THE UNDERSTORY

THE SELECTION BID BOOK OF LEMESOS 2030 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE - CANDIDATE CITY



Photograph by Pavlos Vrionides, *'Τοπο-Γραφιές ΙΙ'*, courtesy of Vivliotropio

CONTENTS

2–3 INTRODUCTION

4–13 CHAPTER 1
CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

14–55 CHAPTER 2
CULTURAL & ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

56–66 CHAPTER 3
EUROPEAN DIMENSION

67–74 CHAPTER 4
OUTREACH

75–94 CHAPTER 5
MANAGEMENT

95–97 CHAPTER 6
CAPACITY TO DELIVER

NOTES FOR THE READER

'letters in coloured italics'
are direct quotes of Lemessolians.

All partners mentioned under each project have confirmed their participation or intention to collaborate. In the rare case we have initiated communication but did not yet receive the final confirmation, you will see (tbc) after that partner's name.

When referring to the region around Cyprus, we use the terms Southwest Asia (SWA) and in extent SWANA to include North Africa, the Levant, or Eastern Mediterranean.

Naming Kosovo in our partners is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Q1

Concept

The Understory is where the heart of Lemesos 2030 beats. It is our concept, our playground, and our way of telling a European story from the ground up. It is where hidden voices, overlooked communities, and untold stories are given space and care.

As we deepened and expanded our outreach actions, crisscrossing the broader Lemesos municipalities, **we didn't just share our concept, we bonded over it**. People instinctively connected with the notion of *'the real story behind the façade'*, recognising their own lived experiences within it.

The Understory emerged from the organic rhythms of our communities. This collaborative refinement has been crucial. It was only due to the ECoC bid and the prospect of being designated as a European Capital of Culture that a space opened for people to speak their mind. The bidding process signalled that the city can still heal. It created the conditions for The Understory to emerge and be named.

As one participant beautifully put it, *'in order to make a 'story', you need to involve the characters that live in the 'under''*. This sentiment powerfully affirmed our approach: that the true richness of Lemesos, and even Europe today, resides in the untold and hidden layers of their diverse populations. For many, The Understory means to tell *'the stories under the storeys'*. The idea to represent *'what isn't heard', 'what is overpowered'* and the *'third stories'* that exist beyond official narratives, became our guide and motivator, and an increasingly relevant bigger story.

This is why The Understory remains the concept nurturing Lemesos 2030 and the vision behind it.

In Lemesos, we witness something impacting many European cities: a boom and a transformation that elevates buildings and urban landscapes, but risks leaving people and cultural heritage behind. Lemesos has become, as our Mayor put it, *'a city of two speeds'*: one of capital, investors, high-rise buildings, fast urban development, and another of workers, artists, immigrants, and long-time residents struggling to find space -both physical or cultural- in the city they call home.

Yet, in the two-speed city, life still pulses. Stories still form. Communities still create. Quietly or fiercely resilient, deeply vital. The Understory connects the life of neighbourhoods, immigrants, artists and everyday creators with the skyline of accelerated development. It responds to gentrification, inequality, and eroded trust with **culture as daily practice** - belonging, creating, collaborating, including.

Our European Capital of Culture is about empowering communities to flourish, challenging division, creating uplifting cultural experiences, and safeguarding plurality. By 2031, we imagine a city buzzing with inspiration, humanity and openness: a thriving Understory. This process needs healing time, self-definition and a **CITY IN THERAPY** - our first programme line.

We are in the third year of a bidding process, in a city that continues to develop at dizzying speed, situated in a region filled with loss and violence. We are yearning to succeed, and we are consciously, fiercely choosing fight over flight. Connected to our concept, we are fueled by hope and persistence. In fact, every day **we choose to remain hopeful**, to focus on our potential, continue growing and building our capacities in collaboration, and make this ECoC journey count.

We have moved on to crystallise and take first actions addressing some of our most pressing challenges - for Lemesos 2030 as an organisation and for the ECoC taking place in the city. These include primarily our capacity building focal points, projects linked to schools, and matters of accessibility for which we have established a more holistic plan in collaboration with the city's long-term strategy.

Having the Organisation Lemesos 2030 already set up meant that we could move efficiently and respond to many points of the pre-selection jury report. We have already increased staff numbers to support the demanding final phase and prepare for the possibility of winning.

We have revisited our cultural and artistic programme, met with organisations from our previous Targeted Call, issued a second one, developed projects and built



collaborations further with Europe and beyond. The role of Lemesos 2030 has become more concrete as either an implementation leader of some projects, a facilitator for others, or a critical friend and support system for purely independent processes. Criteria for open calls and selecting future projects that are closely connected with The Understory -including European Understories- are now a core feature of how our cultural and artistic programme will operate.

We also went to the literal understory, the underbrush of Lemessolian forests and rural areas, and looked closer at our core environmental challenges. Urban development and non-stop building sprawls all over the Lemessolian district next to lack of rain and increased consequences from extreme wildfires and drought. And we have seen again what Lemesos' best qualities can be: Instant solidarity with people being evacuated and losing their homes to the fires; pizza joints bringing food in the middle of the night; supermarkets opening at night and providing water. That is what we want to bring out, and not only in emergencies: The Lemessolian energy to add to the European diversity. The positivity of The Understory.

We invited neighbouring municipalities to join our effort, aiming to decentralise cultural participation further and address shared challenges.

The **Municipalities of Amathounta and Kourion** joined our programme through targeted partnerships and future open calls, ensuring that our common experiences combined with their unique cultural traits are woven into the overall programming of The Understory. Strategic collaborations of the three coastal municipalities -Lemesos, Kourion, Amathounta- also benefit projects that expand along the coastline or in neighbourhoods, giving us practical solutions for the use of areas that cross municipal boundaries, and smoother collaborations with district stakeholders and organisations.

Finally, we have deepened our concept's European dimension, both as an idea and as a practice. The Understory is not just for Lemesos. It is a story for Europe, a European story that we are eager to tell. Cities are facing the same fractures across borders, and Europe is facing extreme challenges of polarisation, overshadowed perspectives and needs. Increasing numbers of Europeans are losing faith in democracy and Lemesos 2030 is on a mission to **set democratic examples that concern communities not politics, people not companies, lives not buildings**.

Lemesos proposes an exercise of plurality, of connection for what has been fragmented: diverse communities, hidden talents and parallel realities that rarely intersect. We still need to unlearn patterns of living that no longer serve us, to make new decisions, to propose and try new forms of collaboration... and then learn anew.

We are still closer to Beirut than Brussels. From here, we can tell a different kind of European story. One where culture becomes the driver, not the afterthought. We believe there's another way forward, and we need the European Capital of Culture to pull this off.

With the ECoC, we can ensure that Lemesos and Europe leave no one behind. That all stories matter.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Q2

Cultural Strategy and ECOC

Although we have not changed the strategy, we have not stood still. In the past few months, certain shifts within the municipality have already been powered by the **Cultural Strategy (CS) 2024-2034** (Council-approved in November 2024), utilising the momentum and demands of the final phase for Lemesos 2030. A new Cultural Officer position for the Municipality and a position of Curator of Municipal Cultural Spaces are to be filled by the end of 2025. Both positions will significantly support work on the ECoC.

CS 2024 - 2034 unfolds Lemesos's long-term vision and expands on a practical action plan to reimagine the role culture can play in transforming the creative architecture of our city alongside the European Capital of Culture activities.

Spaces, Capacity Building and Sustainability were identified as the main intersectional challenges of the cultural ecosystem in Lemesos, leading to the three main pillars of the strategy:

A. **Activating the Arts and Creative Economies** focuses on strengthening the city's cultural ecosystem through more inclusive decision-making, capacity-building, reformed funding models, and sustainable collaboration across physical and digital spaces, with a successful ECoC 2030 as the core milestone and springboard for legacy.

B. **Connecting Communities / Inclusive Development** outlines a more equitable cultural landscape by improving access to space, challenging exclusion, and acknowledging its diverse histories and populations in shaping the city's cultural present and future.

C. **Supporting Relationships and Synergies** strengthens cultural industry ecosystems through education, local and international networking, cross-sector collaboration, and shared leadership.

How can Lemesos 2030 be the spark? How the city's Cultural Strategy and the Lemesos 2030 vision and programming act together as cross-pollinators:

1. Beyond-the-urban development

Lemesos must choose how it grows. Perhaps we cannot stop gentrification, but we can **cultivate places for soft resistance**. Through ECoC, we aim to contribute to an urgent European dialogue about cultural cities, as well as an alternative plan for creating fairer, more human-centred futures rooted in cultural democracy and interconnectedness, and a progress that empowers cultural and artistic expression. **This isn't a rejection of growth, but a redefinition of its purpose**, and a strategy towards a **healthy cultural ecosystem**.

2. A daily art habit

Through ECoC, **art becomes a daily, visible, and participatory habit**, which grows between neighbours and across neighbourhoods. It shifts the city's daily rhythm, and together, our relationships with each other, with Europe, and with the geographical region around us. Our international collaborations also enrich Europe with Lemessolian energy, new alliances, and grassroots insights that feed into a cultural solidarity across the continent.

3. The place of inspiration

Across Europe and beyond, people have grown weary. We cope by going through our daily tasks and to-do lists. We feel unheard, we look for meaning. We don't lack creativity, but we lack the space to breathe, to imagine, and to dream without fear. Our goal is to reclaim that mental space through culture. To build **a cultural environment where inspiration is not a luxury but a shared necessity**. At a time when the world feels uncertain and intimidating, we want Lemessolians and visitors, in person and online, to be curious legacy makers and playful co-authors of their future.

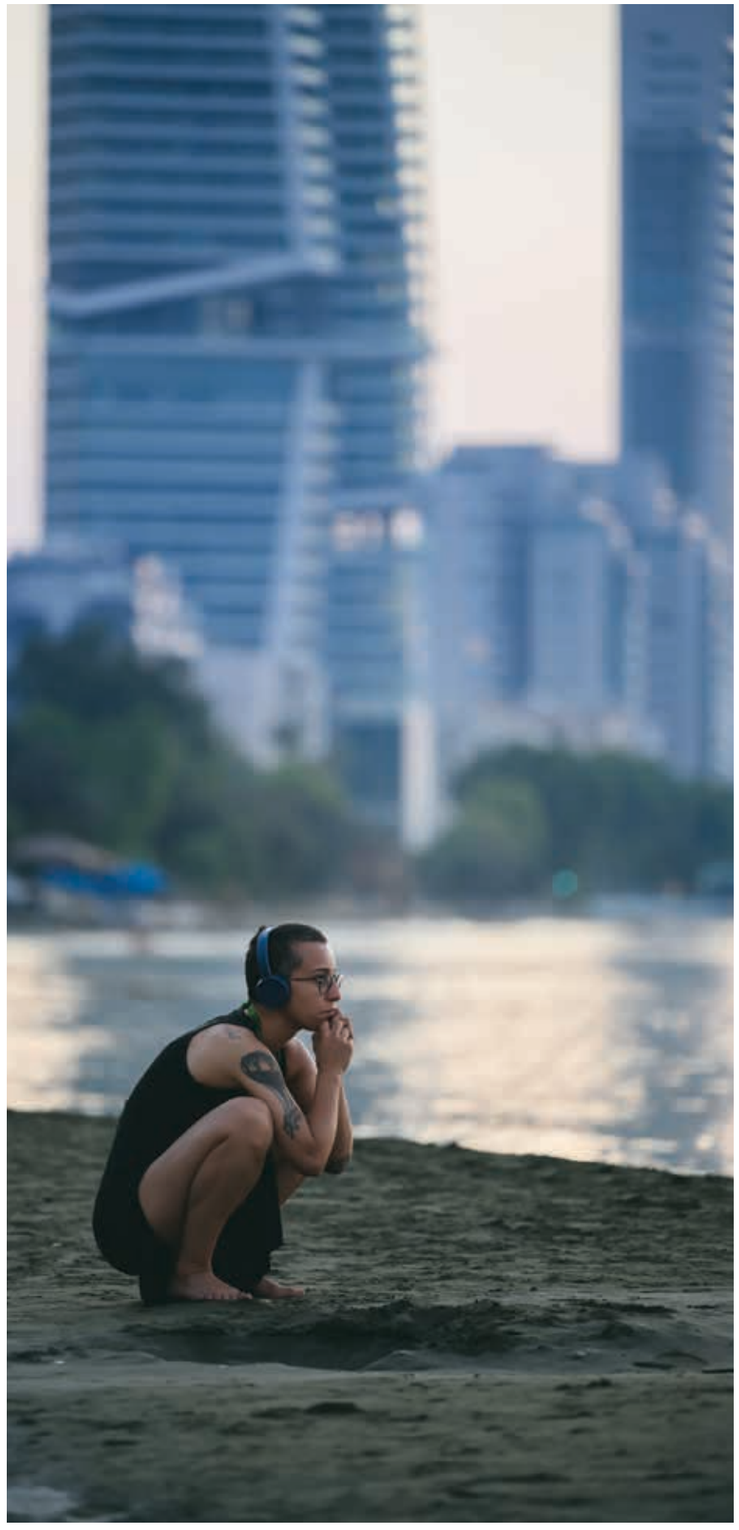
A few updates

CS 2024-2034 prioritises refurbishments to increase physical accessibility for cultural professionals and other users of diverse abilities. With representatives of people with disabilities, **Lemesos 2030** has shaped a plan that includes comprehensive mapping with recommendations (on a case-by-case basis of each building), and aims to raise funding to make cultural spaces fully accessible. This plan will be supported further by our ECoC project BACKSTAGE ACADEMY, which includes training for cultural organisations and artists to make culture itself more inclusive.

Further crucial recalibrations within the **Municipality of Lemesos** include an increase in the budget for culture (excluding the ECoC bidding budget) from €1,810,000 in 2023 to €1,930,000 in 2024, and a budget of €2,900,000 for 2025. Sponsorships to third parties increased from €50,000 to €90,000.

The two neighbouring municipalities of **Kourion** and **Amathounta** officially voted to join The Understory after an invitation from Lemesos 2030. Using their pre-selection bidding experience, we had very productive meetings with Kourion's team members, identifying common goals, projects, and connections. There are good city practices to learn from and practices to share. For example, the **Municipality of Kourion** already implements a diversified micro-financing programme providing institutional and project-based support for a wide range of organisations and communities. The **Municipality of Amathounta** has strategic plans along its river beds which provide infrastructure support, improving accessibility and cultural activations relevant to our district projects. The three municipalities have also begun working on a unified coastline for micromobility and pedestrian use. Through ECoC, we seek to exercise cross-municipal collaborations and enhance good practices that have the potential for a new approach to legacy in culture.

We are witnessing the synergy between **CS 2024-2034** and **Lemesos 2030** already building trust and a new dynamic between social and cultural agents in the city and the municipality. And how their alignment can bring about meaningful long-term cultural change and legacy. What is missing is the ECoC title!



Q3 Long-Term Impacts

The Understory is not nostalgia. It's not resistance to progress. It's a call for a new form of progress: fairer, deeper, more caring, more grounded, more democratic and connected. It's a cultural recovery plan. **It's about placing real people in balance with real estate**, a reweaving of a cultural and social fabric.

Our intentions on long-term impacts have not changed. Our charts and hearts are still packed with goals and targets as they were presented in our pre-selection bidbook. Yet, crystallising our process and building a stronger coherence during the selection phase led us to fewer and more carefully chosen words.

What does the ECoC impact look and feel like?

'A symbiotic city' that feels more fair, connected, and sustainable, and looks like its people.

In the mornings, you see teens cycling to school, chatting about the next event they will organise in the central public square. Posters in multiple languages line the walls of corner cafés, announcing exhibitions, workshops, and concerts shaped by both migrant collectives and long-rooted communities. A wheelchair user easily enters a restored cinema where a mixed-ability performance group rehearses. A Turkish Cypriot artist from the diaspora livestreams into a co-creation lab in Kapsalos that will produce new 'tonena' (braided long strips of cattail cord) products for LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS 2032.

Cultural venues are busy, managed by people who represent the diversity and expertise of the city. People come not just to consume, but to shape what happens. Trust isn't abstract; it's felt in the way residents argue, decide, and show up for each other. You can walk from Lemesos' Philharmonic brass parade in Molos to a small exhibit on neighbourhood memory curated by retirees, and then to a late-night conversation on care, grief, and climate held at Dance House Lemesos' new space.

That's our vision of the future. And, it comes with a clear and feasible plan with detailed indicators for measuring impact and success, as presented in the next table.

Are we really going to get there?

The bidding process has already mobilised key characters from our **Understory** in directions they previously didn't think possible. *'[They] feel it already, [they] feel more empowered.'* They have allowed themselves to 'see' the imagined city, to be ambitious for positive and lasting change. And when we encounter these inspiration-filled moments, it trickles back to the Lemesos 2030 team. Our intentions become bolder and more profound, since we feel that we now have a more solid basis.

This back-and-forth is necessary. It preserves momentum and good spirits. It keeps us focused. It reveals the gaps, too. Lemesos' **Understory** needs care, attentiveness and bold decisions. Therefore, making our expected long-term impacts a reality requires a lot of back-and-forth between our team, the municipality, cultural stakeholders, communities, European partners and collaborators. Checking in, doing and reflecting, practising and sharing. This is how we've worked so far, and this is how we plan to continue, with steadfast determination, enthusiasm, professionalism, with seriousness, with care, and empathy.

Below we present a clearly defined set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), co-developed with stakeholders to ensure both feasibility and meaningful impact. KPIs have been designed not as lofty ideals, but as achievable and relevant targets that reflect the complexity and context of Lemesos. They are meant to guide action rather than constrain ambition.



OBJECTIVES & MILESTONES	KPIs	MEASURED SUCCESS
1. Sense of Belonging - Vibrant Lemessolian temperament full of *'flirtatious', 'yellers', 'huggers', 'easy-goers', 'open-hearted', 'dangerous', 'funny', 'adventurous'* kind of people. - *'In Molos we see all ages, all classes, all ethnicities in one democratic public space'*. So, like Molos, more public spaces are revitalised and used by diverse people with less stress, more happiness, less complaints, more hope. - Infrastructure plans and decision-making mechanisms prioritise access and diverse usability. All information and guidelines to use municipal spaces are available online and up to date. - Expanded cultural infrastructure.	Level and quality of interaction with city & feelings of its people (survey/ interview based)	She's not *'an angry Lemessolian'* anymore!
		50% shift to positive
	Sense of belonging directly asked - special focus in minorities & underprivileged individuals	70% of people
	Sounds & noises of selected areas (as per **Soundtracking** monitoring project - Q4)	*'Hearing culture in the city'*
		Statistically significant shift from construction, mechanical & traffic noise to 'cultural sounds' (public space events, children playing, bird song)
	Numbers & types of events taking place within municipal spaces (excluding events of municipality)	40% increase
	Numbers & quality of interaction from different groups using cultural & municipal spaces	At least 10 new groups or initiatives
		80% of cultural venues have accessibility & use of space info communicated online
	Culture housed or re-housed	New house for Dance House Lemesos
		Restoration of cinema destroyed by fire (info in Q26)
2. Trust and Pride - Confidence has grown when talking about Lemesos and its **Understory**. - Public/private institutions, decision makers, municipal council members show up at out-of-the-box cultural events supporting Lemessolian experimentation and cultural transformation. - Cultural operators are involved in consultations on the future of culture in the city.	Institutions, sectors, roles tracked from scanned RSVPs & from coloured badges/ wristbands from large-scale events where personal information is harder to collect	60% of municipal board members attend one or more events in 2030 beyond ceremonies and **stop-the-city** events
		At least 10% of audience numbers come from public/private sector representatives/ decision-makers
	Attention to the understories of daily life (from **Vibesensor Pridesensor** - Q4)	Less mentions of high-rise buildings and luxury cars, more mentions of attention-catching positive moments in the city
	Participatory processes implemented by ECoC & numbers of participants	Triple the numbers of our bidding process with focus areas and urgent issues taking precedence in selection of topic
	Open calls by city and numbers of applicants (for jobs and for projects)	40% increase
3. Plurality of Bodies, Voices, and Stories and Safe Spaces of Otherness - Culture is substantially more accessible and inclusive for all bodies and capacities. Audiences see and interact with a plurality of bodies in performances, in exhibitions, in public space interventions. - Lemesos is *'not one google-searched brand'*. Diversity in stories and storytellers is visible and heard. Big narratives are deconstructed, soft voices speak with confidence and are heard with empathy. - Artistic freedom and peace equality are safeguarded and practiced as non-negotiable values. - '*Delivery boys are not attacked*', queer people are not 'restricted' in two or three venues. The ECoC strongly contributes to intersectionality awareness, nourishment of tolerance and even acceptance.	Permanent improvements to physical or digital accessibility of cultural spaces	In 50% of cultural spaces
	Response to inclusion requests, accessibility riders, technical specs	50% increase in fulfilled requests compared to pre-ECoC conditions
	Numbers & diversity (age / gender / background) of artists, speakers, leaders within ECoC programme	High diversity for at least 40% of programme
	Level & quality of interaction & integration in culture of non-dominant or minority communities	Significant diversity in demographics & geographies of ECoC audiences & participants
	Numbers of youth participants in ECoC programme (under 30s)	Minimum 20% of programme
	Numbers of youth-led projects	At least 500 actions
	Incidents of censorship or exclusion within the ECoC framework	0 cases
	Shifts of perception for audiences & participants (survey / interview based)	Statistically significant improvement by end of ECoC year

OBJECTIVES & MILESTONES	KPIs	MEASURED SUCCESS
4. Sustainability - The individual and institutional capacity of cultural players is significantly grown and diversified. - Young people report greater optimism for artistic, para-artistic and entrepreneurial career choices. - Cultural organisations have the means and new skills to plan long-term. - Experimentations bear fruit. We exercise new ways of work and "fail", but reflect hard and learn.	Numbers & diversity of participants in capacity-building programmes	At least 70% attendance on offered capacity programmes
		At least 2,000 people under 35 in ECoC programmes that build artistic, para-artistic, or entrepreneurial skills
	Audience numbers	20% increase from baseline & 20% repeating audiences
	Employment numbers - new careers in 2030 & after 2030	30% increase in the cultural sector across the fields
	Numbers & length of employment of core team members & creative industry collaborators for all projects	20% increase from baseline
	Unachieved objectives, missed milestones, unsuccessful ventures in numbers & quality	New ideas, new directions, feedback sessions & reflection reports to try again or try differently
5. Diversified Fundraising - Multiply successful applications with partners or lead organisations from Lemesos. - Secure institutional city funding for long-standing and active cultural stakeholders. - Broaden private sector and CSR investments. Cultural event posters show a diversity of funders and partners. - Micro-financing is boosted by both public and private sectors.	Funding levels from private sector - ad hoc / repeating	Reach our goals with 10% repeating sponsors
	EU funding applications, intensities & success rates from Lemessolian organisations	EU FUNDING APPLICATION CLINIC operating after 2031
		Doubling our current numbers
	Micro-financed projects in 2030	Minimum 208
	Level of institutional funding from city (excluding Lemesos 2030) - in cash & in-kind	40% increase
6. Visibility, Serious Friends and Networks - **The Understory** is recognised and talked about all over Europe as a meaningful concept that connects culture with society, economy, urban and environmental life alike. European Understories are more and more seen and empowered. - We have an operating and up-to-date cultural directory, the **Lemesos Art-full Directory (LEAD)** regularly used by cultural stakeholders and audiences. - More art in public spaces, unused buildings, parks, urban cracks. - A substantial increase in European and international partnerships and participation in networks.	Media appearances, mentions in articles, papers, online media	Reach 20,000 press articles
		1000 TV cross-channel appearances or a total of 50 hours coverage
	Social media & digital channel numbers - mentions by influencers, content creators	Average of 50k views per month combined
		Reach 20,000 followers combined
	Video teasers & trailers hosted by third party organisations, venues, events	80% increase from bidding process
	Public space events & interventions - type / location / duration	1500 hours of projects held outdoors with 50% of them outside the city centre
	Usability & visiting data of LEAD	Minimum 40% of locals use LEAD as a primary event resource.
		Prominent and permanent link on the municipality's website
	Usability & visiting data of LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform	100k clicks, of which 40% outside of Cyprus
	Numbers & geographies of partnerships / collaborations / exchanges / networks - for ECoC & after 2030	International collaboration in 70% of ECoC projects.
	Numbers of international artists / organisations / diaspora artists **first time** in Lemesos	25% of programme

Q4 Monitoring & Evaluation

We are genuinely excited about how our plans for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) have developed since pre-selection. Having the chance to run a huge project like an ECoC, the documentation of our monitoring projects and their evaluations is an attempt to create a new understanding of what culture can do, of what culture is - strategically, socially, physically, financially. We believe that this can be an important stepping stone for culture in Europe, for the ECoC initiative, and one that is much needed for the long-term cultural development of Cyprus.

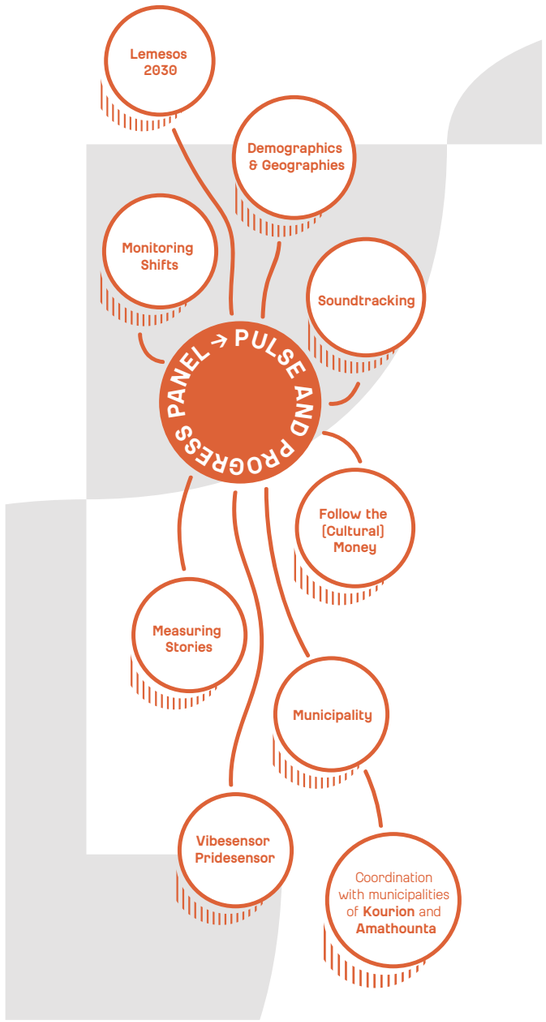
Who

Our M&E approach is decentralised. Divided into several separate monitoring projects. It gathers information, experiences and data from different perspectives and sources. It embodies the core idea of **The Understory**, with each project featuring multiple voices, stories, and experiences to follow and reflect upon.

Each monitoring project (described in detail further below) provides both quantitative and qualitative information that is assessed and evaluated in order to measure the impact of ECoC in Lemesos.

For each monitoring project, there is a leader. Most of them come from different departments of the **Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)** and the **University of Limassol (UoL)**. These monitoring leaders -nine of them- are in charge of coordinating and managing implementation for monitoring activities and evaluation at each milestone. They form the Pulse and Progress Panel, meet every three months, stay connected and maintain peer support.

The Municipality of Lemesos monitors the impact of ECoC within the Municipality and in relation to the Cultural Strategy, and coordinates the monitoring of relevant data from the collaborating municipalities. Lemesos 2030 has its own monitoring and evaluation officer responsible for internal monitoring, participating and acting as a facilitator of the **Pulse and Progress Panel**. These professionals have also contributed to creating a decentralised, yet coherent monitoring and evaluation plan. Our structure is shown in this diagram:



What, How, When

We track how the ECoC is affecting the city, the society, the economy and the cultural sector through targeted projects that go deep into the personal experiences of our main stakeholders and our ECoC programme audience and participants. Additionally, we take a sideways look at how our city is lived through targeted sound monitoring, in order to listen to the impact of ECoC and its footprint - or better: its 'soundprint'.

All results are shared online, in podcasts, on special screenings, in our ECoC info centre and more, allowing them to act as multipliers of change and stimulation.

Each monitoring project described separately:

VIBESENSOR PRIDESENSOR
Mapping Pride and Belonging in Lemesos

Our current **Vibesensor**, collecting views online during our bidding process, is adapted and revamped so that we can assess the **sense of pride** among residents, monitor the **Lemessolian vibe**, and measure the sense of belonging. Imagine questions with custom emojis to choose from, sliders to measure levels of pride, joy, and **sense of belonging**, and questions that ask for simple descriptions of the citizen's day and their city on that day. To ensure meaningful and valid data, a social scientist will lead the development of the instrument, ensuring that prompts are grounded in psychological and sociocultural frameworks.

We expect four to five bespoke interactive display stations to be placed in public spaces, as well as a number of cultural hubs and popular Lemessolian spots. These stations are installed twice a year between 2027 and 2030, for a duration of three to four weeks each time.

Vibesensor Pridesensor is co-developed by a multidisciplinary team, including IT professionals, interaction designers and engineers, and is led by the Departments of Psychology and Education from the Social Sciences and Humanities School of UoL.

MEASURING STORIES
Cultural Lives from Within

Our most ambitious monitoring project requires meaningful connections, building trust, and creating safe spaces for people to feel comfortable documenting their daily lives. It is a **participatory monitoring project** that utilises filming and photo elicitation techniques as tools. From 2028 until 2031, individuals from underrepresented and underprivileged communities are trained to document part of their cultural lives either using their mobile phones or dedicated cameras.

Participants are called to document 20 hours of footage over the course of one month (about 40 minutes per day) and participate in two in-depth interview sessions regarding the captured content. The goal is to reach 100 participants in four years.

To achieve this, we collaborate with NGOs that deal with migrants, asylum seekers, people with disabilities, underrepresented communities and youth, and through the re-established **Limassol Intercultural Council**. We also aim to recruit contributors from the collaborators, audiences or participants in projects like A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION, SESSIONS and others. The **Department of Communication and Internet Studies** at **CUT** leads this project through the **Multimodal Ethnography Lab**, with Social Anthropologist, **Dr. Theodoros Kouros** and Political Communication and Alternative Media scholar, **Dr. Dimitra L. Milioni**. **Measuring Stories** evaluates how participants engaged with our ECoC programme, the sense of ownership they have over their stories, and how they engage with the city and its people.

MONITORING SHIFTS
Expanding Cultural Perception

We aim to capture subtle and significant **shifts in perception, emotional response**, and **cultural comfort zones** among audiences and visitors over time. A mixed-method approach is employed to enable both depth and breadth of insight.

In 2030, we conduct **40 in-depth interviews**, designed as intimate, filmed, and non-anonymous conversations - what we call 'let's sit down and talk' moments. In parallel, the project conducts **anonymous phone interviews (survey format)** to facilitate broader participation and enable a comparative analysis of perceived changes in experience.

To obtain valid and measurable data, a baseline study is planned for 2026 to document existing perceptions and reference points. Comparative findings from 2026 and 2030 are then analysed and synthesised into thematic reports. **Monitoring Shifts** is led by **Dr. Lia Spyridou** of the **Department of Communication and Internet Studies**, at **CUT**, who brings extensive expertise in media studies, participatory approaches, digital journalism, and media impacts.

SOUNDTRACKING
Sonic Shifts in Lemesos

Today, the most common sounds in Lemesos are 'cars, lorries and motorbikes', 'construction site noise', 'fireworks at least twice a week', 'loud music'. We document and reflect on the evolving soundscape of selected neighbourhoods and public spaces, measuring the impact of urban development and cultural activity on the city's acoustic life. **Soundtracking** offers a **sensory understanding of how the city evolves over time**, how noise levels might decrease, how

construction sounds might persist or recede, and how birdsong and other singing voices might re-emerge in the urban environment. Sound recordings are accompanied by a geolocated, layered digital archive that visualises and organises the evolving acoustic data in order to provide context and data that will support evaluation.

The **Aura Lab** of the **Fine Arts Department** at **CUT** leads this project under the direction of Associate Professor **Yiannis Christidis**, and provides internships for students.

Recording equipment is placed in a number of spaces each month of every year from 2026 until 2030, including public squares, neighbourhood parks, green routes, and selected seafront areas. Recordings take place twice a day, with locations and time slots remaining consistent year to year, allowing for robust comparative analysis over time.

FOLLOW THE (CULTURAL) MONEY

Mapping Employment and Funding

From 2026 to 2031, **Follow the (cultural) money** monitors employment, income, and public/private investment in the cultural and creative sectors of Lemesos. We conduct annual polls capturing earnings and spending in the cultural sector, statistical analyses of municipal revenue, cultural spending and arts funding, and yearly questionnaires and interviews of artists and cultural organisations to assess employment trends, including diversity and inclusivity factors. Additionally, we track the amount of EU funding secured annually by the Municipality, Lemesos 2030, and the broader independent cultural and creative industries sectors. The **Department of Management** of the **Business School of UoL** leads this project.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND GEOGRAPHIES

Numbers and Diversity of Audiences and Participants

We track the numbers and diversity of audiences and participatory enthusiasts across our ECoC programme, as well as their origins, including local, EU, SWANA, international audiences. To support data collection, we rely on a network of **volunteers and university interns**, and we employ **digital tools** to ensure the process is efficient and consistent across events.

In collaboration with the **Limassol Tourism Development Company** and other public tourism bodies, we compare cultural audience data with trends in hospitality, tourism flows, visitors, and seasonal activity, offering a broader perspective on the ECoC's city-wide impact.

Overall evaluations and reporting

The results from each project, along with internal monitoring of Lemesos 2030 and the Municipality, are consolidated, analysed, and evaluated as an integrated whole, and compiled into periodic and final evaluation reports. Evaluation and reporting will take place in **three key phases**:

- The first period spans between 2026 and 2029.
- Then the ECoC year alone.
- Lastly, 2031 and 2032 for legacy.

M&E is not a parallel process - it is a living part of the cultural ecosystem, contributing to a **legacy of transparency, participation, and transformation**.

Baseline

All data are systematically analysed and compared against baselines. Existing data in the culture and creative industries is limited and fragmented. During our extensive outreach process in the pre-selection phase, we have gathered significant amounts of information and data, mainly through questionnaires and statistics, which allowed us to understand our current status and define our goals. We have sourced as much financial and operational information as possible concerning culture within the Municipality, the Deputy Ministry of Culture and the Organisation of European Programmes and Cultural Relations (OEPCR).

A complete baseline study, conducted in 2026, defines the initial reference points across all monitoring strands, ranging from audience participation to economic indicators, cultural geography, and narrative shifts. From this baseline, we track progress against a set of practical, context-driven targets (objectives and KPIs as presented in Q3's table).

The M&E process is coordinated by the members of the **Pulse and Progress Panel** and overseen by an independent evaluation entity to ensure transparency, objectivity, and alignment with long-term goals.

Dissemination

Results from most projects are shared online to engage the wider community of Lemesos but also beyond. Pop-up listening stations and mobile sound installations bring the recorded soundscapes to communities across the city, provoking reflection and dialogue. Musicians and



other artists reinterpret the archive as compositions, performances, or sonic installations.

Selected video material from **Measuring Stories** is edited and shared online as 'shorts', as a way to build connections to the stories behind the faces and inspire positive shifts in perception. Selected **Monitoring Shifts** interviews are shared as video or sound podcasts.

Information from our overall results and more conventional data is presented in charts, numbers, and maps in reports, forums, including academic publications and artistic outputs in relevant contexts in Cyprus and Europe. Our ECoC Info Centre hosts mini exhibitions featuring selected materials from our monitoring processes, along with photos and testimonies from the built-up years.

A documentary featuring stories and shifts from **Measuring Stories** and **Monitoring Shifts** is produced involving professionals from the local film industry and premieres at the **Lemesos International Documentary Festival 2031**, which has been taking place every first week of August since 2005. By that time, we expect to have completed our two major evaluation reports and invite our European colleagues and friends for a couple of days of looking back, spring-boarding ahead and sipping cocktails at the locals' favourite G-spot beach bar by the sea.

Lemesos 2030 plans to implement creative and functional approaches to monitoring and evaluating an ECoC title and aspires to become a vibrant part of and contributor to the ECoC learning community. The overall results and integrated analysis not only inform the evaluation of ECoC itself but also feed directly into the development of the city's next Cultural Strategy and the legacy of culture in Lemesos.

What does success look like?

Lemesos in 2031 has texture. You see its scars and how they've been tended to. It is imperfect, but awake. It's still complex, still contested, but held together by participation, successful failures, and a renewed social contract built through culture. Lemessolians themselves no longer feel like spectators, but an essential part of the city's transformation - a place they can truly call home, again.

Success means that we have worked collaboratively and with interconnectedness. We have supported the city's cultural and artistic communities, especially during moments of urgency and transition. We have achieved the sustainability of cultural activity and long-lasting, reciprocal connections to Europe. And we have provided an important (no, massive!) number of pieces towards solving this puzzle of re-establishing the vibrancy and visibility of **The Understory.**

Success also means we have met or exceeded our KPIs in ways that are measurable, but also felt - by people, communities, and the city itself. We have left in place strong mechanisms, new habits of collaboration, and resilient infrastructures that allow culture in Lemesos to continue thriving well beyond 2030.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2



CULTURAL & ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

Q5

Artistic Vision and Strategy

Nowhere in the world can an ecosystem survive without its understory. A bunch of trees without an understory is not a forest. It's a timber plantation. **The Understory** is what makes a forest, a city -or any place for that matter- truly alive. Our artistic vision is that by 2031 we will have moved towards a healthy ecosystem with a good balance between towering trees and a thriving understory that is neither suffocated nor overshadowed by what grows above, but benefits it and benefits from it.

As we said in our Strategy section in Q2, we strive to achieve this by a **'beyond-the-urban development'** (choosing wisely how we grow while learning from and with others in Europe), developing **'a daily art habit'** (art - beyond borders and cultural realms - becoming a daily, visible and participatory habit) and becoming **'a place of inspiration'** (creating a cultural environment where inspiration is not a luxury but a shared necessity in a large-enough-small-enough-city that is part of a wider European family).

We remain rooted in the same core as before; **everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves the opportunity to belong and thrive**.

From vision to action

For us, it's all about the how. Clear, implementable priorities that define our strategy and work. So, we created a clear path from vision to action that lays the ground for our ECoC programme, as well as future open calls and further engagement activities.

BELONGING - Ensure that diverse communities, people of all abilities, ages, backgrounds, and experiences may actively participate, attend, collaborate, and co-create, making inclusion the foundation of all cultural work. Project examples: BEYOND DISDANCE, CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS.

COLLECTIVE GENIUS - Marry artistic excellence with community engagement, tapping into people's diverse voices and stories through well-crafted, meaningful cultural expressions, like PNAM RESIDENCY, SINIKISMOI UNTOLD.

COLLABORATION - Explore, test and adopt new ways of working together, focusing on fresh methods for cooperation, participation, and production, e.g. SFAAACT!, ART-FANATICS.

WIDE ANGLE - Widen the lens to discover new paths and the freedom to get it wrong. THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT and CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY embrace this generously.

CULTURAL LINKS - Practice collaborations and exchanges locally, regionally, and internationally as first steps toward building lasting cultural networks and relationships. Project examples: SARDAM, OUTSIDE THE MAP.

CITY STAGE - Use outdoor spaces to increase cultural access, visibility, and community connection through free, open-air events that reclaim and activate public space. Projects like A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN and CATALOGUE OF WALKS are it.

CATALYST - Challenge existing cultural norms and practices to empower communities and drive meaningful social and artistic transformation, e.g. COST OF DEMOCRACY, SESSIONS.

LIVING HERITAGE - Preserve, re-imagine, and refocus cultural heritage and archives through fresh ideas and new technologies, the way LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS, WEATHERING HERITAGE do.

ACCESS - Expand access to art and culture in the digital dimension through platforms, tools, and centralised entry points, connecting people across communities and borders. Project examples: CYBORG BODIES, LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform.

And if we are designated as ECoC, in the new offices of Lemesos 2030 - for those hectic times in need of focus, or those good days in need of assurance - we will write on a wall:

Listen with empathy, ask questions, invite with intention, trust the mess, document, reflect, unlearn, steady the heart, spread the news.

THE STRUCTURE

Our programme remains structured around four programme lines: **CITY IN THERAPY**, **OUT THERE TOGETHER**, **CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES** and **IMAGINE A CITY** framed by an opening and a closing event. Each programme line holds a part of a new beyond-the-urban development process. A shared journey of understanding, of creating new habits, of discovery, of redefining our future. Starting from what is urgent and needs stabilising and refocusing in a **CITY IN THERAPY**, finding ways to re-connect to each other, making new friends, empowering ourselves through collaboration **OUT THERE TOGETHER**, engaging in play, in experimentation and establishing safe spaces to think and act outside the box with **CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES** and finally, addressing our gaps and nurturing our potentials as we continue to **IMAGINE A CITY**.

The programme has a total of 47 projects, of which 13 are led or facilitated by Lemesos 2030 and 34 are led by independent cultural organisations primarily based in Lemesos. A total of 21 have a digital dimension embeded in their programming through LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform. A minimum of 20% of our programme budget is allocated through open calls, as defined in this bid book, as well as those we will carry out in the next few years, as circumstances evolve. Another 20% of the budget is allocated for youth or youth-led projects.

Budget legend

€*	up to €50,000
€**	up to €100,000
€***	up to €200,000
€****	up to €500,000
€*****	over €500,000

Q6 Cultural and Artistic Programme

THE UNDERSTORY
OPENING CEREMONY

1000 Voices
CLOSING CEREMONY

❶ flagship | ❷ stops the city | ❸ district | ❹ legacy | ❺ neighbourhoods | ❻ open call

CITY IN THERAPY

PROGRAMME LINE

- Pellomaskes ❷
- Outside the Map ❶
  - . Un-inhabitat
  - . Imaginary Water / Imaginary Ice ❸
  - . Bursting Lines
  - . War & Peace
  - . Dancing the Frontiers ❹
- Beyond DisDance
- Lorca's Blood Wedding
- PicNic ❸
- Pnam Residency
- Making Democracy
- Art Fan-atics ❶
- Ecologies of Belonging
- Cost of Democracy ❶
- Things to Cry About ❻

OUT THERE TOGETHER

PROGRAMME LINE

- Next for Pamboros ❷
- Catalogue of Walks ❹
- Neighbourhoods that Float ❹ ❸ ❺
  - . Citizen of All Citizens ❶ ❺
  - . Sinikismoi UnTOLD ❺
  - . Kneading Stories ❺
  - . Among the Flows of the Garyllis River ❺
- A Garden within a Garden
- A Flow of Cultures, Voices & Motion

CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES

PROGRAMME LINE

- Tower Drama ❷
- Sessions ❶
- The Performance Shop Concept
- Cyborg Bodies
- Sardam
- AI Art & Play
- Metamorphic Archives of Disappearing Landscapes
- Folk Clubbing
- Weathering Heritage ❶ ❸

IMAGINE A CITY

PROGRAMME LINE

- SFAAACT! in the City ❷
- SFAAACT! ❹
- Lemesos Design Days ❶ ❹
- Creative Startup Factory ❶
  - . Startup Culture
  - . Lemesos Creative Venture Builder
- Backstage Academy ❹
  - . BA 1 Artistic Leadership, Curatorial Practices, Technology
  - . BA 2 Accessibility, Environment
  - . BA 3 Visibility, Touring
- Decentralised Networks of (Cultural) Care ❶
- Elevators ❹
- Micro Macro ❻

THE UNDERSTORY - opening ceremony JAN 2030

For our ECoC year, we could not begin anywhere other than the port, our open door to the Levante, to Europe and far beyond.

For our opening ceremony in January 2030, boats from European and Mediterranean ports arrive at the cargo port of Lemesos, carrying cultural treasures from across the seas to enrich **The Understory** of Lemesos. Here, containers with paintings, books, songs, stories, ideas, and even artists themselves are unloaded.

The boats from connected ports will provide creative "material" for projects for our ECoC, for example:

From Marseilles, France, with mural stencils by **HOPARE** to use for BURSTING LINES, and carnival costumes for PELLOMASKES's Carnival Costume Bank.

From Beirut, Lebanon, with vinyls of revered singer Fairuz for THINGS TO CRY ABOUT, songs by Mashru Leila for SESSIONS, and the highest allowance of baklava possible for A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION.

From Cadiz, Spain, with scripts for TOWER DRAMA's Don Quixote and LORCA'S BLOOD WEDDING, and Sherry wine to combine with our Cypriot dessert wine Commandaria for wine stories in CATALOGUE OF WALKS.

And then, terminal straddler carriers begin to move, unloading the precious cargo. The giant machines perform a choreography, under the supervision of Socrates Christodoulou, the port's health and safety inspector, who loves the idea - and with the support of **Eurogate Container Terminal Limassol**, the company that manages the port's container terminal.

One container opens, and delivery riders on electric bicycles and scooters are given objects to deliver throughout the city, each breaking off to different routes. The delivery fleet goes to various neighbourhoods, 'activating' each one as they go, and bringing back symbolic "pieces" of **The Understory** for the central show.

With every delivery, a light beam shines into the sky, and processions and floats depart. Music fills the air from local bands and choirs, and the sound spreads and moves from the neighbourhoods towards the city centre. Streets and squares have transformed into spaces for bikers, pedestrians, singers, musicians, dancers, actors, and the vast community of amateur artists from 5 to 105 years old.

Delivery riders and processions continue their journey until they arrive in the centre, close to the "old port", where a stage awaits for the grand performance - **The Understory** in focus. From Lemesos, we deliver our **Understory** to Europe, enriched by the multistory of neighbours and partners: a vibrant meeting of cultures, a transformative, peace-making, uniting message of art, one that will be passed on, now changed, to other cities around Europe.

€*****

1000 VOICES - closing ceremony DEC 2030

A meeting of choirs, ensembles and audience members at **Palais de Sport Spyros Kyprianou**, a large indoor arena, uniting in voice and spirit as they sing together one song, one single (under)story.

We work with our local and international partners to gather hundreds of choral singers: choirs and ensembles from across Europe, local choirs from diverse communities, and ensembles from our Mediterranean and SWANA region. The audiences of this celebration will be guided by an audience conductor, in a **massive symbolic sing along**. In the preceding days, choirs perform in the streets and neighbourhoods of the city - but also exchange capacity on creative and technical aspects of choral ensembles.

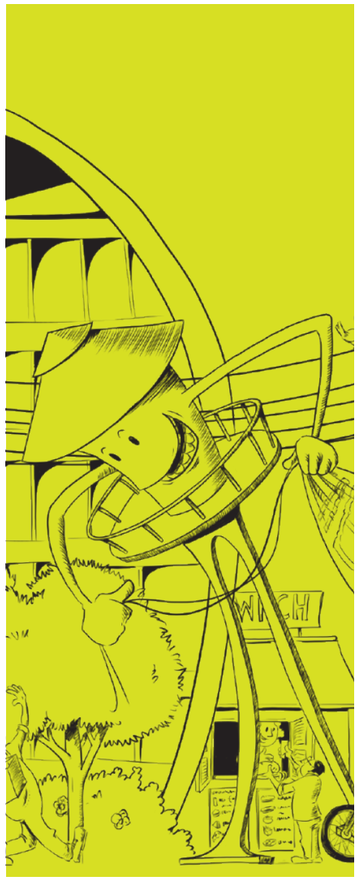
Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Epilogi Cultural Movement Choirs, Kourion Municipal Choir, Cyprus Bicommunal Choir for Peace - Lena Melanidou, Diastasis Cultural Association Choirs, Monternoi Kairoi Choir, Aris Choir of Limassol, Maronite Community Youth Choir, Yermasoyia Municipal Choir, Mesa Geitonia Choir, Jeunesses Musicales Cyprus
International partners: European Choral Association (DE), Liepāja 2027 (LV), Euro-Arab Youth Music Centre (JO/CY/BE), Jeunesses Musicales Internationales, Liepāja Folk Art and Culture Centre - Song and Dance Festival (LV)

€*****

CITY IN THERAPY

stabilise, process, reconnect

CITY IN THERAPY makes time for the city to heal, and for us to finally reconnect with our Lemessolian home and our Europeanness. It takes on the challenges and traumas of (urban) inequality, climate change, migration and discrimination, while also finding everyday joys and unexpected inspiration. We listen, we create, we make space for recovery, solidarity, and a shared sense of pride and belonging.



PELLOMASKES 5 MARCH 2030

❷ stops the city

Our Carnival: open, popular, exuberant and raucous. Ten days, two parades, numerous events and parties, 100,000 visitors and participants of all ages. It becomes a moment of catharsis, a necessary social valve, and it's great fun! For the biggest annual celebration of the island -and of the Eastern Mediterranean- in our ECoC year, we have an extra special plan to engage local communities, international carnival associations, and ECoC visitors in this deeply rooted and very Lemessolian tradition that is listed as a UNESCO intangible heritage.

Pellomaskes usually take place on Carnival Tuesday, and so it will be in 2030 with a **Pellomaskes Catwalk Show, Awards and Party** and a **European Carnival History Photography Exhibition**.

'Pellomaskes' translates to 'ridiculous masks'. These are makeshift costumes created by stitching, glueing, and tying together found material while reusing old and swapped costumes. Improvised, cheeky and satirical, Pellomaskes bring joy, ingenuity and social commentary - wait till you see your first human OnlyFans costume (yes, with attached broken fans all over).

For 2030, we create a crowd-sourced **Carnival Costume Bank** for costume swapping, while reducing waste and saving resources. These can then be modified at digital fabrication and making workshops with experienced carnival seamstresses and costume designers, using reusable and upcycled materials. Maker workshops also take place throughout 2029 for the creation of new banners, floats and oversized puppets.

We are inviting international carnival teams and associations, e.g. from the **Netherlands**, **France**, **Belgium** and **Bulgaria**, to contribute their expertise and old costumes, participate in the **Pellomaskes Catwalk Show** and in seminars, sharing best practices from their countries. Bucolic, pagan, traditional, or slick, the Carnival is a tradition that remains alive and kicking throughout Europe.

Finally, with the collaboration and consultation of **Stelios Georgiades**, Lemesos Carnival History Researcher, we are honouring the Lemessolians' love for the Carnival by creating an online **Lemesos Carnival Photo Archive**: collecting dusty photographs from drawers, chests, storage units, but also inviting **Limassol Photography Festival** to curate a **European Carnival History Photography Exhibition** with photographs from European Carnivals, submitted by our international guests.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Carnival Museum, Cyprus Theatre Museum, MGA Makerspace, Makers Will Make, Lemesos Carnival History Researcher Stelios Georgiades, REC - Reduce, Reuse, Recycling Educational Center, Limassol Historical Archive, Limassol Photography Festival
International partners: COCU - Unified Carnival Organising Committee of Toulouse (FR), Samba Résille (FR), LOV 2030 (BE), Zinneke Parade (BE), Pernik Municipality and Surva International Festival of Masquerade Games (BG), Tempeleers Mestreech (NL)

€***

OUTSIDE THE MAP

1 flagship

A **cluster of labs** to instigate thought and **creative gut responses on burning European issues** from young artists from countries on the periphery of Europe - territories so far away from the continent they are sometimes omitted from official maps - like Cyprus! The periphery sees both the centre and the horizon. It catches signals, carries stories, sparks ideas. From the frontiers, solutions emerge. For us, the periphery is not less - it's a possibility.

OUTSIDE THE MAP is broken down into five thematic labs, one for each year between 2027 and 2031. Through **rolling open calls**, and in conversation with ECoCs (more in Q13), it invites young artists from Europe's periphery, its centre and adjacent territories. Dialogue with young artists leads to their **political manifestos** (one for each lab), which are then proposed for policy change to local, national and European authorities. At the same time, the **new works of art** are performed / exhibited / screened / published in participating cities. And, because labs will end up being far apart, highlights from the work produced in the earlier years will also be presented in 2030 and 2031.

OUTSIDE THE MAP Labs:

UN-INHABITAT
2027

European themes:
Gentrification - Youth Dilemmas

An urban intervention project where designers and architects build ephemeral structures in underused spaces, creating temporary grounds for youth and civic engagement. In times where speculative development deepens inequality, **UN-INHABITAT**, led by the **University of Nicosia's Department of Architecture**, reclaims public ground through participatory design, situated research, and dialogue on belonging.

UN-INHABITAT unfolds in four stages:

1. **Research and Design**: students, academics, researchers and emerging architects engage across Europe in collaboration with the **University of Universities**, a dynamic academic network of 45 university architecture faculties. A design competition is facilitated in partnership with **TAC! Urban Architecture Festival** (ES), based on their experience with pavilion design competitions, and the guest mentorship of established architects such as **Sami Rintala** (FI/NO), awarded architect of the Nordic Pavilion (Osaka World Expo).
2. **Construction**: selected proposals are developed in collaboration with industry professionals, student teams, and with community participation in assembly.
3. **Activation**: participatory and co-design processes activate the structures as venues for dialogue, exhibitions, screenings, and performative interventions. **Building Diversity** (DK), an award-winning organisation dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the built environment, facilitates public-facing events and the presentation of ECoC-related projects (more in Q13), while **Concéntrico Festival** (ES) presents a publication and research on Urban Innovation.
4. **Legacy**: structures, or components thereof, remain as permanent city fixtures or neighbourhood installations.

Through these activations, UN-INHABITAT invites the youth and other citizens to reflect on the future of urban life, not merely through critique, but through situated making, collective use, and the reimagining of what it means to dwell in the contemporary city meaningfully.

A first version takes place under the direction of architect **Sevina Floridou** (19th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2025), with a temporary drystone terraced structure in the city. Co-built by the public, it reconnects heritage and communal knowledge with contemporary urban public space, through intergenerational workshops by expert craftsmen of **Terract-Amfiaraos**, and makes connections to the countryside with the support of the **International Terraced Landscapes Associations.**

Leading partner: Department of Architecture, University of Nicosia
Local partners: Terract-Amfiaraos / **Local artists:** Sevina Floridou
International artists: Sami Rintala (FI/NO) / **International partners:** University of Universities (ES), Oulu Urban Culture (FI), Building Diversity (DK), TAC! Urban Architecture Festival (ES), Concéntrico Festival (ES), Bourges 2028 (FR), Oulu 2026 (FI), Namur 2030 (BE), Nikšić 2030 (ME), Donostia Kultura (ES), International Terraced Landscapes Association (IT/Global)

€****

IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE
2028

3 district

European themes:
Climate Change - Climate Justice

Young people all over the world have been calling for climate justice and political action. We're joining this call and highlighting the urgency of vanishing water supplies by bringing together an international group of young photographers, digital and sound artists, to capture the biggest existential threat to humankind.

Poetic, beautiful, and critical, the artistic results are presented at outdoor exhibitions featuring digital and sound installations, and hold the place of conversations and advocacy actions. Dry riverbeds, dry reservoirs, waterways and wetlands: at **Akrotiri Salt Lake**, a significant yet endangered wetland, at Kouris dam and the submerged Saint Nicholas church - visible when water levels plunge, and at **Amathos River**.

We also look at the other OUTSIDE THE MAP partners, for example in Kiruna, where the vanishing cold makes reindeer and people break through fragile ice and deprives people of their livelihood.

Friends of the Earth Cyprus leads this project and brings along data, urgent matters, activists and scientists using their vast European networks. An international call for a curator will take place, coordinated by artistic partner **CAAM - Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno** (ES), who will also present the digital artworks of the project in the Canary Islands. We connect with scientists with the help of the **Nature Conservation Society** in Norrbotten, Sweden. We bring along **Akti Olympion - Association of Winter Swimmers and Friends of Lemesos**, the first ones in Lemesos to notice seashore pollution at their daily dawn routine. We engage with local youth and diverse communities that care for environmental sustainability and climate justice. We create artistic work responding to the absence (or radical shifts) of water in our respective countries, including the collaboration of **STARC Lab** for 3D area-capturing.

Leading partner: Friends of the Earth Cyprus
Local partners: STAR-C Lab - The Cyprus Institute, Water Museum, Akti Olympion - Association of Winter Swimmers and Friends of Lemesos
International partners: Kiruna 2029 (SE), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 2031 (ES), Nature Conservation Society in Norrbotten (SE), Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno (ES)

€***

BURSTING LINES
2029

European themes:
European Identities - Cultures

Exploration of the ever-elusive European identity through the urban arts. BURSTING LINES brings together muralists and hip hop MCs from across Europe to burst out rhymes and designs. It is organised by the lively **Street Life Festival**, led by muralist **EDMON**. It foresees a series of urban arts competitions and events, transforming Lemesos' streets into an open stage for dialogue, creativity, and cultural exchange.

MC Battles showcases freestyle artistry in Freestyle and Word Challenge cypher formats. Each MC performs either in a common language (e.g. EN, FR, ES), their native hyper-local linguistic variety (like Greek and Turkish Cypriot, Euskara, Sardu, Sámi, etc.) - or both! Celebrated MC **12os Pithikos** (GR) curates the competition, as well as a lineup of guest MCs and DJs.

An international call for a **Mural Art Contest** culminates in a mural art exhibition in the city curated by acclaimed muralist **HOPARE** (FR). **Strawberry Jam** curates **Breaking Battles** with the guidance of **D-PRANK**. An **Arts & Crafts Street Market** showcases the prints and crafts of local artisans, curated by urban weaving artist **Ipheno**. A **DIY Skatepark** is assembled at Athinon Street for best lines, best trick and highest kickflip categories - in collaboration with **Budweis 2028's Skateholders project** (CZ).

Direct and unapologetic, urban arts speak to younger audiences. Hip hop is the music and poetry of today, the literature of the everyday. It gives insight into young people's thoughts and feelings about a changing Europe - and their position in it.

Leading partner: Street Life Festival
Curators: EDMON, D-prank, Ipheno, 12os Pithikos (GR)
Local partners: Strawberry Jam, The Copy Shop
International partners: Budweis 2028 (CZ)

€***

→ WAR & PEACE 2030

European themes:
European Rearmament, Peacebuilding

Divisions everywhere, tensions mounting, war on our doorstep - actually, war has already arrived. Refugees, upheaval, and the fight for what is right, what is just. An open call will invite young filmmakers to send in a treatment for a short film (fiction, animation, documentary or experimental) on this experience and its effects on the psyche, and advocate for peace.

Lemesos International Documentary Festival has been captivating audiences with incisive programming and empowering filmmakers with career-building industry events for 20 years, which makes them a perfect leading partner for WAR & PEACE.

Those selected attend a script-development workshop powered by specialist organisation **Documentary Campus** (DE), and go through a pitching event with the additional support of **Baltic Pitching Forum** (LT). Successful projects are given funds towards the production of their film, getting support and mentorship along the way. When complete, the films are submitted to international festivals, while screenings, discussions and Q&A events will take place in participating festivals with a critical and political point of view. The **Tampere Film Festival** (FI), **Curtas Vila do Conde** (PT), **Kortfilmfestival Leuven** (BE), **Lublin Film Festival** (PL), **Lviv International Film Festival Wiz-Art** (UA), and **Vilnius Short Film Festival** (LT) have already confirmed their participation and screenings. The project is also supported by the vast network of the **European Film Academy** for making the open calls widely known, and potentially screening films online after their festival runs. In effect, the results of WAR & PEACE will be disseminated for years throughout the continent.

Leading partner: Lemesos International Documentary Festival
International partners: European Film Academy, Tampere Film Festival (FI), Curtas Vila do Conde (PT), Kortfilmfestival Leuven (BE), Baltic Pitching Forum (LT), Vilnius Short Film Festival (LT), Documentary Campus (DE), Lviv International Film Festival Wiz-Art (UA), Lublin 2029 (PL), Lublin Film Festival (PL), Lviv 2030 (UA)

€****

DANCING THE FRONTIER 2031

European themes:
Migration, Colonisation, Water Escape Routes

A transnational showcase and collaborative platform for contemporary dance and performance initiated by Dance House Lemesos.

DANCING THE FRONTIER connects artists and institutions from frontier countries - geographies shaped by migration, colonial histories, and cultural convergence across the Mediterranean and beyond. These countries, often framed as peripheral, are, in fact, spaces of radical creativity and hybrid identity.

The collaborative platform launches in 2028 with study visits, introductory artist residencies and interdisciplinary laboratories in **Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia, Malta**, and **Spain**. These will culminate in public presentations simultaneously performed and live-streamed across participating countries. The first official showcase will take place in Lemesos in 2031, a curated international event featuring performances, public conversations, and engagement with presenters, curators, and audiences from across the region and beyond.

Derida Dance Center (BG) will contribute as an Advisory Partner, offering valuable insights based on their experience with the **Moving Balkans Platform**. **Col'jam Association Culturelle** from Morocco will work in close collaboration with **Dance House Lemesos** on the implementation of residencies and the selection of artists. Building on its strong presence in the region, Col'jam will also play a key role in expanding the network. **Teatro Victoria** and the festival **Canarias Dentro y Fuera** in the Canary Islands will contribute through residency exchanges and the selection of artists. They will also potentially host the first pilot showcase in 2029.

Through long-term exchange, DANCING THE FRONTIER builds a sustainable legacy network of collaboration, artistic solidarity, decentralisation, and visibility for underrepresented voices in the global performance ecosystem.

Leading partner: Dance House Lemesos
International partners: Teatro Victoria - Canarias Dentro y Fuera (ES), Col'jam Association Culturelle and Rencontres Chorégraphiques Festival (MA), Derida Dance Center (BG)

€****

BEYOND DISDANCE

BEYOND DISDANCE is an **inclusive performing arts festival** combining residencies, performances, workshops, and public dialogues, with a focus on crip aesthetics and accessibility. It offers a platform for local and international artists with and without disabilities to collaborate, experiment, and present works that challenge normative ideas of the body, movement, and performance.

Building on its years of experience, the festival plans a 2030 edition that invites more local and international artists, and in particular larger touring troupes - ensuring better conditions and wages for artists. Additionally, it expands its content to include performances for toddlers, children and families to cultivate awareness at an earlier age. It also exchanges best practices and performances with other established inclusive festivals abroad.

Audiences encounter live performances, tactile tours, sign language interpretation, audio description, and informal spaces for exchange. Participants include local and international artists, both disabled and non-disabled, working across various disciplines, from dance and theatre to sound art and multimedia. The audience ranges from the general public to the disability arts community, educators, and cultural workers.

Audiences will be confronted with exciting experiences that are not only sensory-rich but also invite reflection on inclusion, identity, and artistic innovation, with indicative artists such as **Doris Uhlich** (AT) and **Chiara Bersani** (IT). The **European Arts and Disability Cluster - ADICLUS**, of which **Ipogia Skini** is a member, offers access to multiple artists and organisations for the project's open calls, cross programming, and know-how. **MeetShareDance Workshop Festival**'s **Monika Požek**, with her long experience in different bodies, untrained dancers, and accessibility in performing arts will offer relevant workshops. Finally, BEYOND DISDANCE, as a partner in our BACKSTAGE ACADEMY capacity-building programme and together with **Koullou Makka Collective**, offers training and produces a toolkit for inclusive performing arts practices. This will be disseminated to partners locally and across Europe, starting with **Namur 2030**'s **Tisser Les Marges/Weaving** the **Margins** festival and conference.

Leading partner: Ipogia Skini
Local partner: Koulla Makka Collective
International artists: Monika Požek (SI/ES) / **International partners:** Liminal (GR), European Arts and Disability Cluster - ADICLUS, MeetShareDance Workshop Festival (ES), Namur 2030 (BE)

€**

LORCA'S BLOOD WEDDING

"In Spain, the dead are more alive than the dead of any other country in the world."

If that is the case, as Federico Garcia Lorca's quote from *Bodas de Sangre* suggests, the dead of Cyprus are a close second. Fate, pride, shame, memories of grudges and trauma, death and displacement. The politics of the past, with the complex and contested histories, form the invisible hand that explains the division of Cyprus today.

In the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot theatre companies' **ETHAL** and **Lefkoşa Belediye Tiyatrosu**'s adaptation, Lorca's emblematic *Blood Wedding* is set in 1960s rural Cyprus, when the poisonous fruits of division between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots began to ripen and fester. For the performance, a Greek Cypriot plays the groom, and a Turkish Cypriot plays the bride. A joyful wedding celebration is staged, with rituals and music from both communities, in contrast to the impending violence and bloodshed.

The dialogues are translated into the local linguistic varieties. At the same time, verses are adapted into rhymed couplets - a tradition of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities (known as 'tsiattista' and 'maniler').

The inter-communal fighting in the 1960s and the Turkish invasion of 1974 marked a deep scar in Lemesos and Cyprus. This production, with a mixed cast of actors and creatives, will help in understanding the 'other', and will constitute a human, artful, and critical response to the current division of the island.

Leading partner: ETHAL - Limassol Theatre Development Company
Local partner: Lefkoşa Belediye Tiyatrosu (Lefkoşa Municipal Theatre)

€**

PICNIC

❸ district

An **artist residency**, culminating in an **'eco-unconference'** and **exhibition**.

PICNIC invites experts, practitioners of empirical inquiry, and locals with embodied wisdom of life on land and water to ferment their knowledge together with resident artists and the public in shared picnics. And while they enjoy and share the food, they explore environmental challenges, land and water stewardship, and our evolving relationship with nature.

The **'eco-unconference'** invites audience members to participate with multisensory and observational peripatetic experiences of the land, and ocean literacy interactive presentations. Night fishing and discussions on board with local fishers to co-imagine solutions to their challenges. An artistic herbarium (including an archive of pressed plants and seeds), non-formal education workshops, e.g. on upcycling and natural dyeing, visual and performing arts workshops, as well as mentoring on sustainable land and sea practices, complete the programme.

Xarkis leads the curatorial work and process of co-design, inviting a variety of participants: educators, artists, curators, natural heritage institutions, public authorities, businesses, local and EU environmental & social justice organisations, researchers, fishers, and the general public.

Drawing on the characteristics of the British military base, situated next to the Akrotiri wetlands, **Active Stills Collective** from Palestine delivers a workshop on documenting environmental degradation under colonial powers, and a photographic exhibition on the marine impacts of Israeli warships on Gaza. Artists/photojournalists such as **Mohammed Zaanoun, Doaa Albaz** and **Yousef Zaanoun** are participating.

IASPIS - Konstnärsnämnden (the Swedish Arts Grants Committee) are the consultation and residency co-curation partners bringing their expertise in socially engaged forms of art. **AKTI Project and Research Centre** from Cyprus offers training on ocean literacy, fishing practices, sustainable practices in the tourism sector, and 1-to-1 mentoring. **Friends of the Earth Cyprus** implements eco-pedagogical practices by developing a capacity-building training and toolkit for cultural workers including artists and curators.

Artists include, for example, **Korallia Stergides** (CY) and a visual artist and expert in natural dyeing, **Maria Pithara** (CY). PICNIC is launching an open call to determine a selected group of artists to participate in the residency. A Swedish artist, an IASPIS alumnus, will also be invited to participate in the residency.

Leading partner: Xarkis
Local Partners: AKTI Project and Research Centre, Friends of the Earth Cyprus
International Partners: IASPIS Konstnärsnämnden - The Swedish Arts Grants Committee (SE), Active Stills Collective (PS)

€**

PNAM RESIDENCY

An **interdisciplinary artist residency** that invites artists of Levantine and Cypriot heritage through an open call, to explore decolonial practices and cultural interconnectedness. 'Pnam' means 'dream' in Sanna, the endangered Cypriot Arabic language spoken mainly by the Maronite community. PNAM draws inspiration from the historical roots of the community in Lebanon and the Levant and takes artistic action to dream of a better future for a region in flames - again.

The residency encourages both independent and collaborative work through a shared studio environment over the period of a few months, with particular attention to socially responsive and decolonial artistic methodologies. PNAM is thematically driven, exploring topics that resonate with the lived and political realities of Europe and the Levant, for example:

Cultural food practices - food poetics and politics, foraging, food systems, and decolonising the land.

Language - multilingualism, oral histories, and linguistic identity.

Urban change - gentrification, tourism, and disappearing neighbourhoods and communities.

The public is invited into the process through a series of intimate public events, including open studios and Q&A sessions, exhibitions, screenings, and digital 'artist rooms'.

The exhibitions are co-curated with **Sic. Contemporary Culture**, an organisation giving space to new models of creation, curation and presentation of contemporary art.

The German-Iranian **Sumac Space**, a non-profit platform that focuses on contemporary art from the Middle East, particularly Iran, brings digital 'artist rooms'. Artists' talks, in the form of roundtable discussions, are facilitated by **Fisherwomxn**, based in Cyprus, who work across writing, publishing, and performance. A screening on disappearing foraging practices with contemporary artist **Jumana Manna**, a discussion with environmental activists and foraging practitioners, and more events proposed by the resident artists take place.

Sanabel Abdel Rahman joins PNAM as a guest researcher and collaborator, contributing her expertise in environmental humanities, food systems, and speculative practices. She engages through public talks, provides research support for participating artists, and may co-develop a collective learning session or publication. Her involvement roots the programme in regional, interdisciplinary approaches that bridge scholarship and creative practice.

Leading partners: PNAM Collective - Jafra Abu Zoulouf (PS/CY), Rony J. El Daccache (LB/CY), Belinda Papavassileiou (CY)
Local partners: Fisherwomxn, Sic. Contemporary Culture, NeMe Arts Centre, Ipogia Skini, Center of Performing Arts MITOS
International artists: Sanabel Abdel Rahman (PS/JO/NL), Jumana Manna (PS/DE)
International partner: Sumac Space (IR/DE)

€***

MAKING DEMOCRACY

A hands-on, collaborative project where **digital fabrication, design thinking, analogue gaming**, and **human rights education** come together to put democratic principles into practice. Through game jams (game-creation events) held in fabrication labs, makerspaces, and classrooms, young adults co-create solutions, engaging with democracy in real-time. Educators also find support in exploring and discussing current democratic issues with their communities. Game jams lead to product development and then a circulation of a democratic experience, democratically available and applied.

MAKING DEMOCRACY develops in three phases:

1. **Participatory Design:** Workshops and game jams among diverse communities, teachers, and youth to explore human rights education through collaborative design and making. Solutions that promote dignity, inclusion, and human rights are co-designed. The **Cyprus Interaction Lab** leads this phase in collaboration with the **Department of Media and Digital Technologies** at **St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences** (AT). Data gathered from these sessions informs the next phase.
2. **Development:** Development of a gamified toolkit based on phase one. It is prototyped and tested by gamers and communities that include migrant women, LGBTQI+ youth, refugees, and asylum seekers. Game masters and facilitators from these communities are trained to lead the game and act as ambassadors. This phase is led by **Serious Products Lab**.
3. **Spreading and Making**: The MAKING DEMOCRACY game is finalised as an open-source, analogue product. It is made available for download, allowing makerspaces across Europe and beyond to fabricate it and play, fostering democratic competences such as empathy, respect for diversity, and active participation. The leading partners collaborate on dissemination and testing across Europe.

The project is currently linked to the *'European Future Generations Lab'*, a **KA2 Erasmus+** project that started in September 2025. Its partners include **Leuven Municipality, LOV 2030, Erat VZW** (BE), and organisations such as **Urban Foxes** and **KU Leuven University**.

Leading partners: Cyprus Interaction Lab - CYENS Centre of Excellence & Serious Products Lab - Cyprus University of Technology
Local partners: Makers Will Make, MGA Makerspace
International partners: Department of Media and Digital Technologies of the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (AT), LOV 2030 (BE)

€**



ART FANATICS

flagship

The art of football. Drama, joy, passion, spectacle. Sadly, sometimes poison, as well as passion. ART FANATICS celebrates, shares and explores some key facets of the culture of the world's most popular spectator sport.

Cyprus is not immediately recognised as a major hotbed of European football. Yet with our three fiercely competitive local professional teams (**Apollon, AEL** and **Aris)** in the Cyprus first division, the rivalry and passion are huge and sometimes scary, even as they share a stadium.

ART FANATICS engages with artists, sociologists, photographers and storytellers in the culture of football and sports fans. A series of **exhibitions, screenings, street art, debates and performative events**, including children events and fan exchanges, explore ways to bring fans from rival football clubs closer together by showcasing their passion and creativity in positive and fun ways. FIFA's 2030 World Cup is a coincidence we will use, setting the ground for broad engagement through the Mediterranean.

We are proposing a series of events, such as new murals for each football club created by international and local **artists,** such as **EDMON** and **Paparazzi**, turning neighbourhood walls into bold statements of pride for the city and team. Also, screenings of sport and football themed short films, with sports and football themes engaging the football academies, in collaboration with **Parenthesis - Offside Festival** (GR). And, two highlight events:

A. **Football Fandom Exhibition and Conference - the Magic Moments**

Where were you when Aris FC got the trophy (CY First League) in 2023? When Champos scored for Apollonas? Or when AEL scored against Zenit Saint Petersburg in the Champions League in 2015? What do you feel now listening to sportscasters describing those moments?

This is an **exhibition for all teams** at the central stadium exposing the inspiring stories of fans and presenting artefacts and tales from memorable football experiences. This is also **a participatory digital arts project** asking people to contribute their memories of their favourite sports moment. Results of this artistic work can also be displayed in very short videos before matches and at half-time, and on social media.

Additionally, a **conference** discusses the positive and negative impact of football in the city, the social and cultural origins of football clubs, as well as the rivalries that extend beyond the football pitch and how to mend them through the arts, with organisations such as the **Everton FC - Everton in the Community** (UK), **DEPO2015 Creative Zone** of the former **ECoC Pilsen 2015** (CZ), **Bodø 2024** (NO), and football clubs from their cities to be confirmed: Rijeka FC, Bodø Glimt FC, and Victoria Pilsen FC.

B. **Kits and Tutus**

A **performative spectacle**, with music and chants, classical and contemporary dance and football led by large-scale performance specialists **Walk the Plank**. Ballet and contemporary dancers perform together with football players at the football stadium. Arabesques, assemblés, precision kicks and scissors expertly performed by local and international soloists, dancers and dance students, together with young football players from local academies, including RWD Molenbeek Girls team (BE). **Kits and Tutus** will bring along the powerful voices of the **Screaming Men's Choir** (FI), artistic contributions from **HKD-Croatian Cultural Centre Rijeka** (HR) and a backdrop of thousands of fans, chants, percussion, music bands, and torch drama.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: AEL FC, Apollon FC, Aris FC, United Sports Cyprus, Kanali 6 Radio Station, local dance schools and football academies
International partners: Walk the Plank (UK), Everton FC - Everton in the Community (UK), Nikšić 2030 (ME), Molenebeek 2030 (BE), Parenthesis - Offside Festival (GR), Bodø 2024 Legacy AS (NO), DEPO2015 Creative Zone - Pilsen 2015 (CZ), HKD - Croatian Cultural Centre Rijeka (HR), RWD Molenbeek Girls (BE), Screaming Men's Choir (FI)

€*****



ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING

A long-term project with **residencies for artists and researchers, workshops, exhibitions, performances, and actions** with an intercommunal and critical focus, the results of which will be presented in *Limani*, **a new periodical publication**. It recreates our understanding of displacement, belonging, memory, trauma, forced migration, and the nostalgia for a past that (perhaps) never existed.

ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING focuses on Lemesos as a living, shifting ecology of diverse communities and stories. It envisions an inclusive, accessible and transcultural space in the pages of *Limani*, in reference to the word for 'port' both in Greek (*λιμάνι*) and Turkish (*liman).* Limani is a work of art in itself: a vessel of implemented artistic events and the instigator of others. It circulates in print and digital form every six months starting in 2027.

Celadon Center for Arts and Ecologies, focusing on ecology, queer discourse and civic/social issues through art and culture, leads the project, activates its core curatorial team -**Gabriel Koureas, Leontios Toumpouris, Elena Parpa**- while collaborating with Turkish Cypriot curators like **Esra Plumer** and other professionals.

Local and international artists participate in three residencies (Spring 2027, 2028, 2029), during which they hold workshops and discussions with local communities, and produce content for coming issues of Limani. After the residencies, the artists propose projects to be realised in 2030, events like site-responsive exhibitions, installations, sculptures, performances, workshops, and engagements in various formats. Residency artists and collectives are selected from open calls and targeted invitations to recognised international artists such as **Mikhail Karikis** (GR/UK/PT), **Slavs and Tatars Collective** (DE), **Jumana Manna** (PS/DE), **Ali Cherri** (LB), **Cooking Sections** (UK), **Lucia Petroiusti** (IT).

The second issue of Limani is curated by the **Famagusta New Museum** (FNM), an artistic platform that engages in intercultural collaboration between Cyprus' two main communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, without excluding other communities on the island. **FNM**'s multi-layered contribution is inspired by the Orange Festival, a cultural event that once brought together diverse communities in the city of Famagusta - a city in the occupied northern part of Cyprus with multiple ties to Lemesos, and where many Greek Cypriot refugees fled from in 1974, later becoming Lemessolians. **FNM** proposes a site-specific sound installation for Lemesos, featuring newly recorded oral histories about the Orange Festival's memories, blurring museum, memory and performance. Layered voices evoke the festival's sensory and emotional landscape, complemented by thematic maps and a crowd-sourced digital archive.

Radius Center for Contemporary Art and Ecology (NL) contributes their extensive experience in addressing the climate crisis through art and educational projects. **Tavros Art Space** (GR) explores notions of democracy, equality, ecology and collective learning. **Triangle-Astérides Center for Contemporary Art and Artist's Residency from Marseille** (FR) has notable experience in editorial projects and a thorough outreach programme. All partners are located at or near ports, with similar experiences in intercultural exchanges. **Leymosun Kültür Evi**, the community of displaced Turkish Cypriots from Lemesos now living in Kyrenia, is an example of engaging the visible and not-so-visible actors connected to the city. Specific Limani issues will be curated with contributions from artists from Lemesos' Lebanese, Russian, Arab, East Asian, and queer communities.

Leading partner: Celadon Center for Arts and Ecologies
Local partners: Famagusta New Museum, Leymosun Kültür Evi
Collaborating curator: Esra Plumer
International partners: Radius Center for Contemporary Art and Ecology (NL), Triangle-Astérides Center for Contemporary Art and Artist's Residency (FR), Tavros Art Space (GR)

€****



THE COST OF DEMOCRACY

1 flagship

Without social movements, volunteerism, and activism, there is no democracy. A series of **large-scale exhibitions between 2029 and 2031** looking at cross-cutting topics and interconnected understories of human rights, like women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights, environmental rights, freedom of opinion and expression, and peace.

COST OF DEMOCRACY explores civil movements in Lemesos and connects them to movements that have changed the course of human rights and democracy across Europe and beyond. It highlights the collective efforts that drive change, the courage of individuals -including artists- on the front lines, and the role of public participation and daring art in renewing democracy.

COST OF DEMOCRACY is collective, personal, and current. Even today, global movements calling for justice and peace face charges and arrests for exercising fundamental rights. As we write this bid book, artists and civil advocates demand artistic freedom and resist the establishment of censorship practices by our government.

Through this process we also ask: Can art and culture change the world? How have the arts documented or participated in societal strife and change?

A call for **curatorial duets or teams invites local and international curators** to take on these topics, to invite artists and run open calls, expanding on a wide storytelling process through artistic and archival work, installations, performance art, and more. We collaborate with local and international institutions and museums, like **Schwules Museum (DE)** and **Combatants for Peace (IL/PS)**, to gather archives, historical moments and artistic interventions from across Europe and beyond. We are also in conversation with London Museum for their *'Votes for Women'* campaign collections. Local organisations like **Queer Wave - Cyprus LGBTQIA+ Film Festival** and **VIMA Art Fair** act as hosting and collaborating partners for the implementation and parallel programmes of each exhibition.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Limassol Historical Archive, Queer Wave - Cyprus LGBTQIA+ Film Festival, VIMA Art Fair, Eins Gallery, Pylon Art & Culture
International partners: Schwules Museum (DE), Combatants for Peace (IL/PS), London Museum (UK) (tbc), LOV 2030 (BE)

€****

THINGS TO CRY ABOUT

6 open call

The world is giving us enough reasons to cry about right now. This leaves citizens little time to take a breath, to think, to imagine the future, to mourn for people and things we are losing, and to remind ourselves of our common humanity, our common fate.

THINGS TO CRY ABOUT calls local and international artists and cultural organisations to propose **musical and performative events** for audiences of all generations and backgrounds who have the need to contemplate collectively, to listen deeply and even to mourn.

Sacred songs, devotional chants and Byzantine choirs contribute to interfaith dialogue between the historic communities of Cyprus: the Maronite, Latin, Armenian, Greek and Turkish Cypriots. We envision unplugged, acoustic events in nature, cemeteries, church courtyards, the gardens of Papadopoulos or Phytidio residences - serene, listed properties in the heart of the city. We listen to choirs from the **Youth Forum of the Maronite Community** and the church choir of **Saint Martyr Stanko** (ME), under the direction of **Lenka Durutović**, among others.

Lamentation voice specialists and performers **Marya Lowry** (US) and **Edda Hegg** (DE) offer lamentation workshops with the support of **Roy Hart Voice Theatre** (FR), a unique experience towards vocal freedom and expression. Beirut-based **Zoukak Theatre** perform their latest play *'Three Verses of Solitude'*, a quiet call for mourning, reflection and reconnection.

Finally, we are in conversation with the **West-Eastern Divan Orchestra** co-founded by academic and author Edward W. Said (PS/US) and legendary conductor Daniel Barenboim (IL), made up of musicians from Southwest Asia and Europe, to host them for a concert and for them to play together with our bicommunal **Cyprus Chamber Orchestra** of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot musicians.

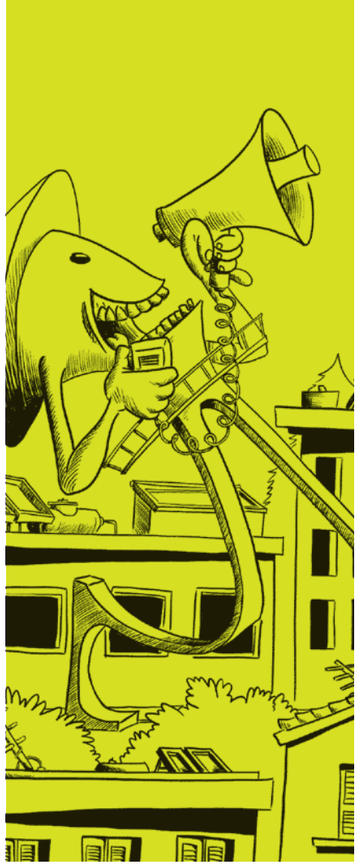
Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Youth Forum Maronite Community for Cyprus, Cyprus Chamber Orchestra
International artists: Marya Lowry (US), Edda Hegg (DE), Saint Martyr Stanko Choir (ME)
International partners: Roy Hart Voice Theatre (FR), Zoukak Theatre (LB), West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (ES/DE) (tbc)

€****

OUT THERE TOGETHER

walk, talk, listen, breathe

OUT THERE TOGETHER creates bridges among the diverse communities living in the city by making art and culture a daily art habit. We decentralise cultural activity. We energise neighbourhoods and urban cracks. We walk new walks. A co-creative and discovery process of the many faces and stories of Lemesos - stories of triumph, struggle, and the mundane in between.



NEXT FOR PAMBOROS
15–17 JUNE 2030

2 stops the city

NEXT FOR PAMBOROS is the revival - with an artistic twist - of public boat rides off the shore of Lemesos!

Until the 1970s, Pamboros used to be the only opportunity for the general public to see up close the big container ships (pamboros) anchored in deep waters off the coast of Lemesos. It took place during the 3-day Kataklysmos Festival (on Pentecost weekend and Whit Monday), which continues to this day. Literally meaning 'flood festival', Kataklysmos Festival takes place by the sea and includes a traditional arts, crafts and a food market, swimming competitions, games, folk dancing and popular traditional singing, like 'tsi-attista' rhyming couplets duels.

Although Pamboros was discontinued, the tradition is so well embedded in Lemessolian culture that the hawking call *'Άλλος για τον Πάμπορο!'* (Next for Pamboros!), for passengers to board barges to visit the big ships, is a catch phrase used even today to jokingly refer to mass participation in an event. So, NEXT FOR PAMBOROS in 2030 employs hawkers to shout "Next for Pamboros" throughout the city!

With the participation of nautical clubs and shipowners, we invite locals and visitors to board barges, catamarans, SUPs, sailboats, yachts, canoes, fishing boats, and sail away! This flotilla visits stages that are set up along the city's coast line: the piers of Molos seaside park, the old port and a barge which becomes a floating stage.

Audiences on the shore and in the water enjoy performances of song and dance. Choir sections, having sailed on different vessels, meet around a pier and sing for the people on the dock, and a soprano is hoisted to the mast. At the same time, Kataklysmos Festival is enriched with hands-on nautical knots workshops led by sea scouts from Namur and Lemesos, snorkelling tours of the submerged ancient port of Amathus, and an exchange of performances, workshops, and sea-themed activities in collaboration with the Sea Festival that takes place at Liepāja's Seaside Park.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Serenade Festival, Cultural Movement Epilogi, Modern Times Choir, Aris Choir, Limassol Nautical Club, Famagusta Nautical Club, Cyprus Union of Shipowners, 27th Group of Sea Scouts - Lemesos, Limassol Folklore Association, Municipality of Amathounta
International partners: Liepāja 2027 (LV), Liepāja Municipality - Sea Festival (LV), 23rd Group of Sea Scouts - Namur (BE)

€***

CATALOGUE OF WALKS

4 legacy

Alternative walking (or cycling) tours that go into **The Understory** of Lemesos reclaiming public space, voices and perspectives. Artists and civil society members of different ages co-create walks that invite locals and visitors to encounter Lemesos behind the façade, in the pulse of the shadows, with the multiple stories, through the city's complex history. Visitors are taken to places and neighbourhoods they wouldn't have discovered on their own, and are paired with local tour-goers, connecting *'with each other and opening up to what and who Lemesos is today'*.

CATALOGUE OF WALKS is a legacy project from our bidding process and the **Trajectories Working Group**. It follows the positive impact of the event **Out There Together** in 2024, where co-creation and collaboration resulted in a remarkable exercise of balance between community engagement and artistic excellence, along with seven walks. **Elena Agathokleous**, a prominent Lemesolian theatre and community artist whose practice dives deep into communities and spaces, curated the event in 2024 and will also curate the CATALOGUE OF WALKS. And yes, the **Trajectories** gang is part of this, building on the core philosophies of participation, narrative plurality, agency and cross-sector collaboration, producing alternative tours like '**The city challenges us'** and **'Bus no.30'** made in June 2024.

The catalogue begins in 2028 with a multitude of partners through invitations and open calls. The **Association for Historical Dialogue and Research** is joining for walks on reckoning our past between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, with participating artists and researchers like **Gürgenç Korkmazel, Ahmet Yıkık, Nihal Soğancı**, and **Nilgün Güney**. **Vivliotropio** and **aRtittude** are contributing to literature walks with readings tracing the city's 4,000-year maritime history and its last remaining ship-builders through literature. **Friends of the Earth Cyprus** helps advocate for micromobility and sustainable practices. And **Limassol Art Walks** connect the dots between galleries and studios around the city.

CATALOGUE OF WALKS also connects with LOV 2030's 'Here we Are Now - From Braem to Beel' and **Nikšić 2030**'s 'Roots and Routes' for exchange of knowledge and methodology. **Anastasia Pappa** (GR) offers a workshop on Desired Landscapes' methodology on mapping, recording and exploring the 'sense of place' of a city through writing, publishing, and visual culture. International walking artist **Clare Qualmann** (UK) joins as a resident, shares her walking politics and practice, and introduces the **Walking Artists Network**. The work *'Walking and Holding'* is produced and presented in Lemesos with a local team led by its creator **Rosana Cade** (UK).

CATALOGUE OF WALKS connects creative industries, tourism and education sectors. These new cultural products are offered in school programmes, at port arrivals, in various hotels and hospitality venues, and of course online. Locals and visitors alike connect with Lemesos in fun and profound ways, solo or in groups. We plan to keep it as a legacy project by sustaining the online space of the catalogue, soft infrastructure needs and the curation and production of processes to create future walks.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Curator: Elena Agathokleous
Local partners: Trajectories Working Group, Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Center of Performing Arts MITOS , Limassol Historical Archive, Limassol Art Walks, Pylon Culture and Arts, Eins Gallery, Ygrasia Collective, Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Rialto Theatre, Cyprus Theatre Museum, ΠΟΛΗΜΠΙΦ, Running Fluent Initiative, Vivliotropio, aRttitude, Limassol 2030 EU Cities Mission, Coordinating Council of Limassol Cultural Bodies
International artists: Clare Qualmann (UK), Rosana Cade (UK)
International partners: LOV 2030 (BE), Nikšić 2030 (ME), Desired Landscapes (GR)

€***



NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT

3 district | 5 neighbourhoods | 6 open call

How many of us truly know our neighbour? Probably not many. Some of us are openly suspicious. Especially when they are new and, especially, different. Yet good neighbours make a huge difference. Sharing stories, sharing food, supporting the same team, solving neighbourhood problems, and sharing a laugh over the same things. It is very difficult to hate people close up.

NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT is a series of community projects in neighborhoods of the greater Lemesos, aiming to strengthen the sense of identity and belonging for those who live in them. Teasing out the stories at the molecular level of our Lemesolian society, these community projects inspire pride in our ultra-local identities, but also resilience, solidarity, and dialogue as a way of soft resistance against gentrification, precarity and burnout. Perhaps even against that contagious malady ailing Europe and the world: losing trust in democracy and, even in each other.

NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT is an open call to develop projects linked to neighbourhoods in Kourion and Amathounta Municipalities and is allocated a separate budget from the rest of the neighbourhood projects in our programme. It will receive best practices, support and inspiration from **Budweis - České Budějovice 2028**'s '*Kul.turista*' project.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Municipality of Amathounta, Municipality of Kourion
International partner: Budweis 2028 (CZ)

€***

CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS

1 flagship | 5 neighbourhoods

The neighbourhood of **Rialto Theatre** and **Heroes Square**

A multi-year community project amplifying the softer voices of underrepresented communities through **artistic research, intercultural sharing, dialogue, photo publications, and video creation**.

CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS engages migrant workers, LGBTQI+ community members, pensioners, school children, and young artists, on the one hand, and professional artists, sociologists, researchers, and cultural operators on the other. It goes into the living and working conditions in the centre of a seemingly flourishing European city, and the experience of people from approximately 15 different nationalities whose labour keeps the city running. **Heroes Square** may be undergoing renovation from its red-light district and mafia past, but are people equally being taken care of?

Activities include a photographic exhibition and a publication focusing on the stories of Heroes Square's neighbours, where photographer **Xavier Istasse** (BE) also collaborates. Intercultural sharings include performative actions like cooking together in the house of a resident, or working together in the kitchen of 'Apahiko' tavern. The research process and engagement is documented and screened in various public spots in the city (billboards, pier, buses etc).

In 2030, a **24-hour durational performance** takes place in the Rialto Theatre, at the square, and in various spots throughout the neighbourhood, featuring actors, non-actors, residents, and visitors of the area. A live audiovisual performative experience invites audiences to a perspective and narrative shift. The performance lasts from 21:00 to 21:00 the next day.

Maqamat from Lebanon is involved in the research, assisting in the dramaturgy and creation of the final performance. **Theater Bremen** from Germany is our partner in the creative process, working closely with invited artists and theorists. With both partners, we further develop a long-term strategy and policy for fair treatment, visibility, and inclusion, to inform future activities.

Leading partner: Rialto Theatre
International artist: Xavier Istasse (BE)
International partners: Maqamat (LB), Theater Bremen (DE)

€****

SINIKISMOI UnTOLD: RECLAIMING NARRATIVES

neighbourhoods

The neighbourhood of **Kapsalos' refugee housing estates**

A socially engaged, multi-format artistic intervention designed by **Urban Gorillas**, a multi-disciplinary team with extensive experience in projects for urban regeneration, community engagement and artistic projects in public spaces.

SINIKISMOI UNTOLD gives a podium to residents of the **Kapsalos** estates (*sinikismoi* in Greek) through thematic workshops and artist residencies. All leading to situated interventions, a culminating exhibition, and the creation of a digital and living UnArchive - a digital footprint and inventory of the project and the process as an artistic and co-created endeavour.

Audiences encounter immersive, collaborative artworks embedded directly in the 'Sinikismos' environment: a half-abandoned modernist shopping centre, the shade of 40-year-old pine trees, a church courtyard, pedestrian walkways, rooftops, dead end streets, residual spaces. Community members co-produce events with resident artists and explore contemporary storytelling approaches: video ethnography, sound installations, performative walks, oral history mapping, and food-based experiences.

SINIKISMOI UNTOLD foregrounds the overlooked narratives of the Cyprus refugee estates that have been historically marginalised both culturally and socially. By centring these marginalised narratives, it facilitates the scripting and emergence of new stories and proposes an alternative city memory.

Urban Gorillas are joined by **Pla Estel**, a Spanish collective specialised in urban pedagogy and citizen participation. A number of resident artists are expected to activate the estate with the local community. **Orangcosong Art Collective**, with **Chikara Fujiwara** and **Minori Sumiyoshiyama** from Japan and Swedish **Art studio SES with Elin Strand Ruin**, whose work focuses on transforming domestic routines into radical public interventions, anchored in care, feminist spatial politics, and communal authorship. **Maidie van den Bos**, a Dutch artist, forager and founder of **Forêt Atelier / Bloesembar**, whose work explores landscapes through taste, scent, prints, and communal rituals. Berlin-based **Operation Himmelblick**, a collective which reclaims Berlin's unused rooftops to foster inclusive, citizen-led public spaces, invites urban dwellers to rethink vertical living, spatial democracy, and collective ingenuity.

Leading partner: Urban Gorillas
International partners: Orangcosong Art Collective - Chikara Fujiwara and Minori Sumiyoshiyama (JP), Art studio SES - Elin Strand Ruin (SE), Pla Estel (ES), Forêt Atelier / Bloesembar (NL), Operation Himmelblick (DE)

€**



KNEADING STORIES - REBAKING A MUSEUM

neighbourhoods

The neighbourhood of **Petrou & Pavlou - NAAFI**

KNEADING STORIES combines the art of traditional decorative bread baking with the art of storytelling to foster community-building and bring cultural heritage into the present day. Retirees and school-children come together in intergenerational storytelling workshops, exchanges, and the communal rebaking of artefacts for the Museum of Decorated Bread. **New audiovisual works, performances, and publications** by artists and storytellers invite people of all ages.

An exciting historical, sociological and sentimental artistic experience unfolds in the **Petrou & Pavlou - NAAFI** (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) area, which used to house personnel of the former British colony, the adjacent 1974 refugee settlements, historical schools, and modernist architecture spread across an urban area with streets named after architects and poets.

The **Museum of Decorated Bread** has lost its venue in the past few years because of rising rents. Its fragile artefacts are now stored in a warehouse while the museum is looking for a new home.

Technodromio, the organisation that founded the museum, has experience especially in the art of decorated bread, storytelling and oral tradition. KNEADING STORIES implements intergenerational workshops of baking and decorating bread, collects testimonies, and folktales. Creative storytelling workshops and performances take place in collaboration with **Thessaloniki Storytelling Festival** (GR). **Storytelling Festival of Pelion** (GR) supports children and teacher-oriented educational workshops, while **Raccontamiunastoria** (IT) shares community bread decorating, creative storytelling, exchanges of workshops and exhibitions. **Dinner Gone Right** (GE) shares Georgian mythology around bread, and **Arte Urbana Collectif** (BG) contributes into the design and implementation of the *'Walk and Tell'* sessions, and in creative writing workshops, for writers contributing to storytelling and publications.

KNEADING STORIES aims to re-bake the collection of decorated bread specimens -liturgical and festive breads, breads from the cycle of life, and their testimonies- and re-establish the museum. It also digitally captures them to create a virtual museum made available on LEAP, our digital platform. Finally, KNEADING STORIES aims to host the **Federation for European Storytelling Conference** in 2030-31.

Leading partner: Technodromio
International partners: Federation for European Storytelling, Thessaloniki Storytelling Festival (GR), Raccontamiunastoria (IT), Storytelling Festival of Pelion (GR), Arte Urbana Collectif and Summer Scriptwriting Base (BG), Dinner Gone Right (GE)

€***



AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER

neighbourhoods

The neighbourhood **between the Garyllis river branches**

A socially sensitive initiative that uses art to empower a marginalised neighbourhood in western Lemesos. Over the past five years, **Center of Performing Arts MITOS** has been developing practices and methodologies in the area aimed at highlighting its complex identity, strengthening social inclusion and the sense of belonging, and positioning residents as co-creators of their landscape.

The geographical scope is defined by the flows and notional boundaries of the **Garyllis River**, 1.5km - 2.8km west of the city centre. It is a historically and socially layered area, intersecting diverse cultural trajectories. AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER focuses on those often absent from the dominant public narrative: the Turkish Cypriot community, the Roma, residents with refugee or migrant backgrounds, women, and older and younger generations.

Throughout the year, two central pillars unfold:

1. The festival **"The Neighbourhood of Cine Volos"**, a participatory platform for interdisciplinary artistic and community encounters. Local stakeholders include the **Pattichion Centre for Adult Education**, the **18th Multicultural Primary School**, and the **Ino and Antonis Chatzipavlou Nursery School**. Their participation focuses on co-creation and activation of community groups.

2. The first **"Neighbourhood Story Archive"**, created in collaboration with the **Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of Cyprus University of Technology**, which records, collects, and documents data of anthropogeographic interest, such as place, oral histories, photographs, and more. In parallel, university students are trained as emerging anthropologists.

AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER is recurring, with each year feeding into the design of the following one. The programme includes both entertainment and community-oriented actions, such as open-air cinema, concerts, performances, socially themed film screenings, memory cafés, communal meals, open mic events, and more.

At the same time, bridges are strengthened with institutions from the northern part of Cyprus, particularly Famagusta, including the **Famagusta New Museum** and the **Famagusta Walled City Association**. These partnerships manage and engage with the shared refugee memory of both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Good practices in community engagement are exchanged with **Eastern Theatre** based in Lublin and **Artscape Menu Agentura** based in Vilnius. **ReCompulsive Behaviour**, based in Athens, collaborates on the visual identity and the production of a publication. With **ECoC Lublin 2029, MITOS** maintains an active partnership.

Leading partner: Center of Performing Arts MITOS
Local partners: Faculty of Communication and Media Studies - Cyprus University of Technology, Pattichion Centre for Adult Education, 18th Primary School, Ino and Antonis Chatzipavlou Nursery School, Famagusta New Museum, Famagusta Walled City Association, Limassol Historical Archives
International Partners: Lublin 2029 (PL), Eastern Theatre (PL), Artscape Menu Agentura (LT), ReCompulsive Behaviour (GR)

€***



ΚΗΠΟΣ ΚΗΠΟΥ - A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN

A series of happenings and short-term artist residencies that seek to breathe new life into the city's **Public Garden** and its old **Tourist Kiosk**, transforming it into a vibrant site of multi-sensory artistic and communal engagement. Central to the project is the idea of care: care for the garden, for the community, and for shared creative processes.

The Errands Group from Greece is a site-specific intervention partner that reimagines the space both conceptually and architecturally. They are invited for a one-month residency to study the site and implement an intervention.

A set of works created by resident artists is exhibited, activating the space throughout a six-month process. These works could be sound pieces recorded during residencies, a video recorded performance, a temporary sculpture intervention on display for the visitors to experience at any time... all allowing the audience to engage with the space in meaningful ways.

Artists are invited by **YGRASIA**, as well as through open calls for artists from the EU, internationally and locally. The programme is open to everyone -locals, tourists, children, elders, minority communities- encouraging connection between diverse people and practices. A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN aspires to create an open, welcoming hub, a shared space where artistic expression and communal care grow side by side.

A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN includes socially engaged dance performances and workshops by Egyptian choreographer, performer and author **Hend El Balouty**, a series of talks exploring themes of care, containment, and protection curated by Le Bloccate collective, constructive feedback sessions reflecting on how the artistic community in Paphos experiences the impact of Paphos 2017 ECoC today, facilitated by **EKSO Space**. Once a month, on a Sunday, the garden will host song and cuisine-sharing events, each time featuring one of one of the many diverse communities in Lemesos, in collaboration with **Running-Fluent Initiative**.

Leading partner: YGRASIA Collective
Local partners: EKSO Space, Running-Fluent Initiative
International artist: Hend Elbalouty (EG/DE)
International partners: Errands (GR), Le Bloccate (DE)

€***

A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION

A bold, people-powered, intercultural project led by **Running-Fluent Initiative** - a multicultural organisation with established links within migrant communities and international student groups residing in Lemesos.

Over two years, A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION reimagines Lemesos' public spaces and social fabric through vibrant, co-created activities that bridge communities and generations, celebrating belonging, integration, and cultural dignity.

It aspires to implement: intercultural storytelling nights with music, poetry, and narrations; informal and playful peer-to-peer Greek language circles using storytelling, cooking, and singing; cycling meetups to introduce cultural landmarks; beach volleyball and inclusive sports in nature; intercultural fashion shows and community workshops focused on anti-racism, digital storytelling, and inclusive leadership.

To accomplish its mission, the team collaborates with **Altera Lab** from Armenia to co-develop intercultural storytelling training and youth leadership workshops. **Physisorg** (GR) integrates climate resilience into public intercultural actions. **Be Art Toulouse** (FR) joins with exchanges and mobility between cultural workers with a migrant background. **RESET** and **Make it Happen** support impact measurement, inclusion-focused research, EU-grant writing, and collaboration on youth and social workers exchanges from across Europe. **University of Limassol** hosts intercultural dialogue, research collaborations, as well as mobilises students. **Limassol Intercultural Council** acts as a base for inclusive outreach and engagement among ethnic networks and communities (Filipino, Russians, Arabs, Africans etc).

All activities are co-led by locals, migrants, and international students, driven by the leadership of eight core members of the **Running-Fluent Initiative: Daniel Barasa** (UG), **Niki Koutsoftides** (CY), **Winnie Wanjiru** (KE), **Samuel Abimbola** (NG), **Annie Fang** (CN), **Oksana Vertman** (RU), **Olga Vilkova** (UA) and **Luyima Jimmy** (UG). A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION is an ecosystem for intercultural transformation.

Leading partner: Running-Fluent Initiative
Local partners: RESET, Make it Happen, University of Limassol, Bridges of Hope CY, Generation for Change CY, Limassol Intercultural Council
International partners: Altera Lab (AM), Physisorg (GR), Be Art Toulouse (FR)

€*

CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES

make a mess and dance

Risky propositions, experimentation, adventurous artistic approaches, and unlikely successes that lead to new ways of thinking about and presenting exciting art. **CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES** embraces the city's and Europe's adventurous sides by taking imperfection seriously and making space for excitement. We go for the unfinished and the unpolished, we remove pressures and open up to renewed meanings of success, beauty and excellence. Here, stories do not necessarily have words or a beginning, a middle and an end. What they do have is disruptive power, sensitivity, criticality, acceptance, and release.

TOWER DRAMA
WINTER 2030-31

❷ stops the city

An outdoor multimedia adaptation of ***Don Quixote*** **by Miguel de Cervantes**, presented on the façade of the massive grain silos at Lemesos Port. This is a lyrical spectacle of a noble, righteous fight against the evil giants. It reminds us of the noble fight to maintain a human scale in our city, even when we know the towering skyscrapers are here to stay. With this performance - with an appetite for size, using the technological capabilities of the tech giants of the city, acrobats, actors, dancers, abseiling artists, and original compositions - we're hoping to put our story of Lemesos' real estate development through the rigours of artistic inquiry. Reality and illusion, sanity and madness, chivalry and dignity, as seen through the eyes of multi-award-winning director of theatre, ballet, circus and cinema, **Robert Lepage**, celebrated French-Canadian company **Ex Machina**, creative director **Steve Blanchet**, and creative producer **Stéphane Mongeau**. Local young creators will join Ex Machina's core team to work on the show and gain international professional exposure.

The project is not envisioned as a one-off spectacle performance. A simpler large-scale multimedia version of TOWER DRAMA will be presented on subsequent occasions - much like Ex Machina's successful *Le Moulin à Images*, which was presented at Québec City's waterfront over the course of a few years. This makes the project more sustainable, creating a beautiful legacy project.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030 / **International artists:** Robert Lepage (CA), Steve Blanchet (CA), Stéphane Mongeau (CA) / **International partner:** Ex Machina (CA)

€****



SESSIONS: AUDACIOUS ACTS AND ENCOUNTERS

❶ flagship

The duo behind SESSIONS**, Dimitris Chimonas & Lex Gregoriou** propose an artist-led cultural project that operates as a queer civic stage for Lemesos 2030. Over the course of four years, a venue is set up in the Rialto Theatre's canteen space for experimental gatherings: intimate performances, communal dinners, screenings, rituals, lectures, and late-night assemblies. It becomes a queer living room, a rehearsal space for other ways of living together, and a culture of belonging, care, and collective imagination.

SESSIONS isn't just for watching, but invites audiences to dwell, participate, and co-create. It is designed for those often excluded from institutional culture, such as queer communities, migrant groups, working-class locals, students, and experimental artists. Yet it is also open to anyone who wants to engage. **Queer Collective CY** is a key collaborator for community outreach, language support, and co-hosting dinners and workshops with underrepresented groups.

In a city reshaped by gentrification, luxury development, and social displacement, SESSIONS offers a rare invitation to resist erasure through presence, care, and shared ritual. It remains informal, flexible, and alive, adapting to the needs and energies of those who gather. During the increasing socioeconomic challenges in Lemesos, SESSIONS brews underground radical thought, focusing on **allowing works to fail with style**.

With **weekly happenings and seasonal highlights,** SESSIONS offers a rhythm of events ranging from protest karaoke to kitchen conferences and utopian lectures. It envisions a **Winter Cabaret**, a mentorship programme for local youth and emerging artists, an **Autumn Symposium in 2027** - a weekend of collective learning focused on hospitality, resistance, and ephemeral institutions. Morning dances and monthly highlight events curated by international guests in dialogue with local scenes also take place.

Braba Plataforma (PT), a queer-led collective and platform dedicated to experimental performance and inclusive community practices, sends mentors for the **Fugitive School** (2028) - an informal school exploring alternative forms of assembly, learning, and action. **Y Events** (CZ), with their expertise in participatory cultural programming, curate ritual-based performance weekends.

Under 500 Fesztival (HU) co-curates a summer showcase in 2029 highlighting marginal voices. **LOCALES**, a curatorial platform for public space practices based in Rome, co-develops site-specific interventions, drawing from their experience in politically engaged, place-sensitive curating. **Moneda Record Label** (CY), a record label and experimental sound platform, curates sonic interventions, DJ sets, and listening events, particularly within the **Winter Cabaret, morning dance rituals**, and the **Fugitive School**. **Moneda** also supports audio documentation and limited vinyl/sonic archive editions of the gatherings contributing towards a digital zine/archive in partnership with **LOCALES** (IT)**. La Fabrique Art Studio** (TN), a community-driven, inclusive art and culture platform supporting emerging artists -especially women and non-binary creatives- will co-host open calls, youth workshops, and cross-regional mentorships. **Rialto Theatre** offers in-kind support and collaborative practices - tech infrastructure, and integration with the theatre's wider cultural programme.

By 2030, SESSIONS is a continuous, soft festival of everyday utopias, minor gestures, and shared rehearsals for freedom. Recurrent, expandable, and rooted in lived relationships, it is designed to continue well beyond 2030 as part of the city's cultural DNA.

Leading partners: Dimitris & Lex
Local partners: Rialto Theatre, Queer Collective CY, Moneda Record Label
International partners: Under 500 Fesztival (HU), Y Events (CZ), Braba Plataforma (PT), LOCALES (IT), La Fabrique Art Studio (TN)

€***



THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT

An **interdisciplinary performance art project** that proposes a new business model based on **arts entrepreneurship**. It is an actual shop -showroom and performance venue- with live durational performances in its windows. It is also an online store where audiences can choose from a catalogue of performances, services, practices and rituals, from the fields of live art, performance, dance, music, and theatre.

Audience members participate by visiting the physical or online shops and receiving a ritual, an experience, or a performance from a menu of 'services'.

An open call invites performers from/based in Cyprus, Sweden and beyond to participate in a series of workshops -a coaching programme- which supports them to build the performance ideas. The performances are then selected through a pitching event and are then rehearsed, built, and refined. The physical shops -one in Lemesos, one as part of **Kiruna 2029**'s '*100 Stages*'- and the digital shop are launched, while sales/fees contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project.

The participation of **NOPE - Norrbottens Performance Network**, a network of performance artists in Northern Sweden and Finland, is valuable in the outreach and engagement of local artists, performance methodologies and practices.

THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT poses questions on the values and practices that performance can offer to create a fairer and healthier world, as well as notions of capitalism and consumerism in the arts world.

Leading partner: PELMA (Projects Embracing Love-Motivated Art) Lia Haraki
International partners: Kiruna 2029 (SE), NOPE - Norrbottens Performance Network (SE)

€***

CYBORG BODIES

Human bodies and new technologies, futurisms and avant-garde performance arts. A way of reimagining the physical body, discussing accessibility, but also offering criticism of exclusive social practices.

CYBORG BODIES is a hybrid project that combines ARtistic research, open calls, residencies, performances, a curated symposium, and culminates in an international exhibition. Rooted in queer, post-humanist, and crip theory, CYBORG BODIES proposes the "cyborg" as a conceptual and creative figure that challenges normative understandings of identity, embodiment, and relational structures - especially within the cultural and political context of Cyprus.

CYBORG BODIES launches with an open call in collaboration with **CYENS Centre of Excellence**, inviting local artists to engage with these ideas through experimental practices, co-creation, and research-based production.

International research artists **Mariella Greil** and **Lucie Stecker** lead mentorship for participating artists. They also shape the curatorial framework and methodology for an **international symposium and exhibition** that frames these local artistic responses within a wider transdisciplinary and global conversation. Indicative participants for the symposium include **Irini Athanassakis** (GR), **Elisabeth Bakambamba Tambwe** (DRC), **Cordula Daus** (AT), **Hettie Judah** (UK), **Sophie Lewis** (DE/UK), **Ann Liv Young** (US), **Mary Maggic** (US), **Maja Smrekar** (SI), and **Dorottya Vekony** (HU).

The audience engages with installations, performances, talks, and workshops that question fixed ideas about the human, explore alternatives to the nuclear family, and imagine new relational bodies and futures. CYBORG BODIES serves artists, theorists, activists, and the wider public interested in critical discourses around technology, gender, and dis/ability.

Leading partners: Ipogia Skini & ITICA Lab - CYENS Centre of Excellence
International artists: Mariella Greil (AT), Lucie Stecker (DE)
International partners: Angewandte Performance Lab – University of Applied Arts (AT)

€**

SARDAM

Sardam (Σαρδάμ) means 'a slip of the tongue' in Greek. An aptly-named experimental and interdisciplinary literature project. SARDAM Interdisciplinary Literature festival, based in Lemesos, coordinates a two-year project between established avant-garde literary organisations in **Lemesos, Athens, Berlin** and **Lviv** to exchange performances and readings for their respective festivals and events. At the same time, the partners engage in a **Europe-wide mapping of the experimental literary scene** through the work of local focus groups, leading to a database and accessible online publication, which includes all those authors, artists, performers, organisations, festivals from 21st century Europe, that have an interdisciplinary approach to literature in an avant-garde, innovative sense.

SARDAM reveals the rich tapestry of literary performance groups and individuals around Europe, including **underrepresented, war-struck and experimental voices**, in order to give literary performance and experimental literature more visibility in 'mainstreaming' artistic realities. This initiative also lays the foundation for the creation of a **literary performance network**, and facilitates the field's further research and development.

Leading partner: aRtittude
Local partner: Limassol Book Fair
International partners: Nefeli Publishing (GR), Lettretage (DE), Authors Reading Month - Lviv (UA)

€***

AI ART & PLAY

A series of **participatory artworks, gaming afternoons, workshops, exhibitions and artist talks** focused on critical AI discourse through collaborative play and creative exploration.

AI ART & PLAY engages with interactive and participatory formats, where the public has the opportunity to build critical AI literacy in an accessible, inclusive, and fun way. Participants playfully learn about the social, political, and ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence, while also experiencing how artists are creatively working with or responding to AI technologies.

Once a month, people join talks, experience artworks, participate in workshops (often using a laptop), where they get to play nerdy fun games, exploring societal issues and AI. The events are aimed at the wider public, including those with an interest or curiosity in media art and emerging technologies. **No previous knowledge of AI is required!**

AI ART & PLAY ensures that conversations around AI are not limited to academic or tech-industry circles, but engage and reflect a broad range of experiences and perspectives - **the AI Understory**.

Creatives from Cyprus, the region, and beyond come together to foster experimentation and shared learning in the field of AI. **Tomo Kihara** (JP), whose globally lauded experimental games and public installations critically explore AI's social impact through play. **Ameera Kawash** (PS/US), an award-winning artist and creative technologist, whose work on speculative decolonial AI futures in the Eastern Mediterranean highlights the possibilities of regions left outside of the global AI race. **Joseph Wilk** (UK), who explores the digital and disability, hosts the award-winning role-playing game 'CripShip: Disability saves society from Big Tech'. **Feminist Design** (UK), working at the intersection of feminism, social justice and design, joins the project as an institutional partner with a meme-creation workshop by **Sinem Görücü** (TR/UK), whose work explores artificial intelligence in accessible and participatory formats. To connect creativity with the realities of everyday life, **Semeli Hadjiloizou** (CY/UK) holds a workshop on the impact of AI on a local societal level.

AI ART & PLAY is directed by **Alexia Achilleos** (CY/FI), artist and researcher at **ITICA: Immersive Technologies for Intelligent and Creative Applications/Museum Lab**, at **CYENS Centre of Excellence**. Through their work in the intersection of arts, technology and society, **ITICA/Museum Lab** has expertise in disseminating scientific research in a creative and accessible manner.

Leading partner: CyENS - ITICA: Immersive Technologies for Intelligent and Creative Applications
Creative direction: Alexia Achilleos (CY/FI)
International artists: Sinem Görücü (TR/UK), Tomo Kihara (JP), Ameera Kawash (PS/US), Semeli Hadjiloizou (CY/UK), Joseph Wilk (UK)
International partners: Feminist Design (UK)

€***

METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES OF DISAPPEARING LANDSCAPES

A **site-specific workshop series, installations, and exhibitions at Akrotiri Salt Lake** that invite artists and audiences to witness and contribute to the land's ongoing acts of remembering and forgetting. An invitation to co-create living archives to celebrate ephemeral, sustainable practices and cross-cultural dialogue whilst exploring the living memory of place and self.

METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES OF DISAPPEARING LANDSCAPES foregrounds the land not merely as soil and vegetation, but as a vibrant collaborator with its trees, flowers, stones, animals, and the ever-shifting borders carved by sea and time. It honours change rather than fixity and historicity while imagining co-existence beyond borders.

Small-group immersive workshops for artists and audiences by **Ipogia Skini** take place in a coastal, semi-rural site in Cyprus, along the coastline and Akrotiri Salt Lake. These locations provide inspiration and materials to experiment with alternative image-making processes, such as soil and organic matter chromatography, salt print, chlorophyll print, and analogue land-based practices.

Every workshop generates living material, a living archive. The exhibition is curated by **Fenia Kotsopoulou** (GR/UK) and features works by sonic sculptor **Yara Mekawi** (EG) and visual artist **Noura Tafeche** (LB/IT), while a digital version of it is presented on LEAP, our digital platform.

The inclusion of Southwest Asian partners like the **Beirut Art Centre (LB)** underscores the project's commitment to border-crossing, solidarity, and cultural plurality. This also fosters cross-cultural dialogue, distinguishing the dynamic memory of place from ideologies of static belonging, and empowers visitors to become active co-creators in an unfolding, living archive.

Leading partner: Ipogia Skini
Curator: Fenia Kotsopoulou (GR/UK)
Participating artists: Yara Mekawi (EG), Noura Tafeche (LB/IT)
International partner: Beirut Art Centre (LB)

€***

FOLK CLUBBING

Folk music out of context can be perceived as ridiculous or kitsch. *'We are often ashamed of what we make ourselves, whereas in these 'traditional' songs there is so much humour and truth, and a lot of 'Cypriotness' that we can celebrate.'*

An **international music production camp** for producers of electronic music, whose work is influenced and inspired by their respective musical traditions, resulting in the production of original music pieces, which will be included in a **final showcase**, a performance celebrating contemporary club culture and traditional music.

FOLK CLUBBING is where tradition hits the dance floor. A bold mashup of folk music and contemporary club culture, this project remixes familiar sounds of home with electrifying beats to create immersive, inclusive party experiences. DJs and artists reimagine folkloric sounds - not as nostalgia, but as living, breathing energy - bringing together generations, communities, and cultures in one shared rhythm.

Alejjos, a leading figure in the contemporary music scene of Cyprus, known for redefining tradition with electronic sound, curates the project and brings together electronic music producers from across Europe and the world such as **Danilo Moura** from Brazil, **Loco Leon** from Greece, **Karno Baghdassarian** from Lebanon, under the guidance of **Euro-Arab Youth Music Center**, a music initiative between Cyprus, Jordan and Belgium. Renowned **Tuvas Blodklubb** (NO) shares their experience, as Norway's first folk music nightclub, and joins as a programming partner, while **Station Beirut - Shuruq Music** (LB) will be a partner in sourcing musicians.

FOLK CLUBBING brings together diverse musical traditions, encourages dialogue across differences, and introduces traditional music to younger crowds and electronic music to older crowds.

Leading partner: Euro-Arab Youth Music Center (CY/JO/BE)
Creative director: Alejjos (CY)
International artists: Danilo Moura (BR), Loco Leon (GR), Karno Baghdassarian (LB)
International partners: Tuvas Blodklubb (NO), Station Beirut - Shuruq Music (LB)

€**

WEATHERING HERITAGE

1 flagship | 3 district

This experimental transdisciplinary Living Lab invites artists and scientists to work side-by-side in shared studio-research environments, and co-create new artistic and research-based works that address how climate change affects both tangible and intangible heritage. An international open call invites participants to collaborative residencies (in-person and online). Open labs, works-in-progress sessions, workshops for artists, public studio talks, community events and educational activities for schools invite people into the research and creative process.

Some of the expected outcomes include a short documentary film, virtual exhibitions on our digital platform LEAP, and a final exhibition with immersive installations, projections, and performative elements.

In Alexandria, Egypt, WEATHERING HERITAGE focuses on the **Shatby Necropolis** and the surrounding urban heritage landscape, an increasingly vulnerable area due to urban encroachment and coastal degradation. In the Lemesos district, attention is given to sites like **Kourion** and **Kolossi Medieval Castle**, exposed to sea erosion and shifting weather patterns, as well as the city's historic urban fabric, which faces development pressures and climate-related transformations. Lemesos district villages and the UNESCO heritage site-awarded **Holy Cross church in Pelendri**, and the **Monastery of St. John Lambadistis in Kalopanayiotis**, are threatened by the lack of water, as seen in the devastating wildfires that occurred last July. The project informs creative interventions and contributes to broader conversations on resilience, adaptation, and the future of shared heritage.

WEATHERING HERITAGE is shaped by a transdisciplinary framework and existing research collaborative networks of the **Cyprus Institute's Science and Technology in Archaeology and Culture Research Center** (STAR-C) and its **APAC Labs**. In this framework and network, the **Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine** and the **Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France** in Paris offer scientific mentorship and climate-sensitive analysis of cultural materials. Likewise, the **National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in the United States** provides input on the use of advanced technologies. The **Benaki Museum** in Athens offers curatorial insight and strategies for audience engagement. In Alexandria, the **Archaeological Society** and the **Hellenic Cultural Center** support research exchange and the involvement of Egyptian artists and cultural professionals. In the context of ongoing collaboration agreements with the Cyprus Institute, the **Department of Antiquities** and the **Department of Forests** facilitate access to heritage sites and landscapes, grounding the project in local histories.

WEATHERING HERITAGE is a shared ecosystem of experimentation where heritage at risk and climate urgency meet creative agency.

Leading partner: Science and Technology in Archaeology Research Center (STAR-C) - Cyprus Institute
Local partner: APAC Labs
Indicative national partners: Cyprus Department of Antiquities, Cyprus Department of Forest
International partners: Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine (FR), Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (FR), National Center for Supercomputing Applications - University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign (US), Benaki Museum in Athens (GR), Alexandria Archaeological Society (EG), Alexandria Hellenic Cultural Center (EG)

€****



IMAGINE A CITY

bold, fierce, legacy makers

We seek the privilege -no! the necessity!- of imagination, not only survival. What happens after the ECoC year and how we build the future of our city and the greater European community is determined by how we set our programme up before and after the big year. **IMAGINE A CITY** includes a series of **capacity-building programmes** to prepare and empower cultural operators and audiences, and **new institutions** that have the potential to remain as legacy projects. We embark on a journey of collective imagination, reconnection and collaboration, to work better with audiences, with each other, with authorities, and make the Lemessolian ECoC legacy a reality.



SFAAACT! in the CITY
SEPTEMBER 2030

❷ stops the city

Will it be a dance floor all over the city? A city-wide festival of AI-generated music and art? A mass LARP event? A CosPlay Convention? A live Reality Show without any TV cameras? Who can predict what trendy or traditional theme will appeal to young people in 2030? The content of this stop-the-city moment will be handed over to the students of Lemesos. Secondary school students will be the driving force and will decide what this moment will be about, and how it will be presented to locals and visitors.

SFAAACT! IN THE CITY will receive the advice of **Bodø 2024 Legacy AS**, based on the expertise of **Henrik Sand Dagfinrud** and **Charlotte Nyheim Eriksen**, who ran a similar youth project culminating in the youth-led *'Heartbeat Festival'*.

SFAAACT! IN THE CITY comes from SFAAACT!

SFAAACT!

❶ flagship

School for Future Artists, Audiences, Advocates, Citizens, Thinkers! - SFAAACT! is an ambitious, year-round outreach programme inviting school students, from elementary to senior high school, to take an active role in the cultural life of Lemesos. It is designed in collaboration with educators and students and encourages curiosity, civic engagement, and a daily relationship with art and the city.

The plan for SFAAACT! is twofold. First, through the Ministry of Education Circular, **it is disseminated broadly and integrated into school systems** across diverse types of schools, including public, private, special education, music, and technology. Second, through parallel outreach channels, **it speaks directly to young people** using social media, influencers, informal education settings and youth networks. This ensures that participation isn't limited to those *'handpicked by teachers'*, but is also open to self-selecting students with their own chosen mentors or facilitators.

Each participating school or independent group appoints an **ECoC Ambassador Duo** -one student, one mentor- to coordinate activities and connections, and strengthen participation. These are **entirely student-led structures**. Young participants form their own teams select their own leaders, and choose trusted adults -such as teachers, youth workers, or cultural professionals- to act as mentors. These adults receive training to serve in an advisory role, supporting rather than directing the process.

SFAAACT! **begins in 2027** with small-scale projects through a micro-financing scheme, alongside weekend bootcamps and in-school sessions to develop creative and practical skills, leadership and budgeting workshops, increasing agency, proactivity, and knowledge of the different professional trajectories within arts and culture. **Pilot cycles of three to four months** lead to small-scale projects. Students gain access to workspaces, materials, and transportation.

Financial support may take the form of micro-grants, matched funding, or alternative incentives, while a *'quick wins'* strategy helps build early momentum and confidence.

Through programmes like Erasmus+ and other opportunities for international collaboration and exchange, SFAAACT! enhances motivation and inspiration. Students engage with local and international artists and organisations, and explore the city's cultural scene as audience members or participants, gathering ideas and connections.

SFAAACT! is designed to grow with its participants. Those who stay involved over time form a **core team** that co-designs and delivers **two major public events**:

2029: TEENAGERS DISCO - a prep event before the bam! An eco-friendly, teen-only weekend designed and run entirely by young people, acting as a promoter/teaser for 2030.

2030: SFAAACT! IN THE CITY - the actual stop-the-city event entirely imagined, curated, produced, and hosted by students. This core team makes all key decisions, from designing open calls and selecting projects, to defining the tone, values, and outreach strategy of the event. It is a tangible way to give young people real authority and visibility in shaping the cultural future of their city.

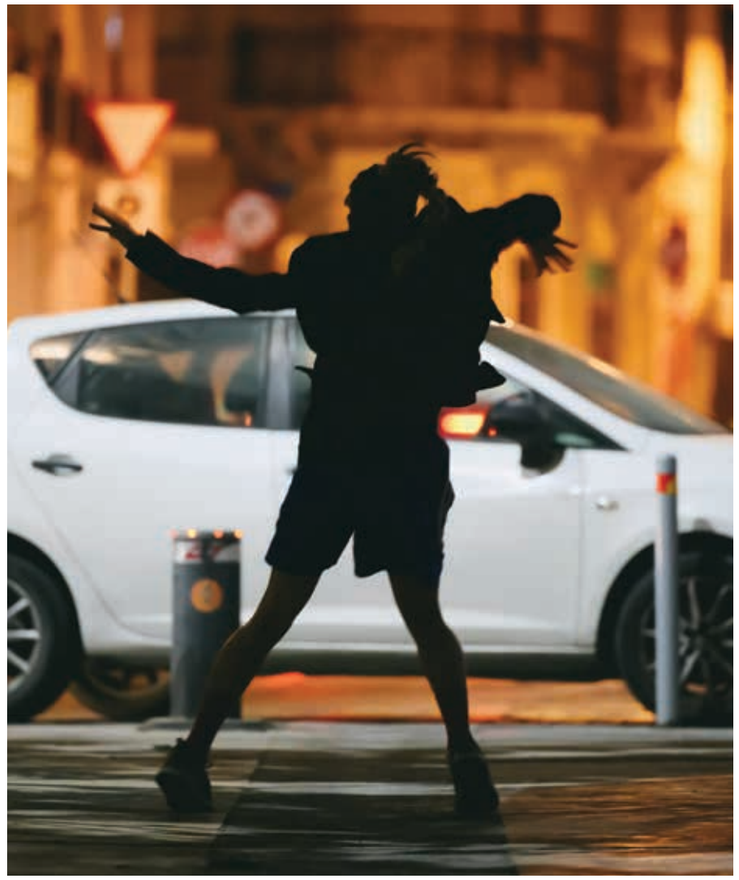
Students also join as participants, short-term collaborators, and ad-hoc activators. SFAAACT! empowers young people and invites them *'not just to be creative in culture - but to lead it'.*

SFAAACT! is inspired by Brazil's CESCs and collaborates with peer youth-led programmes like **Budweis 2028**'s *'Budějovický Majáles Festival'*, **Bodø 2024**'s *'Heartbeat Festival'*, as well as *'Frozen People'* and *'Untamed Office'* by **Oulu Urban Culture** in **Oulu 2026**. Colleagues from these programmes and ECoCs pass on their knowledge and join the project as advisors.

Finally, as virtual spaces and AI are shaping much of the world of young people, our **Water Tower** persona becomes a digital collaborator and a source of information. They answer questions about ECoC, cultural activity in Lemesos, and cultural heritage, starting from the Water Tower itself. Students are also able to design outfits for them to show off to visitors when they interact with them (Q38).

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Indicative national partners: ONEK - Youth Board Cyprus, KOKEN - Youth Clubs Cyprus, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
Local partners: Students and schools of the city
International partners: Bodø 2024 Legacy AS (NO), Oulu Urban Culture (FI), Heartbeat Festival (NO), Budějovický Majáles Festival (CZ), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Oulu 2026 (FI)

€*****



LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS

1 flagship | 4 legacy

An **all-encompassing international design festival in Cyprus** blends cross-disciplinary practices of design with art, technology, science, education, entrepreneurship and social change. It extends an invitation to professionals, future designers and the general public, where design bridges local vernacular wisdom and contemporary innovation, all while prioritising environmentally conscious practices. It reimagines cultural heritage by applying indigenous practices and the genius loci to address today's challenges. It prioritises inclusivity and social engagement, highlighting underrepresented voices, ensuring **Designer-Maker-Worker** parity.

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS starts in **2026** as a small event focused on 'gathering' and amplifying the potential of the Cypriot design scene, which unfolds among **designers, craftspeople, makers, engineers and academics**. Every two years, the festival grows, culminating in a vibrant week of activities in **2028, 2030, 2032**, and beyond. Each edition showcases work developed through workshops and feedback sessions, networking events, exhibitions, guerrilla publications, and playrooms for collaborative and experimental making. It's not just about presenting design. It's participation and hands-on creation, whether through carnival costume-making workshops using digital fabrication tools, video game coding camps or discussions on design ethics.

The festival also takes on local themes, like **Cypriot Modernist Architecture**, with events connecting to iconic buildings in the city. It engages with the **European Craft Alliance** and the **New European Bauhaus** initiative by highlighting principles of sustainable design and inclusive innovation, and how these principles reshape local spaces to tackle specific regional challenges. For example, Cypriot design to tackle heat and drought in the Mediterranean may very well become a compass for Southern Europe in the near future.

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS is intended as a collaborative platform positioning Cyprus as a testbed for design innovation in the Eastern Mediterranean. With organisations like **Beit Collective** (LB) and a close exchange with its founder **Emilie Skaff**, we engage with Lebanese design and craftsmanship, as well as discuss ethical production. With high-impact figures like British designer **Onkar Kular**, we dive into *'The Right to Design'*, who gets to design and who is design for. We intend to highlight and create space for the rich local talent to emerge, as well as enrich the festival's international and regional impact through a collaboration with the **European Product Design Awards** including exhibitions, talks, collaborative awards, and themed calls. These collaborations bring a wealth of expertise, global relevance, and attract an international audience, ensuring the festival brings a unique south-eastern European approach to current burning issues.

Partnerships with **Cyprus University of Technology's Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts**, especially their new **Product Design trajectory**, connect students and graduates to real-world job opportunities and the growing tech industry in Lemesos. This collaboration also invites design students and professionals from across Europe to engage in workshops, like one with **Joëlle Bitton**, from the **Design Department of Zurich University of the Arts**, who guides young designers through her 'excursive' journey of design. CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY connects outcomes and participants from cultural heritage startups and accelerators.

The festival encourages participation from diverse, emerging creators through international **open calls**, ensuring the inclusion of various voices. Satellite events, such as *'WIP Festival'* in collaboration with **CYENS Centre of Excellence**, facilitate dynamic exchanges between local and international practitioners.

To support long-term growth of a sustainable design ecosystem in Lemesos and beyond, the outcomes of the festival are archived in an **open-access database**, mapping resources, opportunities, practices, and designers.

By 2032, we imagine LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS rooted in the city's cultural landscape, becoming a pivotal event enriched with the local context of international reach. And, with the ability to push for social, well-designed change!

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts - Cyprus University of Technology, Serious Products Lab, WIP International Festival - CYENS, The Cyprus Institute, CAGDI - Graphic Design Association
International designers and artists: Joëlle Bitton (CH), Onkar Kular (UK/SE)
International partners: European Crafts Alliance, European Product Design Awards, BEIT Collective (LB), Rembranding the City - Nikšić 2030 (ME)

€*****

CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY

Lemesos 2030 directs youthful energy and creativity towards new approaches and modern-day uses for our rich cultural heritage. To do this, we introduce entrepreneurship and innovation to young people through a **2-step project**, the CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY. It creates the conditions for a more robust and sustainable local Creative and Cultural Industries ecosystem.

It also creates a regional hub for cultural entrepreneurship and innovation for young professionals - a venture builder through which fresh ideas can be materialised, from inception to commercialisation.

STEP 1: **STARTUP CULTURE**

A **creative industry startup competition** led by **Junior Achievement (JA) Cyprus**, challenges high-school and university students to create startups drawing inspiration from the living cultural heritage of the island: tangible, intangible and digital. This happens through a well-tested methodology: training the trainers, providing mentorship to develop innovative cultural startup ideas, business plan support, organising a Demo Day showcasing their ideas to an audience of investors, stakeholders, and the public, and finally, matching them with companies in the 'real' world, prototyping, testing, marketing, and sales.

JA Cyprus brings together a dynamic consortium of partners: **JA Europe** opens access to its expanded capacity and pan-European reach to 42 members and millions of young people. STARTUP CULTURE makes use of toolkits and curricula from previous joint projects. **Matera Hub, Creative Skills Week** and **Istituto Marangoni** contribute expertise in cultural entrepreneurship, creative industries, and design education through workshops and mentoring. **Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics – Yunus Social Innovation Center** adds social business and sustainability strategies. **INJAZ Tunisie**, with other JA organisations, adapts the programme to local contexts and youth networks.

Leading partner: Junior Achievement Cyprus
Indicative national partner: National Committee for UNESCO
International partners: Junior Achievement Europe, Matera Hub (IT), Creative Skills Week - Creative Prague (CZ), Istituto Marangoni (IT), INJAZ Tunisie (TN), Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics - Yunus Social Innovation Center (PT)

STEP 2: **LEMESOS CREATIVE VENTURE BUILDER (LCVB)**

A **regional hub for cultural entrepreneurship and innovation** for young creatives from Europe and our region, led by **SocialTech Lab**, providing them with comprehensive support and resources - from inception to commercialisation. We foresee LCVB becoming incrementally sustainable and scalable in the build-up to 2030 and beyond.

LCVB is a regional venture builder in Lemesos that supports creatives (artists, designers, craftspeople, and material scientists) to turn their ideas into marketable, sustainable ventures. Over a six-month programme, selected participants from Europe, Cyprus and its neighbours, including STARTUP CULTURE alumni, are guided through a hands-on process to turn sketches and concepts into working prototypes. They have access to expert-led training, design-to-product support, and tailored mentorship from successful startups, like **Dergon, Neema** and **pit2table**, to validate both the technical and business potential of their ideas. This is more than an accelerator - it's a creative launchpad where creativity, craft, and entrepreneurship grow hand in hand, redefined through artistic vision.

LCVB starts in 2028, centred in Lemesos, with key prototyping phases happening at the **MGA Makerspace, Cyprus University of Technology** and research collaborations with local universities. The **EIT Community RIS HUB Cyprus** connects the Cypriot innovation ecosystem with the wider **European Institute of Innovation & Technology** (EIT) network. **7Arte** (KO) promotes youth empowerment through cultural projects, and cultural behemoths. **Trans Europe Halles**' vast network and expertise in cultural management and independent spaces bring both reach and depth to the project. To this end, we foresee a strong and sustained connection with LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS, from which interesting designs and ideas can come to LCVB for commercialisation!

Leading partner: SocialTech Lab
Local partners: EIT Community RIS HUB Cyprus – CYENS Centre of Excellence, MGA Makerspace - Cyprus University of Technology, Dergon Designers, Neema Labs, pit2table
International partners: Trans Europe Halles, 7 Arte (KO)

€*****

BACKSTAGE ACADEMY

The BACKSTAGE ACADEMY brings together capacity-building efforts for a well-staffed and specialised ECoC and an empowered and sustainable legacy of the cultural sector after ECoC. In essence, it prepares artists, cultural operators, organisations, and festivals in Lemesos, providing practical knowledge and opportunities for becoming better at what we do.

We propose a series of **workshops, bootcamps, hands-on experience opportunities, traineeships, mentorships** and **professional placements** for the existing and next generation of crucial behind-the-scenes personnel focusing on technical-creative, managerial-leadership and administrative aspects of the industry. An important realisation from our focus groups is that cultural workers have found themselves learning new skills in various capacity-building sessions around Europe, but then they *'did not apply in Cyprus'*, so we enter this process knowing that we *'need to create relevant processes that we can sustain'*.

BACKSTAGE ACADEMY is organised under three directions:

BA_1. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, CURATORIAL PRACTICES, TECHNOLOGY

We collaborate with **The Festival Academy** and **Dance House Lemesos** to develop laboratories for cultural management and new curatorial practices, considering *'times of crisis'*, *'positioning' and 'inclusivity'*, culminating in a **7-day global atelier**. We also focus on management approaches, team collaboration skills, ethics and politics of production and artistic leadership, negotiation skills, as well as having experts offer a more profound understanding of *'legal, financial, marketing and administrative processes of Cyprus, as well as Europe'*.

With **Event Pro** we launch academies for new and established stage technologies, aspects of light and sound design, projection mapping and a more integrated-to-the-art approach to technical direction. Workshops by international companies like **Walk the Plank** go into large-scale production management, while **Zoukak Theatre** lead workshops on art-making in times of crisis. More intimate learning processes include one-on-one mentorships between seasoned and aspiring professionals, as well as hands-on experience in production design and technical management of performances and other live events, through placements in participating local cultural institutions. These can take the form of paid traineeships in venues of the city like **Pattichio, ETHAL** and **Rialto** theatres, internships in events like **VIMA Art Fair** and **Rialto World Music Festival** for the scale, but also **PIFF - Palestinian International Film Festival** and **Beyond DisDance** for the inclusive directions.

We need to learn how to operate more professionally and with adaptability, but also figure out how to preserve the spirit, and radical thought of the arts and culture operators.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Dance House Lemesos, EventPro, Pattihio Municipal Theatre, Rialto Theatre, ETHAL Theatre Company, PIFF - Palestinian International Film Festival, Beyond DisDance Festival, VIMA Art Fair
International partners: The Festival Academy (BE), Walk the Plank (UK), Zoukak Theatre (LB)

BA_2. ACCESSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENT

For Organisations and Festivals, BACKSTAGE ACADEMY offers resources, training, and tools to create a more accessible culture and environmentally friendly big events.

DIS ABILITY, DAT ABILITY: Venues and events have a long way to go before becoming fully accessible to audiences with disabilities and we have a comprehensive plan, as we shared in Q15. BEYOND DISDANCE is our anchor and point of reference for the way more festivals can become inclusive. We're building on the expertise of **Ipogia Skini, Koullou Makka** collective, as well as **Liminal** (GR) to create a series of training sessions and produce toolkits, for audio description, supertitles, sign-language interpretation, digital accessibility, tactile pre-performance visits and more, to make events accessible. In a similar manner, we are learning how to create, rehearse and produce work accessibly and inclusively. More collaborations include the **Psi Foundation** locally and the **Goulandris Foundation** in Greece which expand aspects of accessibility for seniors facing cognitive and physical challenges.

FIESTA FIX: No one on the island can host a city-wide party like Lemessolians - but we can do it with more care! We shift towards environmentally-friendly, cross sector collaborative practices that inspire care for our city, resources, and the planet. With partnerships between the municipality, waste management, cultural organisations, and connecting with the city's **Net Zero Mission by 2030** including its local and international collaborators, we start by reducing our trash. We introduce waste management toolkits, reusable cups, plates, and recycling initiatives towards small changes at major events like **Carnival, Wine Festival**, and **Kataklysmos**, for lasting impact. We also collaborate with **Triin Siimer,** *'Tartu With Earth'* Programme Line Manager at **Tartu 2024**, to identify Lemesos-specific practices and actions, based on her ECoC experience.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Ipogia Skini, Zero Waste Alliance Cyprus, Limassol 2030 EU Cities Mission, Psi Foundation
International partners: Liminal (GR), Tartu 2024 (EE), Goulandris Foundation (GR)

BA_3. VISIBILITY, TOURING

A lot of original art is created in Lemesos already. However, it is not very visible even to the local field. We'd like to change that by proposing artist visibility projects and digital communication infrastructure:

LEAD - Lemesos Art-full Directory: A comprehensive platform (website and app) for all cultural events taking place in the city, including the experimental scene, major gala events, the amateur scene, and an interactive map of venues. Additionally, artists, amateurs, and students will find open calls, job advertisements, internship opportunities, and other calls for participation. Categorised and in a calendar, with clear information on accessibility and language restrictions. A prototype version will be developed by the end of Spring 2026 through the **Department of Communication** and **Internet Studies at CUT**, under the supervision of professors **Dr. Theodoros Kouros** and **Dr. Costas Tziouvas**.

SEE CY: When was the last time you saw a Cypriot play, exhibition or performance outside Cyprus? If you're struggling to answer, you're not alone! There are few opportunities here and limited state-funded programmes to support this. European schemes like **Culture Moves Europe** support residencies and collaboration abroad, offering valuable professional development. But they don't cover touring productions or exhibitions. To change this, we propose, in collaboration with organisations whose role is to nurture artistic communities like **Dance House Lemesos, Nea Kinisi Cyprus, Rialto Theatre** and more, parallel to the state and EU funding schemes, a touring bursary programme that supports the internationalisation of careers of local artists. In addition, we plan **networking events, slow or speed dates** where artists, cultural managers, and agencies can meet, share performances, and make connections - taking place in Cyprus and in the cities of our 2030 colleagues. We'll also hold **team-writing sessions** before application deadlines for cross-border mobility programmes like **Perform Europe** and other opportunities, where artists can work together, share challenges, and learn how to improve their applications.

AAAA - Advertising Agencies Advocating for Artists: Being an artist usually means being a creator, producer, administrator and promoter for your own work, having little time and money for proper communication. **AAAA** pairs artists with advertising agencies and communication professionals to promote their work and build their communication and marketing skills with the collaboration of strategic partners from **Lemesos 2030 NETWORK** (Q22), as well as potential sponsors for out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. billboards, videos, advertising time, etc).

LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform: We create the conditions of connecting and engaging with people all over Europe and beyond - not everyone will come to Lemesos in 2030. Plus, we don't believe in overburdening the city or increasing carbon emissions from mass cultural tourism. We're launching a digital platform to stream key events and host digital projects. Some of them include our ceremonies, WEATHERING HERITAGE**,** METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES, our OUTSIDE THE MAP labs, CYBORG BODIES**,** KNEADING STORIES and more. For the purpose of capturing stream-worthy video recordings of live events, we offer specialised workshops for TV directors and camera people. We draw knowledge from previous ECoCs, such as **Kiruna 2029**'s **Digital Art Space** and **Liepāja 2027**'s **On the Cloud**, alongside local experts like **EventPro** and **AVS**.

Furthermore, a campaign advertising LEAP will take place in various regions through strategic partnerships. For example, other ECoCs and cultural organisations in Europe, cultural centres in Southwest Asia, like the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation, and cultural foundations in Asia, for example, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), and the Cultural Pylon of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Department of Communication and Internet Studies (Cyprus University of Technology), Coordinating Council of Limassol Cultural Bodies, EventPro, Dance House Lemesos, Rialto Theatre, Nea Kinisi Cyprus
International partners: Liepāja 2027 (LV), Kiruna 2029 (SE)

€*****

DECENTRALISED NETWORKS OF (CULTURAL) CARE

1 flagship

"The cultural scene in Lemesos stands on the efforts of a few people. What shall become of it when these people grow old or pass and their efforts remain officially unacknowledged?"

DECENTRALISED NETWORKS OF (CULTURAL) CARE examines the often overlooked and undervalued cultural labour, as well as the power relations in the art world. Planned for 2028, it develops as a framework aiming to secure resources and improve the precarious conditions of the art environment. It addresses the exploitative issues within the institutional, economic, and political infrastructures that sustain them. This takes place through conferences, discussions, symposia and networking, as well as an interdisciplinary exhibition to be presented by the partner organisations in Cyprus, Croatia and Portugal.

Building on its extensive network of partners, leading partner **NeMe Arts Centre** brings together EU and Cypriot cultural NGOs and stakeholders in a conference on the recognition of the value of labour in the cultural and artistic sector, with exchanges of best practices across Europe. NGOs such as **Aksioma** (SI), **Tactical Tech** (DE/NL), **Kontejner** (HR), **iMal** (BE), **Werkleitz** (DE), **Impakt** (NL), **o-o** (LT), **Hangar** (ES), while Cypriot cultural operators such as **Thkio Ppalies** and **The Island Club** will be invited. **Bourges 2028** contributes with their experience on collective action in the cultural sector.

The project partners are organisations with extensive portfolios. **NeMe** promotes a critical and transdisciplinary approach to the arts, with a focus on research and cultural production. **Drugo More**'s expertise in care led to the production of the **Pirate.Care** project as part of **Rijeka 2020 ECoC**. Portuguese organisation **Gnration** focuses on broadening opportunities for creators and professionals within the domain of contemporary music, the relationship between art and technology, and presides over the UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts Network for Braga (PT).

Based on its experience in bringing together local cultural operators and NGOs for **advocacy**, **lobbying** and **policy change** at the national level, **NeMe** also proposes **round table discussions** with local NGOs on various cultural industries (i.e., theatre, contemporary dance, etc.). The project also foresees **networking events** on topics of sustainability of cultural work with representatives from cultural Institutions in the EU, such as **Onassis** (GR), **Laboral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial** (ES), **Ars Electronica** (AT), **ZKM** (DE), as well as local and European artists, NGOs and policy makers.

The project makes a substantial contribution to the theoretical/academic discussion around themes of care in the art world with a series of symposia, lectures and workshops with cultural workers by academics and scholars such as **Dr Gregory Scholette** (US), **Dr Sarah Cook** (CA/UK), **Dr Valeria Graziano** (IT/HR), **Carmen Salas** (ES).

Finally, the project presents an accompanying curated exhibition on the theme of care to be exhibited in Lemesos, Rijeka and Braga, with works by artists such as **Tactical Tech** (NL/DE), **Mindaugas Gapševičius** (LT), and others relevant in 2028.

Leading partner: NeMe Arts Centre
International partners: Drugo More (HR), Gnration (PT), Bourges 2028 (FR)

€***



ELEVATORS

4 legacy

ELEVATORS is designed to reverse years of neglect towards the people and organisations in the arts and culture locally. Those who have managed not to turn to another profession are usually working two or three other jobs on a freelance basis. Organisations are losing their venues and facing precarity in funding. ELEVATORS complements the advocating nature of DECENTRALISED NETWORKS OF (CULTURAL) CARE, by testing and monitoring specific actions that aim to elevate, as well as build fundraising capacity.

Long-overdue **strategic support** mechanisms and sustainability actions, connecting to the city's **Cultural Strategy (CS 2024-2034)** include:

- free housing for young and struggling artists for a year - in collaboration with Lemesos Municipality (Q36 & Q43) and **The Artist Grant** action of the **CS 2024-2034**.
- abandoned or underused industrial sites to be used as venues with low or no rent.
- sponsoring cultural administrators and grant writers for small to medium capacity organisations.

EU FUNDING APPLICATION CLINIC

ELEVATORS foresees the creation of an EU FUNDING APPLICATION CLINIC: a collaborative mechanism to assist organisations and artists applying for European Union Funding Programmes (e.g. Creative Europe, Erasmus +, CERV, Cosme, Interreg, Horizon, COST, etc.) Funding matchmaking, partner search, EU portal introduction, grant-writing principles and workshops, elevator pitches and more, to boost the grant-writing capacity of the local arts and culture industry, as well as complement existing Lemesos 2030 ECoC funding processes done internally.

For the necessary outside expertise needed for our project, we are collaborating with **Liepāja 2027**, based on their International Cultural Conferences and Cultural Breakfast experience, as well as with **Bourges 2028,** based on the expertise it will have accumulated through their *'European City of Artists-Melina Mercouri'* project.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partners: Nea Kinisi Cyprus, Collective of Theatre Creators, Visual Artists and Art Theorists Association – Phytorio, etc.
International partners: Bourges 2028 (FR), Liepāja 2027 (LV)

€***

MICRO MACRO

6 open call

Small funds. Big ideas. Ownership of culture. MICRO MACRO is for those who do not find their place in other participatory or co-creative processes in our programme, those who like to do things their own way and those who are eager to turn their ideas into small acts of change, of joy, of play or even a bit of a mess. Micro projects are funded by up to 600 euro, easily accessible by any resident, young or old, by answering 3-4 questions. Priorities are given to **children and students, neighbourhood activators, intercultural communities and seniors** through calls to MAKE.

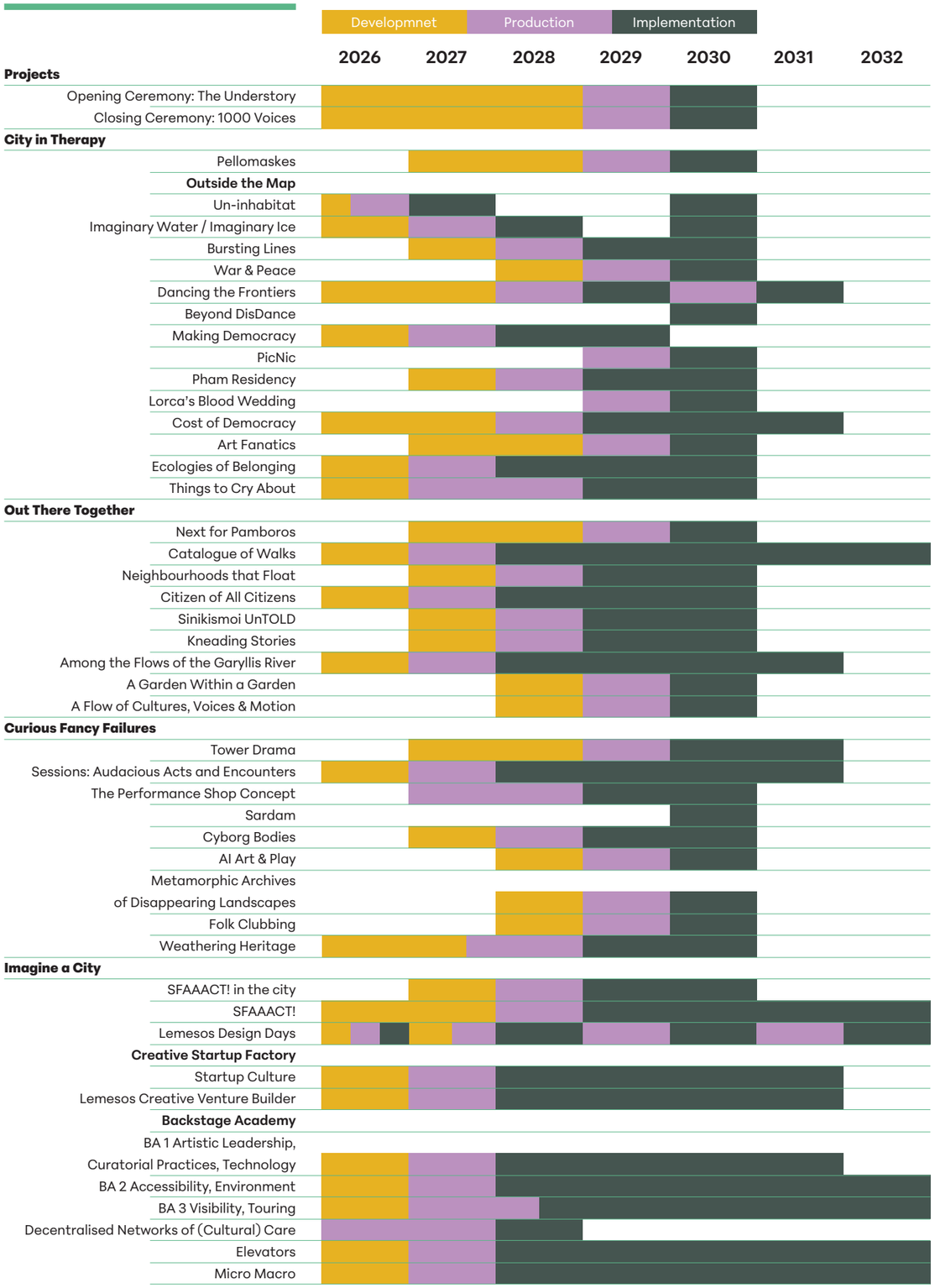
Chemnitz 2025 (DE) has been an early conversation partner sharing expertise from their extensive *'Microprojekte'* programme and we expect our dialogue to continue pending their legacy plans. Financed projects are also able to use **human and material infrastructure**, such as:

Community Activators & Mobilisers: liaisons, organisers, instigators, connectors who understand the local situation, population and different areas of the city. They motivate and empower citizens, spread the news about MICRO MACRO and how it works, create participatory processes, and support residents to decide on events they would like to co-organise or artists they would like to invite.

Movable Art & Culture Kits: Modular architectural elements made of upcycled materials that can be pieced together to create meeting spaces out of empty lots, like refurbished shipping containers or a van converted into a mobile cultural centre with equipment like tents, tables, speakers, microphones, screens, projectors. Kits designed by **Urban Gorillas** collective of architects and supported by the experience of **Oulu Urban Culture** (FI) on interventions making the city friendlier to younger people. This facilitates more straightforward implementation and minimises the request for funding to rent basic equipment.

Leading partner: Lemesos 2030
Local partner: Urban Gorillas
International partners: Oulu Urban Culture (FI)

€***



Q7 Choosing Events

The Understory is our guide. Our core priorities set out in our artistic vision will direct all open calls - local, regional or international.

The main criteria we have asked stakeholders and interested parties for have been and will be:

- to think of the Understory - diversified storytelling, plurality of voices
- to address European themes and challenges
- to think beyond business as usual
- how a project is inclusive
- how it invites an international visitor
- a fresh outlook, a curious viewpoint, a playful mistake
- how it is sustainable and environmentally friendly

Most of the projects populating our artistic and cultural programme are the result of the **Targeted Call** we carried out in our pre-selection and selection rounds, many of them coming with a lead partner. Other projects emerged from our **Outreach** process and from the work with the **Trajectories Working Group**. In revisiting those projects for the selection phase, while thinking ahead towards the time after designation, we did four things:

- Decide which of those will be led by Lemesos 2030 - ceremonies, stop-the-city moments, capacity building, school programme, and so on. For some of those, we ran specialised focus groups for further development (more in Q9).
- Match those project ideas that came from the communities without a lead partner with relevant partners that could lead them, and even think outside of strictly cultural organisations. For example, IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE is led by Friends of the Earth Cyprus, and a curator will take on the role of building the artistic part of the programme along with them.
- While reviewing our programme, we found some gaps and ran a second round of a Targeted Call, from which new projects were developed, like WEATHERING HERITAGE, FOLK CLUBBING, AI ART & PLAY, and A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION.
- Define some of our future open calls.

And after?

Currently, our programme amounts to 80% of our designated budget, leaving us with 20% (€3.4m) to be defined in the next few years. If we are designated as ECoC, more open calls will take place, and a reviewing process linked to our vision and priorities. Overall, our goal is to secure at least 20% of our total budget for open calls and 20% for youth or youth-led projects, as we shared in Q6. We now cover more than half of each of these goals.

The NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT open call focuses on decentralised and participatory approaches in neighbourhoods across the collaborating municipalities. THINGS TO CRY ABOUT calls for musical and performative works connected to practices of burial and mourning, local historical communities or those across the Euro-Mediterranean region. MICRO MACRO provides resources and tools for children, youth and seniors to engage with culture and each other.

Long-term projects like LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS, SESSIONS, ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING, CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY, and others, will run both local and international open calls directly for those activities. More **open calls** will be decided as we move ahead and identify gaps, as well as through our **Targeted Call** projects.

Youth or youth-led projects include SFAAACT!, OUTSIDE THE MAP and CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY. There is remaining €1.3m earmarked for youth or youth-led projects to be decided as we move ahead.

Different reviewing committees with independent members will support selection processes for the final programme and complement the Lemesos 2030 artistic team for calls for projects, curators, or artists. The **Artistic Director** will ensure coherence and keep the final focus and decision where needed.

We will maintain care and continue cultivating processes that start from participation. Our open calls and selection processes will match our vision and campaigns, look for, invite and give space for **The Understory** to thrive.

Q8 Combining Local Cultural Heritage with New Cultural Expressions

In Lemesos, we are bringing local cultural heritage and contemporary innovation together, integrating tradition with experimentation. New technologies allow us to experiment, play, and develop digital forms. At the same time, diverse storytelling and shared experiences help people connect in person and discover fresh, tangible ways to engage with heritage today.

CATALOGUE OF WALKS invites participants to experience tangible and intangible heritage firsthand - from ancient Amathounta and Aphrodite's temple, to modernist architecture as a fresh outlook on progress and aesthetics for both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot architects. By moving through the city on foot, participants reconnect with the layered histories of Lemesos, activating heritage as a lived, shared experience.

The CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY uses entrepreneurship and innovation as tools to reinterpret cultural heritage. Participants take inspiration from local traditions and apply them to new cultural or business projects.

WEATHERING HERITAGE investigates archaeological sites and historic landmarks through the lens of climate impact. It combines artistic and scientific outputs that span both physical and digital spaces, 3D mapping, VR, and creative digital experimentations, highlighting the evolving relationship between people, place, and environment. It draws attention to heritage preservation and creates new ways for people to experience and understand these spaces.

ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING explores intangible heritage through aural histories, intergenerational participation and diversified storytelling. It creates new accessible digital archives and a periodical publication decolonising dominant narratives. It activates mechanisms of critical nostalgia and crafts an expanded cultural memory that fuels new creations in music, performance, and storytelling - in both physical and digital dimensions.

UN-INHABITAT engages with drystone landscapes, designated UNESCO Intangible Heritage since 2018, activating a traditional rural practice to reclaim contemporary urban public space through artistic and participatory actions.

PELLOMASKES dives into a local carnival tradition, elevating it through digital archiving, digital fabrication workshops, and creative reinterpretation. Similarly, PAMBOROS revives a discontinued tradition in a mass gathering of diverse stakeholders, reconnecting on water with blasts from the past, as well as newly composed *kantades* - Lemessolian serenades.

METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES links cultural and natural heritage, utilising alternative image-making processes to create hybrid exhibitions, with a focus on Akrotiri Salt Lake, a vital natural reserve due to its significance as a wetland and a major stopover for migratory birds.

Through THINGS TO CRY ABOUT, we engage with sacred songs, devotional chants, Byzantine choirs, and burial and mourning rituals from across the Euro-Mediterranean, inviting artists and communities to reinterpret historic practices for today's audiences.

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS establishes a biennial international platform to explore and redefine cultural heritage through new technologies and contemporary making processes. It bridges local craft knowledge with innovative design, critically examining traditional practices shaped by colonial histories and generating new methods, materials, and sustainable production models. The festival intends to position Lemesos as a hub where technology, design, and craftsmanship converge.

Our digital and AI ventures include our **Water Tower** persona, who, apart from being an expert travel agent and host (Q38), defends cultural heritage, plays games with young children about the city's architecture, customs and histories, and collaborates with our SFAAACT! crew. The **Water Tower** persona has the potential to play a big part in CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY too, and later on, to be adopted, further developed and become a digital legacy of ECoC as part of LEAD.

Across all initiatives, we aim to seamlessly integrate physical, digital, and virtual spaces, fostering inclusive and sustainable engagement with culture. We explore heritage not as a static archive or backdrop, but a living, interactive foundation for creativity, learning, and community connection, inspiring new cultural expressions while remaining deeply rooted in the plural identity of Lemesos.

Q9/10 Involvement of Local Artists & Cultural Organisations / Examples of Co-operation

During both the preselection and final selection rounds, we focused on a series of actions with Lemesos' cultural stakeholders to think of their involvement as a continued co-creation process. But also to strategically engage them and set the ground for the dynamic players of the city to be ready to implement the projects they lead. In the run-up to 2030, cultural operators in Lemesos and Cyprus will have the chance to develop their capacities further, engage with international partners, but also step up their work in quality, artistic excellence, professionalism and artful care.

Targeted call round 2

Projects previously proposed and led by independent organisations were developed and connected with European and International partners. We extended our **Targeted Call** to find more leaders for those projects that, in our first bid book, were the results of our **Outreach** process and the **Trajectories Working Group**, as we also mention in Q7.

For example, OUTSIDE THE MAP is now broken down into separate annual ateliers led by diverse cultural stakeholders: **Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Architecture Department of the University of Nicosia, Street Life Festival, Lemesos International Documentary Festival** and **Dance House Lemesos**. The ateliers were discussed and developed in collaboration, thinking together about how youth will participate, create, and collaborate.

What was before called 'Critical Nostalgia' now became two distinct projects: ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING led by **Celadon Center for Arts and Ecologies**, and a bicommunal theatre production, by **ETHAL - Limassol Theatre Development Company**.

Focusing our ambitions

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS was further developed through a process led by **Marios Constantinides**, the **Creative Director of WIP Arts and Technology Festival** and Senior Manager of **ThinkerMakerSpace at CYENS Centre of Excellence**. After an initial mapping through questionnaires, 15 designers from diverse backgrounds were invited to participate in focus groups. These included, among others, product designers **Eva Korae** and **Marcos Georgiou** working with new materials, **Konstantina Nina Achilleos** and **Tuomas Venäläinen (Dio Dio collective)**, as well as **Christina Socratous (Tradition Now)** working with preservation and re-interpretation of local craft practices and materials, digital designer **Dennis Constantinou**, furniture designer and maker, **Thalis Nikolaou**, and designers and entrepreneurs **Melina Galati** and **Georgia Moditi**. The designers' input directly defined the festival's vision, aims, and programming, creating a bottom-up approach that strengthens the local design ecosystem.

SFAAACT!, during pre-selection, was formulated based on children's and teenagers' voices. But to make SFAAACT! happen, we needed, yes, some adults! So, we invited schoolteachers from different levels of education, good practices like **Junior Achievement**, who already collaborate with the Ministry of Education (MoE) for a Cyprus-wide programme, representatives of organisations outside of schools, like the **Maronite Community Youth Choir, Lipasma** educational theatre programme, and the **Community of Ukrainian-Cypriot Friendship**. The participants' input informed the project's approach to methodology and future collaborations.

For BACKSTAGE ACADEMY, we gathered cultural organisations, as well as artists and producers, like **Alexis Vassiliou**, director of **Rialto Theatre**, **Georgia Andreou**, president of **Nea Kinisi Cyprus**, **Marios Pavlou**, member of the **YGRASIA** collective and director of **Pylon Art & Culture**, cultural project managers **Nefeli Stylianou** and **Anya Masalova**, and organisations like **Ipogia Skini** and **Dance House Lemesos**. The task was to look at the **Understory** of cultural work, the behind-the-scenes processes that sustain the sector but often go unseen, as well as processes that require attention like accessibility and diversified fundraising. Drawing from these insights, we shaped the content of the programme responding to the needs for running the ECoC, while simultaneously strengthening the local cultural sector which is highly important both for the ECoC as well as for legacy.

Lemessolian diaspora

On July 16th 2025, we organised an online meeting with Lemessolian artists residing abroad. We presented **The Understory** and priorities, future open call plans, and invited exchange and active participation. Through this platform, the goal is to encourage engagement and contribution to projects leveraging the creative potential of the diaspora, as well as creating meaningful virtual opportunities for collaboration, like with **Elena Socratous** based in Berlin and core member of **Koullou Makka**, participating in BACKSTAGE ACADEMY and architect **Natali Timotheou** as part of **Building Diversity** based in Denmark collaborating in UN-INHABITAT, as well as new connections.

Deepening our conversations

We initiated and co-organised a public discussion titled *'Art in Cyprus: a conversation on trauma, unresolved grief and contested narratives'*, anchored in an exhibition by two Cypriot artists (Greek Cypriot **Rinos Stefani** and Turkish Cypriot **Sumer Erek**) at the **Limassol Municipal Arts Centre - Apothikes Papadaki**. The discussion featured the two exhibiting artists in conversation with scholars from the two communities, **Esra Plumer** and **Gabriel Koureas**, and catalysed new partnerships for ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING.

We collaborated with **Lemesos International Documentary Festival** for the screening of the documentary *'How to build a library'* by Christopher King & Maia Lekow, and a public discussion on 'Decolonising Narratives: Embracing Lemesos' understories through culture' with guest panellists, the director of the **Limassol Historical Archives, Mimis Sofokleous** and **Erica Charalambous**, researcher in archival practices in contemporary performing arts.

Not only did we involve our artistic and cultural field, but we also learned a lot that prepares us for a possible implementation: how to handle public discussions that might become difficult or how to touch on complex subjects. And in all of that, we identified how to protect overpowered cultural and artistic voices, as well as our own vulnerabilities, both of which are equally important to know before embarking on a European-level project like the ECoC.

In the following table are all our confirmed local organisations and artists currently in our programme. Names that have multiple appearances in our programme are mentioned only once here. Through open calls and invitations, we anticipate that this list will expand significantly to include curators and artists, as well as local dance, performance, and theatre companies.



Programme Line	Local Organisations	Local Artists
CEREMONIES	**Collaborating / Participating partners:** Eurogate Container Terminal, Epilogi Cultural Movement Choirs, Kourion Municipal Choir, Cyprus Bicommunal Choir for Peace, Diastasis Cultural Association Choirs, Monternoi Kairoi Choir, Aris Choir, Maronite Community Youth Choir, Yermasoyia Municipal Choir, Jeunesses Musicales Cyprus	**OPEN CALLS and invitations**
CITY IN THERAPY	**Leading partners:** Dance House Lemesos, Lemesos International Documentary Festival, Street Life Festival, Department of Architecture, UNIC, Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Synergeio, Cyprus Interaction Lab, Serious Products Lab, Xarkis, PNAM Collective, Celadon Center for Arts and Ecologies, ETHAL	**OPEN CALLS and invitations** plus **Stelios Georgiades** - researcher/advisor, **Sevina Floridou** - creative director, **D-prank** - DJ/ b-boy, **EDMON** - curator, muralist, **Koulla Makka Collective** - performers, writers, workshop leaders, **Eleni Pashia** - designer of participatory methodologies, **Esra Plumer Bardak** - curator
	Collaborating / Participating partners: Carnival Museum, Cyprus Theatre Museum, MGA Makerspace, Makers Will Make, REC, Limassol Historical Archive, Limassol Photography Festival, Youth Forum Maronite Community for Cyprus, CCO Cyprus Chamber Orchestra, Lefkoşa Belediye Tiyatrosu (Lefkoşa Municipal Theatre), Famagusta New Museum, Leymosun Kültür Evi, AEL FC, Apollon FC, Aris FC, United Sports Cyprus, Kanali 6 Radio Station, Queer Wave - Cyprus, Fisherwomxn, SIC Contemporary Culture, AKTI Project and Research Centre, Strawberry Jam	
OUT THERE TOGETHER	**Leading partners:** Rialto Theatre, Urban Gorillas, Ygrasia Collective, Center of Performing Arts MITOS, Technodromio, Running Fluent Initiative	**OPEN CALLS and invitations** plus **Elena Agathokleous** - curator, **Gürgenç Korkmazel** - poet, **Ahmet Yıkık** - researcher/ editor on Turkish language and literature, **Nihal Soğancı** - social anthropologist/ interdisciplinary artist, **Nilgün Güney** - painter/ writer
	Collaborating / Participating partners: EKSO Space, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the Cyprus University of Technology, Pattichion Centre for Adult Education, 18th Primary School, Ino and Antonis Chatzipavlou Nursery School, Famagusta Walled City Association, Municipality of Amathounta, Municipality of Kourion, Trajectories Working Group, Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Limassol Art Walks, Pylon Culture and Arts, Eins Gallery, ΠΟΛΗΜΠΙΦ, Vivliotropio, Limassol 2030 EU Cities Mission, Coordinating Council of Limassol Cultural Bodies, Serenade Festival	
CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES	**Leading partners:** PELMA (Projects Embracing Love-Motivated Art) Lia Haraki, aRtittude, ITICA Lab - CYENS - Centre of Excellence, Euro Arab Youth Music Center, STAR-C - Cyprus Institute	**OPEN CALLS and invitations** plus **Dimitris Chimonas** & **Alexis Gregoriou** - leading artists/ curators, **Alexia Achilleos** - creative director, **Alejjos** - DJ/ creative director
	Collaborating / Participating partners: Queer Collective CY, Moneda Record Label, Limassol Book Fair, APAC Labs	
IMAGINE A CITY	**Leading partners:** Junior Achievement Cyprus, SocialTech Lab, NeMe Arts Centre	**OPEN CALLS and invitations**
	Collaborating / Participating partners: Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts - CUT, WIP International Festival - CyENS, CAGDI - Graphic Design Association, EIT Community RIS HUB Cyprus – CYENS CoE, Dergon Designers, Neema Labs, pit2table, Pattihio Municipal Theatre, Zero Waste Alliance Cyprus, VIMA Art Fair, Psi Foundation, EventPro, PIFF - Palestinian International Film Festival, Department of Communication and Internet Studies - CUT, Nea Kinisi Cyprus, Collective of Theatre Creators, Phytorio Association	

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3



EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Q11a&b
Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Dialogue, European Themes

We started our ECoC bid fuelled by hope and ambition that this large European initiative could become our catalyst for a much-needed change of pace and focus. Today, people actively demonstrate and question the EU's role as a defender of democracy amidst unprecedented contradictions and turmoil - a tension deeply felt in our own communities during the last months of the bidding process. We are reminded that the European Capital of Culture is not only a title but also a test: can Europe still nurture plurality and mutual understanding through culture?

While many lose trust in democracy and party politics, some turn to populist beliefs, and others demand a ceasefire, equality, justice and freedom of expression. This is not a dialogue. It's a battle of statements between different capacities and powers. Cultural diversity is being negotiated in uneven conditions and artistic freedom is increasingly at risk. **The Understory** does not just showcase diversity. It challenges the conditions that turn difference into division through culture: artists, communities, and cultural practices who insist on dialogue where politics fail.

Europe risks losing its grace as Europeans find themselves next to -or in- war zones and militarised areas, gravely affected by active warfare and its aftermath, its costs at the expense of care, and even its threat. How do European Union initiatives such as the ECoC, and values of democracy and fairness co-exist with political agendas and power? **What is Europe's story today**, and how does it care for its **Understory**? And if the European understory is about diverse stories, about non-violence, about acceptance, empathy and inclusivity, then our role as a potential 2030 ECoC is to defend it. It almost feels like the European Capital of Culture is also part of the understory and needs defending, too. We will safeguard it through our programme, intercultural encounters and artistic expression, and turn these values into lived and visible experiences.

The coexistence of multiple cultures -in Lemesos, in Europe, in the world- cannot be sustained by default. Like every long-term relationship, coexistence requires care and effort; accepting the other, listening with empathy, and expressing oneself freely. Lemesos is, too, on the edge of profound transformation. We are OUTSIDE THE MAP on several frontiers - between East and West, 'Global North' and 'Global South'; entangled in overlapping histories, geographical crossings and intercultural connections. Even though this can be confusing at times, it is also a blessing, given that borders are not just peripheral zones but also social laboratories where unique processes occur. Our long-standing "Europeanness," shaped by the frontier, seeks to actively nurture the experience of coexistence, defend diversity, apply plurality, and build conditions to sustain it through culture, art, and civic imagination. Generous and mindful care can sustain the very elements that define Lemesos, and strengthen what makes Europe inclusive, democratic, visionary.

An open-hearted city with a broken heart

Lemesos has always been a city of openness, a multicultural port where people from different places lived and worked side by side. A place shaped by movement, exchange, and shared spaces. That legacy is still visible, but today, the city *'is forced to grow'*, multicultural life is under pressure, and we are slipping into quiet disconnection and unease - a sight of many booming cities around Europe and the world. But as we said in Q1, **we choose hope and we come with a plan.**

Our **CITY IN THERAPY** and **OUT THERE TOGETHER** lines go deeply into diverse communities and generations to listen, to empower, to connect to each other in Lemesos and across Europe. With projects like OUTSIDE THE MAP, we foster dialogue between young people from the periphery of Europe. Regions on the periphery look inward towards the continent, but also outwards transferring ideas back and forth. They act as go-betweens, and facilitate dialogue. OUTSIDE THE MAP offers a space of urgency to look at some of our common pressing issues like war, gentrification, drought, and look for growth beyond the urban, a cultural plurality, inspiration and connectedness. With PNAM RESIDENCY and DANCING THE FRONTIER, we navigate intercultural dimensions linked to our region with criticality and courage. PELLOMASKES and NEXT FOR PAMBOROS make some noise and celebrate the togetherness that embraces difference with joy.

Who gets to stay? Who gets to shape?

Across Europe, we see how urban growth and inequality lead to polarisation. Instead of addressing newfound social or class differences, public frustration often turns against the most vulnerable. Lemesos is no exception. Speculative development and growing population numbers have made it harder for communities to mix and connect. Young people cannot afford to leave their parental homes because of high rents; artists cannot afford to live in the big cities where all the action is. **But the spirit of a city cannot be gentrified, it can only be kicked out and this is what we need to avoid.**

Projects like SESSIONS and UN-INHABITAT resist and shift the conversation by proposing alternative ways to create space, culture, and meaning. Soft resistance to mono-thematic growth also takes place in the neighbourhoods. We aim to understand and navigate this new reality, with both cultural stakeholders and the broader public, through decentralised participatory projects like SINIKISMOI UNTOLD, KNEADING STORIES and AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER. Artistic interventions unpack gentrification, displacement, and access to the city. We support projects that build community, not just audiences. Temporary spaces like GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN and large-scale events like LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS propose new ways of living and operating differently, together. And through micro-financing and co-design processes, we give decision-making power back to those most affected. This is how culture becomes the catalyst for equity, shared memory and co-existence.

Xenomania vs Xenophobia

Civil society and artists have named it clearly: we suffer from *'xenomania'*, *'xenophobia'* and *'philoxenia'*. Partly a result of our colonial history, we glorify the *'foreign'* when it comes dressed in prestige - the famous architect, the imported theatre piece, the international consultant. And, we undervalue the work produced locally. At the same time, we fear and stigmatise otherness that is not as loud, and sometimes treat it with suspicion or even hostility all while being ready to treat our *'xenous'* (guests) with trays of coffees and biscuits.

This double (or triple) standard feeds an unchecked tension that festers. Attacks on migrant delivery boys continue at pace, racist incidents and cultural scapegoating are emerging. Therefore, we want our **opening ceremony** to be not just an artistically uplifting experience, but a result of our community engagement work in the years before, and a statement that honours every human life - *'xeni'* or not. More projects like A FLOW OF CULTURE, VOICES & MOTION and CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS break the barrier of ignorance and suspicion, creating safe spaces for intercultural engagement and co-creation.

There is hope in the cultural sector, too. From last year to this year, we have seen some shifts. The bidding process has brought diverse groups of people into the same room to exchange ideas and begin to collaborate. BACKSTAGE ACADEMY shows a new mix of players: producers and cultural managers, as well as long-standing professionals willing to engage in peer-to-peer learning and re-learning - all because of the ECoC spark.

Where is democracy?

It all comes back to applying democracy. To see all 30 human rights next to each other and remember what we have always been striving for. MAKING DEMOCRACY creates tools, spaces, and processes easy to connect to, that turn everyday democratic participation into a tangible idea. They invite grassroots civic agency, not just visibility. THE COST OF DEMOCRACY focuses on past and present civic movements and artful activism creating an evolving archive of protest, resistance, and the ongoing effort required to sustain democracy. **We look back to look forward.** Through this lens, we invite younger generations to connect with political imagination and understand democracy as something active, not abstract.

Together with communities, artists, educators, and cultural workers (both local and international) we design formats that go beyond representation, into participation and ownership. Projects like CATALOGUE OF WALKS and PICNIC, make space for true encounters and decolonised methods of storytelling. FOLK CLUBBING and ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING invite stories and practices which reflect the plural city - not only as it was, but as it is, and could be. This is not about nostalgia. It's about equity, courage, and reclaiming the *'open-hearted Lemesos'* that is still possible. Supporting and reclaiming an open-hearted Europe that works, not just in theory, but in everyday life.

The Understory -people, voices, stories, expressions- demands attention and care all over Europe. We want to tell these stories and amplify these voices, right from this small but mighty place.



Q11c&d European Co-operations & Transnational Partnerships

Our Cultural and Artistic Programme is rooted in collaborations and partnerships throughout Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and beyond. Organisations, NGOs, associations, scouts, networks, municipalities, as well as notable artists and collectives have joined **The Understory**. We have the confirmation of 130 organisations and artists (96 from EU members, 16 from our region and the Levant, 20 International) and 10 European or international networks.

Additionally, in 2030, Lemesos will host major European gatherings thanks to the local stakeholders' active memberships in cultural networks. **Dance House Lemesos** will host the **Aerowaves Spring Festival**, a platform for some of Europe's most exciting emerging choreographers. **Cultural Movement Epilogi** hosts the **European Choral Association's Membership Weekend**, where choirs and vocal ensembles from across the continent meet and perform. **Technodromio** welcomes the **Federation for European Storytelling**'s Conference, a space for storytellers to share traditions, methods, and contemporary practices. Lemesos 2030 is also an active member of the Cyprus Network of the Anna Lindh Euro-Med Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures for collaboration, networking and funding.

Our programme brings together internationally acclaimed as well as emerging artists whose work resonates far beyond Lemesos. Multi award-winning director **Robert Lepage** and his company **Ex Machina** (CA) create our fourth stop-the-city event, TOWER DRAMA, offering local creators a rare chance to work alongside one of the world's most celebrated theatre-makers. Architect **Sami Rintala** (FI/NO), known for the Nordic Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, mentors participants in UN-INHABITAT, exploring pavilion design and public space. Contemporary artist **Jumana Manna** (PS/DE) contributes to PNAM RESIDENCY with her filmic reflections on disappearing foraging practices, while choreographer **Monika Požek** (SI/ES) leads workshops on accessibility and untrained dancers for BEYOND DISDANCE.

In AI ART & PLAY, experimental game designer **Tomo Kihara** (JP) and award-winning creative technologist **Ameera Kawash** (PS/US) guide audiences through playful installations and speculative approaches to artificial intelligence. **Joseph Wilk** (UK) hosts the award-winning role-playing game *'CripShip: Disability saves society from Big Tech'*, exploring disability in the digital dimension.

In SINIKISMOI UNTOLD, artist-led collectives bring collaborative experimentation, showing how domestic rituals and urban voids can become radical, communal interventions. Japan's **Orangcosong Art Collective (Chikara Fujiwara and Minori Sumiyoshiyama)** and Sweden's **Art Studio SES (Elin Strand Ruin)** bring practices rooted in care, feminist spatial politics, and communal authorship. Berlin-based **Operation Himmelblick**, a collective reclaiming the city's unused rooftops for inclusive, citizen-led spaces, adds its perspective on vertical living and spatial democracy.

International walking artist **Clare Qualmann** (UK) joins CATALOGUE OF WALKS as a resident, shares her practice exploring the interconnections between art, activism, and the radical potentials of participation, and introduces the **Walking Artists Network**. The work '*Walking and Holding'* is produced and presented in Lemesos with a local team led by its creator **Rosana Cade** (UK).

THINGS TO CRY ABOUT, beyond calling for artistic works, offers lamentation workshops by voice specialists and performers **Marya Lowry** (US) and **Edda Hegg** (DE) through **Roy Hart Voice Theatre** (FR). It also welcomes the **Zoukak Theatre** (LB) and their performance *'Three Verses of Solitude'*.

A selection from our connections and exchanges with European and international operators:

PROJECT	GEOGRAPHY	EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATIONS
OUTSIDE THE MAP	Finland Sweden Spain Denmark Germany Lithuania Portugal Belgium Ukraine Morocco Bulgaria Greece Czech Republic France Montenegro European Networks	Connecting Lemesos with organisations that expand how we think about core European themes, values and challenges at Europe's edges. **Oulu Urban Culture** (FI) brings youth-led expertise in activating public spaces through long-term projects with young people. **Building Diversity** (DK) contributes their award-winning work on inclusive narratives in the built environment, while **TAC! Urban Architecture Festival** (ES) shares its experience in pavilion design competitions that turn architecture into platforms for civic dialogue. The **Nature Conservation Society of Norrbotten** (SE) contributes with interdisciplinary residencies, linking environmental science with artistic responses to fragile ecosystems. **CAAM - Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno** (ES) acts as artistic partner and facilitates an international call for a curator. The **European Film Academy** supports dissemination and online screenings through its network. **Documentary Campus** (DE), and the **Baltic Pitching Forum** (LT) bring industry expertise into workshops and pitching sessions. Leading short film festivals in Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Ukraine, and Lithuania ensure that the young filmmakers' work is screened and discussed widely across Europe. **Teatro Victoria** (ES) and **Col'jam Association Culturelle** (MA) extend the map across the Mediterranean, forming a new network that supports choreography, exchange, and new movement languages with **Derida Dance Center** (BG), home of *'Moving Balkans Contemporary Dance Platform'* platform instigator **Atanas Maev** acting as advisory partner.
SESSIONS: AUDACIOUS ACTS AND ENCOUNTERS	Portugal Czech Republic Hungary Italy Tunisia	**Braba Plataforma** (PT) co-hosts regional residencies and sends mentors, bringing their experience in nurturing intersectional, feminist, and LGBTQIA+ cultural spaces across rural and urban contexts. **Y Events** (CZ) curates ritual-based performance weekends. **Under 500 Fesztival** (HU) co-curates a summer showcase in 2029 highlighting marginal voices from the region. **LOCALES** (IT) co-develops site-specific interventions, drawing from their experience in politically engaged, place-sensitive curating. **La Fabrique Art Studio** (TN) co-hosts open calls, youth workshops, and cross-regional mentorships, bringing expertise in feminist cultural initiatives (e.g., DJ Academy for girls, FeMENA network).
SARDAM	Greece Germany Ukraine	**Nefeli Publishing** (GR), **Lettretage** (DE) and **Authors Reading Month - Lviv** (UA) map the experimental literary scene across Europe, exchange performances and readings in Lemesos, Athens, Berlin and Lviv, and lay the foundations for the establishment of a literary performance network.
WEATHERING HERITAGE	France Greece Egypt US	Based on **STAR-C**'s networks and signed MOUs, this project brings together leading organisations and experts from science, heritage, and culture. The **Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine** and the **Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France** (FR) provide scientific mentorship and climate-sensitive analysis of cultural materials, while the **National Center for Supercomputing Applications** at the University of Illinois (US) contributes expertise in advanced technologies. The **Benaki Museum** (GR) adds curatorial insight and strategies for engaging audiences. In Alexandria, the **Archaeological Society** and the **Hellenic Cultural Center** (EG) open the door to regional collaboration, enabling research exchange and the active involvement of Egyptian artists and cultural professionals.
CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY	Italy Czech Republic Tunisia Kosovo Portugal European networks	**JA Europe** provides access to its 42 national members and a network of over 6 million young people, supporting dissemination and scaling across countries. JA partners localise the programme and mobilise their communities starting with **Tunisia** and **INJAZ Tunisie**. **Matera Hub** (IT) shares best practices from Matera 2019 and its deep knowledge of cultural entrepreneurship, while supporting capacity building through workshops and mentoring. **Creative Skills Week - Creative Prague** (CZ) brings expertise in creative skills development and EU-wide networks in cultural industries, while supporting training and dissemination of innovative methodologies. **Istituto Marangoni** (IT) adds mentoring and expertise from the design and fashion industries, and the **Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics - Yunus Social Innovation Center** (PT) introduces social business models, sustainability strategies and mentoring on impact-driven entrepreneurship. Together, these partnerships ensure that capacity building for Lemesos is matched by international knowledge exchange and rooted in real, transferable practice. **Trans Europe Halles** and **7 Arte** (KO) are key in providing mentors and attracting participants from their vast networks in Europe and the Balkans respectively, through dissemination of open calls and our project results. At the same time, the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology**'s (EIT) **Regional Innovation Scheme** (RIS) Community Hub in Cyprus provides opportunities for training and funding to participants.

PROJECT	GEOGRAPHY	EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATIONS
LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS	Lebanon Switzerland United Kingdom Montenegro European networks	With the **European Craft Alliance** and the **New European Bauhaus** initiative, we foster sustainable design and inclusive innovation while showing how these principles can reshape local spaces to address regional challenges. With **Beit Collective** (LB) we open dialogue on Lebanese design and craftsmanship alongside questions of ethical production. We welcome British designer, **Onkar Kular** (UK/SE), for a public talk and interactive session on *'The Right to Design'*, rethinking design education and design as an interconnected discipline. Through exchange with the **European Product Design Award**, we have initiated plans for future exhibitions that support visibility and connect creative communities worldwide. Satellite events, such as the **WIP Festival** in collaboration with the **CYENS Centre of Excellence**, will further activate exchanges between local and international practitioners, turning the festival into a space for reflection, experimentation, and global connection.
ART FANATICS	Belgium Greece United Kingdom Czech Republic Croatia Norway Finland Montenegro	Football's cultural significance will be explored through a conference with **Everton FC** and its community arm **Everton in the Community** (UK), alongside ECoC legacy organisations such as **DEPO2015 Creative Zone** (CZ) and **Bodø 2024 Legacy** (NO) who will also connect us with their local clubs - **Victoria Plzeň FC, Bodø/Glimt**, and **Rijeka FC**. The artistic dimension is led by **Walk the Plank** (UK), drawing on their experience with large football-themed events such as *'Perfect Pitch'* with the English National Opera, and enriched by **HKD - Croatian Cultural Centre Rijeka** (HR) together with dancers, footballers and artists from across Europe.



Q12 Attracting the Interest of the European & International Public

We've come to view this as a kind of 'outreach' question, but with the focus on Europe - sparking conversations among our European and international peers, audiences and (new) friends. Success would be measured by people talking -with friends and family, colleagues and contacts- about what we do and how we do it. So, we don't focus on selling Cyprus as a sunny destination. The world already knows. Actually... what does the world, and especially our fellow Europeans, know about Cyprus?

Our strategy of a European outreach is to position Cyprus and Lemesos in news articles, artists' inspiration, conference talks, activist quotes, urban developers' conversations, and researchers' deep dives - by placing our universal topics with the press, within our communication and marketing, in our social and digital channels, and at any available opportunity around Europe.

Much of what we explore in **The Understory** echoes debates happening across Europe: people struggling to pay rent, artists not affording studio spaces in the cities, and citizens losing trust and feeling estranged. But we're not here to simply join these conversations. We want to invite those who see their own story within the bigger European story, and together, steer it in a different direction.

Perhaps some of our challenging topics will better attract experts and critical thinkers, but what we think could happen is what we mentioned before. For Lemesos to be cited as a place where a cultural vision and a plan disrupted the tide of speculative development and gave people -that are excluded today- reasons and ways to stay, live, and work here. In this context, projects like OUTSIDE THE MAP and THE COST OF DEMOCRACY will attract not only participating artists, culture and humanities professionals, but also engage with a wider European public looking for fresh outlooks, positive news and good practices that can bring people back from a growing estrangement towards their city to greater engagement and 'renewed love'. This is some hard-earned knowledge we can share with the rest of Europe.

Our projects, especially under the **CITY IN THERAPY** programme line, don't just address these issues; they offer counterbalances. We asked in our first bid book and we continue to ask: If **Europe had its own therapist, what would they talk about?** Anyone who feels disconnected, excluded, queer, unconventional, displaced, revolutionary will find a safe entrance in our programme, in a place of sub-stories, loud stories, stories of resistance, love and reclamation. And those who do not feel that sense of disconnectedness, those who choose and feel hope, will also find a safe entrance into a programme that welcomes their story and invites their thoughts.

Most of our projects begin before 2030, not only to prepare the city and region for the ECoC year, but to open our doors early to international audiences and culture professionals. Ateliers, residencies, on-site visits, and workshops bring in international experts, youth, artists, and the public to actively shape Lemesos 2030. Every encounter sharpens our programme and spreads the word abroad.

Many people come to Lemesos anyway for holidays, for business, for conferences, for networking. We draw this international crowd from within the island into our ECoC. They will find a city where cultural events meet city beaches, dense urban life meets archaeological sites, and sipping cocktails during festivals meet unexpected conversations.

We attract business visitors and entrepreneurs to extend their stay and join challenging yet rewarding debates on sustainable investment and development. For example, the newly established LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS positions design as a catalyst for rethinking how contemporary societies operate, from tackling climate change to using materials and processes unique to our region. It rethinks cultural heritage by drawing on traditional practices to address today's challenges. Intended as a meeting point between three continents, the festival strives to attract a cross-disciplinary audience to explore how our physical and digital environments can inspire new ways of creating, making, and producing.

We also reach people who are curious about Cyprus for the first time, tickled by the interplay of a European Capital of Culture in a place they consider a potential tourist destination. Large-scale artistic propositions like stop-the-city-moments PAMBOROS and PELLOMASKES will amplify the city's energy, TOWER DRAMA will appeal to those who want to combine sunshine with recognised



high art. **Our ECoC programme gives the 'traditional' holidaymaker more than a good show.** It invites them into our **Understory**, the plural voices of Europe, acting as anchors in a time of change. Easy rhythm community projects, especially under OUT THERE TOGETHER, invite diving into local flavour and experiencing the realness of Lemesos. Visitors may choose to watch or take part in shaping and sharing our hidden stories alongside those of other European cities. They might join a neighbourhood action, dance with strangers, enter a creative writing circle in the public garden, or be the test audience for a new walking tour from our CATALOGUE OF WALKS.

Projects like THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT, SESSIONS, and CYBORG BODIES bring together experimental voices from across Europe to challenge the status quo and our established behaviours. Audiences -watching from a distance or getting their hands dirty- find a space where getting it wrong might just be the point.

We expect to turn some heads around Europe with our ECoC programme travelling far beyond Lemesos. Some projects take physical form in other cities like THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT in Kiruna (2029), SARDAM in Athens, Berlin and Lviv with its partner network, and OUTSIDE THE MAP moving through the centre across Europe's frontiers. In addition, we offer remote access through LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform, our digital stage for live-streaming events, digital exhibitions, online discussions, conferences, and digital studio visits. Projects like DANCING THE FRONTIER, WEATHERING HERITAGE and METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES will connect audiences who never set foot in Lemesos to **The Understory** made by artists, scientists, ideas, and conversations.

Part of our programme is pure joy -dancing together, unexpected encounters, shared celebration- but **The Understory** is ultimately about telling a renewed European story, realigning with core European values of plurality, freedom, democracy. Who decides what that story is? Right now, it's often dictated from the centre or from higher capacities, overlooking contradictions and leaving deep gaps. We are not interested in performing a monologue, not in Lemesos, not even in Europe. Lemesos 2030 invites artists, thinkers, and citizens from across Europe to help fill those gaps and challenge the narrative. In our streets, our studios, and our digital spaces, we'll make room for voices that have been overpowered, and for stories that can shift the course of the larger conversation.



Q13 Links with other ECoCs

Each ECoC comes from a long line of previous title owners. This noble lineage transmits experience and knowledge, yet each new 'child' of the family has to stand on its own two feet. We tap into the successes and failures of our ECoC ancestors, learning and toddling alongside the other candidate siblings. We have gone deeper into and crystallised our previous collaborations, and forged new ones with former, current and future ECoCs. But also, with the legacy organisations of former ECoCs, and individual experts for specific projects and programme lines - the people who we will revert to if we secure the title.

Creative collaborations

We've built on our previous discussions for OUTSIDE THE MAP and, with the partners, crystallised conceptual and practical aspects of the umbrella project and its five labs. The periphery really does give you a different, valuable point of view. Our partners from the 'continent's centre' are just as crucial; for example **Bourges 2028** working towards participatory policy making and citizen governance in cultural practices, as well as the newly declared **LOV 2030**. The rest of the 2030 finalists are also involved, and we expect a continuation with all.

We take every opportunity we can get to talk about gentrification by connecting, for example, UN-INHABITAT with **Oulu 2026**'s *'The Nook'* activating under-used 'nooks' of the city and **Bourges 2028**'s 'Lots of Neighbours' programme line on making innovative cities on a human scale.

Critical environmental issues are tackled through IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE, bringing together expertise from Sweden's northern territories through **Kiruna 2029** and artistic contribution from the Canary Islands through **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 2031**.

Because of their geographical location on the periphery of the European continent -their proximity to borders, war, their isolation and islandism- we continue our dialogue with **Lublin 2029** and their neighbour candidate **Lviv 2030** for WAR & PEACE, but also with **Bodø 2024 Legacy AS** and **Kiruna 2029** about the effects of living close to military bases and the effects of European rearmament. In fact, in 2026, we are participating in a Creative Europe application, led by **Bodø 2024 Legacy AS**, on the impact of cultural and artistic participation on youth who are

geographically close to conflict areas with increasing military presence, as well as the causal relationship between youth participation in cultural activities and relation to democratic values.

ART FANATICS gathers the knowledge and experience of former ECoCs with a strong football culture: **Bodø 2024** and **Pilsen 2015**, through their legacy organisations and -eventually- their football clubs. The project engages with unlikely audiences, but also explores whether there is some kind of ECoC 'magic' that occurs for FCs, as most of them perform really well in their national cups after their ECoC year! For inspiration, our project looks closely to **Rijeka 2020**'s unrealised football project *'One City One Goal'*.

We're happy to include **Liepāja 2027** in 1000 VOICES due to their experience of putting together choral and cultural events with mass participation, but also in NEXT FOR PAMBOROS, bringing a contemporary understanding to sea-themed traditional festivals.

In March 2025, we had the opportunity to visit Oulu in Finland. It was freezing. It was also a crucial visit in understanding more deeply the organisational setup, their open call processes and timing, the approach to regional projects, the programme, as well as the international marketing strategy of **Oulu 2026**. Through our colleagues, we met Heikki Myllylahti of Oulu Urban Culture, a youth-led organisation, and made connections with **Oulu 2026** programmes *'The Nook'*, *'Frozen People'* and *'Untamed Office'*.

Capacity building

In Lemesos, we have cultural operators with significant knowledge, but an ECoC is a different animal. So, capacity building and continuity are a big deal for us. Since the beginning, we've engaged with contributors and interlocutors. For example, we are in close contact with the **Pafos 2017** team, whose artistic director is the vice-president of the Lemesos 2030 board. With **Rijeka 2020** and **Liverpool 2008**, we discuss volunteering and outreach strategies. We've received a detailed breakdown of **Chemnitz 2025**'s build-up to its *'Microprojekte'* microfinancing project, which has helped us crystallise aspects of our MICRO MACRO project.

Bourges 2028 is participating in our DECENTRALISED NETWORKS OF (CULTURAL) CARE and ELEVATORS for capacity building of organisations, operators and artists, based on the accumulated knowledge gained through their *'European City of Artists-Melina Mercouri'* project. Our colleagues from **Liepāja 2027** are contributing to the same subject through their *'Cultural Breakfast'* series, and the planned International Cultural Conferences, especially on Accessibility, Community & Audience Development, Youth & Legacy.

We receive **Liepāja 2027**'s do's and dont's on developing our LEAP digital space and website, based on their experience building their own project *'On the Cloud'*. We continue talking closely with our colleagues from **Kiruna 2029** on how their *'Digital Art Space'* is coming along - we expect to be building ours right after they have finished theirs.

We partner with **Tartu 2024** to develop Lemesos-specific guidelines for organising environmentally-friendlier versions of our large-scale events and festivals through our **FIESTA FIX**. *'Tartu With Earth'* Programme Line Manager Triin Siimer (Pikk) will be offering her expertise in case additional support is needed beyond **Tartu 2024** Organisation's operational life in 2029.

In our discussions with **Budweis - České Budějovice 2028**, we have identified common interests, and we're focusing our conversations on their legacy priorities. We are connecting our NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT with their *'Kul.turista'* programme, our STARTUP CULTURE with their *'Young Creators'*, but also our BEYOND DISDANCE and accessibility efforts with their *'Open Season'*. We have also exchanged multiple contacts for our respective partner searches.

More from near the title year

The collaboration with **Kiruna 2029** and **Lublin 2029** is closer than with other designated ECoCs due to the proximity of our title years and bidding process. We expect this to grow further in the next couple of years.

We're excited that THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT will also be presented as part of **Kiruna 2029**'s *'100 Stages'* in 2029, with the participation of NOPE, a notable performance network in the Swedish Northern Territories. We have a remarkable number of things in common with **Kiruna 2029**, even being on the northernmost and southernmost points of Europe. We are therefore working closely to develop further ideas together, such as space poetry on star mythology and philosophy, poetry in Cypriot and Sami languages, artistic caches or time capsules buried in mines based on our common heritage of mining and archaeology.

Lemesos 2030 participates in two projects for **Lublin 2029**, *'Congress of Reunion'* and *'Port Lublin 2029 / Port Lemesos 2030 / Port Victoria 2031'*. Its position on the far east of the European Union border makes **Lublin 2029** a part of our OUTSIDE THE MAP thinking and implementation process. To strengthen our connections, we hosted theatre director, Centrum Kultury w Lublinie and **Lublin 2029**'s Programme Curator, Pawel Passini, in Lemesos in February 2025. The conversation is ongoing and lively.

The Belgian 2030 ECoC

With our colleagues from **LOV 2030**, we have chemistry, easy communication and fun-loving curiosity for the world. This translates into how we have connected our programmes. In September 2025, we began implementing an Erasmus+ KA2 project on youth, democracy and human rights, the *'European Future Generations Lab'*, MAKING DEMOCRACY connects wtih their *'Stadhuis'*. SESSIONS creates exchanges with *'The Night is Young'*. *'The World's Smallest Queer Museum'* joins us for COST OF DEMOCRACY.

We are bringing a version of *'A Hill Called Herman'* to Troodos Mountain Astropark. CATALOGUE OF WALKS interacts with *'Here we are now'*. And of course, **LOV 2030** participates in PELLOMASKES.

More ECoC networking

We were present in Chemnitz in April 2025 for the **2030 ECoC Candidates Meeting**. We spoke individually and also came together for collective decisions, including a common statement with the title *'More than winning: Cultural Democracy and Collaboration at the Heart of European Capitals of Culture'*. We were also there at the **40 Years of ECOC Conference**, meeting with the big ECoC family and contributing to the discussion. In February 2025, we attended the opening of **Nova Gorica-Gorizia 2025**. We've been accepted as Observing Members of the **Culture Next** network and in October 2025, we attended the **Bielsko-Biała** conference. Culture Next is important to us because it contributes towards a legacy for our process.

Candidate cities connections

CANDIDATE CITY	PROJECTS TUNING IN
MOLENBEEK 2030	**ART FANATICS** connects with the *'Beautiful Game Tournament'* through football, choreography and choir exchanges, like the choir of families of RWD Molenbeek Girls. **PELLOMASKES** takes part in the *'Year of Parades, Ceremonies and Rituals'* and *'Carnival of Carnivals'*. **NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT** collaborates with the *'Euro Festival'* on community co-creation and tours. **UN-INHABITAT** links with the *'Academy of Unlearning'* for youth exchanges and peer-learning.
NAMUR 2030	**BEYOND DISDANCE** engages with Tisser Les Marges on accessibility. With **UN-INHABITAT** we connect to three projects, *'Builtopia'*, *'Little Connexts'* and *'Dolce Vita - Shelters'*, dealing with urban development and gentrification. **SFAAACT!** interacts with *'The Climate in Us'* on climate awareness. Artist and programming exchanges grow through **NEXT FOR PAMBOROS** and **1000 VOICES**. Residency exchanges are supported through *'Rocket'*.
NIKŠIĆ 2030	Initial aspects of **ART FANATICS** developed from discussions on shared football culture - and collaboration is next. We collaborate in *'Chants and Icons'* exploring Byzantine art. *'Re:design Craft Lab'* collaborates with **LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS** on new souvenirs. *'Stone and Identity'* links with **UN-INHABITAT** on drystone terraces. Additional projects of Nikšić 2030 are nurtured through connections with architects and artists from Lemesos.
LVIV 2030	**OUTSIDE THE MAP** is our main place of collaboration. Discussions about future plans include staged readings of new plays from Ukraine and Cyprus.
VICTORIA 2031	**UN-INHABITAT** interacts with *'Blueprint'* on speculative real estate development. We collaborate on *'L-Ittra 31/The 31st Letter'*, which explores language and unspoken histories and *'Islands That Bleed'*, which connects isolated areas for artistic inquiry and resilience.
LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA 2031	**OUTSIDE THE MAP** connects our common "islandisms" and living on the European periphery, so they participate in two of its labs, UN-INHABITAT and IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE.
LARNAKA 2030	We aim to collaborate with our respective capacity-building programmes creating conditions for island-wide impact.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4



OUT-REACH

Q14

Involvement of the Local Population

In our pre-selection bid book, we described a deep community engagement, which began in Spring 2023 with more than 100 sessions, meetings, and workshops inspired by **'Imagine a City'**, a call that became a key programme line in our Cultural and Artistic Programme.

Since then, we have expanded our reach through more focus groups and collaborations within Lemesos and neighbouring municipalities, and have built key connections to rural Lemesos. But more than just expansion, we've deepened our connections with local people, many of whom have bonded with **The Understory**, as mentioned in Q1. A wide range of 'characters' recognise their own stories in **The Understory**, and feel part of the richness of city life that pulsates in the shadows of the skyscrapers.

Young Lemessolians, single mothers, working-class families, and elderly people have all expressed a continued sense of disappointment about the city, which *'favours the rich foreigners and those that can afford [it]'*. Indeed, lower-income local and migrant communities are pushed to the margins. Inclusive Development, one of the three pillars of the city's long-term strategy, is no longer just a manifestation of cultural management-speak. We strive for it as a reclaimed reality: a Lemesos that reflects the diverse histories of its people and aspires to be fairer, better connected, and more liveable.

However, deepening connections and inclusive development take considerable effort and persistence. As described in our pre-selection bid, our outreach combined 11 different formats including consultations, keeping open office hours, a mobile office, carrying out our Vibesensor questionnaires, mapping cultural organisations and artists, working with our Trajectories Working Group, our '10 10 100' workshops with 100 citizens each, focus groups with children, public presentations, discussions and our Lemesos 2030 support network. To those 1,289 participants and 117 sessions, we have added 61 sessions and 591 participants more.

Historic communities

We have further advanced our conversations with **Turkish Cypriots**, **Maronites**, **Armenians**, **Latins**, and **Roma**. We have deepened our understanding of identity through both tangible and intangible heritage in our engagements with the **Armenian** and **Maronite** communities - priests, school principals, artists and community representatives. The public event **'Art in Cyprus: a conversation on trauma, unresolved grief and contested narratives'** (mentioned in Q9) was promoted island-wide in Greek, English, and Turkish and attracted a multi-generational and diverse crowd which catalysed new partnerships and connections for our cultural programme. Most importantly, we concentrated our efforts on translating what we've learned and who we've met into meaningful projects. ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING, THINGS TO CRY ABOUT and AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER were designed in conversation and will be implemented with these stakeholders. Recognising Lemesos as a place that hosted the lives and losses of many traumatised communities, we aim to create the space and time for this legacy to be acknowledged and honoured.

Building new connections

In this selection round we have also included parts of the greater Lemesos region, where we presented the current stage of preparations in a public event and extended an open invitation to neighbouring municipalities. The **Municipalities of Amathounta and Kourion** joined our bid. We began a series of coordination meetings with their mayors and cultural officers, and identified priorities that led to the district projects in our programme.

Projects earmarked for open calls like NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT, and one of our OUTSIDE THE MAP ateliers, IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE, that uses riverbeds and dams around the whole district, are results of this process. For the **Municipality of Kourion**, having gone through their ECoC process during pre-selection, we built on their previous ECoC work. We identified needs and aligned cultural operators with projects, such as PICNIC, which targets the area and communities around **Akrotiri Salt Lake**, as well as WEATHERING HERITAGE, which engages heritage sites like **Kourion Ancient Amphitheatre** and **Kolossi Medieval Castle**.



During implementation, we plan to deepen our engagement with the district of Lemesos through participation methodologies like our bespoke **'10 10 100'** consultation sessions, workshops and focus groups for new co-created cultural events. Our goal is to bring unique understories of different communities in the greater district into our ECoC programme.

Spaces for conversation

Public space is constantly part of any conversation we have. In May 2025, we collaborated with the **Summer Dance Festival**, a site-specific public space festival happening in Lemesos for more than 20 years, with a discussion titled **'The Unseen Side of Public Space'**, coordinated by the cultural heritage architect **Sevina Floridou**. Artists and citizens sat down together to talk about their interactions with public spaces, sharing observations, knowledge, and moving beyond the obvious issues. We explored more of how culture reclaims and enlivens the urban environment, how it engages real people in real places, crystallising further the intentions of projects like CATALOGUE OF WALKS, and site-specific projects like CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS and A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN.

These types of actions brought many civil society members closer, eager to take on more active roles, be ambassadors within their own communities and provoke more substantial involvement and collaborations.

Our most mass appeal events are our stop-the-city-moments PELLOMASKES, NEXT FOR PAMBOROS, TOWER DRAMA, SFAAACT! IN THE CITY, flagships like ART FANATICS, the COST OF DEMOCRACY exhibitions, and of course our **opening and closing ceremonies**, THE UNDERSTORY and 1000 VOICES. From those who want to just be part of the audience to those who want to be part of making it happen, there is a chance for everyone to be involved.

Communities and stakeholders remain at the centre of our attention. Our ECoC bid also remains connected with the realities of the present. We recognise the fast-changing cultural, technological, and social dynamics of the city (and the world), shaped by everything from AI and other virtual developments, to shifting migration patterns depending on geopolitics, as well as economic pressures that still sustain the two-speed city. The more we stay connected to the present, the more we see our stakeholders attending and joining the conversation.

Q15

Opportunities for Marginalised & Disadvantaged Groups

Priorities are still priorities

Our main priorities continue to be related to people with disabilities, underprivileged migrants or ethnic minorities, and the LGBTQI+ community. Each stems from challenging life conditions and results in a troubled relationship with culture and the arts.

As we said in our pre-selection bid book, **people with disabilities** are some of the most excluded citizens from the city overall. If a body which cannot move 'freely' is considered disabled, would a city which does not 'flow' freely also be regarded as disabled? Parked cars on pavements, occupied disabled parking spots, pavements which simply 'run out', narrow routes for disabled people filled with obstacles like huge plant pots, traffic cones, tables and chairs or garbage bins. Navigating the city is close to impossible. It becomes a huge challenge for the seniors, parents with strollers, families out with their children.

The city has a lot of work to do in terms of mobility, transportation, accessibility of roads, squares, green routes, and so on. The **Net Zero 2030 Mission City Label** includes major plans to make Lemesos more accessible in the next few years. We are using our cultural power to claim and make this shift a more fun and lived experience for all ages and capacities. In collaboration with the city's **CS 2024-2034** we are setting a targeted plan in motion. **The Understory** creates the conditions to nurture several new and sustainable opportunities within the overall program.

Dis ability, dat ability

We have begun a process to create a **Cultural Space and Disabilities Guide** both in coordination with the city's **Cultural Strategy 2024-2034** but also our capacity-building project BACKSTAGE ACADEMY.

How can people with visual impairment learn about a visual exhibition coming up and then attend it?

What conditions are necessary in a rehearsal process for a person with hearing impairment to work or participate as a dancer?

What kind of bodies do we see on stages?

What kind of technology or human interaction is needed to invite more individuals in culture?

The goal is for more cultural workers to learn how to implement accessibility in the creation processes, in spectating circumstances, and also in marketing and communication. We have identified four categories of stakeholders with disabilities or diverse abilities which need better accessibility:

1. The audience which attends an event or is invited to participate/ interact with an event.
2. A collaborator for the creation of a new work who is required to attend rehearsals or be present in a studio or atelier with co-workers.
3. Prospective audience which needs access to the communication material of a performance.
4. A user of a cultural space who does not belong to the other categories (e.g. staff members).

The local trailblazers to support this process in the arts are **Ipogia Skini** -currently the leading cultural organisation in Cyprus that curates, collaborates and makes culture accessible as a comprehensive strategy- and **Koullou Makka Collective**, a mixed abilities performance group. Next to these, the dynamic NGOs such as **YPARXO**, **POAA**, **OPAK**, **Association for the Blind**, and **Association for the Deaf** will continue to be conversation partners and consulting entities to make sure we remain relevant and practical.

Ablebook, a pioneering tech startup specialising in digital accessibility, studies and maps the current status of all municipal buildings with a focus on cultural spaces including a number of privately run spaces by local Organisations, like **Rialto Theatre**, **Theatro Ena**, **Ethal**. ECoC gives us the chance to push this faster and further, but also to make it even more focused on culture. We plan to address and implement accessibility, inclusivity, and participation within the art and culture sector, both in terms of working circumstances and attending cultural events. We are not promising that 100% of our programme will be fully accessible; we need to be realistic. However, we have identified specific targets, and those will be our success measure as mentioned in Q3.

We treat accessibility not as a logistical add-on, but as a starting point in project design and avant-garde approaches like CYBORG BODIES. We plan to include in LEAD - Lemesos Art-full Directory and LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform an embedded digital accessibility with descriptions of images, texts in captions ready for audio rendition, subtitles in videos and more.

Our volunteers

Volunteerism is part of the puzzle - the joy of involvement, next to a sense of care. Through a dedicated team and programme, we will offer training and organised participation of individuals from different backgrounds. We'll share information and work closely with young people, investing in the sustainability of cultural volunteerism. In the end, that's why we do this: to build connections, to care, and to create joy together.

Volunteer numbers in our **Lemesos 2030 Network** are growing! These people want to help *'re-balance Lemesos'* but they also want to be part of the ECoC experience, so we expect the numbers to increase dramatically and integrate all-over our programme. In Lemesos, volunteers are young but also retired people who carry an overarching social role such as patient care and support, social welfare work through secular and religious groups, but also in sports, arts and culture. These are the doers we talked about in our previous bid book. They will be there with the rest of us, making it all happen - navigating audiences in ceremonies, activating small-scale neighbourhood actions, offering a cold lemonade to bystanders, adding to monitoring and visibility, being the faces of Lemesos 2030.

Advantages of margins

Lemesos is the home of a wide range of groups, originating from SE Asia as economic migrants (Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, India etc.), to refugees fleeing war and persecution from the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond (Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Ukrainians, North Africans etc.), affluent immigrants (Russians and Israelis), retired Europeans (British) and many more.

At times, the disconnection between the experiences of migrants is vast, with affluent immigrants experiencing and having a high sense of belonging in Lemesos since *'it is a super welcoming and sunny place with so much to do and enjoy'* versus underprivileged immigrants who *'need to be good, work hard and keep to [themselves]'*. Under-represented groups are in our priorities - not only because they are part of **The Understory**, but also because their contribution to cultural and social life is often overlooked.

We continue to strengthen relationships and better understand migrant communities. Representatives from the **Vietnamese**, **Palestinian**, **Russian**, **Syrian**, **Ukrainian**, **Filipino** and **Kurdish** communities once again confirmed a prevailing sense of isolation - even as some visibility improves, such as the **Vietnamese** community's participation in the Carnival parade. These connections produced new projects like A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION. A recurring need identified was for the *'Limassol Intercultural Council to be reactivated'*, a coordination body for migrant organisations and diverse communities previously supported by the municipality. In response, **Lemesos 2030** re-engaged the Municipality to revive this key structure -both as an entity and a physical space- and to provide more accessible and democratised processes for these communities.

As conditions shift, whether due to politics, war, or displacement, we continue to recalibrate. For example, conversations with **Palestinian Independent Film Festival** organisers highlighted the urgent role of curatorial practice in moments of displacement, conflict, and community vulnerability, shaping a strand of our capacity-building programme BACKSTAGE ACADEMY around curation practices and ethics in times of crisis.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, plus

Writing the whole words makes a difference. Talking with members of the LGBTQI+ community -from island-wide organisations like **ACCEPT Cyprus**, **Rainbow Families**, **Queer Collective** and **Kuir Kıbrıs (Queer Cyprus)** to informal groups of the city, such as student collectives- was revealing. Not because we heard something entirely new, but because we began to fully understand what "safety" actually means in this context.

Again and again, queer people told us that the city lacks safe spaces: places to gather, create, speak, share art, or simply where they can *'bring [their] children without fear'*. It's not just about physical space. It's about the right to exist openly and without threat. In 2023, when a joint activity by an LGBTQI+ organisation and student groups was attacked, it left a deep scar. Planning for an inclusive cultural life demands attentiveness and responsibility: we must build and nurture real safety before we can talk about expression, visibility, or enjoyment of culture and art.

The elderly

What does accessibility mean for the elderly in our city and cultural planning? If a 35-year-old can feel the dramatic change of Lemesos so intensely, imagine what that feels like for an older person. The city is now *'louder, more polluted and harder to navigate'*. Daily life and services are increasingly becoming digital. At the same time, the cost of living -including culture- has gone up. For someone on a low pension, the city feels *'exclusive'*. That's why we are committing to free access to all the events we organise and lower rates for events led by our partners. And, if they now think twice about covering the cost of organising a poetry night in their neighbourhood's park, with the MICRO MACRO project, we hope to see them doing it, and we'll provide technical equipment as well.

But inclusion isn't just about access. It's about participation. As the city changes, seniors carry stories that can help us understand what's been lost, what's shifted, and what still matters. We're taking culture out of the centre, as well as creating space for those stories through oral histories, public storytelling, and projects that bring the past into conversation with the present, like SINIKOISMOI UNTOLD, KNEADING STORIES, THE CATALOGUE OF WALKS and AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER. In a city blessed with nearly year-round sunshine, we see the seafront paths of A FLOW OF CULTURES, VOICES & MOTION, the square of CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS, and the benches of neighbourhoods and of the GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN as stages for sharing stories, humming songs, and building connections across generations.



Q16

Audience Development, Education & Schools

When we began shaping our audience development strategy, we first considered **age** - a natural way to understand how people engage with culture. From the youngest children to older adults, each group has different rhythms, needs and interests. Age helped us design thoughtful and accessible pathways into our programme. But this isn't just about age demographics. The systems that shape people's lives, most notably education, are fundamental opportunities.

To involve our youngest audiences, schools are a crucial partner and site of engagement. Collaborations with public and private schools, art schools, and family networks allow us to offer experiences and processes where children are not just entertained, but listened to.

Current in-school lessons and programmes include government-run **DRA.S.E+**, which provides social inclusion, particularly for migrant students through Greek language lessons, emotional support and school resources. Afternoon public programmes include the government's **Open School**, and numerous private art schools, most of which primarily focus on vocational learning of the arts: drawing, singing, dancing, and playing music.

In our pre-selection bid book, we noted a significant gap between studying art and being actively engaged in the cultural scene. SFAAACT! bridges that gap. A multi-year structure that embeds participation, learning, and artistic engagement into the everyday life of students, and cultivates early, long-lasting connections with culture as something transformative, meaningful, and shared.

Starting from the youngest

Our youngest audiences (aged 0 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15) are not only future adults, but also already observers, participants, and creators in the city - especially the 6 to 15 year olds. Many are eager to explore and often see the city more clearly and freely than adults do. Our engagement strategy focuses on participatory approaches initiated in the school system, especially through SFAAACT!, which is designed to reach thousands of students through a city-wide collaboration with the **Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth**.

We work closely with schools, teachers, artists and educators to co-design programmes that offer children space to speak their language - from participatory workshops in classrooms to hands-on creative experiences in neighbourhoods, and weekend boot camps for immersive cultural engagement. We foresee **student–teacher ECoC Ambassadors**.

We plan capacity-building opportunities, offer mentors from the professional scene, and fund small initiatives. We share practical tools for young children to engage with art, public space, and democratic ideas within and beyond the classroom. As we approach the ECoC year, more projects invite children, young teens, intergenerational and multicultural families, through neighbourhood projects like SINIKISMOI UNTOLD and AMONG THE FLOWS OF THE GARYLLIS RIVER, and initiatives like BEYOND DISDANCE that expand their content to include toddlers, children and families of all abilities.

Youth as critics, creators, and co-leaders

This is a generation of serious cultural stakeholders aged between 16 and 30: deeply aware, critical, and seeking meaningful action on environmental and social justice. This group is not merely an audience but a driver of innovation and activism. While they are eager to be involved, many face mental health challenges, demotivation, or feel that cultural life has little space for imperfection or experimentation. Here, our strategy focuses on **creating safe, open spaces for co-creation, failure, and fun**.

A number of projects -both on a European scale and more locally based- invite youth involvement and young audiences alike. From OUTSIDE THE MAP to MAKING DEMOCRACY to CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY, young people take the reins and the focus on them, and whatever they hold dear or crucial. Large-scale events like NEXT FOR PAMBOROS and new institutions like LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS are places of intergenerational inspiration but also intense Lemessolian vibes!

Whether through university partnerships, ad-hoc or long-term projects, we offer opportunities for young people to explore culture on their own terms. SFAAACT! continues to serve as a guiding structure, now evolving to include a core team, leadership training phases, and equipping youth with skills in project management, communication, and collective creativity.

EU-linked programmes support them to unleash their voice, to connect to young people around Europe and finally organise and participate in the biggest youth-led venture of the island, SFAAACT! IN THE CITY. Special education schools, like **St. Luke's** and **Apprenticeship Evening Schools** (one of them in Lemesos) for late teens who were unable to obtain a secondary school diploma are those school understories that we will collaborate with, with extra care. Next to school collaborations, projects like CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY invest in late teens and young adults, and nurture new connections with cultural heritage through tech-driven formats. OUTSIDE THE MAP connects them to youth all around the European periphery, engages them in collective decision-making processes and articulation of their positions.

Adults in daily flow

This large segment includes young professionals (aged 30-40), working parents and established adults (aged 41-55), and young oldies (aged 55+) – all people managing full lives. Many enjoy music and large-scale events but don't often attend theatre, dance or visual arts unless these are highly visible or linked to familiar formats. They are often short on time -since they spend *'two to three hours driving [their] cars every day'*- but eager for uplifting, social experiences especially during the weekend.

To engage with them, we activate the city's outdoor and public spaces with interdisciplinary events that combine art, food, and fun, speaking to both curiosity and convenience. Projects like CATALOGUE OF WALKS and THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT respond to their lifestyle rhythms and social interests, encouraging broader and deeper engagement with culture. Thematic elements like memory, identity and nature offer further points of connection and can be found in projects like PICNIC and LORCA'S BLOOD WEDDING. LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS will be the new big thing in the city that is both familiar and innovative. Another special project for this crowd is ARTS FANATICS, which bridges divisions between football rivals in the city, while also celebrating and sharing the culture of sports fans - and the sport of culture.

The elderly -although hard to define and different for each individual when one enters this stage- enjoy many opportunities for participation, as reflected in Q15.

Local priorities & cross-cutting audiences

While age helps organise our thinking, Lemesos itself has made other communities visible to us.

A growing segment of the Lemesos population consists of **people with a strong interest in social, environmental or political issues**. They include academics, cultural workers, activists, and professionals across sectors. They are often highly informed, sceptical of surface-level approaches, and eager for cultural and artistic experiences that tackle real, shared questions. Our strategy here is to engage them in interdisciplinary work, and design projects that bring together people from different backgrounds to think, feel and act, together. Urgent themes like gentrification, war, water scarcity, and community memory provide firm common ground in projects like IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE, UN-INHABITAT, PNAM RESIDENCY, COST OF DEMOCRACY and many others.

In the previous round, we also talked about **non-audiences who make culture, but are not an "audience" to other art forms**, like choir singers, band members, and art professionals who are immersed in one discipline but rarely engage with others. Our strategy encourages crossover - bringing people together through interdisciplinary frames like SARDAM and THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT, new collaborative projects like AI ART & PLAY, and events that embrace our Lemessolian spirit like stop-the-city-moments PELLOMASKES and NEXT FOR PAMBOROS. We also use invitations for creative-writing and peer-to-peer engagement as ways to keep connections alive in projects like CATALOGUES OF WALKS and ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING.

Finally, taking into consideration the recommendation expressed by the expert panel's pre-selection report, we have looked at some of the audience development strategies of the city's cultural players to identify what is relevant to our ECoC goals and intentions. For example, **Lemesos International Documentary Festival** captivates a mixed audience of the city because it brings *'urgent matters and daring topics in a friendly atmosphere'* where Lemessolians spend hours watching documentaries, enjoying conversation, and sipping *'Mojitos and Cuba Libres'*. **Rialto Theatre** seeks more plurality and inclusivity, as well as engagement with its surroundings, which align well with our ECoC goals. **Center of Performing Arts MITOS** fosters collaborations with schools, kindergartens, local institutions, and small businesses to promote their yearly activities and cultivate a sense of shared social engagement. **Dance House Lemesos** -in these times of 'houselessness'- moves artistic development and thematic programmes out of the city, cultivating excitement and building community. We see in these examples, proactivity, adaptability and community engagement.

On the opposite end of the spectrum are high-capacity companies and events -often with an international background- whose focus is to bring internationally acclaimed artists and acts to Lemesos, which is not so much strategy-related as it is funds-based. The better you can pay, the more renowned names you can get on the market. Yet, there are new initiatives, like **VIMA Art Fair** with international visibility and team experience which showed a different approach that worked well in Lemesos. They created an advisory team to engage with local players, a parallel to the fair artistic programme, offered free tickets, and had moderate entrance fees by comparison, resulting in good gallery, artist and visitor participation from the international, regional and local field. BACKSTAGE ACADEMY will bring together these diverse city players for peer-to-peer learning and to amplify expertise and international dimensions.

Our intention is to build on audience development through deepening our understanding of both the local perspective and the international diversity that lives in Lemesos.



CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 5

MANAGEMENT

A. FINANCES

Q17 Total Operating Budget

TOTAL INCOME FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE	FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN €	FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN %	FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN €	FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN %
25,800,000	**23,100,000**	**89.5**	**2,700,000**	**10.5**

Despite the joint efforts of Lemesos and Larnaka to secure an increase, planned state funding for 2030 amounts to €10 million. The Municipality of Lemesos has voted to raise its contribution from €7 million to €9 million, reflecting current financial circumstances and projections. We have made a slight increase in estimated funding from the EU after further understanding of our partners' capacities (more in Q20) as well as exploring programmes where Lemesos 2030 and the Municipality of Lemesos may jointly apply. An additional €2.2 million is committed by the two participating district municipalities of Kourion and Amathounta which brings the total of our public sector income to €23.1 million. We have remained close to our original private sponsorship target.

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Q18 Income from the Public Sector

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE	€	%
National Government	10,000,000	43.3
City	9,000,000	39.0
District	2,200,000	9.5
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	1,900,000	8.2
TOTAL	**23,100,000**	**100**

Q19 Financial Commitments for Operating Expenditure

On **11/09/2025**, the city of Lemesos voted for a financial commitment of €9 million between 2026 and 2031.
On **19/08/2025**, the Municipality of Kourion voted for a financial commitment of €1.1 million between 2027 and 2031.
On **15/09/2025**, the Municipality of Amathounta voted for a financial commitment of €1.1 million between 2027 and 2031.

The Council of Ministers voted on the State's contribution on **15/01/2025**. We have received confirmation of this contribution via a letter from the Minister of Finance on **01/07/2025**, after our efforts to renegotiate this amount.

Q20

EU Programmes Fundraising Strategy

We are treating EU programmes as integral tools for shaping and scaling our European dimension and artistic vision, especially in respect of our cultural institutions and partners.

Internal capacity is important. All staff involved in programming and management will undergo basic EU funding training provided by the **Organisation of European Programmes and Cultural Relations** (a non-profit entity based in Nicosia), enabling them to approach projects with an understanding of relevant priorities and mechanisms. Our wider cultural ecosystem is also included in this capacity-building effort, especially project leaders and managers beyond the Lemesos 2030 staff.

Our initiative EU FUNDING APPLICATION CLINIC within the ELEVATORS project will provide crucial services, including vocational up-skilling and targeted support in areas such as navigating the **EU Funding & Tenders Portal**, familiarisation with the **EU Task Force Mechanism** for the Turkish Cypriot community (with its initiatives and funding schemes for inter-communal collaboration), grant-writing, proposal development, peer-to-peer workshops and partner matchmaking. Peer expertise from **Bourges 2028** will also make this process more ECoC relevant.

Dedicated EU-fundraising personnel within **Lemesos 2030** (more in Q32) will support our ECoC projects, framing European collaboration and impact. One of the key tactics we employed during this final phase was to encourage each project leader from our **Targeted Call** to identify and confirm at least two international partners from different countries. This not only strengthens the European dimension of the projects but also lays the groundwork for stronger, more fundable transnational collaborations. Moreover, leading partners for several projects already have multi-annual experience with a wide range of EU funding schemes.

Targeted EU-funding schemes

We are approaching EU fundraising as a strategic -currently under-used- instrument to amplify our programme's ambitions, deepen its European dimension, and build long-term capacity for cultural development in Lemesos.

For example:

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS aligns with **Creative Europe** through its cultural cooperation aims and heritage-based activities. Its focus on circular design, new materials, and low-carbon production connects directly to **Horizon Europe** under the **New European Bauhaus** stream. Its digital components link to **Digital Europe**, particularly in digital fabrication, 3D scanning and youth coding camps.

BACKSTAGE ACADEMY connects to **Erasmus+ (VET)** through its vocational training and professional development goals. Its focus on technical up-skilling and digital tools also fits under **Digital Europe**, while its role in sector competitiveness and resilience makes it relevant to **Creative Europe**.

OUTSIDE THE MAP's direct engagement with themes of European identity, democratic participation, migration, and peace-building makes it exceptionally relevant for the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)**. It also aligns with **Erasmus+ Youth Cooperation Partnerships** for its youth participation and creative exchange. Its artistic and policy-oriented lens links well to **Horizon Europe**, addressing democracy and governance.

SFAAACT! engages **Erasmus+** for its education, youth empowerment, and civic focus, and **European Solidarity Corps** for its youth-led, solidarity-focused and inclusive participation. Artistic components link it to **Creative Europe**, especially around audience development, such as helping students develop a foundation for a daily art habit.

ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING is best placed within **Creative Europe** due to its cross-border artistic collaboration and interdisciplinary structure, and in the **Civic Space** programme of the **EU Task Force** for the Turkish Cypriot community relating to the strong inter-communal elements of the project. Moreover, it aims to engage artists in Lebanon through the **Arab Culture Fund**, a dynamic regional fund that supports organisations and artists in the region.

CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY aligns with **Creative Europe** on cross-sector collaboration and capacity building. Its youth-led innovation labs connect to **Erasmus+ KA2 - Youth**. Emphasis on cultural entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer makes it relevant for **EIT Culture and Creativity** and the **Research and Innovation Foundation**, while its community engagement and European dimension link it to **CERV**. Strategic heritage-based initiatives and international partnerships position it for **UNESCO** funding programmes as well.

We see EU fundraising as a proactive support system and strategy that is vital for maximising our success rates, strengthening our programme's European dimension, and creating a legacy that is connected with Europe in a meaningful, lasting way.

Q21 Timetable for Income to Cover Operating Expenditure

While the three municipalities, Lemesos, Kourion and Amathounta (city and region), have already agreed on the distribution of their commitments below, each year's allocation needs to be voted on separately, as part of the overall municipal budgets. The government has not provided any sort of timetable, therefore the following table currently shows our estimated distribution:

INCOME SOURCE	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031–32
National Government	-	300,000	2,000,000	2,500,000	5,000,000	200,000
City	500,000	800,000	1,200,000	2,000,000	3,300,000	1,200,000
Region	-	400,000	400,000	400,000	800,000	200,000
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	80,000*	200,000	320,000	500,000	500,000	300,000
Network & Sponsors		50,000	200,000	400,000	1,500,000	50,000
Tickets & Sales	-	-	-	130,000	350,000	20,000
TOTAL	**580,000**	**1,750,000**	**4,120,000**	**5,930,000**	**11,450,000**	**1,970,000**

*With Leuven 2030 we have applied and succeeded for an Erasmus+ grant of €60,000 shared between the two. More applications are planned for 2026.

INCOME FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Q22 Fundraising Strategy and Involvement of Private Sponsors

Our fundraising strategy combines the prospect of visibility, engagement and participation in an accumulating force of diversified cultural support.

Lemesos 2030 NETWORK

Our primary fundraising scheme, the **NETWORK**, is a web of engagement and empowerment. It is rooted in our mission and structured across four practical chapters: **sponsors**, **facilitators**, **visibility** and **volunteers**. More than just a financial mechanism, it is also a cultural movement in the making.

The composition of the **NETWORK** has increased in 2025 to comprise eighteen private companies acting as sponsors or facilitators, including three hotels and three media companies. We also have dozens of cultural venues and festivals that helped amplify our presence, and 39 volunteers (up from 23 just months earlier).

Each member brings different kinds of support: **strategic and financial sponsors** like the **Limassol Chamber of Commerce and Industry** or **in-kind sponsors** like **Kanali 6,** the city's most popular radio station. Collaborative partners like the city's state university, **Cyprus University of Technology**, whose official memorandum of understanding (signed 30/01/2025) unlocked access to its venues and technological infrastructure, documentation services, scientific knowledge, research potential and paid student internships. We currently have active collaborations with its Studies and Student Affairs Service, its Communication, Marketing and International Relations Service, three research labs and three university departments.

We also created a unique category: **visibility partners**. This includes everything from major cultural venues like the **Rialto Theatre** (offering use of both its indoor and outdoor digital screens) to the city's football teams (displaying our videos during football matches on LED boards and jumbo

screens). Our vibrant and slightly offbeat visual identity -proudly Lemessolian- has become a point of excitement and pride for these partners.

Volunteers form the third backbone of this ecosystem. We believe support is not just measured in currency, but in time, care, and presence. The **NETWORK** brings business and individuals side by side, a true map of cultural contribution in the city and in culture.

By 2030, we estimate that **€1m** in support -both financial and in-kind- will come through the **NETWORK**. As of 2027, a dedicated fundraising and private sector engagement role will be integrated into our organisational team. This person will be responsible for nurturing sponsor relationships, coordinating member experiences, and organising matchmaking events between businesses and artists. The **NETWORK** is already an engine of activity, and it holds the potential to become a city-wide force for cultural momentum and collective pride.

Flagship partners

The category **Flagship Partners** offers companies the opportunity to directly sponsor one of our eight flagship projects, with contribution levels starting at €60k and reaching up to €100k for projects of greater scale and higher visibility, such as those with live-streaming reach. These sponsors receive a curated package of benefits, including prominent visibility, invitations to exclusive events, and behind-the-scenes access for staff. For example, a **Flagship Partner** supporting PELLOMASKES could involve their team in a creative workshop with a costume design professional to design and make their own branded Pellomaska, culminating in a team-building walk down the catwalk. These engagements go beyond exposure: they build a genuine relationship with the project and a deeper connection to the values of co-creation and cultural participation. We estimate a total of **€700k** here.

To ensure flexibility and inclusivity, we have also designed a backup mechanism: **Flagship Duos**. If we see that companies cannot meet the full financial threshold alone -or prefer a more collaborative model- we will facilitate shared sponsorships through curated networking and project presentation events. These sessions will invite companies to explore co-sponsorship arrangements, fostering a spirit of partnership rather than competition. This flexible approach maintains our targets while allowing for broader engagement, adaptability to shifting financial circumstances and access to mid-size sponsors.

Small scales and crowdfunding

To nurture broad participation and support, and to boost our MICRO MACRO project, we introduce a dedicated programme for small-scale fundraising and crowdfunding under the umbrella of **MAKE** designed to empower diverse communities with direct access to funding. Through targeted micro-funding calls such as **Children Make**, **Students Make**, **Seniors Make**, **Neighbourhood Friends Make**, and **Communities Make**, we invite donations from individuals and small companies to collectively fill a fund aiming at **€100k** and support projects initiated by children, students, seniors, neighbours, and intercultural groups.

This initiative also offers **subscription-based giving**, allowing contributors to donate regularly to a specific strand aligned with their interests or identity. We use **digital platforms** to strengthen transparency and emotional connection: showcasing video stories of projects that were made possible through these funds or spotlighting new ideas from children of SFAAACT! and youth participants of our CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY. To build visibility and a sense of shared ownership, we envision **recognition tools** that allow supporters to receive stickers, digital badges, or even specially designed t-shirts, which identify them as contributors to a shared cultural dynamic.

Tickets, merchandise and souvenirs

Our estimation of **ticket sales and income** from performances like TOWER DRAMA and **Kits and Tutus** from ART FANATICS, large-scale exhibitions like COST OF DEMOCRACY, and projects like CATALOGUE OF WALKS and LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS is estimated at **€500k**.

We are developing a dedicated line of **merchandise and contemporary souvenirs** that reflects the Lemessolian spirit and aesthetics of today - playful, proud, and unmistakably local. Through open calls, design students, applied arts professionals, and marketing agencies from the city come together to co-create original items rooted in our identity, language, and everyday references. This is more than a classic souvenir collection; it's a collaborative platform for emerging talent and creative entrepreneurship applying sustainable and ecologically responsible practices. Product outcomes carry the tone of Lemesos: slightly bold, slightly humorous, and never generic.

In May 2028, as part of the second edition of LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS, we launch a prototype phase in collaboration with the **Cyprus University of Technology** and local craft and sustainable design initiatives like **Dio Dio**, **Fish Tales** and **Serious Products Lab**, activating teams of students

and mentors to co-create a collection. These products are designed and produced with ecological responsibility in mind - from sourcing discarded or natural materials, to using ethical production practices and low-impact packaging. Marketing and product development are supported by two local agencies, ensuring quality and market viability.

Sales points include cultural venues, festivals, pop-ups, and an online store on our LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform and website. We are also exploring bundle options, such as combining merchandise with ticket packages, and offering souvenir items as crowdfunding rewards. Estimated revenue is projected at **€400k**. While this initiative's implementation is anchored in 2029 and the ECoC year, we see potential to carry it forward post-2030 as a cultural micro-brand that continues to support local creatives and offers meaningful objects to locals and visitors alike.

These sponsoring and income opportunities indicate an overall fundraising amount of **€2.7m**.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Q23 Breakdown of Operating Expenditure

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		PROMOTION & MARKETING		WAGES, OVERHEADS, ADMINISTRATION		MONITORING & EVALUATION		CONTINGENCY		TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE
€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%	€
16,800,000	**65**	**3,000,000**	**12**	**4,200,000**	**16**	**700,000**	**3**	**1,100,000**	**4**	**25,800,000**

Q24 Timetable for Operating Expenditure

	PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		PROMOTION & MARKETING		WAGES, OVERHEADS, ADMINISTRATION		MONITORING & EVALUATION		CONTINGENCY		TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE
year	€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%	€
2026	**100,000**	**1**	**50,000**	**2**	**300,000**	**7**	**100,000**	**14**	**30,000**	**3**	**580,000**
2027	**820,000**	**5**	**280,000**	**9**	**500,000**	**12**	**60,000**	**9**	**90,000**	**8**	**1,750,000**
2028	**2,600,000**	**15**	**550,000**	**18**	**700,000**	**17**	**110,000**	**16**	**160,000**	**15**	**4,120,000**
2029	**3,710,000**	**22**	**900,000**	**30**	**920,000**	**22**	**150,000**	**21**	**250,000**	**23**	**5,930,000**
2030	**8,450,000**	**50**	**1,020,000**	**34**	**1,300,000**	**31**	**180,000**	**26**	**500,000**	**45**	**11,450,000**
2031–32	**1,120,000**	**7**	**200,000**	**7**	**480,000**	**11**	**100,000**	**14**	**70,000**	**6**	**1,970,000**

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Q25 Income from the Public Sector for Capital Expenditure

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	€	%
National Government	16,200,000	27.4
City	35,500,000	60.0
District	2,500,000	4.2
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	5,000,000	8.4
TOTAL	**59,200,000**	**100**

Q26/27 Financial Commitments for Capital Expenditure & Fundraising

If it's not already voted on or already in progress, it's not in the bid book! The table we presented in Q38 of the pre-selection bid book is on track with minor changes.

Additional information

Municipality of Lemesos: In our pre-selection bid book, we mentioned abandoned cinemas. In the heart of the Turkish Cypriot neighborhood of Lemesos, there was a famous Turkish Cypriot cinema operating since 1958. The cinema was originally called **Taksim** and after 1974, it was taken over by Greek Cypriot refugees and reopened with the name **Apollon**, as they already had a well-known cinema in Famagusta with the same name. **Apollon Cinema** operated until around 1987. It was then inactive and left to decay. A fire broke out in May 2024, completely destroying it, and its roof collapsed.

On **21/05/2025**, the Municipality of Lemesos, concluded an agreement with the Turkish Cypriot Property Management Service for the lease of the cinema and for its restoration, maintenance and management. The cinema is a 'listed' property. This means that half of the restoration budget (currently assessed at €2.5m) will come from the Department of Urban Planning and Housing. An assessment is already underway to evaluate and plan the next steps. Although our ECoC programme does not depend on this infrastructure, we will definitely use it when it is ready!

Part of the EU income (as shown in Q25) involves the renovation of **Heroes Square** in Lemesos, which is currently in the implementation phase and will be completed towards the end of 2026 - right on time for CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS.

Municipality of Amathounta: An infrastructure project along the Vathkeia stream, the **Vathkeia Linear Park**, includes pedestrian access from the Germasogeia water dam to the sea, a Water Museum, an open space for events and a sculpture park. Beyond Garyllis, Amathos and Kouris rivers, it will provide an additional water route, better location access for IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE, as well as spaces for audiences and participants to gather and exchange. The **Municipality of Amathounta** has already secured €4.4m from **Cohesion Funds (Thalia 2021-2027 & ERDF)**, with the project estimated to be completed by 2028.

Municipality of Kourion: Two new spaces are planned. **Kourion Makerspace** will operate as a centre for creativity and production, offering access to digital fabrication equipment, including CNC machines and 3D printers, as well as woodworking, metalworking, and electronics equipment. This space develops in collaboration with the **Youth Board of Cyprus**, which will also partly fund it. It will connect well with LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS, providing opportunities for research, technological innovation and decentralised access. The second space is the **Kourion Community Media Hub** for digital media and audiovisual production, supporting both professional and amateur creators, providing access to modern equipment and studios. Training programmes and workshops will enhance skills and enrich the legacy actions of our BACKSTAGE ACADEMY.

Q28 Timetable for Income to Cover Capital Expenditure

INCOME SOURCE	2026	2027	2028	2029	*2030
National Government	8,000,000	6,000,000	1,000,000	1,200,000	
City	4,500,000	9,000,000	17,000,000	4,000,000	1,000,000
Region		1,200,000	800,000	500,000	
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	1,000,000	2,500,000	1,500,000		
TOTAL	**13,500,000**	**18,700,000**	**20,300,000**	**5,700,000**	**1,000,000**

*The 2030 amount refers to the last renovation costs of the Municipal Gallery which will be used for COST OF DEMOCRACY in 2031.

Q29 New Infrastructure for 2030

The process for the **Epaminonda parcel** we mentioned in the pre-selection bid book is moving. The Municipal Council voted to proceed with an assessment of the consultation results from our second **10 10 100** event in 2024, which was attended primarily by culture stakeholders. A committee was appointed in coordination with the **Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber** which also includes a member of the Lemesos 2030 Board of Directors. A second consultation phase is in place, involving questionnaires for civil society and targeted focus groups with a small core team of architects and cultural stakeholders.

The process is followed by an open architectural contest in **January 2026**. The plans include two stages, a venue for exhibitions, studios for rehearsals, a recording studio, image and animation processing labs, co-working office spaces, leisure areas and an open square with food and beverage facilities. The cost of this project is estimated at €10m with completion in 2029. We expect that BEYOND DISDANCE will be presented here in the Fall of 2030 as well as the DANCING THE FRONTIER official showcase in 2031.



B. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Q30/31 Governance, Delivery Structure & Management

Lemesos 2030 is an independent non-profit organisation founded in January 2023 by the Municipality of Lemesos to prepare for the pre-selection and selection phases of the ECoC bidding process, as well as the implementation of the content of this bid book if Lemesos becomes European Capital of Culture in 2030.

Governance

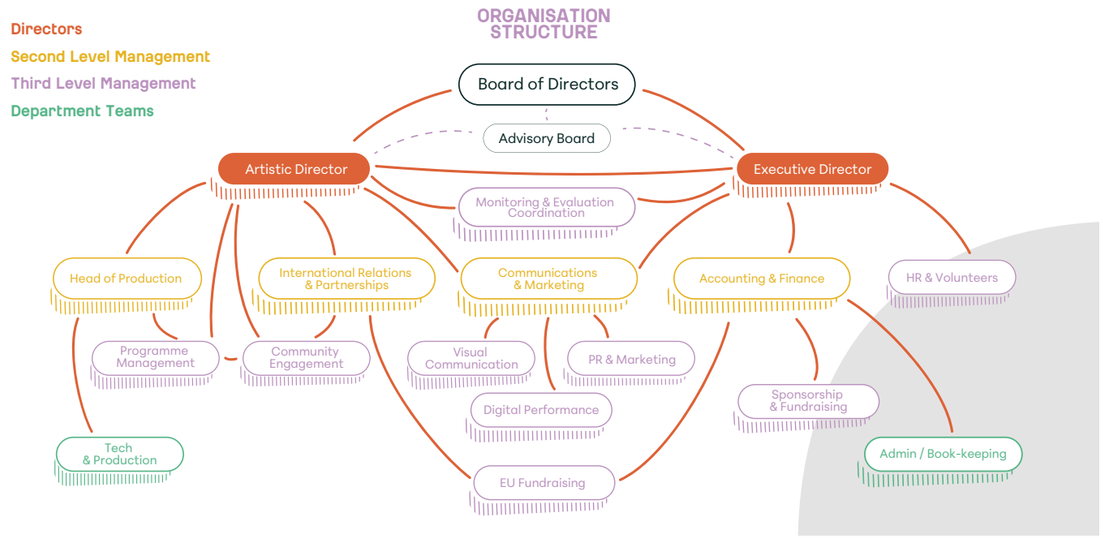
The final decision-making lies with the **Board of Directors (BoD)** made up of five men and four women from different sectors (culture, education, business, journalism, health, entrepreneurship, finance). Persons holding elected positions, such as members of the Municipal Council, cannot be appointed as members of the **Lemesos 2030 BoD**. The Mayor and Municipal Executives participate in all board meetings of the Organisation, but have no voting privileges. This ensures the independence, efficient flow of operation and reliability of the Organisation, and minimises risks of political intervention or censorship. The **BoD** is, and will be, in charge of the overall management of the **Lemesos 2030** activities, approving all decisions, and hiring staff. It will also bear the final responsibility of global leadership, ensure transparency and a process independent from other public or private organisational structures.

Board meetings take place once a month. The frequency will increase, if necessary, as the title year approaches. An appointed 3-member Executive Committee, made up of the **President**, **Vice-President** and a **Member** of the **BoD** with expertise in finance matters, is responsible for the frequently required reviews and approvals in close coordination with the senior management team. A frame will be set for operational decisions that do not require **BoD** pre-approval, including maximum spending authority for the senior management team. This layering of decision-making procedures provides clarity and proactivity, and ensures that no delays occur when decisions need to be made fast. Beyond the practical benefit, there is also a sense of shared responsibility, trust, safety, and flexibility.

In accordance with the law, an auditing firm has already been appointed **(April 2024)** to yearly monitor financial activity, signed contracts and agreements, as well as the decisions visible in the minutes of board meetings in order to produce yearly audited accounts.

Advisory Board

Next to the **BoD**, an intergenerational and intersectoral pro-bono **Advisory Board** will be established consisting



of 21 members with the minimum age set at 16. They will have no voting power but will act as sounding boards and advisors to the **BoD** and the direction team. Their role is to consult, support, foster civic representation, ensure social inclusion, and boost political and financial engagements.

Delivery structure and management

Lemesos 2030 will operate two core departments, each led by its respective director. These two higher-level management roles include the **Artistic** and **Executive Directors**, who have primary leadership roles. The duo of directors work collaboratively and interactively within frames, budgets and processes approved by the **BoD**.

The **Artistic Director** leads the development and implementation of the ECoC programme, capacity building, local and international networking, community engagement and audience development. She is conceptually and artistically independent, develops the artistic vision and strategy further, and works within the financial, and logistical frameworks set up in collaboration with the **Executive Director**. The **Executive Director** leads all administrative, legal and financial demands, as well as human resources.

The **Communications and Marketing** and the **Monitoring and Evaluation** functions will need shared decisions by both the **Artistic** and **Executive Directors** to maintain alignment and cooperate closely. Together with the Head of Communications and Marketing, they will set up an effective work flow between the four, and streamline cross-department processes.

Beyond Communications and Marketing, **second-level managers** include International Relations & Partnerships, Head of Production, and Finance.

Third-level managers include Community Engagement, Programme Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, Fundraising, PR and Marketing, Visual Communication, HR and Volunteers.

It is now clear what stays in-house, what kind of staff is required and what will need externally provided services. For example, EU-fundraising requires in-house personnel to support our ECoC programme, coordinate fundraising activity, research and identify suitable programmes, as well as grant-writing.

Finally, each project will have its own leading partner, either Lemesos 2030 or a local organisation. For projects led by other organisations, Lemesos 2030 will supervise and coordinate through the programme managers.

Directors and managers especially, are expected to embrace Lemesos 2030 philosophy and values, to lead by example, continuing the spirit of collaboration, openness and work ethic that has shaped our process so far.

Q32 Staff with Appropriate Skills and Experience

With the establishment of the Lemesos 2030 Organisation, the position for **Artistic Director** was announced with an open contest and filled in April 2023. **Eleana Alexandrou** has been leading the bidding process from the start ensuring that we apply a strong participatory process, build a sharing and learning momentum, and collectively define our priorities, outsourcing relevant and talented collaborators to support each stage. Her employment foresees continuity, if Lemesos wins the title, investing in a continued building of trust within the cultural sector, as well as in nourishing consistent engagement with the diverse communities and stakeholders.

The **Board of Directors** brings long-standing combined expertise in management, governance, and civic engagement, and plays a key role in selecting people with the right skills. Our proposed organisation structure in the table below will build gradually as we get closer to the title year, and positions will be filled through open contests and calls to both local and European professionals. Positions that involve direct communication with the local communities and residents of Lemesos will place emphasis on local professionals or individuals who speak both Greek and English. Recruitment processes from job openings so far have presented a high number of excellent applicants, and have also shown that joining or collaborating with Lemesos 2030 is desirable.

The staffing plan below outlines our expectations for employee growth over the years and in specific areas or departments. The numbers indicate the **full-time equivalent** in a year, which in some cases will be split between part-time employees, or the new hire starts mid-year.

YEARLY STAFF AND NUMBERS	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031–32
Directors	2	2	2	2	2	2
Managers (Production / Finance / International Relations / Communications)	1	4	4	4	4	4
Programme Management	0.5	1	2	6	6	1
Community Engagement	1	2	2	2	3	1
Tech & Production			1	3	6	
HR / Volunteers		1	2	2	2	2
Administration / Bookkeeping	2	2	2	2	3	1
Fundraising	1	2	2	2	2	
Monitoring & Evaluation	1	1	1	1	1.5	1
Communication / Marketing	1.5	1.5	3.5	5	5	2
	10	**16.5**	**21.5**	**29**	**34.5**	**14**

Skills development and internal trainings

Diversity of expertise and complementary skillsets are needed to build a strong Lemesos 2030 team. What might seem simple -having a large team- could be the biggest challenge, since it's not typical here. What was expressed clearly in one focus group was the potential *'to bring these professionals from different [cultural] communities to work together and mix the groups'* but it's equally important to invest time for *'internal communications'* and *'team-building activities'*.

Our BACKSTAGE ACADEMY programme will also support skills-building and expanding professional trajectories, to increase the numbers of diverse professionals engaged within the cultural sector. This will eventually fulfill the demand for a larger number of jobs opening within culture due to ECoC, boosting both Lemesos 2030 and the cultural sector overall. As far as we know, international communications, large-scale event broadcasting and cultural management during times of crisis are specific areas that require further nurturing.

Internships and collaborative partners

Our collaboration with **Cyprus University of Technology** also provides paid internships in various departments (visual communication, marketing, IT, and monitoring), giving the opportunity to young professionals to find a job and stay in Lemesos. Depending on the school, internships last from three to four months with the option of extending up to 10. During our bidding process, we've had six in-house interns and three more placed in our collaborative labs. Three of those did the whole 10 months, with two remaining as freelance regular collaborators of the Organisation until today.

A connection to a local educational organisation that works frequently with Erasmus+ gave us the chance to have four student interns from Portugal, mostly from IT courses and enrich the exchange and learning experience within the Organisation. We also tried out some cool things! Simao, Francisco and Diogo did small-scale prototypes of an interactive map with cultural venues (envisioned for LEAD), a mini **Vibesensor Pridesensor** questionnaire with emoji sliders, and a 3D version of our Water Tower persona.

Interconnectedness and interdependence

Experienced individuals who currently lead local cultural organisations in the city are not the main pool for the staff of Lemesos 2030. Those need to remain strong and sustainable where they are, because they are already in charge of almost 70% of ECoC projects, with the rate expected to increase in the coming years through our open calls. Having a strong Lemesos 2030 team and high-level cultural professionals leading ECoC projects through empowered local organisations is the desired sustainable goal to make this work. A combination of full-time and part-time jobs will also be good for Lemesos, to target those freelancers who want to keep some of their freedom but are excited to be part of the ECoC team.

Q33

Co-operation between Local Authorities & the Lemesos 2030 Team

To ensure effective and appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and Lemesos 2030, the **Executive Committee** works closely with the Municipality of Lemesos and its administration. The **Mayor** and the **Municipal Secretariat** attend all Board meetings -and will continue to do so- staying up to date and participating in key discussions. This close connection helps align administrative processes, planning, and municipal priorities with the needs of the ECoC programme, while fully respecting the autonomy of artistic decisions. Political leadership has been instrumental in approving the city's **Cultural Strategy (CS 2024–2034)** and enabling key financial commitments. Yet, the content and development of the cultural and artistic programme remain independent and are not subject to political decision-making.

Each of the three participating municipalities will immediately appoint a dedicated coordinator and assign or hire a Monitoring Officer to oversee progress and the impact of ECoC internally and in city activities. The Municipality of Lemesos' officer will participate in the **Pulse and Progress Panel**, bringing key data and insights from the city and district municipalities into the evaluation process. The **Municipal Secretariat** has already connected us with different municipal departments and will continue to help and coordinate as needed. The **Artistic Director** has regularly met with the city's executive team and decision-makers - a close relationship we expect to continue and deepen alongside the **Executive Director**. The Municipality's Cultural Department is a valuable partner, especially when it comes to aligning the ECoC programme with the action plan of **CS 2024–2034**.

Local authorities have publicly and institutionally supported the bid, including presentations to the Municipal Council and coverage in the Municipality's official magazine, which dedicated its cover and several pages to introducing the ECoC vision. The Lemesos 2030 website is hosted and linked on the Municipality's official website. Large-scale visuals of the **Water Tower** mascot, installed on walls and areas provided by the city, have invited Lemessolians to imagine and connect with the journey toward 2030.

Communication and collaboration with the municipality are progressing at a good pace, while exploring how legacy can be achieved and sustained. From 2026 onwards, we plan to conduct staff presentations and workshops for different members of the Municipality to offer a better understanding of the demand and ECoC scale processes, as well as provide capacity and skills building where necessary.



Q34 Artistic and Executive Directors

	ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Selection Process	**Open Call** | Application process and Decision by the BoD carried out	**Open Call** | Application in written form / Presentation and Interview Process / Decision by the BoD
Common Selection Criteria & Profile	**Strategic and creative thinking and systems planning** in implementing long-term strategies and cross-sector partnerships, preferably in complex, multi-year programmes. **Excellent organisational and communication skills** with ability to manage multiple priorities, facilitate collaboration across departments and team members, and represent lemesos 2030 effectively to stakeholders and funders. **Excitement for and experience in collaborative leadership** formats embracing collective ownership, shared responsibility and respect. **Commitment to the ECoC vision and values** showing strong alignment with the values of cultural diversity, sustainability, inclusion, civic participation, empathy and artistic freedom.	
Specific to Role Criteria and Profile	**Proven artistic leadership** with a strong track record in shaping and leading ambitious artistic programmes or organisations, balancing creativity, vision, and strategic direction. **Ability to design, oversee and implement** complex, multi-partner cultural initiatives. **Familiarity with the goals and evaluation** criteria of the european capital of culture initiative and experience in applying european cultural frameworks in practice. **Skills in programme design, editorial development** and conceptual direction. **Experience with civic engagement**, co-creation, and working with diverse communities.	**Proven leadership experience** in senior management or executive role within cultural institutions, non-profits, public administration, or large-scale event organisations. **Strong administrative and financial competence** and multi-stakeholder governance structures. **Team management experience** including conflict resolution, risk management and team development. **Familiarity with performance tracking** systems adaptive project management and monitoring methods.
Employment Start	2023	2026
Reports to	Lemesos 2030 BoD & Executive Committee	Lemesos 2030 BoD & Executive Committee
Reported to by	Programme Management Community Engagement Head of Production International Relations & Partnerships Communication & Marketing (shared responsibility with Executive Director)	Accounting & Finance Fundraising HR & Volunteers Monitoring & Evaluation (shared responsibility with Artistic Director)
Common Responsibilities	**Ensures the effective implementation** of the established monitoring and evaluation plan, accurately tracking progress and constructively responding to gaps or emerging issues. **Closely cooperates** with the Communication and Marketing Director on all related strategies and activities. **Collaborates with the BoD and makes decisions regarding team formation**, and implementation practices across the organisation. **Champions and upholds the mission**, vision, and values of Lemesos 2030 in both internal leadership and external representation engaging with stakeholders, media, institutions, and the wider public. **Manages contingency plans**, exercises readiness and adaptability in dealing with challenging circumstances.	
Main Responsibilities	**Leads the artistic vision and strategic development, with a European Dimension** and guides the evolution of the programme based on this foundation. **Curates** and supports a dynamic mix of projects. **Maintains artistic independence.** **Drives a participatory and inclusive strategy** fostering co-creation, diversity, and long-term development through culture. **Establishes meaningful collaborations**, locally, regionally, and (inter)nationally. **Oversees community engagement** and outreach ensuring continuity and development of connections to diverse stakeholders and target groups. **Ensures the cultural programme** is accessible and inspiring to diverse audiences.	**Leads the organisation's administrative, legal, and financial operations.** **Translates Lemesos 2030's strategic goals** into action plans. **Supervises human resources** and volunteers coordination, ensuring a healthy and efficient working environment. **Aligns cross-departmental strategies** and ensures smooth workflows. **Builds relationships with stakeholders and partners** in the city, including local businesses, cultural institutions, and government agencies. **Ensures a sustainable**, inclusive and environmentally friendly operation manner.

C. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Q35/36 Risk Assessment & Mitigation Measures

RISK	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	MITIGATION MEASURES
Funding The economy can shift rapidly. Culture very often becomes a lower priority during financial downturns. Additionally, large private events in the cultural sector may diminish the urgency for public investment.	Medium	High	We establish funding agreements with structured payment plans promptly. In case of regional conflicts or another pandemic, contingency plans ensure activities and projects continue through alternative means and stronger private sponsorships from companies or networks that are allies. Use our EU FUNDING APPLICATION CLINIC to the max and create a basis for long-term ability of networking, collaborating and healthy success rates. Create more income-generating solutions and activities. Diversify fundraising with both public and private funding, and strategic partnerships. Create a legacy plan for DECENTRALISED NETWORKS OF (CULTURAL) CARE in order to keep a dynamic advocacy and lobbying activity. Programme adaptations while preserving the core of our intentions and artistic vision.
Aggression Extreme behaviours or far-right opposition targeting specific projects, project leaders or participants.	Medium	Medium	Fear often hides behind aggression, so approaching these situations with understanding is crucial, as well as mindful, factual and non-reactive communication. Public statements from the city to make institutional support 'obvious', and solidarity networks with civil society organisations to show broad support. Safety measures like security guards, crowd management, secure access points, rapid response teams and support from police if things escalate. Train staff and volunteers in de-escalation and respectful audience management. We remain committed to listening, creating moderated spaces for dialogue, and responding with empathy, cultural democracy, and non-violence.
Relocations or Closures The city is so expensive that some of our main stakeholders, artists and creatives, are forced to move out of Lemesos. Cultural venues that depend on paying rent are facing increases that become more and more unaffordable.	Medium	Medium	Tackle real problems with real solutions i.e. use of 10 studio apartments from the upcoming student halls for short or long-term use by ECoC collaborators, participants, residents. **(Cultural Strategy 2024 - 2034)** Initiate participatory formats in collaboration with the municipality to create new funding programmes that respond to the cultural sector needs. Our contingency budget estimates complementary travel and hospitality costs for collaborators that are not in Lemesos.

RISK	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	MITIGATION MEASURES
Dropouts High dropout rates for SFAAACT! or STARTUP CULTURE projects who depend on the participation of students.	Medium	Medium	Early wins, rewards, visible success stories, and strong support structures based on trust and honesty. Carefully balance autonomy and guidance, and link individual actions to a broader shared mission - including social media take overs, and a bit of naughtiness! Allocate more people for some roles, i.e. a team of producers, a team of curators, so that drop-outs have minimum impact with time to fill the gaps.
Fires Wildfires during summer months (especially July & August) affecting outdoor cultural sites, natural areas, and surrounding communities.	Medium	Medium	Monitor fire risk alerts in close coordination with local authorities and firewatch platforms. Relevant events like IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE will include 'flexible' venues and backup indoor/urban locations in their planning in order to enable quick relocation if an area is affected. Build programme resilience: for less rigid events, adjust content and tone to respond respectfully to unfolding tragedies (e.g. dedicating moments to solidarity, shifting celebratory tone where appropriate). Train staff and volunteers on emergency communication protocols with audiences and partners.
Stakeholder resistance From stakeholders and organisations who prefer to do it *'like we have always done it'* or what was described as *'professional stubbornness'* or unmotivated stakeholders due to burnout and distrust.	Medium	Low	Invest in both youth and experienced professionals from culture, creative industries and civil society to foster collaborative approaches that spark curiosity and build trust. Combine existing practices while introducing new ideas incrementally and involve stakeholders in *'building our work systems together'*. Frame new approaches as enhancements rather than replacements. Work with transparency and participation, showing trust first and offering agency step by step to shift the spirits. Capitalise on small practical, implementable wins that improve conditions and demonstrate progress. Publicly acknowledge contributions of all sizes, building confidence and goodwill - include connections to the city's **Cultural Strategy** to highlight strategic progress.
Political Shifts Change in political leadership after 2029 (next municipal elections) could affect support for legacy projects, especially if more far-right or extremist voices gain traction.	Medium	High	Our legacy projects, like LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS and SFAAACT! start early, build up, and create synergies and collaborations with high societal impact. Secure broad, cross-party support for legacy projects during the preparation phase, so they are seen as city assets rather than partisan initiatives. Make our impact visible and clear, invest in our youth, and foster spaces of exchange and empathetic listening. Diversify their financial resources using national and international alliances so that even if there are future cuts, there are ways to continue.
Neighbourhood frustrations Cultural interventions in neighbourhoods may cause frustration among residents.	Low	Low	To be good listeners, engaging stakeholders from diverse groups and areas before asking for their attention. Invest time to form meaningful, long-lasting connections. Notify, and invite, people to up-coming noise or activity near their house with early and clear communication like post-box invitations or knocking on doors. Share practical details e.g. time, duration, traffic changes to reduce surprises. The option to participate will be clear, so they can choose how much they engage or how much they receive from a distance.

D. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Q37 Slogan

Our artistic programme is encapsulated by our concept title, our vision, our main story: **The Understory**. It's the phrase that brings out the essence and serves as a living narrative. It resonates with people here in Lemesos and -as we heard from our partners- also around Europe. People get it, they know exactly what we are talking about, it tells a story in itself, it speaks to their experience. **The Understory** is simple, suggestive, and short - it's definitely slogan material. It allows for narrative flexibility across campaigns, while always staying true to the core idea. A title, a story, a signal.

Q38

Marketing & Communication Strategy

The Lemesos 2030 vision speaks of a 'beyond-the-urban' development: a more human-centred city development towards a healthy cultural ecosystem. Our communication and marketing build a 'beyond-the-urban' narrative and an expanded branding of our city through culture. We invite locals and visitors alike to enter **The Understory** with us, to feel the joy of honesty, the urgency of our times and generations, to exercise democracy, to release, to heal, to laugh out loud, to imagine.

The Understory is a collective act of soft resistance and self-definition. We do not aim to "reach audiences" as abstract targets. We speak from within, we **activate participation**, **build relationships**, and **shift perceptions**. Our concept sits at the core of our strategy - the narrative lens through which we will communicate our programme, and build a glossary - including words we live by like beyond-the-urban, imagine a city, the hidden stories, city in therapy.

Our objectives are clear: build trust and pride among residents, strengthen Lemesos' visibility internationally, and invite participation across all layers of society. We speak in different yet connected ways with residents, diaspora, visitors, artists, European partners, institutions, and the wider cultural sector.

Every European Capital of Culture competes with major cities and well-known international festivals. We choose to tell the overlooked or half-told stories: whispers *'in the shadows of the skyscrapers'*, the humour and intensity of hybrid identities, the cultural life of peripheries and frontiers. Lemesos -Eastern Mediterranean, European, post-colonial, wired and unpolished- becomes a platform for asking what it means to be culturally visible, plural, valuable, and connected.

Our communication is shaped by **empathy**, **transparency**, **joy** and **critical reflection**. It connects **local voices with European conversations and vice versa**, and builds a shared public space where questions matter as much as answers. These values guide not only what we say, but how we share it: across media, digital platforms, face-to-face, and partnerships that carry our story further.

To deliver this, we first require **a strong brand identity**, which we've already begun to build, embracing our **Understory**'s dynamic through our long participatory bidding process. We will grow an in-house team, work with local professionals, and partner with agencies with international reach.

To turn these values into action, our strategy rests on four pillars:

1. The ECoC journey as public space
2. European narratives from the periphery
3. Less visitors is more visitors
4. Going 'interdigital'

Strategic pillars

1. The ECoC journey as public space
Shareable, interactive, personal, honest. Our language, visuals, and public presence -both physical and digital- prioritise proximity over generic polish. They invite citizens not as spectators but co-authors: community members writing on digital channels, takeovers by shared international and local/regional co-authors, digital communities and chat rooms for direct exchange. This participatory spirit extends into everyday spaces through guerrilla campaigns, pop-up ECoC info desks in 2028 and 2029, and collaborations with the **Limassol Tourism Development & Promotion Company**, the **Limassol Marina**, and the city's hotels. Together, these actions spark imagination about Lemesos - not just the city we live in now, but the one we are shaping for the future, making the best of the ECoC title.

2. European narratives from the periphery
We position Lemesos as a cultural crossing - a port city and European frontier raising urgent questions of identity, resilience, and cultural autonomy. We challenge what European culture looks and sounds like, and insist on its plurality. We are aware that this is not new for ECoCs, but rather an ongoing process that still has a long way to go. Our European and Lemessolian dimensions meet here, not in competition but in dialogue.

Projects like OUTSIDE THE MAP and COST OF DEMOCRACY can be connecting grounds, as they hold a strong link to civil society and culture, intervening and taking a position amidst big European challenges. NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT FLOAT zooms into marginal urban communities, while WEATHERING HERITAGE reimagines sites through digital tools and new perspectives. Together, they bring fresh relevance and resonance from the edge.

To make these stories travel, we will work with international marketing agencies based in Cyprus for regional and European reach, and explore collaborations with platforms such as Tripadvisor to pitch curated lists and experiences that attract interest, making Lemesos 2030 visible, shared, and amplified to more audiences. International events like LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS will further bridge diverse populations, designers and craftspeople, and explore shared and unique heritage and creative practices through visit or visit-less exchanges.

3. Less visitors is more visitors
We acknowledge that Lemesos isn't within easy reach of most Europeans. That's why, instead of sheer numbers, we focus on **deepening cultural engagement** among those who are already here: permanent and temporary residents, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, tourists, expats, international students, immigrants, refugees, and digital nomads. With an average tourist stay of over 9 days, our ambition is to transform the city into a **cultural base camp** for intercultural encounters and new stories.

In 2030, we invite people to become **cultural travellers**: to stay longer, return often, and carry **The Understory** into wider European networks. Journalists, writers, activists, travel bloggers, and art influencers will be welcomed for residencies and short visits. Tourists can become temporary citizens by volunteering in neighbourhood projects, helping produce events, or joining a local host. Storytelling campaigns will amplify the diverse faces of Lemesos - from underrepresented youth to long-time residents of the city, to new visitors and first impressions - dismantling stereotypes and making visible the fabric of our coexistence.

4. Going 'interdigital'
Keyboards and keypads between the digits of our hands. We are indeed providing the very best experience to those who join us in Lemesos. Yet, bringing our messages, events, debates and images out into the world is an important -and a digital- matter. A strong online campaign will address general or special interest groups and connect them with our web presence and digital platforms.

Through LEAP - Lemesos Arts Platform, our central digital hub, audiences will find live streams, digital exhibitions, streaming performances and films, talks, and archives. It will host the digital spaces of THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT, the WEATHERING HERITAGE digital and AR experiences, digital renderings of IMAGINARY WATER / IMAGINARY ICE and METAMORPHIC ARCHIVES. Imagine joining remotely a walk from our CATALOGUE OF WALKS, looking through the eyes of a locally present person's phone, discovering AR "monsters" appearing on the screen.

With the collaboration of marketing experts, digital engineers and AI designers, we will create an **AI-assisted Lemesos 2030 Concierge** that offers curated ECoC experiences and itineraries for potential visitors of the city. This will be our **Water Tower** persona, 'fed' with our plans through a dedicated database, and taught -like AI tools- how to sell them and provide information to prospective visitors.

Recognising digital exclusion, especially of the elderly and less-connected audiences, offline communication -posters, banners, radio, TV, and print- remains essential. How we frame and codify information also matters. Recognising familiar toponyms and historic geographies of the city helps keep the experience grounded and accessible.

Ambitious hard workers are getting ready

The Lemesos 2030 internal communications team will work in sync with the programme team to implement this integrated approach - combining **creative content production, strategic outreach, and institutional visibility**. From values to visuals, from campaign tone to media and digital channels, **we will not only inform - we will invite, disrupt, and connect**.

Q39

Partnerships with Media

While our focus is on international audiences already in Cyprus, we want Lemesos 2030 to be discussed and perceived by a wide range of the international public, even if they never travel here. Our Communications and Marketing department will collaborate with or hire an International Media Officer to ensure strategic visibility across European and global media outlets. Our aim: **place Lemesos 2030 in front of high-value audiences and listeners** - cultural travellers, opinion-shapers, diaspora communities, and those curious about border and periphery narratives.

Strategic partnerships

We already have a baseline for this approach. During our bidding process, **AVATON Communications** supported us in building media partnerships, engaging strategic partners for specialised campaigns, as well as monitoring our reach. This experience showed us what works and how to use resources for maximum impact. We plan to expand systematically to ensure wide, credible, and multilingual coverage at local, national, European, and international levels.

Targeted international media placement

Being talked about or being referred to is often as valuable as being visited. We will pitch to high-impact European and international channels -digital, print and TV broadcasters- relevant to culture, travel and innovation. Key markets include France, Greece, Belgium, and beyond Europe, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Placement will link to project stories and milestones, creating both visibility and engagement. We will prioritise media collaborations such as Euronews, ARTE, The Guardian Culture, Al Jazeera Artscape, and ECoC News, while leveraging networks such as Culture Action Europe, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and ASEF Creative Networks. Organic storytelling will be combined with targeted paid reach for maximum impact.

Leveraging partner networks

As we mentioned in Q32, we strive for interconnectedness and collective amplification. In this vein, visibility will not solely rely on our own channels. It will be multiplied through our programme partners' networks and media reach. And it works: in 2025, the exhibition **Unseen Gaze: The Hidden Portrait under Titian's** *Ecce Homo*, presented in collaboration with STAR-C Lab (Cyprus Institute), generated coverage in 32 international outlets including ARTnews US, Taipei Times TW, Reuters UK, 75 local press items, and 12 national TV appearances. More of our partners have similar strength: Rialto Theatre's EFFE Label festivals and Dot.on.the.Map Industry Days are directly linked to European creative industries; Dance House Lemesos is a member of the European Dancehouse Network and Aerowaves partner, with Spring Forward Festival already planned for Lemesos in 2030. Partners such as Jeunesses Musicales International, Junior Achievement, and CYENS, will embed our campaigns in specialist ecosystems and peer networks.

Local alliances & national media

Local allies remain essential. Cyprus-based journalists and media outlets have supported us from the start with articles, interviews, podcasts, and news coverage. We trust they will continue to do so. **Kanali 6** hosted regular content from Lemesos 2030 and collected opinions on selected questions from our **Vibesensor**. Our **LEMESOS 2030 Network** engages online media for banner placement, teaser videos, and podcast collaborations. These alliances ensure both proximity and credibility across diverse audiences at home.

Social and digital media amplification

Digital platforms will carry **The Understory** globally. We will use TikTok, YouTube and explore emerging metaverse spaces. Visual storytelling, live Q&As, takeovers by artists from projects like SESSIONS and THE PERFORMANCE SHOP CONCEPT, and teens from SFAAACT! are expected actions. Partner organisations will integrate Lemesos 2030 content into their own channels, multiplying reach. In parallel, an **ecosystem of community columnists and journalists** will create space for more in-depth, participatory coverage.

Residencies for journalists

Residencies and coordinated press trips will form a cornerstone of our strategy. In collaboration with **Visit Cyprus**, the **Limassol Tourism Company**, embassies, and twin cities, we will host international journalists and freelance writers, aligning invitations with key cultural moments, like our ceremonies and stop-the-city events, as well as flagship projects like CITIZEN OF ALL CITIZENS and SESSIONS. Residencies (as practised in the past) will extend to journalists covering culture, travel, urbanism, and innovation, combining physical immersion with digital participation for remote reporting.

Multilingual coverage & diaspora

Multilingual coverage and the Cypriot diaspora are vital amplifiers of **The Understory**. We will work with the **Cyprus Diaspora Forum** and Cyprus' satellite culture offices in Athens, London, Melbourne, and Johannesburg to engage diaspora communities and media. Stories will be translated and reinterpreted, creating a powerful bridge between Lemesos and global Cypriot voices, while extending our narrative into new languages and local international communities.

We aspire to a combination of professional expertise, partner amplification, and community-driven content that will make Lemesos 2030 a visible and credible voice across Europe and beyond.

Q40 Citizens as Communicators

Lemesos 2030 and **The Understory** are all about participation, empowerment and building momentum. Mobilising our own citizens as communicators and connectors feels natural. When something good happens, we are inclined to share it - face-to-face or on social media. We saw it happening with our **'10 10 100'** participants and our **Trajectories Working Group**. And when tragedy strikes -like the devastating fires this summer- people also react and help out with solidarity and generosity.

Truth is, now, more than ever, we need the courage to connect; share hopeful news, chat with strangers, smile, and dance together. For those whose body memory has become accustomed to stress and sorrow, we will build new memories, new muscles, new hope.

Community journalists

As we mentioned in Q38, we aim to create a network of **culture columnists and community journalists**, inviting writers from within our communities to produce creative, first-person content that reflects multiple voices. This participatory approach was tested during **Out There Together** (2024), when we collaborated with **Parathyro** by **Politis News**, a national media company, to publish seven articles by seven different writers on seven co-created walks. Each piece captured lived experience, nuance, and perspective. The experiment demonstrated that personal cultural writing deepens engagement and sparks meaningful dialogue. Building on this and in preparation for the ECoC year, we will collaborate with local and international outlets to host rotating columns, co-authored pieces, and thematic series, fostering a public conversation around Lemesos 2030 from the inside out.

Ambassadors from The Understory

'To be loved the way Lemessolians love Lemesos' sums up the Lemessolian spirit and our deep love for our city. We will create a team of ambassadors through an open call, coordinated by two members of the **Trajectories Working Group** and the appointed **2025 Carnival King, Vasilis Papavasiliou**, a hospitality professional and proud Lemessolian. While saving the world may be overly ambitious, these ambassadors will nurture friendships, host conversations, and bring the cultural spirit of Lemesos into events, conferences and cultural exchanges.

Visibility partners

Citizen mobilisation also comes through partnerships that meet people where they are. Major football clubs **AEL** and **APOLLON**, already partners in ART FANATICS, have shared our bidding trailer on big screens during matches and our Water Tower visuals on LED boards around the football court, reaching thousands. Going forward, we will scale this approach with teasers in presentations and pop-up offices, in events like the **Cyprus Diaspora Forum** and **Cyprus 3x3** Basketball tournaments, making Lemesos 2030 European Capital of Culture impossible to miss!

Storytelling and amplifying

Storytelling is at the heart of **The Understory**. We will invite residents of Lemesos, neighbouring municipalities, and villages to share their stories, restoring a sense of belonging and ownership. These stories will travel to the Lemessolian diaspora, to Europe and beyond. Citizens become the most genuine communicators of Lemesos 2030. To support this, **a digital storytelling layer** will accompany our journey: podcasts and podcast takeovers, street-level campaigns run by ECoC participants of all ages, and collaborations with mainstream and alternative media.

Results from our monitoring and artistic projects, testimonials and creative outcomes will feed into this stream, creating content that is specific, surprising, and rooted in lived experience. Analogue and digital formats together will multiply the resonance of **The Understory** across spaces and audiences, ensuring that communication is not top-down but lived and shared.



Q41

Highlighting ECoC as an Action of the EU

Let's think of the European Capital of Culture as another example of the EU initiating or funding essential infrastructure, research and cultural projects: people use them, enjoy them, benefit from them, and wouldn't miss them for the world. Yet hardly any of us acknowledge how much of our daily life depends on what the EU makes possible. The European Capital of Culture is no exception.

It is not an easy brand to promote. It is a European-scale project with notorious underfunding compared to the audience it has to reach. It's in a different place each year - actually, in at least two. It must balance European scale with local ownership. This is both a challenge and a strength. The diversity of styles, languages, and narratives reflects the very nature of the Union itself.

There is no distinct branding or wording that must be used by each ECoC other than the use of the EU logo -similar to Creative Europe and all other EU funding schemes- and we applaud this restraint. Each member state has its own style, language, flag, etc. Consequently, each title bearer develops its individual life and brand, while still carrying the EU's values at its core.

Therefore, yes, we will integrate the EU logo across all materials, both digital and print, and clearly present the ECoC on our website, in press conferences, and through our outreach. EU officials will be invited to key moments, and our digital storytelling will connect to European milestones such as the **European Day of Languages** and **Europe Day**, insisting on European values of democracy, diversity and coexistence.

It remains to be said that Lemesos' **Understory** embodies the richness of Europe's story. Lemesos 2030 will highlight not only that the ECoC is an action of the European Union, but also why it matters: a living proof of Europe's plurality. And it nurtures from the ground up a thriving narrative that belongs to the many voices and faces of the Union.

CHAPTER 6

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Q42

Commitments & Political Support

Below is the timeline showing the specific votes of support for our ECoC candidacy:

17/11/2022: The Municipal Council of Lemesos votes on the establishment of an independent organisation to bid for the 2030 European Capital of Culture.

12/01/2023: Lemesos 2030 European Capital of Culture - Candidate City is founded by the Municipality of Lemesos appointing a 9-member Board of Directors that is independent of individuals holding elected positions, such as the Mayor and members of the Municipal Council.

26/04/2023: The Municipality of Lemesos provides office space and equipment for Lemesos 2030 in the Municipal Buildings 'Ploutis Servas'.

28/11/2024: The Municipal Council votes to adopt the Cultural Strategy 2024 - 2034.

28/11/2024: The Municipal Council votes to commit €7m for the ECoC during the pre-selection round, as well as a target of €3m for culture in the city's budget to ensure legacy.

15/01/2025: The Council of Ministers on the national level votes to commit €10m for the ECoC.

11/09/2025: The Municipal Council of Lemesos votes to raise its financial commitment for the ECoC to €9m.

19/08/2025: The Municipal Council of Kourion votes to commit €1.1m for the ECoC.

15/09/2025: The Municipal Council of Amathounta votes to commit €1.1m for the ECoC.

Q43

Infrastructure Projects, Timetables & Links to ECoC projects

Our bid does not rely on large-scale infrastructure investments. We focus more on treating our wounds - like the burnt **Apollon Cinema (ex Taksim)** in the Turkish Cypriot neighbourhood, or housing the **Dance House Lemesos**. Next to that, the city is working hard to create new funding schemes to support cultural venues that rely on private properties, so that they do not face the same fate of being indirectly ousted.

Lemesos has also begun a process of listing iconic modernist architecture buildings, aiming to preserve a strong part of the city's personality. One of them is the long-abandoned Polydoridis Kiosk within the Public Garden, which is undergoing a deep clean and is intended for use by the city for cultural purposes. This particular spot is one of our options as an ECoC info and exhibition space, as well as a hosting area for activities of the projects ECOLOGIES OF BELONGING, GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN and A FLOW OF CULTURE, VOICES & MOTION.

The table below shows projects that are either ongoing, or in the assessment phase, or have already announced architectural competitions. As we said in Q27, if it's not already voted on, it's not in the bid book! Infrastructure projects from the table in Q38 of our pre-selection bid book that have finished or are not directly linked to the ECoC taking place are not presented here. New additions include:

- Apollon Cinema (ex Taksim) as presented in Q26.
- District projects of Amathounta and Kourion Municipalities: Kourion Makerspace, Media Hub, Vathkeias Linear Park.

The **Municipal Art Gallery** is a renovation project. In case renovation works are delayed, COST OF DEMOCRACY can be hosted in the **Municipal Arts Centre** or in one of the large private exhibition venues of the city.

Lemesos & District Infrastructure Plans

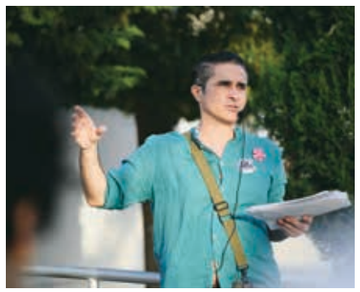


















TEAM & CONTRIBUTORS

Team

Artistic Direction	Eleana Alexandrou
Artistic Programme & Networking Coordination	Diomedes Koufteros
Outreach & Projects Management	Michalis Karakatsanis
Administration	Dr. Dara Milovanovic
Administration & Outreach Support	Aggela Ioannidou
Outreach & Participatory Processes	Elena Agathokleous, Dr. Eleni Pashia, Marina Kakoulli
Inter-community Relations & Placemaking Coordination	Dr. Ellada Evangelou
Communication / Content	Diamanto Stylianou

Board of Directors

Dr. Andreas Pittas, Georgia Doetzer, Nicos Kyriakides, Dr. Antigoni Komodiki, Markella Menikou, Dr. Niki Papadopoulou Papa, Michalis Papaevagorou, Dr. Vasilis Protopapas, Dr. Nikolaos Zamboglou, Christos Melides (Secretary)

Trajectories Working Group

Core Members: Ria Alexandrou, Marina Athinodorou, Daniel Barasa, Georgia Chrysanthou, Panos Hadjichristofis, Rania Iakovou, Panayiotis Kleanthous, Dr. Theodoros Kouros, George Panayiotou, Dr. Yiannis Papadakis, Marina Pashia, Phidias Pavlides, Tonia Psilla, Sara Mariza Vryonidi

Contributors: Domniki Agathokleous, Eleni Anastasiou, Eleonora Constantinou, Kat Constantinou, Elli, Anthi Ermogenous, Verina Gouda, Lia Haraki, Yiangos Hadjiyiannis, Evita Ioannou, Anastasia Korae, Maria Kyriakou, Dr. Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, Loizos Olympios, Ianthi Papadema, Alexis Papadopoulos, Sofia Paraskeva, Marios Pavlou, Constantina Peter, Dimitris Pitsillides, Konstantina Skalionta, Eleftheria Socratous, Tasos Stylianou, Nektarios Theodorou, Tatiana Tsetti

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS

Foundations Phase Creative Lead: Marios Constantinides

Focus Group: Konstantina Nina Achilleos, Clio Alphas, Denis Constantinou, Alexis El Kater, Melina Galati, Markos Georgiou, Michalis Georgiou, Eva Korae, Antreas Kyriakou, Georgia Moditi, Thalis Nikolaou, Suzana Petri, Christina Socratous, Tuomas Venäläinen

SFAAACT!

Focus Group: Elena Efstathiou, Rania Iacovou, Iosif Kartapanis, Dr. Antigoni Komodiki, Dr. Konstantinos Melides, Ksenia Mukhortova, Popi Nikolaou, Nicolas Vryoni

BACKSTAGE ACADEMY

Focus Group: Georgia Andreou, Julia Georgiadou, Marina Kakoulli, Anya Masalova, Marios Pavlou, Eleftheria Socratous, Nefeli Stylianou, Alexis Vassiliou

A warm ‘thank you’ to all who participated in discussions, focus groups, consultations, who responded to our Vibesensor and questionnaires, who were a phone call away.

CREDITS

Lemesos 2030 Selection Bid Book (2025)

Published by Lemesos 2030 European Capital of Culture Candidate City on behalf of the Municipality of Lemesos

Publication	The Book Arts Lab, CUT
Art Direction	Omiros Panayides
Graphic Design	Omiros Panayides, Natali Touloupou
Illustrations	Charalambos Margaritis
Diagrams and Stickers	Nour Mustafa
Print	Kailas Printers & Lithographers Ltd

Texts

Writing	Eleana Alexandrou, Diomedes Koufteros, Dr. Ellada Evangelou
Contributions	Michalis Karakatsanis
Consulting / Editing	Louiza Papaloizou, Dr. Theodoros Kouros, Eva Korae, Dr. Andri Ioannou, Nicolas Pantopiou, Georgia Chrysanthou
Proofreading	Diamanto Stylianou

Photographs

p. 98	Paris Christophi
p. 98	Elena Constantinou
p. 25, 41, 48, 98	Katerina Kountourioti
p. 54, 98	Skevi Laou
p. 82	Silvio Augusto Rusmigo
p. 4, 13, 27, 30, 33, 34, 59, 64, 67, 69, 72, 74, 86, 94, 98	Pavlos Vrionides

Photos Courtesy of the Contributing Organisations

Pavlos Vrionides

Summer Dance Festival, courtesy of Nea Kinisi Cyprus

p. 3	*'Slips away from you'* by Petros Konnaris & Belinda Papavassiliou
p. 6	Summer Dance Festival, 2024
p. 37	*'Vacationists in the absurd'* by Styliana Apostolou & Polena Kolia Petersen
p. 43	*'A Meeting - Celebration'* by Viky Kalla
p. 56	*'Where the divide meets the horizon: buffer knots'* by Elias Klark
p. 61	*'E|C|H|G|O'* by Areti Chourdaki
p. 75	*'@Maria_i_nifi'* by Konstantina Skalionta

Open House Festival, courtesy of Dance House Lemesos

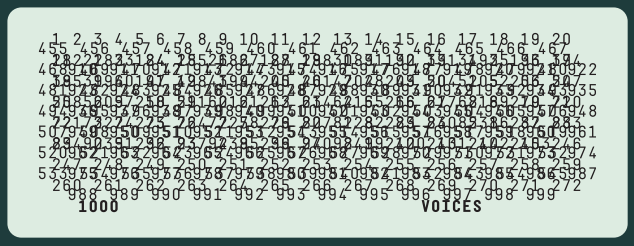
p. 14	*'Grace'* by Hodworks
p. 63	*'Bless the sound that saved a witch like me'* by Benjamin Kahn
p. 26	Fête de la Musique, courtesy of Alliance Française de Limassol
p. 95	Cyprus Film Days, courtesy of Rialto Theatre

© Lemesos 2030 European Capital of Culture Candidate City

lemesos2030.com
facebook.com/lemesos2030
instagram.com/lemesos2030
youtube.com/@Lemesos2030



Photograph by Pavlos Vrionides



FIESTA FIX

THINGS TO CRY ABOUT

COST OF DEMOCRACY

Rock Clubbing

IMAGINARY WATER IMAGINARY ICE

Catalogue of Walks

OUTSIDE THE MAP

OUT THERE TOGETHER

UN-INHABITAT

LEMESOS DESIGN DAYS

NEXT→FOR PAMPOROS

AAAA
LEAD
LEAP
SEE CY

Dancing the Frontiers

TOWER DRAMA

CREATIVE STARTUP FACTORY

in the city
SFAAACT!

CURIOUS FANCY FAILURES

A FLOW OF CULTURES VOICES & MOTION

MICRO MACRO

ART FAN-ATICS

BURSTING LINES

PELLO MASKES

AI ART & PLAY

WAR & PEACE

IMAGINE A CITY

CITY IN THERAPY