



Ex-post Evaluation of the 2015 European Capitals of Culture

*Final Report
November 2016*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education and Culture
Directorate D - Culture and Creativity
Unit D2 — Creative Europe programme

Contact: Unit D2

E-mail: EAC-ECOC@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

Ex-post Evaluation of the 2015 European Capitals of Culture

Final Report

**A study prepared for the European Commission by
Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation
Services (CSES)**

Authors:

Tim Fox (Ecorys), James Rampton (CSES)

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for the European Commission. However, it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.***

**Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

ISBN 978-92-79-52816-3

doi: 10.2766/423160

© European Union, 2016

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Images: © Fondation Mons2015, © Pilsen2015 Foundation

Printed in Belgium

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
1.0 Introduction	12
1.1 Purpose of the report	12
1.2 The European Capital of Culture Action	12
1.3 Evaluating the European Capital of Culture.....	18
1.4 Evaluation Methodology	21
2.0 Mons	24
2.1 Background.....	24
2.2 Development of the ECoC	26
2.3 Cultural programme	31
2.4 Governance and funding	45
2.5 Results	52
2.6 Legacy	62
2.7 Conclusions.....	63
3.0 Pilsen	66
3.1 Background.....	66
3.2 Development of the ECoC	67
3.3 Cultural programme	72
3.4 Governance and funding	85
3.5 Results	90
3.6 Legacy	98
3.7 Conclusions.....	100
4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations	103
4.1 Relevance	103
4.2 Efficiency	104
4.3 Effectiveness.....	105
4.4 Sustainability	107
4.5 Recommendations	108
Annex One: Interviewees	120
Annex Two: Online Survey.....	124
Annex Three: Terms of Reference.....	134

Executive Summary

Introduction

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is a European Union Action to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities. It consists of a title awarded each year to two cities in different EU Member States, who are selected through a two-stage open application process in each country. The designated cities implement a year-long cultural programme of European dimension and involving local citizens. The 2015 title-holders were designated in 2010 under the terms of Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. In 2014, a new legal basis for the ECoC was introduced through Decision 445/2014/EU, which will apply to title-holders from 2020 onwards.

This final report presents the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the ECoC Action for 2015, which was undertaken by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES). The evaluation focussed on the two 2015 hosts: Mons (Belgium) and Pilsen (Czech Republic). It assessed the ways in which each city implemented their ECoC and the benefits that have resulted. The report explains how Mons and Pilsen developed their application, designed their cultural programmes and organised themselves to deliver their activities. The report also focusses on the benefits of hosting the title, as well as on legacy and lessons learned.

This evaluation is designed to satisfy the requirement of Decision 1622/2006/EC for an “external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year”. Although each city has kept in regular contact with the Commission including through the provision of monitoring reports, the evaluation will help establish a more detailed understanding of the lifecycle of the ECoC, from its early inception through to its sustainability and legacy. In particular, the evaluation provides an opportunity to look back at the previous year in order to highlight lessons and recommendations based on the experiences of the host cities.

In order for results to be comparable with previous evaluations, the methodology follows a consistent approach for evidence gathering and analysis. Primary data sources include interviews conducted during two visits to each city or by telephone. A specific online project survey was carried out in Mons while analysis was undertaken from an existing project survey in Pilsen. Interviews have gathered a variety of perspectives on each ECoC, including those of the management teams, decision-makers at local and national level, plus key cultural operators, a range of partners involved in the delivery of ECoC and a sample of organisations participating in projects. Secondary data sources include the original ECoC applications, studies and reports produced or commissioned by the ECoC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites, statistical data on culture and tourism and quantitative data supplied by the ECoC on finance, activities, outputs and results.

Mons

Mons is a city of about 93,000 people and the capital of Hainaut province in Belgium, situated close to the French border. The city is in the eastern end of an area known as the Borinage, which comprises around thirty municipalities. Mons flourished in the Middle Ages as a centre for trade and commerce and in the 19th century as a centre for coal mining and heavy industry. However, Mons and the Borinage suffered considerable damage in both World Wars and from industrial decline during the post-war period. In recent years, Mons has benefitted from the arrival of hi-tech companies, including Google, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Cisco and as a centre for higher education. Mons has a rich cultural offering including several historic buildings and museums including the 15th century Town hall (with its Baroque-style belfry), the Beaux Arts de Mons (BAM), the Maison du Marais (dedicated to Van Gogh) and the Museum of Contemporary Arts (housed in a former coal mining complex). A high quality contemporary arts programme is offered at several sites in the city by "Le manège.mons", an initiative to democratise culture and make it accessible to a wide audience. The "Doudou" or "Ducasse" festival dating from the 14th century takes place each year in Mons and features the "Lumeçon", a re-enactment of the fight between St George and the dragon.

The idea for Mons to host the ECoC emerged from the wider strategy of the municipality to regenerate the city based on culture, tourism and new technologies. In this context, a decision was taken in 2004 by the Mayor of Mons, Elio di Rupo, to prepare a bid. Mons's application stated its overall aim as being to put itself on the European map as a symbol of economic restructuring based on culture and of successful alliance between the economic and cultural spheres. In line with that aim, the overall theme was "where technology meets culture". In line with the chronological order of entitlement in Decision 1622/2006/CE, Belgium was entitled to host the ECoC in 2015. Mons was the only Belgian city to submit an application. At the final selection meeting on 9 February 2010, the panel recommended that Mons be awarded the title and highlighted the "hunger" to stage the event, the high quality cultural and artistic concept, the professional and motivated team, strong political commitment and solid governmental financial support.

Mons2015 was implemented by a dedicated delivery agency, the "Fondation Mons 2015", which was founded before the ECoC application. This was a public utility foundation overseen by the four main public authorities (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Région wallone, Province de Hainaut, Ville de Mons). Those bodies, as well as the municipalities and communes of the Borinage, offered strong political support. They also guaranteed the Foundation its artistic independence, for example, in terms of the allocation of funds to projects. The team largely remained intact throughout the application, development and implementation phase of the ECoC. Mons2015 was one of the better-funded ECoC to date. Total projected income to the end of 2015 was €72.8m (including in-kind support from corporate sponsors valued at more than €2m). The four main authorities committed 68% of the proposed budget at an early stage and fulfilled the large part of this commitment. EU funding in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize was used to increase the overall budget.

The cultural programme of Mons2015 was divided into four seasons:

- Season 1: "l'Éblouissement" ("Dazzle") aimed to bring light and warmth to the winter months. This season featured the opening ceremony, "Art en ville": a series of public art installations, a "Van Gogh au Borinage" exhibition and the launch of "Le Café Europa", a temporary café, venue and meeting place connected to ten other European cities.
- Season 2: "The Metamorphosis" emphasised the arrival of spring and changes taking place in Mons (new infrastructure developments, development of culture in the city, possibilities offered by new technology). To celebrate the opening of five new museums and a concert hall, a "discovery weekend" was held in April with events and exhibitions at the new venues.
- Season 3: "#Escale" encouraged visiting or staying in Mons during the holiday period. It featured open air events, festivals and urban art installations. For example, a maze of sunflowers in the Grand Place highlighted the connection of Van Gogh to Mons.
- Season 4: "Renaissance" emphasised the rebirth of Mons after the decline of key industries. There was a focus both on the historical characters of the "golden age" of Mons and on future developments. There were exhibitions related to St George and to the poet Verlaine.

The cultural programme reflected that city's own culture and history and expressed the diversity of European cultures in different and innovative ways. It featured themes and personalities with a connection to Mons but with a European resonance, notably, St George and the Dragon, Van Gogh and Verlaine. There were also events featuring works by contemporary European artists, including the French visual artist Christian Boltanski and the English product and furniture designer, Jasper Morrison. There were also many co-operations with cultural operators and towns from other European countries, including Pilsen.

The cultural programme was more extensive, more innovative and more European in nature compared to the city's cultural offering in previous years. It included 219 projects featuring 2,390 events of different sizes, cultural disciplines and art forms, most of which were new for 2015. Mons2015 found new and creative ways to use public spaces for artistic purposes. These included the large open-air events, most notably the opening ceremony and 25 urban art installations. It also featured a significant number of new works that were performed or exhibited for the first time in 2015. Some were by prominent artists, whilst others were by emerging local artists or by children and young people.

One of the main objectives of Mons's application was to "involve citizens in a process of cultural democracy". To this end, local citizens were involved as creators, performers and audiences. The programme specifically targeted children and young people, disabled people, prisoners and prison staff, local non-profit associations and the various nationalities that had immigrated to Mons since the second world war (Algerian, Italian, Moroccan, Polish, Russian, Tunisian, Turkish and Ukrainian). Specific

events were held for the towns and communes neighbouring Mons and in the rest of the Borinage. These involved local citizens as creators and performers in events that reflected something of the culture and heritage of these territories, albeit in a contemporary way: "Le Grand Huit" ("The Big Eight") for the 19 communes neighbouring Mons; "Le Grand Ouest" ("The Big West") for the towns and communes further west within the Borinage; and "Les 400 coups" ("The 400 strikes") for 18 towns in the Wallonie picarde area of Hainaut.

The greater number, diversity and accessibility of events meant that cultural events in 2015 attracted higher audiences than in previous years. Total audiences were nearly 2.2m people, most of which must be considered as additional to the audiences of previous years, as most events were new in 2015 and there is no evidence that events and venues outside the Mons2015 cultural programme suffered any significant loss of audiences. For example, the Van Gogh exhibition attracted 180,000 visitors and the opening ceremony had an audience of 100,000 people. Moreover, the sheer scale of the programme, as well as specific initiatives meant that new types of audiences for culture were attracted. The ECoC also attracted audiences from further afield in 2015 than in previous years. For example, data from the tourist office provides evidence of a marked increase in tourist visits to Mons during 2015, of which many were specifically for cultural reasons.

The ECoC can be seen to have increased the cultural capacity of Mons in different ways. It has gone hand-in-hand with a very substantial development of the cultural infrastructure of the city, in terms of new venues and increased exhibition and performance space; public and private investments of more than €143m were made during the development phase. Mons2015 has also helped create and strengthen networks between cultural operators within the city and also across the Borinage. It has helped cement the link between culture and tourism in the city and beyond. A key factor here has been the close co-operation between the Ville de Mons, the Foundation and Wallonie Bruxelles Tourisme (including through the local tourist office "Visit Mons").

Mons2015 has created new capacity for corporate sponsorship of culture. Whilst corporate sponsorship of culture was not absent before 2015, Mons lacked a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the attraction of corporate sponsors. A key achievement of the ECoC has thus been the new partnership(s) created with the local corporate sector, encompassing large companies and multinationals, as well as local SMEs. Initiated by the corporate sector itself, "Club2015" was a not-for-profit association with a membership of 841 SMEs, each of which contributed €1k. The total sponsorship of €841k thus made Club2015 one of the major corporate sponsors of Mons2015.

The ECoC has strengthened the international dimension of cultural activity within Mons and the Borinage. International collaborations have increased the number of connections with new partners performing in other countries. Marketing and communication activities carried out by the Foundation Mons2015 were reported as being effective. This has contributed to attracting international tourists and other visitors to the city and improving Mons's image amongst visitors and residents.

Mons has put in place very concrete plans for continuation activity including a biennial, the first edition of which will be "Mons2018". This is intended to be "a major cultural date on an international scale that will revive the spirit of the festive European Capital of Culture" and be "based on the values that brought the success of Mons 2015". The biennial will be preceded by events in 2016 and 2017. A new body, the Fondation Mons2025, will retain some of the staff of the Fondation Mons2015 and operate from the same premises and under the same governance structure. It will continue to operate in partnership with local businesses in the context of "Mons 2025 Business Club", which will serve as a successor to the Club2015.

Pilsen

Pilsen is the fourth largest city in the Czech Republic and is situated approximately 90 km southwest of Prague. With a population of 165,000 Pilsen is the largest city and the administrative and industrial hub of the Pilsen region, which, with 550,000 inhabitants, accounts for about 5% of the total Czech Republic's population. Although the city is relatively large compared to those elsewhere in the Czech Republic, it is a relatively small city when it comes to hosting an ECoC. The city also boasts an increasing number of cultural institutions and events. The city is home to the J. K. Tyl Theatre; the city's famous theatre, which has three scenes and four ensembles: the play, the opera, ballet, operetta and dramaturgy. Again, due to its relatively small size, although Pilsen has a thriving cultural scene and a number of high quality cultural offers in the city, the cultural provision is relatively small compared to other ECoC host cities.

Pilsen is a relatively prosperous city within the Czech Republic with a generally thriving industrial hub and comparatively high levels of employment. Although some social issues do exist within the city, it does not perceive itself nor do statistics suggest that it is a city suffering common urban problems linked to issues such as unemployment, social unrest, crime or pollution.

Alongside Belgium, the Czech Republic was entitled to propose a European Capital of Culture for 2015. Three cities submitted a proposal: Hradec Králové, Ostrava and Pilsen. At the final selection meeting on 8 September 2010, the panel recommended that Pilsen be awarded the title, complimenting Pilsen for the focus of the proposal on utilising the cultural projects planned for 2015 in the general regeneration of the city.

The general aim of the Pilsen ECoC application was to explain how the European Capital of Culture would contribute to the opening up of Pilsen towards Europe and other external influences (whether people or elements). Hence, the development of the slogan "Pilsen, Open Up!". The motivations for Pilsen applying for ECoC status were generally not focussed on 'tackling urban problems such as unemployment or industrial decline' like many previous ECoC cities have stated.

In overall terms the early development stages of Pilsen2015 were largely acknowledged as being poor and many local stakeholders admitted that the ECoC had a worryingly slow and stuttering start. The monitoring panel was concerned about the lack of senior management involved in the overall management and the artistic

development of the project. Additionally, the panel noted that the project lacked sufficient communication about its activities. Furthermore, the panel was very concerned about the low size of the budget of €18 million (much lower than the €33 million budget foreseen at bidding stage) and the relatively low engagement of the regional authorities in the project.

However, the Pilsen2015 quickly turned the early difficulties around. Firstly, the First Deputy Mayor of the City took charge of the overall development process for Pilsen2015. Secondly, an international advisor was employed by the city administration to help understand the failing in the early development process and put forward a clear action plan to help negate the main barriers and problems identified. Finally, there was a change in the team responsible for the day to day delivery of the ECoC programme.

Throughout 2015, over 600 cultural events and experiences were delivered in Pilsen across four streams:

- Stream one: Arts and Technologies: was established to celebrate and strengthen the link between Pilsen's industrial background, crafts, skills and business.
- Stream two: Relationships and Emotions: was developed to open up the public space of Pilsen, to engage the public in a discussion about their personal and national identity.
- Stream three: Transit and Minorities: was developed to highlight the diversity of the city and its population through various workshops and events.
- Stream four: Stories and Sources: was established to promote tourism based on some of Pilsen's personalities and to reminisce about past events and experiences.

There were a large number of individual and practical activities put in place to ensure the involvement and empowerment of residents. Central to this was the "Foster the City" programme which was focussed on the improvement of small public spaces. Local people identified public spaces that were in need of improvement, developed an Action Plan for each, chose which projects they wanted to fund and helped implement the improvements themselves, supported by expertise and funding from Pilsen2015. In addition, a volunteering programme also engaged active volunteering from Pilsen residents across a range of ECoC projects. A total of 515 volunteers were identified and trained through the ECoC to help undertake a range of roles including crowd control and signposting at larger events, undertaking local marketing as well as helping to set up various events and activities. Finally, over 1,100 participants also took part in a number of neighbourhood walks that ran across the city throughout 2015 run by local people who delivered 'professional' guided walks for visitors to the city taking into consideration the history of the neighbourhood and covering pertinent events.

A success of Pilsen2015 was around helping raise the profile of culture among the local population. Results of resident surveys showed that the most enjoyable forms of cultural entertainment in 2010 was 'watching TV' whilst after the ECoC this shifted to watching live music and visiting exhibitions. The same survey showed that local

residents also ranked culture much higher in level of importance in their lives after compared to before the ECoC year. As one stakeholder stated 'ECoC helped articulate the value and importance [of culture] to the city's residents that simply would not have happened without the year taking place'.

Pilsen2015 also made the most of its small budget of just 18 million euros. However, a small budget has not necessarily led to a small impact. In terms of results, the ECoC has seen strong benefits around internationalising the cultural offer in the city (making it outward rather than inward looking) and also ensuring stronger links between cultural operators within the city- both with each other and with partners outside of Pilsen. 53% of cultural players taking part in the ECoC project survey now say that they had good international links with partners because of their participation in the ECoC and that this participation was low or non-existent prior to 2015. Despite the ECoC having no large (and expensive) capital projects (outside of the Depot2015 and the New Theatre), there were very few stakeholders who saw this as a negative. Most were quick to point out that new buildings do not automatically mean success.

Despite a poor start, Pilsen2015 has been viewed by almost all stakeholders as a positive investment of time and money and although there were many early doubters almost all of these stakeholders have been positive about its end outcome. This turn around in the fortune of Pilsen2015 has been partly put down to stronger and high profile political backing (by the First Deputy Major), support of expert advisors and particularly the Pilsen2015 Foundation staff, as well as greatly simplifying and 'decluttering' the cultural programme. Many commentators also stressed that the relatively small size of the city helped ensure joint ownership and responsibility of the ECoC and a genuine local emphasis on 'making ECoC work'.

Because the city's ECoC Programme included less in the way of new cultural buildings and infrastructure the key longer term legacy of the programme was less obvious for some stakeholders to articulate. The main 'softer' legacies identified by stakeholders were threefold:

- a stronger international dimension to the cultural offer, with links to mainly European partners formed in 2015 generally staying in place beyond the ECoC year. 12% of ECoC projects were continuing to strengthen their links with international partners beyond 2015;
- a stronger set of skills and capacity held by cultural operators developed as a consequence of designing and delivering ECoC projects throughout 2015. 42% of ECoC projects reported that the technical skills linked to performance production, marketing, ticketing, lighting and social media were all being used beyond the year itself; and
- a stronger set of links and networks within the city among cultural operators reported during the year itself was again continuing beyond 2015. Again, these joint activities were still occurring due to the legacy of strong relationships built up over the ECoC year.

Conclusions

Relevance: the experience of 2015 reinforces the finding from previous evaluations that ECoC remains highly relevant to the EU Treaty, particularly Article 167, through contributing to the flowering of Member States' cultures, highlighting common cultural heritage as well as cultural diversity and increasing cultural co-operation between Member States and internationally. The selection process introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC ensured that the applications of both the eventual ECoC title-holders for 2015 set out objectives and approaches that were consistent with the legal basis for ECoC. The ECoC concept also continues to be of relevance to the objectives of local policymakers and stakeholders that wish to promote the culture-based development of their cities.

Efficiency: overall, the ECoC Action has been implemented efficiently at EU level. The selection process has enabled the selection of cities with the capacity, resources and vision to implement effective ECoC. Both cities have also benefited from the monitoring at EU level and from the informal support given by the monitoring panel and the European Commission. At the same time, the very modest funding provided by the EU can be said to have had a considerable leverage effect by stimulating the two cities (and their respective regions and countries) to invest considerable sums in their ECoC programmes and in associated infrastructure developments. Both cities also report that the Melina Mercouri Prize offers important symbolic value, as it represents an endorsement by the EU of their activities and offers opportunities to positive publicity. The impact of the Melina Prize could be enhanced by greater publicity at EU level.

Effectiveness: the ECoC Action in 2015 has proved effective against the objectives set for it at EU level, as well as the objectives set by the cities holding the title. The Action has achieved an impact that would not have arisen through the actions of Member States alone. In the absence of ECoC, both the 2015 title-holders would have been free to invest their own resources in implementing cultural programmes and developing their cultural infrastructure. However, their designation as ECoC has attracted additional resources, including from private sponsors, as well as greater media coverage, increased international tourist visits and enhanced local pride in the city. These benefits would have been unlikely to arise to the same extent in the absence of ECoC designation; in that sense, the ECoC Action has generated clear 'European added value'. At the same time, the extent of impact is hard to determine, given the limited baseline data submitted with the ECoC applications. The ECoC Action has also proved to be complementary to other EU policies and programmes. In particular, it has been reinforced by and added value to investments made the ERDF; the ECoC has stimulated cities to use ERDF for investments in cultural infrastructure and has given greater impetus to the completion of those investments in time for the title-year.

Sustainability: the timing of this evaluation makes it difficult to draw conclusions about sustainability. However, the research has identified some potential for sustainability of activities and impetus, particularly in Mons where there are concrete

plans for a legacy event. However, further research is recommended to identify the extent of sustainability in practice.

Recommendations for the European Commission

1. Given their success in 2015 and in previous years, the European Capitals of Culture Action should be continued in line with Decisions 1622/2006/EC and Decision No 445/2014/EU
2. In order to assist the evaluation of impacts:
 - the ECoC application form should be revised to require applicants to provide baseline data on the situation prevailing in the cities at the time of the application;
 - the format for the monitoring reports should be revised to require applicants to provide baseline data on the situation prevailing in the cities in the years preceding the title-year;
 - the ECoC application form should be revised to require applicants to state how they will gather and analyse “big data” relating to their cultural programmes; and
 - the guidance given to the cities regarding evaluation should encourage designated cities to state how they will gather and analyse “big data” relating to their cultural programmes.
3. The European Commission should consider inviting designated cities to sign an informal Memorandum of Understanding to cover the period from the formal designation to the completion of the title year, as a complement to the formal monitoring reports. Such a memorandum could set out the support that the Commission would provide (e.g. publicising the ECoC through its various communication channels) and actions that the cities would undertake (e.g. use of EU logo, publicising the ECoC as an EU Action, collaboration with the other designated ECoC, communication with the Commission, co-operating with the Commission’s evaluator).
4. The informal support provided by the monitoring panel during the development phase should be continued, including the visits to the designated cities.
5. The European Commission should undertake more extensive publicity related to the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize in collaboration with the title-holders. This could include a symbolic award ceremony to provide “photo opportunities”, press releases and news items on the ECoC pages of the Europa website.
6. The European Commission should undertake research into the long-term impacts of the ECoC, given that the annual evaluations have been unable to do this (being undertaken soon after the end of the title-year).

Recommendations for future ECoC

1. Small cities should not be deterred by having only a small budget.
2. Ensure national buy-in and involvement.
3. Ensure continuation of people and cultural structures.
4. Think carefully about new cultural buildings.
5. Be realistic around the attraction of foreign visitors.
6. Confirm and communicate key events as early possible and present the overall cultural programme several months before the title-year.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

This final report presents the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Action for 2015, which was undertaken by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES). The 2015 ECoC was hosted by Mons in Belgium and Pilsen in the Czech Republic. The evaluation investigated how these two cities developed their application and cultural programme, how they delivered their year, the benefits they gained and any legacy issues they experienced. The evaluation also puts forward conclusions, recommendations for the EU institutions and lessons for future ECoC title-holders and applicants to learn from. The report is comprised of an introduction setting out the aims of the evaluation and its method. The main parts of the report focus on the two 'city chapters' for Mons and Pilsen and it is then concluded with overall findings and recommendations.

1.2 The European Capital of Culture Action

1.2.1 Policy history and context

Having started in 1985, the ECoC Action is now in its 30th year. Fifty cities have had the opportunity to be a European Capital of Culture since 1985 when the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, put forward a European resolution to establish the Action.

The resolution identified Europe as a centre for artistic development, with exceptional cultural richness and diversity, with cities playing a vital role in society. In 1999, this intergovernmental scheme was transformed into a fully-fledged initiative of the European Community by a Decision of the Parliament and the Council. The aim was to create a more predictable, consistent and transparent rotational system for the designation of the title, using Article 151 of the Treaty (now Article 167) as its legal basis, which calls on the EU to "contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore". The 1999 Decision was amended in 2005, integrating the ten Member States that joined the EU in 2004. A further Decision was made in 2006, which introduced new processes for selection, co-financing and monitoring for ECoC for 2013-19.¹

Under the 2006 Decision, host countries are responsible for the procedure leading to the selection of one of their cities as "European Capital of Culture". This is done through an open competition within the Member State. Six years before the ECoC, the host Member State's relevant authorities must publish a call for applications (including a questionnaire to cities wishing to bid) and cities interested in applying for the title must submit an application. A panel of thirteen independent experts in the cultural

¹ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019

field (seven nominated by European institutions and six by the Member State concerned) meet approximately 5 years before the year of the ECoC to review and analyse the proposals. The proposals are assessed against the objectives and criteria of the ECoC Action as defined in the Decision and the cities with the best fitting proposals are short-listed (pre-selection). The short-listed cities are invited to submit more detailed applications. The panel meets again approximately nine months after the pre-selection meeting to assess the final proposals against the objectives and criteria of the ECoC Action: one city per host country is selected for the title (final selection). The recommendation of the panel is then endorsed by the relevant authorities of the Member State in question, which notifies the EU institutions. Acting on a recommendation from the Commission, the Council draws upon the opinion of the European Parliament and the panel's selection report, officially designating the European Capital of Culture.

In line with the 2006 Decision, once designated as ECoC and until the title-year, cities must adhere to a monitoring procedure directly managed by the Commission, although there is no written agreement between the Commission and the designated cities. The cities have to submit two monitoring reports. The submission of the reports is followed by formal monitoring meetings between the Commission, the cities and the panel of experts (respectively 24 months and 8 months in advance of the title year). The aim is to check progress, ensuring that cities are fulfilling their commitments in relation to their proposal and for the panel to provide guidance on implementation. Based on a recommendation of the panel after the final monitoring meeting, EU funding in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize is then awarded by the Commission to the cities. It is also possible to arrange additional informal meetings or *in situ* visits between members of the panel and representatives of the city.

In 2014, a new legal basis for the ECoC was introduced through a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.² This latest Decision leaves several key elements of the ECoC Action unchanged, such as the chronological order of entitlement, the two-stage selection process based on year-long cultural programmes created specifically for the event, and the fact that cities will remain title holders (though bids may continue to involve the surrounding region). Among the changes from 2020 are:

- removal of the need for confirmation at EU level, with ECoC title holders designated directly by the Member State concerned;
- partial opening of the action to candidate and potential candidate countries (with the European Commission responsible for official designation in these cases); and
- stricter and more specific selection criteria, including stronger emphasis on the long-term impact of the action and reinforcement of the European dimension.

² Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC

The long history of the ECoC Action means that there is a wealth of experience, which has been the focus of much research. An extensive study was produced on behalf of the European Commission by Palmer/Rae Associates in 2004 to cover the period 1995-2004.³ As the authors point out, this was not an evaluation but was designed to “document”, “make observations” and “offer a factual analysis”, although it also refers to the longer-term impacts of the 1985-94 cohort of title-holders and offers many useful insights. For example, the report found that the ECoC programme is a powerful tool for cultural development that operates on a scale that offers unprecedented opportunities for acting as a catalyst for city change. But it also found that the cultural dimension of the ECoC had been overshadowed by political ambitions and other non-cultural interests and raised questions about the sustainability of the impact of the ECoC.

Building on Palmer/Rae, annual evaluations of the ECoC have been produced on behalf of the European Commission since 2007. These have shown the potential of ECoC to stimulate cultural programmes that are more extensive, innovative, avant-garde, diverse and high-profile than would have been the cultural offering of each city in the absence of ECoC designation. They have also demonstrated the capacity of ECoC to highlight the European dimension of culture and to promote European cultural diversity, including through giving prominence to the diversity of cultures present with cities holding the title. The annual evaluations have also demonstrated that a successful ECoC can serve the long-term development of cities as creative hubs and cultural destinations, whilst also widening the participation of citizens in culture. At the same time, the evaluations have highlighted challenges faced by the ECoC: establishing a vision and garnering broad support for that vision; reducing the risk of political interference in the artistic direction of ECoC; putting in place effective management arrangements; securing the commitment of funders; and establishing legacy arrangements.

Since the annual evaluations have been produced in the months following the title-year, they have not been able to consider long-term impacts of the ECoC. Such impacts have been considered by a recent study commissioned by the European Parliament.⁴ This study found that the ECoC have proven capable of generating noticeable impacts in the host cities. These include:

- cultural vibrancy – strengthening networks, opening up possibilities for new collaborations, encouraging new work to continue and raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector;
- an image renaissance – enhancing local, national and international perceptions, with some cities repositioning themselves as cultural hubs;
- social impacts: improved local perceptions of the city and wider diversity in cultural audiences; and
- economic impacts – increased tourism in the medium-term or long-term, although the evidence for wider economic impact (e.g. job creation) is less robust.

³ Palmer/Rae Associates (2004), *European Cities and Capitals of Culture*

⁴ European Parliament (2013), *European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-term Effects*.

At the same time, the European Parliament study found that some ECoC have struggled to propose a clear vision that can secure broad local ownership, balance cultural, social and economic agendas, fully understand and implement the European dimension, ensure that all neighbourhoods or communities benefit and ensure sustainability.

To fully understand the ECoC Action, it is also necessary to consider the wider policy and academic debate around the role of culture and culture-based development in cities. Much of this debate focusses on two questions. First, the extent to which mobile capital and high-skilled labour are attracted to cities with strong cultural and creative industries and a vibrant cultural scene. Second, the extent to which public interventions can stimulate the creativity and innovation that is seen as essential to the economic success of a city in a globalised economy characterised by rapid technological advances. Indeed, one of the most influential commentators in this debate, Richard Florida has put forward a “creative capital” theory of city growth, which highlights the importance of cities attracting the “creative class”, including technology workers, artists and musicians, who can foster an open, dynamic, personal and professional urban environment, which in turn attracts more creative people, as well as businesses and capital.⁵ The validity of Florida’s research has been the subject of debate and criticism in academic and policy circles. But the general concepts and ideas promoted by Florida and others have provided the theoretical underpinnings for investments by policymakers in numerous cities across the world.

In line with this trend, the cities holding the ECoC title have put increasing emphasis on priorities such as the attraction of tourists, improvement of the city’s image (locally and externally) and the development of the local cultural and creative sector. This reflects a wider shift in cultural policy in general, which requires cultural expenditure to deliver “tangible, quantifiable returns on investment” instead of being deemed to “have its own intrinsic value and thus [being] an end in itself”.⁶ This policy shift is now reflected in EU policy, with the 2014 Decision including “supporting the long-term development of cities” as one of the general objectives of the ECoC.

However, there is not universal acclaim for this shift of emphasis. Some have questioned the effectiveness of ECoC to deliver the intended benefits. For example, LA Group & Interarts (2005) present evidence that the ECoC creates a boost in the number of visitors in the title-year, but within two or three years the number of visitors returns to the level before the title-year.⁷ In relation to Liverpool 2008, Connolly (2007) states that “while representing Liverpool as a creative city [via the ECoC] may help market the city and attract investment... the city is not moving to an employment base rooted in the ‘creative industries’ but one that will, in all likelihood, be based within the service sector”.⁸ Others have suggested that attempts to attract tourists and improve the external image of the city are not easily reconciled with an

⁵ Florida (2002), *Rise of the Creative Class*

⁶ Binns, L. (2005), *Capitalising on culture: an evaluation of culture-led urban regeneration policy*. Futures Academy, Dublin Institute of Technology.

⁷ LA Group & Interarts (2005), *City Tourism & Culture - The European Experience*. Report produced for the Research Group of the European Travel Commission and for the World Tourism Organization

⁸ Connolly, Mark 2007. *Capital and culture: An investigation into New Labour cultural policy and the European Capital of Culture 2008*. PhD Thesis, Cardiff University

authentic expression of the city's culture. For example, Krüger (2013) suggests that the Liverpool 2008 ECoC "tended toward a particular place brand that reflected an 'official culture', rather than to promote to the outside international world an organic culture that already existed within the city".⁹ At the same time, Turşie (2015) has highlighted the potential for ECoC to enable cities to overcome their inferiority complexes of coming from totalitarian regimes, or having young democracies and poor economic condition, by re-inventing their images and re-narrating their past in a [more positive) European context.¹⁰

Given the long history and the wider context of ECoC, it is clear that the current evaluation cannot consider the 2015 title-holders in isolation. Those cities are only the latest in a list of +50 cities to have hosted ECoC and thus draw on the experience of previous ECoC to a greater or lesser extent. They also represent just two of out the countless examples of cities that are attempting to reinvent or regenerate themselves through the development of culture. In evaluating the 2015 title-holders, we thus draw on the lessons from 30 years of the ECoC as a means of gaining perspective on 2015. We can also identify policy learning, lessons from experience and key success factors that can inform not only future ECoC but also wider efforts to stimulate culture-based development of cities.

1.2.2 Objectives of the ECoC Action

In evaluating the 2015 ECoC Action, it is useful to understand the overall objectives of the ECoC. More particularly, the hierarchy of objectives is based on the objectives as stated in the 2006 Decision but has been updated from previous evaluations as laid out in the table below to reflect the content of the new legal basis for ECoC post-2019. The general and strategic objectives are taken directly from Article 2 of the new legal basis, with the operational objectives flowing logically from these. They are also informed by the selection criteria detailed in Article 5 of the new 2014 Decision.

⁹ Krüger (2013), *Branding the City: Music Tourism and the European Capital of Culture Event*, in "The Globalization of Musics in Transit: Music Migration and Tourism", Routledge 2013.

¹⁰ Turşie (2015), *The unwanted past and urban regeneration of Communist heritage cities*. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*" 2015_2

Table 1.1 ECoC hierarchy of objectives

General objective			
Safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities			
Specific objectives (SO)			
SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation	SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture	SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its links with other sectors	SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture
Operational objectives			
<p>Stimulate a diverse range of cultural activities of high artistic quality</p> <p>Implement cultural activities promoting cultural diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding</p> <p>Implement cultural activities highlighting (shared) European cultures and themes</p> <p>Involve European artists, promote cooperation with different countries and transnational partnerships</p>	<p>Create new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events</p> <p>Involve local citizens, artists and cultural organisations in development and implementation</p> <p>Provide opportunities for volunteering and foster links with schools and other education providers</p>	<p>Improve cultural infrastructure</p> <p>Develop the skills, capacity or governance of the cultural sector</p> <p>Stimulate partnership and co-operation with other sectors</p> <p>Combine traditional art forms with new types of cultural expression</p>	<p>Attract the interest of a broad European and international public</p>

1.3 Evaluating the European Capital of Culture

Decision 1622/2006/EC established a legal requirement for the European Commission to ensure an external and independent evaluation of the results of the ECoC from the previous year, in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the performance and achievements of the Action. Although each city keeps in regular contact with the Commission, including through the provision of monitoring reports, the evaluation helps establish a more detailed understanding of the lifecycle of the ECoC. The analysis reviews the ECoC from its early inception through to its sustainability and legacy. In particular, the evaluation provides an opportunity to look back at the previous year and highlight lessons and recommendations based on the experiences of the two host cities.

The above table allows for the unique nature of the ECoC Action to be considered when evaluating the impact of the ECoC Action against the objectives. The Action is both the activities which the cities deliver as well as the methodology and systems used to run the activities. Therefore, the evaluation reviews the separate activities run by Mons and Pilsen as well as the two separate institutional arrangements through which they are delivered. Similarly, the process by which the effects of the ECoC are realised may be inseparable from those effects and is equally important.

The evaluation of the ECoC is set against criteria designed to capture the essence of what makes an effective ECoC (found in the table below). This is based on Article 5 of the 2014 Decision.

Table 1.2 Effectiveness / success criteria

Category	Criteria
1) Long-term strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Strategy for the cultural development of the city (b) Strengthened capacity of the cultural sector, including links with economic and social sectors in the city (c) Long-term cultural, social and economic impact (including urban development) on the city (d) Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the title on the city
2) European dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Scope and quality of activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding (b) Scope and quality of activities highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history and European integration (c) Scope and quality of activities featuring European artists, co-operation with operators or cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships (d) Strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public

Category	Criteria
3) Cultural and artistic content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Clear and coherent artistic vision for the cultural programme (b) Involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme (c) Range and diversity of activities and their overall artistic quality (d) Combination of local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions
4) Capacity to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cross-party political support (b) Viable infrastructure to host the title
5) Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Involvement of the local population and civil society in the application and implementation of the ECoC (b) New and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, marginalised and disadvantaged people, and minorities; accessibility of activities to persons with disabilities & to the elderly (c) Overall strategy for audience development, in particular the link with education and the participation of schools
6) Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Feasibility of budget (covering preparation, title year, legacy) (b) Governance structure and delivery body (c) Appointment procedure of general and artistic directors & their field of action (d) Comprehensive communication strategy (highlighting that the ECoC are an EU initiative) (e) Appropriateness of the skills of the delivery structure's staff.

The evaluation also applies a number of "core indicators" that correspond to the most important results and impacts for each ECoC, which draw on previous ECoC evaluations as well as on the work of the European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2009-2010) funded under the former EU Culture Programme (2007-13) to share good practices and produce recommendations for research and evaluation by cities hosting the title.¹¹ The core indicators allow a degree of comparison and aggregation of effects across the 2015 ECoC as well as with previous years.

¹¹ *European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2010), An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme*

Table 1.3 Core Result Indicators

Specific objective	Result indicators
SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of projects and events € value of ECoC cultural programmes No. of European cross-border co-operations within ECoC cultural programme Number and/or proportion of artists from abroad and from the host country featuring in the cultural programme
SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance or participation in ECoC events Attendance or participation by young, disadvantaged or “less culturally active” people Number of active volunteers
SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its connectivity with other sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € value of investment in cultural infrastructure, sites and facilities Sustained multi-sector partnership for cultural governance Strategy for long-term cultural development of the city Investment in, or number of collaborations between cultural operators and other sectors
SO4: Improve the international profile of cities through culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in tourist visits and overnight stays Volume and tone of media coverage (local, national, international, digital) Awareness of the ECoC amongst residents and recognition amongst wider audiences

Recommendations are offered for the Commission regarding the implementation of the ECoC Action at EU level. (More far-reaching recommendations regarding the design of the Action were offered in previous evaluations and were taken into account in the drafting of Decision 445/2014/EU). Recommendations are also offered for future title-holders based on the experience of 2015.

Further details of the evaluation framework and evaluation questions are found in the Terms of Reference for this study.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation of the 2015 ECoC partly followed the approach adopted in previous studies of the Action. The focus of the evaluation methodology has been on research at the city level and in particular the gathering of data and stakeholders' views from Mons and Pilsen. Key evaluation sources were as follows:

- EU-level literature: this included higher level EU policy and legislative briefings, papers, decisions and other documents relating to ECoC. This mainly focussed on reports of the selection panels and the original bidding guidance to understand how the two ECoC established themselves in the early days. Academic research was also consulted regarding the ECoC Action and the role of culture in the development of cities.
- ECoC-level literature from Mons and Pilsen: this included the original bids and applications, internal reports linked to the application processes and numerous pieces of literature collected on the cultural programme itself. Key monitoring and in particular evaluation reports were also collected and analysed.
- Quantitative data: where available, evidence linked to each ECoC was collected in relation to budgets and spend details, project numbers and types, participation levels and audience figures as well as other pieces of quantitative data to show and describe the work and benefits of the ECoC in each city.
- Interviews with managing teams: those responsible for the day-to-day design and delivery of the ECoC were interviewed in each city during visits in 2015 and in 2016. Almost all of the key individuals within the delivery agencies were interviewed including those linked to strategic development, marketing and communication, project implementation and financial management.
- Interviews with key stakeholders: mainly face-to-face interviews were undertaken with stakeholders both directly and indirectly involved in either the planning or delivery of the ECoC along with those more widely linked to the cultural, social, economic or political agenda of the host cities. Stakeholders included those working in cultural organisations, city/regional/national administrations, tourism and visitor agencies, media organisations as well as voluntary and community organisations. Managers of individual projects and activities supported through the ECoC Action that made up the cultural programme of each city were also interviewed.
- Survey of ECoC projects: a specific survey of projects was undertaken by the evaluators in Mons whilst the results of a survey undertaken by the Pilsen2015 Foundation (the body responsible for the ECoC) was used to gain further insight of project managers' views on a variety of different issues linked to the design, delivery, benefits and legacy of the ECoC.

1.4.1 Key research tasks

In summary, the main research tasks were as follows:

- Inception and background research including the refinement of the evaluation framework and methodology which was set out in the original tender.
- Desk research on both host cities and their ECoC programmes was undertaken to develop a good understanding of their cultural programme, their application process as well as secondary evidence they had on issues connected to design, delivery, impact, benefits and legacy.
- Online survey (in English and French) of projects in Mons to gain their views on a variety of different aspects of both their project and the overall ECoC programme. Analysis was undertaken from the existing project survey undertaken in Pilsen.
- Fieldwork in host cities was undertaken at two stages. A first visit was undertaken in late 2015 to familiarise ourselves with the ECoC programmes and identify the key stakeholders and organisations that needed to be consulted. A second visit was undertaken in January 2016 in Mons and April-May 2016 in Pilsen to undertake face-to-face interviews with a variety of organisations directly and indirectly involved in the ECoC and the wider policy agenda of the cities.
- Analysis and final reporting including a comprehensive review of all secondary evidence and data linked to both cities was undertaken.

1.4.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the method and evidence base

This evaluation report provides a detailed understanding of the 2015 ECoC Action and within this a good assessment of the work and progress of Mons and Pilsen. There are a number of issues to consider when assessing the strengths of the evidence base used for this study:

- There are restraints to the evaluation linked to resources - both in terms of the time and budget available to undertake the work. Ideally a study which provides a 'before' (baseline) and after picture would allow the evaluation to better understand the benefits and impact of the ECoC Action. However, the timescales of the evaluation only allow an ex-post evaluation to take place and the budget allocated to the work means that only an after picture has been studied.
- Although both cities have undertaken some form of evaluation work themselves, not all of the results of those studies were made available to this evaluation. This evaluation of the ECoC Action has used as much of this secondary information as possible but more data and in particular quantitative information would have strengthened the evidence base. For example, some of the previous evaluations of the ECoC Action have received survey data from the cities regarding the "Awareness of the ECoC amongst residents and recognition amongst wider audiences" but such data was not made available to the current evaluation; in respect of that particular issue, we therefore rely instead on other sources of evidence, such as stakeholder opinions.

- Linked to the above issue is a lack of hard evidence on the benefits and impact of the ECoC on the host cities. Although this evaluation uses the data that was available, it is inevitably dependent on the views and opinions of stakeholders as well as empirical evidence. Having said this, the impact of an Action such as ECoC will often only manifest itself fully beyond the ECoC year itself and any evaluation of this nature undertaken close to the end of the year itself is only likely to identify emerging higher level benefits rather than harder on the ground impacts.

Despite the above issues for consideration, this final report addresses all of the evaluation questions and the findings and conclusions are based on a firm evidence base that uses primary and secondary information as well as quantitative and qualitative data.

2.0 Mons

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The City

Mons dates from at least the Roman period, when a castrum was built as a military defensive position. Being built on a mountain top, the castrum gave the city its name, Montes, which later became its current name of Mons. The city then grew further, following the founding of an abbey by St Waltrude in about 650 AD. During the Middle Ages, Mons flourished as a centre for trade and commerce and became the capital of the County of Hainaut. In the 19th century, the city's fortifications were removed and Mons became an important centre for coal mining and heavy industry. However, Mons suffered considerable damage in both the First World War (during the Battle of Mons in 1914) and the Second World War (due to aerial bombing). The city then suffered from severe industrial decline during the post-war period.

Today, Mons is a city of about 93,000 and the capital of the Hainaut province in Belgium, situated close to the French border. Since 1967, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has hosted its Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) just outside Mons. This has created employment opportunities for local people and brought a significant number of nationals of other NATO member countries to live and work in the area. Another important source of employment has been the arrival of hi-tech companies, including Google, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Cisco. Mons is now also a centre for higher education, being host to the Conservatoire royal de Mons, the Facultés universitaires catholiques de Mons, the Université de Mons, the Institut Reine Astrid Mons and TechnocITÉ, a competence centre in ICT and digital media.

Mons is at the eastern end of an area of Walloon known as the Borinage. The Borinage comprises around thirty municipalities that were heavily reliant on coal mining from the 18th century until the 1960s. Since the closure of the last mine, the Borinage has suffered industrial decline and associated problems of high unemployment. Although Mons is within the Borinage, it has traditionally had a different cultural and sociological identity from the other parts of the Borinage, in part because it is a university town.

2.1.2 The Cultural Sector

Mons's history and its status as the provincial capital have given the city a rich cultural offering. A number of Mons's historic buildings survived the damage sustained during the Second World War, notably the collegiate Church of St. Waudru (known for its stained-glass windows and reliquaries), the 15th century Town hall (with its Baroque-style belfry, recognised in 1999 by UNESCO as a world heritage site) and the Hotel de Ville overlooking the main square.



Mons and its surrounding area are also home to several museums and other cultural institutions. These include a fine arts museum - the Beaux Arts de Mons (BAM), which was built in 1913 and renovated in 2013, creating 2,000m² of exhibition space – and the Mundaneum, an initiative to create one universal body of documentation which dates from 1910 and which moved to new premises in 1998. These premises were then renovated in time for 2015 to incorporate new reception area, annex and interior courtyard, as well as a new conservation area underground of 500m². The Mundaneum is listed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register and was awarded the EU's European Heritage Label.

Outside the city, there are other significant institutions, including the Maison du Marais, which is dedicated to Vincent Van Gogh who lived there briefly (around 1878-80), and the Musée des Arts Contemporains de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and Le Pass (Parc d'aventures scientifiques). Within the Borinage, is the Grand Hornu: a former coal mining complex and company town (cité ouvrière) in Hornu (Boussu), which was built between 1810 and 1830 and now houses the Museum of Contemporary Arts (MAC's). The area surrounding Mons also features many important battlefield sites that are of interest to historians, war veterans and tourists.

Mons is home to several cultural festivals. One of the oldest and best-known is the "Doudou" or "Ducasse", a one-week festival dating from the 14th century and which takes place every year on Trinity. One of the highlights of the Ducasse is the "Lumeçon", a re-enactment of the fight between St George and the dragon, which is accompanied by the rhythmic "Doudou" music. The Doudou is recognised by UNESCO as a "Masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity". For the last 20 years, the Via International Festival has taken place in the Mons area, bringing together new technologies with various different forms of performing arts.

Recent years have seen a greater focus on the development of contemporary arts. The key driver in that respect has been the creation of Le manège.mons in 2002, which brought together the Centre Dramatique Hennuyer, Mons Musique (which became Musiques Nouvelles) and Centre Culturel de la région de Mons. The objective of Le manège.mons is to democratise culture and make it accessible to the widest audience possible, as well as to offer a high quality cultural programme. This cultural programme is offered at six key sites in the city: Théâtre Royal (traditional theatre, variety and classical music), Théâtre le Manège (contemporary, theatre, music and dance), Carré des Arts (summer festival), Maison Folie (new forms of artistic participation, special events and residences), the Auditorium Abel Dubois (youth) and the Médiathèque (audio-visual). Le manège.mons features cross-border co-operation with its French counterpart in the context of Le Manège Mons Maubeuge.¹²

¹² www.lemanege.com

2.2 Development of the ECoC

2.2.1 Application

The idea for Mons to host the European Capital of Culture emerged from the wider strategy of the municipality to regenerate the city and its surrounding area, which had suffered from the decline of coal mining in the post-war period. From the early 2000s, these efforts focussed on three fields: culture, tourism and new technologies. In the cultural field, much of the effort was linked to Le manège.mons (as described above), which featured the development of a new cultural venue and which stimulated the concept of a cultural district in the city. These efforts complemented the development of tourism and efforts to attract new technology companies to the area; young montois and university students became less likely to leave Mons and technology entrepreneurs and professionals were attracted to live in the city.

In this context, a decision was taken in 2004 by the Mayor of Mons, Elio di Rupo, to initiate preparations for a bid for Mons to be European Capital of Culture 2015 (it had been known that Belgium would host the 2015 ECoC since the adoption of the 1999 Decision of the Parliament and of the Council). As well as fitting with the wider strategy for the development of culture in the city, this decision also reflected the fact that Mons could expect to have a good chance of being successful; it was likely that the number of potential applicants would be relatively few, since three Belgian cities had already hosted the title: Antwerp (1993), Brussels (2000) and Bruges (2002). To take the proposal forward, the Mayor appointed Yves Vasseur (directeur general of Le manège.mons) as project leader in March 2004.

The Mayor's announcement (made in January 2005) of the decision to bid for the ECoC title was made in the context of a wider development of the town ("projet de ville"), based on research, consultation of experts, statistical analysis and an exchange of ideas. The town's communal council ("Conseil Communal") then adopted this proposal on 28 February 2005 and later adopted five "axes", of which one related to culture (including the ECoC application). Further consultations took the form of "café-debates" in November and December 2005. The development of the application was further supported by an informal working group, which met monthly from January 2007, led by Yves Vasseur and including cultural representatives of the Ville de Mons and representatives of the Ministry of Culture of the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles (the public authority for Belgium's French-speaking community). Further support was provided by an expert group, which included the directors of local cultural institutions, as well as Didier Fusillier the director of the Lille 2004 ECoC and its legacy body, Lille 3000. A Mons2015 unit, led by Yves Vasseur and his deputy Marie Noble, was formed in September 2007, which then became a separate foundation - the Fondation Mons2015 - in February 2008. This foundation took forward the development of the application, including launching a website (www.mons2015.eu) in September 2008, operating an awareness-raising campaign and preparing the initial and full applications.

Mons's application stated its overall aim as being to put itself on the European map as a symbol of economic restructuring based on culture and of successful alliance between the economic and cultural spheres, as a way of meeting the challenges of the 21st century. In line with that aim, the overall theme of the application was "where technology meets culture". The overall aim of Mons2015 was to be achieved through the pursuit of the following objectives:

- Provide "harmonious" support for the economic conversion of the town and the region;
- Be a motor for the refocussing of tourism in Mons and the cross-border area of Hainaut;
- Provide an example of sustainable development;
- Involve citizens in a process of cultural democracy;
- Reinforce Mons's position in a series of European networks of medium-sized cities; and
- Initiate a policy of east-west European communication and co-operation, starting from Mons.

In terms of territorial focus, the application foresaw four concentric circles with Mons at the centre:

- Mons/Borinage: this area of 200,000 inhabitants included Mons itself, the nineteen peripheral communes and the rest of the Borinage;
- Mons/Hainaut: this territory included the current Province of Hainaut, as well as those parts of modern-day France that were within the historical County of Hainaut (Comté de Hainaut). This area includes around 1.3m inhabitants. The application highlighted the increase in cross-border cultural activity, some of it supported by the EU's Interreg programme, which included the Le manège.mons Maubeuge initiative.
- Adjoining partner towns within the French Community (mostly within the Wallonia and Brussels regions), Flemish Community (mostly within Flanders and Brussels regions) and the Nord département within France.
- Region Nord/Pas de Calais, Netherlands, Ruhr (Germany) and Luxembourg: this circle would particularly focus on connections with those cities that had recently held the ECoC title, i.e. Lille (2004), Luxembourg (2007) and Essen for the Ruhr (2010).

During the application phase, Mons2015 explored links with the three Czech cities that had been invited to submit full applications. In the case of Hradec Králové, the Mons2015 emphasised the features shared by the two cities, notably their origins as walled, fortress cities. The theme of bells was chosen as the symbol of this partnership. Co-operation went further with Ostrava and emphasised the cities' shared heritage of coal-mining and the emergence of digital technologies. A meeting was held between the two bidding teams in April 2009, followed by a visit of the Mons team to

Ostrava in September that year. The teams agreed to organise exchanges of orchestras to their respective musical festivals and exchanges of film professionals to their respective film festivals in the years following the designation. Two concrete projects for 2015 were also proposed, one related to the theatre and the other related to creating a memory of their industrial heritage as coal-producing areas. Most co-operation in the application phase took place with Pilsen and included visits by the Mons team to Pilsen as early as October 2008 and a return visit by the Pilsen team in November 2009. A range of collaborations was then proposed in the application, including exchanges of artists and of exhibitions.

2.2.2 Selection

In line with the chronological order of entitlement set out in Decision 1622/2006/CE, Belgium was entitled to host a European Capital of Culture for 2015. The Belgian Government entrusted the organisation of the selection process to the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium. The Communities then organised a call for proposals, which was published in the *Moniteur Belge* on 10 September 2008. Unlike calls in some other countries, this call allowed only six months for the submission of applications instead of the ten months allowed under the Decision. Mons was the only city to submit an application.

Previous research has found that the application process in Belgium received some criticism from European panel members for its failure to generate more than one application.¹³ Three of the largest cities in Belgium had already held the title (as noted above). However, the same research found that this outcome did not merely reflect a lack of interest on the part of other cities; a group of citizens from Liège felt frustrated by the decision of their city not to apply and therefore staged a protest outside the pre-selection meeting.

At the pre-selection meeting of 2 June 2009, the panel recommended that Mons be allowed to proceed to the final selection stage. The final selection meeting took place on 9 February 2010, with a visit to Mons by a delegation of the panel the day before. At this meeting, the panel found that Mons had submitted a high-quality bid that corresponded well to the objectives and selection criteria set at European level. Moreover, Mons had taken into account the recommendations made by the panel at the pre-selection stage. In particular, the panel highlighted the “hunger” to stage the event, the high quality cultural and artistic concept, the professional and motivated team, strong political commitment and solid governmental financial support.

The panel also made a number of recommendations to be addressed during the development phase:

- More development in the field of multimedia;
- Maintaining the dimension of culture and democracy in schools;
- Developing the links with the local SHAPE community;

¹³ *Ecorys (2011), Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Capitals of Culture 2010-16.*

- Emphasising the multicultural aspect, participation of disadvantaged groups and environmental impact;
- Transparency of calls for artists and visibility of artistic dimensions;
- Maintaining strong political and financial commitment;
- Spending more budget in the early years of the preparatory phase;
- Guaranteeing the autonomy of artistic choices;
- Further developing the European dimension, i.e. beyond networking;
- Highlighting European cultural diversity in more depth;
- Developing contacts with other EU countries and establishing lasting partnerships; and
- Maintaining and continuing the strong involvement of the inhabitants of Mons.

2.2.3 Development of Mons2015

Once the title had been awarded, an early priority was to establish the governance and management arrangements. The Fondation Mons 2015 was entrusted with the task of developing and implementing the cultural programme and the associated communications activities. This period also featured extensive consultation with stakeholders, cultural operators and citizens to build support for the ECoC and to gather ideas. More than one thousand consultation meetings of varying sizes were held in different locations and cultural bodies were invited to submit project ideas. A key objective of the consultation was to bring together the various cultural bodies in the area, which did not have a strong tradition of close collaboration with each other.

At the monitoring and advisory meeting in November 2012, the panel complimented Mons on the efficient work of the team and its achievements since being selected, including the announcement of several flagship projects. The panel was encouraged that artistic independence was being respected, the city remained closely involved and citizens were kept informed. At the same time, the panel raised concerns about the (insufficient) involvement of local artists and whether the motto of “where culture meets technology” remained at the heart of the artistic programme. Recommendations included ensuring that a digitally-oriented programme would be streamed to citizens, embedding the ECoC in the long-term strategy of the city and (concerning the European dimension) going beyond importing other European arts and networking.

In the period following the panel meeting, some 535 project applications were received by the Fondation Mons2015. Of these, 22 were selected by an independent jury for inclusion in the cultural programme and to receive funding of up to 50%. Given the small proportion of projects selected, the Foundation invited all unsuccessful applicants to meet on a one-one basis; over the next three months, the Foundation met with around 300 in an effort to encourage them to remain involved with and supportive of the ECoC and its cultural programme.

At its second meeting in April 2014, the panel noted the stability of the governance and management structures, the strengthening of the senior management team and the reliability of financial commitments. It recommended a prudent approach to setting targets for increased tourism, publishing a summary booklet for visitors, keeping the doors open to last-minute projects and carrying out opinion polls in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The panel noted its appreciation for the theme of “where culture meet technology”, which had been consistent from the pre-selection. Overall, the panel was confident that Mons2015 had the potential to be a successful ECoC in a relatively small city. For that reason, the panel recommended that the Melina Mercouri Prize be awarded.

The development phase also featured considerable public and private investment in the infrastructure and cultural facilities of Mons. As with all ECoC, it is impossible to specify how many of these investments would have taken place in the absence of the ECoC title. As already noted above, there was a wider strategy for the development of culture and tourism in Mons from the early 2000s, which foresaw investments in physical infrastructure and facilities. However, as already noted above, a potential bid was discussed as early as 2002 and the decision to bid was made in 2004 in the knowledge that Mons would have a good chance of winning. In that context, it is clear that the many investments that were initiated from 2007 onwards were clearly intended to support the ECoC application and, in the event of a successful application, the title-year. At the same time, it is also the case that many decisions to invest had to be made before the award of the title (and thus could not be dependent on the award of the title), if they were to be completed by 2015 given the long timescales generally associated with physical investments.

The table below presents the main public investments in infrastructure and cultural facilities relating to Mons2015 and that were listed in the cultural and tourist strategy of the Ville de Mons. These amount to more than €143m and include several of the venues for cultural events during 2015. Those venues include six venues that opened or re-opened for the first time in 2015:

- Arsonic: a new music venue;
- l'Artothèque: the main centre for archiving, researching, restoring and studying the heritage of Mons;
- Beffroi de Mons: re-opening of the belfry to the public;
- Mons Memorial Museum: museum of military history;
- Musée du Doudou: dedicated to the traditional Ducasse festival and to Saint George and the Dragon; and
- SILEX'S interpretive centre at the Neolithic flint mines of Spiennes.

Table 2.1 Investments in the cultural infrastructure of Mons

Investment project	€	Main funding sources
Headquarters of the Foundation Mons2015	4 470 730	FWB
Maison du Design	6 996 936	ERDF
Expositions de prestige	544 985	ERDF
Façades of centre-ville and Grand-Place	4 691 261	ERDF
Tourist and Cultural Information Office ("VisitMons")	4 342 824	ERDF
SILEX'S Archaeological Museum	3 106 185	ERDF
Musée du Doudou	4 084 235	ERDF
Saint Nicholas church	10 889 675	ERDF
Mons International Congress Xperience (MICX)	31 993 415	ERDF
Regeneration of the railway station quarter	8 080 493	ERDF
Artothèque	10 363 216	ERDF
Les Beaux-Arts Mons (BAM)	16 879 673	ERDF
Belfry park	851 080	ERDF
Collégiale Sainte-Waudru	801 569	ERDF
Arsonic	6 250 000	ERDF, FWB, SPW
Mundaneum	3 000 000	FWB
Maison Losseau	6 280 000	PH, FWB
Mons Memorial Museum	12 136 105	RW
Belfry	7 766 513	RW
Total	143,528,895	-

Key: ERDF: European Regional Development Fund; FWB: Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles; PH: Province de Hainaut; RW: Région wallone.

2.3 Cultural programme

2.3.1 Overview

As anticipated in the application, the theme of “where technology meets culture” remained integral to the cultural programme of Mons2015. According to the Mons2015 website: “The goal is not technology for its own sake. The goal is to break the digital barriers between different generations and social classes. We want to create a bond between them, boost empowerment and invent new artistic and economic models”. To that end, various pilot projects were implemented to change the understanding and use of new technologies, such as MEDIA DJ, Mons Street ReView and Café Europa.

Other important themes included:

- "Home and away": a space for "all possibilities", a series of events celebrating the 10th anniversary of La Maison Folie (an old school building serving as a cultural venue), created in the framework of Lille 2004;
- "Le Grand Huit" ("The Big Eight"), a series of eight weeks of festivities in eight territories in the Greater Mons region, each with its own theme (see the case study below);
- "The Grand Ouest" ("The Big West"), which allowed citizens and associations in the municipalities of the Greater Mons area to develop their own projects on the theme of territory, memory and identity and which took place during a week-long series of festivities (see the case study below);
- "Artistic Partners", unique adventures produced by six prominent artistic figures;
- "Atmosphere places", which used a diversity of locations and buildings to host artistic events; and
- "Mons2015 on tour", which involved events and collaborations with partner cities in Belgium and the north of France.

The cultural programme was divided into four seasons:

- Season 1: "l'Eblouissement" ("Dazzle"), which aimed to bring light and warmth to the winter months and start the ECoC on a high note. As well as the opening ceremony, this season featured "Art en ville": a series of public art installations aimed at creating a sense of the unexpected within the city and which remained in place throughout the year. One installation was "the Passenger", a wooden installation above a busy shopping street in the city centre, which was created by the Flemish conceptual artist Arne Quinze. Other highlights included the "Van Gogh au Borinage" exhibition featuring around 70 works at the BAM and which focussed on the period 1878-80 when the artist resided in the Borinage area in Hainaut. This season also featured the launch of "Le Café Europa", a temporary café and meeting place connected to ten other European cities via a bank of television screens and which hosted a diversity of events, including artistic residences, debates and exhibitions (see the case study below).
- Season 2: "The Metamorphosis", which emphasised both the arrival of spring and the changes taking place in Mons (new infrastructure developments, development of the cultural life of the city, possibilities offered by new technology, etc.). To celebrate the opening of five new museums and a concert hall, a "discovery weekend" was held in April with special events and exhibitions at the new venues: Art Library, Mons Memorial Museum, Doudou Museum, Silex's, and the Arsonic Concert Hall (a converted fire station). The Baroque Belfry was illuminated at night and re-opened in June after 32 years for a new tour featuring objects from the City of Mons collections.

- Season 3: “#Escale”, which encouraged visiting or staying in Mons during the holiday period. This season particularly featured open air events, festivals and urban art installations. For example, a maze of sunflowers in the Grand Place highlighted the connection of Van Gogh to Mons. “Fervent China” featured 25 sculptures in the premises of the former slaughterhouse. There was also a strong emphasis on events for families and children. This included a series of open-air events in the “Hanging Garden”, in the grounds of the old military bakery.
- Season 4: “Renaissance”, which emphasised the rebirth of Mons after the decline of key industries. As part of this, there was a focus both on the historical characters of the “golden age” of Mons and on the future development of the city and its cultural life – “plunge into Mons’s glorious past to open the way to its future: from Renaissance to Renaissance”. To that end, there were exhibitions related to St George and to the poet Verlaine.

The highlights by artistic form, as reported in the Foundation’s activity report 2015, were as follows.

The ambition of the **performing arts** programme was to do something out of the ordinary and to take theatre “out of its walls”. In total, 33 new works were performed during 2015. For 13 of these, the Foundation acted as executive producer, whilst for the other 20, that role was performed by other bodies. The works were created by a mix of local, regional, national and international artists, of which some were emerging whilst others were of high renown. A highlight of the programme was the 16th edition of the “Festival Au Carré” (1.7.2015 to 9.7.2015) at Le Manège. The performing arts programme also included a new festival, “Le Festin” (1.9.2015 to 6.9.2015). There was also a transnational dimension through the continued collaborations through the Manège de Maubeuge (France), collaboration with Pilsen in the UBUs project (see section 2.3.2 below) and with international artists. For example, the production of “Cold Blood” (8.12.15 to 15.12.15) featured collaboration with artists from France, Switzerland and Canada.

The **exhibitions** programme was co-ordinated by the city’s “museum cluster” (“Pôle muséal de la Ville de Mons”) in partnership with the Foundation. It featured 20 main exhibitions at nine different venues. As well as using five established venues (BAM, Abattoirs, Salle Saint-Georges, Magasin de Papier et salle d’exposition du Mons Memorial Museum), the programme also made use of new venues, which created challenges related to the conversion of premises. Exhibitions also took place outside of Mons, most notably at the Grand-Hornu MAC’s (most notably “Man, Dragon and Death; the Glory of Saint George”) and at the Musée royal de Mariemont (“L’Ombilic du rêve Félicien Rops, Max Klinger, Alfred Kubin et Armand Simon”).

The programme of **festivals, installations and events in public spaces** featured three key elements: i) large, open-air events, including the opening ceremony (which took place at 22 different sites across the city) and the closing ceremony; ii) performances taking place in public spaces, including theatrical, music and circus performances; iii) new artistic installations in the city centre.

The **gastronomy** programme featured activities focussed on the cuisine of Mons and elsewhere. This included "Le Dimanche Toqué" one of the first events organised by Mons2015 and presenting the best in local and regional cuisine, which first took place in 2010 and was repeated each year in the grounds of the Belfry of Mons up to and including 2015. In 2015, some 6,000 meals were served in just 16 hours. A gastronomic guide to Mons was published in 2011 and updated in subsequent years. The programme also featured the creation of new or temporary restaurant venues in the city, including at the Manège theatre ("Le M") and at La Maison Folie ("Le Bistrot Folie").

The **youth** programme was entitled "Mon(s) idéal" and aimed to involve young people as active participants in culture, not only as spectators. A key part of the programme was "J'aurai 20 ans en 2015" ("I'll be 20 in 2015") and involved young people aged 15 years in 2010. It included an international dimension, with the artist Wajdi Mouawad working with 50 young people from Nantes, Namur, Montréal and Réunion, as well as from Mons during that period. This involved travelling to different destinations during that five-year period to undertake artistic activities and culminated in two new works: a book entitled "En route avec Wajdi" ("On the road with Wajdi") and an exhibition "Adolescence, la fabrique des héros" ("Adolescence, the making of heroes"). The youth programme was also linked to other parts of the cultural programme, including the



Café Europa venue, the Grand Huit project, and the Festival au Carré. In order to be distinctive, "Mon(s) idéal" had a visual identity and a communication strategy that were distinct and separate from those of the main cultural programme.

The **literature** programme aimed to show the literature of Mons to its citizens and to visitors, as well as to readers and authors across Europe. A key aim was to create a place specifically dedicated to literature, which was fulfilled through "la Guinguette littéraire", a literary garden within the grounds of la Maison Losseau featuring 42 events over five months including readings, concerts, as well as a bookshop and "literary bar". Another key project was "La Phrase", which placed a single line of poetry, composed of 250,000 characters, on a 10km trail through the city centre covering hundreds of properties, as well as walls and pavements. The literary programme featured several international literary figures, including the montois Carl Norac, who wrote an album, "Noirs Quarts d'heure" based on the local tradition of miners reading to the children for quarter of an hour in the dark. Short stories from the album were read at 50 events held at secret locations during the title-year.

The **fashion and design** programme recognised the limited tradition and prominence of the fashion industry in Mons. It therefore sought to bring together the various operators in this field based in Mons and the Borinage to strengthen links between them and enhance their international visibility. The intention was to “sprinkle” fashion throughout various different projects within the cultural programme and thus bring it to a wider audience. Regarding design, the programme emphasised the long tradition of Mons and the Borinage in making ceramic and metal products. The programme was led by the Foundation with support from Jean-Paul Lespagnard, a noted Belgian fashion designer. Activities included a presentation of operators from Mons at the Biennale Intérieur à Kortrijk (Belgium) in October 2014, production of 20,000 ponchos (of which 300 customised by residents of Mons) for audiences to wear during the opening ceremony, and the exhibition of local works “Lumeçon Inspiration”, hosted at the Maison du Tourisme in Mons. During the title-year, two other new venues also opened: Maison du Design in Mons, which hosts and supports design enterprises and exhibits their works; the Centre Keramis in La Louvière, dedicated to the creation, preservation, exhibition and study of ceramics.

The **music** programme aimed to showcase and reinterpret the music and musical heritage of Mons and bring it to new audiences. There was an emphasis on the Renaissance period and, in particular, the life and work of the 16th century composer, Roland Lassus, the Franco-Flemish composer who was born in Mons. The Mons2015 team established contact with Lassus experts and commissioned universities in Belgium and other countries to undertake research into music in Hainaut during the renaissance period. In each of the five years leading up to 2015, an album of music by Roland Lassus was recorded and released. The culmination was the week of events focussed on Lassus, the highlight of which was “La Grande Clameur”, a performance of a new work in the style of Lassus composed by the director of the Mons2015 music programme, Jean-Paul Dessy. La Grande Clameur created a choir of 500 local residents to perform this new work on the steps of Sainte-Waudru church for an audience of 5,000, which was then viewed thousands of times on YouTube. Other events involved local children as performers. Most notably, “El Sistemons” worked with school teachers and 150 children over a two-year period, culminating in concerts at the Théâtre Royal (24-25.4.2015) for an audience of 1,800. Another project featured 40 children as creators and performers in a collaboration between the Brussels choral group “Shanti! Shanti!” and Jeunesses Musicales de Mons-Borinage. The programme also included the performance of newly-composed works performed by ensembles from other ECoC title-holders (Pilsen2015, Wrocław2016, Donostia-San Sebastián2016, Aarhus2017), including in the Tactus project, although audiences were lower than expected.



The **digital** programme was at the heart of the cultural programme and one of the main ways by which the slogan of “Where technology meets culture...” was expressed by Mons2015. The ambition was to find new ways to use technology, not for its own sake, but to reduce the social and digital divide, to empower citizens, create new forms of artistic expression and new economic models and bring people together. Activity was focussed on the new venue, Café Europa (described as a case study below). Another key project was Mons Street Review, which involved citizens in creating an artistic alternative to Google Street View for 10km of streets in the centre of Mons. In respect of “big data”, the programme also included hosting the Third Annual Knowscape Conference of the TD1210 COST action KnowEscape at the Mundaneum on 7-9 October 2015, which aimed to trigger interactions between designers, social scientists and applied mathematicians interested in modelling of knowledge dynamics.¹⁴ Another big data event was an exhibition “Mapping Knowledge. Understanding the World through Data”, which took place from June 2015 to May 2016. The exhibition marked the reopening of the Mundaneum and focussed on the history of data use in arts, science, design and information architecture, culminating in the internet, the digital society and big data.

Café Europa



The concept of Café Europa emerged from the wider strategy for the development of Mons through the attraction of digital industries and through support for culture. It sought to bring together digital technology, culture and education and thus change people’s understanding and use of new technologies – and to do so in a European context. Café Europa was thus both a cultural

collaboration and a promotional tool. It was implemented by the Foundation in collaboration with local education providers, cultural operators, enterprises and 15 European partners in different cities (including Dublin, Kaliningrad, Pilsen, Riga, Rome, San Sebastián and Sarajevo). A pilot project in 2014 allowed the Foundation to test ideas, develop the technological equipment and establish the working arrangements with the European partners. The project was then fully launched in March 2015.

At the heart of the project was a new café of 70m² developed within a converted shipping container and located in the city centre. As well as operating as a café, Café Europa served as a venue for cultural, educational and social events on a daily basis, including for children, young people and families. Events included artistic residences, performances, exhibitions, debates and gastronomic happenings. A bank of television

¹⁴ <http://knowscape.org/third-annual-knowscape-conference/>

Café Europa

screens on one wall (the “Europa wall”) allowed an audio-visual connection to the twelve partner cities, thus creating a virtual shared space, with joint events taking place simultaneously in the other cities. Café Europa also linked to external events related to digital technology such as “Big Data Week 2015”, an annual event whereby about 40 cities across the world hold local events, networking functions, data visualisation demonstrations, debates, discussions and hackathons, which are then connected via online platforms. Events in Mons were held between 20-24 April as part of “Big Data Week 2015” and also involved the City of Mons, the Mundaneum, the University of Mons, Brussels Data Science community, TechnocITé, Data Motive Cronos, Google, Futurocité and IBM.¹⁵

Café Europa featured more than 100 projects, of which 48 were initiated by residents of Mons themselves, including several within the youth programme of Mons2015. It also received around 1,500 visitors each month and 15,000 in total during the title year. Crucial to the concept of Café Europa was the emphasis on providing a stimulating and dynamic experience for the visitor: whether arriving for a scheduled event or merely making use of the café, visitors would be welcomed and served, but also encouraged to engage with the artistic concepts, make use of the technology and connect with the European partners via the audio-visual equipment. In that sense, Café Europa captured the essence of what was intended for Mons2015 and embodied the overall slogan of “where technology meets culture” in a very tangible way. Moreover, it leaves a legacy in terms of some of the initiatives and concepts that will be carried forward by Creative Valley (the hub for Hainaut’s cultural and creative sectors, led by a partnership of public and private bodies), whilst Le Manège will continue some of the specific activities initiated by Café Europa. The intention is that EU funding, e.g. from Creative Europe, might co-finance some of the continuation activities.

2.3.2 European dimension

The cultural programme of Mons2015 sought to articulate a “narrative” that was both local and European. As noted in the application, Mons has, in the course of history been ruled by Burgundy, Spain, Austria, France and the Netherlands before becoming part of Belgium. Moreover, the city’s twentieth-century history also illustrates some of the major themes of Europe’s history in that century, including the two world wars, immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East, industrial decline and urban renaissance based on culture.

Mons’s cultural programme thus sought to express and explore themes based on this cultural history. It also sought to express a contemporary and forward-looking European identity: one which was “cosmopolitan” and thus “a mix of several identities”, “generating the feeling of being a citizen of Europe rather than of any nation”. In that context, Mons2015 aspired to present a cultural programme that both reflected that city’s own culture and history and expressed the diversity of European cultures. The programme was to emphasise this diversity in different ways.

¹⁵ <http://www.mons2015.eu/nl/big-data-week>

First, **in a classical sense**; the cultural programme particularly featured certain themes and personalities with a connection to Mons but with a European resonance. A highlight here was the “Man, Dragon and Death; the Glory of Saint George” exhibition at the MAC’s. This focussed on the representation of St. George and the dragon in European art through the centuries: a theme which has permeated European culture but which is particularly relevant to Mons, given the centuries-old Doudou festival. There was also an exhibition at the BAM devoted to Paul-Marie Verlaine, the French poet associated with the Symbolist movement, who was imprisoned for some time at Mons prison (“Verlaine, Cellule 252. Turbulences poétiques”). Another exhibition at the BAM (25.1.2015 to 17.5.15) was devoted to Van Gogh and the period that he spent in the Borinage (“Van Gogh in the Borinage: the birth of an artist”). A week of events (3.10.15 to 11.10.15) focussed on the life and works of Roland de Lassus, the Franco-Flemish composer of the late Renaissance who was born in Mons. These included: “La Grande Clameur”, a performance of Lassus’s poetry set to music by a choir of 500 people, as well as exhibitions, discussions and the release of books and CDs.

Second, **in a contemporary sense**; the cultural programme included events that featured works by contemporary European artists. This included an exhibition at the MAC’s: “La Salle des Pendus” (15.3.2015 to 16.8.2015), by Christian Boltanski, a French visual artist of international renown and with a strong connection to the Borinage, having curated the first exhibition at the MAC’s in 2002. Using various materials, including old photographs, found objects and lights, the exhibition explored the themes of memory, the unconscious, childhood and death. There was also an exhibition by the English product and furniture designer, Jasper Morrison, showing key moments in his 35-year career, including furniture, kitchenware and electrical appliances, “Retrospective” (10.5.15 to 13.9.15).

Third, **by presenting innovative forms of European cultures**. The application particularly highlighted the “Week-ends en folie” organised by Collectif Tous-en-Scène, an amateur dance company featuring adults and children, particularly known for tap-dancing but also performing a wider range of styles. Collectif Tous-en-Scène organised around 20 week-ends en folie during 2015, including a showpiece weekend at la Maison Folie (2.10.15 to 4.10.15). The weekend featured three innovative performances featuring 100 dancers aged 3 to 76 years.

As with all ECoC, a key part of the European dimension of Mons2015 was the **co-operation with cultural operators and towns from other European countries**. This was facilitated by the activities of the Foundation and explicitly encouraged through the criteria applied to the selection of projects. In terms of co-operation with cultural operators from other European countries, the operators involved in Mons2015 both built on their existing links and fostered new ones. Some of the most significant collaborations included Café Europa (presented as a case study above) and Ailleurs en Folie, (presented as a case study below).

Ailleurs en Folie

“Ailleurs en Folie” was organised by La Maison Folie (an initiative within Le manège.mons to support new creative activities) and featured eight different series of events from a range of artistic disciplines. Each series was focussed on the culture of a city in another country and was developed in partnership with cultural operators in those cities. Each series was put together by a different programme director, chosen for the knowledge of the culture of the city in question. During each series, the different parts of La Maison Folie were transformed to resemble places in those cities, whilst le Bistrot Folie served food that was typical of them. Each series featured an intense period of events over 4-11 days, including shows, performances, concerts, games, gastronomical events, and artistic residences. The events featured works or performers from the city in question.

The eight series focussed on the following cities:

- Lille (24 January - 1 February), which featured “cabinets of curiosities” (re-) created by artists from Lille;
- London (19-22 February): the atmosphere of a London working men’s club was recreated during this series of events;
- Casablanca (16-26 April): which attempted to get away from simple clichés of the city to present something of its contemporary culture;
- Milan (7-17 May) offered a diversity of events for audiences to sample or taste the follies of daily life in the city;
- Melbourne (18-28 June), based around the cultural diversity of that city’s “laneways”;
- Montréal /Québec (17-27 September), which featured events around a camp fire on a carpet of snow, with artists both from Belgium and from Montréal /Québec;
- Tokyo (15-25 October), which presented the cultural contrasts of traditional culture and hypermodernity, ranging from the art of “shogi” (a traditional Japanese board game, similar to chess) to avant-garde culture; and
- Pilsen (12-15 November) focussed on the underground culture of the other title-holder in 2015 (see below).

In total, Ailleurs en Folie featured 150 different artistic activities, including 37 new creations and featuring 297 different artists. The total audience was 27,250, equivalent to 462 per day. According to the Foundation, Ailleurs en Folie succeeded in attracting a “loyal” audience of people, having enjoyed one series, returning to enjoy subsequent ones.

Co-operation with Pilsen had been initiated during the application (as described above) and continued during the years following the award of the title. Specific events were held in the two years leading up to 2015. A key event during the title-year was “Mons in Pilsen” project: three days of events to highlight Mons, which included joint activities making use of Café Europa, including connected parties and cookery events.

However, collaboration was slightly limited by the much smaller budget available to the Pilsen2015 programme. Two of the main collaborations with Pilsen2015 included:

- UBUs, a theatrical project jointly produced between Mons2015 and Pilsen2015, which was performed in both cities. It involved a collaboration between the Fondation Mons2015, Le manège.mons, Pilsen2015, Théâtre de L'éveil (Mons), Théâtre de Liège and the Centre des Arts Scéniques (Mons) and Compagnie POP UP (France). Funders of the project included Mons2015 and Wallonia-Brussels International.
- "Ailleurs en Folie Pilsen": a series of more than thirty events focussed on the culture of Pilsen. Taking place from 12.11.15 to 15.11.15, the events featured works and performers from Pilsen. They included: "Twins": a dance performance by two Belgian and two Czech artists who created the work during residencies in Pilsen and Mons under the direction of choreographer Pétra Hauerova; the performance was based on the shared industrial heritage of the two cities, as well as their experiences of war in the 20th century. "Cesta Ven" / The Way Out": a showing of the acclaimed 2014 Czech film by Petr Václav, and which emerged from Pilsen's "Finale" contemporary film festival; "WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE NUMBER?": a concert by this bitpop band from Pilsen.



2.3.3 City and citizens dimension

As described above, one of the main objectives of Mons's application was to "involve citizens in a process of cultural democracy". This objective was pursued in three ways.

First, the cultural programme was to facilitate the **participation of the citizens of Mons** as creators, performers and audiences of the cultural programme.

In that sense, it was intended to be “built” by the citizens of Mons and “anchorage” was stated as one of the core values of Mons2015. In support of that, a specific on-line tool “2015 façons de participer” provided the opportunity for members of the public to identify concrete ways in which to participate in the cultural programme and to register their interest and was supported by a broad communication campaign at regional level.

Second, the application listed four **groups that were to be specifically targeted** by the activities of the cultural programme.

- **Young people**; the focus on young people was based on the theme “I’ll be 20 in 2015” (“J’aurai 20 ans in 2015”). During the title year, young people were particularly targeted by the “Mon(s) idéal” strand of the cultural programme, the essence of which was articulated in two straplines. The first strapline, “Do it yourself”, was about enabling young people to get involved in projects that they themselves proposed, for example, the students of “Monstudentclub” were supported to organise a series of concerts. The second strapline, “Utopia”, was about inviting young montois to reimagine society and thus “invent” a better world with those ideas then inspiring the content and format of various artistic events involving the young people. “Mon(s) idéal” featured a diverse selection of hundreds of projects, including workshops, training, concerts and other events. It culminated in a procession into the town on 28 November 2015.
- **Socio-cultural associations**; the intention was to facilitate the participation of many of the 500 non-profit associations in Mons, as well as others in the Borinage. This was facilitated during the development phase by a support body (“Carré des associations”) directed initially by Dany Josse (deceased 2011). Three specific tools served this purpose: i) the participative cultural council (“conseil culturel participatif”); ii) support service (“service d’animation”); iii) Maison Folie. These structures enabled the Foundation and the other institutional partners to get to know the associations better and support them to participate in projects. It also enabled the associations to work more with each to develop their own projects. For example, introductory evenings (“soirees de recontres”) were held, as a means of facilitating this process and involving the associations in the cultural programme.
- **Citizens of “elsewhere”**; this was to involve and highlight the cultures of the various nationalities that had immigrated to Mons and the Borinage since the second world war: Italian (particularly Sicilian), Eastern Europe (Polish, Ukrainian, Russian), Mediterranean (Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Turkish), African students studying in Mons and the various NATO nationalities represented at SHAPE.
- **Specific groups**, including disabled people and prisoners and prison staff. Regarding disabled people, this was to be through guaranteeing access for those with reduced mobility to all public events in 2015, as well as through specific initiatives, such as audio-descriptions of performances for those with visual impairments. For the prison staff and 400 prisoners of Mons Prison, one of the main activities was an evening of gastronomy and poetry, which took place on the day of the opening ceremony, 24 January 2015.

Third, the cultural programme drew the different **towns and communes neighbouring Mons and in the rest of the Borinage** (and their residents) into a structured programme of creation and performance. From the outset, one objective of Mons2015 was to involve the citizens of the wider Borinage within the cultural programme. It was recognised that this involvement must go beyond merely attracting those citizens as audiences and involve them as participants. Moreover, such participation was not intended to be a one-off event but a process by which capacity was built and a desire created for future activities. The aim was to give the citizens of these areas the tools to understand, criticise, create and participate in contemporary artistic events. This was pursued through three specific strands of activity: “Le Grand Huit” (“The Big Eight”), “Le Grand Ouest” (“The Big West”) and “Les 400 Coups” (“The 400 strikes”). The three strands are presented as case studies in the boxes that follow.

Le Grand Huit

Le Grand Huit grouped the 19 communes neighbouring Mons into eight territories and a creative process was initiated in each of those eight. From the summer of 2013, research was undertaken by local citizens into the history, culture and landscape of their territories. A series of 2,189 preparatory and development meetings was held within local associations and citizens in those areas to explain the concept, initiate preparations and provide practical advice, for example, in relation to communications, security, etc. The Foundation nominated a contact person for each of the eight territories to offer advice and supported the development process. The Foundation also provided €20k funding for each territory, which represented a considerable sum, since the communes tended not to have their own budget for culture. Each territory was also supported by international artists in residence who worked with them over the course of one month. These preparatory activities resulted in a week of events taking place in each of the eight territories between April and October 2015. Each week involved a different programme of diverse cultural activities in one of eight territories, collectively covering the nineteen communes. In each case, the events reflected something of the culture and heritage of the territories, albeit in a contemporary way. The events were developed and implemented by 500 citizens of the communes, with preparations beginning in March 2013 and supported by the Foundation.



The highlights in each territory were as follows:

- Ghlin (28.4.2015 – 3.5.2015): the programme explored the theme of “Une vie de château” (“Castle life”), given that this territory had previously been host to several castles. The French collective “Métalu A Chahuter” served as artist in residence and involved citizens in various activities. For example, workshops enabled the citizens to create and pose within historical-style portraits.

Le Grand Huit

- Hyon – Cibly – Mesvin (11.5.2015 - 16.5.2015): “A la recherche de la licorne” (“Seeking the unicorn”): here the activity was based on the theme of the mythical unicorn and was supported by the French designer and costumier, François Andes. Events included costume exhibitions, choral performances and other concerts.
- Jemappes – Flénu (11.6.2015 – 14.6.2015): “Voyages Mystérieux” (“Mysterious journeys”); here, the theme emphasised time travel. It included open-air events in the centre of Jemappes, based on the year 1900, when some of the key sites of the town were constructed. Another exhibition “Free Wheeling”, focused on the bicycle as a symbol and means of freedom.
- Mons Intramuros (19.6.2015 – 27.6.2015) “Sens dessus dessous” (“Topsy-turvy”): featured a week of events and exhibitions in unusual places.
- Obourg – Saint-Denis – Havré (21.08.2015 - 30.08.2015): “L'eau et les fantômes” (“Water and ghosts”) explored local legends relating to ghosts at Chateau d'Havré through events and open-air exhibitions across the three communes with audiences encouraged to ride between them by bike.
- Harmignies – Spiennes – Villers-Saint-Ghislain – Harveng – Nouvelles – Saint-Symphorien (10.9.2015 – 13.9.2015): “A travers champs, le vent” (“Across fields, wind”); activity included open-air events and open-air cinema showings. Other activity included a play about a local personality from the 18th century: “Spectacle Victor, Poète et paysan”.
- Cuesmes (23.9.2015 – 27.9.2015): “Cuesmes, 2015m d'altitude” (“Cuesme, altitude of 2015m”); the theme of this sub-programme highlighted the fact that the vertical distance from the depths of local coal mines to the top of the roof of the local mining museum is around 2015m. (The “Living Museum of the Levant Mine” (Musée Vivant de la Mine au Levant) had opened in 2014). Events included theatrical performances and family days at the site.
- Nimy – Maisières (7.10.2015 – 11.10.2015): activity in this territory particularly focused on the theme of “Epouvantails, marionnettes et géants” (“Scarecrows, puppets and giants”). It included a ventriloquist performance, as well as a participative circus performance in Maisières. Another event brought puppets from across Europe to Nimy. Other activity included performance and tuition in the bagpipes.

Le Grand Ouest



Inspired by the proposals for Le Grand Huit, the mayors of the 12 other towns and communes further west within the Borinage approached the Foundation to propose a similar programme in their territories. The result was “**Le Grand Ouest**”, a programme of cultural activities proposed by the citizens and associations of those towns and communes: Boussu, Colfontaine, Frameries, Quévy, Jurbise, Hensies, Quaregnon, Honnelles & de Quiévrain, Lens, Saint Ghislain, and Dour. During the course of 2014, an agreement was reached with the Foundation to establish Le Grand Ouest with financial support from the Foundation and from local/regional sources. For each of the 12 communes, a local co-ordinator was nominated either an elected representative, cultural officer or director of productions. An official media launch took place in June 2014 involve all 12 mayors and the Foundation. In the last few months of 2014, numerous meetings took place with

local citizens and associations to foster their involvement, gather ideas and sketch out the shape of the cultural programme. One significant challenge was to ensure that the 12 communes individually and collectively enjoyed sufficient visibility and prominence and did not get “drowned” within the overall programme of Mons2015. This was addressed by ensuring that each individual event was communicated but that communication took a collective approach. For example, this included the symbolic passing of the Grand Ouest flag from one mayor to another at the “changeover” points in the programme, as well as an opportunity for each commune to be featured in an exhibition house in the centre of Mons.

As with Le Grand Huit, the events within Le Grand Ouest highlighted the culture and heritage of the territories involved. Some also connected to the themes of the wider Mons2015 programme. For example, the activity within Colfontaine was entitled “Van Gogh, la folle légende” and focussed on the time that Van Gogh spent in this coal-producing area, including accompanying the miners underground in the colliery. The weekend of events was hosted at the site of the former colliery of Marcasse and included cinema showings, concerts, artistic installations and theatrical performances.

The various activities of Le Grand Huit and Le Grand Ouest attracted audiences of 80,000 people. Beyond that, the stakeholders report that the projects have created the capacity, the potential and the political will to undertake future activities. In support of such activities, the Foundation has highlighted the legacy in terms of a set of recommendations to guide the teams in each commune, the technical and communications equipment that remains available and the network of associations committed to serving people with reduced mobility.¹⁶

¹⁶ Rapport d'activités Mons 2015 Capitale européenne de la Culture

Les 400 Coups

Through “**Les 400 Coups**”, Mons2015 also supported activity in the Wallonie picarde area of Hainaut province beyond the Borinage. This area is not a formal administrative area within the Belgian system of governance but instead comprises a “community of communes” that are co-operating in various fields, including economic development and culture. In that context, the organisation Culture WAPI proposed a programme of activity for inclusion within the cultural programme of Mons2015. This had both a cultural and a political purpose; like Le Grand Huit and Le Grand Ouest, the cultural purpose was to enhance local capacity for culture through the involvement of local citizens as creators and participants in a cultural event that expressed the culture and heritage of their territories; the political purpose was to make the concept of Wallonie picarde more tangible and visible for residents and outsiders alike. The resulting activity was Les 400 Coups.

Les 400 Coups was a programme led by Culture WAPI, the cultural agency representing cultural operators, cultural centres and the development council of Wallonie picarde. This ambitious programme was several years in the making, due to the need to gain the support of the various towns and communes of Wallonie picarde, as well as of the Foundation. Ultimately, some 18 towns offered support at the political level, as well as funding equivalent to €0.50 per year per head of population in their respective territories. This created a budget of €1.45m for the programme, which took place between 2.8.2015 and 13.9.2015.

The programme implemented by “Les 400 Coups” was based on local folklore in which giants are particularly important. An open competition allowed the selection of a contractor, “Les Facteurs d’amour” (“Postmen of love”), to lead the programme and work with the participating towns to develop their activities. Each town created its own giant and created an associated cultural programme involving local citizens and local cultural operators as creators and participants. At the heart of the programme was “La Grande Marche”, a procession of the giants from all 18 towns along a route of 18km through all 18 territories over five days. Each evening featured open-air concerts and other performances as the giants were “put to bed”, whilst those accompanying the giants camped alongside them. The procession culminated in a concert in a church at the final designation, “Le Coup Final” (“The Final Strike”).

Les 400 Coups was the first time that a cultural collaboration of this scale had taken place involving most of the towns within Wallonie picarde. Since the events were all free and mostly held in the open-air, data on audience numbers was not available. However, attendance fulfilled the expectations of Culture WAPI and the activity attracted considerably more press interest in the cultural dimension of Wallonie picarde than had previously been the case.

2.4 Governance and funding

2.4.1 Governance

Like the rest of Belgium, Mons has a complex and multi-level governance context. At the local level, responsibility for culture lies with the town (Ville de Mons) and also with the municipalities and other local authorities within the Borinage. The province (Province de Hainaut) also has certain responsibilities for culture, although this is largely funded by regional taxation. Overall responsibility for culture and tourism lies

with the French community of Belgium (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles), one of Belgium's three federal communities. Responsibility for economic and social issues lies with the Regional Government of Wallonia (Région wallone).

Despite the complexity of this context, the proposal to bid for ECoC received strong political support from the four main public authorities (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Région wallone, Province de Hainaut, Ville de Mons), as well as from many of the municipalities and communes of the Borinage. The four main authorities collectively committed 68% of the proposed budget at an early stage and (as shown in the section on funding below) fulfilled the large part of this commitment. There is, moreover, a consensus amongst all the stakeholders that Mons2015 received cross-party political support from the outset and that this support was maintained throughout the development phase and during the title-year; this support thus represents a key success factor.

Like many ECoC, Mons2015 was implemented by a dedicated delivery agency, the "Fondation Mons 2015", which was founded well before the ECoC application was made, i.e. on 23 March 2006. This is a public utility foundation overseen by the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, the Région Wallonne, the Province de Hainaut and the Ville de Mons. Those bodies guaranteed the Foundation its artistic independence, for example, in terms of the allocation of funds to projects. The Foundation is autonomous and governed by a Board (Conseil d'administration) chaired by an independent President, Guy Quaden, a former governor of the National Bank. In addition to the representatives of the public authorities, the Board also includes six independent members and two observers. The artistic direction of Mons2015 was the responsibility of the Commissioner General (Commissaire général), Yves Vasseur, who was supported by the Deputy Commissioner (Commissaire général adjoint), Philippe Degeneffe, and by the Deputy Artistic Commissioner (Commissaire artistique adjoint), Marie Noble. Another key success factor of Mons2015 was that this team largely remained intact throughout the application, development and implementation phase of the ECoC; unlike most ECoC, Mons did not suffer the departure of key staff (whether by resignation or dismissal) at any point in the process.

Project promoters responding to our survey reported that support provided by the Fondation Mons2015 was generally very useful, mainly for projects implemented in the visual arts and audio-visual sectors where almost all the respondents were satisfied with the support provided. Indeed, all but two projects reported that they were satisfied with such support. Moreover, of those projects expressing a view, the majority reported that the Fondation Mons2015 had been able to resist political and commercial pressures when developing the programme.

2.4.2 Funding

The final application of Mons2015 proposed a budget of just over €78m for the development phase and title-year, i.e. for the years 2011-15. This represented an increase of more than 10% on the initial budget of €70m proposed in the initial application.

The majority of income, i.e. €67m (86%) was proposed from public sources (including the EU and partner towns and institutions), notably the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles (38%) and the Walloon Region (19%). The application emphasised that the estimates for corporate sponsorship (€7m) and ticketing (€2m) were modest and realistic.

Table 2.2 Proposed sources of finance (final application)

Source	Total proposed income 2011-15 (€)	% of total proposed income
Communauté française (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles)	30 000 000	38
Région wallone	15 000 000	19
Province de Hainaut	5 600 000	7
Ville de Mons	3 000 000	4
Europe Union	1 000 000	1
Sponsorship	7 000 000	9
Partners (towns and institutions)	12 414 827	16
Ticketing	2 000 000	3
Bank interest	2 000 000	3
Total	78 014 827	100%

Source: Mons2015 final application

The table below presents data (provided by the Fondation Mons2015) on the actual income for the period 2006-15.¹⁷ From the table, it can be seen that the eventual financial budget was €70.6m. This is about 10% lower than the budget proposed in the final application, although it does not cover 2016. Once activity in 2016 is taken into account, the final figures for income and expenditure will be close to the figures proposed in the final application. In addition to the financial income, Mons2015 also received in-kind support from corporate sponsors valued at more than €2m. Total projected income to the end of 2015 was thus €72.8m, which makes Mons2015 one of the better-funded ECoC to date and the best-financed ECoC on a per capita basis, i.e. €748 compared to the average of €272 for the 2011-15 ECoC.¹⁸

Of the four main public funders, two provided the exact sums proposed in the application, i.e. Communauté française and the Ville de Mons. The Région wallone had provided 95% of the proposed sum by the end of 2015, whilst the Province de Hainaut had provided 73%. At the application stage, it was intended that corporate sponsorship would reach €7m, although in practice it was slightly below €6m (including contributions received in cash and in-kind). Income received from partner towns and institutions was broadly similar to the sum originally proposed (€12m), although mostly provided directly to projects with only about €2m paid to the Foundation. More than €7m of additional funding was received from other public sources, including €6.7m from the National Lottery. Income from ticketing (i.e. €2.1m) slightly exceeded the “modest and realistic” estimate of €2m, whilst an

¹⁷ The figure is based on a projection to 31.12.2015.

¹⁸ KEA European Affairs (2016), Evaluation impact Mons2015

additional €0.3m was received from the sale of merchandise, such as books. Total commercial revenue was thus more than €2.4m.

The Melina Mercouri Prize was paid by the European Commission in 2014, following the recommendation of the second meeting of the monitoring and advisory panel. Although the Foundation publicised the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize, there was limited publicity of the award given by the European Commission. The Prize money was used to increase the overall budget of Mons2015. The "Other Public" funding also includes other (project-based) EU funding of €22k.

Table 2.3 Actual income of Mons2015

Financing sources	Total income 2006-15 (€)	% of total income
Communauté française (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles)	30 000 000	42
Région wallone	14 237 500	20
Province de Hainaut	4 095 000	6
Ville de Mons	3 000 000	4
Partner towns and institutions	2 084 792	3
Other public	7 239 442	10
Europe Union	1 500 000	2
Sponsorship (cash)	3 817 655	5
Ticketing and merchandise	2 436 500	3
Financial products	1 750 370	2
Other (Museum nights, other financing sources)	470 422	1
Total (cash)	70 631 681	100
Sponsorship (in-kind)	2 122 097	-
Total (cash + in-kind)	72 753 778	-

Source: Fondation Mons2015

The table below compares the actual expenditure of Mons2015 to the figures proposed in the final application. The data are not directly comparable as different categories have been used in the different sources. In particular, actual expenditure on personnel is included within other categories (cultural programme, marketing, operating expenditure), rather than as a separate item. From the data, it can be seen that slightly less was spent in cash terms on marketing (€9m) than originally proposed (€10m). However, the figure of €2m of in-kind support relates to preferential rates provided by the media partners, meaning that the overall expenditure on marketing was about €11m in practice. By the end of 2015, the Foundation also had a reserve of €2.4m to fund closure and legacy activities from 2016 onwards, as well as to ensure that none of the public partners were required to cover any loss.

The data also show that Mons’s activity was very focussed on the title year itself, with 90% of expenditure arising in 2015. This is in contrast to some previous ECoC (e.g. Umeå2014) that have expended a much higher share of their budget on preparatory activities in the years leading up to the title-year. Most expenditure in the years before the title-year consisted of salary costs at the Foundation (€5.6m), of which most in 2014 (€3.3m).

Table 2.4 Expenditure by Mons2015

Expenditure	Proposed expenditure 2006-15 (€)*	Expenditure in 2015 (€)**	Total expenditure 2006-15 (€)**	% of total expenditure (2006-15) (€)
Cultural Programme	54 333 298	40 227 730	43 587 403	62
Personnel	12 000 000	-	-	-
Previous operations	1 191 123	-	-	-
Marketing	10 000 000	8 043 403	8 978 588	13
Operating expenditure	-	15 275 160	15 677 501	22
Reserve	490 406	0	2 388 189	3
Total	78 014 827	63 546 296	70 631 681	100
Expenditure in-kind***	-	2 122 097	2 122 097	-
Total	78 014 827	65 668 393	72 753 778	

Sources: *Mons2015 final application; **Fondation Mons2015; ***NB: a breakdown of expenditure in-kind per year was not available, although most arose during the title-year.

In addition to the income and expenditure of the Foundation, there was considerable public and private investment in the infrastructure and cultural facilities of Mons, as described above (section 2.2.3).

2.4.3 Marketing and communication

As with all ECoC, the communication of Mons2015 was seen as essential to its success and took place in different ways and at different levels. As with the territorial focus of the ECoC as a whole, the application foresaw four concentric circles with respect to communication with Mons at the centre: Mons, Hainaut, Belgium and border areas, and the rest of Europe.

An important preliminary press conference was held in autumn 2013 dedicated to international press, tourism offices and tour operators and specifically promoting the main exhibitions of 2015. The programme as a whole was unveiled at an event in Mons on 7 October 2014 with seven buses representing different parts of the programme. Many journalists attended. Although effective in gaining publicity, this launch was relatively late and might have been more effective at an earlier date. For example, an earlier programme launch, with more key events highlighted, might have facilitated the promotion of the programme by the tourist bodies, not least since international tour operators often put together their programmes one year or so in

advance. Following the launch, a pre-programme was implemented to raise the profile of the ECoC. The overall slogan adopted was “En 2015, je suis Montois. Et toi?” (“In 2015, I’m from Mons too. And you?”).

Within Mons and Hainaut, much of the communication took place through existing media. A monthly supplement was published in the French language daily Belgian newspaper, *Le Soir*. Around 150,000 copies of the supplement were distributed across Mons, including through boxes situated at many points in the centre. A press conference was also held for each season and there were visits from 2,330 accredited journalists. These activities generated a total of 8,420 articles in the Belgian press or items on Belgian radio and television.¹⁹

At the international level, it was recognised that the Foundation would not have the resources to sustain its own global marketing campaign. Like most ECoC, international communication activities were thus very reliant on effective partnership working with the existing bodies responsible for promoting Mons and the rest of Hainaut, most notably the regional bodies responsible for tourist promotion (Wallonie-Bruxelles Tourisme) and for international relations (Wallonie-Bruxelles International). Most of the Foundation’s international relations activity was undertaken by its Department of International Relations. The Department particularly focused on those countries that were seen as important, both as sources of cultural co-operation and as tourist markets: France, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK and Flanders (part of Belgium but considered as a tourist market distinct from Wallonia). Activity centred on four axes:

- **Bringing together tourism and culture:** given the obvious link between tourism and culture, the Department established a steering group for the tourism dimension of Mons2015, which brought together on a quarterly basis, the Foundation, the Mons Tourist Office and the regional tourist body, Wallonie-Bruxelles Tourisme.
- **International visibility:** working with two of the regional bodies, Wallonie-Bruxelles Tourisme and Wallonie-Bruxelles International, the Department worked to promote Mons2015 to international tour operators and to the global press. In that context, the Department promoted Mons2015 in press conferences in key cities, notably Amsterdam, Cologne, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. Each press conference gave particular emphasis to different parts of the cultural programme, in line with the likely interest of those countries. For example, the projects related to Van Gogh were highlighted in the Amsterdam press conference, whilst the one in Cologne highlighted the digital axis of the cultural programme. In order to raise the international visibility of Mons2015 further, a specialist cultural press agency in Brussels (with partners in each target market) was also contracted to develop and implement the international press strategy. Amongst the successful activities, the Department has highlighted three in particular: i) the “Made in Mons” event in April 2015 at the Gare Saint Sauveur exhibition venue in Lille and in partnership with lille3000 (the legacy body of the Lille2004 ECoC); ii) a similar event in June 2015 at the “Festival des Folies” in Maubeuge (a French commune, only 20km from

¹⁹ *Mons2015 (2016), Press dossier on the European Capital of Culture: the balances sheet*

Mons); iii) participation in a trade mission with Agence wallonne à l'Exportation et aux Investissements Etrangers (AWEX) and Wallonie-Bruxelles International at Expo 2015, the Universal Exposition in Milan in October 2015, which included a demonstration of cooking featuring chefs from Mons and with a live audio-visual connection to Café Europa in Mons.

- **Artistic collaboration at international festivals:** the Department supported artists from Mons at the Festival d'Avignon including through production of a newsletter and handbook distributed at the festival; Mons2015 was also present at the Ars Elektronica Festival in Linz, Austria (which held the ECoC title in (2009).
- **Formal relations:** like all ECoC, Mons2015 attracted and hosted many international delegations during the title year. More than 80 such delegations were received in 2015, consisting of nearly 1,800 representatives of towns and cities, cultural operators, partner institutions and businesses. This work was facilitated by the formation of a team of 2,140 "Mons2015 ambassadors" to welcome such delegations. Mons2015 was also represented at 42 official events in other countries.²⁰ According to the Foundation, such visits have helped make Mons2015 better known internationally and have fostered ongoing informal links. Some of those delegations represented future ECoC title-holders who may have learned useful lessons for the implementation of their own activities.

With any ECoC, it is difficult to establish the direct impact of the communication activities on the awareness of local residents and regional, national and international audiences. However, the fact that Mons2015 attracted audiences of nearly 2.2m people (see section 2.5.2) and there was a marked increase in tourist visits (see section 2.5.4) suggests that the communication activities were mostly effective in raising awareness. Similarly, as early as 2013, the Mons2015 website was already being visited three times more often than the website of the Mons tourist office.²¹

Although the Foundation took steps to communicate the ECoC as an EU action and used the EU logo extensively, it seems that projects have placed less emphasis on making the EU nature of the event known. According to our survey of projects, the EU logo feature has not been widely used in marketing and communication materials: 50% of project respondents reported not having used the EU logo at all, while only 14% of respondents had included the logo in all their materials. The survey analysis shows that this happened evenly across a wide range of sectors, excluding the dance sector.

2.4.4 Local research

Mons's application specified a number of key performance indicators to be monitored, whilst highlighting the limits to quantification of effects, the risks associated with applying the indicators and the need to consider the most appropriate frequency and method of collecting data against those indicators. Some of the monitoring undertaken by the Foundation made use of big data and analysis of social media. This included

²⁰ Mons2015 (2016), *Press dossier on the European Capital of Culture: the balances sheet*

²¹ KEA (2013), *Evaluation d'impact de Mons 2015 – Rapport II, Mons avant l'évènement – Dimension économique, culturelle, image et attentes*

monitoring entries on Twitter (70,000 entries for a range of more than 127m users) and visits to the Mons2015 website (1.8m visitors making 5m page views).²²

A key part of the monitoring and evaluation function was undertaken by an external contractor, KEA European Affairs, a Brussels-based consultancy specialising in the cultural and creative industries. The external evaluation featured two reports in 2014, followed by subsequent reports in February 2016, May 2016 and June 2016. A key part of this evaluation was an assessment of the economic impact of Mons2015, including investments in culture, multiplier effects on local income and employment, tourist impacts and effects on the opinions of local residents.

2.5 Results

This section highlights the main results of Mons2015 in relation to the four specific objectives of the ECoC Action presented in Table 1.1. One weakness of the selection and monitoring process is that cities are not required to provide a comprehensive baseline of their cultural capacity, cultural offering and economic and social situation. As we have noted in section 1.4.2, the timing and scope of the evaluation do not allow a comprehensive baseline to be recreated “after the event”. However, any evidence that was publicly available or provided by the cities to the evaluator has been used to give a picture of the situation prior to the title-year.

2.5.1 Cultural impacts

According to the legal basis of the ECoC, cities holding the title are intended to create a cultural programme specifically for the title-year highlighting the European dimension. These programmes should highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens. The key results achieved by Mons2015 against this objective were as follows.

First, Mons2015 presented **a cultural programme during the title-year that was more extensive, more innovative and more European in nature** compared to the city’s cultural “baseline” offering in previous years. It included 219 projects (of which 117 were interdisciplinary in nature) featuring 2,390 events of different sizes, cultural disciplines and art forms, as described above. Whilst some events and festivals within the cultural programme represented the continuation of activities established before 2015, most of the programme represented activity that was new for 2015. Moreover, the four main public partners (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Région wallonne, Province de Hainaut, Ville de Mons), made available substantial resources that were genuinely additional to the funding that they would usually provide for culture.

These findings are supported by the evidence from the survey of projects. Two-thirds of respondents felt that the ECoC had been positive. Almost 60% reported that their projects did not exist compared to the baseline before 2015. This impact is experienced across all the sectors but is particularly relevant in the literature, books and reading sector (75%), in the education, training or research (71%) and design

²² Mons2015 (2016), *Press dossier on the European Capital of Culture: the balances sheet*

and applied arts (67%). At the same time, the respondents highlight that the ECoC allowed an increase in the scale of projects already implemented before 2015, mainly in the architecture (67%), dance (60%) and audio-visual (50%) sectors.

Second, Mons2015 offered an **authentic representation of the culture and heritage of Mons** and the Borinage but in a way that offered real European resonance. A key factor was the leadership of the Foundation and of specific elements of the cultural programme by some of the most prominent cultural operators in Mons. Mons2015 was not led by a team that was “parachuted in” from elsewhere. In particular, the fact that the Foundation was led by Le Manège meant that it was rooted in the city’s contemporary artistic scene and by a team that was known and trusted by local and regional stakeholders. The team went to great lengths to identify and research various elements of the culture and heritage of Mons in order to make it better known to a local and international audience. For example, research was undertaken into prominent cultural personalities of international renown but with a connection to the Mons and the Borinage, e.g. Van Gogh, Verlaine, Lassus. In each case, the resulting events presented the life and works of these personalities in terms of their connection to Mons and the Borinage; this not only informed local residents about their own cultural heritage but also represented an offering that would be of interest to international audiences. The cultural programme also gave greater visibility to the current and contemporary cultural offering of Mons and the Borinage.

Third, Mons2015 found **new and creative ways to use public spaces** within the city for artistic purposes. These included the large open-air events, most notably the opening ceremony, which was attended by more than 100,000 people. Mons already had a tradition of using its centre for culture through the long-standing Doudou Festival. However, the opening and closing ceremonies not only attracted as many (if not more) people but also used the city centre in a different manner, including through the 22 venues and sites that featured performances during the opening ceremony. These events were complemented by the 25 urban installations that featured during the title-year, most notably the Passenger. Such urban installations not only gave visitors and residents a different experience of the city centre, they also attracted attention to the ECoC and encouraged debate. However, one very significant problem was faced when part of the Passenger collapsed just before the start of the title-year, i.e. on 24 December 2014. This required the entire structure to be dismantled for reasons of public safety and attracted negative media coverage. The work was later reinstalled and remained in place until the end of the title-year without any further difficulties.



Fourth, Mons2015 featured a significant number of **new works that were performed or exhibited for the first time in 2015**. Such works arose across most, if not all, of the main artistic disciplines of the cultural programme (as discussed above). Some of these new works were by prominent artists, including the new composition by Jean-Paul Dessy (a prominent Wallonian composer, musician and conductor) of the choral piece based on the work of Roland de Lassus. Other works were developed by emerging local artists. The works of local citizens, including children and young people, also featured within the cultural programme. For example, the book “Mons à petits pas” (“Mons in small steps”) was co-authored by 48 local children. Within the performing arts programme, 33 new works were created, of which 13 will be taken on tour in future years.

Fifth, Mons2015 featured numerous **new or enhanced international cultural collaborations** during 2015 compared to the baseline situation before the ECoC. Many of the key cultural operators had well-established international connections but these were further developed or added to during 2015, whilst other operators established international connections for the first time. For example, new partnerships were formed with other European cities in the context of the Café Europa project. New connections were also established with cultural operators in Pilsen for the first time.

2.5.2 Access and participation

One of the criteria that was applied to the selection of the 2015 ECoC related to “City and Citizens”, namely to “foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad”. Against that objective, the key results of Mons2015 are as follows.

The greater number, diversity and accessibility of events meant that **cultural events in 2015 attracted higher audiences than in previous years**. Events within the programme of Mons2015 attracted nearly 2.2m people, most of which must be considered as additional to the audiences of previous years, as most events were new in 2015 and there is no evidence that events and venues outside the Mons2015 cultural programme suffered any significant loss of audiences. This figure also includes attendance at some of the museums that opened for the first time in 2015. This compares favourably to the baseline situation in 2012, when the two most visited museums (Grand Hornu and Le Pass) each received only about 70,000 visitors per year for all exhibitions.²³ The events that attracted the highest audiences were:

- “Van Gogh in the Borinage: the birth of an artist” exhibition: 180,000
- Opening ceremony: 100,000
- Events within Le Grand Huit and Le Grand Ouest: 80,000
- Metamorphosis weekend (opening of new museums): 50,000
- La Ville en Jeu(x) Festival: 50,000
- Musée du Doudou: 44,000
- Belfry: 38,000
- Sun city (sunflower maze): 35,000
- Le Grand Ouest: 29,000

²³ KEA (2013), *Evaluation d’impact de Mons 2015 – Rapport II, Mons avant l’évènement – Dimension économique, culturelle, image et attentes*

- La Chine Ardente: 27,000
- Mons Memorial Museum: 22,500
- La Guinguette littéraire: 22,000
- Maison Van Gogh: 21,000
- Le Jardin suspendu: 20,000
- Café Europa: 15,000

Mons attracted **new types of audiences for culture in 2015**. This was achieved through the sheer scale of the programme, as well as through specific initiatives. Visitors with disabilities were supported to visit exhibitions through various means including guides published in braille in French and Dutch (organised in collaboration with the charity “Les Amis des Aveugles de Ghlin”), “easy-to-read” guides to exhibitions guides and guides featuring sign language on tablets. These initiatives complemented the initiative of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles to make entry to museums free on the first Sunday of each month.

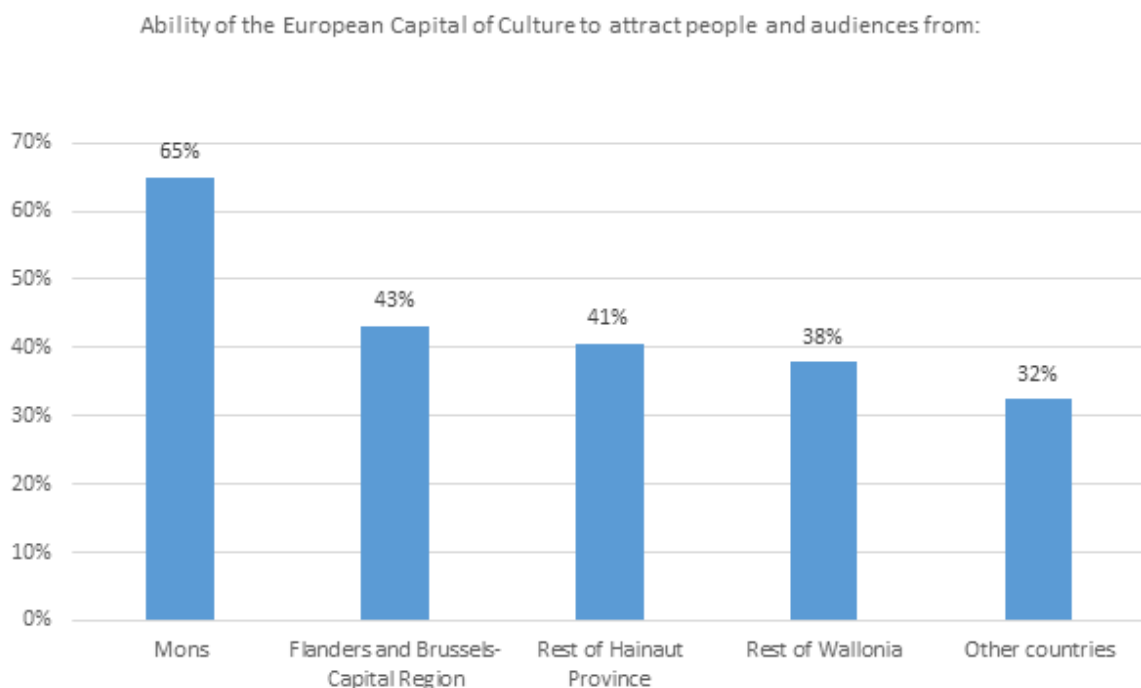
It is impossible to know with any certainty the precise extent to which audiences for specific events were entirely new and would not have attended events in the absence of the ECoC. However, the total visitor numbers (nearly 2.2m for events that were nearly all new for 2015) suggest that Mons2015 attracted a more diverse audience to its cultural programme than did the city’s cultural offering in previous years. This finding tended to be supported by the stakeholders and projects that were interviewed. It was also supported by evidence from the survey of projects, which highlighted that a wide range of measures were used to attract different audiences and facilitate the accessibility of events. The percentage of projects responding to the survey that had taken specific measures is as follows:

- **Children and young people** have been mainly attracted providing free entry (67%) and by targeted measures (57%);
- Access and participation of **elderly people** were facilitated through free entry (88%) and the involvement of organisations already experienced in working with old people (39%);
- Involvement of **poor or disadvantaged communities** was supported through free entry (75%) and the development of activities attractive to specific groups (63%); and
- Access of **minority ethnic groups** was facilitated by providing free entry (100%), by implementing activities tailored to their specific community (75%) and by involving partner organisations already experienced in working with specific group of people.²⁴

²⁴ Survey respondents were not asked to state the minority ethnic groups that they had targeted. However, the main ones present in Mons include Italian (particularly Sicilian), Eastern Europe (Polish, Ukrainian, Russian) and Mediterranean (Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Turkish).

Mons attracted **audiences from further afield in 2015** than in previous years. The city's industrial history means that it is only relatively recently that Mons has come to be seen as a cultural destination by residents in other parts of Belgium and in other countries. Indeed, a feature of the baseline situation was that the audience for local cultural institutions was principally local.²⁵ Stakeholders highlighted that the area's main attraction for many, perhaps most, international visitors to the area had traditionally been the battlefields of the two world wars, rather than culture. However, data from the tourist office provides evidence of a marked increase in tourist visits to Mons during 2015, of which many were specifically for cultural reasons. Moreover, the interviewees reported that more visitors from the rest of the Borinage and of Wallonia were attracted into Mons, whilst the residents of Mons are perhaps more aware of and interested in cultural venues and events in the rest of the Borinage. This benefit results in part from the efforts to make the cultural offer of Mons and the Borinage more "joined up", through common communication and joint ticketing. Evidence from the survey of projects suggests that two-thirds felt that the ECoC has been particularly effective in increasing audiences from Mons itself. The projects report some success in attracting audiences from outside of Mons, although to a lesser degree.

Figure 2.1 View of projects on attraction of audiences



Source: CSES project survey

²⁵ KEA (2013), *Evaluation d'impact de Mons 2015 – Rapport II, Mons avant l'évènement – Dimension économique, culturelle, image et attentes*

Mons2015 increased the **number and diversity of people involved as participants in culture**, i.e. as creators, performers and volunteers. There was a particular focus on young people, with around 15,000 young people and more than 1,000 teachers involved in various elements of the cultural programme. This included 500 workshops held for young people, involving 9,700 participants. The Foundation operated a volunteer programme involving more than 7,500 volunteers, including more than 2,100 ambassadors.

Mons2015 proved successful in **extending the cultural offer of Mons to surrounding areas and in involving the citizens of those areas** in the cultural programme. As noted above, the application stated a clear intention that the ECoC would not be solely focused on Mons but would involve the neighbouring communes and reach across the Borinage and beyond. Whilst those places already had their own cultural offering – including some prominent venues, such as the Grand-Hornu MAC's and the Musée royal de Mariemont – the levels of participation in and attendance at cultural events tended to be lower there than in Mons. To address this, the Foundation studied the situation in these areas in order to understand the reasons for the apparent lack of interest in culture and also to identify their inherent potential for culture. In this context, the three structured programmes of creation and performance (Le Grand Huit, Le Grand Ouest, Les 400 Coups) made a valuable contribution to raising participation in these areas; moreover, such participation was in events that took place locally and that expressed the very specific culture and heritage of these localities.

2.5.3 Cultural capacity

As noted above, the Mons2015 ECoC formed part of a broader development strategy for the city based on culture, tourism and new technologies and which was implemented from the early 2000s onwards. It was intended that the process of preparing and implementing the ECoC would support wider efforts to develop the capacity of the city's cultural sector and link it to the development of tourism and hi-tech industries. In that context, the ECoC can be seen to have increased the cultural capacity of Mons in different ways, of which the most significant are as follows.

First, **the Mons2015 ECoC has gone hand-in-hand with a very substantial development of the cultural infrastructure of the city**, in terms of new venues and increased exhibition and performance space. These developments represented an investment of nearly €144m compared to the baseline situation at the time of the decision to bid in 2004. It cannot be said that the award of the ECoC title in 2010 was the trigger for these developments, since most were initiated or planned before that time. This is in line with other title-holders, as the period of less than five years between the award of the title and the start of the title-year is often insufficient to initiate and complete entirely new infrastructure projects. However, plans for the new and improved venues were developed very much with the ECoC title-year in mind and in anticipation of the title being awarded. Their opening in 2015 thus added to the overall dynamism of the title-year by creating additional capacity for the cultural programme, providing opportunities for promoting Mons and its ECoC programme and giving the sense amongst local citizens that the city's cultural offering was enhanced.

Second, **Mons2015 has helped create and strengthen networks between cultural operators** within the city and also across the Borinage. The wider strategy for cultural development and the ECoC itself have offered both a focus and practical means by which the different cultural operators can pursue common goals and make use of shared tools to a greater and more effective extent than was the case before 2015. There was a consensus expressed by stakeholders that the Foundation, being rooted in the cultural sector of Mons (i.e. through its link to Le Manège), has been able to mobilise actors around this shared vision for Mons more effectively. More specifically, the stakeholders consistently highlighted the benefits of a co-ordinated approach to communicating the cultural offering and cultural events taking place in Mons and the Borinage, as well as practical arrangements around joint ticketing for different venues, which had not been in place previously. Some progress was made in facilitating transport between Mons and venues outside the city, specifically for cultural audiences, although the potential for this has not perhaps yet been fully realised.

Third, **Mons2015 has helped cement the link between culture and tourism in the city and beyond**. Since the early 2000s, it was always intended that culture and tourism would be developed in an increasingly integrated way, with an improved cultural offer being one of the ways by which to attract tourists. Whilst good progress had been made before 2015, the consensus amongst stakeholders was that the title-year took such integration to a higher level. A key factor here has been the close co-operation between the Ville de Mons, the Foundation and Wallonie Bruxelles Tourisme (including through the local tourist office "Visit Mons"). Staff from the local tourist office took early steps to prepare for the ECoC, including visiting the Marseille tourist office in order to learn from the experience of the Marseille-Provence 2013 ECoC. There was good co-ordination regarding communications, with the tourist office focusing its communication for 2015 on the ECoC in a way that avoided overlap with the communication activities of the Foundation. The tourist office also took various practical steps to facilitate tourist visits based on the ECoC. These included converting the tourist office on Mons's Grand Place into the official ECoC shop, with the Ville de Mons allowing Wallonie Bruxelles Tourisme full use of the Mons2015 brand. For example, the tourist office's guide to the city was branded as Mons2015. This approach proved effective, with the tourist office receiving 250,000 visits in 2015, which was five times more than in 2014. The tourist office made other preparations, including training 113 additional "guides conférenciers" (e.g. university graduates in art, able to offer informed guided tours) for the main exhibitions and making use of 60 "greeters", i.e. local residents working as volunteer welcomeers for visitors to the city. This focus on culture has been maintained by Wallonie Bruxelles Tourisme, with the Mons pages on its portal continuing to highlight culture and heritage as the city's main attraction.²⁶

²⁶ <http://www.tourismewallonie.be/en/mons>

Fourth, **Mons2015 has created new capacity for corporate sponsorship of culture.** Whilst corporate sponsorship of culture was not absent before 2015, Mons lacked a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the attraction of corporate sponsors. A key achievement of the ECoC has thus been the new partnership(s) created with the local corporate sector, encompassing large companies and multinationals, as well as local SMEs. Like all ECoC, this partnership took time to develop, with both sides needing to understand the other better.

Although the major corporate sponsor, ING (the multinational banking and financial services corporation headquartered in Amsterdam) had a track record of sponsoring culture, Mons2015 was the first time that it had specifically supported an ECoC. A key challenge for this partnership was the fact that although the sponsorship agreement covered 2011-15, the ECoC offered relatively little visibility for the sponsor before the full cultural programme was implemented in 2015. For some of the cultural operators, having a main corporate sponsor was also a new experience, which some took time to understand and a nuanced approach was required. For example, the sponsorship by ING of the Van Gogh exhibition centred on the provision of an "ING Room" within the BAM museum of fine art, where visitors could leave their belongings in ING-branded lockers but which was separate from the exhibition rooms and thus not seen as interfering with the exhibition itself. The success of the ING sponsorship of Mons2015 was ultimately reflected in the company winning an award.

Regarding the sponsorship by SMEs, the establishment of the "Club Mons 2015 Entreprises" has to be seen as a significant success of the ECoC and a unique initiative in the history of ECoC. Initiated by the corporate sector itself, the Club was a not-for-profit association (association sans but lucratif, ASBL), which eventually had a membership of 841 SMEs, each of which contributed €1k. The total sponsorship of €841k thus made the Club one of the major corporate sponsors of Mons2015. A number of events were held to attract support, including gala dinners in 2013, 2014 and 2015, the last of which attracted around 1,200 participants. In return for sponsorship, the Club offered a package for each member company, including free tickets, VIP access to events, discounted tickets and private (paying) viewings at some exhibitions.

2.5.4 International profile

Like other ECoC, a key objective of Mons2015 was to raise the international profile of the city and attract international visitors. This was undertaken in different ways and some of the key results are as follows.

Mons2015 has strengthened the international dimension of cultural activity within Mons and the Borinage. Collaboration with cultural operators in other countries was encouraged in the selection of projects responding to the open call, as well as in the productions of the Foundation itself. Most of the projects responding to our survey have an international dimension. Of those respondents, this international dimension consisted of involving performers from other countries (43%) or featuring works from other countries (22%). Collaborations also took the form of collaborations with non-cultural organisations or people (19%) and of cultural exchanges (16%).

Most of the organisations and artists involved came from neighbouring countries, in particular from France.

The **international collaborations have increased the number of connections with new partners performing in other countries**: approximately 40% of the respondents report having collaborated with some of the partners for the first time, while more than 20% collaborated for the first time with all partners. New collaborations have been developed across all sectors. One out of five respondents used the ECoC to further develop collaborations with existing partners. However, according to project promoters, it is not clear whether this will result in stable collaborations in the future: approximately one respondent out of two is not able to say whether the collaboration is going to continue after the end of 2015. Conversely one project out of five reported that the collaboration is likely to continue at the same level in the future, mainly in the music and visual arts sectors.

Mons2015 has been effective in attracting international tourists and other visitors. As noted above, the tourist office in Mons experienced a five-fold increase in tourist visits during 2015, reaching a total of 250,000. Data from the local evaluation demonstrated an increase in visits to the tourist office to 157,000 in 2015 compared to the baseline in 2014 of 50,000, once visitors to the tourism office shop are excluded. This also compares favourably to the situation in 2011 when fewer than 70,000 tourists visited Mons (including those that did and did not visit the tourist office).²⁷ Overall, a “conservative” estimate suggests that the ECoC has attracted around €75m in additional expenditure by all tourists (whether visiting the tourist office or not) compared to the baseline situation.²⁸ This reflects not only the communication activity, but also the improved cultural offer of Mons. For example, much of the potential for tourism based on Van Gogh had not previously been exploited, but during 2015, the various sites and items of interest were brought together in a way that made it possible to sell them as an overall “experience” for visitors interested in the artist and his time spent in the Borinage.

Marketing and communication activities carried out by the Foundation Mons2015 were reported as being effective in raising the awareness of local, regional, national and international audiences. This was the consensus of stakeholders, which was supported by a majority of projects responding to our survey, as shown in the figure below. Perhaps as would be expected, projects report that the communication activities were most effective in making Mons2015 visible in local and regional media and slightly less in national and international media. However, data from the Fondation Mons2015 confirms that there were visits from 450 accredited international journalists and 3,717 articles in the international press or items on international radio and television.²⁹ Data was not available on the overall tone of this international media coverage. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the tone of some of the international media coverage has been broadly positive in relation to the new venues, the opening ceremony and key exhibitions, notably the Van Gogh exhibition

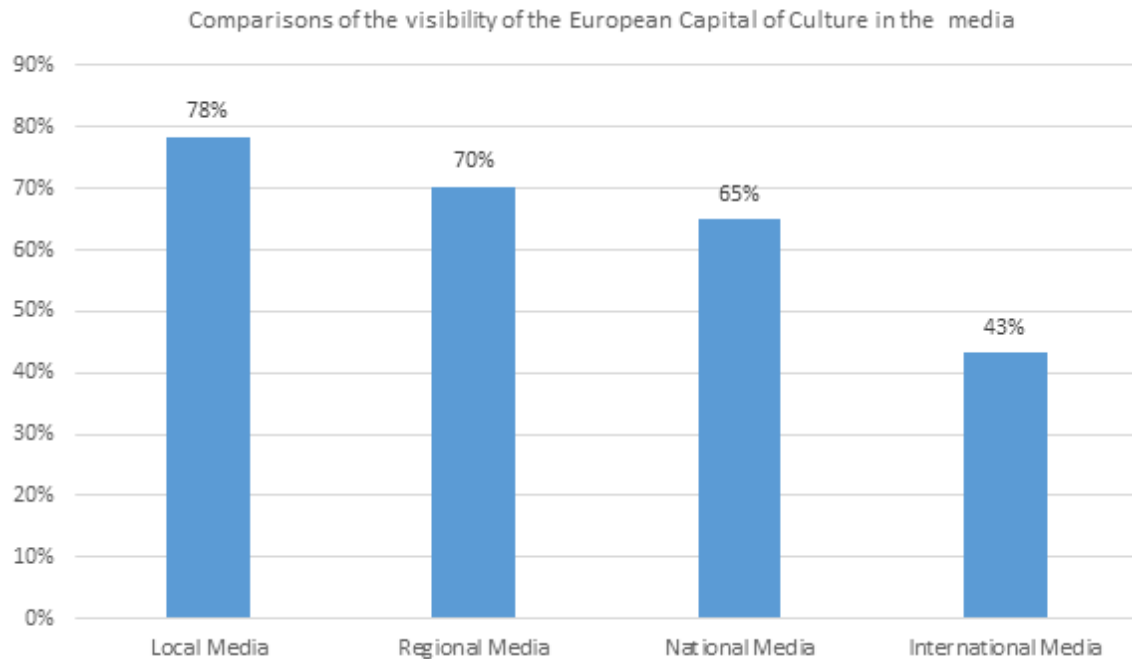
²⁷ KEA (2013), *Evaluation d'impact de Mons 2015 – Rapport II, Mons avant l'évènement – Dimension économique, culturelle, image et attentes*

²⁸ KEA European Affairs (2016), *Evaluation impact Mons2015*.

²⁹ Mons2015 (2016), *Press dossier on the European Capital of Culture: the balances sheet*

but particularly negative in relation to the collapse of part of the Passenger installation.³⁰

Figure 2.2 View of projects on the media visibility of Mons2015

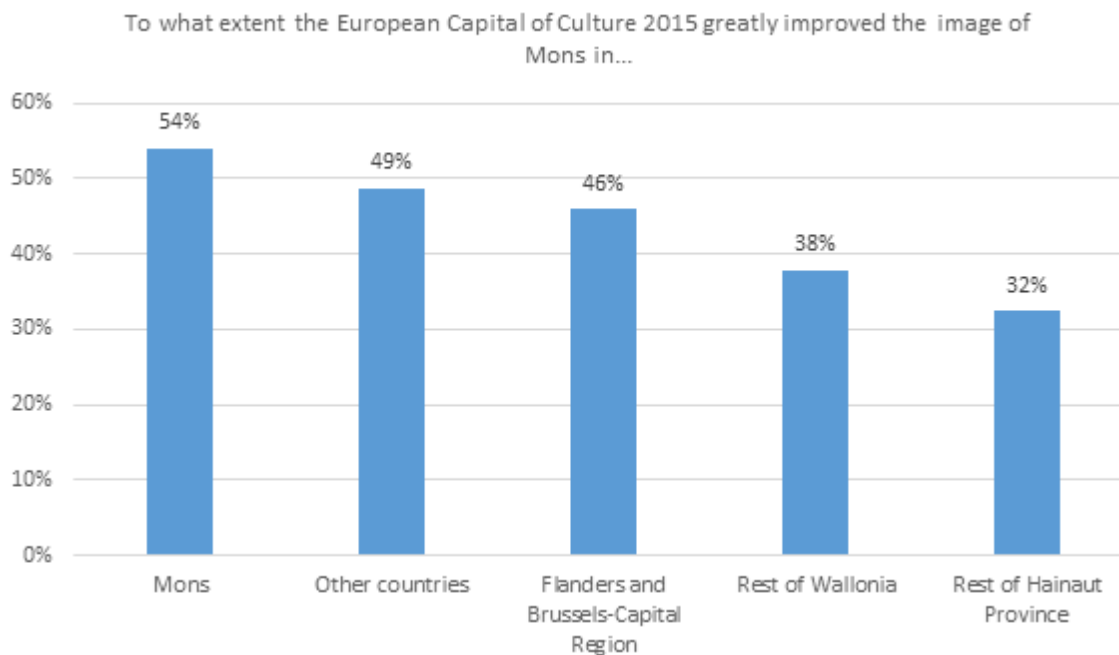


Source: CSES project survey

Mons2015 has had a positive impact on the city’s image, although the extent of impact varies. Research by KEA found that 86% of residents of Mons felt that the ECoC had been a positive thing. This is supported by our survey of projects, which suggests that more than half feel that the ECoC has greatly improved the image of Mons with its own residents. Interestingly, the projects believe that the next highest impact was in other countries, whilst there was some impact elsewhere in Hainaut Province, Wallonia and Belgium. This may reflect a previously negative image of Mons in the rest of Belgium (which can prove hard to overcome), whereas citizens of other countries may not have previously had such a negative image of Mons (having previously been largely unaware of Mons). Evidence from the KEA study suggests that 82% of tourists were satisfied with their visit to Mons during 2015.

³⁰ See, for example: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3MnbP6w6xtNczbMfZ9tFkZL/capitalising-on-culture-van-gogh-and-more-at-mons-2015>; <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/jan/06/mons-belgium-2015-culture-capital-art-museums-beer>; http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2015/01/26/mons-la-fierte-retrouvee-du-borinage_4563325_3246.html; <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/27/travel/van-gogh-france-belgium-netherlands.html>; <https://www.architectural-review.com/archive/viewpoints/mons-hubris-2015-european-capital-of-culture/8677758.article>; <http://dredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/News/1.2192303>.

Figure 2.3 View of projects on the impact of the ECoC on the image of Mons



Source: CSES project survey

2.6 Legacy

2.6.1 Continuing activities and new venues

Like all ECoC, Mons2015 offered a cultural programme that was intended to be a one-off; it was never intended that all the new events in 2015 would continue in future years. However, from the outset, Mons2015 was part of a wider strategy for the development of the city based on culture, tourism and technology. It was therefore intended that some of the activity would be sustained and, indeed, new activities would emerge after 2015, albeit not at the same scale or level of intensity as in 2015.

To that end, Mons has put in place very concrete plans for continuation activity. At the heart of these plans is a proposed biennial, the first edition of which will be "Mons2018". This is intended to be "a major cultural date on an international scale that will revive the spirit of the festive European Capital of Culture" and be "based on the values that brought the success of Mons 2015: an emphasis on proximity, a strong will to share (through the pursuit of interactive and territory projects among other things), innovations, a demanding artistic mentality and, of course, a small touch of craziness".³¹ The biennial will be preceded by a number of large events in 2016 and 2017. The continuation activity is represented by the slogan: "Culture is here".

In addition to the biennial, some of the individual activities that were new for 2015 are being or will be continued. Moreover, all the new venues remain in operation and therefore constitute a permanent increase in the scale and breadth of Mons's cultural offer.

³¹ <http://www.mons2015.eu/en/mons-2018-0>

2.6.2 Cultural governance and legacy arrangements

Whilst the Fondation Mons2015 was a new body and its primary mission was to implement the ECoC, it is not to be disbanded. Instead, the Foundation is to become the Fondation Mons2025. This new foundation will retain some of the staff of the Fondation Mons2015 (although much fewer) and operate from the same premises and under the same governance structure.

The goals of this new foundation are as follows: "We need to keep the momentum and the wind of change that is not only blowing on the city but also blowing people's minds away. We need to maintain the interest and the curiosity that our visitors and our public felt during this exceptional year that has been lauded by all. We need to continue opening the channels of culture, offering intelligent leisure activities, providing art history, etc., for all Mons citizens but also people beyond".³²

The new foundation will continue to operate in partnership with local businesses, in the context of "Club Mons 2025 Entreprises", which will serve as a successor to the Club Mons 2015 and complement the strategy and activities of the Fondation Mons2025, including the biennale in 2018. A launch event in June 2016 at the Mons Memorial Museum attracted both existing members and new members.³³

2.7 Conclusions

2.7.1 Successes

Amongst the successes of Mons2015, we can highlight the following:

Embedding the ECoC in a wider strategy for development. For many years, almost every ECoC has been intended to promote the development of its host city through culture. In the case of Mons, the idea of the ECoC was explicitly embedded in the city's development strategy from a very early stage, i.e. more than 10-12 years before the title-year. Moreover, both the overall programme slogan ("Where technology meets culture") and specific strands of the programme (not least the digital programme and projects such as Café Europa) related very directly to the overall development strategy of the city based on growth of culture and the development of hi-tech enterprises. The long timescale of this strategy and the embedding of the ECoC therein also allowed some very significant investments in cultural infrastructure, which have helped make a success both of the ECoC and of the city's development strategy. Reflecting this, the KEA study estimates that for each €1 invested by the public authorities in the operation budget of the Foundation, there was benefit to the Belgian economy of €5.5. Although Mons was selected according to the criteria of the 2006 Decision, it is thus safe to say that it has effectively addressed the criteria within the 2014 Decision relating to "contribution to the long-term strategy".

³² <http://www.mons2015.eu/en/mons-2018-0>

³³ http://www.telemb.be/les-reportages-mons-le-club-entreprises-2015-devient-2025_d_18896.html

An authentic representation of the culture and heritage of the territory.

Although Mons and the Borinage have not traditionally been seen as cultural destinations, much of the cultural programme of Mons2015 directly drew on or was influenced by the culture and heritage of the territory. Some of that culture was by very well-known artists, as in the case of Van Gogh or Verlaine, but the ECoC gave a greater prominence to the specific connection between those artists and the locality, in terms of their time spent there and the consequent influence on their work. In other cases, the ECoC brought to light a cultural heritage that was not particularly well-known and made it more visible to local and international audiences, as in the case of Lassus. At the more parochial level, the ECoC allowed an expression and celebration of the “arts modestes” of the different communes and towns of the Borinage.

Cross-party political support and stable governance. The history of ECoC show that putting in place effective governance and management arrangements for a large but one-off event can be challenging. There can be different interests and personalities to reconcile, both artistic and political. By definition, there is not usually any precedent within the city that can be drawn on. Compared to other ECoC, the operation of the governance and management arrangements of Mons2015 has been relatively smooth and stable, despite the complexity of the Belgian governance context. One key factor was the strong, high-level political support offered by the mayor at the time of the decision to apply, Elio di Rupo (who later served as Prime Minister of Belgium from 6 December 2011 to 11 October 2014), which does not seem to have come at the cost of cross-party support. Indeed, such support seems to have been reasonably consistent across the application, development and conception of the ECoC and at the different levels (regional, provincial, local). Within the management of the ECoC, Mons2015 is also unusual amongst ECoC in having continuity within the key members of the operational team throughout the process. Moreover, that team was very much rooted locally, although with the necessary international experience and connections required to deliver an effective ECoC.

2.7.2 Lessons in delivery

An early decision to bid. Whilst the process of selecting the ECoC title was not formally launched until 2009, Belgium was earmarked as one of the countries entitled to host the ECoC as far back as 1999. In that context, it made sense for Mons to consider and decide upon an ECoC application in the early 2000s. Whilst the concrete development of the bid did not start until the call for applications issued by the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, important progress was made in the early years, particularly in gaining support at the political level across the different levels of governance, in nominating Le Manège to lead the development and in planning the investments in new cultural infrastructure and venues.

The need for an early presentation of the cultural programme. As highlighted in the evaluation of the 2014 ECoC, the timescales of international media and tour operators require at least some of the important events to be defined well in advance.³⁴ Tour operators typically want to promote packages in the year before the title-year, meaning that key events need to be confirmed up to eighteen months of

³⁴ Fox, T., & Rampton, J., (2015), *Ex-post Evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture 2014*.

more before the title-year. International travel writers and cultural correspondents typically want to report on forthcoming events in the months leading up to the title-year or in the first few weeks of the title-year, which again requires some events to be confirmed. Mons2015 was successful in confirming and communicating some of the main exhibitions as early as autumn 2013. But the impact of the ECoC might have been greater had the overall cultural programme been presented earlier than October 2014.

A targeted approach to reaching international audiences. Mons2015, like most ECoC, sought to gain visibility with international audiences everywhere and attended key tourism fairs in pursuit of that goal. But much of the effort was focussed on target markets that were most likely to provide the increase in visits from outside: Flanders, Netherlands, Germany and (northern) France.

A specific legacy proposition. All cities holding the ECoC title finish their title-year with aspirations to build on their achievements of their cultural programmes in future years. But the end of the year may be followed by the departure of most staff and the disbanding of the delivery agency. A “pause for breath” can become a permanent slowing of activity, as stakeholders focus on other objectives and face competing demands for resources. A strategy that was focussed on delivering a successful ECoC is not updated and momentum is lost. In the case of Mons, it would seem that some of these risks have been mitigated by an early commitment to a specific legacy proposition, in the form of the proposed biennial and the continuation of a Foundation to manage it.

3.0 Pilsen

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The City

Pilsen is the fourth largest city in the Czech Republic and is situated approximately 90 km southwest of Prague. With a population of 165,000 Pilsen is the largest city and the administrative and industrial hub of the Pilsen region, which, with 550,000 inhabitants, accounts for about 5% of the total Czech Republic's population. Although the city is relatively large compared to those elsewhere in the Czech Republic, it is a relatively small city when it comes to hosting an ECoC.

Pilsen has a long history dating back to 1295, when the New Town of Pilsen was founded following the decree issued by King Wenceslas II. Due to the city's strategic location by a number of rivers, Pilsen quickly flourished as an important trade city. In the 16th century, a number of buildings in the city centre were destroyed by fires and, subsequently, Italian builders contributed significantly to the architectural development of the city. Today the city's architectural heritage comprises a number of famous sights, such as the Gothic St Bartholomew's Cathedral, the Renaissance town hall, a Franciscan monastery and a Jewish synagogue. Many of Pilsen's Baroque-style buildings, which date back to the 17th century, were designed by Jakub Auguston, whereas sculptures were constructed by Kristian Widman. Buildings such as the city theatre and museum, the Burgher Hall and houses with Mikolas Ales's graffiti date back to the 19th century. In 1989, the city centre of Pilsen acquired historical landmark status.

Pilsen's industrialisation accelerated in the 19th century when the city's brewery was founded in 1842 and Skoda in 1859. Today, the city is a modern business hub with the Pilsen region accounting for 4.8% of the total GDP of the Czech Republic. The 2013 unemployment level was 6.2% (compared to the national average of 7.7%). Today, the regional economy is dominated by mechanical engineering, food processing, building materials and ceramics, energy production and distribution, metallurgy. More than half of the region's labour force is employed in the service sector. Pilsen is also home to the University of West Bohemia and the Faculty of Medicine of the Prague-based Charles University.

It is worth noting that Pilsen is a relatively prosperous city within the Czech Republic with a generally thriving industrial hub and comparatively high levels of employment. Although some social issues do exist within the city, it does not perceive itself nor do statistics suggest that it is a city suffering common urban problems linked to issues such as unemployment, social unrest, crime or pollution.

3.1.2 The Cultural Sector

Although Pilsen is the industrial hub of the region, the city also boasts an increasing number of cultural institutions and events. The city is home to the JK Tyl Theatre, the city's famous theatre, which has three scenes and four ensembles: the play, the

opera, ballet, operetta and dramaturgy. The European Investment Bank provided the city with a loan, which among other things, financed the construction of a brand-new theatre ('The New Theatre'), which showcases opera, drama, and operetta musical performances and hosts various concerts and exhibitions.

Pilsen is also home to the Gallery of West Bohemia, which is renowned across the entire Bohemian region. The gallery hosts a number of exhibitions on art from different periods and is located in one of the city's gothic buildings, a former butcher shop. The city also has the West Bohemian Museum, one of the largest museums in the Czech Republic, where visitors can find rare European art from the 14th-17th centuries.

Visitors to Pilsen can also visit the Brewery Museum, which documents the development of the brewery sector, as well as the Ethnographic Museum, which is specialised in documenting the culture of the people of West Bohemia and the Puppet Museum, where visitors can see Spejbl and Hurvínek, two famous puppet characters from the city. Pilsen also hosts a number of cultural events such as the Smetana Days (a cultural festival, which takes place in spring), the Theatre Festival, the International Drawing Biennial, Skupa's Pilsen (Festival of the Czech Professional Puppet and Alternative Theatre) and the International Big-Band Festival.

Again, due to its relatively small size, although Pilsen has a thriving cultural scene and a number of high quality cultural offers in the city, the cultural provision is relatively small compared to other ECoC host cities.

3.2 Development of the ECoC

3.2.1 Application

Alongside Belgium, the Czech Republic was entitled to propose a European Capital of Culture for 2015. The managing authority of the European Capital of Culture competition in the Czech Republic was the Ministry of Culture. Three cities submitted a proposal within the fixed deadline as set by the managing authority: Hradec Králové, Ostrava and Pilsen (Prague had already held the title in 2000.)

The general aim of the application was to explain how the ECoC would contribute to the opening up of Pilsen towards Europe and other external influences (whether people or elements). Hence, the development of the slogan "Pilsen, Open Up!". The four project dimensions as outlined later in this chapter were inspired by the four rivers surrounding the city and the city's geographic position and its communist history are utilised as a way of promoting the opening up and the cultural enhancement of the city.

The motivations for Pilsen to apply for ECoC status were generally not focussed on 'tackling urban problems such as unemployment or industrial decline' like many ECoC cities have stated in their bids in the past. Instead, Pilsen recognised that it would not win any bidding process if it posed 'as a Liverpool' or if it 'pretended' to have high levels of poverty which the ECoC would somehow help to address. In the bid book, it was relatively upfront that the city is a prosperous one and that issues such as

unemployment and a declining local economy were not the main motivations for trying to secure ECoC status. Instead, the main driver for ECoC was around more simple messages linked to strengthening and diversifying the cultural offer, making the city more outward looking and fundamentally using ECoC as a 'vehicle for positive change' throughout the city. It also highlighted its relatively small size (165,000 residents) and noted that when Prague had ECoC status in 2000, many commentators felt that the city and its existing cultural offer was simply too big to have any meaningful impact or benefit.

At the pre-selection stage in December 2009, Pilsen and Ostrava were selected as the two candidate cities to be put forward to the final selection round. This assessment was based on the quality of the proposals of the two cities in relation to the assessment criteria, whereas the third candidate city, Hradec Králové, was assessed as not being ready to host the European Capital of Culture award yet. The evaluation panel complimented the Pilsen proposal for the original and creative way in which its bid was presented. The panel made the following suggestions for improvement for the final selection stage:

- The quality and sense of direction of the project should be clarified along with a better integration of a European and an overall vision;
- A better development of tasks and capabilities within the team;
- A clearer evaluation and communication strategy; and
- More details on funding projections.

Following the pre-selection in December 2009, the second selection stage consisted of visits to the two candidate cities by a delegation of the selection panel. The Pilsen field visit was carried out on 6 September 2010 and the visit to Ostrava took place on 7 September 2010.

The final selection meeting was held at the Ministry of Culture in Prague on 8 September 2010. At this meeting, the selection panel presented their general assessment of the two cities, which were both complimented for their professional approach in utilising the European Capital of Culture as an efficient way of developing the local culture and economy in their respective proposals. Pilsen was complimented for the focus of the proposal on utilising the cultural projects planned for 2015 in the general regeneration of the city. Ostrava's project proposal was more focused on long-term urban and architectural plans for the transformation of the city from an industrial hub to a cultural venue and the involvement of civil society in the project was complimented by the evaluation panel. The panel further assessed the feasibility of the two cities' projects in relation to the timeline of four years as well as the possible contribution of the candidate city for Europe in addition to local economic development.

3.2.2 Selection

The final award was given to Pilsen because it was assessed that its proposal best responded to the evaluation criteria ('European dimension' and 'City and citizens'). The major positive points, which were voiced by the evaluation panel were:

- The creativity and the relevance of the presentation and the ability of the delegation to respond clearly to questions posed by the panel. The project's cultural strategy and the integration of the European dimension in the project were also viewed positively.
- Strong political commitment on part of the mayor of the city and all other authorities (including a solid budget) involved as well as the solid and relevant experience of all involved parties.

In the final selection process, Pilsen received the majority of the votes by the selection panel. Ostrava was once again complimented for its hard work and the panel encouraged the city to carry forward its project plans as the panel emphasised that these were feasible even without the ECoC title.

Following the final nomination of Pilsen as the European Capital of Culture 2015, the panel provided a number of recommendations to the organising team, which included:

- A better integration of the private sector in the project given the high concentration of private companies in the area;
- An increase in the budget for marketing activities and a better training of cultural managers; and
- A clear balance between creativity and the long-term cultural strategy of the city.

Furthermore, the organisers were reminded that the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize by the European Commission is not automatic; rather, the city of Pilsen would have to earn it by committing to the plans laid out in its proposal.

3.2.3 Development of Pilsen2015

In overall terms, the **early development stages of Pilsen2015 were largely acknowledged as being poor** and many local stakeholders admitted that the ECoC in Pilsen had a worryingly slow and stuttering start. This did not go unnoticed by the ECoC monitoring committee.

At the first monitoring meeting on 14 November 2012, the panel remarked that a lot was still to be done in Pilsen in order for them to be awarded the monetary prize. The panel was very concerned about the lack of senior management involved in the overall management and the artistic development of the ECoC. Additionally, the panel noted that the ECoC lacked sufficient communication about its activities with the outside world. It also expressed concerns that the organisers had not yet followed through with all the recommendations, which it had received in September 2010. Furthermore, the panel was very concerned about the low size of the budget of €18.5m (much lower than the budget foreseen at bidding stage) and the relatively low engagement of the regional authorities in the project. It was recommended that the city should quickly prepare a first draft of the artistic programme and highlight the intended legacy of the

ECoC for the city. Finally, it was recommended that the organisers work towards better sponsorship agreements.

Many of the local senior stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation stated that the negative early monitoring visits acted as a good stimulus for action. Soon after the monitoring visits and the subsequent reports and letters were received by the Pilsen city administration, a very difficult meeting took place to assess whether the city should continue to progress with the ECoC programme. After it was agreed that efforts should continue, three key decisions and subsequent actions were taken to ensure a rapid and positive response to early failures:

- **The First Deputy Mayor of the City took charge of the overall development process** for Pilsen2015. His personal attention and influence was seen as being important and he publicly stated that the ECoC was the 'number one' priority for the city administration and the city overall. Critically, he ensured that all of the city administration was behind the programme (i.e. public sector staff linked to roads, planning, street cleaning, tourism, city marketing, financial department and local politicians) rather than just a small number of people in the separate 'ECoC team'.
- **An international advisor was employed by the city administration to help understand the failing** in the early development process so far and put forward a clear action plan to help negate the main barriers and problems identified. Actions included simplifying the development process (less red tape, less administration linked to project applications, less themes), cutting the number of projects to something which was deemed more achievable and ensuring a stronger European dimension.
- **Changing the team responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the ECoC programme.** In total, the programme saw four changes in its management, with the changes mainly brought about because of a lack of the right skills to see the actual implementation of the programme become a reality. Early Programme Directors had relatively strong cultural experience and 'artistic flair' but had not managed a programme of this size, others had 'strong ideas on content' but little in the way of putting this into practice, while others were seen as being too locally-focussed (i.e. not looking beyond the boundaries of the city for cultural content and partners).

The second monitoring meeting took place on 9 April 2014. On this occasion, the panel had received an updated progress report from Pilsen and the delegation responded to specific questions, which were addressed by the panel. The Pilsen delegation first presented the progress, which had been made by the organisers since the first poor monitoring meeting, along with additional initiatives, which had been taken by the organisers. The panel expressed a general satisfaction with the degree of progress-which had been made by Pilsen since the first meeting. It expressed a satisfaction with the strengthening of the teams involved in the project. The panel pointed out that a significant number of projects were in the pipeline and that comparatively many of these were to be managed in-house. It expressed concerns that the number of projects would impact the quality of them and it encouraged further negotiations with

external partners. Furthermore, the panel stressed the integration of the European Union brand in the execution of the project as well as the fact that the European Capital of Culture should have a strong legacy for the city in the future. Following this assessment, the city was awarded the Melina Mercouri prize.

During the development process, there were also issues with one of the key ECoC projects known as the Světovar Community Centre project (or, alternatively, the Cultural Factory). This was a key project that was seen as central to the original ECoC application and included a range of elements linked to cultural activities throughout 2015. As well as hosting various cultural events, it was also meant as the city's first incubator for creative businesses (to be open well beyond 2015 and therefore provide a major legacy to the year). Světovar was also a key factor in the success of the city's original selection. Although the redevelopment of the building for this project started, there was a series of setbacks, the most significant of which was finding asbestos in the roof of the building. This meant that a key aspect of the programme was halted and a new site (a former bus depot) was found to deliver similar outcomes in terms of both an incubator unit and also space for cultural activities, known as DEPO2015 (see the case study in section 3.3.1).

The team responsible for developing the programme after the award of ECoC status also felt that the original bid book was too ambitious. This meant that translating it into reality became challenging in the early stages of programme development, particularly when the target audience numbers, the budget and the number and scale of projects were assessed. It was estimated that around 25% of the activity found in the bid book was cut in order to take account of the smaller than anticipated budget (which was around one third of the total budget of Mons).

The table below presents the main public investments in infrastructure and cultural facilities relating to Pilsen2015, including a number of improvements to existing projects. These include two new venues that opened for the first time in 2015:

- New Theatre
- DEPO2015

Table 3.1 Investments in the cultural infrastructure of Pilsen

Investment project	€
New theatre building	41 714 769
Struncovy Sady Sport and Leisure Centre – Brewery – Roudna	3 406 153
GREENWAYS - Rivers Mze and Uslava	640 346
Pilsen of Culture	136 198
Adolf Loos Interiors	221 321
Improving general and aesthetic quality of public areas in Štruncovy Sady	911 230
Lochotin Amphitheatre Reconstruction	1 134 615
Reconstruction of DEPO2015 Creative Zone [instead of 4x4 Cultural Factory Svetovar]	446 625
Total	48 611 260

3.3 Cultural programme

3.3.1 Overview

'PILSEN, OPEN UP! – Otevři si Pilsen!' was the slogan and overarching concept of Pilsen's cultural programme for the 2015 ECoC. In Czech, the slogan refers to the colloquial designation of the beer (translating as 'Open your Pilsener' (beer)), but the usage of the slogan in English was to challenge the traditionally 'closed' nature of Czech society emanating from its historical experience of a totalitarian regime. 'PILSEN, OPEN UP!' was used to encourage the people of Pilsen to interpret the meaning of the slogan in their own way, to enable them to open up to each other, and the rest of Europe through the wider programme of the ECoC events (directly in line with the European dimension). Throughout 2015, over 600 cultural events and experiences were delivered in Pilsen, ranging from theatre and music events to festivals and conferences. To reflect the many interpretations of 'PILSEN, OPEN UP!', the programme of events was delivered through the four work streams already identified at application stage: Arts and Technologies, Relationships and Emotions, Transit and Minorities, and Stories and Sources. The opening ceremony in January touched upon all four themes, bringing together musicians, acrobatic performers and other personalities for the event. The four themes are as follows:

Stream one: Arts and Technologies

The 'Arts and Technologies' stream was established to celebrate and strengthen the link between Pilsen's industrial background, crafts, skills and business. The 'creative incubator' at DEPO2015 was developed to provide the creative people of the Czech Republic and abroad with a space to progress their cutting-edge ideas and to exhibit and open up their work to the public. The first flagship project – 'New Circus Season' – was launched through this stream, with live music, acrobatics and theatre events spanning over 50 evenings across 2015. The 'Imagination Factories' flagship project ran across 2015, opening up five industrial sites in Pilsen for workshops and events for the public. Another flagship project, 'Jiří Trnka and the World of Animation' ran from January to May, with various events showcasing the origins of the art and craft of puppetry and film. The December closing ceremony provided the opportunity to present a restored, digitised version of Jiří Trnka's film, as part of an attempt to preserve the Czech Republic's national film heritage.

Stream two: Relationships and Emotions

The second stream – 'Relationships and Emotions' – was developed to open up the public space of Pilsen, to engage the public in a discussion about their personal and national identity. The flagship project 'Public Space' intended to support this idea, through a variety of events including the 'Festival of Light'. In February, the 'Festival of Light' illuminated Pilsen, with installations and interactive exhibits in eight locations across the city. In May, areas across Pilsen celebrated 'European Neighbour's Day', and more than 5000 residents joined in with the event, through activities such as preparing dinner for people in their neighbourhood. The Relationships and Emotions work stream also supported another flagship project called the 'Hidden City'. For this

project, interactive applications were created to draw residents of Pilsen to more secluded areas in the city, to discover new public places.

Stream three: Transit and Minorities

Over the years, Pilsen has seen a large influx of immigrants from former Soviet Union countries, Mongolia and Vietnam, but the city has struggled to integrate these populations. This work stream was developed to highlight the diversity of the city and its population through various workshops and events. Only one flagship project was established for 'Transit and Minorities', based on the work of the artist, Gottfried Lindauer, who first brought portraits of New Zealand Maoris to Europe. This project supported eight painters in producing portraits of minorities currently living in Pilsen, which were exhibited and shared with the public from June to July.

Stream four: Stories and Sources

The final stream – 'Stories and Sources' – was established to promote tourism based on some of Pilsen's personalities and to reminisce about past events and experiences. The 'Liberation Festival' – celebrating the 70th anniversary of Pilsen's liberation by the US Army - was one of the most popular events of the Capital of Culture programme. Spanning over several days, events included a historical re-enactment, an unveiling of a memorial, and musical events and festivities. In the summer months, the flagship project, 'The Baroque Beauty of West Bohemia' was delivered, celebrating the Baroque landscape of the Pilsen Region. The main event in the project was the '9 Weeks of Baroque', where every week a new area was the backdrop for art, music, fireworks and theatre events. The work stream was also complemented by the flagship project exploring 'Festivals and the Cultural Wealth of Pilsen'. This project ran throughout the year and was focused on highlighting the many cultural institutions in Pilsen, from theatres and exhibition halls to art galleries and museums.

Key highlights identified by stakeholders of the cultural programme were:

Manege Carre Senart: The transformation of Pilsen into the European Capital of Culture was marked by the artistic carousel by the French artist and technologist Francois Delaroziere from suburban Paris that was situated on Republic Square (in the centre of the city). It was accompanied every evening by video projections by the art group 3Dsense onto St Bartholomew's Cathedral. Overall, around 60,000 people attended this project.

The Opening Ceremony: The Symphony of Bells:

The Opening Ceremony of the Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 project directed by the Artistic Chief Petr Forman was watched by 25,000 spectators (see adjacent picture). Pilsen residents participated in four processions that took six months to prepare and which all met in the central square of the city. The



audience then watched the biggest video-mapping event in the Czech Republic and a

'dramatic' crossing above the Square by the Swiss tight-rope walker David Dimitri. The event culminated in the first sounding of the new bells named Bartolomej, Marie, Jan and Hroznata in the cathedral's tower. The return of the bells after 70 years was enabled by three years of money collection by Pilsen residents and local businesses. Bells in 14 other European cities sounded at the same time.

Jiri Trnka Studio Exhibition: A unique multi-media exhibition dedicated to the life and work of Jiri Trnka, the world-famous author of animated films, artist, illustrator and Pilsen native. The collection of exhibited works comprised over 300 original works of art: original film and theatre puppets, paintings, graphic, reliefs and complete collection of original illustrations, a collection of digitalised films and stylised copies of the film, wood-carving and creative studio of Jiri Trnka. The exhibition was seen by more than 25,000 visitors and became one of the most popular events of 2015

Munich – The Shining Metropolis of Art 1870 – 1918: This important international project by the Gallery of West Bohemia was one of three large joint exhibitions as part of the European Capital of Culture 2015 programme and presented the famous Munich School of painting, Munich Jugendstil and the avant-garde movement of the Der Blaue Reiter group. More than 7,000 visitors saw the works by Kandinsky, von Max, von Lenbach, Leibl, von Stuck and the works of Czech artists working in Munich at the time.

Particularly strong and interesting **case studies** from the Pilsen2015 ECoC programme are as follows:

DEPO2015

One of the most important ECoC projects, DEPO2015 was originally a derelict bus depot located about half a mile from the centre of Pilsen. DEPO2015 was often highlighted as one of the key successes of the overall ECoC programme and an important aspect of its implementation as well as its sustainability. The success of the project is even more welcoming as it gestated out of a failed project linked to the development of another building called Světovar for which development plans halted early on in the proceedings due to the identification of asbestos in the fabric of the building.

According to the promotional material 'DEPO2015 is a living space where businesses and culture are combined in innovative solutions'. A key strength of the project is its multifunctional design, as the project (found under one roof) includes:

- co-working offices which allow flexible space for 25 micro (generally one person) companies to work in one space either on joint projects or by themselves. Most of the tenants are artists, designers or IT related businesses.
- a large exhibition space which acts as the main space within DEPO2015 where art and sculpture and other cultural exhibitions, performances take place. During 2015, 28 separate exhibitions took place.
- a café which provides food and drink to visitors of the DEPO2015, open throughout the day and in the evenings.
- a workshop for creative industries to make and build various products and art

DEPO2015

installations- open to tenants and non-tenants of the Depo.

- an enterprise zone where 6 larger companies have office and workshop space (most related to art, culture and the creative industry but not all).
- a former bus yard big enough to host a range of outdoor events including concerts and sporting activities. The biggest activity in 2015 was a large concert with 20,000 people in the crowd.

The project therefore addressed a range of objectives of the ECoC including those attached to culture, enterprise, workspace and building renovation, innovation as well as events and exhibitions. As a consequence of this, the project was often referred to as the 'hub' of ECoC and where a good proportion of the programme was either developed, designed or implemented. The main outcomes of the project range from jobs, commercial space, skills development and economic diversity.

At the heart of DEPO2015 is the 'Centre for Creative Enterprise' which supports business within the culture and creative industries in a number of different ways. First, the project has worked hard to create a sense of community with its tenants so that they are encouraged to design, trade and market themselves together. This was seen as being important by the tenants as they were able to provide 'peer to peer support' to one another on a range of issues related to establishing and growing a small company. Second, DEPO2015 also provides a shared open workshop for making products and prototypes. The strongest of the tenants are put forward to receive on-going help with their business plan with the assistance and mentoring of professionals from cultural and creative industries (usually from large local companies but not always). The DEPO2015 also hosts the residential programme OPEN A.i.R. which has been offering opportunities to Czech artists and creative people to travel abroad and inviting foreign artists to Pilsen since 2012.

The building itself has a feel of an industrial zone with a large amount of open space and a design that still represents the former use of a bus depot as set out in the pictures below.

Specific examples of activities run in the DEPO2015 include:

- Design Thinking Festival conference which facilitated meetings of 230 entrepreneurs with creative individuals and artists presenting possibilities for cooperation (to link culture and commerce together);
- Pilsen Family Photo Album exhibition consisting of around 200 photographs taken in Pilsen and borrowed from local residents;
- various performances from the Prague Dance festival who visited and performed at the Depot throughout 2015;



DEPO2015

and

- Rock of People music festival which had 80 bands and DJs from 26 European countries.

The DEPO2015 project overall was visited by 100,000 people throughout 2015 and for some events over 10,000 people came through the doors in any one weekend.

In terms of the sustainability, the project does seem to represent good practice and is seen as being a key part of the ECoC's overall legacy. Central to this legacy is a constant income stream for the project to ensure it is less (rather than totally) reliant on grant funding. The income stream comes from the hiring of the enterprise space, the hiring of the venue for exhibitions and performances, the café and also because the ECoC team has now moved into the building from their previous office. Some of the activities within the venue are ticketed meaning this also adds to the income of the organisation.

Giant Puppets in Pilsen

The Czech Republic has a long historical link with puppetry as many famous puppeteers have originated from the country. One of the most important aspects of puppets in the Czech Republic links to the Pilsen Puppet Theatre, founded in 1930 by Josef Skupa, one of the most significant Czech puppeteers and later founder of the world-famous Spejbl and Hurvínek Theatre (S & H Theatre) in Prague.

The Pilsen2015 cultural programme had a variety of projects linked to the theme of puppetry. This ranged from projects run by the large and internationally renowned puppet theatre called the Royal de Luxe (a French street theatre seen by 18 million people in more than 170 cities) through to small puppet shows designed and performed by local Pilsen children. Although puppetry was not an overall theme of the ECoC programme, as a cultural genre it became a key part of the overall year.



Giant Puppets in Pilsen



Two key activities which were noted as being particularly successful linked to the puppetry theme seen as being a highlight of the overall programme were:

- Organisers of the Skupa's Pilsen festival worked in collaboration with Artprom to present a unique show intended to be a tribute to Pilsen puppetry and was made specifically for the Pilsen2015 year. As a homage to the tradition of Pilsen puppetry, the Spanish theatre company Carros de Foc opened a special international edition of the Skupa's Pilsen festival with their giant puppets. Over 5,000 visitors had the chance to encounter the puppets in the streets throughout the afternoon and in the evening a procession took place along with dozens of Czech dancers, musicians and acrobats from the main Republic Square and ending at the DEPO2015. Here, the parade culminated in a large show with original music, acrobatics on a large helium balloon and fireworks. This was the first time such a festival had an international dimension and was estimated to be five times larger than the normal annual festival because of the 'ECoC influence'.
- Two high schools in Pilsen were brought together to design and present a high-level puppet show for a paying audience. The project, which was seen as a key part of the curriculum for the pupils' design course, helped local pupils to plan the event (including finding a venue, designing the lighting, marketing and promotional material), developed the storyboard for the show and making the puppets. This was the first time the two schools had worked seriously together and was the first time the children had delivered such an activity to the 'paying public'. The shows ran over three nights, 42 pupils took part and over 300 people attended the shows, making a small profit for future activities.
- The local Puppet Museum increased the scale and scope of its activities throughout 2015 because of additional funding and support from the Pilsen2015 Foundation. This included additional exhibitions, additional shows from international artists,

Giant Puppets in Pilsen

longer opening hours and additional staff in place for larger and busier activities. Although exact visitor numbers were not recorded, the project lead felt that the ECoC year had given the opportunity for the museum to promote itself to a much wider audience than before, which would have a lasting impact through increased visitor figures in the future.

OPEN A.i.R. (Artists In Residence)

The OPEN A.i.R. project allowed Czech artists, particularly those from Pilsen, to work abroad and artists from around the world to come to Pilsen to work. Although the project started in 2012, it was increased in scope and scale for the ECoC year in terms of the number of artists taking place and the type of support they each received. The artists were in residence both in Pilsen and abroad for between 2 weeks and 6 months.

The project was run through the Pilsen2015 delivery team and supported artists by:

- helping to source venues abroad which can play host and be residence to the local Pilsen artists;
- providing practical help in term of transport, accommodation and guidance on the host country and city; and
- providing financial help to pay for the residence in terms of their cultural activities (e.g. pay for the transportation of artwork or sculptures) or for their living expenses.

The project supported 8 local Pilsen artists during 2015 and worked in co-operation with a number of international partners from Slovakia, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands France, and Belgium. A total of 18 artists from these countries was hosted in Pilsen throughout the ECoC year.

The benefits to the projects according to local artists taking part were as follows:

- it helped local artists to 'internationalise' their talents abroad for the first time. All of the local artists taking part in the project had only worked in Pilsen and had never taken their activities outside of the Czech Republic. This had a particularly strong benefit of opening up new networks of people the artists could link up with when they returned to Pilsen. These networks included potential collaborators, potential customers and potential sponsors who the artists would never have 'reached' without the help of the project.
- being in residence abroad also brought financial benefits to artists because some of them were able to sell their talents to a wider set of customers compared to if they had remained in Pilsen. All but one of the Pilsen artists on the project stated that they sold more art pieces, were commissioned to produce more pieces or were booked at more venues as a consequence of their involvement in the project. This therefore brought about a financial benefit and allowed them to remain in the field of art and culture (some of the artists stated that they would not have been able to

OPEN A.i.R. (Artists In Residence)

afford to stay in the field if the increased income from the project had not materialised).

- the project also helped the Pilsen artists to develop new skills and techniques through being involved in artistic activities abroad. These new skills included developing their performance skills (e.g. acting or circus tricks), their new media skills (e.g. using new computer software or social media) or becoming more commercial (e.g. learning how to better market works of art via the internet). All of these skills were put to good use when the artists returned to the Czech Republic.

Some 12% of respondents to the Pilsen2015 project survey also stated that they travelled abroad to meet or perform with European cultural players through their participation in the OPEN A.i.R. project and all of these stated that they would not have done this in the absence of the ECoC. These foreign visits were often in addition to return international visits from foreign artists to Pilsen during the ECoC year itself. These visits were highlighted as being critical in giving local artists their first 'taste' of international work on a foreign stage.

3.3.2 European dimension

The **lack of a strong European dimension** was seen as a weakness of the original ECoC bid for Pilsen and was an on-going issue identified by the monitoring panel during the development of both the original application and the cultural programme once the city was selected. This weakness was identified through an assessment of the monitoring panel reports but also in the wider consultations with stakeholders with all types of stakeholders (including the delivery team, project leads and wider cultural players) agreeing that this was a key weakness of the overall ECoC. Although the main themes and wider goals of the cultural programme in Pilsen mentioned the 'European' ethos in its text, the actual activities and individual projects originally emerging in the early days of the programme were often seen as being too local, involving only local stakeholders, local themes and local organisations. Although the overall banner of Pilsen2015 was "PILSEN, OPEN UP! – Otevři si Pilsen!" which focussed on opening up the city to the outside (including the rest of Europe) the early work of the programme lacked any real European dimension. The lack of real international activities involving stakeholders and artists from outside of the city therefore became an issue often highlighted by many involved in the evaluation as an early problem the programme needed to overcome.

This problem was partly seen by the Pilsen2015 Foundation as stemming from the difficult balance between trying to showcase local talent and culture in the city, coupled with the enthusiasm of small local artists (who wanted to 'perform their activities to the world') but also a need to involve activities from outside of the city from other European countries. The need to look 'beyond the city boundaries' for cultural content was also made harder by Pilsen being a relatively small city with fewer cultural players who already had established European connections and who generally already worked with foreign partners prior to 2015. This was particularly true when

compared to Pilsen's larger counterparts in, for example, Prague or Brno whose cultural infrastructure had long-term relationships and networks across the world.

This early problem around articulating the European dimension was partly overcome by the employment of international advisors by the city authority who were tasked with 'making the programme look and feel more European' and ensuring that the actual activities found in the programme involved cultural content co-produced by cultural operators from other European countries. As well as the advisors providing advice and guidance on the European dimension drawn from good practice from other past ECoC cities, they also provided practical recommendations on how local cultural players could source and work with their counterparts in other countries with them again providing good practice examples of how this had been done previously in other host cities.

The employment of a new General Director (the director who would eventually oversee the programmes delivery) also helped strengthen the European dimension as his previous career had been spent in Prague rather than Pilsen. This meant that his networks and contacts were often seen as more international and external to previous Programme Directors who had generally only worked in Pilsen. The General Director also ensured that a key selection criterion for projects was the level of European links found in their application plans. Although this was not the only key selection criterion for projects, it was seen as one of the key aspects to consider when finalising the main programme.

Once the initial problems around a lack of a European dimension were identified, the Pilsen2015 Foundation staff provided practical help to local projects to link them up with possible European partners as well as sourcing European artists themselves who could become part of the cultural programme. This work to make the Pilsen ECoC programme more 'European' did cause some tension locally as some local artists and cultural players perceived that they were being 'pushed out' of the ECoC programme in favour of larger European players, partners and performers. This led some of these local cultural stakeholders to become relatively vocal in their opposition to the programme including, for instance, putting on separate cultural activities at the same time as key ECoC projects or writing letters to the local press stating their concerns. However, the tension caused by transforming a local programme into a European one was limited to a relatively small handful of stakeholders and the problems linked to ensuring a true European dimension to Pilsen2015 were generally confined to the early development stages of the programme.

As stated above, during 2014 the programme and project staff worked hard to embed a European dimension which manifested itself in a range of strong projects that had clear European links and joint working. In overall terms, artists from 50 countries participated in Pilsen2015 activities. Of these 50 countries, 27 were European. The Pilsen2015 project survey found that 53% of projects had made European contacts and networks as a consequence of the ECoC programme mainly in eight countries (Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Poland, Croatia, Slovakia and Italy).

Interestingly, stakeholders felt that the added value of ECoC around the European dimension was particularly high because many of the cultural operators in the city did

not previously have links with European organisations. As stated earlier, if Prague or another larger city from the Czech Republic was given ECoC status (whose cultural operators already had strong external links to foreign partners) then the level of 'new' European relationships formed because of ECoC was likely to be much lower.

Examples of projects in Pilsen2015 which had particularly strong European dimensions were as follows:

- the **Gallery of West Bohemia** started collaboration with German art museums to facilitate the exhibition "Munich – Shining Metropolis of Art", which was a very popular and well-visited exhibition. The first-ever retrospective exhibition of this artist was done in close cooperation between the Pilsen gallery, the museum of art in Berlin as well as the Auckland Art Gallery in New Zealand. This project represented a strong joint collaboration between the three galleries/museums in terms of marketing, gallery set-up, technical support as well as the general visitor experience- with the West Bohemian gallery reporting capacity building learning through participation with the other two more experienced partners.
- an **international exchange grant** was established as a project of Pilsen2015 which facilitated and funded a well-received exchange programme of artists that partly facilitated study or collaboration trips of artists from Pilsen abroad and vice-versa. The project therefore gave practical and financial help to bring about a more European ECoC programme in Pilsen. Artists receiving an exchange grant were from the areas of graphic design, painting and dance who had no previous experience of working with European partners and who would directly deliver activities linked to the cultural programme. In total, 19 foreign artists had residential stays in Pilsen and 8 Czech artists worked abroad as a consequence of this exchange project.
- The **Rock for People Europe concert** is a Czech Republic music festival which came to Pilsen for the first time in 2015 (see below). 80 bands and DJs from 26 European countries performed a special 'European edition' of this annual rock concert. Artists included international celebrities such as Motorhead, Pete Doherty and Parov Stellar, along with local bands from Pilsen.
- The **West Bohemia University and the Faculty of Art and Design** was also often highlighted as an organisation who took advantage of the ECoC status of the city to extend its international network, especially reaching out to other EU universities to widen its foreign network. This included a project working with four other Universities in Europe to map, record and present the work of Ladislav



Sutnar who is a famous Czech graphic design personality with a global reputation who emigrated to the US due to the uprising of socialism in the Czechoslovakia.

The Pilsen2015 Foundation also encouraged many of the local artists and organisations delivering ECoC projects to join relevant European associations and networks linked to their cultural genre. This included local organisations joining the European networks linked to orchestras, choirs, graphic design and ballet, which all gave Pilsen cultural organisations direct access to a wide range of new potential partners in their sphere of work.

3.3.3 City and citizens dimension

The original bid book of Pilsen2015 mentions on a number of occasions the desire for the cultural programme to put citizens and general public at the heart of the cultural programme in terms of its content, design and delivery. Although the bid book again provides limited detail on how this overall goal was to be delivered, there were a large number of individual and practical activities put in place to ensure the involvement and empowerment of residents. These activities were focussed on the following:

- Key to the involvement of citizens was the **Foster the City project** which was focussed on the improvement of small public spaces in the city into places where local people 'want to play, meet and enjoy'. Local people identified public spaces across Pilsen that were in need of improvement (ranging from neglected 'corners' of public parks, communal gardens of blocks of residential flats to the banks of the local river). Ideas submitted by local residents were reviewed by a panel consisting of local people who were empowered to make their own decision on which projects to support. A total of 9 projects received support, with €75,000 being allocated overall. These projects saw the revitalisation of public spaces thanks to local volunteers working with the city authorities to implement the ideas originally submitted by local people. Once the spaces were improved there was always a celebration which was again driven by local people. Celebrations included neighbourhood dinners, neighbourhood walks, family outdoor afternoons for children and neighbourhood festivals. The case study on this project is found below.

Foster the City

The key aim of this project was to deal with a number of open public spaces across Pilsen which had fallen into dereliction and disrepair. These spaces might be 'forgotten corners' of parks, green space at the edge of car parks/railway stations or open space outside a local school that look unkept and which people do not tend to frequent. The project worked by setting up a competition where locations around the city were put forward as possible places to invest the funding to improvement. The competition was open to applications from community groups, schools and individuals.

At the heart of this project were the local communities which live or use these public spaces and the project worked on the principle that it is better to empower people to improve their own area rather than having someone else improve it for them. Firstly, local people established their own project committee to identify the open space which they thought needed to be improved and put forward a short 'case' for why it should be supported. This case was put forward to a decision group that again consisted of

Foster the City

local people from across the city who agreed a total of 8 projects to be supported.

Once approved, local people were again tasked with organising the project with support from the Foster the City team (consisting of two full time staff and around 5-10 regular volunteers) and architects and other specialists. If schools were the applicants of successful projects, then the school children partly undertook the work and also ensured the areas' on-going upkeep. Once the project plan was agreed, the team of local volunteers was then tasked with undertaking the improvements with financial help from the project which was generally used to pay for materials and planting.

One example of such as project is run by the Masaryk Elementary School who have improved an area called Covent Garden on Jirasek Square. Through running the project the school pupils have learnt:

- how to generate interest and support for the project among the local community and therefore the importance of being democratic,
- design work including working with a local architect to come up with the design concept;
- how to project manage including budgeting, risk assessments and critical path analysis; and
- horticulture, including the importance of choosing the right plants to match the position of the sun, the type of soil found at the site etc.

Local people are also responsible for 'marketing' the improved area to local residents and often have a launch day which includes community picnics, community plan sales and community concerts and other cultural activities. Finally, local people are tasked with the general upkeep of the open space although (depending on the size and nature of the project) the city authorities also play a role in keeping the space tidy and presentable. The projects are collectively part of a wider Foster the City education programme aimed at educating citizens on the subject of open space and architecture which includes lectures, seminars and guided tours taking place across key improved sites.

- A **volunteering programme** engaged active volunteering from Pilsen residents across a range of ECoC projects. A total of 515 volunteers were identified and trained through the ECoC to help undertake a range of roles including crowd control and signposting at larger events, undertaking local marketing, helping escort foreign artists around the city, helping with translations for foreign tourists, as well as helping to set up various events and activities (e.g. building stages, lighting rigs etc.). As well as giving the overall ECoC programme much needed resources in terms of running events, the volunteer programme also helped to ensure that a large number of enthusiastic residents became part of its delivery team and partly owned its production.
- Over 1,100 participants took part in a number of **neighbourhood walks** that ran across the city throughout 2015. These neighbourhood walks were run by local

people who delivered 'professional' guided walks for visitors to the city taking into consideration the history of the neighbourhood and covering pertinent events such as the World Wars, the rise of communism and the uprising of socialism. Guides were encouraged to use personal stories of the aforementioned issues.

It was also noticeable (compared to other ECoC programmes) that **local people themselves were often the subject of various ECoC exhibitions**, shows and performances meaning that local citizens again became a key aspect of the overall ECoC programme. For example, the 'Pilsen Family Photo Album: A Paradise Among Four Rivers' (see below) included over 200 pictures submitted by local people of past Pilsen residents which was visited by 5,150 people, a group of local artists used older residents as subjects for their portraits which included short stories about their lives as well as a local photography group photographing local people to use in a large public exhibition. Many stakeholders taking part in the evaluation were quick to state that a key aspect of the city and citizens dimension related to local people being the actual subject of the culture that was on offer throughout the ECoC year.



Through consultations with projects supported by Pilsen2015, the evaluation has also found that existing cultural projects have been able to use the additional funding that ECoC has made available to support specific target groups within Pilsen's community. The additional 'new' or extra activities put on in 2015 included specific shows for targeted audiences (i.e. shows specifically for younger people which had not been possible previously), exhibitions that helped people with disabilities (e.g. the blind and deaf) enjoy culture (which again had not been possible before) and simply being able to open their facilities for longer hours. Although the amount of cultural activities targeted specifically at these groups was perhaps less than other ECoC (explained mainly due to the size of the budgets the ECoC had available), there was still an attempt to focus some of its cultural programme on these community groups.

3.4 Governance and funding

3.4.1 Governance

At the heart of the governance arrangements for the ECoC was the **Pilsen2015 Foundation**. The Foundation is a non-profit organisation established by the city authority in 2010. The organisation was responsible for the preparation and implementation of the ECoC programme overall and had a staff which fluctuated between 50-60 at the peak of the ECoC year (summer 2016). The Foundation was comprised of an administrative board and a supervisory board, which consisted of six people each made up of representatives from Pilsen City, Pilsen Region and the national Ministry of Culture for the Czech Republic.

The Pilsen2015 Foundation (see picture below) provided strategic direction for the entire ECoC programme, managed a number of key projects (e.g. the opening ceremony) and supported the design and delivery of ECoC activities run by other organisations within the city and beyond. Although the Foundation had a difficult start (highlighted earlier) the **general perception of the organisation and its staff was very positive**. 65% of projects taking part in the Pilsen2015 project survey reported that they thought the overall programme was well run, which is relatively high considering the large difficulties and negative press which it encountered in its early days. Most projects interviewed as part of the evaluation reported that they had received hands-on advice and support by the Foundation which was a point backed up during interviews with ECoC projects taking part in the evaluation process. All projects interviewed during the evaluation felt that the Foundation staff were helpful, knowledgeable and pragmatic (e.g. willing to be flexible when original plans needed to change).



Although there was a total of four Programme Directors during the development stages of the ECoC, the last Programme Director was seen to bring both a good knowledge of the cultural agenda but also a clear remit of delivery and implementation to ensure 'things got done'. Linked to this strength was the fact that the senior team at the Foundation remained intact during the year and are still in place today.

It is worth noting that, according to those involved in the delivery of the ECoC in the Pilsen Foundation, a key weakness identified in both the development and delivery stages of the ECoC was the limited involvement of the National Government. Previous ECoC cities have enjoyed a relatively higher involvement of their national Ministries for Culture in the planning and delivery of their ECoC programmes. Although policy-makers linked to the National Ministry of Culture were involved in some aspects of the strategic direction of the ECoC as well as some of the bid preparation, their

involvement was sometimes seen as being relatively superficial with them generally not being involved in supporting project development and delivery.

This had a number of negative impacts according to the delivery team including a lack of their involvement in marketing the ECoC (through their tourist offices) and less involvement in using the Ministry's networks into the cultural agenda to support the development of the programme content.

However, views on the involvement of the National Ministry from outside of the ECoC delivery team were less negative. The Ministry's involvement in financing the programme was generally in line with other ECoC, with around 20% of the overall budget coming from national sources. In addition, their involvement at the bid preparation stage was also generally seen as being positive as they helped in the early days to identify and then support Pilsen with their initial and final bid.

3.4.2 Funding

The total budget for Pilsen2015 was €18.2m which was largely in line with what was projected at the bid stage. The table below provides the income for the ECoC between 2011 and 2016 provided by the Pilsen2015 Foundation.

Table 3.2 Financial Sources for the Pilsen2015 ECoC

Financing sources	Expected income [bid book 2009] €	%	Real income 2006-16 €	%
Pilsen City	16 065 000	48,1%	8 246 279	45.2%
Pilsen Region	3 392 000	10,1%	1 789 000	9.8%
Ministry of Culture of Czech Republic	3 292 000	9,8%	3 788 630	20.8%
EU funds [incl. Melina Mercouri]	4 892 000	14,6%	1 904 173	10.4%
Sponsoring	1 608 000	4,8%	1 175 748	6.4%
Ticketing and Merchandising	1 042 000	3,1%	520 717	2.3%
Other	3 195 920	9,5%	823 682	4.5%
TOTAL	33 486 920	100%	18 248 229	100%

Firstly, the table confirms the comparatively small budget of the Pilsen ECoC (with just €18m compared to €72m in Mons). The table also shows that the majority of the funds (86%) were from the public sector whilst the remainder came from either sponsorship, ticketing or merchandising. As is typical of past ECoC, the majority of funding came from either local or regional sources, and a relatively small amount came from national Government sources (20%). The percentage of the total income for the ECoC coming from ticketing sales was 2.3% of the total which, although low, is generally in line with ECoC from the previous three years (being found between 1-5% of the total budget). This was partly explained by the small amount of high profile concerts and exhibitions; even though they were ticketed, the ticket price was

relatively low and the audience figures relatively small. EU funding mostly came from the Melina Mercouri Prize. Although Pilsen publicised the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize, there was limited publicity of the award by the European Commission.

It is worth noting that €8.2m was provided by Pilsen City. Although relatively small in real terms, it was a large figure when the size of the administration and its original budget on culture (amounting to €2.5m in 2011 and 2012) is taken into account and shows the commitment which this city had to the ECoC year.

The above table also provides details provided by the Pilsen2015 Foundation of expected income for Pilsen2015 from the bid book against the real income the programme received by mid-2016. In actual terms, the original monitoring committee were right to be concerned about the overall budget of the ECoC dropping from bid stage to inception stage. The bid book put forward a programme costing €33m whilst the actual budget was just over half that at €18m. This fall in income came across a range of different sources including an €8m drop in income from Pilsen City, a large percentage drop from the region, as well as the inability to attract the expected level of EU funds. All of these drops were put down to a severe lack of public funds at a time when this sector was under pressure to 'save rather than spend' as stakeholders in the Pilsen City put it.

The further table below shows the expenditure of Pilsen2015 by the main activities of the ECoC. Not surprisingly, 86% was used for programming, but a comparatively low figure (€2.9m) was used for marketing, showing that this was perhaps seen as being less of a priority for the city. The €577k in the reserve pot was transferred into the Foundation for 2016 to pay for legacy activities.

Table 3.3 Expenditure for Pilsen2015 ECoC

Financing sources	Total Expenditure 2006-16 (€)
Marketing	2 949 794
Programme	12 376 282
Administration Costs	2 344 986
Reserve	577 168
TOTAL	18 248 229

3.4.3 Marketing and communication

Marketing and communication activities for the ECoC centred on a range of key actions and tools in order to ensure as many potential partners, residents and visitors were aware of the ECoC programme as possible from a local, national and international perspective.

The creation of the ECoC website which (during 2015) was continuously updated with the on-going cultural activities taking place in the city was the key tool used to market and communicate activity during the year. The website (produced in three EU languages) also provided extensive information on accommodation, food and drink and other tourist activities within the city and region.

The close collaboration between Pilsen2015 Foundation staff and various media outlets at local, national and international levels was also seen as a key aspect of the marketing and communication plans. As with other ECoC, most of the plans revolved around contacting, hosting and supporting journalists to write about the ECoC programme and the wider city with a view to ensuring high levels of coverage across different media outlets. Between the end of 2014 and the end of 2015, a total of 325 foreign journalists visited Pilsen and many more local and national journalists attended (and covered) various ECoC activities during the year. This work cumulated in the following outputs:

- 3,500 news pieces produced that directly relate to the ECoC across local, national and international press outlets published between December 2014 and December 2015;
- the media TV partner (Czech Television) dedicating 17 hours of broadcast time to activities in Pilsen during 2015;
- 43 contributions (i.e. interviews, comments) to the main Czech news programme totalling 75 minutes during their cultural events programme; and
- the live broadcast of the opening ceremony on Czech Television.

In terms of the tone of the media coverage, the tourism team at the Pilsen Municipality undertook their own assessment of the type of messages seen in the above media coverage and whether the content was generally positive or negative. They found that 86% of the coverage was either positive or generally descriptive (i.e. generally described the events due to take place and provided factual information without stating whether the activities were positive or negative). 14% of the media coverage had a more negative tone. However, the negative views put forward were all focussed on specific elements of the cultural content of the ECoC rather than the ECoC itself. For example, there was negative newspaper coverage of a few exhibitions and on a small number of theatre productions rather than on more fundamental related issues such the costs of the ECoC or whether the city should have bid for ECoC status in the first place.

Stakeholders stated that most of the obvious and more high profile media coverage tended to be found in either local or national media with less significant coverage being reported internationally. However, media monitoring did pick up smaller articles about Pilsen (which included mentions of the ECoC) in 11 daily newspapers including The Times (UK), Le Soir (Belgium), Wiener Zeitung (Austria) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany).

It is worth noting that, due to budget constraints, there was **no largescale marketing campaign** for the ECoC in Pilsen and that the city relied more on positive press coverage and visits to their website as the main method of communication. Although thousands of leaflets were printed and distributed throughout the city (to hotels and other visitor 'hotspots'), there was no proactive focus on reaching out to potential international visitors using advertising or public relations campaigns. This was mainly down to cost, with many stakeholders taking part in the evaluation

recognising that, with the limited budget, their preference was to focus on cultural content rather than large and expensive advertising campaigns.

According to the Pilsen2015 delivery team, the **role of the national Government and national tourism agencies in terms of marketing and communication was relatively small**. Mirroring the general involvement of the national Government in the overall ECoC programme, the extent to which the national Ministry of Culture distributed ECoC literature and other material through its outlets was limited which led some stakeholders to assume the 'reach' of the ECoC nationally and internationally was probably small. To many this felt like a missed opportunity and a lack of joint working between local and national players around the theme of communication was often highlighted as an overall weakness of the ECoC.

Although covered in more detail later in this chapter, the lack of significant marketing and communication at the international level was seen as being one of the contributing factors that led to **only 5% of the audiences of ECoC projects coming from foreign countries** and also only a small proportion of the overall expenditure from ECoC visitors (13%) coming from international locations.

It is interesting to note that some of the key stakeholders involved in the evaluation were sometimes 'resigned' to accepting that the majority of marketing and communication activity should be targeted at the local and regional level rather than trying to target national and international visitors. Reasons for marketing at the more local level included an acceptance that Pilsen is a relatively long way from Prague (where the vast majority of international visitors come), a lack of a local airport for international tourists to easily access the city as well as a small budget that would simply not allow the programme to have any meaningful impact in the highly competitive international tourism market. (These points are covered in more detail under the results section of the chapter.)

3.4.4 Local research

The delivery team at Pilsen2015 instigated a range of studies and evaluations to help understand the nature of the ECoC programme (in terms of participation, audience numbers, ticket sales etc.) as well as the impact and legacy of the programme. The main studies commissioned are as follows:

- survey of all projects funded through Pilsen2015 (used throughout this chapter);
- economic impact assessment of the ECoC delivered by the West Bohemian University;
- assessment of the media coverage linked to the ECoC in Pilsen undertaken by Charles University Prague;
- assessment of visitor numbers to the city undertaken by the Czech Tourism Agency;
- two economic impact reports on large events, including the economic impact of the opening ceremony;
- tourism visitor figures for the entirety of 2015; and

- qualitative assessment undertaken by the Cultural Manager at ECoC on partner views around impact, legacy and lessons learnt.

In some of these studies, Pilsen experimented with using “big data” to understand a number of key aspects of the ECoC programme, particularly those linked to attendance figures. This included gathering mobile phone data to record the locations of visitors to the city, as well as the time they spent in different locations. Using this data, and employing a specialist mobile phone intelligence company, the Pilsen2015 Foundation were able to understand how many people visited the city, who the visitors were (e.g. age and gender), when they visited the city, which part of the city they visited and how long they stayed in the city. The results of this information are found in the annex to this report.

3.5 Results

This section highlights the main results of Pilsen2015 in relation to the four specific objectives of the ECoC Action. One weakness of the selection and monitoring process is that cities are not required to provide a comprehensive baseline of their cultural capacity, cultural offering and economic and social situation. As we have noted in the introduction section of the report, the timing and scope of the evaluation do not allow a comprehensive baseline to be recreated “after the event”. However, any evidence that was publicly available or provided by the cities to the evaluator has been used to give a picture of the situation prior to the title-year.

3.5.1 Cultural impacts

A key result of the Pilsen2015 ECoC according to the interviewees and the review of the cultural programme has been around **strengthening the cultural offer of the city** in terms of volume, content and quality. Although Pilsen was seen as having a relatively strong cultural offer prior to 2015 (particularly compared to other cities of similar size), the ECoC year helped push the boundaries on the cultural offer to a level not experienced before, according to the stakeholders consulted through the evaluation.

The Pilsen2015 project survey showed that 68% of projects supported by Pilsen2015 did not exist prior to the ECoC year. Although many of the organisations delivering the projects were in existence, the actual activities (in terms of performances, exhibitions and events) were generally new. Examples of new activity stimulated by ECoC include the JK Tyl Theatre and Puppet Museum in the city. Although both facilities had previously delivered special summer exhibitions to coincide with the summer tourist trade, 2015 saw them double (for the JK Tyl Theatre) and triple (for the Puppet Museum) the amount of activities taking place. As mentioned earlier (in section 3.3.3), the additional extra activities put on in 2015 by these two cultural operators included specific shows for targeted audiences, such as young people and people with disabilities.

As stated elsewhere in this report, cultural impacts were also focussed on helping cultural operators and cultural content in the city become **more externally facing** - particularly to European influences and activities. A concern of the development phase of the ECoC and an issue highlighted more generally by some cultural stakeholders in the city was around the 'local' focus of the cultural offer and a lack of an international flavour to exhibitions, performances and other artistic content. When asked how the ECoC has impacted on the cultural offer of the city, all but one stakeholder taking part in the evaluation stated that it had diversified the offer to external influences, content and artists. Two thirds of respondents to the Pilsen2015 project survey stated that their work and activities were now much more diverse internationally as a consequence of taking part in the ECoC year and that this diversity would continue beyond the year itself. (More details on this result are found in the European dimension part of the chapter.)

Although difficult to measure, another common result of the ECoC year on the cultural offer of the city was around **improving the quality of the cultural scene** in the city. The survey carried out by Ondrej Jirkovsky (as yet unpublished) on the perceptions of local Pilsen residents on the quality of culture in Pilsen showed that 76-80% of residents felt that the city now has a much higher quality offer for them to enjoy. A better quality cultural offer came in many forms according to individual ECoC projects consulted ranging from:

- better quality equipment: including ECoC funding paying for new equipment linked to ICT, cameras, lighting, video editing, stage design and marketing material;
- better quality content: including 'better' artists (who had higher profiles and who were more recognised artistically), higher quality art installations and generally stronger productions; and
- a better quality of visitor experience: including ECoC funding being used on aspects to improve a visit to, for example, a local gallery including higher quality signage, seating and lighting.

As a consequence of the better quality of offer, the survey of Pilsen residents carried out by Ondrej Jirkovsky showed that satisfaction levels of the cultural offer in the city had risen from 65% in 2010 to 90% in 2015.

Another related impact of the ECoC year on the cultural offer of the city came through the obvious impact of **more funding going to local cultural projects**. 34% of projects taking part in the Pilsen2015 project survey stated that additional new funding was the biggest benefit for them as an organisation with a further 60% saying that it was of 'some benefit' to their organisation from being involved in ECoC. The projects mainly used the funding to help pay for:

- additional staff: ECoC projects used additional ECoC funding to pay for new staff resources. These staff were often only temporary or had one off employment contract (e.g. employed to support a particularly short term exhibition or event) or were employed for a specific area of expertise (e.g. to help strength a project's website);

- additional equipment: as stated above, additional ECoC funding was used to pay for new equipment, improve facilities at cultural venues or one off-payments for hiring specialist services (e.g. a TV crew); and
- actual artistic content: funding was also used to commission a new piece of art, pay for a particular artist or performer or hire in new items for exhibitions or events.

Linked to the above issue of funding, a further financial impact of the ECoC year was linked to **increased incomes for local cultural operators** coming from ticket sales and entrance fees as a consequence of an increase in visitors during the year. According to the economic impact assessment of the ECoC delivered by the West Bohemian University, 1.4 million visitors attended activities organised through ECoC projects throughout the year who spent around €20m directly with ECoC projects. Projects again used this funding to help support new activity, buy new equipment or employ new staff in a way that would not have been possible without the additional visitors which ECoC attracted to the city.

Although nearly all of the ECoC projects stated that a key result was additional financial support for their activities and organisation, most also stated that this extra funding was relatively short lived and only had a positive impact during the ECoC year itself. (This issue is dealt with in more detail in the sustainability section of this chapter.)

3.5.2 Access and participation

Statistics on audience numbers for Pilsen2015 activities show a strong performance throughout the ECoC year, particularly compared to previous years. Figures collected as part of the Pilsen2015 Evaluation show that 1.4 million visitors attended ECoC projects through 2015. **This number of visitors was a 28% increase from the two years prior to 2015.** The events which had particularly high audience and visitor figures were as follows:

- The Liberation Festival: 219,000 visitors
- Giant puppets in Pilsen (Skupa's Pilsen festival): 73,000 visitors
- Manege Carre Senart: 60,000 visitors
- Lively Street Festival: 47,000 visitors
- Exhibitions: Jiri Trnka Studio and Trnka's Garden: 44,000 visitors
- The Light Festival: 40,000 visitors
- The Opening Ceremony (all events on 16-19 January): 43,000 visitors
- Fresh Festival Pilsen 2015: 33,000 visitors
- The Historical Weekend or Pilsen's Ghosts and Mummery: 30,000 visitors
- Bavarian Days: 25,000 visitors.

As well as ECoC encouraging larger audiences, Pilsen2015 projects also encouraged a wider and more diverse audience base in 2015 compared to previous years. The research team undertaking part of the ECoC evaluation in Pilsen (delivered by the West Bohemian University) undertook a survey of local residents regarding their consumption of culture in 2010 and then again in 2016. The survey showed two key findings to demonstrate a more diverse audience was stimulated through ECoC:

- a third of local residents now regularly (at least once every two weeks) consume culture in 2016 compared to 2010. Although there is no data to understand the extent to which this large increase is down to ECoC, almost all stakeholders taking part in the evaluation thought that this rise was closely linked to the existence of Pilsen2015;
- the survey also asked the type of culture they regularly consumed in 2010 and again in 2016. The results show that in 2010 the cultural activities most enjoyed by local residents were going to the cinema and watching TV, whilst in 2016 the most enjoyable form of culture experienced by residents was watching live music and visiting exhibitions. This means the type and nature of cultural consumption in the city changed before and after the ECoC year towards higher level (and more 'sophisticated' as one stakeholder stated) cultural genres.

Stakeholders also generally thought that ECoC had helped raise the overall profile of culture in people's lives. The above survey of local residents also asked them to rank how important culture was in their lives compared to other aspects including family, friends, work, religion, wealth and politics. In 2010, culture was ranked as the seventh most important compared to fourth in 2016, meaning culture had risen up their agenda in terms of contributing to a fulfilling life. Stakeholders felt that this general rise in the importance of culture in the city's population would lead them to regularly access cultural activities in the city beyond 2015 and therefore have a longer-term impact of increasing visitor numbers to cultural activities more generally.

Compared to other ECoC programmes (including Mons), there were **fewer projects specifically targeting certain groups in the city** including young people, old people and the disadvantaged. Although these groups undoubtedly attended and benefitted from ECoC projects during 2015, there was no particular focus on distinct groups within the overall cultural programme. Included in this was a lack of targeting of more disadvantaged groups in the city, such as those living in poorer neighbourhoods or those who are, for instance, on low incomes or out-of-work. When questioned about why this was the case, interviewees at programme and project level tended to respond that there were fewer deprived groups found within Pilsen compared to other host cities and that that the comparatively smaller number of projects, population and budget found in Pilsen did not allow the city to deliver projects targeted at specific groups.

Another key aspect of the result of Pilsen2015 on access and participation was around the cultural operators in the city attracting more audiences from outside of the city itself. Although a few of the stakeholders stated that ECoC had been good at attracting new foreign audiences to the city, the Pilsen2015 project survey showed that only 5% of audiences to ECoC activities were from abroad (with 60% of audiences of ECoC

projects coming from Pilsen, a further 20% from elsewhere in the surrounding Pilsen region and 15% coming from other regions of the Czech Republic). This therefore suggests that although participation and access was widened during 2015 as a consequence of ECoC, this increase in participation was mainly from relatively local rather than international audiences. When questioned around why participation in ECoC cultural activities was mainly confined to local people most stakeholders stated that this was because:

- the marketing budgets to target international visitors was low compared to other ECoC cities and Pilsen2015 was unable to afford a high-profile campaign. This meant international marketing for the ECoC programme was generally reliant on foreign press picking up and writing news stories on the ECoC year rather than the Pilsen2015 Foundation being proactive in designing and rolling out its own marketing strategy; and
- although the cultural programme was relatively large in comparison to the size of the city, stakeholders did not necessarily feel the programme had the status and profile to truly encourage foreign visitors to come to the city specifically to attend ECoC events. If foreign tourists did visit ECoC events, it was more because they were visiting the city anyway as part of their holidays and would visit a project as part of their wider plans.

3.5.3 Cultural capacity

The Pilsen2015 project survey provides a range of evidence to suggest **cultural operators in the city have benefitted in the longer term** as a consequence of their involvement in ECoC activity. These benefits were mainly focussed on the cultural operators gaining more skills and capacity across a range of disciplines for them to use in the future to provide better and bigger cultural offers for local residents and visitors.

Firstly, the ECoC 'brand' **opened doors to new relationships** in a way that many felt would definitely not have been possible without the year taking place. 18% of respondents to the Pilsen2015 project survey reported that taking part in the year and using the 'status' and brand of ECoC allowed them to talk to more and higher profile partners, sponsors and funders in a way that normally would not have been possible. For example, the West Bohemian Gallery made links with international players and artists in a way that they had not done previously with the Gallery curators stating that they made more links in 2015 than over the past ten years put together. The ECoC brand also helped local curators, managers and artist bookers to reach out and secure higher profile artists and performers who were keen to become involved in the ECoC year, partly because it gave the artists kudos themselves or because they were likely to be seen by more audiences compared to if they had gone to another city that did not have ECoC status.

Secondly, and perhaps most obviously, was that cultural operators reported much **stronger skills and experience in designing and delivering larger and better cultural activities** as a consequence of being involved in ECoC, with projects reporting that they had benefitted from participation in the year in this way. New skills reported by ECoC projects gained through 2015 included:

- **stronger technical skills**, particularly linked to lighting and sound through the engineers (and other staff) of galleries, museums, concert halls putting on performances and shows to much larger audiences and much more frequently than in a 'non-ECoC year'. For instance, the New Theatre in Pilsen employed around seven local engineers to run various shows and performances over 2015 who together gained new technical skills in their first few months of employment that would have 'normally taken them years to gain' if it was not for the fact that ECoC had brought a large number of high profile activities to the theatre; and
- **stronger networks** and links between cultural operators in the city. The large majority (60%) of projects responding to the Pilsen2015 project survey stated that ECoC had stimulated them to collaborate with other local cultural agents in the city. Even though Pilsen is a relatively small city, the survey results backed up by interviews with cultural projects suggest that participation in the year has helped them to link up with other local partners rather than working independently by themselves. During the project selection process, a 'softer' selection criterion was included around explaining how the project would link up with other local players and was purposely included to encourage stronger networks among local cultural operators. Examples of local collaboration included:
 - sharing marketing material to advertise separate events happening on the same day (to encourage the audience to move from one event to another) rather than having individual marketing material;
 - organising a 'day or weekend ticket' for visitors to gain entry into several galleries and exhibitions to stimulate people to visit more than one ECoC activity. This again was not in existence prior to the existence of ECoC; and
 - sharing technical staff between venues and facilities, particularly when high-level experts needed to be employed for roles such as video editing, lighting and stage erection. As above, this level of collaboration was simply not present between cultural operators prior to 2015.

Importantly, the above examples of better networks stimulated through Pilsen2015 have carried on post-ECoC, which means further long-term benefits beyond the year itself.

As stated elsewhere in this report, a further impact of the ECoC programme on cultural operators in the city was identified as encouraging the cultural scene to become **more international and 'outward rather than inward-looking'**. The cultural offer prior to 2015 was often seen by many as being too local and focussed on local subjects, issues and artists. Although this was not necessarily seen as a weakness, the ECoC year helped broaden the relationships, content and artists found

within the cultural sector that ensured a more diverse set of cultural activities in the city in the future.

The original bid included three relatively large infrastructure projects as part of the cultural programme – with only one taking place in the end of the year. The Cultural Factory did not happen because asbestos was found in the building (although the DEPO2015 was built instead), the Gallery of West Bohemia did not receive funding meaning only the New Gallery and DEPO2015 were opened as part of the 2015 year.

However, interestingly nearly all of the stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation were not overly disappointed with the lack of an increase in cultural facilities within the ECoC year. Many stakeholders felt that a new cultural facility does not necessarily guarantee a successful ECoC and many cited examples of recent cultural programmes in cities who have built large cultural facilities that have not always been well received nor have automatically led to positive results (the Prague 2000 ECoC was often mentioned here). Stakeholders also stated that the limited funding available to Pilsen and the comparatively small budgets (particularly compared to Mons) meant that a decision had to be made to either focus on a single and expensive capital project or a larger number of smaller projects that together would have a meaningful impact. Stakeholders also stated that despite no new gallery space being made available in the city during the ECoC year the cultural programme for Pilsen2015 still included ‘plenty of art for people to enjoy’. ‘You don’t necessarily need new buildings to enjoy a quality piece of art or have to go to a new theatre to see a ground-breaking performance’ was stated by one senior public official taking part in the evaluation.

Cultural players in the city were all clear that the impacts on cultural capacity coming from ECoC were likely to be significantly higher for a city the size of Pilsen compared to if the ECoC was held in the three largest cities in the country. Although Pilsen’s cultural operators were by no means inexperienced or unqualified to deliver high quality cultural content, their counterparts in other larger cities in the Czech Republic were already seen to possess the skills to deliver larger and more international cultural activities without the need for an ECoC.

3.5.4 International profile

A key objective of the overall ECoC action is to raise the profile of the city and its cultural content internationally and in particular to other European countries and European visitors.

Pilsen2015 has certainly helped **strengthen the international ties** which cultural players in the city have with partners from outside of the Czech Republic. ECoC supported projects reported that they previously had few existing links with international partners, whether in the form of international performers, artists or cultural organisations and bodies. Through the support of the Pilsen2015 Foundation and the inclusion of a selection criterion for projects to show how they are developing new international collaboration, the ECoC programme was seen to greatly increase the number of cultural operators in the city who had links to foreign partners. 53% now

say that they had good international links with partners because of their participation in the ECoC.

Partly because of the links with international partners created through the ECoC programme, the actual **cultural programme delivered in Pilsen was much more international** than it would have been in the absence of the ECoC. As stated in the European dimension part of this chapter, prior to 2015 the cultural offer within the city was very much seen as a 'local offer for local people' with one of the overriding goals of the ECoC year being around 'opening up' the city to international stakeholders, visitors and cultural influences.

However, although stakeholders stated that the ECoC brand helped put Pilsen on the international stage through the city appearing in various international news articles and travel reviews and although Pilsen saw an overall increase in visitors to the city, there is less evidence to suggest that visitors came from locations outside of either Pilsen itself or the Czech Republic.

As stated earlier, ECoC projects reported that only 5% of their audience were from foreign countries and analysis of the figures of visitor expenditure shows that of the €26m spent by visitors to the city in 2015 the majority (approximately 87%) was from visitors from the city itself or the wider Pilsen region. This means that the number of international tourists specifically attracted to Pilsen by the ECoC programme seems to be relatively low. Although Pilsen2015 and the city overall appeared in international press (see marketing and communication section), the extent to which this actually encouraged international visitors to come to the city was more questionable. Although some stakeholders disagreed with this finding, most of them recognised less progress had been made in stimulating a real increase in the international profile of the city. Reasons to explain this were as follow:

- Pilsen was seen as being away from the 'central core' of the Czech Republic's international tourist route which was dominated by Prague. Although the capital is relatively near (90 km) from Pilsen the public transport routes are limited, meaning tourists would need to make a concerted effort to travel to the city. A lack of a local international airport also linked into this reason.
- The small budget of the overall ECoC programme and the marketing budget in general was also a factor to explain low levels of international profile and visitors. Stakeholders from the City's tourism team stated that the budget did not generally allow the city and its tourist agency to invest heavily in marketing, advertising and promotional work directly targeted at the international visitor.
- Around half of all stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation felt that the cultural programme did not necessarily target or attract the international visitor. Again, the budget did not allow any high profile or truly internationally renowned artists to be included in the cultural programme who would specifically attract international visitors to make a 'special' visit to the city.

The above issues meant that most stakeholders taking part in the evaluation felt that although the ECoC year may well have raised the profile of the city internationally, this profile did not necessarily manifest itself in more foreign visitors during the 2015 ECoC

year. Foreign visitor numbers are being monitored during 2016 to understand the extent to which there might be a longer-term increase as a consequence of the news articles appearing across Europe during 2015.

3.6 Legacy

3.6.1 Continuing activities and new venues

Because the city's ECoC Programme included **less in the way of new cultural buildings and infrastructure** the key longer term legacy of the programme was less obvious for some stakeholders to articulate. Other ECoC evaluations (including that for Mons) generally highlights new venues, museums or galleries as the most obvious and clear legacies of the ECoC. In the case of Pilsen, many of the legacies identified by stakeholders revolved around more nuanced benefits linked to stronger capacity and the strong skills of local cultural operators. The main legacies identified by stakeholders were threefold:

- **a stronger international dimension** to the cultural offer, with links to mainly European partners formed in 2015 generally staying in place beyond the ECoC year. Pilsen artists were continuing to visit and perform outside of the city and, to a greater extent, foreign artists were continuing to take part in cultural activities found in the city in 2016. But only 12% of ECoC projects were continuing to strengthen their links with international partners beyond 2015;
- **a stronger set of skills and capacity** held by cultural operators developed as a consequence of designing and delivering ECoC projects throughout 2015. Most projects interviewed linked to 42% of ECoC projects reported that the technical skills linked to performance production, marketing, ticketing, lighting and social media were all being used beyond the year itself to provide stronger, bigger and higher quality activities post-2015;
- **a stronger set of links and networks** within the city among cultural operators reported during the year itself was again continuing beyond 2015. Joint activities (including joint ticketing, joint marketing and the sharing of equipment) were still occurring due to the legacy of strong relationships built up over the ECoC year.

Although these 'softer' legacies identified above were often highlighted by stakeholders, the main **physical legacy of the ECoC programme was DEPO2015**. This key ECoC project was seen as the centrepiece of the legacy plans for the programme and its survival was of significant importance to all those stakeholders directly linked to the Pilsen2015. Although this project still receives some funding from the city authority, the other income streams it receives (from the café, creative space for hiring and the workspace for the creative businesses) is helping to ensure its long-term future. The Pilsen2015 Foundation team will also be moving to these premises shortly (from their city centre site) to ensure a further income stream through rent.

One relatively simple but nevertheless important aspect of the programme that has not been sustained post-2015 – which many stakeholders regretted – was the online tool explaining the various cultural activities taking place in the city (including an

online diary of activities). During the ECoC year itself, the website provided continually updated information to visitors and residents on cultural activity which was taking place each day. Although the volume of cultural activity was less in 2016 than it was in 2015, a lack of an online 'one-stop-shop' for people to refer to was seen as a weakness for the overall legacy plans – partly because the website in 2015 was visited by 400,000 people who regularly used it to browse what cultural activities they could enjoy.

3.6.2 Cultural governance and legacy arrangements

The Pilsen2015 Foundation was always part of the wider legacy plans of the ECoC in the city and has therefore remained in place beyond the year itself. The Foundation still has its main senior staff in place (including the General Director and Programme Director) and a further four staff continue to be employed on a full-time basis. The role of the Foundation staff still remains critical in terms of not only the cultural scene in the city but also its wider development and strategic direction. For example, the General Director chairs three working groups linked to tourism and city investment, culture and creative industries and is therefore tasked with leading and driving forward key aspects of the city's future development. These working groups plan and deliver a wide range of actions across these three policy areas and the Pilsen2015 General Director is a member of all three.

The First Deputy Major of the City is still very much supportive of the culture agenda of the city and he ensures that other staff and politicians consider the cultural dimension in their work, whether that is in terms of setting budgets or designing projects. The strategic and political profile of culture therefore remains high thanks largely to the success of the ECoC programme in 2015. However, a few stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation noted that the city politicians 'seemed to be moving away from culture and towards sport' as the next 'big thing' the city should be investing in and developing. Although culture was not necessarily dropping off the political agenda, it was interesting to note that the cultural stakeholders in the city recognised that other policy areas were emerging as higher priorities. Some of the original private sponsors who had supported cultural projects through 2015 are instead now supporting sports-themed projects for 2016 and 2017.

Perhaps the more negative side to the legacy of the Pilsen2015 programme has been the **drop in funding to pre-2012 levels following the end of the ECoC year**. As a consequence of this, 82% of the projects taking part in the Pilsen2015 ECoC Project survey felt that the lack of funding post-2015 was a problem and a direct threat to their activities. The city administration had provided funding for 2015 but had always made it clear that grants were one-offs for the purposes of the ECoC year itself.

However, it is interesting to note that although projects are worried about their sustainability post-2015, 45% of projects taking part in the Pilsen2015 project survey were still in existence and delivering activity at similar levels as 2015. Projects interviewed as part of the evaluation all stated that at least in the next 12-18 months their activities and financial arrangements remained secure.

Pilsen2015 had not developed a specific legacy plan or strategy but was rather reliant on individuals to secure the legacy of the programme and continue to share the good practice learnt during the year. Although this is generally working at present, if these individuals were to leave their posts and move away from Pilsen then some of the drive for a legacy may well be lost according to stakeholders interviewed.

3.7 Conclusions

3.7.1 Successes

The main successes of the Pilsen2015 ECoC are as follows:

Helping to raise the profile of culture among the local population: the interviewees report that the ECoC in Pilsen has been successful in generating a much stronger awareness and uptake of culture among local residents. The results of a survey of residents showed that the most enjoyable forms of cultural entertainment in 2010 was 'watching TV', whilst after the ECoC in 2016 this shifted to watching live music and visiting exhibitions. This means the type and nature of cultural consumption in the city changed before and after the ECoC year towards higher-level cultural genres. In addition, the same survey showed that local residents also ranked culture much higher in level of importance in their lives after compared to before the ECoC year. Of course, all ECoC raise the profile of culture among the residents of the host city but the impact in Pilsen seems to be much stronger than has previously been the case. The above statistics, backed up by interviews from the evaluation therefore show a much stronger appetite and 'consumption' of culture among residents because of the ECoC year and a large rise in the importance of culture compared to other issues in their lives (such as family and friends or politics). As one stakeholder stated, 'ECoC helped articulate the value and importance [of culture] to the city's residents that simply would not have happened without the year taking place. It got them away from their TV and into the city's streets and buildings'. Importantly, this higher usage and appreciation of culture among local residents is likely to have a positive impact on cultural operators in the future as more people will visit, use and enjoy the various cultural facilities on offer in the city.

Making the most of the ECoC with a smaller budget: Pilsen2015 had a smaller budget than most with total expenditure of just €18m. The evaluation has been interested to understand whether this significantly reduced either the results (and impact) or legacy of the ECoC. In terms of results, the ECoC has seen strong benefits around internationalising the cultural offer in the city (making it outward rather than inward-looking) and also ensuring stronger links between cultural operators within the city - both with each other and with partners outside of Pilsen. 53% of cultural players taking part in the ECoC project survey now say that they had good international links with partners because of their participation in the ECoC and that this participation was low or non-existent prior to 2015. Despite the ECoC only having one large capital project, which was the New Theatre (outside of the DEPO2015 which was still only €0.5m), there were very few stakeholders who saw this as a negative and most were quick to point out that, as one stakeholder put it, 'a big new building doesn't mean

automatic success for an ECoC'. Despite this, when it came to an obvious legacy for the city then a lack of many new cultural facilities was an issue that some saw as a negative.

Not giving up when early issues arise: Pilsen2015 had a very difficult start to its development phase and many internal and external stakeholders had strong concerns about how its cultural programme and delivery model was being established. Despite this, Pilsen2015 has been viewed by almost all stakeholders as a positive investment of time and money and although there was a large number of early doubters (and some people who were vehemently against the ECoC) almost all of these stakeholders have been positive about its outcome. This turnaround in the fortune of Pilsen2015 has been partly put down to stronger and high profile political backing (by the First Deputy Mayor), the support of expert international advisors as well as greatly simplifying and 'decluttering' the cultural programme. Many commentators also stressed that the relatively small size of the city helped ensure joint ownership and responsibility of the ECoC and a genuine local emphasis on 'making ECoC work' which some commentators felt would not be the case if it was in a larger city (where a mass backing of a single project would be harder to instigate).

3.7.2 Lessons in delivery

The main lessons for others to consider from the Pilsen2015 experience are as follows:

Keeping it simple: Of course, no city should approach ECoC preparations and implementation thinking it is a simple exercise. However, one of the reasons why Pilsen2015 had a difficult development phase was its desire to involve and ensure as many local cultural operators as possible were part of the emerging exciting cultural programme. The early development of the programme thus contained a large number of small projects, a long list of themes and priorities and a wide range of different delivery partners and stakeholders. One of the first actions taken after receiving the negative feedback from the ECoC monitoring committee was to cut not only the number of projects but also the number of themes and priorities of the ECoC programme. Although this upset some stakeholders (whose projects were scrapped), this simplification process made a significant difference to the deliverability of the programme. Lessons around keeping the ECoC simple and not letting the cultural programme 'run away with itself' in the early development stages therefore need to be considered.

Consideration for international visitors: Pilsen2015 has been relatively strong in 'opening up' Europe to Pilsen but has perhaps been less successful in terms of showing Pilsen to Europe. Only 5% of audiences of ECoC projects were foreign and only 13% of expenditure in the city in the ECoC year came from other countries. Although this might mean that Pilsen2015 was less successful in its goal of attracting more foreign tourists, there does need to be a realisation that with the small budget available only a certain amount could be expected. Smaller budgets mean less in the way of international marketing or advertising and also means that the content of the cultural programme was less able to specifically attract foreign visitors with high profile artistic content. Although foreign visitors to the city would have undoubtedly attended ECoC projects, there was less evidence to show that ECoC specifically drew them into the

city. If the national Government had been more active in the promotion of Pilsen2015 to international visitors, then this may have helped. The lesson here is therefore to understand that there are sometimes limits to how much smaller ECoC can truly grow their international tourist market.

The importance of involving national partners: Some closest to the programme felt that, to some extent, Pilsen delivered its ECoC without much support from the national level. Although the level of national funding as a proportion of the total budget was on a par with other ECoC, less direct involvement in delivery was observed. Other ECoC evaluations show that the national Government often plays an important role in the overall ECoC programme, not only in terms of finance but also in relation to contacts, expertise and capacity. With a relatively modest national involvement, the Pilsen2015 ECoC did suffer in many ways and the cultural programme and marketing in particular were all at a lower level also because of this. The lesson learnt here is one around the importance of national involvement and backing of an ECoC, particularly for smaller host cities (that are not the capital city) that lack the budget and capacity to plan and implement such a large programme of activity by itself.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter provides overall conclusions to the ex-post evaluation of the 2015 ECoC Action, drawing together the results from the two host cities as well as findings from previous ECoC evaluations. As stated in the introduction chapter, the evaluation has not developed recommendations for the 2015 host cities (because they will not host another ECoC) but have rather developed them with future ECoC cities to consider. Recommendations for the EU institutions have also been developed.

4.1 Relevance

The experience of 2015 reinforces the finding from previous evaluations that ECoC remains highly relevant to the EU Treaty, particularly Article 167, through contributing to the flowering of Member States' cultures, highlighting common cultural heritage as well as cultural diversity and increasing cultural co-operation between Member States and internationally. The selection process introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC ensured that the applications of both the eventual ECoC title-holders for 2015 set out objectives and approaches that were consistent with the legal basis for ECoC. The ECoC concept also continues to be of relevance to the objectives of local policymakers and stakeholders that wish to promote the culture-based development of their cities.

The cultural programmes in Mons and Pilsen demonstrated a high degree of relevance to the policy objectives set at EU level for the ECoC Action. Indeed, the experience of both cities shows that the ECoC is relevant to a range of different European policy areas and not just those related to culture.

Both Mons and Pilsen have seen their cultural offer greatly strengthened because of ECoC which has not only helped them to diversify their cultural scene but also diversify the types of audiences enjoying culture. This diversification in both cities is likely to bring benefits well beyond 2015 as local people will continue to access more culture in their lives because of their ECoC 'experience'. The evaluation has therefore shown that ECoC continues to contribute to the 'flowering' of the cultures in the Member States as set out in Article 167.

Both cities have used ECoC to help them 'internationalise' their cultural offer, thus making it relevant to the European dimension. This is particularly true in Pilsen which used ECoC as a vehicle to help 'open up' the city to Europe. Although both cities were focussed on the European dimension and although both were successful in adding European content to their exiting cultural offer, Mons was more successful in generating foreign visitors compared to Pilsen. This was partly down to the size of budget found in Mons. This city showed that to truly encourage a step-change in foreign visitors requires a budget big enough to fund meaningful marketing campaigns and a budget large enough to implement a cultural programme that encourages foreign tourists to visit the city specifically to attend cultural events.

The 'label' which ECoC gives to host cities is one of the key aspects of the European added value of the Action. This label brings a significant amount of profile to the host city at a level that would simply not be possible without ECoC status. This is particularly true for smaller host cities like Pilsen who could not hope to generate the amount of press coverage, visitor numbers and overall interest in its cultural offer without it hosting an ECoC. The ECoC label also acts as a significant generator of interest from stakeholders in the city around culture itself; both Mons and Pilsen stated that ECoC helped raise the profile of culture among a wide range of policy makers in the city. ECoC often helps galvanise a city and its stakeholders to get behind culture in a way that was never possible before, not just in terms of cultural stakeholders but also those related to employment, enterprise, tourism and city investment. This means that the overall relevance of the ECoC action to a variety of European policy areas is assured.

Mons has used ECoC more than Pilsen to improve the city more widely beyond its cultural offer. Mons has seen more physical improvements and more projects linked to tourism, business support and community development compared to Pilsen meaning its overall ECoC programme was more holistic. This was not because Pilsen overlooked this wider opportunity for urban development but was instead down to its smaller budget which led the city to focus more narrowly on delivering a strong cultural programme for its residents and visitors to enjoy.

4.2 Efficiency

Overall, the ECoC Action has been implemented efficiently at EU level. The selection process has enabled the selection of cities with the capacity, resources and vision to implement effective ECoC. Both cities have also benefited from the monitoring at EU level and from the informal support given by the monitoring panel and the European Commission. At the same time, the very modest funding provided by the EU can be said to have had a considerable leverage effect by stimulating the two cities (and their respective regions and countries) to invest considerable sums in their ECoC programmes and in associated infrastructure developments. Both cities also report that the Melina Mercouri Prize offers important symbolic value, as it represents an endorsement by the EU of their activities and offers opportunities to positive publicity. The impact of the Melina Prize could be enhanced by greater publicity at EU level.

At the city level, both Mons and Pilsen have delivered their ECoC in an efficient way. Mons had a budget that was around four times larger than Pilsen but both used national and EU funds to implement cultural programmes of high artistic quality and of considerably greater size than the cities' "usual" cultural offering. Both ECoC cities designed and delivered a large amount of cultural activity with many hundreds of performances, exhibitions and other activity taking place as a direct consequence of ECoC. At the start, Pilsen 'ran away with itself' in terms of designing hundreds of ECoC projects at the development stages of the bid. It quickly recognised that a strong

ECoC programme does not necessarily have to have numerous different projects and consequently cut its programme to make it more realistic and deliverable. Both cities also continued ECoC traditions by implementing a programme that was wide, varied and innovative. The programme used a range of cultural genres to entertain its audiences ranging from street art through to world-class dance.

To some extent, the 2015 evaluation shows that 'money matters' when it comes to ECoC, with the larger Mons budget helping the city achieve more in terms of reach, the content of its cultural programme and the amount of legacy and sustainability being achieved. However, the 2015 evaluation also shows that a small ECoC budget in a comparatively small city can still produce a very strong outcome across a range of different issues. Pilsen should be congratulated in putting on an ECoC which made a large difference across the city and which used its smaller resources in a very efficient way. Although the cultural programme perhaps had fewer benefits in helping showcase Pilsen to Europe, it had a great benefit in helping promote Europe to Pilsen.

Interestingly, there was less mention in 2015 from stakeholders about 'difficult economic circumstances' compared to previous years. Recent ECoC evaluations have seen stakeholders often mention about budget cuts, increased pressure on spend and a lack of public sector resources at the local and national levels. Stakeholders in Mons and Pilsen tended not to either mention this as a key challenge nor raise it as a driver for less progress around, for instance, impact and legacy. This may highlight that at least some Member States are increasingly experiencing better economic times with less pressure on their public finances. This is positive for future ECoC and wider cultural activity in Member States going forward.

The delivery mechanisms established in both cities were strong and there were very few negative views placed on this aspect coming from the evaluation. Although both Mons and Pilsen had a different scale of cultural programme and activity, both had similar delivery mechanisms, similar partnership arrangements and similar development processes. Pilsen had a very difficult start to its development process with it lacking progress in terms of its cultural programme, key ECoC projects and its funding. However, Pilsen also shows that ECoC that have difficult starts can also change direction and make the year extremely positive, as long as the right people are in charge who have the power to influence a turn-around in proceedings.

Mons had much stronger involvement of the relevant regional Ministries and related agencies compared to Pilsen. Pilsen was relatively unusual to other ECoC in its relative isolation from national Government and national support. As a consequence, Pilsen struggled to secure budgets and reach international visitors.

4.3 Effectiveness

The ECoC Action in 2015 has proved effective against the objectives set for it at EU level, as well as the objectives set by the cities holding the title. The Action has achieved an impact that would not have arisen through the actions of Member States alone. In the absence of ECoC, both the 2015 title-holders would have been free to invest their own resources in implementing cultural

programmes and developing their cultural infrastructure. However, their designation as ECoC has attracted additional resources, including from private sponsors, as well as greater media coverage, increased international tourist visits and enhanced local pride in the city. These benefits would have been unlikely to arise to the same extent in the absence of ECoC designation; in that sense, the ECoC Action has generated clear 'European added value'. At the same time, the extent of impact is hard to determine, given the limited baseline data submitted with the ECoC applications. The ECoC Action has also proved to be complementary to other EU policies and programmes. In particular, it has been reinforced by and added value to investments made the ERDF; the ECoC has stimulated cities to use ERDF for investments in cultural infrastructure and has given greater impetus to the completion of those investments in time for the title-year.

The effectiveness of the ECoC in 2015 is particularly strong in terms of the two cities maximising the opportunity to strengthen the cultural organisations found within Mons and Pilsen. Both cities recognised that ECoC is a powerful tool in helping capacity build and develop local organisations, whether in terms of them developing stronger business plans, helping with marketing or helping their staff put on bigger and better productions. ECoC has also helped these local cultural organisations employ more staff and also buy new equipment that will again raise the quality of their cultural offer. A stronger and more skilled cultural sector in the two cities will have a lasting benefit well beyond 2015.

The 2015 ECoC evaluation has also found that the two cities put on 'new' and 'better' cultural content than was previously the case. ECoC did not replace or substitute existing cultural content that would have happened in the absence of the year and the review of the cultural programmes shows that Mons and Pilsen made the most of the title-year and were ambitious and innovative. None of the stakeholders taking part in the evaluation felt that 2015 was a lost opportunity and that more could have been done to maximise its content and benefit.

The ECoC in both cities also used the year to encourage cultural organisations in the city to work with one another more than they did previously. Both Mons and Pilsen made it a condition of grant (or involvement in the ECoC programme) to work in partnership with other local cultural players. Joint ticketing, the sharing of equipment and joint marketing were just some of the examples of where the ECoC has helped stimulate better partnership working. Even in cities the size of Mons and Pilsen, the cultural sector can often work in isolation and ECoC is a good vehicle to strengthen this aspect of the cultural infrastructure of future ECoC cities.

The two 2015 cities have been effective in showcasing local culture to the large number of audiences attending ECoC events. Both Mons and Pilsen ensured that local cultural talent enjoyed as much attention as possible with many local cultural venues enjoying audience numbers much higher than they had seen before. This has given them vital experience and confidence to use in the future and overall will help the cultural operators raise their profile beyond their normal reach. There was some tension in Pilsen around the need to involve the European dimension (with European

cultural organisations) at the same time as involving local organisations. Pilsen dropped some local cultural projects in favour of European ones in order to reduce the programme which caused a certain amount of 'anti-ECoC' sentiment. Linked to this, although both ECoC included high profile cultural operators in their programme, they also focussed on nurturing local talent.

In terms of being effective around targeting specific groups in the city, then Mons has been more successful than Pilsen in this respect. Mons had a number of projects specifically targeted at different groups, including young people and people with disabilities. Pilsen had less opportunity to be effective in this area, again mainly due to its budget which only allowed it to focus on the wider audience. This is not to say that more 'minority groups' did not benefit but rather that they were not a focus of specific cultural activity.

Whilst Mons had some success in attracting foreign visitors, Pilsen was less effective in attracting international visitors. Although evidence from previous ECoC evaluations is mixed, the more recent evaluations (2014/2015) show that ECoC programmes need relatively big budgets in order to lay on and market a cultural programme that is big enough to specifically attract foreign visitors to make a 'special' journey to the city. Although foreign visitors do attend and enjoy ECoC projects, it may be that they are already in the city because of its wider attractions rather than specifically there just because of ECoC. This issue is worth understanding more in future ECoC evaluations.

Pilsen did not have any key physical developments as part of its ECoC year outside of the DEPO2015. Interestingly, instead of local stakeholders complaining that this lessened the impact and effectiveness of the overall ECoC programme, they were adamant that this did not reduce any of the benefits. Although it reduced a more obvious legacy for the programme (see sustainability) it did not seem to dampen the enthusiasm or passion that local cultural operators had of the ECoC year. Most were quick to state that new buildings do not necessarily lead to successful ECoC and all were keen to put on a rich and varied cultural programme rather than spend their limited budget on new capital projects/ buildings.

4.4 Sustainability

The timing of this evaluation makes it difficult to draw conclusions about sustainability. The research has identified some potential for sustainability of activities and impetus, particularly in Mons where there are concrete plans for a legacy event. However, further research is recommended to identify the extent of sustainability in practice.

Both the 2015 ECoC genuinely thought and planned for sustainability and legacy. They were both keen to ensure that ECoC lasted more than one year in terms of its benefits and impact. Because of its bigger budget, Mons has more obvious sustainability and legacy than Pilsen and has more physical infrastructure in place in terms of new cultural buildings and facilities. Mons also had more concrete legacy plans in place including the Mons2018 festival.

Pilsen did not have a clear legacy strategy in place. Although they were aware of the importance of prolonging the benefits of ECoC there was less in the way of a specific plan to help this become a reality. Having said this, the core team from the Pilsen2015 Foundation is still in place and they personally drive forward many of the legacies as well as the learning from the year. There was a certain amount of fragility around this though and a risk that some of the legacy could be lost if key staff move on. Properly planning for sustainability for the ECoC rather than merely hoping that a long-term legacy appears is a key learning point here.

Both Mons and Pilsen still have their Foundations in place post-2015. This is now becoming more common practice among ECoC who are recognising that having an independent body driving forward policy and practice within the cultural agenda of the city is highly beneficial. The Foundations set up by ECoC are therefore increasingly doing more than simply overseeing the ECoC year and are becoming a much more established part of the cultural infrastructure of the host cities. The Foundation staff in both cities are still very much involved in the development and delivery of culture and are still using their vast amount of knowledge, skills and experience to drive forward positive change across the city's cultural offer. Again, based on the last few ECoC evaluations, ECoC staff seem to be remaining in post after the year rather than moving to another city which has benefits all round for the sustainability theme.

The main legacies of the ECoC are often less tangible to see but are nevertheless very important long-term impacts of the action. As with other recent ECoC evaluations, stakeholders in Mons and Pilsen articulated the legacies of the year in terms of stronger skills, stronger relationships and a higher profile for culture in the city more widely. These less tangible legacies will equip the cultural operators to deliver better quality cultural offers and will strengthen the organisations delivering cultural projects well beyond the year itself.

Another long-term legacy of the ECoC in Mons and Pilsen has been around how the programmes have attracted a new type of audience to experience and enjoy culture. As with other recent ECoC, widening participation away from the 'converted' and laying on cultural projects that appeal to those who 'usually watch TV' will have an important legacy for both cities. More people attended cultural activities in both cities in 2015 compared to previous years and therefore more people are likely to continue to attend activities in the future. This is generally good for the wider population of the city (who will become more culturally enriched) but will also ensure an increase in audiences (and therefore income) for cultural players across the two cities.

4.5 Recommendations

Based on the evidence offered in this report, we offer a number of recommendations for the EU institutions in respect of the ECoC Action. We also offer recommendations for future ECoC to consider when developing and implementing their activity.

Table 4.1 Recommendations for the EU institutions

Recommendations	
1.	Given their success in 2015 and in previous years, the European Capitals of Culture Action should be continued in line with Decisions 1622/2006/EC and Decision No 445/2014/EU.
2.	In order to assist the evaluation of impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the ECoC application form should be revised to require applicants to provide baseline data on the situation prevailing in the cities at the time of the application; ▪ the format for the monitoring reports should be revised to require applicants to provide baseline data on the situation prevailing in the cities in the years preceding the title-year; ▪ the ECoC application form should be revised to require applicants to state how they will gather and analyse “big data” relating to their cultural programmes; and ▪ the guidance given to the cities regarding evaluation should encourage designated cities to state how they will gather and analyse “big data” relating to their cultural programmes.
3.	The European Commission should consider inviting designated cities to sign an informal Memorandum of Understanding to cover the period from the formal designation to the completion of the title year, as a complement to the formal monitoring reports. Such a memorandum could set out the support that the Commission would provide (e.g. publicising the ECoC through its various communication channels) and actions that the cities would undertake (e.g. use of EU logo, publicising the ECoC as an EU Action, collaboration with the other designated ECoC, communication with the Commission, co-operating with the Commission’s evaluator).
4.	The informal support provided by the monitoring panel during the development phase should be continued, including the visits to the designated cities.
5.	The European Commission should undertake more extensive publicity related to the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize in collaboration with the title-holders. This could include a symbolic award ceremony to provide “photo opportunities”, press releases and news items on the ECoC pages of the Europa website.
6.	The European Commission should undertake research into the long-term impacts of the ECoC, given that the annual evaluations have been unable to do this (being undertaken soon after the end of the title-year).

Table 4.2 Recommendations for future ECoC

Recommendation	
Small cities should not be deterred by having only a small budget	The experience of Pilsen shows that a comparatively small city with a comparatively small budget can still host a very strong and meaningful ECoC which people hold positive views on. A smaller budget might mean less in the way of activities, legacy and even impact but experiences in 2015 show that a city can still make a real difference to its cultural operators, the local population and the city overall through hosting an ECoC. Smaller cities should therefore not be put off bidding for ECoC and those who award cities ECoC status should not simply choose the ‘biggest’ and most ‘high profile’ cities when making their decisions.

Recommendation	
<p>Ensure national buy-in and involvement</p>	<p>Past ECoC evaluations show that national level involvement (particularly from the national Government) is key to ensure profile and budget for the cultural programme in some ECoC. Pilsen did not enjoy strong national involvement and as a consequence suffered in a number of ways. The ECoC monitoring committee and the original ECoC bidding process are right to highlight when national involvement is lacking, and cities applying for or granted ECoC status need to ensure they follow through with their original arrangements on this matter to truly get the most out of the ECoC year.</p>
<p>Ensure continuation of people and cultural structures</p>	<p>The 2015 ECoC have both enjoyed the continuation of their Foundations and also their key staff beyond the year itself. These Foundations and people are now pressing forward with a range of continuation and sustainability work from ECoC based on their experiences gained throughout the year. Having people and organisations remain in place is as important for the sustainability plans of a city than having cultural buildings or a sustainability strategy in place. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure key people and delivery bodies remain in place following the ECoC title-year.</p>
<p>Think carefully about new cultural buildings</p>	<p>It is often preferable to have a new cultural facility or building in place as part of the ECoC year. In particular, new buildings often cement the legacy of the year. However, a new cultural building is not always the vital ingredient of a successful ECoC and care needs to be taken in ensuring that the building does not replace or detract from a full and colourful cultural programme. Future ECoC may need to make hard decisions if budgets are limited on either having a cultural building or a stronger cultural programme. Stakeholders should not necessarily be disappointed if the city finishes the year without a new gallery or museum to show for it.</p>
<p>Be realistic around the attraction of foreign visitors.</p>	<p>The 2015 ECoC evaluation shows that it is sometimes hard for ECoC cities to attract foreign visitors specifically to attend ECoC projects. Cities need the right conditions in place - including a high profile cultural programme, strong marketing strategies and a strong transport infrastructure (ideally with a nearby airport) - for it to attract a meaningful number of visitors from abroad. All of these ingredients come at a financial cost and it is only the 'bigger' ECoC that may truly see a step change in foreign visitors as a consequence of them hosting the year. Many foreign visitors will not automatically visit the city simply because it has ECoC status. If cities are to realistically use ECoC to establish themselves on the foreign visitor "map", then it needs to be recognised they will have to invest heavily in meaningful marketing activity and a high profile cultural programme to make this goal become a reality.</p>
<p>Confirm and communicate key events as early possible and present the overall cultural</p>	<p>International media and international tour operators usually require at least some of the more important events to be defined well in advance. Tour operators typically promote packages in the year before the title-year, meaning that key events need to be confirmed up to eighteen months or more before the title year. International travel writers and cultural correspondents</p>

Recommendation	
programme several months before the title- year	typically report on forthcoming events in the months leading up to the title-year or in the first few weeks of the title-year, which again requires some events to be confirmed. Ideally, ECoC should confirm at least the “big ticket” events about 18 months before the title year so that tour operators can sell packages and international journalists can provide coverage. The overall cultural programme should ideally be communicated four to six months or more before the title-year.

5.0 Postscript: Contribution to the long-term strategy

5.1 Introduction

A requirement of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation was to assess the impact of the two ECoC for 2015 and learn lessons from their experience. This aim has been satisfied by the reports for each city (sections 2 and 3) and by the conclusions in section 4. In addition to the findings relating specifically to 2015, there are a set of lessons that emerge from the experience of ECoC across the years. Previous evaluations of the ECoC have captured some of these lessons in a series of post-scripts covering "Lessons in delivery" (2007-08), "The European dimension" (2009), "Leaving a legacy" (2010), "Fostering the participation of citizens" (2011), "Measuring impacts" (2012), "Financing an ECoC" (2013) and "Effective promotion of a European Capital of Culture" (2014). Together, these post-scripts constitute a rich resource for future applicants and title-holders as well as for those responsible for the future development of the initiative at European level. To complement this resource, we now present a set of reflections on lessons learnt with respect to "Contribution to the long-term strategy". This draws on the experience cities holding the title in 2015, as well as those covered by the evaluation reports for 2007 to 2014.

The new legal basis for ECoC from 2020 onwards includes selection criteria that relate very directly to long-term strategy. Applicants must take the following factors into account:

- (a) that a cultural strategy for the candidate city, which covers the action and includes plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title, is in place at the time of its application;
- (b) the plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including developing long-term links between the cultural, economic and social sectors in the candidate city;
- (c) the envisaged long-term cultural, social and economic impact, including urban development, that the title would have on the candidate city;
- (d) the plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on the candidate city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation.

Drawing on the experience of previous ECoC, we present lessons from experience in relation to these four criteria.

5.2 Cultural strategy

A cultural strategy for the city is not only one of the ECoC selection criteria, it has also been a feature of the strongest ECoC in recent years. Moreover, city cultural strategies are by no means unique to ECoC applicants and title-holders. Many, perhaps most, European cities have some kind of a strategy for culture, even if those cities give

differing levels of importance and resources to it. In that context, we can identify some lessons from experience about the contents of such strategies.

Articulate a unique and authentic vision for the city and its cultural life. In the context of a globalised, knowledge-based economy, many European cities face the challenge of finding a new role for themselves. Many can no longer rely on being centres of production, trade or commerce, but need to be places where people choose to live, work, study, invest and visit on the basis of the city's attractiveness and vitality. With that in mind, there has been no end of (post-)industrial cities wishing to reinvent themselves as cultural destinations or small cities trying to "put themselves on the European cultural map". In that context, it becomes ever more important for cities to offer something authentic, unique and distinctive by which to differentiate themselves from other cities. This can perhaps be summed up as the "genius loci": the atmosphere of the city, which gives it its character and differentiates it from other places. Moreover, the genius loci is not static and unchanging; it is dynamic and constantly evolving. For example, the "traditional" genius loci of Mons could be said to lie in its characteristic as a medieval city of trade and commerce set on a hill in a (post)-industrial territory. But the genius loci is evolving, as Mons becomes a centre for hi-tech industry, learning and contemporary culture, merging the traditional character of a Wallonian industrial town with the characteristics of a modern multi-cultural city. At the same time, the "authentic" culture of the city may need to be challenged and stretched. For example, in Pilsen much of the original cultural programme was very local in flavour but needed more involvement of and exposure to outside influences – to push boundaries of what was "normal" in the city and develop a new contemporary cultural offering, whilst ensuring that the offering remained authentic to Pilsen.

Rooting the strategy in the cultural heritage of the city, but taking it in new directions. Every city and territory has its own unique culture and cultural heritage and many have significant cultural personages connected with the city. Some parts of that culture may be known internationally, whilst other parts may be forgotten. Some cultures within the city may be hidden or underground, particularly those of youth, immigrants or ethnic communities. In developing a long-term cultural strategy, cities should draw on that culture, highlight it and make it known to a wider audience. For example, Pilsen highlighted the diversity of cultures within the city, including those communities from former Soviet Union countries, Mongolia and Vietnam. But ECoC should also reinterpret and develop a city's culture and take it in new directions. This is about drawing on external influences but it is not about importing a model of culture from elsewhere. For example, Mons offered a new dimension on the lives and works of Van Gogh, Verlaine and Lassus either by highlighting their connections to the area (Van Gogh), by exploring a unique period in their lives (Verlaine's time in Mons prison) or interpreting their works in a new way (Lassus). At the same time, it is important for cities not to rely on a few things for which it is already well-known, as this risks overshadowing the wider cultural offering of the city. For example, Mons saw little need to use the ECoC to promote its heritage of world war battlefield sites. Pilsen incorporated the thing it is best known for – beer – into its ECoC slogan ("PILSEN, OPEN UP!"), but used this to express something very contemporary: challenging the traditionally

'closed' nature of Czech society. Further back, Liverpool (2008) rightly celebrated the Beatles but took care not to put this at centre of its ECoC programme. Umeå (2014) drew on its Sami culture as something unique and of interest to European audiences, but as just one strand in its programme, reflecting the fact that most of the city's residents – and thus their culture - are not Sami in origin; it sought to present Sami culture as it is, and to avoid stereotypes, though this would have been superficially appealing in a global tourist market.

Developing audiences not just promoting events. Recent ECoC reinforce some of the policy lessons emerging from across Europe's cultural sector. Developing the cultural life of a city is not only about "suppliers" of culture promoting their events to a passive audience. Instead, as highlighted by the European Commission, there is a need for a "strategic and interactive process of making the arts widely accessible by cultural organisations. It aims at engaging individuals and communities in fully experiencing, enjoying, participating in and valuing the arts. Its focus is on a two-way exchange".³⁵ In fact, the early experience of ECoC highlighted this, most notably the Glasgow ECoC (1990). This ECoC sought to develop culture in the city and, in that way, stimulate wider regeneration of the city. Whilst Glasgow was innovative in that respect, it did not connect well with many citizens, particularly the working classes and the disadvantaged. Recent ECoC have learned from this experience and their cultural strategies have opened up a dialogue with their citizens not only as audiences, but also as creators and performers. As we have seen, Mons operated a specific programme for young people ("J'aurai 20 ans en 2015"), which began several years before the title-year and engaged them in a very direct way. There were also the structured programmes of creation and performance for the Borinage and Wallonie picarde. In all these programmes, the boundaries between creators, performers and audiences became blurred: a genuine two-way exchange. Pilsen also engaged local people as the creators, subjects and audiences of cultural works, for example, through the Pilsen Family Photo Album exhibition.

Key events as staging-posts to the ECoC. The development phase of four years or so between the award of the title and the start of the title-year can risk appearing from the outside as a quiet period, with few events of note – other than the "usual" cultural offering of the city. Successful ECoC have tended to implement key events in the years before the title-year, in order to give a sense of momentum, to test ideas or new venues, develop experience and increase external profile. This should be outlined in the application, if possible, and planned from an early stage. The 2015 ECoC implemented a more modest suite of events in the development phase than did some other ECoC. This was by no means a disaster, but more events at an earlier stage might have helped address the perennial risk faced by ECoC, i.e. that of local disenchantment and the feeling that nothing is happening. In contrast, Linz (2009) implemented a "warm-up programme" in the years 2006-08 featuring some 147 "pre-projects", including the musical "Linz Europa Tour" along the Danube to the Black Sea and North Sea, which served to test the feasibility of some of the key concepts and themes of the ECoC.

³⁵ For example, see: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/conference-audience_en.pdf

Early legacy planning is essential. An ECoC is very often the most ambitious and extensive cultural event held by the title-holders. It is indeed a highlight and a goal of the strategy, but should not be the final destination. After the busyness of the title-year, there is often a need for the stakeholders to take stock, review effects and consider next steps. Not all the activity during the title-year needs to be – or can be – maintained. But it is essential that momentum is not lost. Whilst at the application stage, the legacy strategy need not be too detailed, there is a need for a reasonably-developed legacy proposal to be in place before the end of the title-year. This may require the nomination of a separate team to that responsible for delivering the cultural programme of the title-year. Indeed, a legacy programme requires different skills, experience and aptitude to what is required in the title-year. Moreover, some of those who implemented the title-year may choose to move on, particularly if their long-term ambitions and interests lie elsewhere. Legacy planning thus requires a team that is even more rooted in the local context than was the ECoC team. It also requires a specific legacy proposal to focus efforts and maintain the profile of the city and its culture. Encouragingly, both the foundations that implemented the 2015 ECoC will remain in existence and continue to organise cultural events in future years. Similar legacy bodies were also established in Luxembourg Grande Région (2007) and Tallinn (2011).

5.3 Strengthening the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors

Building capacity both for the short-term and the long-term can should be integral to the vision, governance and cultural programme of the ECoC. Lessons learned from recent ECoC are as follows.

Supporting the grassroots. Many of the cities holding the title have been quite small in size, i.e. less than 150,000 people and relatively far from the main centres of population in their country. In that context, it may be unrealistic to expect that the city will be able to sustain many large cultural institutions. It thus becomes vital to support small cultural bodies, including professional operators and enterprises, as well as NGOs and amateur operators. Moreover, involving such bodies and building their capacity is essential to developing a cultural programme that is authentic to the city and which involves local citizens. One important form of support is creating opportunities to widen contacts and networks, particularly internationally. Indeed, this was an essential activity in Pilsen, where the cultural sector tended to have weak international links. Supporting networks and contacts was also important in Mons, particularly in the territories of the Borinage, where cultural operators were not well connected with each other or with operators in Mons and elsewhere. An important part of supporting the grassroots is also to make funding more accessible to small cultural bodies. For example, Umeå (2014) offered funding of SEK2014 (about €2,100) to small organisations via the “Cultural Boost”, a series of 25 monthly open calls for proposals. Crucial to the success of the Cultural Boost was not just the funding but also the advice and support offered to supported organisations.

Genuine partnership with the corporate sector. Traditionally, co-operation between the corporate sector and the cultural sector of any city has not always been smooth, given their different interests and ways of working. But the experience of ECoC shows that partnership working can take many different forms, not only those at the opposite ends of the spectrum, i.e. disinterested philanthropy (financial gifts with no strings attached) and naked commercialism (culture as advertising). The business interest in culture is in fact complex and multi-faceted. Businesses may wish to use an association with cultural events as an opportunity to raise their own profile and the value of their brand. But the experience of Mons shows that this can be done subtly and sensitively, without interfering with artistic independence. For example, ING's sponsorship of the Van Gogh exhibition in Mons allowed extensive promotion of the bank's brand to visitors, yet in a way that was entirely separate from the exhibition space. The experience of recent ECoC is also reminder that local businesses value the indirect benefits that ECoC offer through raising the profile, prestige and attractiveness of the host cities in which they are located. Local business people are also, of course, residents and citizens and thus audiences or even participants in culture. For that reason, they can be keen to support the ECoC through finance or gifts in kind, even where the immediate commercial return is not obvious. As Mons shows, where a co-ordinated effort is made to engage local businesses, as through the Club Mons 2015 Entreprises, there are benefits not only in the corporate sponsor received but also in the connections made and "moral support" offered.

Strengthen the link to tourism development and promotion. The experience of recent ECoC shows that strengthening the cultural and creative sectors goes hand-in-hand with tourism development and promotion. At the most basic level, the cultural and creative sectors provide an important part of cities' tourist offer, whilst the tourist sector provides an important part of the audiences that sustain cultural and creative events and venues. But the relationship between the two goes much deeper. The cultural heritage and life of a city is a key determinant of its image in the minds of potential visitors. The arrival of visitors from elsewhere, particularly other countries, can also be a driver to develop a richer, more international cultural offer, which can enrich the local cultural sector and widen the horizons of local audiences.

5.4 Envisaging long-term impact

As noted in Section 1.2.1, recent decades have seen increased demands for cultural expenditure to deliver "tangible, quantifiable returns on investment" instead of being deemed to "have its own intrinsic value and thus [being] an end in itself". This policy shift is now reflected in EU policy, with the 2014 Decision including "supporting the long-term development of cities" as one of the general objectives of the ECoC". Evaluations of the ECoC from 2007 have demonstrated the potential for ECoC to contribute to such development and also highlighted some lessons from experience.

Recognising the limits to culture-based development. The potential for culture to stimulate, or at least contribute to the development of cities is widely accepted and proven by experience – though there is a debate as to how and to what extent. At the

same time, events such as the ECoC by themselves are not a panacea for all urban development challenges and not always the catalyst for regeneration. Not every city can break into the top-tier of cultural destinations and not every job lost in declining industries can necessarily be replaced by one in the cultural sector. There is thus a need for culture to be incorporated into the wider development effort. For example, Mons is unlikely to overtake Brussels in terms of the importance of its cultural offering. However, by linking the development of culture to the attraction of hi-tech industries, growth in higher education and the development of tourism, amongst other things, Mons shows how culture can play its part – in making the city an attractive place for businesses to invest, young people to study and tourists to visit, whilst also stimulating creativity and innovation in industry. Similarly, the ECoC has strengthened the international connections of Pilsen and made its cultural offering more international. But, by itself, the ECoC does not seem to have transformed the city into a key destination for international tourists.

ECoC can add important impetus to investments in cultural and other infrastructure but do not by themselves justify all investments. Cities hosting the ECoC quite rightly have ambitions for the ECoC and the long-term benefits that can accrue from them, including an increase in audiences for culture and in tourist visits. This might seem to justify extensive investment in cultural and other infrastructure. However, the long-term increase in audiences for culture and in tourist visits – after the title-year – is not necessarily sufficient to make all new venues sustainable. Moreover, the long timescales associated with many infrastructure investments (such as concert halls or transport infrastructure) mean that cities cannot wait until the title is awarded before deciding to proceed with such investments. Experience offers three lessons. First, investments need to be sustainable in the event that an ECoC application is unsuccessful. In Mons, much of the €143m of infrastructure investments was made before the award of the title, because there was the political will and an apparent demand, regardless of the ECoC. Second, it can be worthwhile to invest in temporary venues for the title-year. Such an approach avoids difficulties in meeting long-term operating costs of “white elephants”. It also offers a “safe” way to innovate and take risks in the location of performances and exhibitions, thus creating a more unique experience for audience, as well as learning lessons for the future. Third, smaller-scale investments can be very important. As shown in Pilsen, the quality of the local cultural scene was greatly improved by fairly modest expenditure on equipment, content and visitor experience.

Some of the most important long-term impacts of ECoC are intangible. It is, of course, essential to demonstrate a good return on financial expenditure on the ECoC, in terms of new/improved venues, increased employment and revenue in the cultural and creative sector and more tourist visits. But the experience of the 2007-15 ECoC consistently highlights the importance to the long-term development of the cities of intangible factors, including better image, increased national/international profile, local pride, greater vibrancy, etc. Such impacts are not easily measured but are nonetheless one of the most important impacts of the ECoC. In the case of Mons, the new use of public spaces for cultural purposes may well have left an indelible impression in the minds of its citizens as to what is possible within their city. Equally,

the events across the Borinage and Wallonie picarde are likely to have encouraged residents to view those territories in a different light – to look beyond the effects of industrial decline and to see the potential for new opportunities in culture and other fields.

5.5 Plans for monitoring and evaluating impacts

It is only in the last decade or so that the ECoC have started to undertake monitoring and evaluation on a comprehensive basis. Without this, the risk is that decision-makers will lack essential information and the ECoC do not achieve all their effects. Where desired effects are achieved, the risk is that information is not available to make the successes of the ECoC more widely known. With that in mind, we highlight some lessons from experience.

Build a pre-ECoC baseline and monitor its evolution. Most ECoC make claims regarding the positive benefits that they have provided for the city, its development and its cultural life. Such claims are not necessarily inaccurate but monitoring developments during and after the title-year against a baseline makes them more credible. It also helps understand the precise nature of impacts and the way that they came about. At the same time, care is needed as the ECoC is not the only influence on developments in the city. For example, growth in tourist arrivals in a city would need to be compared to the general trend at national level. Ideally, the baseline should be established at the application stage and updated each year during the development phase, title-year and for a few years after the end of the title-year.

Gather a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data can be collected against a range of indicators, including cultural events, audiences, venues, size and nature of the cultural and creative sector, hotel capacity, tourist visits and expenditure, etc. Qualitative information can complement the quantitative data by putting it in context and providing underlying explanations and anecdotal illustrations of trends.

Monitoring and evaluation can play an important *formative* role in the development of the ECoC. Information gathered during the development phase and the title-year itself is useful not only as a record of what has happened but also as a means of informing decision-making regarding current and future developments. Monitoring and evaluation can highlight difficulties at an early stage and thus the need for corrective action. They can also help identify early achievements and successes and thus inform the media, who might otherwise fill a “news vacuum” with negative coverage.

An independent evaluator can offer an impartial and external perspective on the ECoC. Typically, the preparation and implementation of an ECoC is a period of intense activity for the ECoC team. Moreover, there is pressure to demonstrate successes to stakeholders, funders, the media and the general public. In that context, the team may not have the time and space to examine evidence of effects, reflect on causes and underlying drivers and develop recommendations for alternative causes of action. An independent evaluator can act as a “critical friend” to the ECoC team during

the development phase and title-year. Following the title year, the evaluator can then offer credible, independent evidence of effects, strengths and weaknesses of the ECoC. In both the 2015 ECoC, independent evaluators have published research regarding the effects of the ECoC, which complement the final reports of the foundations.

Annex One: Interviewees

Mons interviewees

No.	Name	Organisation	Role / description
Fondation Mons2015			
1.	Yves Vasseur	Fondation Mons2015	Commissaire général
2.	Philippe Degeneffe	Fondation Mons2015	Commissaire général adjoint
3.	Marie Noble	Fondation Mons2015	Commissaire adjoint artistique
4.	Anne Sophie Charle	Fondation Mons2015	Administratrice générale
5.	Jean-Paul Dessy	Fondation Mons2015	Direction Artistique Musique
6.	Pascal Keiser	Fondation Mons2015	Chef de Projets Technologies
7.	Anne André	Fondation Mons2015	Maison Folie
8.	Marie Godart	Fondation Mons2015	Institutions et villes partenaires
9.	Caroline Kadziola	Fondation Mons2015	Communication
10.	Charlotte Jacquet	Fondation Mons2015	Communication
11.	Pascal Goossens	Fondation Mons2015	Musiques actuelles
12.	Gaetan Jacquemin	Fondation Mons2015	Partnership Project Manager
13.	Philippe Kauffmann	Fondation Mons2015	Artistique
14.	Philippe Reynaert	Fondation Mons2015	Cinéma
15.	Xavier Roland	Fondation Mons2015	Pôle muséal
16.	Emmanuel Vinchon	Fondation Mons2015	Territoires
17.	Yoann Waroquier	Fondation Mons2015	Welcome Team

No.	Name	Organisation	Role / description
Government			
18.	Joëlle Kampompolé	Région wallonne (previously Ville de Mons)	Députée wallonne (previously: Conseil commun de Mons)
19.	Nathalie Brassart	Province de Hainaut	
20.	Ermeline Gosselin	Ville de Mons	Chef de cabinet de Mr Di Rupo
21.	Yves Roose	Villes flamandes	Représentant de la commune de Brugges
22.	Régine Van Damme	Villes francophones	Directrice de Culture, WAPI
Cultural operators			
23.	Laurent Fack	Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie	Directeur général
24.	Bernard Château	Musée des Arts Contemporains (MAC's)	Adjoint à la direction
25.	Sofiane Laghouati	Musée royal de Mariemont	Conservateur – Chargé de recherche
Media organisations/journalists			
26.	Eric Deffet	Le Soir	Media partner
27.	Daniel Brouyère	Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française (RTBF.be)	Media partner
Business and tourism			
28.	Caroline Decamps	Intercommunale de développement économique et aménagement du territoire (IDEA)	Directrice générale
29.	Natacha Vandenberghe	Visit Mons (Office Tourisme)	
30.	François Honoré	Club entreprises GO Consult	

No.	Name	Organisation	Role / description
Education and research			
31.	Jean-Luc Depotte	Université catholique de Louvain	Professeur

Pilsen interviewees

No.	Name	Organisation	Role / description
1.	Martin Baxa	1st Deputy Mayor of the City of Pilsen, Chairman of the Board of Pilsen 2015	Pilsen City Council
2.	Jaroslav Bláha	Executive Director	Papírna Culture Centre
3.	Roman Černík	Artistic Director	JOHAN o.s. - center for cultural and social projects
4.	Petr Choura	Director	Pod lampou Theatre
5.	Markéta Formanová	Director	Puppet Museum
6.	Šárka Havlíčková	Former Programme Director	Pilsen 2015
7.	Jakub Hora	Director	Alfa Theatre
8.	Ivan Jáchim	Director	Dominik Centrum
9.	Ondřej Kašpárek	Digital Media Manager	Pilsen 2015
10.	Lenka Kavalová	Director	Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra
11.	Daniel Konrád	Head of culture section	Hospodářské noviny
12.	Petra Kosová	Editor	Czech Radio Pilsen
13.	Zuzana Koubíková	Director	Plzeň- TURISMUS
14.	Šárka Krtková	Regio2015 Project Manager	Pilsen 2015
15.	Pavla Mášková	Sustainable Development Manager	Pilsner Urquell

No.	Name	Organisation	Role / description
16.	Josef Mištera	Dean, Member of the Board of Pilsen 2015	Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art
17.	Roman Musil	Director	West Bohemia Museum
18.	Jiří Peňás	Director	J. K. Tyl Theatre
19.	Martin Otava	Journalist	Lidové noviny
20.	Petr Šimon	Manager of International Projects	Pilsen 2015
21.	Marek Sivák	Chairman	Pěstuj prostor Association
22.	Dagmar Škubalová	Head of the Pilsen Municipal Administration	Pilsen City Council
23.	Květuše Sokolová	Head of Department of Culture	Pilsen City Council
24.	Jiří Suchánek	Director	Pilsen 2015
25.	Jiří Sulženko	Programme Director	Pilsen 2015
26.	Milan Svoboda	Manager of Evaluation	Pilsen 2015
27.	Michal Vozobule	Municipal Councillor. Member of the Board of Pilsen 2015	Pilsen City Council

Annex Two: Online Survey

MONS2015 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

[Email subject] Mons2015: Survey of projects

Dear Sir or Madam

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey of projects within the cultural programme of Mons2015.

The survey is part of an evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture undertaken on behalf of the European Commission by the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services ([CSES](#)).

The survey is supported by the Fondation Mons2015.

The purpose of the survey is to collect:

- information on the characteristics and effects of your project;
- your opinions of participants regarding the overall effects of Mons2015.

The survey will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be treated in confidence.

Please click on your preferred language to enter the survey.

English

Français

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services
Contact: mons2015@cses.co.uk

Survey welcome page

Welcome to the survey of projects within the cultural programme of Mons2015.

The Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services ([CSES](#)) is currently evaluating the European Capitals of Culture 2015 on behalf of the European Commission. As part of the evaluation, we are inviting projects within the cultural programme of Mons2015 to provide us with:

- information on the characteristics and effects of their projects;
- their opinions of participants regarding the overall effects of Mons2015.

The results of the survey will be analysed by CSES. They will inform the final report of the study, which will be completed later in 2016.

Your responses will be treated in confidence. Individual respondents will not be identified in the final report of the study.

If you have any questions about the survey or the evaluation or if you would like to complete the survey by email or post, please contact us at mons2015@cses.co.uk.

For other queries about the European Capitals of Culture please contact:

- [European Commission](#)
- [Fondation Mons2015](#)

To enter the survey, please click on the button below.

Next

About your organisation

1	How was your organisation involved in Mons2015 European Capital of Culture
	Lead organisation in a project within Mons2015
	Partner in a project within Mons2015
	Other involvement within Mons2015, please specify:
	None of the above

2	In which country is your organisation mostly based?		
	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria
	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic
	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
	France	Germany	Greece
	Hungary	Ireland	Italy
	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg
	Malta	Netherlands	Poland
	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia
	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden
	United Kingdom	Other, please specify	

FILTER FOR NEXT QUESTION: ONLY RESPONDENTS IN BELGIUM

3	Where is your organisation based?
	Mons
	Hainaut Province (except Mons)
	Wallonia Region (except Hainaut Province)
	Brussels-Capital Region
	Flanders Region
	Other, please specify

4	Please state the name of your organisation
	<input type="text"/>

5 What type of organisation is it?	
Public cultural organisation	
Municipality	
Provincial authority	
Regional authority	
National authority	
Other public organisation	
Non-profit-making cultural association	
Private company in the cultural sector	
Other private company	
Private individual	
Don't know	
Not applicable	
Other, please specify	
.....	

6 In which cultural sector(s) does your organisation mostly operate? (Please select all that apply)	
Cultural Heritage	Visual arts
Music	Dance
Theatre	Audio-visual
Literature, Books and Reading	Architecture
Design, Applied Arts	Education, training or research
Youth	Don't know
Not in the cultural sector	Other cultural sector, please specify

About your project

7 Please state the name of your project	
	<input type="text"/>

8 Did your project exist before 2015?	
Yes – at same scale as in 2015	
Yes – at smaller scale than in 2015	
No	
Don't know	
Other, please specify	
.....	

9	How was your project selected for inclusion in the Mons2015 programme?
	Open call for projects
	Directly commissioned by Fondation Mons2015
	Don't know
	Other, please specify

10	How useful was the support provided by the Fondation Mons2015 for your project?
	Very useful
	Useful
	Not useful
	Not at all useful
	Not applicable (we did not need any support)
	Don't know

11	Did the EU logo feature in the marketing and communication materials of your project?
	In all materials
	In some materials
	Not at all
	Don't know

12	Did your project involve cultural organisations or artists in other countries? (please select all that apply)
	Yes - performers from other countries took part
	Yes - works from other countries were featured
	Yes - performers from Belgium performed in other countries
	Yes - works from Belgium were exhibited or performed in other countries
	Yes - in the form of international cultural exchanges
	Yes - we collaborated with non-cultural organisations/people
	Yes - Other, please specify
	None of the above

13	In which other countries are those organisations/artists located? (Please select all that apply)		
	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria
	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic
	Germany	Denmark	Estonia
	Spain	Finland	France
	Greece	Hungary	Ireland
	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg

13 In which other countries are those organisations/artists located? (Please select all that apply)			
Latvia	Malta	Netherlands	
Poland	Portugal	Romania	
Sweden	Slovenia	Slovakia	
United Kingdom	Other, please specify		

14 Was it a new collaboration?	
Yes – we collaborated with all partners for the first time	
Yes - we collaborated with some partners for the first time	
No - we had worked with all partners previously	
Don't know	
Other, please specify	

15 Will this cooperation continue after the end of 2015?	
Yes – and there will be more co-operation in future	
Yes – there will be a similar level of co-operation in future	
Yes – but there will be less co-operation in future	
No further co-operation	
Don't know	

16 Did your organisation establish new collaboration with organisations and/or artists in Belgium? Please mark all the relevant answers.	
Yes – with cultural organisations/artists in our core disciplines	
Yes – with cultural organisations/artists in different cultural fields	
Yes – with organisations/people outside the cultural sector	
None of the above	

17 Will this new cooperation continue after the end of 2015?	
Yes – and there will be more co-operation in future	
Yes – there will be a similar level of co-operation in future	
Yes – but there will be less co-operation in future	
No - there will be no further co-operation in future	
Don't know	

18 Did your project seek to promote or highlight any of the following? (please select all that apply)	
Awareness of cultural diversity	
Intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding	
Common or shared elements of European culture	
Themes of relevance or significance across Europe	
If so, please provide more information on the theme addressed	

.....

19 Was your project specifically targeted at any of the following groups? (Please select all that apply)

- Children and young people
- Older people
- Poor or disadvantaged communities
- Minority ethnic groups
- People with disabilities
- Other groups (please specify)
-

20 What steps did you take to reach different audiences or groups? (Please select all that apply)

- Involved partner organisations working with specific audiences or groups
- Implemented activities frequented by specific audiences or groups
- Provided free entry
- Reduced ticket prices
- Project was accessible or attractive to specific audiences or groups
- Involved specific audiences or groups in the development and implementation of the project
- Other method (please specify)
-

21 Will the activities of your project continue after 2015?

- Yes – all activities will continue
- Yes – some activities will continue
- No
- Don't know

22 To what extent has your European Capital of Culture project(s) strengthened the capacity of your organisation to undertake future cultural events?

- Greatly strengthened
- Strengthened
- Neither / was not important to strengthen our capacity
- Weakened
- Significantly weakened
- Don't know

23 Would like to provide additional information on your project and its achievements?

--	--	--

Your views on Mons2015

24	Overall, did Mons2015 present a cultural programme of high artistic quality?	
	High artistic quality	
	Reasonable artistic quality	
	Low artistic quality	
	No artistic quality whatsoever	
	Don't know	

25	How much artistic independence did the Fondation Mons2015 have? (To what extent was the Fondation Mons2015 able to resist political or commercial pressures when developing the cultural programme?)	
	High level of artistic independence	
	Reasonable level of artistic independence	
	Low level of artistic independence	
	No artistic independence whatsoever	
	Don't know	

26	How effective was the marketing and communications activity undertaken by the Fondation Mons2015?	
	Very effective	
	Effective	
	Neither	
	Ineffective	
	Very ineffective	
	Don't know	

27	Overall, how effective was the Fondation Mons2015 in managing the European Capital of Culture 2015?	
	Very effective	
	Effective	
	Neither effective nor ineffective	
	Ineffective	
	Very ineffective	
	Don't know	

28	How visible was the European Capital of Culture 2015?					
		Highly visible	Visible	Neither / Don't know	Not visible	Not at all visible
	In local media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In regional media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In national media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In international media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In other media, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29 How successful was European Capital of Culture in attracting visitors and audiences?						
Visitors and audiences from:	Very successful	Successful	Neither / don't know	Unsuccessful	Very unsuccessful	
Mons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rest of Hainaut Province						
Rest of Wallonia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Flanders and Brussels-Capital Region						
Other countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

30 To what extent will the cultural life of Mons be more vibrant after 2015 as a result of the European Capital of Culture?	
Much more vibrant	
Slightly more vibrant	
About the same as before	
Less vibrant	
Much less vibrant	
Don't know	

31 To what extent has the European Capital of Culture 2015 improved the image of Mons in:						
	Greatly improved	Improved	No difference / about the same	Deteriorated	Greatly deteriorated	Don't know
Mons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rest of Hainaut Province						
Rest of Wallonia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flanders and Brussels-Capital Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other countries						

32 To what extent do you think that the following have improved as a result of the European Capital of Culture 2015?							
	Greatly improved	Improved	No difference / about the same as before	Deteriorated	Greatly deteriorated	Don't know	
Governance and administration of culture in Mons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Local cultural infrastructure (facilities, buildings, support, structures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Urban environment and infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

33 Overall, how successful was Mons2015 European Capital of Culture?	
Very successful	
Successful	
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	
Unsuccessful	
Very unsuccessful	
Don't know	

34 Would like to make any other comments about Mons2015 (e.g. cultural programme, impact on the city)?	

[Click here to view your responses or click 'Finish' to submit](#)

Annex Three: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Ex-post evaluation of the two 2015 European Capitals of
Culture

Contracting Authority: European
Commission

1.	CONTEXT	2
1.1	Background on the European Capital of Culture EU Action	2
1.2	Objectives of the Action.....	2
1.3	Description of the Action for the year 2015.....	5
2.	TASK SPECIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT	8
2.1	Evaluation questions	8
3.	REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES	13
3.1	General reporting requirements.....	13
3.2	Inception Report.....	13
3.3	Initial Bulletin	13
3.4	Interim Report	13
3.5	Draft Final Report	14
3.6	Final Report.....	15
4.	ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET	16
4.1	Organisation	16
4.2	Meetings	17
4.3	Timetable.....	17
4.4	Budget	17
5.	REFERENCES.....	18
5.1	Action documents.....	18
5.2	Background and reference documents	18
6.	REQUIREMENTS	19
6.1	Methodology	19
6.2	Quality assurance	20
6.3	Resources	20

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Background on the European Capital of Culture EU Action

The initial scheme of "The European City of Culture" was launched at an intergovernmental level in 1985.¹ In 1999, Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and the Council gave the scheme the status of a Community Action under the name of "European Capital of Culture" (hereafter referred as "the Action")². The Decision introduced new selection procedures and evaluation criteria. Member States were ranked in a chronological order of entitlement to host the event each year. This Decision was amended by Decision 649/2005/EC in 2005 in order to integrate the ten new Member States which joined the EU in 2004. In 2006, it was replaced by Decision 1622/2006/EC³, which kept the principle of a chronological order of Member States but further refined the objectives of the Action and introduced new selection and monitoring arrangements.

1.2 Objectives of the Action

1.2.1 General objectives

In accordance with Article 1 of Decision 1622/2006/EC, the overall aim of the Action is to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

In accordance with Article 4 of Decision 1622/2006/EC, this Action should fulfil the following criteria.

As regards '*the European Dimension*', the Action shall:

- Foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- Highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- Bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

¹ Resolution of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, meeting within the Council, of 13 June 1985 concerning the annual event 'European City of Culture' (85/C 153/02), on the initiative of the former Greek Culture Minister, Melina Mercouri.

² Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019 (OJ L 166, 1.7.1999). That Decision was amended by Decision 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 117, 4.5.2005)

³ Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019 (OJ L 304, 3.11.2006).

As regards '*City and Citizens*' the Action shall:

- Foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad;
- Be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

1.2.3 Intervention logic

The figure below presents the hierarchy of objectives against which the 2015 ECOC shall be evaluated. This hierarchy is based principally on the 2006 Decision (as this Decision provided the legal basis for the 2015 ECOC), but is also complemented by information in the new legal basis for ECOC post 2019⁴ in order to reflect the evolving requirements and expectations for ECOC:

⁴ Decision 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC (OJ L 132, 3.5.2014).

General objective

Safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities

Specific objectives (SO)

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation

SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture

SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its links with other sectors

SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture

Operational objectives

Stimulate a diverse range of cultural activities of high artistic quality

Implement cultural activities promoting cultural diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding

Implement cultural activities highlighting the diversity of cultures in Europe and European themes

Involve European artists, promote cooperation with different countries and transnational partnerships

Combine traditional art forms with new types of cultural expression

Create new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events

Involve local citizens, artists and cultural organisations in development and implementation

Provide opportunities for volunteering and foster links with schools and other education providers

Improve cultural infrastructure

Develop the skills, capacity or governance of the cultural sector

Stimulate partnership and co-operation with other sectors

Attract the interest of a broad European and international public

1.3 Description of the Action for the year 2015

1.3.1 *The selection of the two European Capitals of Culture 2015*

Under Decision 1622/2006/EC, Belgium and the Czech Republic are the two Member States entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2015. According to the arrangements of the Decision, the competition is managed by the relevant authorities of the Member State concerned, usually the Ministry of Culture, which publishes a call for submission of applications six years before the ECOC-year. The selection is in two phases: a pre-selection phase, at the end of which a shortlist of applicant cities is drawn up, and then a final selection nine months later. A panel of thirteen independent members, six of whom appointed by the Member State concerned and the other seven by European Institutions, examines the cities' bids on the basis of the criteria laid down in the Decision.

In the Czech Republic, three candidate cities responded to the call published by the Czech Ministry. Two (Ostrava and Plzeň) were pre-selected in 2009, and the panel finally recommended in 2010 that the ECOC title be given to Plzeň. In Belgium Mons was the only candidate city. It was preselected in 2009 and finally recommended in 2010 for the ECOC title. The Council of Ministers of the European Union formally designated Mons and Plzeň as the two 2015 European Capitals of Culture respectively in November 2010 and May 2011.

1.3.2 *The monitoring of the two European Capitals of Culture 2015*

Decision 1622/2006/EC lays down a monitoring phase, applying from the 2010 title onwards.

During this phase between the designation of cities as ECOC and the actual ECOC-year, the progress in the cities' preparations is monitored and guided by a monitoring and advisory panel, composed of seven independent experts appointed by the European Institutions.

The role of this panel of experts is to:

- assess the progress made in the preparations,
- give guidance on the implementation of the event and
- check compliance with the programme and the commitments on the basis of which the cities were selected (particularly as regards meeting the "European Dimension" and "City and Citizens" criteria).

For this purpose, representatives from the cities are invited by the Commission to meet the monitoring and advisory panel twice:

- The first meeting takes place two years before the event;
- The second meeting takes place at the latest eight months before the event.

Ahead of each of these meetings, the city concerned sends a progress report. After the meeting, the panel draws up a monitoring report, which is made public. The report related to the final monitoring meeting also includes a recommendation to the Commission as to whether to award the Melina Mercouri prize. The prize is awarded provided that the designated cities have honoured the commitments made in the selection phase and acted on the recommendations of the panels during the selection and monitoring phases. This prize, to be awarded no later than three months before the event, rewards the quality preparation of the event. It consists of 1,5 million EUR under the EU Creative Europe programme and has a great symbolic value often triggering complementary sponsoring. Both 2015 European Capitals of Culture were awarded the Melina Mercouri Prize in 2014.

Regarding Mons and Plzeň, the two monitoring meetings took place in November 2012 and April 2014. The panel's reports are available at the following address:

- http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2015/first-monitoring_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2014/documents/2015-ecoc-2nd-monitoring-report-final_en.pdf

On the basis of the panel's recommendation, the Commission awarded the Melina Mercouri Prize to Mons and Plzeň during the second half of 2014.

1.3.3 Description of the two European Capitals of Culture 2015

1.3.3.1 Plzeň

The programme of Plzeň 2015 is articulated around the slogan "Opening up" and contains four main programme streams, namely "Art and Technologies", "Relationships and Emotions", "Transit and Minorities" and "Stories and Sources".

"Art and Technologies" is focused on creating sustainable jobs in the creative and cultural sector and enforcing the image of the city in a European context in this respect.

"Relationships and Emotions" focuses on public space in general – the transformation of the physical public space together with the citizens, officers and architects, but also on moderating debate on European issues.

"Transit and minorities" showcases the power of diversity and interculturality with projects on minorities, a series of moderated debates and open workshops as well as other artistic events.

"Stories and Sources" aims to foster tourism based on iconic personalities. It also draws attention to the Plzeň region, with the ambition to make a better use of the area's vast baroque heritage to further develop tourism.

Programme highlights are scheduled on a monthly basis, starting with the Opening Ceremony in January. It includes outdoor projects during the summer and a closing ceremony in December.

According to the information in the second monitoring meeting, Plzeň 2015 has a total operating funding allocated of 20.884.044 €, of which 14.099.726 € are devoted to the programme, amounting to 68% of the total. The remaining budget is allocated to promotion (13%) and

administration (19%). 92% of the budget comes from public funding (20% from National Government, 60% from the City, 10% from the region and another 10 % from the EU, including the Melina Mercouri prize). The private sector contributes with 8% of the budget for an amount of 1.582.654.

Further to this, capital expenditures of more than 82MM € have been invested in relation with the European Capital of Culture.

1.3.3.2 Mons

The programme is articulated around the theme of the "Metamorphosis", where technology meets culture, understood as a bridge for citizens to move from new technologies to art. It intends to question the European citizen on the management of digital technology skills, social networking, European identity, local and European connectivity, digitisation of heritage and preservation of digital heritage. Activities are distributed among four themes: Images, Sounds, Words and Memory. As part of Mons 2015 the city's inhabitants and visitors are also invited to discover five new museums as well as a series of urban installations.

Finally Mons 2015 is an element of a wider development strategy aiming to transform part of the industrial Hainaut region into a digital valley with a strong focus on the creative and digital economy.

Programme highlights include:

- Major exhibitions such as Van Gogh in the Borinage, with art works coming from various galleries around Europe and beyond; the Myth of St George in European Art, that evidences the common roots of European History and Culture; Metro IT, with virtual underground lines as a basis of a series of urban trails where each station offers a technological experience or Atopolis, focusing on the phenomena of circulation, exchange and transfer of artistic cultures and practices.
- Citizens' projects such as the Grand 8, eight weeks of festivals for local inhabitants including citizens' planning meetings to establish the theme and programme for each event; the Grand Ouest, with a similar structure over 12 weekends; the Autumn Festival featuring exclusively local artists.

Other major events include Café Europa, providing convivial spaces equipped with technology enabling contact with people from other European cities and partners; Street re-review, recreating through digital technologies 10 km of fake "Street view" in Mons City centre with the help of its inhabitants; Lassus and the European Renaissance, a week of meetings and concerts centred on the flourishing of polyphonic music in Mons and the region; or "Home and Away", a series of weekends with programmes mixing cultural performances and residences, concerts and gastronomy events of European and non-European host cities.

In total, Mons 2015 will feature a very large number of events, in all cultural sectors: 36 in Festivities and gastronomy, 52 in Theatre and Dance, 103 in Festivals & Others, 18 in Fashion & design, 62 in Art in the city and trails, 73 in Exhibitions & museums, 56 digital events, 23 in Literature and 76 in Music

According to the information in the second monitoring meeting, Mons 2015 has a total operating funding allocated of 68.262.650 € €, of which 45.546.750€ are devoted to the programme,

amounting to 67% of the total. The remaining budget is allocated to promotion (14,65%) and administration (18,63%). 80,51% of the budget comes from public funding (43,95% from the Community, 21,97% from the Region, 6,00 % from the province 6,39 from the cities and 2,2% from the EU, including the Melina Mercouri prize). The private sector contributes with 19,49% of the budget for an amount of 13.306.625 €. Mons has implemented a very effective sponsorship strategy, including a large pool of small contributions from local businesses under the Club Mons 2015.

1.3.4 Evaluations carried out by the two European Capitals of Culture 2015

On top of the independent evaluation carried out for the European Commission in line with Article 12 of Decision 1622/2006/EC, many European Capitals of Culture carry out their own evaluation reports.

The contractor will liaise with Plzeň 2015 and Mons 2015 to see whether they have commissioned such evaluations and, of so, to which extent the results of such evaluations can feed into the contractor's own evaluation without extra costs for the Commission.

2. TASK SPECIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Aims of the evaluation

This evaluation is launched according to Article 12 of the current Decision 1622/2006/EC: "Each year the Commission shall ensure the external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year in accordance with the objectives and criteria of the Action".

It shall cover the two 2015 European Capitals of Culture Action, Mons and Plzeň.

The aim is to better understand how the two 2015 European Capitals of Culture contributed to the objectives of the Action, whether they have broadly achieved their objectives and whether implementation has proceeded in line with their original application.

The evaluation should also contribute to reinforcing the existing evidence-base on the ability of the Action to produce cultural, social and economic impact.

Finally the evaluation should draw lessons from the implementation of the two 2015 European Capitals of Culture that may be useful for future ECOC or cities wishing to bid for the ECOC title.

2.2 Evaluation questions

The contractor must provide answers to the evaluation questions (EQ) listed below.

The contractor will nonetheless be called upon to use their knowledge and experience to refine and elaborate these questions and, where appropriate, propose others to the Commission with the aim of improving the focus of this evaluation. The contractor should note that the sub-questions

proposed under some of the evaluation questions do not necessarily cover the entire aspect of the questions concerned. The sub-questions deal with issues the Commission is particularly interested in and which the contractor therefore should address, in addition to any other issues which the evaluator may see as requiring attention in the case of each evaluation question.

With respect to each of the evaluation questions, the evaluation is expected to provide concrete recommendations particularly on how future European Capitals of Culture can address any deficiencies and/or gaps identified by the evaluator. As far as the conclusions for the two evaluated ECOC allows recommendations should also be made – if appropriate –for the future design of the Action.

Relevance

EQ1: To what extent were the objectives of each ECOC relevant to the objectives of the Action?

- What was the main motivation behind the city bidding to become a European Capital of Culture?
- What was the process of determining objectives? Was there a process of consultation in each city to define aims and objectives?
- What were the objectives of the city in being ECOC? What was the relative importance of each objective?
- To what extent were the objectives consistent with the Decision and with the ECOC's own application? (special focus on the European dimension)
- Have any specific objectives of the ECOC event been related to social impacts?
- In this connection, did the objectives of the ECOC event include reaching out to all groups of society, including the excluded, disadvantaged, disabled people and minorities?

EQ2: To what extent were the ECOC's cultural programmes and associated activities relevant to their own objectives?

- To what extent were the activities consistent with the ECOC's own objectives? (special focus on the European dimension)
- To what extent have the specific themes/orientations of the cultural programme proved to be relevant to the objectives defined?
- How was the European dimension reflected by the themes put forward by the ECOC event and in terms of cooperation at European level? How did the Capitals of Culture seek to make the European dimension visible? To what extent did the two ECOC cooperate?

Efficiency

EQ3: How did the management arrangements of each ECOC contribute to the achievement of outputs, results and impacts?

- How have the organisational models of the formal governing Board and operational structures played a role in the European Capital of Culture? What role have the Board and operational structures played in the ECOC event's implementation? At what stage were

- these structures established? How did it improve management of culture in the city during the event?
- Who chaired the Board and what was his/her experience? What were the key success and failure elements related to the work of the Board and operational structure used and personnel involved?
 - Has an artistic director been included into the operational structure and how was he/she appointed? What were the key success and failure elements related to the work of the artistic director and personnel involved?
 - What was the process of designing the programme?
 - How were activities selected and implemented?
 - How did the delivery mechanism contribute to the achievement of outputs?
 - To what extent has the communication and promotion strategy been successful in/contributed to the promotion of city image/profile, promotion of the ECOC event, awareness-raising of the European dimension, promotion of all events and attractions in the city?
 - To what extent has the communication and promotion strategy including the use of social media successfully reached the communication's target groups at local, regional, national, European and international levels?

EQ4: To what extent were the selection, monitoring and EU co-financing procedures introduced by Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC efficient?

- To what extent have the mechanisms applied by the Commission in line with Decision 2006/1622/EC for the selection of the European Capitals of Culture and the subsequent implementation and monitoring mechanisms influenced the results of the ECOC event?
- To what extent has the informal meeting following the designation as well as other advice offered by the panel and by the Commission influenced the results of the ECoC event?
- How was the Melina Mercouri Prize used?

EQ5: To what extent did the ECOC manage to raise the necessary resources?

- What was the process of securing the financial inputs?
- What was the total amount of resources used for each ECOC event? What was the final financial outturn of the year?
- What were the sources of financing and the respective importance of their contribution to the total? How much came from the European Union Structural Funds (e.g. ERDF - European Regional Development Fund, ESF – European Social Fund) or other sources of EU funding?
- To what extent did the ECOC title trigger complementary sponsorship?
- What was the total expenditure strictly for the implementation of the cultural programme of the year (operational expenditure)? What was the proportion of the operational expenditure in the total expenditure for the ECOC event?
- What proportion of expenditure was used for infrastructure (cultural and tourism infrastructure, including renovation)?

EQ6: To what extent were the financial and human resources secured by each ECOC appropriate and proportionate?

- Was the total size of the budget sufficient for reaching a critical mass in terms of impacts? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding? Could the same results have been achieved if the structure of resources and their respective importance was different?
- To what extent have the human resources deployed for preparation and implementation of the ECOC event been commensurate with its intended outputs and outcomes?
- As a result, could the total budget for the ECOC event be considered appropriate and proportional to what the each ECOC set out to achieve?

Effectiveness

EQ7: To what extent were the EU-level objectives achieved?

- Provide typology of outputs, results and possible impacts of the Action at different levels (European, national, regional etc.)
- To what extent has the ECOC event been successful in attaining the objectives of the Action (refer to list in the intervention logic)?
- Was the cultural programme perceived as being of high artistic quality? To what extent did the ECOC prove successful in bringing their chosen artistic themes/orientations to the fore?
- To what extent did the ECOC title contribute to an enhanced cultural offer in the cities holding the title (e.g. in terms of scope and scale) with stronger European Dimension?
- To what extent did the ECOC implementation widen access to and participation in culture in the two cities? What actions were taking to include the elderly, young people, people with special needs in the cultural activities? How accessible were the activities carried out?
- How did the ECOC programmes help strengthening the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors and its links with other sectors? Which help was available to cultural operators to extend their networks and work transnationally and internationally?
- To what extent did the Action in the two cities raise their international profile through culture?

EQ8: To what extent were the ECOC's own objectives achieved?

- What quantitative indicators (number of visitors, overnight stays, cultural participation of people, etc.) of the social, tourist and broader economic impacts of the event have been gathered by the ECOC?
- To what extent did the ECOC achieve the outputs hoped for by the city and as set out in the application?
- To what extent have specific objectives related to social impacts been met?
- To what extent were the objectives related to reaching out to all groups of society, including the excluded, disadvantaged, disabled and minorities, met?

EQ9: To what extent has the Action resulted in unintended effects?

- Are there any instances where the ECOC event has exceeded initial expectations? What positive effects has this had?
- Where expectations have not been met, what factors have hindered the development of the Action?
- Have any other unintended effects been identified?

Sustainability

EQ10: To what extent can the positive effects of the ECoC Action be considered to be sustainable?

- Which of the activities or elements of the ECOC event are likely to continue and in which form once the ECOC-year is over?
- Has any provision been made to continue and follow up the cultural programme of the ECOC event after the closure?
- How will the city continue to manage its long-term cultural development following the ECOC event?
- What will be the role of the operational structure after the end of the ECOC event and how will the organisational structure change?
- What has been the contribution of the ECOC event to improved management of cultural development in the city? (in the medium-term)
- What are the impacts of the ECOC event likely to be on the long term cultural development of the city?
- What are the impacts of the ECOC event likely to be on the long term social development of the city?
- What are the impacts of the ECOC event likely to be on the long term urban and broader economic development of the city?

EQ11: What is the EU added value of the ECOC Action?

- As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allow, what is the added value of the European Capital of Culture being an EU initiative, compared to what could be achieved if the Action was a purely national or local action?

EQ12: To what extent were the ECOC complementary to other EU initiatives?

- As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allows it, to what extent has the Action proved to be complementary to other EU initiatives in the field of culture?
- To what extent has each ECOC been reinforced by and added impetus to investments by the EU Structural Funds?
- To what extent have the two ECOC complemented other EU initiatives, e.g. European Youth Capital, European Green Capital?

3. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

3.1 General reporting requirements

Each report (except the final version of the Final Report) should have an **introductory page** providing an overview and orientation of the report. It should describe what parts of the document, on the one hand, have been carried over from previous reports or been recycled from other documents, and on the other hand, represent progress of the evaluation work with reference to the work plan.

The Commission will comment on all reports within maximum 30 calendar days. In the absence of observations from the Commission within the deadline the report will be considered as being approved.

Within maximum 14 calendar days of receiving the Commission's observations the Contractor will submit the report in definitive form, taking full account of these observations, either by following them precisely or by explaining clearly why they could not be followed. Should the Commission still not consider the report acceptable, the Contractor will be invited to amend the report insofar as such amendments do not interfere with the independence of the evaluator in respect of their findings, conclusions or recommendations.

All reports must be drafted in English and submitted according to the timetable below to the responsible body. The Executive Summary should be translated into French and German. Electronic files must be provided in Microsoft ® Word for Windows format. Additionally, besides Word, the Final Report must be delivered in Adobe ® Acrobat pdf format and in 3 hard copies. Authorized pictures of ECOC events 2015 will be welcome in the cover page and in the report.

3.2 Inception Report

The report should detail how the methodology proposed by the Contractor is going to be implemented in the light of an examination of the quality and appropriateness of existing data.

3.3 Initial Bulletin

The initial bulletin to be delivered early in March 2016 should provide some first messages on the two 2015 European Capitals of Culture; e.g. main attendance figures, number and scale of cultural events and key features and qualities as observed at the end of the ECOC year. The information may be used as a basis for press releases and news reports by the European Commission on the 2015 ECOC of interest to the press and the general public.

3.4 Interim Report

The report must as a minimum provide:

- An overview of the status of the evaluation project;
- A description of problems encountered and solutions found;

- A summary of initial findings and results of the data gathering (primary data collected in the field and secondary data), as well as information about the initial analyses of such data. The Contractor may be in a position to provide preliminary answers on the evaluation questions;
- An assessment of the data, whether it meets expectations and will provide a sound basis for responding to the evaluation questions;
- A conclusion whether any changes are required to the work plan, or any other solutions should be sought in order to ensure that the required results of the evaluation are achieved. If any such issues are to be identified, they must be discussed in the meeting with the Steering Group dedicated to this report;
- A proposal for the final structure of the Final Report, as well as a structure of the Executive Summary.

3.5 Draft Final Report

This document should deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be clear enough for any potential reader to understand. Upon authorisation of the Steering Group, the contractor shall submit this document for factual check to key stakeholders in the cities concerned.

The structure of the report should follow a broad classification into two main parts:

- **Main report:** The main report must present, in full, the results of the analyses, conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation. It must also contain a description of the subject evaluated, the context of the evaluation, and the methodology used (with an analysis of the latter's strengths and weaknesses). Length should not exceed 100 pages.
- **Annexes:** These must collate the technical details of the evaluation, and must include:
 - the Terms of Reference,
 - questionnaire templates, interview guides, full transcript of case studies, any additional tables or graphics, and references and sources,
 - a one-page statement about the validity of the evaluation results, i.e. to what extent it has been possible to provide reliable statements on all essential aspects examined. Issues to be referred to may include scoping of the evaluation exercise, availability of data, unexpected problems encountered in the evaluation process, proportionality between budget and objectives of the assignment etc.,
 - a proposal for the dissemination of the evaluation results, on the basis of the draft Dissemination Plan annexed to these Terms of Reference,
 - in case of need, a glossary of terms used.

3.6 Final Report

The Final Report follows the same format as the draft Final Report. On top of that, it will include:

- **An executive summary:** It sets out, in no more than 6 pages, a summary of the evaluation's main conclusions, the main evidence supporting them and the recommendations arising from them. It should be translated into French and German by a professional translation agency, once it has been approved by the responsible body;
- A 200-word **abstract**;
- **A summary statement:** one-page summary of the main evaluation conclusions and recommendations;
- **Best practices:** they highlight any kind of practices in terms of governance, management or work organisation which contributed to the smooth delivery of the project.

The document must take into account the results of the quality assessment of the draft Final Report and discussions with the Steering Group about the draft Final Report insofar as these do not interfere with the autonomy of the Contractor in respect of the conclusions they have reached and the recommendations made.

It should be noted that the European Parliament and the Council have adopted in 2014 a Decision covering the European Capital of Culture Action from 2020 to 2033. When drafting general recommendations about the Action, the contractor should make sure that they have not been already addressed in the new Decision.

The final version of each separate deliverable (except the one-page summary statement) must:

- respect the Commission's visual identity (see below);
- contain specific identifiers which shall be incorporated on the cover page provided by the Contracting Authority;
- include the following disclaimer: *“This document has been prepared for the European Commission. However it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”*

The contracting authority will publish the Final Report, the Executive Summary and the annexes on the World-Wide Web.

Rules and graphic requirements of the final deliverables

Graphic requirements

All studies produced for the European Commission and Executive Agencies shall conform to the corporate visual identity of the European Commission by applying the graphic rules set out in the European Commission's Visual Identity Manual, including its logo.

For graphic requirements please refer to the template provided in Annex 2. The cover page shall be filled in by the contractor in accordance with the instructions provided in the template. For further details, you may also contact comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu.

Accessibility

The Commission is committed to making online information as accessible as possible to the largest possible number of users including those with visual, auditory, cognitive or physical disabilities, and those not having the latest technologies. The Commission supports the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) of the W3C.

For full details on Commission policy on accessibility for information providers, see: http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/standards/accessibility/index_en.htm

Pdf versions of studies destined for online publication should respect W3C guidelines for accessible pdf documents. See: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

Raw data and datasets

Any final datasets should be provided as structured data in a machine readable format (e.g. in the form of a spreadsheet and/or an RDF file) for Commission internal usage and for publishing on the Open Data Portal, in compliance with Commission Decision (2011/833/EU).⁵

The data delivered should include the appropriate metadata (e.g. description of the dataset, definition of the indicators, label and sources for the variables, notes) to facilitate reuse and publication.

The data delivered should be linked to data resources external to the scope of the evaluation, preferably data and semantic resources from the Commission's own data portal or from the Open Data Portal⁶. The contractor should describe in the offer the approach they will adopt to facilitate data linking.

4. ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET

4.1 Organisation

The contract will be managed by Unit D2 of the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

⁵ If third parties' rights do not allow their publication as open data, the tenderers should describe in the offer the subpart that will be provided to the Commission free of rights for publication and the part that will remain for internal use.

⁶ For a list of shared data interoperability assets see the ISA program joinup catalogue (<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/catalogue/repository/eu-semantic-interoperability-catalogue>) and the Open Data Portal resources.

A Steering Group will be involved in the management of the evaluation. The responsibilities of the Steering Group will include:

- providing the external evaluator with access to information;
- supporting and monitoring the work of the external evaluator;
- assessing the quality of the reports submitted by the external evaluator,

while ensuring that the Contractor's independence is not compromised;

4.2 Meetings

It is expected that the contractor participates in four meetings in Brussels with the evaluation Steering Group. The evaluation team leader and other relevant experts must participate in these meetings. For these meetings, **minutes should be drafted by the contractor** within 5 working days, to be agreed among the participants and approved and signed by the chair person, who will be appointed from Unit EAC/A4.

4.3 Timetable

The indicative starting date is **October 2015**. The contract will start after both parties have signed it. The period of execution of the contract is **10 months**.

The following outline work plan and indicative timetable are envisaged:

Deadline	Task
<i>Early October 2015</i>	A kick-off meeting may be held after the signature of the contract.
<i>November 2015</i>	Contractor submits the inception report to Steering Group. At least one Steering Group meeting will be held in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>1 March 2016</i>	Contractor submits the initial bulletin to Steering Group.
<i>15 April 2016</i>	Desk and field research: at least 60% completion. Contractor submits the interim report to Steering Group. At least one Steering Group meeting will be held in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>15 June 2016</i>	Desk and field research completed. Analysis and drafting completed. Contractor submits the draft final report , to Steering Group. At least one Steering Group meeting will be held in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>15 July 2016</i>	Taking account of the Commission's comments contractor submits the final report and executive summary to Steering Group.
<i>31 July 2016</i>	Taking account of the Commission's comments, contractor submits the very last versions (hard copies included) of the final report and the executive summary (including the translated versions into French and German).

4.4 Budget

The estimated maximum budget for the evaluation of the Action, covering all the results to be achieved by the contractor as listed in sections 2 and 3 above, is **EUR 75 000**.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Action documents

The following information will be made available to the contractor in the inception phase:

- The bids and progress reports of the two ECOC 2015.

5.2 Background and reference documents

- Knowledge of the following documents is required for the tender. Unless differently specified, they are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/european-capitals-of-culture_en.htm:
- Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019;
- Decision 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2005 amending Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019;
- Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019;
- Regulation 1295/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decisions 1718/2006/EC, 1855/2006/EC and 1041/2009/EC;
- Decision 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC;
- Conclusions of the Ministers of Culture meeting within the Council of 18 May 1992 concerning the choice of European Cities of Culture after 1996 and the 'Cultural Month';
- Resolution of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs regarding the annual organization of the 'European City of Culture';
- Study about the European Cities and Capitals of Culture, and the European cultural months (1995-2004) achieved by palmer/RAE Associates;
- European Parliament study on "European Capitals of Culture: success strategies and long-term effects";

- Ex-post Evaluations of European Capitals of Culture from 2007-2013⁷;
- The panel's reports concerning the 2015 titles;
- Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of ECOC 2010-2016, Ecorys, 2011⁸
- IMPACTS 08 - European Capital of Culture Research Programme <http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/impacts08/>
- European Capital of Culture Policy Group <http://ecocpolicygroup.wordpress.com/>

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Methodology

The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to gather and analyse information and for making the assessment, but must take account of the following:

- The evaluation must be based on recognised evaluation techniques, as well as those stemming from the emerging domain of big data analytics when relevant.
- The choice and a detailed description of the methodology must form part of the offer submitted. There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions addressed and the corresponding methodology proposed. The evaluation questions can be further elaborated, e.g. by providing operational sub-questions under each question.
- Secondary data should be obtained from all existing literature relevant to the evaluation subject, including any existing robust (academic) research into the topic.
- Primary data should be obtained from the broadest possible variety of sources and should also include the views of key informants beyond those directly involved in and benefiting from the intervention.
- Considerable emphasis should be placed on the analysis phase of the evaluation. In addressing the evaluation questions, quantitative indicators should be sought and used as far as possible. The contractor must support findings and recommendations by explaining the degree to which these are based on opinion, analysis and objectively verifiable evidence. Where opinion is the main source, the degree of consensus and the steps taken to test the opinion should be given.
- Comparability of results with evaluation of ECOC 2007-2013 should be ensured.
- A set of core and preferably quantitative indicators should be proposed in the inception report. They should build on indicators developed for the ex-post evaluation of ECOC 2010

⁷ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm

⁸ Idem

- It is not expected that all individual projects financed during the ECOC event will be assessed, but the sample of projects examined should be drawn up in a manner suitable for each evaluation question addressed, and should be such as to enable the evaluators to draw general conclusions on the actions.

6.2 Quality assurance

The Contractor shall, as a minimum, apply the quality assurance procedures described in the Quality Plan included in their bid for Framework Contract EAC/22/2013. The offer should describe how the Quality Plan will be applied during the implementation of this specific contract.

6.3 Resources

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting resources, as well as junior experts, must be available to enable senior experts to concentrate on their core evaluation tasks. For each of the main team members (team leader, quality assurance expert, report writer and other senior experts), the offer should include, preferably in their respective CVs, a list of evaluations in which they have participated, the dates of each project and their specific role in it

HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
from the delegations in non-EU countries (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/eurodirect/index_en.htm) or
calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(* The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).

Priced subscriptions:

- via one of the sales agents of the Publications Office of the European Union (http://publications.europa.eu/others/agents/index_en.htm).



Publications Office

doi: 10.2766/423160
ISBN 978-92-79-52816-3