office space, weekly guidance meetings and facilitating testing of the prototypes. York Civic Trust welcomed the flexibility of support from Creative Media Labs tailored to the internship and their own needs. Duncan indicated the genuine interest from the XR Stories team in the internship project delivery was obvious throughout and there were no areas that could have been improved from the Trust's point of view.	
Impact:	The heritage plaque digitisation project goal was to complete 2 plaques conveying the story behind it in around 30 seconds to people using a mobile phone. Many lessons were learned during the development and delivery of the project, practical and technical which will be used to influence delivery of further plaque digitisation.	

	Real life testing is taking place during in summer 2023 to gain feedback and resolve issues to ensure the experience is the best it can be and fit for purpose. The delivery of this project has led to York Civic Trust modifying its criteria for installing new plaques ensuring they will be better suited to heritage based digitised information conveyance. The Civic Trust is now looking to work with Creative Media Labs and local poet, Kitty Greenbrown, to bring the heritage blue plaques of York alive. Engagement with the Creative Media Labs team provided physical professional resource, technical knowledge, expertise, focus, advice and confidence of a deliverable idea. Duncan highlighted that York Civic Trust would have struggled to reach the goal on its own even with a large budget. Roll out of plaque digitisation will increase accessibility of York's heritage to a much wider audience than at present and will break down barriers to engagement. Creative Media Labs was crucial to turning DM's idea into reality taking heritage of York literally back to the streets.
Follow-on support & investment:	Around £1,000 has been allocated to date to take forward digitisation of a 3rd plaque with an ambition to incorporate sound technology.
'York Civic Trust's engagement with the Creative Media Labs was really beneficial. Without the team we could not have achieved the R&D and proof of concept stages. Our 21st Century heritage experience will enable those walking the streets of York in the future to access blue plaque stories simply by lifting their phone to the plaque.' **Duncan Marks** – *Civic Society Manager, York Civic Trust*	

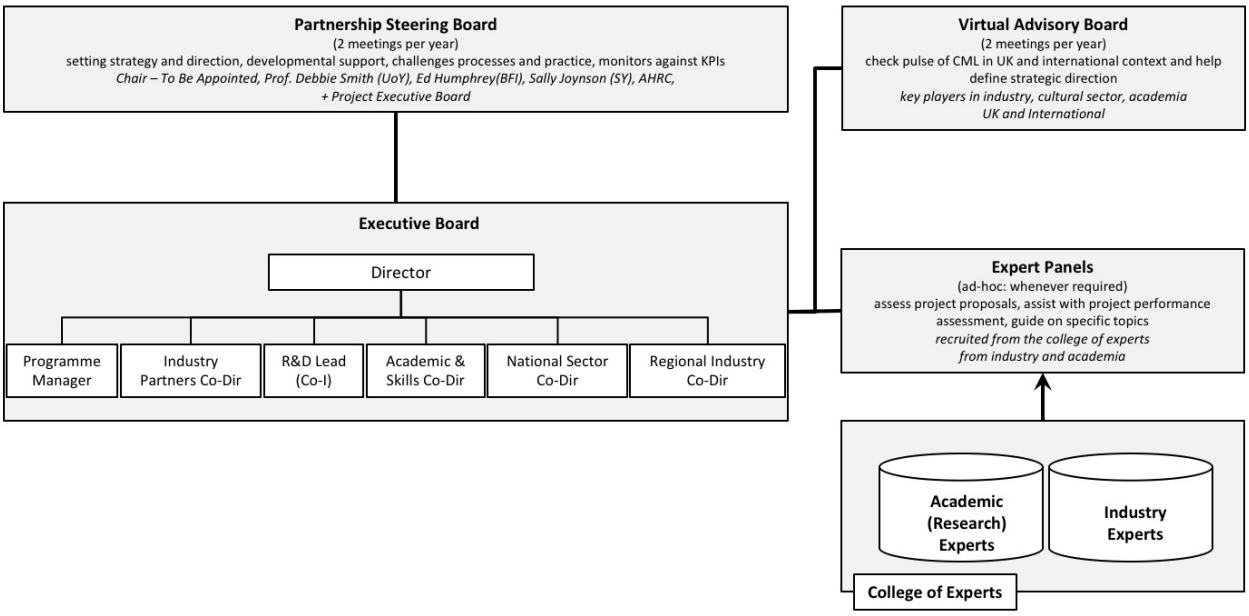
3.3 – Delivery and management conclusions:

The section below addresses the specific prompts issued by the Department (DLUHC) in the Summative Assessment guidance relating to programme performance.

Was the project well managed? Were the right governance and management structures in place and did they operate in the way they were expected to?

The project was well-managed, and as detailed earlier the overall staffing structure changed throughout the course of delivery. Initially, the Creative Producer role was required to deliver support to businesses and manage the project's overall operation. It was felt that this was too great a responsibility and that there was merit in dividing operational management from business support. The staffing structure was therefore amended with the introduction of a Project Manager to oversee compliance, spend and output performance with support from the Administration and Monitoring Officer role. This change proved to be effective and enhanced the project's management.

In relation to governance and management the Full Application detailed that the project forms a '*crucial component in a wider initiative called XR Stories which is managed by an Executive Board, supported by a Delivery Team. The diagram shows the management and leadership structure.*'

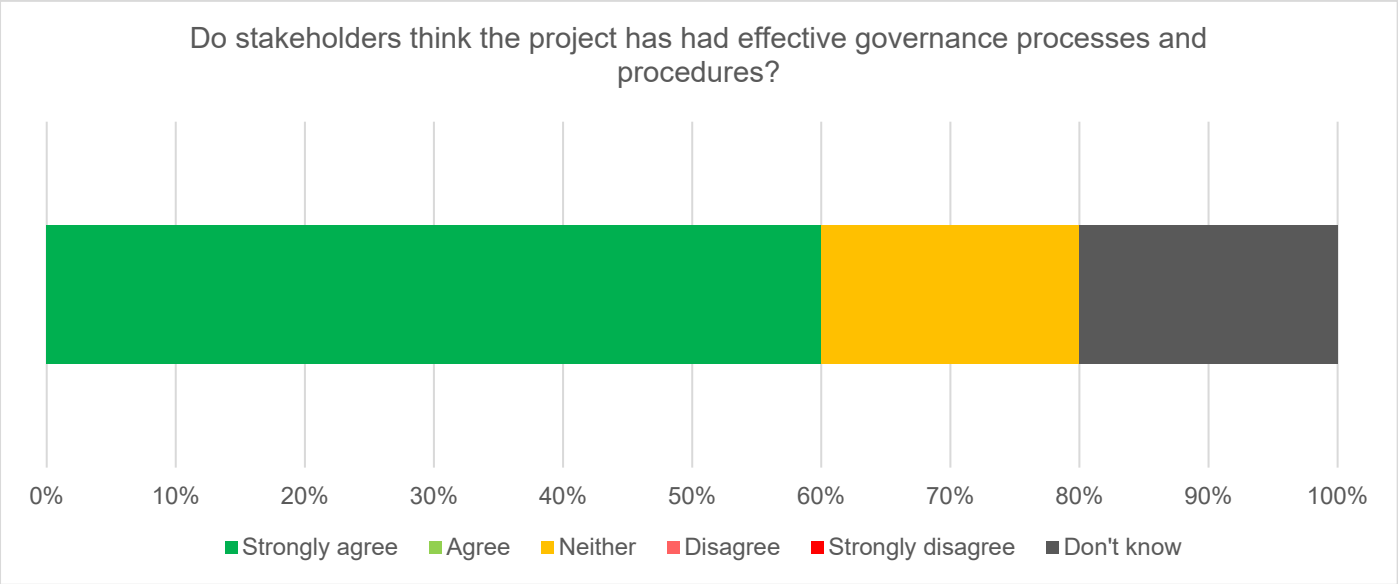


In practice the Partnership Steering Board met twice a year and was responsible for a range of tasks including:

- Setting overall strategy and direction;
- Monitoring and advising on overall budget and any budget changes;
- Agreeing R&D budget over forthcoming periods; and,
- Monitoring delivery against KPIs.

The Executive Board met regularly and was responsible for the day-to-day activities of XR Stories and the Creative Media Labs. Expert Panels were convened for individual calls and competitions (the XR Stories R&D Fund) which each Panel be chaired by the R&D Lead, with at least one other member of the Executive Board, and at least three expert representatives from industry and academia.

Stakeholders were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the '*project has had effective governance processes and procedures?*' As shown in the chart, 60% of stakeholders strongly agreed with 20% selecting neither agree nor disagree, and 20% stating that they did not know.



Has the project delivered its intended activities to a high standard?

As outlined throughout the Chapter, the feedback from business beneficiaries is highly positive with overall satisfaction of 88%. Satisfaction across the different support elements was also consistently high with just the intern area seeing satisfaction below 50%.

Could the delivery of the project have been improved in any way?

As outlined earlier, businesses were asked whether they could identify any aspects of support that they felt could have been improved. 10 specific improvement areas were identified, but only 2 suggestions were made by 3 or more businesses which suggests that on the whole respondents were identifying minor issues not experienced by many other businesses. The two areas for improvement identified by more than 3 businesses were:

- Easier access to the team with comments including '*I got a lot out of the course because I actively contacted my tutors outside of the course. To those that struggle with social anxiety etc I'm not sure if they would of got the full benefits of the course.*'

- More structure with comments including '*A few of the classes could have been a bit more structured- when learning about specific XR skills there was a lot of time to 'play around' with the equipment but it was hard to try things out with so many others doing the same.'*

These suggested improvements need to be seen in the context of the exceptionally high overall satisfaction rate, and are offered as considerations for future similar schemes.

Did the project engage with and select the right beneficiaries? Were the right procedures and criteria in place to ensure the project focused on the right beneficiaries?

The Full Application highlights that the ideal target beneficiaries were SMEs operating in the screen industries sector, or seeking to enter the sector facing barriers to the development of new products, services and processes. The project operated across the whole of Leeds City Region and hence SMEs were sought from each of the Local Authority districts of Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield and York.

Analysis of the survey data provided by 33 businesses shows that the majority of businesses (72%) were located in Leeds or York. This may reflect the higher business density in these two areas and the fact that the project was physically based in York. However, businesses that

completed the survey were located across the City Region including Bradford Calderdale and Craven. The project delivery team made pro-active efforts to attract businesses from across the City Region: an example being the StoryLab programme which was delivered in Bradford.

As highlighted earlier, 58% of survey respondents were already operating in the screen industries sector, with the remaining 42% seeking to enter the sector. This suggests that the project was effective in targeting beneficiaries that were either already in the sector, or seeking to enter the sector.

Analysis of survey data highlights that nearly half of businesses had not used immersive and interactive technologies at all to develop new products, services or processes, and a third had only used them in minor way. 8 out of 10 businesses supported then had very little prior experience of using the technologies offered by the project to support Research and Development (R&D) activities.

The businesses that had not previously used immersive and interactive technologies to support R&D activities were asked why this was the case. The main barrier identified was a lack of information on the technologies (30% of all responses). The project was highly effective at engaging with and selecting the right beneficiaries.

<u>To what extent have the horizontal principles been integrated into and shaped delivery?</u>

In relation to **sustainable development** the Full Application simply provided a copy of the University's Sustainable Development policy. The Policy highlights the University's commitment to '*continuing our progress to make our activities more sustainable in support of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.*'

The evaluation team discussed actions that the project has taken in relation to sustainable development and a number of these were identified. Whilst many of the XR Stories funding calls for the project activity from Screen Industries sector businesses were open calls, one was specifically the Climate Change Challenge[4]. The topic was about ways in which immersive technologies can help convey the climate change message with businesses encouraged to think about innovative ways to change customer behaviours. This is a very good example of ways in which project leads can influence business behaviour within the delivery of a project, and three different extended reality projects were supported including one tackling the hidden pollution of digital consumption and another the impacts of flooding.

At a more operational level, the project team seek to ensure that kit has a more-than-one-time use in terms of the kit for hire, and that kit has multiple uses. There were also resource efficiencies from moving some of the delivery online, although one borne principally out of necessity.

Stakeholders were asked if they could identify '*any ways in which the project has considered Sustainable Development issues?*' Of the 5 stakeholders that completed the survey 2 could identify how the project has considered these issues, 2 could not and 1 was not sure. The stakeholders that could identify how the project had considered sustainable development issues made the following comments:

- '*The project provides a comprehensive range of training and development schemes, designed to create a larger, more diverse, more creative and more entrepreneurial screen industry workforce to ensure that our world-leading research can be adapted and utilised to strengthen the region, support economic activity and promote growth.*'

[4] Challenging climate change perceptions through immersive experiences - XR Stories

- ‘*The project addresses sustainable development through raising the profile of XR industries with Local Economic Partnerships, by investing in training and development of practitioners.*’

In relation to **equality and diversity** the Full Application outlined that a range of commitments including that:

- ‘*The marketing strategy we develop outlines how our marketing and engagement efforts reflect our desire to achieve equality of opportunity.*’

- *‘The project is open equally to men and women, and gender plays no part in the access criteria or activity content delivered.’*

- *‘Where disability or other related factors may act as an impediment, the project team will work closely with the beneficiary company to devise practical and pragmatic ways of addressing the challenge and ensure that the individual concerned is able to make a positive and effective contribution to product and process innovation within the business.’*

- *‘The University regularly gathers and monitors equality and diversity information for beneficiaries throughout the ERDF project and will review this information as a part of the project governance activities. Where it is considered that a potential for an imbalance exists, the project delivery team will implement those adjustments which it considers it can reasonably undertake to achieve the desired outcomes.’*

The evaluation team discussed actions that the project has taken in relation to equality and diversity and again a number of actions were identified. At an operational level, these actions included ensuring opportunities for participation in the Creative Media Labs project were genuinely inclusive, and that potential participants felt comfortable and supported. The Creative Media Labs team focused on equality and diversity within the project and this resulted in increased confidence amongst those asking for support. It took time to truly embed this approach and to build the trust of participants. One example cited, in terms of BAME, was working with the Bright Black Band in London, to widen the diversity of training.

In terms of gender, the mixed gender delivery team was regarded as beneficial in encouraging more women to take part in the project. The team recognised the deficit in women founders in the UK and the under-representation in the immersive technologies, including barriers to going through traditional studio-based approaches.

In considering the issue of equality and diversity, one of the project team members put together an article reflecting on the increasing need for a coordinated diversity approach in the XR sector (The growing need for a unified diversity approach in the XR sector' | BIMA), indicative of the seriousness with which the Creative Media Labs project embraced the issue.

Stakeholders were asked if they could identify ‘*any ways in which the project has reflected equality and diversity issues?*’ Of the 5 stakeholders that completed the survey 2 could identify how the project has considered these issues, 2 could not and 1 was not sure. The stakeholders that could identify how the project had considered sustainable development issues made the following comments:

- ‘*Providing placements across the sector for Black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants, for women, for disabled people, for those from low socio-economic backgrounds, for those who want to return to work after raising a family, and for those identifying as LGBTQ. Making bursaries available for necessities ranging from childcare costs to travel and training.*’

- ‘*Through the partnership with SIGN, opportunities shave been created to address inequalities and lack of inclusion in training and mentoring with the XR and related creative industries.*’

Chapter 4 – Outcomes and impacts

4.1 – Logic model outcomes:

The scheme's logic model has the following forecast **outcomes**:

- Increased in SME turnover; and,
- Increased in SME staffing levels.

This section explores the extent to which the scheme has made progress on these forecast outcomes.

4.1.1 – Increase in SME turnover:

As outlined earlier, the survey asked businesses to confirm whether their turnover had risen following support from Creative Media Labs. 33 businesses answered the question and:

- 4 (12% of the total) stated that their turnover had already risen; and,
- 17 (52% of the total) expected that their turnover would rise in the future.

15 businesses provided turnover data for 2021/22 and 2023/24 and on average these businesses forecast a turnover rise of £55,206. On average they attribute 27% of this rise to the support they receive, this equates to £14,906 of turnover rise. Overall, the project is forecast to assist 56 enterprises by June 2023. Assuming that 64% of them have either seen turnover rise, or will experience a rise, enables us to calculate a total gross rise of £534,231.

This represents the gross position and in order to calculate the net position the evaluation team have adopted benchmark values for the following factors:

- *Deadweight* refers to those outcomes that might have been achieved anyway, in the absence of the support.
- *Leakage* occurs where some outcomes benefit those outside of the target area or group.
- *Displacement* occurs when the benefits are offset by a reduction in outcomes elsewhere in the target area.
- *Substitution* refers to those individuals or businesses that change their behavior to take advantage of public sector assistance (when they might anyway have achieved the outcome with private means).

Where the support did not fall into any of those categories, it is considered an additional contribution (the net impact). The table below converts gross turnover into net turnover rise.

Gross to net factor	Benchmark value		Turnover
		Gross position	£534,231
Deadweight	45.5%	Minus deadweight	£291,156
Leakage	11.5%	Minus leakage	£257,673
Displacement and substitution	32.7%	Minus displacement & substitution	£173,414
Multipliers	1.5%	Plus multipliers	£260,121

As shown above, from 2021/22 and 2022/23 Creative Media Labs is forecast to assist businesses to deliver gross turnover rise of £534,231; and a net turnover rise: £260,121.

4.1.2 - Increased staff levels:

As outlined earlier, the survey asked businesses to confirm whether their employment had risen following support from Creative Media Labs. 33 businesses answered the question and:

- 2 (6% of the total) stated that their employment levels had already risen; and,
- 10 (30% of the total) expected that the levels would rise in the future.

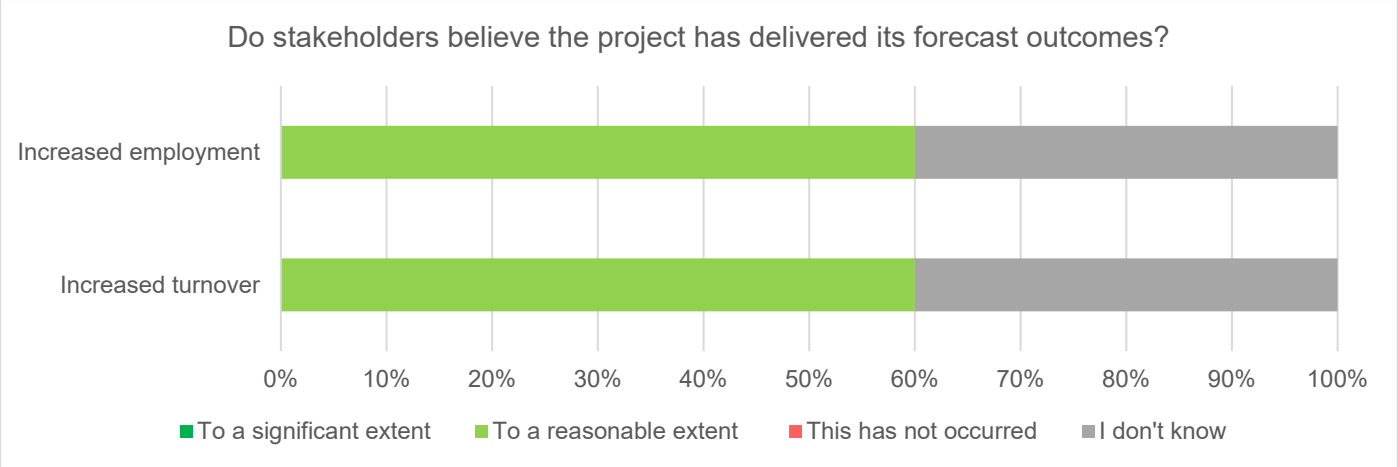
12 businesses provided employment data for 2021/22 and 2023/24 and on average these businesses forecast a rise of 1.17 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff over this period. On average they attribute 11% of this rise to the support they receive, this equates to 0.13 FTE.

The project is forecast to assist 56 enterprises by June 2023. Assuming that 36% of them have already seen employment rise, or will see employment rise, then we forecast a total employment rise across all supported businesses of 24 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. This represents the gross position and the conversion to the net position is shown in the table below.

Gross to net factor	Benchmark value		Employment
		Gross position	24
Deadweight	45.5%	Minus deadweight	13
Leakage	11.5%	Minus leakage	12
Displacement and substitution	32.7%	Minus displacement & substitution	8
Multipliers	1.5%	Plus multipliers	12

As shown above, from 2021/22 and 2022/23 Creative Media Labs is forecast to assist businesses to deliver a gross employment rise of 24 FTE; and, a net employment rise of 12 FTE.

Finally, stakeholders were asked to identify the extent to which the project had delivered on the forecast outcomes of increased turnover and increased employment.



As shown above, the majority of stakeholders (60%) felt that the project has delivered the two forecast outcomes to a reasonable extent, with the remaining 40% stating that they didn't know.

4.2 – Logic model impact:

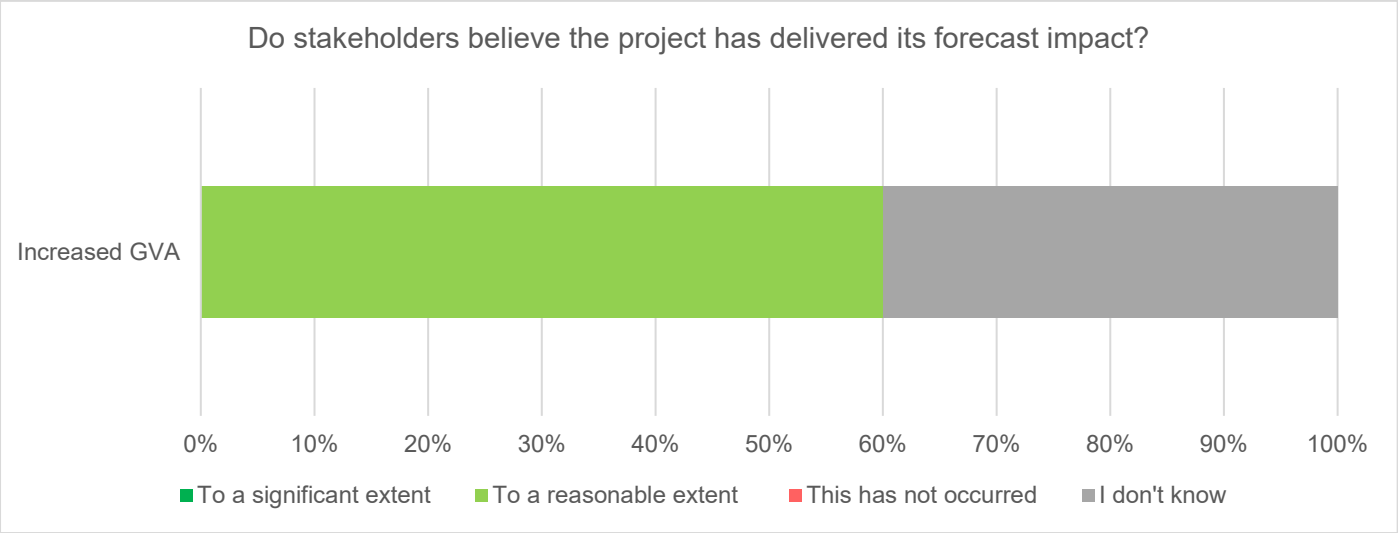
The logic model forecasts the following forecast **impact**: increased Gross Value Added (GVA) captured through Summative Assessment. This section explores the extent to which the programme has made progress on this forecast outcome.

As identified in Section 4.1, Creative Media Labs has assisted businesses to create 24 gross FTE jobs from 2021/22 and 2023/24. This converts to 12 net FTE jobs over the same time period. Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (Sub-Regional Productivity, estimates from Table B4: Nominal (unsmoothed) GVA (B) per filled job (£) for West Yorkshire in 2020) shows an average GVA per filled job of £50,581. The table below sets out the project's gross and net impacts in relation to employment increase and Gross Value Added.

Indicators	Gross to net factors	Leeds City Region	
		Measure	Adjustment
Employment (FTEs)	**Gross**	**24**	
	Deadweight	13	45.5%
	Leakage	12	11.5%
	Displacement / substitution	8	32.7%
	Multipliers	12	1.5%
	Net additional	**12**	
Gross Value Added (GVA)	Gross	**£1,213,944**	
	Deadweight	£661,599	45.5%
	Leakage	£585,516	11.5%
	Displacement / substitution	£394,052	32.7%
	Multiplier	£591,078	1.5%
	Net additional	**£591,078**	

As shown above, from 2021/22 and 2023/24 the project is forecast to assist businesses to deliver gross GVA of £1.2 million which converts to £0.6 million net GVA. Costs per impact can be derived for increases for GVA. As identified earlier, total forecast project expenditure is £1,178,209. The **return in net GVA is therefore £0.50 for every pound of expenditure**.

Finally, stakeholders were asked to identify the extent to which the project had delivered on the forecast impact and their responses are shown in the chart below.



As shown above, the majority of stakeholders (60%) felt that the project has delivered the forecast impact of increased GVA, with the remaining 40% stating that they didn't know.

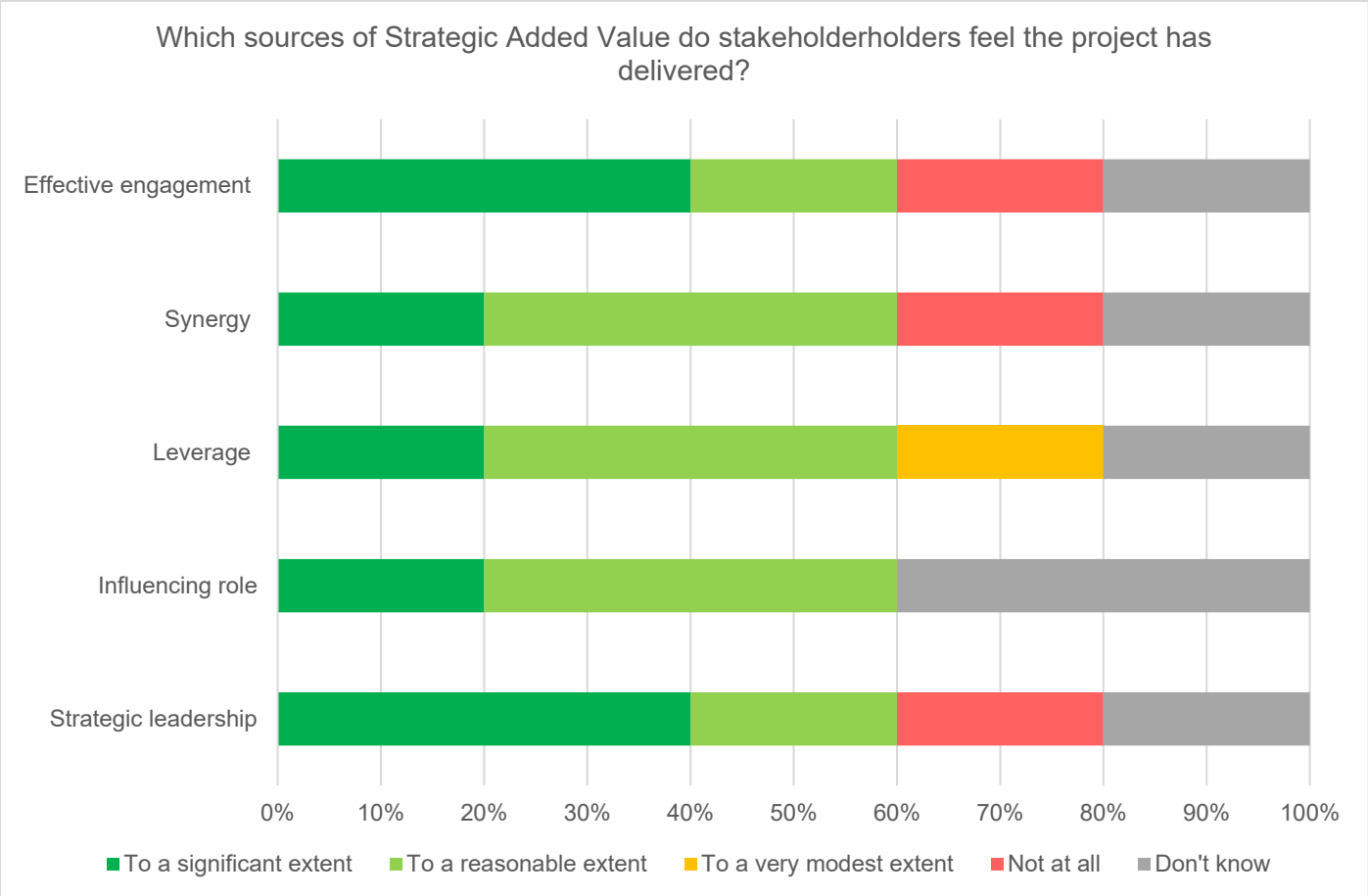
4.3 – Strategic Added Value:

The section below addresses the specific prompts issued by the Department (DLUHC) in the Summative Assessment guidance relating to outcomes and impact. Stakeholders were asked whether they felt Creative Media Labs had delivered the five components of Strategic Added Value (SAV), which are:

- Delivered a **strategic leadership** role by articulating regional development needs to partners & stakeholders in the region and elsewhere.
- Delivered an **influencing** role by getting partners to commit to shared strategic objectives and to allocate resources accordingly.
- Achieved **leverage** by providing incentives to mobilise partner and stakeholder resources.
- Achieved **synergy** by co-ordinating activity with partners and stakeholders.
- Achieved effective **engagement** by engaging partners & stakeholders in the Programme's design and delivery.

The table and chart below contains the analysis of the responses received to this question.

SAV	Significant extent	Reasonable extent	Modest extent	Not at all	Don't know
Strategic leadership	40%	20%	0%	20%	20%
Influencing	20%	40%	0%	0%	40%
Leverage	20%	40%	20%	0%	20%
Synergy	20%	40%	0%	20%	20%
Engagement	40%	20%	0%	20%	20%



As shown above, 60% of stakeholders felt that each of the five sources of Strategic Added Value had been delivered to a significant, or reasonable extent. Stakeholders were most positive about the extent to which the project had:

- Delivered a **strategic leadership** role by articulating regional development needs to partners & stakeholders in the region and elsewhere; and,
- Achieved effective **engagement** by engaging partners & stakeholders in the Programme's design and delivery.

4.4 – Outcomes and impact conclusions:

The section below addresses the specific prompts issued by the Department (DLUHC) in the Summative Assessment guidance relating to outcomes and impact.

What progress has the project made towards achieving the outcome and impacts set out in its logic model?

As outlined in Section 4.1, the project has made strong progress on the two forecast outcomes of increased SME turnover levels and increased SME employment levels. Analysis of data gathered through the online survey highlights that on average supported businesses will gain a rise in turnover of £55,206 from 2021/22 and 2023/24. Over the same time period supported businesses 1.17 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff

On the forecast impact of increased GVA, the project is forecast to have facilitated gross GVA of £1.2 million which converts to £0.6 million net GVA.

Stakeholders were also asked to identify the extent to which the project had delivered on the forecast outcomes and the majority of stakeholders (60%) felt that the project has delivered the two forecast outcomes to a reasonable extent, with the remaining 40% stating that they didn't know. In relation to the forecast impact again the majority of stakeholders (60%) felt that the project has delivered the forecast impact of increased GVA, with the remaining 40% stating that they didn't know.

To what extent are the changes in relevant impact and outcome indicators attributable to project activities?

As outlined earlier, a range of questions were included in the survey to determine the extent to which the outcomes and impacts could be attributed to project activities. Firstly, businesses were asked to identify the proportion of any change in turnover and employment levels they would attribute directly to the support they received. In relation to turnover on average businesses attribute 27% of this rise to the support they received, and in relation to employment the equivalent figure is 11%.

The survey also asked businesses: '*in terms of the turnover and staff level impacts detailed above, which of the following statements best describes your opinion of the scheme's impact?*' Nearly a third of businesses confirmed that they would probably have not achieved similar outcomes without the support they received. A related survey question asked businesses to indicate '*how important or unimportant has the Creative Media Labs been for the growth of your business?*' 85% of businesses said the project support was either important (52%), very important (15%) or extremely important (18%).

What are the gross and net additional economic, social and environmental benefits of the project?

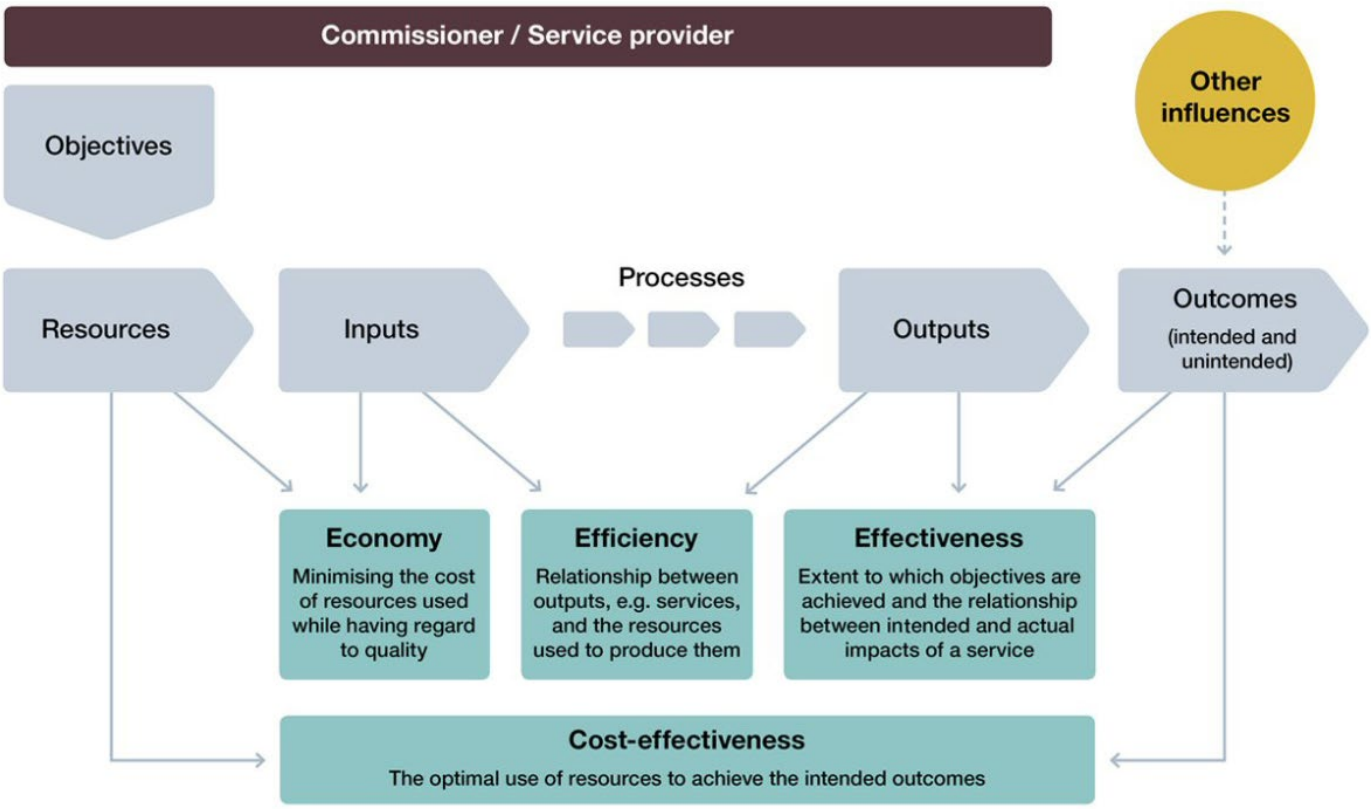
As outlined above, the project is forecast to have facilitated gross GVA of £1.2 million which converts to £0.6 million net GVA.

What are the main sources of Strategic Added Value that the project has created?

60% of stakeholders felt that each of the five sources of Strategic Added Value had been delivered to a significant, or reasonable extent. Stakeholders were most positive about the extent to which the project had delivered a strategic leadership role; and, achieved effective engagement.

Chapter 5 – Value for money

The National Audit Office (NAO) recommends that value for money assessments analyse economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The NAO's logic model is provided below.



Firstly, with regard to **economy**, the University of York procured equipment and suppliers through competitive procurement processes. This ensured that the market had been effectively tested. Price was a major factor in decisions on submitted tenders, and value for money was evaluated.

As outlined earlier, the project is forecast to spend £1,178,209 which is 91% of the full spend. The majority of the minor under-spend relates to the salaries budget with factors including that the initial budget for salaries was larger than required; there were periods where posts were vacant; and, that underspend in the salaries cost category led to underspend in the indirect costs category as the two are linked.

With regard to **efficiency**, the unit cost for businesses assisted (output C1) based on the original Funding Agreement targets was £43,204 (£1,296,130 / 30). This reflects that the project was providing high intensity support to a small number of businesses to help them develop new products, services and processes.

In practice the project will assist 56 businesses at a total cost of £1,178,209. This delivers an improved unit cost of £21,039. National benchmarking, undertaken by Regeneris in 2013, confirmed a mean average unit cost of £34,000 for medium intensity business support programmes. Creative Media Labs's unit cost is lower than this national benchmark and provides higher-intensity support.

Effectiveness assesses the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives through the outputs and outcomes being generated. Firstly, the actual outcomes and overall impact delivered were strongly in line with the intended impacts outlined in the logic model. As outlined

earlier, on average businesses supported by Creative Media Labs are forecast to deliver a rise in turnover of £55,206 from 2021/22 and 2023/24, and a rise in employment levels of 1.17 FTE over the same time period. On the forecast impact of increased GVA, the project is forecast to have facilitated gross GVA of £1.2 million which converts to £0.6 million net GVA.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

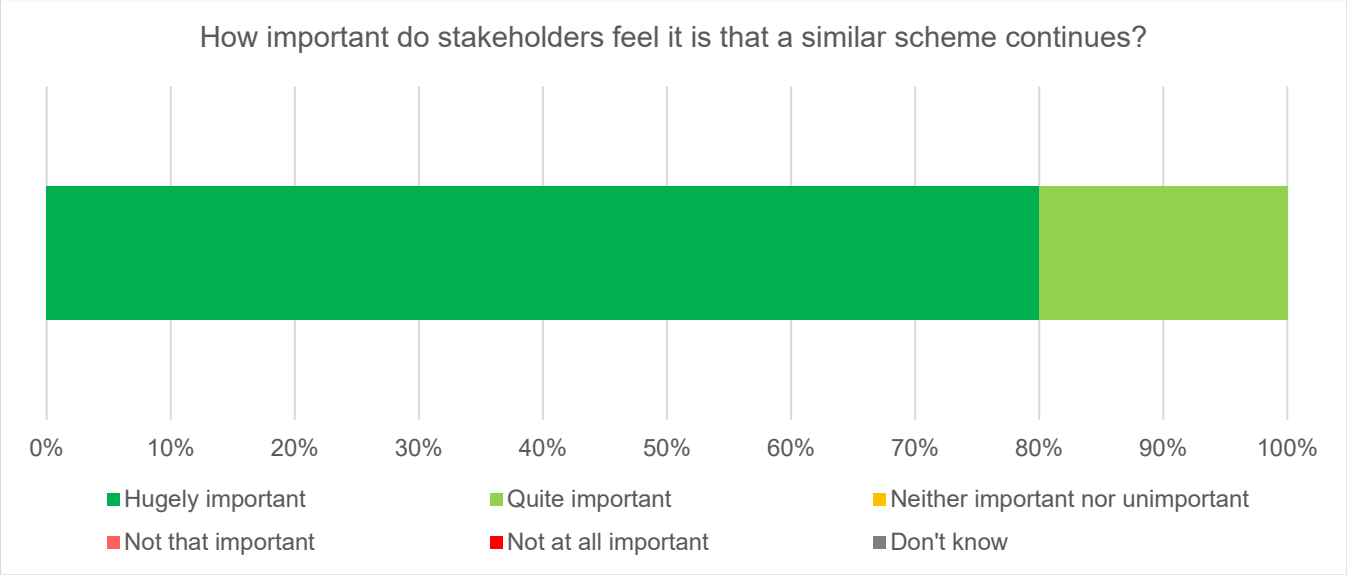
6.1 – Conclusions:

This section provides a summary of the main strengths and weaknesses identified through the Summative Assessment as suggested in the guidance provided by MHCLG.

Project rationale	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
➢ The project had a clear rationale outlined in the Full Application and logic model. The project sought to help businesses develop new products, services and processes for the screen industries sector using immersive and interactive technologies.	➢ There are no significant weaknesses in relation to the project's rationale.
Project design	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
➢ The scope of business support activity was well designed and in practice the project has largely delivered the customer journey set out in the Full Application. However, the project delivery team has added one-to-many activities which were not scoped in the Full Application, but have added real value and enabled the target for businesses assisted to be exceeded.	➢ The staffing structure set out in the Full Application could have been scoped more effectively. In practice, a Project Manager was appointed to focus on operational management and this has proved to be very effective. The two separate roles for Administrator and Monitoring Officer planned in the application were combined in practice.
Project activities	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
➢ A major strength is that 78% of businesses assisted that had no, or very little, prior experience of using immersive and interactive technologies to develop new products, services or processes. ➢ The project activities were delivered effectively and overall satisfaction is high at 88%. Satisfaction with individual elements of support is also high with the most valued aspects being networking events (84%); equipment loan (83%); and, workshops (80%). ➢ Businesses were asked what they most valued about the support and the main themes were the project delivery team, and the equipment loan and access.	➢ Businesses were asked what areas of delivery could have been improved and the two main areas suggested were easier access to the project and a greater level of structure in some of the group activities. These are not major weaknesses and need to be see in the context of very high satisfaction levels.
Project management and governance	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
➢ The project was well managed and the delivery team has taken a very pro-active and effective approach to the targeting of beneficiaries, enabling many output targets to be exceeded. ➢ The project had robust governance structures within the wider XR Stories programme.	➢ The staffing structure at the start of the delivery was perhaps not optimal and evolved over the course of delivery. The team structure that evolved is highly effective with a good capacity and an effective split of roles and responsibilities.

Project outputs, outcomes and impacts	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
➢ Creative Media Labs is on track to exceed many of the output targets, and will deliver 56 businesses assisted (C1) against a target of 30. ➢ The project has performed well on the forecast outcomes of turnover and employment change at supported businesses; and, delivery of Gross Value Added across Leeds City Region.	➢ The project has not met the employment rise (C08) output but, as outlined earlier, this output was added by the funder following the submission of the Full Application and was arguably not appropriate given the project's nature. The reasonably modest level of employment rise evident through the survey confirms that short-term employment rise is not an effective measure of the project's success.

Stakeholders were asked '*how important do you 'believe it is that support remains available from June 2023 onwards to help businesses in the screen industries (film, games, TV, performance, arts & live events) to increase R&D and innovation?*' Their responses are shown in the chart below.



As shown above, all stakeholders felt it important that a successor scheme is delivered, with 80% of stakeholders stating that this was hugely important. Stakeholders were asked if they could identify any aspects that a similar future scheme should do differently, given that it won't have the same funding guidance to follow. 2 stakeholders provided the following suggestions:

- Make the support that is available clear and accessible.
- Engage with stakeholders of a wide range and share what resources and expertise you have to a wider audience.
- More flexibility around who can access support and services

6.2 – Lessons for delivery partners:

Given the Creative Media Labs project was delivered by the University of York, there are limited lessons from delivery partners. That said, the effectiveness of the project, for example in reaching across the Leeds City Region, are a result of the working arrangements between the University of York and partners through the wider XR Stories project. This works through a hub model, with centres in parts of the region such as Bradford which reflect the local demographic context. These networks developed through the wider XR Stories project have allowed the University of York to promote the Creative Media Labs project effectively.

Further, the strong partnership and governance arrangements for XR Stories (with the involvement of the AHRC, Screen Yorkshire, British Film Industry etc.) has ensured there is credibility in the Creative Media Labs project, which itself opens up opportunities for further XR Stories R&D and other support.

6.3 – Lessons for other organisations:

6.3.1 - Project design:

The Creative Media Labs project was designed very effectively and the team investigated projects in operation to learn what worked well, examined gaps in support locally and ran some pilot activity to test demand. The following lessons are offered:

- That a mid-project review would be beneficial. The team valued the chance to take stock and reflect on performance as part of this evaluation, with the evaluation team providing insight from the survey of beneficiaries. A mid-project review could be used to refine or amend project design. In this case, the team were interested to see how beneficial businesses found the networking opportunities within the project; earlier knowledge of this would have enabled the team to build in more networking into the project.

- By extension of the above, new start/early stage creative industries businesses really benefit from sharing experiences and the ability to 'spark off' one another. Creating these opportunities was a highly valuable part of the project.

- That, for this sector and in these circumstances, grant funding would have been good to offer. The majority of businesses were micro-businesses with financial barriers to innovation, which the project was not able to address. That said, there were considerable advantages arising from the speed of response that the project team was able to deliver, and this ability to be 'fleet of foot' was of benefit to the project. Administering grant funding can raise business expectations, and to time consuming to implement.

- That in future a broader definition of what constitutes support is developed. In terms of what counted as support towards an output (see lessons for policy makers below).

- That, for this sector and support, the high value, low intensity support approach was appropriate (rather than higher volumes with lower levels of support). The projects businesses were developing were complex, high level projects which required the team to spend time with the business.

6.3.2 - Project delivery:

Creative Media Labs has been delivered effectively and the following lessons are offered:

- There is a need, in a project of this nature, to have physical lab premises for businesses to trial kit and to test ideas and develop projects. This is best as a series of hubs/labs, as is the approach via the wider XR Stories.

- In terms of support for businesses, the Creative Media Labs project did not set any upper limit on support, even well after 12 hours of support had been provided. With hindsight, in delivery terms, there should have been an upper limit, allowing more resources to extend to more participants.

6.4 - Lessons for policy makers:

A number of broader lessons for policy makers are identified, as follows:

- That in future a broader definition of what constitutes support is developed. In terms of what counted as support towards an ERDF output, only meetings were eligible, whereas the Creative Media Labs project team provided a lot of support between and in advance of meetings in the form of document review and feedback, desk-based research to support business project ideas and development and follow-up. This could be some of the team's most valuable input, and take considerable time, although the 'support' was not direct.

- That experienced delivery organisations, such as the University of York for the Screen Industries, are able to identify the support the industry needs without projects and programmes having unnecessary restrictions and conditions. In the case of the Creative Media Labs project, the University of York was able to design a project to good effect, despite the ERDF regulations. Further, more clarity and help in interpreting the guidance would have been beneficial.

- The inclusion of an employment creation target in the project outputs was, arguably, reflective of a lack of understanding of the project and sector. A non-financial project offering 12 hours of support was unlikely to lead to businesses creating new posts; particularly from new project ideas that were likely to require further development and where the business base is dominated by sole traders (collaborative models were much more likely where more than one business comes together around a specific project).