



Ex-post Evaluation of the 2018 European Capitals of Culture - report

August 2019

*A Final Report by the EFECTIV
Consortium
(Evaluation consortium for
Education, Culture, Training
and Innovation)*

Authors:

*Tim Fox, Ecorys
James Rampton, CSES*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate D— Culture and Creativity
Unit D.2— Creative Europe

Contact: EAC/D.2

E-mail: eac-culture@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

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1.0 Introduction

This final report presents the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Action for 2018 undertaken by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES).

The cities of Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta were the two ECoC cities for 2018. The evaluation has focussed on how these cities developed their application and cultural programme, how they delivered their ECoC year, the benefits and impacts that were gained and any legacy issues they experienced. The evaluation also highlights what the cities actually delivered over 2018 and describe the themes, priorities and key projects that made up their ECoC cultural programme. Finally, the evaluation also puts forward conclusions, recommendations and lessons for future ECoC title-holders and applicants as well as EU institutions to learn from.

This report starts with an introduction explaining the aims and methodology of the evaluation and a brief policy history and context of the ECoC. It is then followed by a chapter each for Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta which sets out the main findings and observations of the evaluation for each of the 2018 host cities. It concludes with overall findings and recommendations.

1.1 The European Capital of Culture

1.1.1 Objectives of the ECoC Action

The overall objective of the ECoC Action is 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".

In achieving this objective, the ECoC Action is interested in helping host cities to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of their cultural offer, widen participation in culture among residents and strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector. The ECoC also aims to raise the international profile of host cities and help promote and celebrate different European cultures. The ECoC therefore aims to do more than 'put on a year of culture' and the benefits of hosting the year reach further than those directly associated with culture.

In evaluating the 2018 ECoC Action it is important to recognise the overall objective of the ECoC as stated in the 2006 Decision but updated from previous evaluations as laid out in the table overleaf 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 2014 Decision.

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			
Stimulate a diverse range of cultural activities of high artistic quality	Create new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events	Improve cultural infrastructure	Attract the interest of a broad European and international public
Implement cultural activities promoting cultural diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding	Involve local citizens, artists and cultural organisations in development and implementation	Develop the skills, capacity or governance of the cultural sector	
Implement cultural activities highlighting (shared) European cultures and themes	Provide opportunities for volunteering and foster links with schools and other education providers	Stimulate partnership and co-operation with other sectors	
Involve European artists, promote cooperation with different countries and transnational partnerships		Combine traditional art forms with new types of cultural expression	

1.1.2 Policy history and context

Since the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, put forward a European resolution to establish the European City of Culture Action in 1985, nearly 60 cities have held the ECoC title. Given the long history and the wider context of ECoC, it is clear that the 2018 evaluation cannot consider the two 2018 title-holders in isolation. Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta are the latest in a long list of cities to have hosted ECoC and thus draw on the experience of previous ECoC to a greater or lesser extent. Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta also represent just two out of the countless examples of cities that are attempting to reinvent or regenerate themselves through the development of culture. In evaluating the 2018 title-holders, we thus draw on the lessons from 30 years of the ECoC as a means of gaining perspective on 2018. 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. Some of this wider policy learning and context is set out below.

The resolution put forward in 1985 by Melina Mercouri 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 and the "European City of Culture" became "European Capital of Culture". 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.

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 and cities interested in applying for the title must submit an application. A panel of independent experts in the cultural field (seven nominated by European institutions – European Parliament, Council, Commission and Committee of the Regions – and six by the Member State concerned) meet approximately 5 years before the year of the ECoC to review and analyse the applications. 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 in the Member State in question, which notifies the EU institutions. Acting on a recommendation from the Commission, the

Council draws on 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 (only those nominated by European institutions): around two years 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 acting upon a proposal of the Commission (later amended by Decision (EU) 2017/1545). 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 for cities holding the title as of 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 countries, potential candidates, as well as European Free Trade Association countries which are parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (with the European Commission responsible for the competition and official designation in these cases);
- Stricter and more specific selection criteria, including stronger emphasis on the long-term impact of the action and reinforcement of the European dimension; and
- Three monitoring meetings instead of just two.

Whilst the ECoC Action has its own legal basis, EU funding for the ECoC (in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize) is provided via the Creative Europe programme. The Creative Europe Regulation lists the ECoC as one of several "special actions designed to make the richness and diversity of European cultures more visible and to stimulate intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding".¹ The ECoC thus contribute progress to the objectives of Creative Europe, whilst being distinct from the other activities supported, i.e. co-operation projects, networks, platforms, etc. Funding from Creative Europe has been awarded to all titles up to 2019 titles, i.e. all those covered by the 2006 Decision but – for the time being – none covered by the 2014 Decision.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020)

The European Commission plays a role in promoting the ECoC Action. This includes publications, such as brochures, a fact sheet, short video, press news, guidelines for applicants and “stories” about previous ECoC. The Commission has also organised events, such as a conference celebrating 25 years of the ECoC. The Commission also takes part in ECoC info-sessions organised by the relevant national authorities when the latter launch their respective competition. These sessions usually take place a few weeks after the calls inviting interested cities to submit applications are published. A dedicated page on the Europa website provides essential information on the ECoC concept, history and operation, as well as links to past, present and future title-holders.² The ECoC page appears prominently via a Google search and is easily accessible via the list of “Actions” on the Creative Europe website.³ However, the page does not feature prominently on the Commission’s main web page for culture.⁴ Indeed, the ECoC does not feature under the list of “Initiatives” but can only be found by clicking on several tabs or links in turn (“Policies” then “Culture sector support”, then “Culture in cities and regions”, then “European Capitals of Culture”). Casual browsers that are unaware of the ECoC would thus tend not find the ECoC via this route.

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. 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 the ECoC 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

² https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/node_en

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/>

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.⁵ 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.

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 sectors 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. 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 sectors. 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

⁵ <http://www.beatrizgarcia.net/projects-newer/1985-2019-european-capitals-of-culture/>

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.

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, LAgroun & 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.⁶ In relation to Liverpool 2008, Connelly (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"⁷. Others have suggested that attempts to attract tourists and improve the external image of the city are not easily reconciled with an 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". 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.

1.2 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 event of the previous year, in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the performance and achievements of the ECoC 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 objectives of the ECoC (as set out in Table 1-1 above) allow 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 that the cities deliver as well as the methodology and systems used to run the activities. Therefore, the evaluation reviews the separate activities run by Leeuwarden and Valletta 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 a number of key issues designed to capture the essence of what makes an effective ECoC (found in the table below).

⁶ LAgroun & Interarts, (2005), *City Tourism & Culture: The European Experience; A Report produced for the Research Group of the European Travel Commission and for the World Tourism Organization*.

⁷ https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/impacts08/pdf/pdf/Creating_an_Impact_-_web.pdf

Table 1-2 Effectiveness / success criteria issues

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
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.
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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 title⁸. The core indicators allow a degree of comparison and aggregation of effects across the 2018 ECoC as well as with previous years.

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	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	Attendance or participation in ECoC events Attendance or participation by young, disadvantaged or "less culturally active" people Number of active volunteers

⁸ European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2010), *An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme*: <https://ecocpolicygroup.wordpress.com/>

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

€ 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

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 2018.

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

1.2.1 Methodology for the 2018 ECoC Evaluation

The methodology for the evaluation of the ECoC closely followed the approach adopted in previous assessments 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 Leeuwarden and Valletta. 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 panels for selection and monitoring and the original bidding guidance to understand how the two ECoCs 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 which is mainly set out earlier in this section.
- ECoC-level literature from Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta: 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 local 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 city visits in late 2018 (i.e. during the host year) and in Spring 2019. 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. A number of international artists and cultural operators were interviewed, which provided an external perspective on the ECoC.
- Interviews with EU-level stakeholders: a former member of the selection and monitoring panel was interviewed, whilst another former panel member provided written feedback. EU-level cultural bodies were invited to contribute and one responded.

1.2.2 Evaluation evidence base

This evaluation report provides a detailed understanding of the 2018 ECoC Action and within this a good assessment of the activities and effects of Leeuwarden-Friesland and Valletta. However, there are a number of issues to consider when assessing the strengths of the evidence base used for this study and there are some limitations that are linked to the timing and resources allocated to the evaluation that are important to recognise.

- 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 for an ex-post evaluation to take place and the budget allocated to the work means that only an after picture has been studied. Equally, because the evaluation was undertaken during and shortly after the end of the ECoC some of the effects of the programme have not manifested themselves properly. Many stakeholders involved in the evaluation commented that the real impact of the ECoC on the city and its residents will take time to filter through.
- The resources allocated to the evaluation are also relatively modest. They allow for consultations with stakeholders and a survey of projects (where needed) but other primary research is not possible within the budget. Although resources allow us to gather a range of views, this means much of the primary evidence used in the evaluation is focussed on the opinions and ideas of stakeholders rather than 'hard' and quantitative data to prove, for instance, the clear impact of the ECoC on widening participation in culture. However, the views of these stakeholders are still very valid and should not be dismissed as a 'weaker' piece of evaluation evidence. Gaining the views of stakeholders who have delivered the ECoC often over several years, or

stakeholders who have worked in the cultural field in the cities for most of their careers or have been closely involved in issues such as bid development, legacy planning and community development is key to understanding the work of the ECoC and also the benefits that it has brought about. The consultations were also a useful way of triangulating the evidence provided by the ECoC and further testing various secondary evidence that was available to the evaluators (including the local evaluation).

- Both the 2018 ECoC have undertaken or commissioned some research themselves, as described in sections 0 and 0. 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.
- Detailed modelling, economic impact assessments or large-scale surveys were outside the scope of this study. This evidence used outside of the interviews is dependent on the local evaluation and other research commissioned by the ECoC cities. Both 2018 ECoC cities did not commission large and ambitious evaluations which provide quantitative data on audience figures, or which understand the economic impact of the programme or levels of cultural awareness before, during and after the ECoC year.

More specifically, some of the limitations to the evidence base are as follows.

Limitations in the evidence base for Leeuwarden-Friesland:

It is worth noting that Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC did not commission an external evaluation but rather collected a range of monitoring data (see below) and commissioned a range of research projects linked to the ECoC culminating in a final report in 2019.⁹ Although this gives some good qualitative and quantitative evidence to use in this report, there was no external evaluation to look at issues such as the strength of the delivery arrangements, the quality of various systems and procedures or the overall approach to stakeholder engagement

The limitations of the evidence base for Leeuwarden-Friesland is mainly related to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) collected by the Foundation on an annual or sometimes quarterly basis from a range of different sources. A key source of quantitative evidence which the European evaluation can utilise is the monitoring information from 32 KPIs which the delivery agency collects on an ongoing basis. These 32 KPIs relate to measurements linked to five key themes:

- Cultural access and participation
- Economy and tourism
- Cultural vibrancy and sustainability
- Image and perception
- Governance and delivery process

⁹ *LF2018 Foundation (2019), Final Assessment LF2018 Research Results*

Although this aspect of existing information is a useful source for the European evaluation, it is worth noting that there are two key limitations that the European evaluators note associated with this data:

- Some of the indicators are beyond the influence of the ECoC and relate to issues that the ECoC cannot hope to truly change. For instance, there are KPI related to *encouraging 7,500 additional jobs in the water sector* or *60% of students coming back to the area who have studies elsewhere*. The ECoC can of course indirectly help achieve this but other wider factors will be the main drivers of change for these types of indicators. This means that the European evaluation will use some of the KPIs as contextual rather than direct indicators of success for the ECoC.
- Some of the indicators (around a third) do not have a quantitative element attached to them, either in terms of the main indicator or a target. For example, indicators related to *new academic opportunities and more bachelor, masters and PhD students* or *encouraging coherence between existing cultural institutions* do not have any quantitative element. This means that although the indicators will be useful, around a third of them will only give qualitative rather than quantitative information to the European evaluation.

There is no evidence of big data having been used by the LF2018 Foundation or by any of the other stakeholders in Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018, although an annual snapshot of the city was undertaken in the form of an “annual baseline assessment”.

Limitations in the evidence base for Valletta:

The Valletta 2018 Foundation did not commission an external evaluation to cover the overall operation and effects of Valletta 2018. Instead, a monitoring and evaluation group included staff of the Foundation, as well as some other stakeholders. Linked to this, the Foundation oversaw a programme of research, which led to publications at various points, including a set of final reports in March 2019 that covered various impacts of the ECoC.¹⁰ The results of this work have been taken into account in this report.

The Foundation has not published monitoring data against KPIs. Indeed, it has not made any KPIs publicly available. This has made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the ECoC against its own objectives. Although a certain amount of baseline evidence is available from 2015 onwards, it is not comprehensive across all criteria relevant to this evaluation.

Comprehensive data on attendances at the main cultural venues were not gathered by the research programme of the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

There is no evidence of big data having been used by the Foundation or by any of the other stakeholders in Valletta 2018, although a number of national surveys were carried out within the context of the research programme of the Foundation or by other stakeholders. For example, the Valletta Participation Survey interviewed more than 1,000 people (see section 0).

¹⁰ Valletta 2018 Foundation (2019), *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Final Research Report Valletta 2018*.

2.0 Valetta

2.1 Background

2.1.1 City

Valletta is the capital city of Malta and located on the south-east coast of the island of Malta. The metropolitan area including Valletta has a population of nearly 400,000 people, representing around 90% of the total population of the country. The area has been continuously inhabited for around 8,000 years and, like the rest of Malta, ruled in turn by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantium, Aghlabids, Normans, Sicilians, Anjou, French (under Napoleon) and the British from 1814. Malta became independent in 1964 and declared itself as a neutral and non-aligned state in 1979. It joined the EU in 2004 and adopted the Euro in 2008. As the capital city, Valletta houses the Parliament of Malta, the Office of the President of Malta and all major government buildings. It is governed locally by the Valletta Local Council, which was established in 1993.

The city's two natural harbours, Marsamxett and the Grand Harbour, have made Valletta a major strategic port for centuries and particularly since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This strategic location has also caused the city to suffer numerous attacks and sieges, including the Great Siege of 1565, when the Knights Hospitaller held off an invasion by the Ottoman Empire and, more recently, the Siege of Malta during World War Two. Whilst the city remains a major port, the nature of shipping has changed with fewer ships requiring refuelling and an increase in the arrival of cruise ships. Like the rest of Malta, Valletta is heavily dependent on tourism, with many of Malta's 1.6m annual visitors passing through the city's ports and airport. In recent years, medical tourism has grown in importance, particularly amongst British visitors. Other key industries in the city include electronics, textiles and film production, driven in part by financial incentives offered by the Government. The main campus of the University of Malta is in Msida, just to the west of Valletta, although the university retains a presence in Valletta in the original Old University Building. Overall, the University has 11,500 students. Just outside Valletta is the SmartCity technology park, a €275m development that is expected to house businesses employing more than 8,000 people and attract investors from around the world.

Nationally, Malta has a two-party system of politics, with all Members of Parliament having represented either the Labour Party or the Nationalist Party since 1966. This context has been described as intensely polarised (despite the country being small and, until recently, relatively ethnically homogeneous), which is explained in part by socio-cultural and institutional factors but also the response of the two main parties to the challenges that arose from independence.¹¹ This polarisation is said to reach down to the very local level. For example, the political scientist, Mario Vassallo has noted that the political culture comes from village politics, with each parish celebrating its own annual feast, for which there are band clubs - the predecessors of political parties - each of which is in favour of a different saint, breaking villages into two.¹² In recent years, this polarised context has been

¹¹ Cini, Michelle. (2002). *A Divided Nation: Polarization and the Two-Party System in Malta*. *South European Society and Politics*. 7(1), pp.6-23.

¹² <https://euobserver.com/eu-presidency/137556>

characterised by allegations of corruption made across the political divide and in October 2017, the investigative journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia, was murdered in Malta, after having reported on alleged corruption, nepotism, patronage and money-laundering.

2.1.2 Cultural sector

Valletta's history has given it a rich cultural and architectural heritage. This includes the Hypogeum of Ħal-Saflieni, a Neolithic subterranean structure dating back 5,000 years and which was renovated in 2017. As well as some Roman architecture, many of the buildings in the old city date from the rule of the Order of St. John in the 16th century and are of Baroque style. There are also more recent buildings in the Mannerist, Neo-Classical and Modern styles. Despite the destruction caused in the Second World War, this heritage enabled Valletta to be given UNESCO World Heritage status in 1980. A key feature of the old city is the City Gate, which dates from 1569 but has been rebuilt four times. The most recent City Gate was designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano and completed in 2014. It features an open-air theatre (Pjazza Teatru Rjal) and a new Parliament House.

Valletta also has a long heritage in the fine arts. Several significant European artists worked in Malta from the 16th century, including Matteo Perez d'Aleccio, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Mattia Preti. More recently, Valletta's "Modern Art Group" emerged after the Second World War and led a renewal of the city's art. This led to the creation of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Malta, which operated from 1974 to 2016.¹³ The museum has been replaced by a new institution, MUŻA (an acronym for "MUŻew Nazzjonali tal-Arti" in Maltese), which had a partial opening towards the end the title-year of Valletta 2018. MUŻA is located at Auberge d'Italie, within the UNESCO World Heritage Site. One of the museum's stated aims is to "promote greater participation by the community through a story-based narrative of display and related objects and empower a broader range of access tools to experience heritage and culture".¹⁴ Valletta is home to the Manoel Theatre (Teatru Manoel) built in 1731 by the Order of the Knights of St John. It is also home to the Saint James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, located in a 16th century gun platform and which serves as a venue for exhibitions and performances. Other notable aspects of Valletta's cultural life include the Maltese Carnival, which dates from 1535 and takes place each year in the week leading up to the start of Lent. It owes its origins to the knights of the Order of St. John and is characterised by masked balls, fancy dress and grotesque mask competitions and a parade of allegorical floats. The Valletta International Baroque Festival also takes place in January each year.

2.2 Development of Valletta 2018

2.2.1 Application

The decision to prepare an application was taken soon after the entry into force of Decision 1622/2006/EC, according to which Malta was entitled to propose a European Capital of Culture for 2018. An early decision was taken by the main stakeholders at national and

¹³<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/national-museum-of-fine-arts-prepared-to-close-its-doors-for-one-last.625192>

¹⁴<https://muza.heritagemalta.org/about-us/>

local levels that an application would be submitted on behalf of Valletta but involving the entire territory of the Maltese islands. Since Valletta's population in 2011 was only 5,800 and the entire population of Malta was 416,000, it made sense for a single application to be submitted.¹⁵ Moreover, several of the most populous cities, such as Qormi (population 16,500) form part of the wider continuous conurbation that includes Valletta. In any case, the Local Councils for all 68 Maltese municipalities were represented in Valletta's application (including those covering the other Maltese islands, namely Gozo and Comino).

In order to prepare the application, an inter-ministerial commission was set up in 2009 and a new body was created, the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Two staff members were employed to work on the day-to-day development of the application, including a Project Co-ordinator, Karsten Xuereb, who was appointed early in 2011.

Valletta's application carried the overall slogan of "Imagine 18", which had emerged from the various consultation activities that had taken place. The concept was not explained, but the stated intention was to verify that Imagine 18 "triggers the responses to support our ECoC project, inspires Maltese society and appeals to our overseas audiences and partners".¹⁶

In its application, Valletta set four objectives that were to be pursued through a programme structured around four themes.

Table 2-1 Objectives and themes of Valletta's ECoC application

Objectives and themes of Valletta 2018 application
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making careers of culture: including the development of artists and creatives as well as growing the critical mass of participants and audiences and encouraging children and young people to question and be curious about culture. ▪ Growing internationally from the world within us: integrating Malta's rapidly-changing and diverse society into the programme, as well as engaging communities across and beyond Europe's borders. ▪ Establishing Valletta as a creative city: promoting Valletta's potential to contribute to the international cultural scene and targeting the city's social, economic and cultural regeneration. ▪ Nurturing sustainable relationships with our environment: ensuring that interaction with the environment is sensitive and sustainable; discovering and exploring new ways of interaction among citizens, architecture, the coastal landscape and Malta's maritime neighbours.
Themes

¹⁵ Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report; Valletta: National Statistics Office (2012).

¹⁶ Valletta 2018 Foundation (2012), Imagine 18, p.19.

- Generations
- Routes
- Cities
- Islands

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation (2012), *Imagine 18*, p.31

The application went on to highlight four ways in which the ECoC was intended to promote the European dimension:

- “Meeting through migration”: the ECoC would address issues relating to inward migration and create a platform for European and third countries to come together [to discuss migration and its effects].
- “A feast of festivals”: with reference to existing festivals taking place in Malta, the intention was that Valletta would “widen and deepen current collaborations beyond shared stages and events calendars with a European flavour”. To that end, the ECoC would provide a platform for festivals to move to the next level.
- “Meeting of minds across the Mediterranean”: participating in the “Averroès Meetings” (“Rencontres d’Averroès”), an annual series of roundtable meetings focussed on helping young people to discover and learn about the Mediterranean world.
- Hyper-local Europeans: supporting the participation of Local Councils through five regional groupings and by encouraging them to develop town-twinning arrangements that look further afield than the current arrangements, which are mostly with Italian counterparts.¹⁷

The Valletta 2018 application highlighted several ways in which the ECoC was intended to promote the city and citizens dimension:

- Visible to our visitors: encouraging more visitors to Malta to participate in events.
- Interest in more than attendance: promoting projects that “enable us to learn from our European neighbours and third-country citizens”, including through encouraging touring of homegrown productions, co-creation of projects that appeal to audiences overseas and collaborations with other ECoC.
- Embracing embassies: collaborations with foreign embassies and cultural representations in Malta and their cultural programmes.
- Cultural diplomacy: using Malta’s Cultural Diplomacy Fund to promote Maltese arts and artists internationally through Malta’s embassies abroad.
- Connecting with the Maltese diaspora: promoting international cultural exchanges through associations representing Maltese people abroad, including the Council of Maltese Living Abroad and the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad.

¹⁷ <http://www.rencontresaverroes.com/>

- The role of the social web: using social and digital media to communicate with citizens within Malta and internationally and to promote the programme and receive project proposals and enquiries.
- Participation in practice: outreach and actions in favour of integration and accessibility to attract and involve different categories of people, including young, aged, people with different sexual orientations, various ethnicities, people of different income levels, social standing and education, and the prison community.
- Participation through crowd-funding: using Malta's strong volunteering tradition and established citizen connections to foster a collective, participative spirit, as well as developing a crowd-funding platform for creative projects.

In practice, the eventual cultural programme was considerably different to that set out in the application, as explained in section 2.3.1.

2.2.2 Selection

The selection procedure introduced by Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC set out a central role for Member States in publishing the call, convening the selection panel, selecting six of the thirteen members (all independent experts), and notifying the EU institutions of its nomination (albeit based on the report of the panel). On that basis, the Maltese Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment took charge of the selection process in line with the requirements of Decision 1622/2006/EC. By the deadline of 17 October 2011, as expected, only Valletta had submitted an application, albeit for an ECoC that would cover the whole country. The application was submitted by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Given that the Foundation was set up and overseen by the national Government, this meant that the Government was both the organiser of the selection procedure and one of the key players in the ECoC application. Given the small size of Malta and the governance context for culture (i.e. policy responsibility, capacity and financing is almost entirely at the national level), it was unrealistic for more than one bid to be submitted and inevitable that the Government (or bodies working under within its remit) would have to be involved. Whilst the Valletta application was rigorously scrutinised by the panel in line with the requirements of Decision 1622/2006/EC, this situation perhaps highlights weaknesses in those requirements.

At the **pre-selection meeting** in January 2012, Valletta was represented by the Mayor, Dr Alexiei Dingli, and senior figures of the Valletta 2018 Foundation. The panel was unanimous in recommending that Valletta should proceed to the final selection phase. Valletta duly submitted its full application. A delegation of four panel members visited the city on 11 October 2012 to further assess the application.

Perhaps uniquely – as the only application submitted from Malta – Valletta was able to establish collaborations with all of the Dutch cities involved in the parallel application process in the Netherlands. Indeed, meetings were held and agreements or Memoranda of Understanding were signed with Eindhoven, The Hague, Leeuwarden, Maastricht and Utrecht.

At the **final selection meeting** on 12 October 2012, the four delegates reported back to the rest of the panel on the findings of their visits and Valletta – represented by a

delegation of its Mayor and key cultural, educational and business stakeholders – made a presentation of its bid to the panel. Having evaluated the proposal on the basis of 1) the ‘European Dimension’ and ‘City and Citizens’ criteria, 2) the overall capacity to ensure the event in terms of governance, budget and the support from local authorities and the business sector, and 3) the quality and accuracy of the application, the panel unanimously agreed to recommend that Valletta be designated as European Capital of Culture 2018.

The decision was made on the basis that the bid as expressed by its logo and title – “Imagine 18” – was very suggestive and brought out the importance of providing a much-needed boost to the city’s inward-looking cultural sector. Moreover, the application was well connected with a strategic development plan for Valletta and for Malta and had the unanimous support of all 68 Local Councils and cross-party political support in Parliament.

In order to further improve the bid, the panel provided a set of recommendations:

- Improvement of the European dimension through the themes put forward in projects and through intensified co-operation with European artists and cultural operators, as well as making Maltese citizens more aware of Europe and European citizens more aware of Malta.
- Development of the awareness of, interest in and commitment to the ECoC by the citizens of Valletta, with more citizens involved as participants, not just spectators and receivers.
- Raising the cultural ambition of the ECoC, including by increasing the international attraction and combining disciplines and artists from different backgrounds.
- More co-operation with North African countries.
- Exploiting cultural capabilities and artefacts that are not well-known beyond Malta.
- Enhancing the contemporary arts dimension.

Valletta was then officially designated as European Capital of Culture 2018 in Malta by the Council of the European Union on 17 May 2013.

2.2.3 Development

Following the award of the title, the staff of the Foundation expanded, initially to six people (and later to 40-50 people, as described below). Karsten Xuereb retained the oversight of this team, in the new role of Executive Director. The Board of the Foundation at that stage was composed of six members, including the Mayor of Valletta and representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment, the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Malta. There were some changes to the membership of the Board following the change in Government after the general election on Saturday, 9 March 2013 that brought the Malta Labour Party (Partit Laburista) to power, in place of the Nationalist Party (Partit Nazzjonalista), which had ruled since 1998.

The **first monitoring report** was issued following the meeting on 15 September 2015 in Brussels between stakeholders from Valletta and the monitoring and advisory panel. The meeting heard that all management structures and reporting arrangements were up and running. Capital projects associated with the ECoC were being implemented, including the regeneration of Valletta’s Old Market, the conversion of the Museum of Fine Arts into the

MUŻA and the Valletta Design Cluster. Four major events were planned, including the opening (“Erba’ Pjazez”), an opera dealing with the subject of migration (“Aħna Refuġjati”) and a visual arts extravaganza. The Foundation’s core team was working with 30-40 project managers and through them the wider population. An information campaign was planned, and partnerships were being developed with other institutions, such as Heritage Malta. The panel stated that they had no concerns about monitoring, evaluation or government support, but it was concerned about the high budget for administration relative to the programme budget. They went on to make several recommendations including that the costs should be more clearly explained; mitigating measures should be prepared in case private funding targets were not reached; priority should be given to development of the cultural programme in line with the bid-book; coherence should be sought between highlights and the “daily” programme; partners for co-produced projects should be identified and criteria should be developed for selecting projects.

A **second and final monitoring meeting** was held in Brussels on 7 March 2017. The presentation by the Valletta delegation showed that the infrastructure projects had made good progress: the renovation of Strait Street included year-round cultural programmes, whilst the Indoor Market, Valletta Design Cluster, MUŻA and Renzo Piano project were expected to be completed before or during 2018. The cultural programme featured some 250 artists from other countries and most projects in the bid-book were underway. Contractual arrangements were being finalised and legacy proposals were being discussed. The panel praised the work carried out to date and considered that the programme had a strong European dimension and high involvement of citizens. The panel’s recommendations included simplifying the overall narrative and clearly linking it to themes and projects, continuing efforts to gather sponsors, bringing forward legacy discussions and business plans for flagship venues, clarifying the targets for international visibility and following up applications for EU funding. On the basis of the progress made, the panel recommended awarding the Melina Mercouri Prize. The Commission consequently decided to award Valletta 2018 the Melina Mercouri Prize in the second half of 2017.

2.3 Cultural programme

2.3.1 Overview

During the development phase, the cultural programme was put together, drawing on the details provided in the application. Four criteria were used to select projects:

- Artistic quality and innovation
- Participation: role of citizens
- European dimension
- Legacy.

Most of the new projects in the cultural programme were directly developed or commissioned by the Foundation or developed in collaboration with other public bodies. Some of those projects involved local or national artists who had directly approached the Foundation either during or after the award of the title. Very few projects were selected via open calls, although there were some open calls for project funding, music events, mobility grants, creative competitions (e.g. for young people to create their own work) and

for artists in residence. The programme also inserted existing events, including some festivals.

The eventual cultural programme was considerably different to that set out in the application with the overall slogan and the four themes being entirely revised. During the development phase, the Foundation came to see the theme of "Imagine 2018" as being of limited relevance or usefulness and it was eventually dropped in favour of the strapline: "Valletta 2018: An island-wide fiesta". The intention was for the ECoC to represent the whole of Malta and facilitate the participation of citizens across the national territory. This theme was also chosen for its reference to the traditions and heritage of Malta, i.e. local traditions and fiestas bringing whole communities together.

The original four themes of the programme (Generations, Routes, Cities, Islands) were replaced by three new themes. According to the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme, the themes were interpreted as flexible and the approach was not one of strict adherence to the original themes. Instead, the themes were used as a narrative across the full programme with some of the projects having a more obvious link to the themes than others did.¹⁸ The new themes were:

- Island Stories: "about the islands' realities, their communities, and the spaces they use".
- Future Baroque: "an extravagance that's part and parcel of our daily rhythms".
- Voyages: "an opportunity to celebrate life and creativity in our capital while nurturing vital dialogue".

The cultural programme was then presented in sub-sections:

- **Community:** aimed to encourage active participation in the arts by "bringing culture to everyone's doorstep, uniting the traditional vision of a Mediterranean life enriched by close ties to family, friends and neighbours with the islands' growing creative practices". It featured 18 diverse projects, including concerts, exhibitions and interdisciplinary events.
- **Visual Arts:** aimed to investigate visible and invisible spaces, communities and creative practices by establishing strong international networks with high profile artists to produce quality productions that place Maltese artists on the world stage. It featured 13 projects, including the "Kif Jghid il-Malti" project, which included 13 new public art installations based on 13 Maltese proverbs known as "qwiel".¹⁹
- **Design:** featured initiatives intended to "tackle complex urban issues in valuable ways – from support platforms for small start-ups, to spaces that encourage thinking among young generations and showcases that seek to internationalise the work of local creatives". It featured 5 projects, including the Valletta Design Cluster, as well as workshops and exhibitions.
- **Children and Young People:** provided "a wide array of creative activities designed to inspire young people to get involved in dance, theatre, shadow puppetry and much more." It featured 13 projects involving or for young

¹⁸ Vella, D. and Godhwani, V. (2019) *A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme*, p.33.

¹⁹<https://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-2018-unveils-kif-jghid-il-malti-public-art-installations/>

people including theatrical performances, concerts and a creative competition.

- **Performance:** invited audiences “to experience sensual, physical, provocative theatre and to discover your inner artist through many exciting creative workshops.” It featured 14 projects, including musical, dance, gastronomical and interdisciplinary performances.
- **Opera:** offered “a journey through the wonderful world of opera, where world-class collaborators offer fresh takes and contemporary twists on some of the genre’s most iconic works and motifs: epic voyages that bring international and local opera singers together”. It featured 7 projects, including performances of Mozart’s Don Giovanni, Bizet’s Tosca and Verdi’s Aida, as well as a new operatic work by Maltese composer, Mario Sammut.
- **Music Festivals:** included festivals “from doom metal to accordions, baroque compositions to alternative sounds, pop anthems to jazz sessions and electronic concerts”. It featured 10 already-established festivals, including the Malta International Baroque Festival, the second edition of the Malta World Music Festival and Ghanafest.
- **World Sounds:** offered “performances and workshops created to share powerful rhythms and experiences, a space where music transcends borders”. It featured 18 projects, including Modern Music Days, a collaboration between local and international artists.
- **Film:** offered “outdoor screenings showcasing alternative cinema, performances that experiment with film and sound, and workshops that build creative support networks and audiences for young aspiring film-makers”. It featured 8 projects, including the creation and performance of new works, as well as the TAFXNAF project, which involved children in film-making the programme also featured editions of two established film festivals: Kinemastik’s Wizard of Goz festival and the Valletta Film Festival.^{20, 21}
- **Encounters:** supported “debate platforms and residences that facilitate artist mobility”. It featured 8 projects, including residency programmes in Gozo, Valletta and Kalkara.

Highlights of the cultural programme included the Official Opening Ceremony on 20 January 2018, the Maltese Carnival (9-13 February 2018), Valletta Green Festival (4-6 May) and Valletta Pageant of the Seas (7 June 2018).

As well as changes to the overall slogan and the key themes, there was considerable change to the content of the cultural programme. Some of this reflected the “usual” change that happens in the development phase of any ECoC, as the aspirations of the bid-book have to be converted into a workable programme. The eventual programme retained projects that were recognised for their high artistic quality and innovative nature (as described in section 2.5.1 below). However, some key stakeholders noted that, following a change of leadership after the general election (see section 2.4.1 below), the eventual cultural programme underwent a significant shift in terms of its focus, artistic direction, participation and involvement of international artists. The view amongst these stakeholders (as expressed in the media or during interviews for this evaluation) was that there had

²⁰ <https://www.kinemastik.org/the-wizard-of-goz/>

²¹ <https://www.vallettafilmfestival.com/>

been a shift in emphasis away from innovative, artist-led and avant garde works towards large-scale, less artistically-challenging events.

For example, Toni Attard, the Head of Strategy at arts funding body Culture Venture and former Director of Strategy at Arts Council Malta was quoted in the national media as saying that the initial idea for the year was “more artist-led”, with various projects originating from the artistic communities themselves rather than being conceived and controlled by a central governmental body. Attard went on to note that the artist-led projects ended up being fringe-like events. In the same media article, Sean Buhagiar, the Artistic Director of Teatru Malta, was quoted as saying that “it was quite a shame to see brilliant projects led by passionate artists being almost disregarded when compared to the high-priced, sugar-coated, large-scale projects”.²²

Similarly, a former member of the selection and monitoring panel reported that, compared to the bid-book, the final programme had a weaker international dimension and that some artistically-interesting projects with an international dimension were reduced in scale or importance or even cancelled. For example, “Greenscreen” was due to offer a multidisciplinary performance project bringing together professional and non-professional dancers of all ages in unusual and ‘invisible’ locations across Malta. The project featured in the final printed programme of Valletta 2018 but was cancelled by the Foundation towards the end of 2017. The reasons given by the Foundation for this cancellation were that the artistic vision had shifted too far from the original premise of multi-site, site-specific, performative elements in favour of a short film at the end of a performance in a theatre and that only a few of the participating youths were to be included in the final performance.

According to the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme, a key issue in the programming was that of timing. There was a concern to get an equal distribution of projects across different months, whilst also taking into account the timing of long-standing festivals and feasts. Whilst there were events throughout the year, there were peak periods when the number of events created a strain on the limited resources available.²³

2.3.2 European dimension

As noted above, the European dimension of the application (as just described) was not seen by the selection panel as being particularly strong. The panel thus recommended improvement of the European dimension through the themes put forward in projects and through intensified co-operation with European artists and cultural operators, as well as making Maltese citizens more aware of Europe and European citizens more aware of Malta. Progress had been made by the second monitoring meeting, when the panel praised the work carried out to date and considered that the programme had a strong European dimension. Specific steps to strengthen the European dimension included the appointment of an International Artistic Advisor, Airan Berg (who had been Artistic Director for Performing Arts for the Linz 2009 ECoC). He provided advice on a restructure of the programme in order to increase the international dimension and helped connect the

²² *Malta Today* 30 December 2018.

²³ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.34-35.

Foundation to international artists, who were then involved in the cultural programme. An International Officer was also appointed to assist the programming team.

In line with the original application, the cultural programme included projects that explored the **theme of European migration**. Most notably, a new opera scripted and staged entirely in Maltese, “Aħna Refuġjati”, explored the issue of large-scale migration across the Mediterranean. The opera followed a family of five fleeing the civil war in Syria and experiencing racism, separation, loss and infringement of human rights en route. Aħna Refuġjati was performed with surtitles in English and Maltese at the “Granaries” (“il-Fosos”), a large public square in Floriana, just outside Valletta, from 31 August to 4 September 2018.²⁴ A second project, “Latitude 36”, explored the theme of migration in Europe through engagement with the Maltese diaspora. It featured the creation of new works telling the stories of the diaspora and culminated in an exhibition in June 2018 and a documentary supported by the Malta Film Fund.²⁵ A third project, “Map of the Mediterranean”, featured the performance of a poem of the same name written by the Maltese poet, Antoine Cassar, and accompanied by newly composed songs about the current Mediterranean refugee crisis. There was also a multi-project strand, “Exile & Conflict”, curated by anthropologist Elise Billiard Pisani, which featured several projects on the theme of migration: “Utopian Nights”, a series of public events which brought artists and thinkers together to discuss important social issues related to exile and conflict;²⁶ “Exiled Homes”, a visual arts exhibition that explored stories of Filipino domestic workers in Malta;²⁷ and “Rima”, a series of creative collaborations between artists, scholars and migrants that drew on the experiences of the migrants.

The eventual programme featured several important new collaborations with **European artists and cultural organisations**, which had not taken place before the ECoC. These collaborations took a diversity of forms.

In one case, Valletta collaborated in a large project co-financed by the EU’s Creative Europe programme: one of the first Creative Europe projects to feature the participation of a Maltese partner. “Orfeo & Majnun” was an interdisciplinary, participatory music-theatre project featuring partners from Austria, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal and combining the Greek myth of Orfeo and Eurydice and the Middle Eastern legend of Leyla and Majnun. Within Valletta, there were music-theatre performances and workshops bringing together local citizens with local and international artists, as well as a parade through the city centre.²⁸

In several cases, European and international artists were commissioned to develop entirely new works or projects, often in collaboration with local artists or local communities. They included “Dal-Baħar Madwarha”, a multi-site exhibition curated by Maren Richter, which featured new works by 25 established and emerging artists from fifteen countries, including the Turner Prize winner Susan Philipsz and the Artes Mundi Prize winner John Akomfra.²⁹

²⁴ <https://valletta2018.org/news/ahna-refugjati/>

²⁵ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/latitude-36/>

²⁶ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/utopian-nights/>

²⁷ <https://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-2018s-exiled-homes-exhibition-stories-from-filipino-caretakers/>

²⁸ <https://www.orfeoandmajnun.eu>

²⁹ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/dal-bahar-madwarha/>

Rosa Martinez, the first female director of the Venice Biennale, curated “Constellation Malta”, a contemporary art exhibition featuring work by several international artists. The Italian contemporary theatre company TeatrInGestAzione was commissioned to implement “Altofest”, a contemporary live art project.³⁰ International artists were hosted by Maltese citizens in their own homes, which then became venues for performances for local audiences. Altofest took place across four different regions in Malta, over four consecutive weekends.³¹ There was also a collaboration with the EU-Japan Fest, a Japanese organisation that organises cultural exchanges each year between Japan and the holders of the ECOC title.

In other cases, there were performances by recognised international artists who had not previously performed in Malta. Most notably, the cultural programme featured the first visit to Malta of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam) on 1 July 2018, as part of its “RCO Meets Europe” tour.³² The concert also featured the Malta Youth Orchestra performing alongside the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.³³ The Greek director, Elli Papakonstantinou, directed “Kazin Barokk”, a well-attended theatrical performance at Notre Dame Gate in Birgu. The production of Corto Maltese: Una Ballata del Mare Salato (The Ballad of the Salty Sea), by the Teatru Manoel Youth Opera, brought together European artists to work with Maltese professionals and young people.³⁴

Collaborations with European artists were also supported through a new programme of **artistic residences for European artists**. In particular, the “Meeting Point” strand arranged eight residency programmes across Malta, which enabled 50 European artists to complete residencies in Malta. Meeting Point also organised three outgoing residencies and three international workshops (on the theme of co-creation and urban design), as well as creativity training programmes for teachers, masterclasses, half-day symposia, workshops, exhibitions, concerts, interventions and discussions that brought together the European artists with local artists and local communities.³⁵ The artistic residences were supported by mobility grants made possible through a collaboration between the Foundation and the Roberto Cimetta Fund, an international non-profit making organisation that facilitates artists’ mobility within the Mediterranean region.³⁶

Valletta featured some difficulties regarding **collaboration with Leeuwarden 2018**, due to the political controversy surrounding Valletta 2018 (see “Governance and funding” below). Nonetheless, a number of projects were implemented either jointly with Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 or involving artists from Leeuwarden. They include the following:

- “Kirana”: an interdisciplinary children’s opera conceived and directed by the Maltese composer, Ruben Zahra and produced by Soundscapes (a Maltese

³⁰ <http://www.teatringestazione.com/tiga/who-we-are-2/>

³¹ <https://valletta2018.org/events/altofest-malta/>

³² <https://www.concertgebouwworkest.nl/en/side-by-side>

³³ <https://valletta2018.org/events/royal-concertgebouw-orchestra/>

³⁴ <https://valletta2018.org/events/corto-maltese-the-ballad-of-the-salty-sea/>

³⁵ <https://valletta2018.org/start-of-an-artist-in-residence-programme-at-sir-anthony-mamo-oncology-centre/>

³⁶ <https://www.cimettafund.org/article/index/rubrique/2/lang/en/fm/1/id/39>

contemporary performing arts organisation), which was performed in the Stadsschouwburg De Harmonie in Leeuwarden.³⁷

- TAFXNAF project, which involved children in film-making. Maltese students were invited to submit stories for publication, of which 25 were selected for workshops in creative writing and film appreciation. Some of the stories were then made into short films produced by young people. It was implemented in collaboration with Leeuwarden 2018 and Aarhus 2017, with performances taking place in all those cities as well as in Malta.
- European Eyes on Japan: implemented by the EU-Japan Fest, this project involved a Maltese photographer, Alexandra Pace, and another photographer from Leeuwarden-Friesland living and working in Japan, Alice Wielinga, leading to an exhibition of their works that was presented in Valletta at Spazju Kreattiv and later in Leeuwarden and Japan.
- Poetry in Potato Bags: celebrated the long-standing practice of exchanging potato crops and seeds between Malta and the Netherlands. The project featured exchanges of poetry in Maltese, Frisian and English along with the agricultural produce.
- Subterranean Matter: featured an exhibition and a documentary by the Dutch experience designer Leanne Wijnsma, which recreated hard-to-access underground spaces using 3D technology.³⁸ The project was organised by the artist and hosted by Fondazzjoni Kreattività in Valletta.
- Oħloq Kultura: involved partner schools from Malta and Leeuwarden in a collaboration on the 'Capital of Invented Cultures', which featured workshops for the children and an assembly modelled on the United Nations that showcased results of the workshops.
- Aida: an open-air contemporary reworking of Verdi's opera was performed in Valletta and in the countryside of Leeuwarden-Friesland. Students from the MCAST (Malta) and D'Drive (Leeuwarden) were involved in costume design, production design and film production.
- Student mobility programmes organised between MCAST (Malta) and Friesland College, Roc Friese Poort and Nordwin College (Netherlands).

There were links to another EU initiative, namely the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH 2018). The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) – one of the members of the EYCH 2018 stakeholder committee – held its annual conference in Valletta from 15-18 November 2018 and used the conference as an opportunity to celebrate the EYCH 2018. Five projects that had been awarded the EYCH 2018 label were presented in the "European Project Slam" at the conference. The conference was attended by around 150 participants, who included representatives of European national museums and museum experts.³⁹

2.3.3 City and citizens dimension

In practice, as would be expected, the main effort was put into connecting with **citizens and audiences across Malta**. This was done through communication of the cultural

³⁷ <https://www.soundscape.com.mt/projects/kirana/>

³⁸ <https://www.nextnature.net/people/leanne-wijnsma/>

³⁹ https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/nemo-26th-annual-conference_it

programme across the Maltese islands (see “Marketing and communication” below), through organising events in locations across the islands and through targeted activity in some specific areas.

To ensure the involvement of citizens from across Malta, the staff of the Foundation included a team of 6 **regional co-ordinators** with responsibility for different territories, namely: Valletta, Gozo, North, Central, South and East Malta. The role of the regional co-ordinators was to undertake community outreach across their respective territories to promote Valletta 2018 and its cultural programme. They engaged local mayors and councillors and held meetings in local community halls to get good representation from councils and local people. They also organised events in school halls with parent-teacher associations in different villages. For example, the Foundation created a platform for communication between Valletta 2018 and Valletta-based organisations, namely the Valletta Forum, to explain the ECoC to local communities and start a dialogue about what was expected e.g. with sports bodies, philanthropic bodies, parishes, etc.⁴⁰ During the title-year itself, the regional co-ordinators also collected market research data and monitored patterns of audience behaviour at events.

In Gozo, the Foundation opened its own office in Victoria in a collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority, which hosted the V18 office in its premises. Using this base, the Foundation was then able to organise specific events in Gozo and supported Gozitan artists and citizens to participate in the cultural programme. The Meeting Point project was also supported to undertake artistic residences in Gozo for the first time, with 38 artists from 14 countries hosted in Gharb, a village located at the north-western edge of Gozo,

As noted above, one of the sub-sections of the Valletta 2018 programme featured 13 projects specifically focussed on involving **children and young people** from across Malta, whilst projects in other sub-sections also focussed on children and young people. The projects included:

- Four projects that worked directly with schools. For example, the music group Tikka Banda implemented the “Ġaħan 18: Nifthu L-Bieb Ma’ Ġaħa” project, which involved visiting schools to conduct workshops about creating musical instruments that were then used in performances at different localities across Malta. “The Box” project organised workshops in schools enabling the children to develop their own performances. The “Kantakantun” project organised workshops in schools to explore the relationship between music and architecture, leading to the composition of soundscapes and art installations. As described above, the Oħloq Kultura project also organised workshops in several schools.
- The 2018 edition of an existing festival, the Żiguzajg International Arts Festival for Children and Young People. Including new local productions and existing international productions, the Festival featured an enlarged programme for 2018. This included two projects supported by the Valletta 2018 Foundation: “iLand”, a site specific piece of work devised by young people exploring what it means to be a teenager in Malta in 2018;

⁴⁰ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/valletta-forum/>

“KantaKantun BiebBieb”, an educational project involving an art installation created by children with the help of top sound and visual artists.⁴¹

There was some activity, albeit relatively limited, to connect with and involve the **Maltese diaspora** internationally. It included:

- ‘Stories from the Maltese Diaspora’, an exhibition within the “Latitude 36” project (described above) featuring new works telling the stories of the Maltese diaspora.⁴² The participants were selected via an international call that was open to first, second and third generation Maltese living abroad.⁴³
- “Sempre Viva”, a site-specific installation and video work, bringing the observations and recollections of the Maltese diaspora to an audience in Malta. It featured a three-screen projection of documentary footage shot in the homes, clubs, workplaces, and neighbourhoods of Maltese emigrants in the UK (London, Stockport), USA (Detroit, New York), Canada (Toronto, London, Ontario) and Tunisia (Tunis). The work was installed in the courtyard of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion in Valletta from 10-15 December 2018 and was co-financed by the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Governance and the Valletta 2018 Foundation.
- Lectures by members of the diaspora, including Shawn Micallef, a lecturer on civic citizenship and design at the University of Toronto.⁴⁴

Across the cultural programme, efforts were made to promote the programme and specific events therein to **visitors to Malta** (see “Marketing and communications” below), although very few, if any, events or outreach initiatives were specifically targeted at visitors. However, as promised in the application, there were a number of projects implemented in partnership with **foreign embassies or cultural representations**. These included the Latitude 36” project (described above), which was supported by the Embassy of the United States of America in Malta. The project featured “Sh!t Theatre: Researching Drink Rum With Expats”, a theatrical performance developed after research with foreign expatriates in Malta and supported by the British Council and the Arts Council England Artists’ International Development Fund. The German-Maltese Circle Valletta and Goethe-Institut, along with the City of Leipzig co-financed “It’s Schiller!”, a theatrical dance performance at the Teatru Salesjan, Sliema, across the harbour from Valletta.⁴⁵

2.4 Governance and funding

2.4.1 Governance

As noted above, the ECoC was implemented by a new body, the Valletta 2018 Foundation, which was created to develop the application. During the title year, the Foundation was led by a Board of Governors consisting of ten members, including the Mayor of the City of Valletta, the Rector of the University of Malta, the President of the Malta Chamber of

⁴¹ <https://www.ziguzajg.org/festival-2018/>

⁴² <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/latitude-36/>

⁴³ <https://valletta2018.org/news/latitude-36-call-for-maltese-living-abroad/>

⁴⁴ <https://valletta2018.org/diaspora-return/>

⁴⁵ <https://valletta2018.org/events/its-schiller-dance-theatre-performance/>

Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and other stakeholders. The Foundation was also supported by a wider partnership that included all 68 Local Councils (which each signed a charter), the Association of Local Council and Arts Council Malta.

Four objectives were set for the Foundation, namely to:

- Transform Valletta into a creative city
- Improve the quality of life in Valletta through culture
- Stimulate awareness of Malta's cultural identities and
- Drive collaboration and excellence in culture and the arts in Malta.

The Foundation went through some considerable changes in personnel during the development phase, which ultimately impacted on the artistic direction and content of the cultural programme. The governance of the ECoC also became the subject of much political debate and disagreement. Stakeholders were unanimous in stating that any political difficulties or disagreements were not particularly caused by the ECoC but that they arose from the wider political context (i.e. the polarisation of Maltese politics), which spilled over into the ECoC. Overall, there were divergent, indeed polarised, views regarding the impact of the various changes in leadership and personnel on the effectiveness of the governance and management of the ECoC.

During the selection process and at the time the title was awarded, the Nationalist Party was in power both in the national Government and in the City of Valletta. At the final selection meeting, the delegation from Valletta was led by the Mayor, Mr Alexiei Dingli (from the Nationalist Party), with support from the Chairman of the Foundation, David Felice, the Project Co-ordinator, Karsten Xuereb, and the Artistic Director Wayne Marshall, as well as other stakeholders. (Given that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment was organising the selection process, it was not appropriate for the Ministry to be represented in the Valletta delegation.)

Following the general election of 2013, the Labour Party took power and a number of changes were made to the leadership of the Foundation over the next few years. First, the role of the Mayor of Valletta in the ECoC became less prominent, reflecting the changed political context (although it should be noted that the City of Valletta was not one of the funders of the ECoC). Then, in April 2013 the Chairman of the Foundation, David Felice – a Maltese architect involved in the regeneration of Valletta – was replaced by Jason Micallef, who had previously been the Secretary General of the Labour Party and Chairman of ONE, a national television station owned by One Productions, the media arm of the Labour Party. In part, this reflected the tendency in Malta for those considered to be political appointees within the public sector to be replaced following a general election. Some criticism of the appointment of Mr Micallef was made at the political level but also from some media commentators and cultural stakeholders (including some interviewed for this evaluation) who considered that Mr Micallef did not have sufficient experience of the cultural sector.⁴⁶ At the same time, some staff members interviewed for this evaluation reported that having a political figure in charge of the Foundation was beneficial in terms of deflecting political

⁴⁶ For example, see "A far cry from culture", *Malta Independent*, 5 May 2013.

criticism and allowing them to focus on the operational implementation of the ECoC. The views of the stakeholders differed as to the extent to which this appointment enabled the Foundation to act impartially; some criticisms endured throughout the title-year and beyond, although the eventual cultural programme included artists affiliated with both political parties and with none.

In early 2014, it was then announced that the contract of the Artistic Director, Wayne Marshall, was not to be renewed. A British conductor, Mr Marshall was recruited to the Foundation in 2012 after an international open call. He had previously served as guest conductor of several prominent European orchestras, including the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi and the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. Around the same time, the contracts of all seven artistic programme directors were also terminated. In a document tabled at a parliamentary committee in February 2014 by Jose Herrera, the Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Marshall was quoted as making various criticisms of the governance of Valletta 2018. These included a lack of structure and a proper marketing strategy, the administration not allowing the artistic team to oversee and implement the cultural programme, poor communication on the part of the Foundation, structural problems within the Foundation and uncertainty over the available budget.⁴⁷ However, the Foundation later issued a public statement to emphasise that it had maintained working relations with these directors and in some cases stepped up the collaboration.⁴⁸ For example, one of the artistic programme directors, Ruben Zaha (a composer and producer of contemporary music and producer of avant garde interdisciplinary works) went on to implement two significant projects within the ECoC programme, namely Urbe Nova and Modern Music Days.

There was further change in the senior staff of the Foundation in June 2017, when the Executive Director, Karsten Xuereb, and the Programme Coordinator, Margerita Pulé, were dismissed from their posts.⁴⁹ The views of stakeholders interviewed and media reports differed as to the reasons for and the effects for these dismissals. The Times of Malta quoted the Chairman as saying that Mr Xuereb and Ms Pulé had lost his personal confidence and that staff were no longer to take instructions from them.⁵⁰ Some of the staff interviewed for this evaluation reported that one of the main reasons for the dismissals was that there were serious organisational weaknesses in the Foundation that needed remedying and, in any case, the individuals in question were not formally-trained artists. For example, the new Executive Director highlighted the need to strengthen procedures around public procurement and align staff salaries and roles in line with those approved by the Government. Another staff member reported that the communications department also required to be strengthened in the run-up to the title-year and that steps were taken to do so.

⁴⁷ https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/valletta_2018/36324/wayne-marshall-complains-of-lack-of-structure-within-v18-20140305#.XIVQoSj7Q2w

⁴⁸ <https://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-2018-competent-and-accountable-preparations-for-the-european-capital-of-culture/>

⁴⁹ https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/valletta_2018/78489/multiple_dismissals_at_v18_arts_council_months_before_start_of_events#.XIVQfCj7Q2w

⁵⁰ <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170704/local/commission-seeks-v18-explanation-on-high-profile-dismissals.652342>

In contrast, some stakeholders (including cultural experts, local politicians, national media, international artists, the International Artistic Advisor and one of the departing members of staff) reported that the dismissals of Karsten Xuereb and Margerita Pulé were politically-motivated and damaging to the ECoC, its artistic vision and its cultural programme. The dismissals prompted a letter sent from the ECoC panel to the Culture Minister Owen Bonnici and the Foundation Chairman Jason Micallef. The letter highlighted concerns that the decision to dismiss may have been taken for political reasons, that the decision may have been made without the usual legal requirements, due transparency and communication, and that the dismissals risked seriously compromising the prestige and success of Valletta 2018.⁵¹ Malta Today, the twice-weekly newspaper reported that “the move raised questions both on the ethical implications of the dismissals, as well as the suspect strategic choice behind replacing such a key post at the eleventh hour”.⁵²

Following the departure of Mr Xuereb, a new Executive Director was appointed in July 2017, Catherine Tabone, a senior civil servant with extensive international experience at the Culture Directorate within the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government. By that point, most of the cultural programme was already in place, or at least well-advanced. The focus of the Foundation thus turned to final planning and implementation, as well as to finalising its own internal structures and processes and ensuring organisational robustness in advance of the title-year. The day-to-day implementation of the ECoC was led by the Executive Team, including the Executive Director, a Programming Department, a Communications Department, a Research Department, an Administration & Human Resource Department and a Finance Department. An important part of the cultural programme was led by an Artistic Director of Special Events, Mario Philip Azzopardi.

One challenge facing the Foundation was that of striking the right balance between, on the one hand, ensuring accountability of public funds and compliance with government procedures and, on the other hand, supporting artists in the creative process. Indeed, the final report of the Foundation stated that the contractual agreements drawn up by the Foundation, the rigid public procurement procedures and “bureaucratic processes” were a major challenge hindering relations with artists and that administrative measures were adopted at the detriment of artistic quality and requirements. At the same time, it is not clear whether the Foundation could have adopted a different approach that allowed more artistic freedom, given the requirements of public procurement procedures.⁵³

This point was reflected in the interviews of international artists and international cultural operators, who all reported that the changes in personnel at the Foundation, particularly the departure of staff with artistic experience and expertise (notably the artistic programme directors, the Executive Director and the Programme Coordinator), had been detrimental to the implementation of their projects. Indeed, a former member of the monitoring and selection panel reported that at least ten international artists had contacted the panel to express concerns about the support offered by the Foundation. The Foundation reported very positive collaborations with several international artists, some of which are

⁵¹<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170704/local/commission-seeks-v18-explanation-on-high-profile-dismissals.652342>

⁵² Malta Today 30 December 2018;

⁵³ Vella, D. and Godhwani, V. (2019) *A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme*, p.33.

continuing beyond the title-year. At the same time, amongst the international artists interviewed for this evaluation, there was a consensus that the relationship with the Foundation became more difficult in the run-up to and during the title-year. In the view of these artists, the underlying reason for these difficulties, was the loss of artistic expertise that arose during the development phase and particularly in 2017, and which was not compensated for by the management and administrative expertise of the Foundation staff. More positively, the artists reported that there was little interference in their artistic choices.

The governance of Valletta 2018 attracted a considerable degree of national and international criticism following comments posted on social media by the Chairman, Jason Micallef, which appeared to mock the murdered journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia.⁵⁴ The posting led to condemnation from various sources both within Malta and internationally. An open letter to the Prime Minister demanding the sacking of Mr Micallef was signed by more than 100 Maltese artists, including Toni Attard, the Head of Strategy at arts funding body Culture Venture and former Director of Strategy at Arts Council Malta, and Vicki Ann Cremona, Chair of the School of Performing Arts at the University of Malta.⁵⁵ One author, Lizzie Eldridge, chose to boycott performances of her own play that took place within the ECoC programme.⁵⁶ A letter signed by 72 MEPs also called for the dismissal of Mr Micallef (the signing of the letter was initiated by Maltese MEPs from the Nationalist Party).⁵⁷ The writers' organisation, PEN International, sent a letter signed by 286 international writers to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, condemning "the behaviour of the management of Valletta 2018".⁵⁸ Ulrich Fuchs, a former member of the ECoC selection and monitoring panel, was quoted as stating that he would not attend any event held by Valletta 2018 "as long as people who are representing the project destroy European values".⁵⁹

In response to this letter, the European Commission First Vice-President, Frans Timmermans, issued a statement that "the Commission cannot bear any responsibility for public statements of a national chair of a European Capital of Culture, who is designated by the national authorities". The letter went on to state that "the Commission strongly encourages anyone who represents a European Capital of Culture to express him or herself in a manner that reflects the common values on which the EU is based (...) such as democracy, freedom of speech and the rule of law" and that "any statements made in this context that go against this spirit are highly regrettable and should, in the Commission's view, be avoided."⁶⁰

In response to the letter from PEN International, the Government's Head of Communications described the letter as making "an unqualified allegation" that was "false",

⁵⁴<https://lovinmalta.com/news/valletta-capital-of-culture-chairman-mocks-last-words-of-assassinated-journalist>

⁵⁵ <https://www.independent.com.mt/file.aspx?f=166635>

⁵⁶<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/author-boycotts-her-own-valletta-2018-play.689226>

⁵⁷<https://www.eppgroup.eu/how-we-make-it-happen/with-eu-countries/malta/news/meps-lambast-valletta-2018-chairman-and-demand-his-sacking>

⁵⁸<https://pen-international.org/news/6-month-anniversary-assassination-daphne-caruana-galizia>

⁵⁹<https://lovinmalta.com/news/local/the-man-who-chose-valletta-to-be-european-capital-of-culture-will-be-boycotting-it/>

⁶⁰<https://pen-international.org/news/european-commission-calls-for-justice-for-daphne-caruana-galizia-and-for-european-capitals-of-culture-to-uphold-european-values>

“grossly defamatory” and “unsupported by the known facts”.⁶¹ For his part, Mr Micallef has been quoted as saying that the criticism against him was “blown out of proportion”.⁶²

The controversy was reported by the two main independent national newspapers in Malta: the Times of Malta and the Independent.⁶³ It was also reported widely in the international media. In April 2018, the City of Leeuwarden-Friesland (the other ECoC title-holder in 2018) announced that it would not send any official representatives to Valletta 2018 celebrations.⁶⁴ However, Leeuwarden-Friesland did continue to collaborate with Valletta 2018 on a number of projects (as described above).

2.4.2 Funding

Valletta’s ECoC application set out a budget of €49.57m for the years 2013-20. Of this, the majority (80%) was to come from the National Government and the rest from the EU, sponsorship and commercial revenue. The majority of the budget (57%) was to consist of additional public and private funding, whilst the rest (43%) was to consist of the reallocation of current government funds, including funds devoted to public cultural organisations. None of the funding was expected to come from the Local Councils, reflecting the very limited resources available to them and their limited policy responsibilities (mostly relating to landscaping and maintenance of parks and gardens, maintenance of roads and infrastructure, waste management, and administration). For example, the total income of Valletta Local Council in 2017 (the last year for which figures are available) was only €822k.⁶⁵

The bulk of the funds (72%) were proposed to be spent on programming, with the rest devoted to marketing and communications, and sales and administration.

It was proposed that just less than €19m would be expended during the title-year (2018).

Table 2-2 Proposed financing of Valletta 2018

Year	Total financing 2013-19 (€)	% of total financing
National Government (reallocated funds)	21.23 m	43 %
National Government (new funds)	18.44 m	37 %
Sponsorship (cash)	2.00 m	4 %
Sponsorship (in-kind)	3.00 m	6 %
Revenue (merchandise, tickets, etc.)	3.40 m	7 %

⁶¹<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/25/maltas-government-had-no-hand-in-the-killing-of-daphne-caruana-galizia>

⁶²<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20180503/local/jason-micallef-says-criticism-was-blown-out-of-proportion.678094>

⁶³<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2018-11-30/local-news/Jason-Micallef-PEN-International-profoundly-disturbed-over-total-lack-of-accountability-6736200162>

⁶⁴ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-04/27/c_137139670.htm

⁶⁵ National Audit Office – Malta (2018), Report by the Auditor General on the Workings of Local Government.

EU (Melina Mercouri Prize)	1.50 m	3 %
Total	49.57 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

Table 2-3 Proposed operational budget of Valletta 2018

Year	Proposed expenditure 2018 (€)	Proposed expenditure 2013-20 (€)	% of total financing
Programming	15.73 m	35.58 m	72 %
Marketing & communications	1.85 m	5.40 m	11 %
Sales & administration	1.33 m	7.70 m	16 %
Reserve	-	0.89 m	2 %
Total	18.92 m	49.57 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

Table 2-4 Proposed annual expenditure of Valletta 2018

Item	Total expenditure (€)	% of total expenditure
2013	1.14 m	2 %
2014	2.14 m	4 %
2015	3.95 m	8 %
2016	6.30 m	13 %
2017	10.09 m	20 %
2018	18.92 m	38 %
2019	4.68 m	9 %
2020	1.45 m	3 %
Reserve	0.89 m	2 %
Total	49.57 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

Detailed figures on the eventual financing and expenditure of Valletta 2018 are provided in the tables below. The figures show that the eventual budget for Valletta 2018 (€26.5m) was considerably lower than the budget proposed in the application (€49.57m), even allowing for the fact that the original budget covered a slightly longer period (i.e. 2013-20

rather than 2013-19). As a result, expenditure on the cultural programme during the title-year and during 2013-19 was just over half the amount originally proposed.

Data on government funding did not differentiate between new funds and reallocated funds. However, since the Government substantially increased the level of current and capital expenditure on culture between 2013 and 2018 and since many of the ECoC events were new for 2018 (not least the Opening Ceremony, Valletta Pageant of the Seas, and the Closing Ceremony), it would seem that a considerable proportion of the Government's contribution to Valletta 2018 consisted of new funds. For operational and administrative reasons, a considerable part of the cultural programme was financed by money allocated by the government directly to public cultural organisations that were organising events in collaboration with the Foundation rather than directly to the Foundation itself.

Table 2-5 Actual operational budget of Valletta 2018

Year	Total expenditure 2018 (€)	Total expenditure 2013-19 (€)	% of total financing
Cultural programme	8.26 m	17.31 m	65 %
Marketing	0.96 m	2.21 m	8 %
Personnel	0.67 m	2.87 m	11 %
Operations, equipment, overheads, administration, etc.	1.17 m	2.57 m	10 %
Reserve	0.25 m	1.53 m	6 %
Total	11.31 m	26.50 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

Table 2-6 Actual annual expenditure of Valletta 2018

Item	Total expenditure (€)	% of total expenditure
2013	0.76 m	3 %
2014	1.15 m	4 %
2015	1.55 m	6 %
2016	3.30 m	12 %
2017	5.17 m	20 %
2018	11.06 m	42 %
2019	1.97 m	7 %

Accumulated reserve	1.53 m	6 %
Total	26.50 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

Table 2-7 Actual financing of Valletta 2018

Year	Total financing 2018 (€)	Total financing 2013-19 (€)	% of total financing
Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Governance	11.12 m	24.22 m	91 %
Arts Council Malta	0.02 m	0.60 m	2 %
Fees and sponsors	0.04 m	0.06 m	<1 %
EU (Melina Mercouri Prize)	0 m	1.50 m	6 %
Ticket sales	0.12 m	0.12 m	<1 %
Total	11.31 m	26.50 m	100%

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

In practice, much less cash funding (€60k) was raised from sponsorship than was originally intended (€2m). Figures were not available for in-kind funding, but it is unlikely to have reached the original target of €3m, despite the appointment of two service providers whose task was specifically that of attracting sponsorships and partnerships. Some stakeholders commented that this reflects Malta's weak tradition of corporate sponsorship of the arts.

The EU funding provided in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize was added to the general budget for operating expenditure for Valletta 2018. Funding from other EU sources was also secured for projects within the cultural programme (although was not included in the accounts of the Foundation presented in the tables above):

- Creative Europe funding supported the "Orfeo & Majnun" project (described above in section 2.3.2),
- Interreg supported Design4Innovation, a collaborative project organised by eight European partners dedicated to promoting design as a tool for user-centred innovation.

EU funding has also supported the infrastructure developments directly associated with Valletta 2018, namely the development of the MUŻA, for which Heritage Malta received €8m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Valletta Design Cluster, for which the Foundation received €4m from the ERDF funding.

2.4.3 Marketing and communication

The marketing and communications for the ECoC was undertaken by the communications department of the Valletta 2018 Foundation. As with all ECoC, the task of communicating

a year-long cultural programme can prove challenging, and some weaknesses in the Foundation's approach became apparent by early 2017. At that point, the Foundation's Chairman appointed Jean Pierre Magro, a transmedia producer with international experience, to act as a special advisor on communications (in addition to his role in designing and implementing various parts of the cultural programme). Dr Magro undertook a reorganisation of the communications department into five discrete functions, namely publishing, audio-visual, marketing, press and market research. The aim was for the department to be more like a newsroom, with priority given to having trained staff in specialist roles and to the communication of messages of higher quality.

With this new structure in place, a communications strategy was developed during the preparatory phase. The years before the title-year featured market research and the gathering of data about potential audiences for the cultural programme. In particular, the Foundation's Research Department undertook research into the current behaviour and preferences of audiences in different parts of Malta, with support from the regional coordinators who were able to provide a qualitative "feel" for different local audiences. The work included audience surveys covering issues such as participation in culture, awareness of the ECoC and perceptions of the Valletta 2018 brand. There was an exercise to map the many theatres across Malta's towns and villages.⁶⁶ In the run-up to the title-year and during the year itself, there was also monitoring of weekly data, which informed adjustments in communications.

The marketing of the cultural programme faced the challenge and the opportunity arising from the fact that cultural bodies in Malta had not traditionally collaborated or co-ordinated their marketing activities. The Foundation thus prioritised collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Governance, Arts Council Malta and key players, such as the Teatru Manoel in Valletta. There was also collaboration with the Public Broadcasting Services Limited (PBS), Malta's public broadcaster. PBS agreed to advertise Valletta 2018 and its cultural programme on its television channel and radio station at subsidised rates during prime-time slots, e.g. during breakfast shows or current affairs programmes.

In the task of reaching an international audience, the Foundation collaborated with the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). This included promoting Valletta 2018 at the e.g. World Travel Market London,⁶⁷ and the ITB Berlin.⁶⁸ The MTA invited international journalists to visit Valletta both when the programme was launched (September 2017) and again in January 2018 for the opening event. Inevitably, relations with the international media were complicated by the political controversy surrounding the Foundation Chairman, particularly in March 2018, although the Foundation reports that relations improved as the year progressed (see section 2.5.4 below).

⁶⁶ <https://valletta2018.org/spazji-teatrali-a-catalogue-of-theatres-in-malta-and-gozo/>

⁶⁷ <https://london.wtm.com/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.itb-berlin.com/>

2.4.4 Local research

Valletta 2018 featured an important research, monitoring and evaluation function, which was undertaken by the Research Department of the Foundation. The work of the Research Department broadly followed the commitments in the application.

The Valletta 2018 application committed the Foundation to undertake regular monitoring of projects within the cultural programme. The detailed monitoring of projects was primarily undertaken for internal management and reporting purposes, as a separate exercise to the formal Evaluation and Monitoring programme, and with results not generally made publicly available.

The Valletta 2018 application stated that the monitoring and evaluation activity would facilitate and enable comparisons for long-term evaluative assessments of impact. To that end, it was proposed that a baseline study would be undertaken in 2014 and published in 2015 to enable such comparisons to be made. Data was to be collected during 2016-19 leading to the publication of results in 2019-2020, followed by long-term analysis 5-10 years later.

A first report was published in 2015, which offered baseline evidence for the five themes:

- Cultural and territorial Vibrancy;
- Governance & Finance;
- Community Inclusion & Space;
- The Tourist Experience; and
- The Valletta Brand.

Further reports were published in 2016 and 2017, followed by the final reports in March 2018. These reports have been more in-depth, with each focused on one of the five themes above. Baseline evidence has been gathered in various ways, including:

- Valletta Participation Survey: a sample survey providing an overview of the main characteristics associated with attendance to cultural events in Valletta and perceptions of the city; the last sample for the survey (May 2018) interviewed 1,008 people out of a target population of 368,963 (people aged over 16 years living in private households in the Maltese islands);
- market profile survey data will serve to monitor trends in visitors to Valletta;
- institutional and industry level analysis;
- statistical analysis of quantitative data on the cultural and creative industries;
- mapping and surveying of projects to be fully produced by the Valletta 2018 Foundation; and
- expert focus groups.

⁶⁹ Valletta 2018 Foundation (2019), *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Final Research Report Valletta 2018*.

2.5 Results

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 with a strong European dimension. These programmes should highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens.

The key results achieved by Valletta 2018 against these objectives were as follows.

First, **Valletta 2018 presented a cultural programme during the title-year that featured some events of high-quality and that was more extensive compared to Malta’s cultural “baseline” offering in previous years.** The cultural programme featured 168 projects involving nearly 500 events. Whilst some parts of the programme represented a continuation of existing events (e.g. some festivals), some important projects were new for 2018. These included big events, such as the opening ceremony, Valletta Pageant of the Seas and the closing ceremony. They also included key projects curated by international artists, such as the “Dal-Baħar Madwarha” exhibition and “Altifest”, the contemporary live art project, as well as the artistic residences within “Meeting Point”.

The quality of parts of the cultural programme is evidenced by the fact that several projects either won or were nominated for the Arts Council Malta’s Il-Premju Għall-Arti 2019, an award which acknowledges excellence in artistic work premiered during 2018 and which were announced on 16 April 2019.⁷⁰ They include:

- Valletta 2018 Opening: Audience’s Choice Award (winner); Production of the Year (nominated).
- Magna Żmien – The Magnificent Memories Machine: Innovation Award (winner); Best Project in the Community (nominated); a community project to capture, record and exhibit cultural content from non-digital formats, e.g. open reels, cassettes, photographs, vinyl and film.
- Kirana Soundscapes: Best International Achievement (winner); an interdisciplinary performance that connected children with creative professionals in order to create and perform their own content.
- Hush: Best Work for Young Audiences and Production of the Year (winner); an original musical performed by the Teatru Manoel Youth Theatre.
- Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture Programme: Best Artistic Programme or Season (nominated).
- Il-Festa l-Kbira: People’s Choice Award (nominated); a new event that brought together Valletta’s four main annual feasts into one event.
- A Tale of Two Cities: nominated for Best International Achievement (nominated); a photographic documentary of Valletta and the surrounding harbour area spanning 29 years.

⁷⁰ <https://www.artscouncilmalta.org/news/il-premju-ghall-arti-2019-winners-announced>

- Kantakantun: Best Work for Young Audiences (nominated); a musical education project involving early secondary school students across Malta and Gozo (see section 2.5.2).
- Ġewwa Barra: Best Project in the Community (nominated); a community arts project encouraging the residents of Valletta to relate creatively with the city and its ongoing changes.
- Deep Shelter: Best Project in the Community (winner); a community visual arts project, which related the experience of illness, hospitalisation and care to the visual art process.
- Annual Representation of Opening Doors 2018: Best Project in the Community (nominated); supporting adults with different intellectual needs to create and perform original works of music, dance and theatre.

Second, **Valletta 2018 has contributed to making the cultural offering of Malta more European**. As described above, the cultural programme featured performances by international artists and exhibitions of international works and residencies by European artists. In the first six months of the year, more than 1,500 Maltese artists and 166 international artists took part in the programme. In the whole of 2018, the Meeting Point project organised artistic residences for 50 international artists in eight different locations across Malta and Gozo and three outgoing residences in other countries for Maltese artists (including one in Wrocław, one of the holders of the 2016 ECoC title). The final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme reported that the vast majority (92%) of respondents responsible for individual projects viewed their work as relevant to European audiences, while 69% believed their project could be exported in the future.⁷¹ Reflecting the European dimension, data from a large-scale cross-sectional survey undertaken within the Valletta 2018 research programme also shows that the sense of attachment to Europe amongst residents of Malta increased significantly, with 73% feeling “very attached” in 2018 compared to 34% in 2016.⁷² At the same time, some stakeholders expressed a view that the cultural programme was insufficiently European. As one stated: “The European Capital of Culture project is about Europe and all we talked about was Malteseness. Did we really need a whole year about what it is to be Maltese?”.⁷³

Third, **the cultural programme has included many projects and events that were new or innovative to Malta**. These included some of the large open-air events, as well as numerous smaller projects. According to a survey of audiences at events in 2018, the most commonly-stated factor influencing the decision to attend an event was that the “the event is innovative” (32%).

Some of the key new or innovative events were as follows:

- “Modern Music Days” was a collaboration between Valletta 2018, the Teatru Manoel and the Malta Association for Contemporary Music, which expanded a project that had begun in 2015. Its aim was to promote the performance and appreciation of twentieth century repertoire and contemporary music in Malta and thus overcome what was considered a gap in the nation’s cultural offering. The project featured the performance of nine interdisciplinary

⁷¹ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.39.

⁷² *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.50.

⁷³ <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20181223/local/valletta-2018-what-has-it-left-behind.697495>

works. This included six recitals in historical venues, including a catacomb, a Neolithic temple and a crypt. One of the concerts featured the first performance in Malta of four 20th century works 'Octandre' by Edgard Varèse, 'Chamber Concerto for 13 Instruments' by György Ligeti, 'Sinfonietta Op.1' by Benjamin Britten, and 'Tehillim' by Steve Reich. Another concert featured a site-specific electronic music work by Dutch composer Luc Houtkamp at Ta' Bistra Catacombs. The emphasis of the project was on presenting challenging works, such as Varèse's "Ionisation" performed by 13 percussionists, which required the organisers to bring in musicians from Italy, as there were not sufficient numbers of percussionists available in Malta. Given the niche appeal of the works, the typical audience at each concert was around 200-300, which was in line with expectations for performances of contemporary works. Modern Music Days will continue in 2019.⁷⁴

- "Dal-Baħar Madwarha" (translated into English as "The island is what the sea surrounds") was a visual arts exhibition specially commissioned for 2018. It featured new works by 25 established and emerging artists from fifteen countries (including Malta) and taking place at sites across Malta. The multi-site exhibition was intended to be an "artistic journey through the contemporary realities of the Maltese Islands, placing at their helm the Islands' relationship with their closest neighbour – the Mediterranean Sea". In that way, the project was intended to challenge the boundaries of contemporary art and build new audiences for such work in Malta. The works included an installation in the Pixkerija, Valletta's Old Fish Market, where audiences were invited to bring their own memories and thus engage in a dialogue with the work. Another work was a sound installation, based on recordings of church bells damaged during the war, in a recently-discovered cistern beneath the Law Courts in Valletta. A sculpture based on abandoned industrial fishing nets was located outside the bastion walls of Valletta, whilst another installation was displayed in the Grand Harbour docks. Data from the Foundation shows that exhibition attracted an audience of 9,400 paying visitors, in addition to those who viewed the installations in public spaces. Evidence from a small-scale survey of visitors suggested some impact in terms of building a new audience for contemporary art. Another benefit reported by the curator was that relationships were built between local and international artists, which offer the potential for future collaborations.
- "Cabinet of Futures" was a new project for 2018, which aimed to "engage the public in playful experiences designed to explore alternative, possible, plausible and most importantly, preferable futures".⁷⁵ Having curated an event for the Malta's 2017 Presidency of the EU, Time's Up, an Austrian art and culture organisation, was commissioned by the Foundation to curate Cabinet of Futures.⁷⁶ Building on the contacts established for the previous project, Time's Up undertook field research in November 2017 to engage local communities and organisations and gather content for the exhibition. Three series of "Futuring Exercise" participatory workshops on different themes were then held between September and November 2018 to enable citizens to "develop utopian literacy": Radical & Circular (the connections between economy and ecology); Quality of Human Life (creating systems to

⁷⁴ <http://www.modernmusicdays.eu/events.html>

⁷⁵ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/cabinet-of-futures/>

⁷⁶ The organisation predates and is not connected to the Time's Up movement against sexual harassment. See: <https://www.timesup.org/>

bring a better quality of life to all); Fair Food and Clean Cargo (reflecting on the commodification of everything and the loss of meaning in a world where cheap fuel enables food to be transported across the globe). The workshops informed an exhibition that took place in parallel in a parish house at Birkirkara (a town in the central region of Malta) between 24 August and 24 November 2018. The workshop offered an “exploration of a small European coastal city as it may develop in the next few decades” by inviting audiences to visualise themselves in the scenario.

- “Altofest” was a project to “explore experimental sociality through contemporary live art”.⁷⁷ It was curated by the Italian theatre company TeatrInGestAzione, which had implemented the concept in Naples (Italy) since 2011.⁷⁸ Twenty residents of different neighbourhoods across Malta and Gozo hosted international artists in their own homes during April and May 2018. During these residences, the artists involved their hosts in the process of creating new works that were performed for local audiences in the homes, gardens or workplaces of the hosts. The purpose of the project was to reconsider the concept of the artist and audience, as well, as the concept of production and performance spaces. As well as the performances, Altofest culminated in a film and a book capturing the experience of 2018.

Many international artists brought their works to Malta for the first time and there were some fruitful collaborations with Maltese artists. However, such collaborations were not as extensive as planned. As noted in the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme, some international artists were mostly interested in bringing their existing works to Malta, rather than collaborating with local artists. Moreover, Maltese artists sometimes proved reluctant to respond to calls for participation in internationally-led workshops and thus did not make full use of the international opportunities available to them.⁷⁹

At the same time, **Valletta faced a number of challenges that served to limit the cultural impact of the ECoC.** According to several key stakeholders (including cultural experts involved in the programme, media and local politicians), there was a consensus that the departure of the Artistic Director and of the seven artistic programme directors had served to weaken the overall artistic direction of the ECoC. Whilst three of the artistic programme directors (Jean Pierre Magro, Raphael Vella and Ruben Zahra) did still implement specific projects, this by itself did not overcome the very significant loss of expertise represented by the artistic programme director team. Linked to this, a number of important stakeholders in the cultural and creative sectors have suggested that the overall artistic vision of the ECoC was overshadowed by the political leadership of the ECoC. For example, one prominent stakeholder has described Valletta 2018 as being “very politicised from a PR point of view”.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ <https://valletta2018.org/events/altofest-malta/>

⁷⁸ http://www.teatrinstazione.com/tiga/home_en/

⁷⁹ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.40.

⁸⁰ <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20181223/local/valletta-2018-what-has-it-left-behind.697495>

2.5.2 Access and participation

One of the criteria that was applied to the selection of the 2018 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”.

Evidence from literature, interviews and data from research published by the Valletta 2018 Foundation highlights some of the challenges that were faced in the years before the ECoC. In particular, before the ECoC a significant proportion of the Maltese population did not regularly participate in or attend cultural events. Indeed, a 2013 Eurobarometer Survey found that 82% of Maltese people took no active part in any artistic activity, whilst more than half of citizens cited lack of interest for not going to the theatre (54%) or to museums and art galleries (52%). Similarly, the 2015 Valletta Participation Survey found that 38% of the population reported a “lack of interest” as a reason for not attending cultural activities. Following on from that, the 2016 survey found that only 42% of the population reported they were “likely to participate in activities organised by Valletta 2018”, even though 67% were at that time aware of Valletta 2018. Interviews of stakeholders have suggested a previous reluctance amongst much of the Maltese population to attend museums, art galleries or theatres, particularly for events seen as “high-brow”.

In that context, the key results of Valletta 2018 against the objective of fostering the participation and raising the interest of citizens are as follows.

First, **the ECoC attracted much greater audiences for culture than in previous years**, exceeding 400,000 people for the whole of 2018.⁸¹ Around three-quarters of this figure was accounted for by the major outdoor events (Opening Ceremony, Pageant of the Seas, il-Festa I-Kbira, Green Festival, Closing Ceremony, New Year’s Eve 2018-19). More than half of the total audience figure was accounted for by events that were new for 2018, including:

- 110,000: Valletta 2018 Opening Ceremony.
- 40,000: il-Festa I-Kbira: a one-off event in which the four main feasts and the two band clubs of Valletta came together and which featured processions of statues through the streets, marches and joint concert by the two band clubs of Valletta, a regatta and other events.⁸²
- 50,000: Pageant of the Seas: an open-air spectacle featuring Original music, a choir and special choreography, which took place at Valletta’s Grand Harbour.⁸³
- 9,400: Dal-Bahar Madwarha: a visual arts exhibition (see section 2.5.1).

Second, **Valletta 2018 contributed to an increasing attendance at or participation in cultural events amongst Maltese residents**. Evidence from the Valletta Participation Survey undertaken by the National Statistical Office showed growth in attendance between 2014 and 2018 across all types of cultural event covered by the survey.

⁸¹ Valletta 2018 Foundation

⁸² <https://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-2018-launches-il-festa-l-kbira/>

⁸³ <https://valletta2018.org/news/more-than-50000-people-attend-valletta-pageant-of-the-seas-the-largest-spectacle-in-the-grand-harbour/>

Table 2-8 Growth in attendance at cultural events in Valletta 2014-18

Type of event	% increase in the population attending events over 4 years (2014-18)
Carnival	1.2
Live theatre	3.7
City-wide activities	4.7
Parish feast	4.7
Other arts festivals or cultural activities	5.3
Museum or historical site	5.6
Dance	7.1

Source: *Valletta Participation Survey 2018*

It is not possible to quantify the contribution of Valletta 2018 to this increase, not least because not all of these events were implemented as part of the Valletta 2018 cultural programme. However, the majority of respondents had a high awareness and a positive view of Valletta 2018, which suggests that the ECoC cultural programme made an important contribution to the increase. For example:

- 91% had heard of Valletta 2018.
- 69% reported that Valletta 2018 events were meeting their expectations.
- 88% were likely to recommend events that were part of Valletta 2018 (of which, 69% were “very likely” and 19% “rather likely”).
- 58% of respondents were likely to attend Valletta 2018 events (of which 27% “very likely” and 31% “rather likely”).

Third, **Valletta 2018 provided new opportunities for citizens to be involved as creators, performers and audiences**, including children and young people compared to previous years. In some cases, this involved working with international artists in productions of high professional quality, such as the opening event, which was produced by the Spanish company La Fura Dels Baus, or the Pageant of the Seas. The opening also highlighted the artistic work of communities, NGOs and local artists through a week-long fringe programme. The cultural programme also included many small-scale events taking place at local level or in schools. For example, the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme highlights the significant number of small, grass roots projects and initiatives happening throughout the year and across different locations and the fact that many grass roots projects were led by Maltese or Malta-based creatives.⁸⁴ These included:

⁸⁴ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report, p.34.*

- “Darba Waħda” was a multi-disciplinary project involving elderly people and children, which featured several events in different communities across Malta each year from 2016, whilst the final event took place at different locations over four days in July 2018.⁸⁵ The project used drama, games, arts and crafts, storytelling and improvisations as a way to encourage creative interactions between the two generations. The sessions were animated by an applied drama practitioner and the project was organised with the support of several Local Councils and the Valletta 2018 Regional Coordinators.
- “Oħloq Kultura” worked with different schools to encourage children to make up their own cultures, as a way of teaching them critical and creative thinking skills, as well as the importance of collaboration. In parallel to creating their own cultures, the children were taught how Valletta developed as a city with its own culture, architecture and heritage. The project culminated in a final event modelled on the United Nations in October 2018.⁸⁶ It also featured a “festival edition” version which took part in various community festivals in Malta.
- “KantaKantun” was an innovative education project led by composer Alexander Vella Gregory and junior architect Charlo Briguglio.⁸⁷ The project engaged school students in examining ideas of space and sound and looking at how composers and architects deal with structure and style. As noted in section 2.5.1, the project was nominated for the Arts Council Malta’s Il-Premju Għall-Arti award for Best Work for Young Audiences.

Fourth, **Valletta 2018 provided new opportunities for citizens to be involved as volunteers in culture.** The “Tal-Kultura” volunteering programme was launched by the Foundation in 2016 together with SOS Malta, a Maltese NGO with a long history of promoting volunteering and civic participation. Aggregate data on the total number of volunteers by the end of the title-year was not available. However, before the start of the title-year, the programme had already recorded 2,500 hours of volunteer time at more than 50 events. More than 200 volunteers supported the flagship “Pageant of the Seas” event on 7 June 2018. By the end of 2018, the volunteer programme’s Facebook page had attracted more than 2,200 followers. However, the Foundation’s final report notes that the role of volunteers in engaging audiences was mostly limited to ushering guests and distributing materials during events.⁸⁸ The programme has continued beyond the title-year, including at the Malta Carnival 2019 on 1-5 March 2019.

Fifth, **Valletta 2018 created new opportunities for citizens to access or participate in culture in different localities across the Maltese islands,** thus bringing culture “closer” to many citizens. The original application was intended to cover the whole of Malta and this aspiration was retained within the revised programme, as summarised by the slogan of “An island-wide fiesta”. Whilst the big open-air events all took place in Valletta, there was a diversity of smaller projects and events that took place in new locations across Malta or that engaged local communities in new ways. As described in section 2.3.3, this community engagement was facilitated by the appointment six regional co-ordinators.

⁸⁵ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/darba-wahda/>

⁸⁶ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/ohloq-kultura/>

⁸⁷ <https://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/kantakantun/>

⁸⁸ Vella, D. and Godhwani, V. (2019) *A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme*, p.33.

Projects that brought culture closer to citizens in different localities include some of those described above, such as Altofest, Cabinet of Futures and the schools' projects (such as Darba Waħda, Oħloq Kultura and KantaKantun).

Notwithstanding the success in increasing audiences compared to previous years, **Valletta 2018 faced challenges in reaching all the intended audiences**. Indeed, the total audience of more than 400,000 was considerably less than the stated aspiration of a total audience of 1 million.⁸⁹ Some stakeholders (e.g. cultural experts involved in the programme, national media, local politicians) stated the view that there could have been greater efforts to engage and educate local audiences, particularly in respect of more challenging, avant-garde or contemporary works. Similarly, the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme reported that it proved easier to attract the general public to events that were familiar, such as the very traditional il-Festa l-Kbira (which brought together four existing feasts), than to the more contemporary innovative works. The report also suggested that, at times, the large number of events created competition for audiences, resulting in some events being less well-attended than anticipated.⁹⁰

2.5.3 Cultural capacity

Valletta 2018 can be seen to have had two main impacts of the ECoC on the cultural capacity of the city and of Malta in general.

First, **the ECoC has contributed to the culture-driven regeneration of Valletta**. Although Valletta has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1980⁹¹, the years up to about 2005 saw the city suffer from under-investment by the public and private sectors and a consequent problem of degraded streetscapes, vacant properties and falling population numbers.⁹² Since then, various public investments have supported a process of regeneration, in which culture and heritage have played a key role. These have included the restoration of the historic Fort St. Elmo site and development of Valletta's two harbours. In this context, the consensus amongst the stakeholders interviewed (including those external to the ECoC, such as representatives of local businesses) was that the ECoC has served as a focus for further investments. These include a number of cultural infrastructure investments directly overseen by the Valletta 2018 Foundation namely the Valletta Design Cluster, MUŻA, regeneration of Strait Street and regeneration of the Valletta Indoor Market. Alongside these investments, the Government made other investments in culture and heritage, namely the construction of the new Parliament building and the Mediterranean Conference Centre and renovations of St. Elmo fort, the Grandmaster's Palace and Admiralty House. Total public investments of €84m between 2013 and 2018 helped stimulate private investments during the period, bringing the total investment in Valletta to €167m during that period.⁹³

⁸⁹https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/valletta_2018/80846/valletta_2018_will_see_up_to_1_million_in_audiences_next_year#.XTm0Z-hKg2w

⁹⁰ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.36.

⁹¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131>

⁹² Ebejer, John (2016), *Regenerating Valletta: A vision for Valletta beyond 2020*. Paper presented at the Valletta Beyond 2020 Seminar, April 2016.

⁹³ *Heritage Malta, Restoration Directorate, GHRC, MTIP*

According to the representative of the hotels and restaurants sector, private investments in the sector, such as the recent increase in boutique hotels, have largely been driven by the general increase in tourism, however, the ECoC title-year gave a fixed target date and thus gave impetus to their timely completion. The representative of local retailers and SMEs also reported that the Foundation worked well with local businesses on cultural activities that helped attract visitors to Valletta and increase the city's vibrancy.

The Foundation was also involved in community regeneration projects, such as the regeneration of the San Ġorġ Preca Valletta Primary School. The consensus amongst all stakeholders interviewed was that the cultural programme of Valletta 2018 had pushed – and been complementary to – these infrastructure projects by increasing the cultural vibrancy of the city and by attracting more tourists and Maltese residents into the city, particularly at night. One of the business representatives (not involved in implementing the ECoC) reported increased sales for local businesses through extended opening hours and the increase in local people and tourists visiting Valletta because of the ECoC, particularly at night.

Evidence from the Valletta Participation Survey in the years leading up to the title-year suggests that local residents believed that culture-driven regeneration was serving to improve the city, as shown in the table below. Although this data reflects the situation before the title-year (data was not available for 2018), it is reasonable to conclude that the ECoC preparatory events and promotional activities, as well as the imminence of the title-year contributed to this increasingly positive opinion.

The two business representatives who were interviewed confirmed that Valletta 2018 had been positive for their member businesses, through attracting more people to the city, although both saw those benefits as arising not only because of the cultural programme but also because of the wider development of Valletta. However, one of the business representatives highlighted the concerns of some local businesses and residents regarding increased disruption, congestion, noise, etc. due to new construction work and the more vibrant night-life. This might also explain the slight increase in the proportion of local residents responding to the Valletta Participation Survey reporting that Valletta was changing for the worse, although the respondents were generally positive.

Table 2-9 Local perceptions of culture-driven regeneration in Valletta

Perceptions of Valletta	2014	2017
Valletta as a city rich in culture	3.2	4.5
Valletta as a city which offers cultural diversity	3.0	4.2
Valletta as a city which is changing for the better	3.1	4.4
Valletta as a city which is changing for the worse	1.0	1.3

1 = Do not agree at all; 2 = Agree partly; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree mostly; 5 = Agree very much

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

At the same time, it must be noted that some of the key infrastructure projects were not completed in time for the title-year, which thus limited the impact of the ECoC on the city's cultural capacity. Most notably the MUŻA had only a partial opening in December 2018 due to complications in the restoration of the premises, partly due to archaeological reasons. Similarly, the opening of the Valletta Design Cluster – originally intended to take place during the title-year – was postponed beyond the end of the title-year.

Second, **Valletta 2018 has helped develop the capacity of Malta's cultural and creative sectors.** This was facilitated by the involvement of some 645 cultural operators in the cultural programme.⁹⁴ This development must be seen in the wider context of Malta's first National Cultural Policy, which was launched in 2011, and the first Creative economy strategy, which was launched in 2012.⁹⁵ These policies have been accompanied by an increase in government revenue expenditure on culture: from €12.7m in 2013 to €35.8m in 2019; and in government capital expenditure on culture from €1m in 2013 to €2.6m in 2019.⁹⁶ In this context, there has been a steady increase in the size of Malta's cultural and creative sectors. For example, the number of businesses in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector increase from 2,509 in 2011 to 4,224 in 2018.⁹⁷ Although it is impossible to quantify the contribution of Valletta 2018 to this growth, the ECoC has nonetheless formed a central part of the national cultural policy.

Evidence from the Valletta Participation Survey showed that the opinions of local residents regarding the potential impact of Valletta 2018 on the local cultural sector went from being positive to being very positive in the run-up to the title-year. As shown in the table below, local residents expected the ECoC to have a positive impact in terms of events, as well as on businesses (in general, not just cultural and creative businesses).

Table 2-10 Local perceptions of likely impact of Valletta 2018

Perceptions of impact of Valletta 2018	2014	2017
Valletta as a city rich in culture	3.2	4.5
Valletta as a city which offers cultural diversity	3.0	4.2
Impact of Valletta 2018 on cultural or artistic events	3.5	4.4
Impact of Valletta 2018 on businesses	3.0	4.6

⁹⁴ Valletta 2018 Foundation

⁹⁵ <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/malta.php>

⁹⁶ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment

⁹⁷ National Statistical Office of Malta

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

The experience of 2018 has highlighted a number of **challenges that continue to face Malta's cultural and creative sectors**. These include the need to further develop the cultural infrastructure, for example, to address the lack of a major concert venue on the island, which limited the Valletta 2018 musical programme and which was mentioned by the Executive Director of the Foundation. Similarly, evidence from the 2017 Valletta Participation Survey suggested that local residents believed further investments were needed.

The final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme also highlighted the challenges arising from a lack of experience and a need for capacity building, development of knowledge, competencies and skills amongst cultural players in Malta. These resulted in difficulties in finding the right professionals to work on projects and in ensuring the commitment of professionals over a number of years. Some efforts were made in the development phase to build capacity for the title-year with €75,000 dedicated to this purpose. They included a workshop to develop the technical skills of theatre operators, designers and other creative teams, a curatorial school and curators in residence programme as well as a cultural mapping project. Despite these efforts, the report went on to highlight the ongoing need to improve the organisational strength in the Maltese cultural and creative sectors and to build capacity of public institutions and cultural operators.⁹⁸ Linked to this, one cultural expert involved in the programme reported that very specialist expertise and equipment can be lacking in Malta, making it necessary to import such expertise and equipment for ambitious productions. Similarly, the final report of the Valletta 2018 research programme highlighted the fact that some private venues had fewer facilities and equipment. The report also highlighted the logistical challenges involved in organising outdoor events and the lengthy processes to acquire permits from various entities.⁹⁹

A further challenge relates to future co-operation with international artists. Some of the artists interviewed for this evaluation reported that the ECoC had enabled them to establish good working relationships with local artists and/or communities in Malta, which would endure beyond 2018. For example, Maren Richter, the curator of the "Dal-Baħar Madwarha" exhibition reported that she was preparing future exhibitions in Malta and collaborating with the MUŻA. Similarly, Time's Up reported that the collaborations it had established with local artists through the Cabinet of Futures would continue. At the same time, all the international artists interviewed, the International Artistic Advisor to Valletta 2018 and the former member of the selection and monitoring panel interviewed, as well as some local stakeholders reported that the governance challenges and political controversies had tended to reduce the willingness of international artists to work in Malta in future.

⁹⁸ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.40-41.

⁹⁹ Vella, D. and Godhwani, V. (2019) *A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme*, p.35.

2.5.4 International profile

As noted above, one of the objectives of Valletta 2018 related to “engaging communities across and beyond Europe’s borders” and part of the “City and citizens” dimension related to encouraging more visitors to Malta to participate in events. That objective thus related to attracting tourists and interest from international media.

In respect of tourism, the main results are as follows.

First, **there was an increase in tourism to Malta** in general. Across Malta, the MTA forecast a 14.3% rise in the number of inbound tourists, an increase of 13.14% in tourist guest nights, an increase in tourist expenditure of 8.4% and an increase in air passenger numbers of 12.7% during 2018 compared to 2017. This followed similar levels of growth from 2015 to 2017. Of course, given the large number of tourists arriving for “sea and sand” holidays, it is very impossible to quantify the extent to which Valletta 2018 contributed to this growth in tourism at national level.

Second, **there was an increase in tourism to Valletta in particular**. The number of tourists visiting Valletta increased by more than 338,000 (16.6%) between 2017 and 2018, whilst the number staying in Valletta and Floriana (the town adjacent to Valletta) increased by more than 50,000 (24.3%). These increases came on the back of increases in 2016 and 2017. Tourists to Malta were also more likely to stay in Valletta or Floriana than in previous years: with 10% staying there in 2018 compared to 9% in 2017 and 7.7% in 2015.

Table 2-11 Tourist visits to Valletta 2015 to 2018

Year	2015	2016		2017		2018	
		No.	+ %	No.	+ %	No.	+ %
Tourist visits to Valletta	1.61m	1.75m	8.4	2.04m	16.4	2.37m	16.6
Tourists staying in Valletta and Floriana	137,300	143,500	4.5	209,200	45.8	260,000	24.3

Source: Malta Tourism Authority

Third, **there was high awareness of Valletta 2018 amongst tourists, which may have led to high participation at events**. Evidence from the MTA Heritage Locality Survey shows an increasing awareness of Valletta 2018 amongst incoming tourists. Indeed, the forecast was that 95% of incoming tourists would be aware of the ECoC, with 60% being aware prior to their visit to Malta. A survey of nearly 30,000 people attending events in 2018 found that 39% of respondents were of non-Maltese nationality (although the survey did not specify the proportion that were tourists rather than expatriates living in Malta).

Table 2-12 Tourist Awareness Valletta 2018

	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Forecast
Prior to visiting Malta	25.4%	28.8%	38.5%	60.0%
During visit	43.3%	47.9%	46.2%	35.0%
Not aware	31.3%	23.3%	15.3%	5.0%

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

Fourth, survey evidence suggests that **Valletta 2018 was a main motivation for a significant number of incoming tourists**. The MTA Heritage Locality Survey suggests that this was the main motivation of 13.4% of incoming tourists.

Fifth, survey evidence suggests that **the number and the share of tourists that were “greatly motivated by culture” to visit Malta was greater in 2018 compared to previous years**. Some 10.5% of tourists reported such a motivation in 2018, compared to 9.0% in 2016. Overall, the number of tourists that were greatly motivated by culture to visit Malta rose by 33.5% to 273,000 in 2018 compared to 2017, an increase of 68,500.

Last, **more tourists visited Valletta for cultural reasons in 2018 compared to 2017**. The proportion of tourists who were motivated by culture to visit increased from 16.5% to 20.0% (although the figure in 2016 had been slightly higher, at 20.7%).

As well as attracting tourists, it was also intended that the ECoC would “promote Valletta’s potential to contribute to the international cultural scene”, i.e. raise the international profile of Valletta and of Malta’s cultural sector.

Evidence from the Valletta Participation Survey in the years leading up to the title-year (i.e. 2014-17) showed that **local residents strongly felt that the ECoC would have a positive impact against this objective of raising the international profile of Valletta**. (Data was not available for 2018 or 2019). It is not possible to quantify the extent to which the ECoC raised the international profile of Valletta, although the increase in tourist visits to Valletta (including those motivated by culture) would suggest some success against this objective.

Table 2-13 Local perceptions of the likely impact of Valletta 2018

Perceptions of likely impact of Valletta 2018	2014	2017
Tourism	3.5	4.6
Visibility of Valletta on a global scale	3.5	4.5
Image of Valletta	3.5	4.4

1 = Do not agree at all; 2 = Agree partly; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree mostly; 5 = Agree very much

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Similarly, **there was some success in attracting the interest of the international media and in reaching an audience on social media.** As noted above, the international media attended the launch of the programme in September 2017, as well as the opening and other key events. One clear success was a 25-minute documentary about Valletta 2018 on the Euro News channel, which was broadcast on 21 November 2018.¹⁰⁰ There was positive coverage of the cultural programme in the UK's Guardian newspaper,¹⁰¹ whilst the New York Times¹⁰² and Condé Nast Traveller¹⁰³ also referred to Valletta 2018 (although without reporting on the cultural programme itself).

Across 2018, social media proved essential in reaching audiences. According to the survey of audiences at events, 47% of respondents learnt about events via Facebook/social media, which was the most common response.¹⁰⁴ In terms of social media reach, Valletta 2018 had achieved the following results by the end of 2018:

- App downloads: 4,656
- Facebook followers: 40,553
- Twitter followers: 7,511
- Instagram followers: 6,238
- Website users: 397,747
- Website sessions: 578,310
- Website page views: 2,020,364.¹⁰⁵

However, alongside the positive coverage, **the international reputation of Valletta 2018 was considerably damaged by the political controversy arising in March 2018,** as described in section 2.4.1 above. Indeed, it is unprecedented for an ECoC to receive such strong condemnation at the international level, regardless of the accuracy (or otherwise) of the claims made in the letters issued by the international artists and the MEPs.

2.6 Legacy

According to the Ministry of Culture, the three main goals for the legacy period are to:

- create and develop cultural audiences;
- increase the quality of cultural activities; and
- create jobs in the cultural sector and the creative economy.

Plans to ensure and exploit the legacy of Valletta 2018 include three main elements.

First, in October 2018 the Government announced the creation of a dedicated agency to replace the Valletta 2018 Foundation, namely the Valletta Cultural Agency. According to the Government, the role of the new Agency will be "to serve as a main reference point for the development and for cultural activities in the Capital, and to carry forward the legacy created by Valletta 2018" and also to "ensure that Valletta's cultural regeneration

¹⁰⁰<https://www.euronews.com/2018/11/19/go-europe-maltese-marvel-valletta-shows-off-its-cultural-side>

¹⁰¹<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2018/apr/13/valletta-malta-2018-european-capital-of-culture-music-muza-gallery>

¹⁰²<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/21/travel/what-to-do-36-hours-in-malta.html>

¹⁰³ <https://www.cntraveller.com/article/malta-and-valletta-things-to-do>

¹⁰⁴ *The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture Valletta 2018: Final Research Report*, p.70.

¹⁰⁵ Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation

continues”.¹⁰⁶ This will include the implementation of a cultural plan for Valletta and the development of a programme with other public cultural organisations. The Agency will also co-ordinate Malta’s application to host the ECoC in 2031.

A considerable part of the expertise at the Foundation will be retained, as several staff members will transfer from the Foundation. The Government has also announced that the Agency will be led by the Chairman of the Foundation, Jason Micallef. However, this appointment has been criticised by PEN International, which wrote to the Prime Minister in November 2018 to express “profound dismay at the promotion of Jason Micallef, Chairman of Valletta 2018, to chair the Valletta Cultural Agency”.¹⁰⁷

Second, some activities that were initiated for the ECoC or expanded in scope will continue in 2019. In some cases, activities will receive support from the Agency through its role in the administration of funding for artists based in the capital. Encouragingly, Government funding for culture will increase by 19% in 2019 compared to 2018.¹⁰⁸

Third, the Valletta Design Cluster, one of the major infrastructure projects promised in the original ECoC application and developed by the Foundation, will become operational in late 2019 (or later, depending on the extent of any further delays). The Design Cluster will operate in the renovated Old Abattoir building in Valletta, which will include exhibition space, studios, co-working spaces, workshops, accommodation and facilities for artists in residence and a roof garden for the local community to use. The Design Cluster will also feature a programme of artistic events, as well as practical support for the local cultural and creative sectors. The consensus amongst the stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation (including those who expressed a more negative view on Valletta 2018 overall) was that the Design Cluster has the potential both to serve the development of Valletta’s cultural and creative sectors and to contribute to the regeneration of that part of the city.

2.7 Conclusions

2.7.1 Successes

The performance of Valletta 2018 against the “success criteria” set at EU level is as follows.

Long-term strategy: perhaps the main success factor of Valletta 2018 was the fact that it formed part of a wider government strategy for the culture-driven regeneration of Valletta and for the wider development of Malta’s cultural and creative sectors, i.e. through the National Cultural Policy and the National Creative Economy Strategy. The strong support for culture and culture-driven regeneration in Valletta has meant that the cultural programme was supported by significant infrastructure investments and by a commitment to sustain the legacy of 2018. Support was offered to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors before and during the title-year and that support will be sustained, e.g. by the Valletta Cultural Agency and the Valletta Design Cluster. As a result, there was a consensus amongst all stakeholders that Valletta 2018 contributed to the cultural

¹⁰⁶<https://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-2018s-legacy-to-be-carried-forward-by-valletta-cultural-agency/>

¹⁰⁷<https://pen-international.org/news/a-total-lack-of-accountability-open-letter-on-the-promotion-of-jason-micallef-chair-of-valletta-2018-1>

¹⁰⁸<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2018-10-31/local-news/Budget-for-culture-sector-increased-by-18-for-total-of-82-million-6736198641>

vibrancy of Valletta and played its part in promoting the long-term development of the city. Its impacts have been captured by the monitoring and evaluation activity undertaken by the Foundation.

European dimension: the cultural programme of Valletta 2018 featured more activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe and highlighting the common aspects of European cultures than Malta's cultural offering in previous years. There were more collaborations with European artists and operators from different countries and new partnerships were established. The tourism data (particularly the increased cultural motivation to visit Valletta) suggests some success in reaching a European public. At the same time, the European dimension tended to be given less prominence than the big open-air events. Moreover, several international artists responsible for key projects reported that their overall experience of Valletta 2018 had been negative due to challenges in governance. Similarly, the political controversies associated with Valletta 2018 had the effect of attracting negative international attention.

Cultural and artistic content: there was considerable change to the content of the cultural programme compared to the final bid-book, which was much more extensive than for previous ECoC. The view of several stakeholders (including some involved in implementation and some outside the process) was that the departure of the Artistic Director and the artistic programme directors served to weaken the overall artistic direction of the programme and, as a result, the programme perhaps lacked a clear and coherent artistic vision. Nonetheless, there were instances of very high quality and overall the cultural programme offered a diversity of activities of many different artistic disciplines. The activities involved a considerable number of Maltese artists and organisations and covered traditional art forms and heritage, as well as more contemporary expressions. The main large events within the cultural programme were of a scale rarely, if ever, seen before in Malta and were well received by audiences, stakeholders and critics. Most notably, the opening event attracted possibly Malta's largest ever audience for a cultural event. As with large events at many ECoC, these were not necessarily the most avant-garde. However, they did feature high-quality productions (as evidenced by the nominations for artistic awards), involvement of renowned European artists (e.g. La Fura Dels Baus) and co-operations between those artists and local artists.

Capacity to deliver: whilst Valletta delivered a credible ECoC, it faced challenges regarding the capacity to deliver. As a small island remote from the European mainland with a hitherto under-developed cultural sector (compared to many previous ECoC title-holders), Malta inevitably faced the challenge of ensuring viable cultural infrastructure to host the title. To address this challenge, the Government made considerable investments both in the physical infrastructure required to host the ECoC and in cultural events and projects before and during the title-year, as well as in legacy activities. The cultural and creative sectors, although growing, do not enjoy the critical mass of other countries' cultural and creative sectors and, as a result, gaps in experience, expertise, skills or equipment often have to be filled through "imports". Progress was made through capacity building activities and through the experience gained, including through international collaborations, but the challenge of building capacity remains. In addition, Valletta 2018 did not enjoy strong cross-party political support, but risked being seen by many as an

initiative of whichever party was in government. This reflected the wider political context of Malta and it is not clear whether a more consensual approach would have been possible in that context.

Outreach: the Valletta was successful in increasing the involvement of the Maltese population, cultural and creative sectors and civil society in the development and implementation of the ECoC. The six regional co-ordinators provided a clear mechanism to engage populations across Malta, not least through the office in Gozo. The volunteer programme provided new opportunities to participate. Artistic events and activities took place in new locations and there was engagement with schools. The programme was particularly successful in attracting local people as audiences to the four large open-air events. Audience numbers represented an increase on previous years, even if they did not fulfil the aspiration of 1 million. At the same time, the experience of 2018 also highlighted the continued need to build – and engage with – audiences for culture in Malta and to address the challenges of scheduling different events that may compete for the same audiences.

Management: given the small size of Malta, it was essential that the national Government played a leading role, as few other bodies would have had the scope to organise the ECoC event. In practice, the Government provided full support from the award of the title to the completion of the title-year and beyond, even in the face of considerable criticism at local and international levels. Sufficient government funds were provided to implement the cultural programme and the associated infrastructure investments, albeit less than stated in the original application. However, the main difficulty reported was the turnover of senior staff and loss of high-level artistic expertise and the perception of undue political influence over decision-making.

2.7.2 Lessons in delivery

The importance of protecting the ECoC brand: the ECoC is one of the best known and most prestigious EU initiatives, which attracts interest from international media, audiences and cultural stakeholders. In that context, communications that are intended primarily for a local or national audience can be amplified much more widely to the international level by virtue of the prominence offered by the ECoC title. Whilst this can and does serve the interests of title-holders – by creating a stronger international profile – it also creates the responsibility to ensure care in any communications made. In the case of Valletta 2018, it is unfortunate that ill-advised communications served to damage its international reputation and overshadow the many positive elements of the ECoC, at least as far as the international media were concerned.

Importance of balancing political ownership with artistic independence: since ECoCs are largely overseen, supported and financed by public bodies, to a certain degree, they require political ownership. The ECoCs also serve to promote (national and/or local) governmental policy objectives. At the same time, the need for clear artistic vision and direction suggests the need for a degree of independence in the leadership of the ECoC. A careful balance thus needs to be struck between political ownership and artistic independence. Whilst the nature of this balance will vary in line with the context of each ECoC, in polarised political contexts such as that of Malta, the risk is that artistic excellence

suffers. According to many stakeholders, whilst Valletta 2018 included many projects and events of high artistic quality, the overall artistic vision and direction suffered due to the strong political influence over the process and the loss of artistic expertise during the development phase.

3.0 Leeuwarden-Friesland

3.1 Background

3.1.1 City

Located in the northwest of the Netherlands, Leeuwarden is a city of 100,000 inhabitants and is found in the region of Friesland, which has a total population of 646,000. Although Leeuwarden is the main city of Friesland, the region has a total of eleven historic cities connected by water. Leeuwarden is also one of the oldest cities in the north of the Netherlands and has a rich history which dates back to the Roman age.¹⁰⁹ There are records of people living on a mounded piece of land bordering the sea at the mouth of the rivers Ee, Vliet and Potmarge, which today is called Oldehove. Because of its location, the inhabitants of the region mainly worked in agriculture, fishery and trade by the sea. In the Middle Ages, Leeuwarden became the home of the Court of Friesland, and during the 16th and 17th centuries, the 'Golden Age' of the Northern Netherlands, it became particularly affluent.

Friesland has two official languages: Dutch and the local Frisian and is the only bilingual region in the Netherlands with Frisian being taught in many of the region's schools. The inhabitants of Friesland are also recognised as having a strong cultural identity and sense of local pride.

3.1.2 Cultural sector

The cultural sector of Leeuwarden-Friesland is often seen as being locally focussed in terms of its target audience and ambition. Stakeholders taking part in the evaluation often saw the region and its cultural content as being 'internal' looking. This was not necessarily perceived as being a weakness but was seen as having a direct influence on the type, scale and focus of the cultural sector in the region.

The city of Leeuwarden and the Friesland region as a whole is relatively well served in terms of cultural infrastructure and activities, particularly considering its population size. The city hosts the impressive Fries Museum that opened in 2013 (with a construction cost of €18 million), the Prinsessehof National Museum of Ceramics (the only national museum in the region) as well as a series of smaller galleries, exhibition areas and performance areas. In terms of its cultural history, the artist M.C Esher¹¹⁰ was born in Leeuwarden and his work formed an important part of the ECoC programme while the artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema was also born a short distance from the city.

There was a perception that Leeuwarden-Friesland had a relatively low 'cultural starting point' according to the bid-book. As described above, because the city and the region were perceived to be inward-looking the cultural offer tended to target local people already living in the area rather than those living elsewhere in the Netherlands and Europe more widely. The cultural artists and performers that made up Friesland's original cultural offer was sometimes seen as being locally-focussed, with relatively few 'visits' from cultural players

¹⁰⁹ The first records of the city's current name date back to the 8th century.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.mcescher.com/>

from outside of the north of the Netherlands. Linked to this, outside visitors to Leeuwarden-Friesland tended to be drawn by the isolation and rural nature of the area rather than its cultural offerings.

3.2 Development of Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018

3.2.1 Application

Alongside Malta, the Netherlands was entitled to nominate a city for the European Capital of Culture title of 2018. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Min OCW – *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*) was responsible for the preselection and final selection meetings, and appointed Dutch Culture, the Dutch Centre for International Cultural Affairs, to organise the hearings between the selection panel and the candidate cities as well as the visits to the short-listed cities on its behalf.

On 12 December 2011, the Ministry launched a call for ECoC candidates with a deadline of 31 October 2012. Five cities submitted applications:

- The Hague;
- Utrecht;
- Maastricht;
- Eindhoven; and
- Leeuwarden.

On 29-30 November 2012, the Ministry organised a **pre-selection meeting** in Amsterdam. This was the first opportunity for the five candidate cities to present their respective programmes for the ECoC 2018. The Hague presented a project called "A City Without Havens, Haven for Free Thought", making the case for the Hague as the Dutch ECoC 2018 largely because of its experience as the political centre of the Netherlands, its intellectual drive, and existing cultural infrastructure. Utrecht's programme for ECoC 2018 was entitled "Trust the Future, Create your City". The core theme of Maastricht was "Maastricht Revisited", dividing the programme into four thematic lines: "Speaking in Tongues", "Remembering the Future", "Mirroring Europe" and "Living Europe". Eindhoven's slogan for ECoC 2018 was "Imagination designs Europe", presenting itself with four of the other four major cities in the region of Brabant as a 'mosaic metropolis, a 'cityside' and network of the future. Leeuwarden, finally, presented the concept of "Mienskip", and applied with the surrounding region of Friesland. "Mienskip" is a deeply rooted concept in the Frisian minority culture and refers to a sense of shared community thinking that has developed over the centuries in the region to collectively face the challenges resulting from the threat of the forces of nature, in particular the sea.

3.2.2 Selection

Maastricht, Eindhoven and Leeuwarden were preselected. As far as Leeuwarden is concerned, the panel were in particular impressed with the bottom-up approach to implementing the ECoC, but did however emphasise that the city made sure to:

- Utilise sufficient **experienced professional managers and curators** given the size and depth of an ECoC;

- Come up with a **more secure funding plan**, in particular in relation to the contributions expected from the various public authorities;
- Make more apparent the **European dimension** in the revised bid, clearly outlining how the cultural programme would help the city and the wider region of Friesland to prepare for a multicultural society which is becoming the reality in Europe;
- **More strongly embed culture in the programme** and explain how it can help face the urgencies the city proposes to address as part of the title-year.

For the **final selection**, the three remaining candidate cities were asked to submit a revised bid by the 12th July 2013. Ahead of the final selection meeting in Amsterdam on the 5-6th September 2013, each candidate city was visited by a delegation of four panel members: Leeuwarden on 2 September 2013, Eindhoven on 3 September 2013, and Maastricht on 4 September 2013. Leeuwarden was put forward by the panel as the winning city, and Leeuwarden's title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2018 was officially confirmed by the Council Decision of 21 May 2014.¹¹¹

In addition to Leeuwarden's translation of Europe into communities of values and people, the strong involvement of citizens and volunteers in the proposed design and implementation of the cultural programme, the holistic and bottom-up approach and unity in the management of the programme, the panel was particularly impressed by a number of changes included in the revised bid of the city:

- The **central motto had been shifted from "Mienskip" to "Iepen (open) Mienskip"**: to stress that the inward-looking mentality should change into an outward orientation, without losing the bottom-up approach. With "Mienskip" being a collective Frisian term for values such as mutual respect, values and responsibility in the community, Leeuwarden argued that these are values underpin Europe as a whole and that the ambition was to open this Mienskip to other communities so to promote a more inclusive sense of solidarity;
- The **proposed common challenges and wider connections with Europe**, for example the attention to common challenges related to living in rural areas or in regions near the sea with rising sea-levels in an era of climate change, thereby connecting Friesland to other 'wetlands' and rural areas in Europe, or the focus on Frisian as a minority language, thereby connecting the region to many other countries with similar issues around minority languages;
- Putting **young people at the core of the bid**, for example for the organisation of events and communication;
- Emphasising even more **the urgencies of some of the key issues of the ECoC** (outside of culture) including education, poverty and unemployment;
- Explaining more clearly the **strong network** that had been built up to develop the bid;
- The **participation and inclusion dimension**, which was extremely well developed across all parts of the project, and in particular the specific focus

¹¹¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0352&from=EN>

on connecting young people with migrant communities, and specific programmes to integrate and engage Polish workers.

The panel also underlined several aspects that needed further development / monitoring:

- **Programme:** use the momentum created by the nomination to start focusing efforts on actually turning the “Mienskip” into “Iepen Mienskip”, a task which was projected to take years. It was also recommended to link up with Umea 2014 in Sweden in order to learn from its experience regarding the co-creating aspect of the programme, and to make sure the proposed digital aspect was properly embedded in the design and implementation of all projects proposed;
- **Implementation:** give young people a core place in the further organisation of the ECoC in order to deliver on the promises made at the selection stage, and to ensure the logistics and communication around the event organisations stays up to date with developments in ICT;
- **Inclusion and participation:** the panel noted Leeuwarden’s peripheral geographical location in the Netherlands and Europe as a challenge to make the ECoC a success throughout Europe. Specific attention should be paid to finding ways to scale up the local focus on participation to a wider European level;
- **Governance:** reinforce the management structure by setting up a strong delivery foundation;
- **Funding:** clarify the budget arrangements.

3.2.3 Development

The **first monitoring meeting** on the development of Leeuwarden 2018 took place between stakeholders from Leeuwarden and the monitoring and advisory panel on 15 September 2015 in Brussels. The following aspects needing further development / monitoring were underlined:

- **Programme:** ensure a clear agenda for self-produced projects as well as for the open projects;
- **Participation and inclusion:** the panel appreciated the flexibility of the programme to adapt to new realities. As such, it was recommended to embed a stronger focus on developing the work with refugees in a European perspective;
- **International dimension:** the panel highlighted it was aware of the challenge of Leeuwarden not being yet known as an interesting cultural destination, encouraging the team to collaborate as closely as possible with the tourism office (Fryslân – the name of the Tourism brand for the region) to create new tools for synergies between culture and tourism. Investments are also needed to ensure increase to increase the quality and quantity of tourism infrastructure;
- **Governance:** the panel appreciated the tradition in the Netherlands to have supervisory boards independent from the Government to ensure transparency and avoid undue influence on the programme. The appointment of a person dealing specifically with monitoring and ensuring the European dimension of the projects was also welcomed by the panel, and it was recommended the monitoring and reporting arrangements around this were kept;

- **Budget:** Leeuwarden should only stick to the principle of spending secured money, and closely monitor the timing for requesting funds, in particular the ERDF funds.

The **second monitoring meeting** took place on 7 March 2018 in Brussels, and highlighted the following aspects for further development / monitoring:

- **International dimension:** three recommendations were made to raise the international profile of Leeuwarden and Friesland, and to attract a greater international audience:
 1. Governance: increase cooperation with national authorities and cultural institutions in order to increase the international visibility of Leeuwarden and Friesland;
 2. Communication: enhance marketing and (digital) communication efforts around Leeuwarden 2018 in order to attract international attendance, and reflect on the relevance of having social media pages (e.g. Facebook) in multiple languages;
 3. Programme: simplify the overall message of Leeuwarden 2018 so it can be more broadly understood by various communities and stakeholders.
- **Legacy:** two recommendations were made with regards to the legacy of Leeuwarden and its 2018 ECoC year:
 1. Governance: involve all relevant stakeholders, from institutions to civil society at regional and local levels, in governance discussions to develop a sustainable legacy strategy. It was recommended to set up a specific task force to lead such discussions at multi-sectoral level;
 2. Programme: relevant artistic projects should, from the start, be seen as having the potential of being sustainable infrastructure projects that can make a valuable contribution to the whole region and be funded accordingly.
- **Budget and programme:** keep the budget balanced and finalise the programme in line with the available funds by cancelling or scaling down projects as needed.

On the basis of the progress made, the panel recommended awarding the Melina Mercouri Prize. The Commission consequently decided to award Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 the Melina Mercouri Prize in the second half of 2017.

3.3 Cultural programme

3.3.1 Overview

“**Iepen Mienskip**” (Open Community) was the central motto of Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 cultural programme. In the bid-book, ‘Mienskip+’ was described as “[a] Frisian word for a process that has been around for generations, it is synonymous locally with an instinctive action-driven, bottom-up organised form of solidarity [... and] is derived from times when the struggle against water led people to join forces, sharing talents with the goal of building terms and dykes for the common good”.¹¹² Core values associated with

¹¹²See

this concept are mutual respect, participation, grass-roots development, equality and civic responsibility.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the *mienskip* approach dominated the development work of the ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland as well as the eventual content of the cultural programme. Out of the 800 projects found in the cultural programme, over 700 were in the 'open programme', which was the part of the cultural programme that dealt with the bottom-up *mienskip* approach. This open programme and its associated 700 projects were mainly designed and delivered by local people with guidance and support from the ECoC Foundation (LF2018). The *mienskip* projects emerged from ideas and the efforts of local people and were often led by amateur cultural artists or simply people who wanted to 'try' culture out or promote a social message through the vehicle of culture (see below). As such, the cultural programme focussed on **exploring ways of citizen participation**, and how culture can unite people to bring together their talents to address common challenges and think about solutions for the challenges of the future.

The **"Iepen" addition** (Open) to the initially stand-alone "Mienskip" as part of the development of the cultural programme in the years leading up to 2018, adds an important second dimension of 'openness' to the overall motto of Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018. As a geographically remote area in the Netherlands and Europe more broadly, characterised by its own distinct language and local culture, the *"dark side of Mienskip"*, as it is described in the bid-book, is that Frisians are traditionally rather averse to external input. The action-oriented "Mienskip" further specified by the openness of "Iepen" thereby specifies that all action to improve society should be open-minded and outward-looking, which is needed if societies wish to embrace and evolve with Europe. An important aspect of the programme is therefore to bring together people from different backgrounds, including locals and migrants and those from outside of the region and also stimulating more cross-sectional co-operation.

Outside of the open programme was the 'main programme' that consisted of 60 projects. In many ways the content of the main programme although unique, represented more traditional projects expected to be found in an ECoC project. Projects were generally a lot larger in budget and profile and had larger audience figures than those found in the open programme. They were generally designed and delivered by professional cultural players from within or outside of the Friesland region.

Tackling social issues was also a key part of the bid-book and eventual cultural programme, particularly in the fields of social inequality, ecology, diversity and the relationship between the city and the countryside. By arguing that these challenges facing Leeuwarden and Friesland are common to many other cities and regions in Europe, the programme also had a very strong **European dimension**. The bid-book argues that this community feeling of 'Mienskip' can be felt anywhere, but that the only difference in Friesland is that the concept *"has been given a name, and its presence is felt by people as part of their culture"*.¹¹³

The cultural programme was organised around five major thematic lines:

<https://www.friesland.nl/uploads/media/58d18402d64e4/v4-online-bid2-lwd2018.pdf>

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

- **Nature and Culture:** projects under this theme explored and celebrated the links between nature and culture, using culture as a way to draw attention to nature. Due to Friesland's location and history, attention was paid in particular to water as a precondition for a sustainable future, and how to live with it after centuries of battling it;
- **City and Countryside:** projects under this theme sought to close the gap between the increasing detachment of the city from the countryside in Friesland more specifically and other European regions more broadly. Through this theme, broader issues such as 'brain drain / brain gain' and 'creative ecologies' were explored in greater detail;
- **Community and Diversity:** in line with the open *Mienskip* motto, projects under this third theme focussed on how people from different cultural backgrounds can live and work together;
- **Lab Lwd:** in Lab Lwd the ECoC was seen as the laboratory for innovation and also one where cooperation is key. Local people were called upon to work in their neighbourhood and ask to make changes and enter into the debate about the future of people and the city;
- **Royal Frieslan:** which represents the highlights of the rich culture of the area.

More specifically, three story lines were explored across these above overarching themes:

- **Dare to Dream:** Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 had the ambition to 'elevate' the city and region to the European stage;
- **Dare to be Different:** "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you got". Projects under this story line were centred around encouraging the Frisian community to look beyond its local identity, and to be open to different cultures and Europe;
- **Dare to Act:** the cultural programme also consisted of projects centred around protecting the unique biodiversity of the Frisian region. The Waddenkust (coastal area in Friesland), for example, now has an open-air museum with different walking routes.¹¹⁴

The *mienskip* approach led to a cultural programme in Leeuwarden-Friesland that was both large and more diverse than most other ECoC. The projects of the main programme (60) were organised by third parties (external to the Foundation), but controlled and communicated by the Foundation, more specifically, the programme managers. The projects of the *Mienskip* (or Open) programme (more than 700) were also organised by third parties, but not directly steered by the programme managers. This led to a cultural programme that covered a wider range of themes, provider types, locations and issues than most other ECoC. Its dispersal across a region rather than a city was also an aspect of the ECoC that made it different (although not unique) to other ECoC.

As mentioned above, a key overarching principle of the ECoC was around using culture to 'help [deal with] society's issues' or in other words, not just doing 'culture for culture's sake'. Although the ECoC had a focus on culture, the themes emerging out of the original bid, development process and eventual cultural programme were often focussed on social

¹¹⁴ See <https://www.friesland.nl/nl/nu-te-doen/fietsen-en-wandelen/wandelen-aan-de-waddenkust>

policy issues. These included child poverty, the threat to biodiversity, equality, the integration of migrants and water management (i.e. flooding). The ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland therefore chose to use their cultural year to highlight and to some extent tackle social problems, using the ECoC and culture as a vehicle through which to do this. It was interesting to note that many stakeholders felt that the ECoC was successful in engaging with local people because of the existence of these wider social issues and that the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was often viewed as a social programme (using culture at its engine) rather than a cultural programme. Helping highlight and address social issues was often seen as the 'hook' by which projects encouraged people to participate rather than trying to stimulate them through promoting a purely cultural programme.

3.3.2 European dimension

In overall terms, the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC took the European dimension seriously. Research undertaken by LF2018 showed that a total of 1,600 international collaborations covering 87 countries took place as a consequence of the ECoC programme (the original target for international collaborations was 300, meaning the actual level of collaboration was five times greater than originally estimated). International collaborations included visits, exchanges, joint performances and joint marketing campaigns. Leeuwarden-Friesland also created new connections with international networks. For example, the International Society for the Performing Arts held its international congress in Friesland with support from the LF2018 Foundation, at which several key European networks were present, such as IN SITU, the European platform for artistic creation in public space.¹¹⁵ Although data on the level of international collaborations found in Friesland prior to the ECoC year is not available, those responsible for the European dimension estimated that the ECoC stimulated ten times more international collaborations than would normally be the case.

In terms of strengths, firstly, a key member of the ECoC LF2018 team was specifically responsible for promoting and embedding the European dimension at both programme and project levels. Other ECoC tend to ensure that staff in general consider the European dimension with no overall lead in charge of pro-actively pushing this agenda forward. The Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC instead chose to establish a specific post to champion and drive forward a European dimension whose key responsibility was to check, monitor and encourage project owners, the ECoC board and fellow management team members to promote a European aspect to their work and thinking. This designated European dimension role meant there was always at least one person in key discussions championing this issue, whether that was in bid-book discussions, management meetings, discussions around monitoring or simply in ongoing discussions with project leads.

Secondly, the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC contained a number of key 'European' themes that linked Leeuwarden-Friesland with other regions across the EU Member States, which themselves were facing similar challenges and issues. Themes found in Leeuwarden-Friesland's cultural programme that had common European issues included social inclusion, migration, minority languages, urban/ rural pressures as well as a range of environment

¹¹⁵ <https://www.ispa.org/page/lf18>

and ecological issues. Projects that drew these common European issues together included:

- **Lost in the greenhouse:** having as its overall theme that of migration in Europe, this project was a collaboration with local musicians and the Orkater theatre company from Amsterdam (together with a Polish cultural company), which put on a theatre production in a large greenhouse near the Frisian village of Sexbierum. The production worked with local people and migrants living in the area to put on a performance that revolved around a whodunit story line but had a key message linked to migration and co-existence between Polish and Dutch workers who currently work in the greenhouse where the performance took place. The story covered a range of European issues including disparities in wage levels across the EU, skilled labour moving to Western Europe, integration issues with newly arrived migrants as well as the economic consequences and benefits of migration in different countries.
- **11 Fountains:** eleven artists from across the world were commissioned to design and build eleven new fountains in each of the 11 Frisian cities. Fountains were chosen to promote the importance of water across the region. The international artists worked with local residents and businesses to develop local stories and suitable locations in each city and 'co-produce' each fountain (which was generally contemporary in nature). Amongst others, artists were chosen from Belgium, France, the UK, China, Cuba and Japan who spent time listening and working with the communities to ensure their fountain took account of local issues, cultures and themes.
- **Potatoes go wild!** working with Valletta in Malta but also involving artists from other EU countries including Germany, Ireland and Serbia, Potatoes go wild! used the common theme of the potato to share European cultural stories and performances. Both Malta and the Netherlands have a large potato industry and this sector was used as a basis for a range of projects including poetry, education, theatre and art. For example, activities included 25 artists from Friesland and Germany exhibiting in seven potato barns across the region to put art into new locations. There was also a music-theatre performance that covered the issue of waste food facing European countries and the agricultural sector, and the Friesland Museum of Nature was home to the Kûnstsinnige Eerappels potato exhibition, where artists created works of art with raw potatoes. Children in Friesland and Valletta also exchanged poems with each other and sent seed potatoes to one another. Poems from each country were put on bags of potatoes that were sold in the markets of the other country.

Another strong aspect of Leeuwarden-Friesland's ECoC approach to the European dimension was the existence of funding to specifically help projects find and secure partners and activities from across Europe. Some €265k from the open programme was specifically ring-fenced and made available to help smaller organisations find European partners (e.g. go on European visits to partner organisations) recognising that these organisations would have fewer existing European connections to draw upon and fewer resources to spend on finding appropriate foreign partners. The existence of a European dimension funding 'pot' sent out clear messages to projects that they were expected to have (rather than just consider) a European aspect to their work. Along with funding,

project owners also received specific help through the 'meadow sessions' (see section 0 below) to assist them in identifying potential partners and in exploring how a European dimension could be considered in their projects design.

The ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland also had a number of processes in place to check, report and monitor the extent to which the programme and its projects had a European dimension. During the project appraisal stage, one particular criterion was included to assess the strength of their plans around the European dimension, projects were also asked to specifically report on their European dimension activities in six monthly monitoring reports and finally the European dimension formed part of the formal contract each project had with the ECoC Foundation. These processes were felt to 'formalise' the European dimension throughout the ECoC projects rather than again having the European aspect being an issue that project managers could consider if they happened to deem it as useful.

Despite the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC having a number of positive aspects to the European dimension, stakeholders did recognise that a large number (700+) of small, community-led projects found in the open programme made it hard to promote a European dimension in all its activities. Many of these small and micro project promoters often had no prior experience of delivering a cultural project, let alone finding international partners or linking with other European cultures in a meaningful way. Connected to this issue was the difficulty some open programme project promoters had in encouraging international partners to become interested in their projects, particularly those which may well be performing only over one weekend to a small audience. The need for and practical implementation of a European dimension was therefore made difficult by some parts of the open programme.

An issue raised in the bid-book and borne out in the cultural programme was the "dark side of 'Mienskip'", as described in the original ECoC bid. The bid-book refers to the fact that Frisians are traditionally rather averse to external input and sometimes struggled to engage with people outside of the region let alone elsewhere in Europe. The Foundation were aware of this and put in extra effort (as described above) to ensure this traditional inward-looking culture was tackled and also ensure that a strong European dimension existed in the programme. There were a few examples of where local people took offense to artists from outside of Friesland taking forward high-profile projects. This included the high cost (estimated to be around €4m¹¹⁶) for the Royal de Luxe giants (from France) but particularly in relation to the 11 Fountains projects (international artists). For the latter project, there was a relatively large amount of local people against this project with an alternative 'opposition' fountain built (partly funded by ECoC budget)¹¹⁷.

3.3.3 City and citizens dimension

By far the most unique and key principle of the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was linked to the city and citizens dimension. Engaging with and encouraging local people to develop and implement projects for the cultural programme was a key defining aspect of the ECoC and something that those in the LF2018 Foundation were totally committed to delivering.

¹¹⁶ Although a proportion of this went to local and regional suppliers of logistics, technical support and safety-measures.

¹¹⁷ Details of this opposition fountain are found here.

Critically, those responsible for overseeing the ECoC in the Foundation saw the citizens of Leeuwarden-Friesland as the producers of the ECoC rather than simply the consumers of it (i.e. were part of the ECoC's delivery and not just a passive audience).

As mentioned earlier, over 700 out of the 800 projects (or nearly 90%) of the cultural programme came from the *mienskip* approach where the communities came together to design, plan, often fund and deliver various cultural projects. Three dedicated staff in the LF2018 Foundation were in place to help develop the 'open programme', which is the aspect of the programme that included projects coming from this bottom-up dimension. Although other ECoC have also included a community aspect, the scale and importance of the city and citizens dimension in the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was much more significant than seen before.

The *mienskip* approach started early on in the ECoC planning. Firstly, even before the ECoC status was secured, staff involved with the bid but also students, volunteers and cultural staff in the wider bid team went around Friesland in an 'old bus' to collect, share and listen to people about what they wanted out of an ECoC and what they thought about the areas in which they lived. The bus visited schools, old people's homes, community centres, local business parks and parked itself in the centre of various community events to make it as accessible as possible. Once the ECoC status was secured, the Foundation interviewed 2,000 people from across Friesland with a series of structured but generally open questions about what they wanted to see from their ECoC, the themes they felt were important and how they wanted to get involved. Secondly, at the end of 2013, four years before the ECoC year, the decision was made to 'open the door' to the community by setting up a small office in the centre of Leeuwarden (in the Foundation building) to allow local people to come in and talk about their ideas and learn more about the evolving programme. Although this fledgling information office had less to tell people in terms of the details of the programme (i.e. projects, funding and timescales) it acted as the conduit through which local people could come and share their early ideas for projects. It also stood as a key way for local people to start feeling that they were part of the ECoC rather than seeing the programme being developed "behind closed doors".

Those people who visited the information office were supported through the open programme. As further highlighted in section 0 below, the support people received was both meaningful and multi-faceted. This support included attendance at a minimum of three 'meadow' sessions (which linked people with ideas together as well with as with professionals), access to an online toolkit as well as guidance on financial support. As well as the support received by local people with cultural ideas being relatively structured, those working in the information centre also gave more informal advice 'over a cup of coffee' on numerous occasions from 2013 onwards.

Having a cultural programme which had a large number of projects run by citizens did have its downsides, particularly around the quality levels of the culture on offer and the coordination of such a large and decentralised programme involving a very large number of people producing cultural activity. Stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation noted that as most projects found in the open programme were run by amateurs or simply those with an interest in culture, the quality of the actual cultural output was sometimes mixed. Those projects found in the main programme were thought to generally provide the

real high-quality aspects of the overall cultural programme in Leeuwarden-Friesland as they were mainly run by professionals, who were paid and who had often delivered similar cultural projects for many years. This was not to say that the open programme provided a poor cultural output, but rather that the quality should be judged in the perspective of the context of community arts while the main programme should be judged in the context of contemporary international art.

There was also a challenge identified by stakeholders around trying to coordinate a cultural programme where the citizens of the city were developing and running a large part of the programme outside of the direct control of the Foundation's Programme Managers. Although the Foundation played an important role in terms of bringing the projects together into one single and cohesive ECoC programme, the coordination challenges included ensuring that the website contained all of the details needed on each project, ensuring that project leads were kept in touch about any requirements (e.g. health and safety, ticket pricing etc) and simply ensuring the Foundation staff were aware of the projects taking place so they could promote them within their networks.

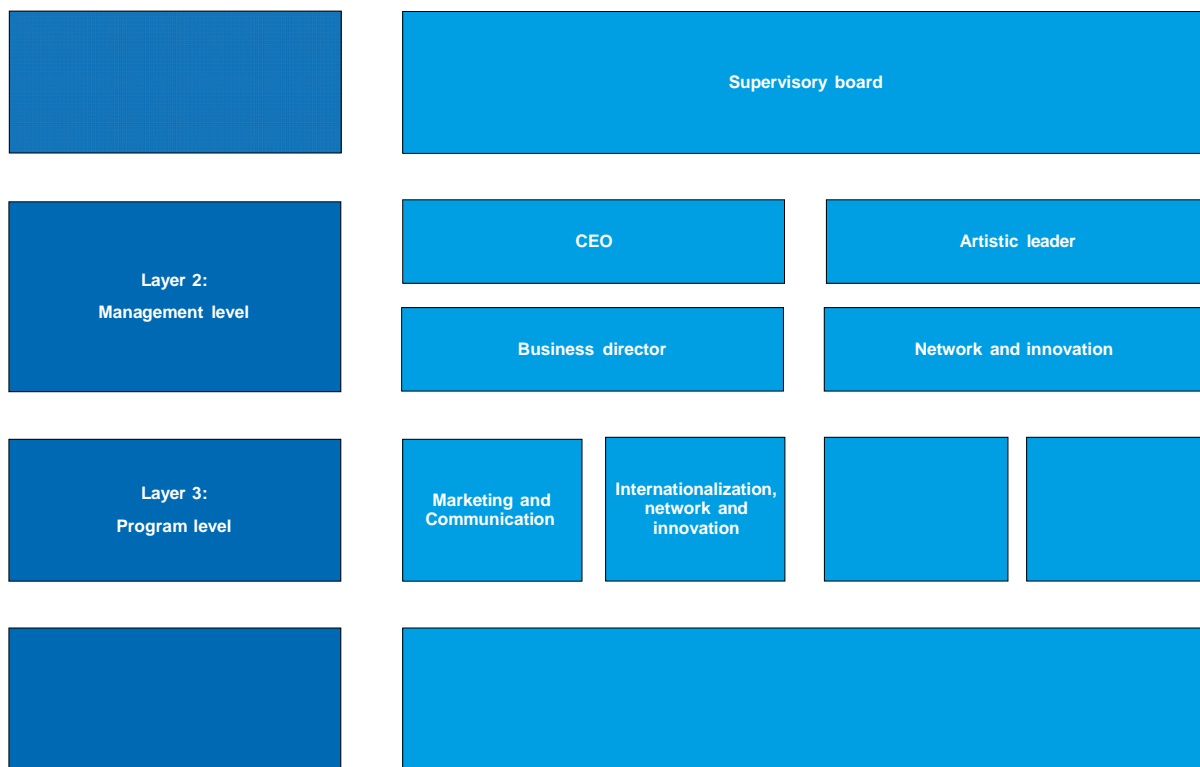
It was interesting to note that many stakeholders felt that although quality was important, it was actually the taking part and participation in the cultural programme that was deemed to be as important as a key outcome of the open programme. As one stakeholder stated, "if Leeuwarden-Friesland purely wanted to put on the highest quality programme possible, then it would have missed [the point] of the mienskip principles and would have simply funded the usual [cultural] suspects". Thus, the participation of the city and region – and their inhabitants – in the ECoC was as important as actually entertaining them with a set of high-quality cultural projects.

3.4 Governance and funding

3.4.1 Governance

The diagram below provides an outline of the governance structure linked to the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC. As with other ECoC the LF2018 Foundation was an independent body set up to specifically develop and deliver the programme, which was closed after the ECoC year had finished. It consisted of around 60 staff members linked to a range of roles including marketing and communication, internationalisation, theme producers as well as finance. The Foundation's Supervisory Board was independent of the region and city authorities and consisted of five members selected from different perspectives such as knowledge areas (artistic, legal, governance). The representatives of the region and city were connected through a regular formal meeting with the CEO and managing director of the LF2018.

Figure 3-1 Governance structure of the LF2018 Foundation



A key strength of the delivery arrangements of the ECoC identified by external stakeholders and projects was the LF2018 Foundation. Firstly, the team spent a significant amount of time engaging with and speaking to external stakeholders. This was not simply in relation to the cultural players and public sector organisations found in the region but also in terms of local people and local communities. The Foundation staff made a point of having an open door policy where local people could literally walk on off the streets and speak to Foundation staff members about a range of issues including sharing project ideas, putting forward concerns, asking questions, understanding how to volunteer and also simply seeing what cultural projects are on the programme. The Foundation staff also went out of their way to go into communities to speak to local people about their ideas and thoughts and what issues the ECoC should aim to address. Secondly the Foundation were praised for their facilitation and supportive role to projects. The theme producers were tasked with helping rather than leading projects and guiding them as much as needed in order to allow local producers the opportunity to steer and shape projects.

3.4.2 Funding

The original budget foreseen at the bid-book stage by the Leeuwarden Friesland 2018 for the delivery of the ECoC was estimated at €74 million, with the municipality of Leeuwarden, the other municipalities in the region and the province of Friesland contributing respectively €5.95 million, €11 million and €20 million. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Interior Affairs pledged to contribute €7.5 million. Expected income from private sponsors was estimated comparatively high, at €16 million or 22% of the total budget.

By the end of 2018 the actual budget had increased to €104.6 million meaning spend on the ECoC increased by €30.3 million compared to the bid-book. The contribution from the

public sector was €1.5 million higher than expected, mainly due to an increase in funds from both the municipality of Leeuwarden and the province. Regional contributions were lower than foreseen at the bid-book stages. It is worth noting that the total spend on the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC is likely to be much higher because activities from the mienskip open programme were not included in the finances presented by the Foundation.

The table below provides the expenditure at the bid-book stage compared to the actual figures at the end of 2018.

Table 3-1 Comparison of proposed to actual expenditure Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018

Bid-book versus realisation	€			
	Bid-book	Actual	Difference	Percentage Difference
Total expenditure in the budget	74.3m	104.6m	+30.3m	41%
Total income in the budget				
From the public sector	52.3m	53.8m	+1.5m	3%
From the private sector	22.0m	50.8m	+28.8m	131%
Total	74.3m	104.6m	+30.3m	41%

Source: LF2018 Foundation

The table below provides the income from the public sector comparing actual and planned figures.

Table 3-2 Comparison of proposed to actual income Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018

Bid-book versus realisation	€			
	Bid-book	Actual	Difference	Percentage Difference
Income from the public sector				
National Government	7.5m	6.4m	-1.1m	-15%
City	6.0m	8.3m	+ 2.3m	39%
Region	20.8m	21.7m	+ 0.9m	5%
EU	2.5m	5.8m	+ 3.3m	131%
Transnational/other cities in the region	11.6m	6.5m	-5.1m	-44%

Indirect funding (in-kind)	4.0m	5.1m	+ 1.1m	27%
Total	52.3m	53.8m	+ 1.5m	3%

Source: LF2018 Foundation

The table below provides the operating expenditure comparing actual and planned figures.

Table 3-3 Comparison of proposed to actual operating expenditure Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018

Bid-book versus realisation	€			
Operating Expenditure	Bid-book	Actual	Difference	Percentage Difference
Programme expenditure	53.6m	84.7m	+ 31.1m	58%
Promotion and marketing	11.2m	12.2m	+ 1.0m	9%
Wages, overhead, administration	7.0m	7.5m	+ 0.5m	7%
Other reserve	2.5m	0.1m	+ 2.4m	-96%
Total	74.3m	104.6m	+ 30.2m	41%

Source: LF2018 Foundation

In terms of income, ticket sales in particular raised significantly more than was foreseen at the bid-book stage. Ticket sales were targeted to raise €4 million in the bid-book whilst in reality the actual figure was five times higher than this at €20 million. This was explained by a strong start to the cultural programme, which created demand for tickets that continued throughout the year, a number of early 'sell outs' that again created the perception among audiences that they needed to book tickets early and finally the mienskip programme that encouraged people to attend cultural activities as a consequence of their direct involvement in the programme or because they wanted to support their friends, family or neighbours.

Another positive aspect linked to the funding of the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was around the existence of the Ticket Risk Fund initiated by the province and supported by the municipality of Leeuwarden and a national private fund (FPK). The €1 million fund was available to any ECoC project with ticket sales in the main programme to guarantee them an income to cover their costs if ticket sales were below what was expected. This meant the financial risk associated with developing a project were greatly reduced as there was a reassurance that costs would be recouped if needed. A range of projects applied for the Ticket Risk Fund support, but by the end of 2018 none of these projects had needed to

access it (i.e. tickets sales always covered project costs). This fund is still in existence in 2019 and is one of the legacies of the ECoC programme.

The number of sponsors involved in the programme and the amount of funding they contributed was also comparatively high¹¹⁸. A total of €20 million was contributed by the private sector. More details on how the Foundation secured this level of sponsorship will be explained at the final reporting stages¹¹⁹.

It is interesting to note that a financial issue which often came up in the development and implementation of the ECoC programme was around the high cost of the Royal de Luxe (Giants) project. The total cost of this single project (including security costs and costs associated with preparing the city for the giants) was estimated to be around €4 million. Even for an ECoC with a budget of over €100 million, €4 million spent on a single project that lasted just three days was questioned by some stakeholders. This questioning partly came from the local community and local press who noted that a large sum of money going to a company from outside of the Netherlands (the Royal de Luxe is French) went against the mienskip principle of supporting local and a bottom-up culture. However, there was perhaps more supporters than non-supporters on the large amount spent on this single project. Firstly, the giants were a truly international and very high-profile project that drew in audiences from abroad as well as national and international media coverage. The audience figures linked to the project showed that the Royal de Luxe was the third most attended project of the year, with 430,000 people visiting the city over just three days (the other projects with larger audiences generally lasted more than six months). Most of the costs (around 50%) was spent in Friesland and was therefore injected into the Friesland economy. Finally, research undertaken by the Foundation showed that the average expenditure by each visitor coming to see the giants was €30 meaning the impact on the local economy was around €5.5 million, significantly more than the cost of the project.

3.4.3 Marketing and communication

The total cost on promotion and marketing for the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was €12.2 million, which was around €1 million more (9%) than foreseen in the bid-book. Around 25 people worked on marketing and communication activity linked to the ECoC who came from the Foundation, the Regional Office for Tourism and staff of the City marketing department, meaning their work was fully integrated. The team were also further integrated through working with the Dutch Tourism Board (NBTC), the Dutch embassies in the target countries of Belgium, Germany and United-Kingdom as well as the with Dutch Culture, the Dutch network and knowledge organisation for international cultural cooperation funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The marketing and the communication teams were responsible for building a brand to attract visitors, sponsors and external relationships. The teams were also responsible for spreading the ECoC cultural programme across a range of channels to increase participation, attendance and exposure at local, regional and international levels.

¹¹⁸ A full list of sponsors can be found at <https://www.friesland.nl/en/european-capital-of-culture/partners-and-sponsors/sponsors>

¹¹⁹ Interviews with staff tasked with securing private sector sponsorship is outstanding.

As set out in the section on legacy, around €0.5 million is being spent on marketing linked to international tourism promotion in 2019.

The Foundation developed a media partner with NDC Media Group, which publishes three newspapers in the north of the Netherlands and 34 weekly papers. This partnership ensured high numbers of people were aware of the content of the cultural programme with around 350,000 people a week being in touch with the work of the ECoC who could easily see what the ECoC was offering on a weekly basis. This large-scale media coverage started early on in the planning of the ECoC. For example, in January 2015 the Foundation with the media partner distributed 350,000 newspapers door to door that shared the main goals, priorities and early cultural programme with all householders in the region. A further media partnership with the Dutch Public Broadcasting company (NPO) also helped secure on-going media coverage across national TV and radio.

One overarching goal of the marketing and communication activity of the ECoC was around changing the image of Friesland in the media from a place associated with a rural, peripheral and agriculture scene to one associated with culture and innovation. Foundation staff members analysed the proportion of articles and reports in the media in 2014 that gave a traditional (often rural) image of Friesland and found that 85% portrayed the area in this way (with only 15% giving a cultural reference). By 2018, 70% of articles about Friesland in the media covered the cultural angle while only 30% portrayed it in a more traditional way. Most of the 2018 articles directly related to the ECoC itself, whether in terms of cultural projects, programme content or reviews of projects that had recently taken place.

In addition to the above, the ECoC was also helpful in terms of increasing the area's association with culture in social media. The term 'LF2018' and/or 'European Capital of Culture' was only mentioned 800 times in social media (e.g. tweets) in 2014 whilst by 2018 this figure had risen to 85,000. LF2018 communication staff also looked at the sentiment of social media messages that mentioned either Leeuwarden, Friesland or the European Capital of Culture. The proportion of negative messages in social media about these three subjects dropped from 8% to 5% from 2014-2018, but the proportion of positive messages linked to the area over the same period also decreased from 58% to 36%. Though there was no analysis available as to why positive content dropped in the years running up to and during the ECoC year, communication staff recognised it may be because there was more 'content' for social media users to comment on and that a proportion of the 800 projects found in the programme were always going to have more negative reviews.

The nature of the open programme, with its large (over 700 projects) and disperse set of activities, was seen to make the marketing and communication of the ECoC programme more of a challenge compared to a cultural programme that would have been centralised with a smaller number of projects. For example, to keep in regular contact with all of the 700+ projects around issues such as start times, descriptions and ticket costs (all aspects felt necessary to effectively market their activities) was seen as being too difficult. This meant that a proportion of the projects (estimated by some stakeholders to be around half of the open programme) did not receive any marketing or promotion through the central marketing activity of the Foundation and marketing activity was generally focussed on the larger projects found in the main programme. For some stakeholders the focus on larger

projects made sense simply because these projects were where the largest returns (in terms of visitor numbers and levels of interest in the cultural programme) were likely to be. For other stakeholders linked more to the open programme then there was a feeling that more could have been done to promote these smaller, local and unique projects to a wider audience. This was not to say that these smaller projects were poorly attended but rather that they were generally not enjoyed by the large number of visitors coming into the Friesland region during 2018. One stakeholder highlighted that some visitors may well be attracted to extremely local projects and stated that cities and regions are now promoting the 'live like a local' and 'hidden' agendas much more. For instance, eating in local neighbourhoods rather than city centres, discovering 'hidden' neighbourhoods rather than simply visiting the main usual attractions and also a rise in authentic tourism could have all been considered more, particularly because the cultural programme lent itself to promoting this approach more.

In order to collect and assist projects found in the open programme to market themselves the Foundation allowed project leads to directly upload their project details onto the LF2018 website. Although this allowed the projects direct access to the central marketing vehicle of the ECoC, it did lead to a mix of results. Some project leads were more able than others to promote and market their projects recognising that this task required a certain amount of skill to describe, in an inspiring way, what their project was about and the main details the audience needed to know. The consistency, structure, quality and accuracy of the marketing activity of the open programme was therefore questioned by some, particularly compared to the marketing support which projects found in the main programme enjoyed, many of which were run by professionals who were much more able to market their activities compared to their counterparts leading open programme projects.

Stakeholders highlighted that the amount of press coverage from the national press was perhaps less than they had anticipated and ideally wanted during the ECoC year. The amount of local and international press was generally strong but the extent to which national journalists were interested and covered the programme and individual projects was often seen as being disappointed by those in the Foundation who were responsible for media relations.

The LF2018 website¹²⁰ was generally praised by stakeholders in terms of the level of detail found on the site, the recent and up-to-date information on events and activities as well as its overall usability. The site also had a number of innovative technologies included such as an associated YouTube channel¹²¹ and app¹²². The app in particular had information about events and projects, accommodation advice, restaurants and bars as well as the latest local news and weather. Users of the app could also select their favourite events and locations and share these with friends and family. The facebook campaign was also highly successful with the highest number of members ('likes') of recent ECoC programmes.

¹²⁰ <https://www.friesland.nl/en/european-capital-of-culture>

¹²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyHLeibSaBMwp5VWhJFzIAg>

¹²² <https://www.friesland.nl/en/european-capital-of-culture/lf2018-app>

3.4.4 Local Research

A key source of quantitative evidence collected by the ECoC was the monitoring information from 32 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which the delivery agency collected on an ongoing basis, culminating in a final report in 2019.¹²³ These 32 KPIs relate to measurements linked to five key themes:

- Cultural access and participation,
- Economy and tourism,
- Cultural vibrancy and sustainability,
- Image and perception,
- Governance and delivery process.

Although these KPIs are a useful insight into how the region has changed, it is worth noting that there are limitations with these data:

- Some of the indicators were beyond the influence of the ECoC and relate to issues that the ECoC cannot hope to truly change. For instance, there was a KPI related to encouraging 7,500 additional jobs in the water sector or 60% of students coming back to the area who have studies elsewhere. The ECoC can of course indirectly help achieve this but other wider factors will be the main drivers of change for these types of indicators.
- Some of the indicators (around a third) did not have a quantitative element attached to them, either in terms of the main indicator or a target. For example, indicators related to new academic opportunities and more bachelor, master and PhD students or encouraging coherence between existing cultural institutions did not have any quantitative element.

Since 2015 the Leeuwarden ECoC has undertaken an annual snapshot of the city in the form of an 'annual baseline assessment'. This assessment (published in an Annual Report online) provides an explanation of how the city and its surrounding area has changed over time using mostly quantitative information (including the indicators described above). The plan is to deliver an annual report until at least 2020, meaning this data source looks at the city before, during and after the 2018 ECoC year.

The Foundation also commissioned an economic impact assessment of the ECoC. A major economic impact study undertaken by BBO estimated that extra expenditure in the region taking into consideration spend by extra visitors, cultural organisations and the Foundation themselves equated to €4,570 million. This included an extra €74-125 million on overnight stays, an extra €62 million of extra expenditure from the cultural sector, extra spending of €20-25 million from other sectors because of the ECoC (e.g. hospitality sector), extra expenditure of €40-50 million from additional consumption in households (e.g. food, clothing) and an extra €20 million on capital expenditure across the region.

¹²³ LF2018 Foundation (2019), *Final Assessment LF2018 Research Results*

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Cultural impacts

The main cultural impacts of the ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland were focussed on making the cultural offer more diverse and more international as well as expanding the characteristics of those who generally produced and delivered cultural activity.

As the cultural programme contained a large number of projects (with nearly 800 activities delivered over 12 months), the ECoC was seen to have significantly diversified the cultural offer in the city and region. This was not just in terms of genre, but also in relation to the themes which cultural projects covered. During 2018, the ECoC helped expand the cultural offer to cover more social issues (including ecology, which was rarely a subject seen in local culture) delivered in more diverse locations (from potato barns to old people homes) and by performers who were outside of the professional cultural sector. A widening of the offer led many stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation to point to a cultural impact around broadening the appeal of culture to a wider set of people and 'not just those interested in going to galleries, concert halls and museums' as one stakeholder stated.

The impact of the ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland on culture was greatest in terms of the extra amount and additional locations of cultural activity taking place in the region compared to non-ECoC years. Although the region of Friesland and the city of Leeuwarden had their fair share of cultural activity prior to 2018, stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation stated that this was around 80% higher in the ECoC year than in a non-ECoC year, as the cultural programme overall had around 800 separate projects, which is higher than other ECoC (cultural programmes attached to previous ECoC generally have between 200-500 projects found in their programme). It was also observed by stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation that prior to 2018 the cultural activity was often generally confined to the main cultural venues found in the region, especially in its capital city. A new range of locations became the venues for this increased cultural activity, including churches, schools, cafes and even streets for various pop-up performances. For example, an island off the coast of Friesland called Wadden was used for a variety of performances and art exhibitions that were enhanced because of the natural and wild backdrop of this location. Wadden can only be reached by boat and is also a UNESCO World Heritage site, meaning it is protected by a number of restrictions. Despite the logistical challenges, the island became the venue for a number of cultural projects that stakeholders felt would never have taken place without the impetus of the ECoC. The number of ECoC projects that took place in the natural environment was also identified as being relatively unique by stakeholders, with a range of projects taking places in beaches, forests, waterways and fields. Part of the thinking behind this was to ensure that the audiences connected more with the natural environment (in line with the programme's five thematic lines) and ensure that visitors to the region saw more than just Leeuwarden or the other ten cities. Again, having cultural venues within the rural locations was another relatively unique aspect of the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC.

Another key cultural impact was around how the ECoC stimulated a new wave of amateur performers in the region, who wanted to directly produce rather than just consume culture. Professional artists, performers and technical staff still played a key part in the cultural programme but a key 'impact' of the ECoC was its ability to awaken and stimulate a whole

new type of people to consider performing culture as a key part of their life. Over 60,000 local people actually took part as performers or volunteers in the ECoC and the types of people undertaking these projects included teachers, farmers, office workers, restaurant owners, people out of work and schoolchildren rather than simply paid cultural professions¹²⁴. As one stakeholder stated, the ECoC year had 'given people a new hobby, a new recreational activity, a new type of exercise that simply wasn't part of their mind-set prior to 2018'. As stated earlier, this point made most stakeholders recognise the cultural impact the ECoC had on encouraging local people to become producers rather than just consumers of culture and moved the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC beyond a one-off project that finished at the end of 2018.

A good example of an ECoC project encouraging a new wave of amateurs to directly participate and perform in a cultural project was the "Under the Tower" project. This project took place at the Grote Kerk (the Big Church), which is located in the medieval centre of Leeuwarden. At this site, 32 local stories that fell under the Under the Tower project were brought to life over a series of events. These stories often focussed on local Friesland issues and helped share a range of messages about the region and its people and took the form of plays, musical performances, art and exhibitions. Although some of these performances were undertaken by well-known artists and performers, many were led by local people. Those leading the locally performed events were often supported by both LF2018 staff (who provided them with practical support on project set up, marketing, promotion and technical skills e.g. lighting and sound) and professional cultural artists who helped them develop their performances. Each of the 32 'stories' saw audiences of around 8,000 people per weekend with the first weekend seeing over 70,000 attendees.

As well as the ECoC having an impact on smaller cultural operators found in the open programme, the year also greatly benefitted larger cultural players found in the region. Despite Leeuwarden, the biggest city in the region, having some strongly established cultural organisations, many of these players had not previously put on significantly large and international projects at the scale found in 2018. As an example, the Fries Museum delivered three large exhibitions in 2017 and 2018 covering Escher, Mata Hari and Alma-Tadema, which together saw over half a million visitors. The Groningen Museum in Groningen also put on new art exhibitions that saw 215,000 visitors coming through the doors over 2018 (which was a 50% increase on the previous year). Although both museums had well established and professional teams who were well used to delivering large exhibitions, the scale and type of exhibitions delivered during 2018 were seen to stretch their capabilities in a positive way and help their staff develop an array of new skills that have been put to good use post 2018. The Escher exhibition found in the Fries Museum was a good example, where museum staff became used to handling and presenting priceless art, became experienced with building complex interactive exhibitions (part of the exhibition mirrored Escher art with a range of optical illusions on show), dealing with security and complex insurance issues. Even dealing with queue management was seen to have benefitted the museum. Having experience of running a number of 'block buster' and

¹²⁴ Figures supplied by the independent Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation of the province of Friesland and the municipality of Leeuwarden.

cutting-edge projects even for the largest cultural players in the region was therefore seen as a key impact of the ECoC.

As stated in the European dimension section of this chapter, a further cultural impact identified was around expanding the cultural offer towards a more international focus. Prior to 2018, the cultural offer was seen to be relatively inward looking, using local artists on local and often smaller-scale projects. The ECoC through all of the activities explained in the European dimension section encourage cultural players to reach outside of the local area for partners and themes that were much more internationally themed. This resulted in 1,600 new international collaborations over 2018 that simply did not exist prior to the ECoC year.

Another cultural impact of the ECoC year was around increasing the amount of funding and income coming to cultural organisations over 2018 compared to previous years. The economic impact study of the ECoC, which published its findings in February 2019, looked at the 'extra' income that flowed into the region's cultural organisations that would not have disposed of without the existence of the ECoC¹²⁵. It estimated that the cultural sector benefitted from an additional €62-65 million funding during 2018. This included €9 million from National Government, €3.25 million extra contribution the regional Government made because of the existence of the ECoC and the extra €50 million coming from sponsorship and ticket sales that would again not have flowed into the cultural sector without the existence of ECoC status. This additional income was obviously spent on delivering the 800 ECoC projects that made up the cultural programme but was also used to generally strengthen the sector in 2018 with better resources, equipment and skills. For example, investments made to put on the Mata Hari and Alma-Tadema exhibitions at the Fries Museum ensured this cultural facility had new lighting, staging and sound equipment that is still in use post-2018.

Another cultural impact of the ECoC was around stimulating cultural operators to work together more and cooperate with one another in a way that had not been seen before. Stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation often stated that the cultural scene in the Friesland region was fragmented prior to 2018 with little joint working and collaboration across organisations and cultural sectors. A survey of ECoC projects by the Foundation showed that 85% of cultural operators felt that the ECoC had ensured stronger collaboration of their project across the sector whilst only 10% of organisations had felt it had made no difference to levels of collaboration. During the application process, Foundation staff tried to match and put projects together and attempted when possible to link smaller projects found in the open programme with larger projects found in the main programme. The Fries Museum was a good example of this increased collaboration as although the museum already undertook a significant amount of joint working prior to the ECoC year, it greatly increased the amount of joint working it did with the local schools, local universities and local students during the ECoC-year.

A less-evidenced impact of the ECoC but nevertheless one that many stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation highlighted as being important was the effect the ECoC had on raising awareness of various social and environmental issues through cultural

¹²⁵ *LF2018 Economic Impact 2018 – Concept Paper (27 February 2019) published by BBO.*

means. Firstly, the 'subjects' of some ECoC projects were linked to issues including biodiversity, poverty and water management and were as much about educating people as it was about entertaining them. Secondly, the location of some cultural projects took place in natural environments to further raise awareness of particular environmental issues. Finally, local groups who traditionally campaigned for certain social or environmental issues were encouraged to take up an opportunity to promote their cause through delivering a cultural project. Although the impacts and outcomes of this work in terms of raising awareness takes time to show itself, stakeholders often mentioned this awareness raising during their interviews.

3.5.2 Access and participation

Audience figures from the local research showed that 5.4 million people attended ECoC projects up to and including 2018, a figure which increased by 5% each year from 2015 onwards. 51% of the audiences were from people living in Friesland with a further 42% coming from the rest of the Netherlands and the remainder coming from abroad. For some larger events, significant parts of the local population participated in ECoC activities with 71% of all 18-84 years olds attending the Royal de Luxe Giants and 32% of this age group attended the Escher¹²⁶ exhibition. The local research also showed that 30% of people attending ECoC projects had little affinity to culture meaning a broader range of participation was achieved over the ECoC year.

In terms of participation, the local evaluation showed that the level of participation in the ECoC programme affected the level of satisfaction that people had in the overall ECoC. People who were directly involved as a volunteer or who delivered a project rated their level of satisfaction in the overall ECoC as 7.4 (where 10 is completely satisfied and 0 is completely unsatisfied). Those not directly involved rated their satisfaction levels much lower at 5.7.

Perhaps equally impressive is that around 10% of the total population of the entire region (around 62,000 people) actually participated in ECoC activities either in terms of delivering an ECoC project or being a volunteer (i.e. was a producer and not just a consumer). A study published by the Friesland Cultural Planning Bureau showed that 68% of the total population of Friesland felt involved in the ECoC and that access levels into the programme were high. The 'mass participation' that the bid-book referred to in relation to the open mienskip method was therefore seen to be a success with many stakeholders genuinely seeing the ECoC as creating a movement of people towards not just culture but also the social issues the cultural year was often trying to highlight.

Participation numbers at the project level also showed impressive increases in participation in culture during 2018. The Fries Museum in Leeuwarden attracted more visitors than ever before in the ECoC year. 350,000 people visited the museum, almost twice as many as the previous record from 2016 (175,977). The high number of visitors was mainly due to the blockbuster Escher's Journey. Due to the unprecedented popularity of the exhibition, the museum was sold out almost daily between 28 April and 28 October 2018. The Walking

¹²⁶ <https://www.friesmuseum.nl/en/see-and-do/exhibitions/eschers-journey/>

Tours of Leeuwarden¹²⁷ also showed large increases in participation over 2018. In 2018, 5,100 people participated in these tours whilst in 2018 this figure grew to 28,143 people (over 5 times more).

According to the local evaluation, the number of people in Friesland who had never participated in culture (theatre, film, festivals and museums) dropped from 37% in 2016 to 33% in 2018 meaning participation in the ECoC by people who were new to culture was also proven to be successful. The Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC also partly targeted specific groups, particularly in relation to those who did not usually have an affinity to culture and included a specific target indicator linked to increasing participation rates of those who normally did not consume culture including those on low income, those with special needs and those with low educational attainment. Local research showed that there was a 50% increase in participation in culture over 2018 by these groups, which was again put down to the broad ECoC programme.

According to stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation, the high participation rates of the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC were seen to be encouraged by five key factors:

- The theme of the cultural programme (social issues) was seen to be more engaging than a cultural programme that may well be 'entertaining' but did not have any reference or meaning to 'real life' issues or challenges. People were felt to have more affinity with, for example, a theatre production on local homelessness than attending a production linked to Shakespeare that had no link to their own lives, personal experiences or local area.
- People were more likely to attend cultural events that involved either themselves, their families, their neighbours or friends as performers. Because a large number (10%) of the population were actually taking part in the ECoC programme as performers, they were more likely to be supportive of each other and therefore attend various activities.
- Linked to the above, people were thought to be more likely to attend other and different ECoC events if they had themselves been part of the ECoC programme as a performer or volunteer. For example, if a community had been involved in developing a village art project, they were more likely to attend projects in nearby villages because it was part of the same wider programme.
- The number and location of events meant that there were very few barriers stopping people accessing events near to their homes or places of work. Projects took place on village greens, in people's houses, in old-people homes, in fields and in barns, meaning projects were scattered across the region rather than being found in a small number of key cultural facilities. The fact that projects were spread over a wide geography and that there was a high number of them meant that there was always ECoC activities taking place nearby. People did not always have to travel into the city centre nor attend typical locations (e.g. theatres and galleries) to see large parts of the cultural programme.
- A final driver of high levels of participation in the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was that the cultural programme had a good strong start. The first weekend of the ECoC had particularly good reviews from local and national press, as well as a quite positive coverage by one of the main TV channels, and tickets

¹²⁷ <https://www.aguidetoleeuwarden.nl/en/tours/>

for the first few days sold out quickly. This created a strong early momentum and generated a feeling that people had to book tickets early to avoid disappointment.

Around 7% of the participation came from foreign visitors¹²⁸. This was mainly for projects run under the main programme, which generally contained the larger projects with higher budgets. It was felt difficult to encourage a foreign visitor to attend a smaller open programme project as the profile and status of these projects were much smaller. Although open programme projects did appear on the LF2018 website, the way the search facility worked meant that these activities were posted further down the list of the 'what's on' facility which is the main source of information that foreign visitors used (local people also had local press, word of mouth and local information points). The lower visibility of open programme projects was therefore also a key reason why participation by foreign visitors was thought to be limited in this part of the overall cultural programme.

In conclusion, the level of participation in the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was extremely high mainly because of the existence of the open programme but also the meaningful approach to engagement the Foundation stimulated. This engagement was not contained to a small 'engagement team' in the Foundation staff, nor was it a focus on one or two projects. Instead, engagement was at the centre of the ECoC's approach and ran through the work of every staff member and every project found in the cultural programme.

3.5.3 Cultural capacity

Another key impact of the mienskip approach adopted by the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was linked to the cultural capacity it helped build within the local population. Capacity was not just built in terms of strengthening the skills and abilities of cultural organisations already established in the area but also in relation to the 'new' cultural players who were involved in the open programme. Helping build the capacity of grass roots organisations or individuals who often possessed very little cultural skills prior to 2018 was particularly driven by the 1.28 million euros that was spent on project support in the open programme. Anyone interested in developing a cultural project or who had an initial idea was encouraged to attend a series of "meadow sessions". These sessions were aimed at putting people in touch with their peers (who also had an idea for a project) as well as the Theme Producers in the Foundation and often other professionals who were encouraged to attend the sessions in order to provide comment and help. In total around 500 people attended the sessions and it was estimated by Foundation staff that around 80 projects were conceived through the sessions. The first meadow session helped those with often vague ideas to test and debate their initial thoughts, the second session was often about developing the idea further and linking up with people who could support in its implementation whilst the third session was about developing detailed implementation plans and budgets. Although these sessions also put people in touch with possible funding streams, the sessions were about encouraging peer support rather than 'telling' people

¹²⁸ Key Performance indicators collected by the independent Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation of the province of Friesland and the municipality of Leeuwarden.

what do to from the top down. The meadow sessions were delivered over 2018 with the last one taking place in June 2018.

Cultural capacity was also built in two further ways. Firstly, the LF2018 Foundation developed an online toolkit (called *stipe*) specifically to help people develop projects. The toolkit provided a step by step guide on issues including project design, funding availability, partner development, health and safety, marketing, securing permits (e.g. for road closures), finding venues and maximising ticket sales. Secondly, the Foundation organised six weekly meetings with all projects to bring them together in order to share news, requirements (e.g. funding rules) but also to share knowledge, good practice and advice. These six weekly meetings were very well received by projects who praised them for creating a community of mutual support and instilling a sense of a single programme rather than a dispersed set of individual projects.

The work of the Theme Producers in the LF2018 Foundation were also seen as an important part of the capacity building element of the overall ECoC. As stated previously, only 4 projects were actually led by Foundation staff with the remainder being managed by external players. This meant the role of the Theme Producers was one of support, guidance and practical advice and their work was again very well received by project owners who appreciated their hands-on but supportive (rather than directive) support. The Theme Producers were sometimes heavily involved in the projects' implementation but were also used on a 'call-off' basis to help projects in an ad-hoc way. Project leads interviewed in the European evaluation often saw the Directors as a central part of the team who brought in valuable expertise as required.

According to those stakeholders who took part in the European evaluation, the Theme Producers also helped more established cultural organisations in the Leeuwarden-Friesland to develop their skills and capacity. Although some projects were run by organisations with many years of experience (e.g. the Fries Museum) the ECoC also helped them push themselves out of their comfort zones to add value to the skills they already possessed pre-2018. In fact, the Theme Producers often only agreed ECoC funding when these more established cultural players could prove that they were 'thinking outside of the box' and the Directors were constantly encouraging them to do something different to what they already were doing. This 'difference' may have been in terms of working with new partners, trying out new genres, delivering work to a much bigger audience or performing in new locations in order to develop a project that pushed their capabilities further than ever seen before. For example, the Potatoes Go Wild project had been running in Friesland for several years prior to 2018. Working with the ECoC Foundation, the managers of this existing project stated that the ECoC had increased the amount of content three-fold over 2018 by:

- Increasing the marketing materials and communication activities and strengthening the marketing skills of the project managers (through the meadow sessions). This meant that the project had a higher than normal presence on the web and the level of social media attached to the project was much stronger than was previously the case. The reach of the promotional activity was also far greater as it was promoted in the ECoC newspaper that was delivered to all households in the region;

- Increasing the amount of international content to this project. Previous years had seen much less cooperation with international artists compared to 2018 with a particular focus on joint working with Valletta. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this joint working included several joint projects across 2017 and 2018;
- Diversifying the content and volume of work attached to this existing project with, according to estimation, three times more activities and 10 times more audiences than in previous years. The project received additional funding as a consequence of the ECoC, which meant more activities in more locations took place partly staffed by the 4,000 volunteers the project utilised over 2018.

Another key way in which the ECoC greatly increased capacity in the Leeuwarden-Friesland area was linked to the increase of volunteers available to cultural operators. Many projects (both large projects but also small projects found in the open programme) stated that they greatly benefitted from a large increase in staff numbers from the volunteers who came forward over 2017 and 2018. The fact that these extra staff numbers were free also greatly helped the smooth delivery of the large number of cultural projects happening over 2018 (recognising that most cultural operators found in the region generally had small staff resources). Research from the Foundation showed that there were approximately 1,500 'core' volunteers who volunteered on a regular basis throughout the ECoC year on a range of different projects across the region. These volunteers received various pieces of training including crowd control, marketing and promotions as well as health and safety with the majority of this training being delivered by the projects themselves rather than Foundation staff. In total, 16,159 people registered as volunteers, which is around 2% of Friesland's overall population. However, the overall number of volunteers was likely to be much higher than the number of people actually registered because project monitoring forms (which requested each project to count the volunteers they used) suggested larger volunteer figures. Monitoring figures from the "Under the Tower" project alone showed it used 14,595 volunteers over the ECoC year on a variety of roles, including promotion, sign-posting and setting up and taking down various stages that were used throughout the region at a number of different venues. One of the Foundation staff members overseeing the monitoring of projects felt that the staff capacity of cultural players increased by 500% because of the use of volunteers coming forward.

It is worth noting that the ECoC in Leeuwarden-Friesland did not increase the cultural capacity of the region in terms of providing new cultural infrastructure. The programme included some physical improvements but these were mainly related to the implementation of the "11 Fountains" project, which included the design and installation of the fountains as well as smaller scale improvements to the street scenes around each fountain. Other than this project, the region did not see any new or improved facilities that could have increased cultural capacity in the future despite the overall budget for the ECoC being over €100 million. Perhaps surprisingly, no local stakeholders interviewed as part of the European evaluation stated that more of this large budget should have been spent on new or improved cultural facilities and all were happy for it to be spent on non-physical projects linked to the delivery of the cultural programme. Most stakeholders explained this by recognising that the region already had a relatively high number of high quality and modern

cultural venues and that the ECoC programme tended to have a focus on 'people' rather than buildings, particularly in relation to the ethos of the open programme.

3.5.4 International profile

Figures from the local research showed that 7% of visitors to ECoC projects (around 300,000 people) came from abroad. This is generally in line with other ECoCs, which generally see about 5% of their audiences coming from outside of their country. Although 7% was deemed low by some stakeholders from LF2018 who were interviewed during the evaluation, many recognised that Leeuwarden-Friesland was not on the typical tourist route for many international visitors to the Netherlands and was comparatively difficult (compared to other parts of the country) to access from Schiphol airport, which is the main route into the country for most international tourists. As stated earlier in this chapter, stakeholders involved in the programme design also noted that much of the programme was unlikely to be attractive to foreign visitors based on the large proportion of cultural activities being found in the open programme. Many projects were relatively small with limited marketing budgets that did not tend to reach foreign tourism press or articles.

However, overnight stays (often seen as a good proxy for international visitors) showed an increase from 0.8 million in 2017 to 2.1 million in 2018. Although the number of overnight stays is also a sign of national visitors staying in the region, interviews with hotel managers in Leeuwarden suggested that most of these overnight stays were from foreign visitors coming to the region because of the ECoC. Estimates from the hotel managers suggested around 65% of the 'extra' overnight stays seen in 2018 compared to 2017 were from international visitors. Anecdotal evidence from the hotel managers suggests that most international visitors came from Germany, Belgium, France and the UK.

A survey undertaken for the Foundation showed that of the visitors who attended ECoC projects over 2018, 90% are considering returning after the year¹²⁹. Although figures on the number of 'new' tourists whom the ECoC had attracted is not available (i.e. the proportion of tourists who had visited the area for the very first time) there was a general feeling that it was likely to be high (estimates from stakeholders taking part in the European evaluation ranged from 70-90% mainly because Friesland was not generally on the traditional 'tourist route' of the country). This means that the ECoC was particularly useful in stimulating new tourists, but that the vast majority (90%) may be returning and creating additional income for the area post 2018.

The team at the LF2018 Foundation undertook a series of activities before 2018 to help ensure as many people as possible were aware of the ECoC in 2018. Since 2015, LF2018 staff had worked with tour operators from across Europe to ensure Leeuwarden was on the operators map when they were designing their plans. A key objective of this work was to ensure that people would consider visiting Friesland because of its culture and not only consider visiting it because of its rural beauty and isolation (often seen as the main reason tourists visited the area and often seen as the main theme which previous promotional and tourism campaigns focussed on). Working with the National Dutch Tourism Group, the LF2018 staff also visited travel trade shows in Berlin, London, Paris and Brussels to further

¹²⁹ LF2018 Foundation Indicator Report published February 2019.

promote the city and region as a destination in 2018. Foundation staff organised meetings with tour operators and travel journalists and followed these up with the organisation of visits to the region. These visits allowed LF2018 staff to show the tour operators and travel journalists the key venues and sites, talk through the main cultural highlights planned for 2018 and also explain practical arrangements for international visitors including travel, hotels and other subjects of interest (restaurants, bars, local food).

Stakeholders interviewed through the evaluation tended to disagree about whether more could have been done to encourage international visitors to visit cultural projects and sites outside of Leeuwarden. Although much of the cultural programme did take place in the city, the ECoC had a regional rather than city focus meaning many of the projects (particularly linked to the open programme) were delivered in surrounding cities, villages and neighbourhoods. Although it is not uncommon for international visitors to stay within city centre boundaries, the fact that a good proportion of the cultural programme was located elsewhere did encourage some stakeholders to feel that more marketing and communication activity could have been done to encourage foreign visitors to widen their geographical boundaries. Interestingly, some LF2018 staff felt that the open programme would have little appeal to international visitors (small, locally themed and amateur productions) whilst other staff felt the opposite, noting that visits to cities are often enriched by experiencing smaller and more locally focussed activities.

3.6 Legacy

The first recommendations related to legacy were made in 2016 and 2017 where the Foundation recommended that local and regional authorities should adopt the Sustainable Development Goals. As a consequence, the city and regional (after the 2017 elections) ensured their development plans became more focussed on sustainable and longer-term development in the economic, social, ecological and cultural senses. In addition, the LF2018 published an 11 point plan for the legacy of the ECoC in January 2018 which provided the basis for the legacy planning for both the city and the region.

From January 2019 the Foundation responsible for the ECoC is being wound down, a plan that has been in place since mid-2018. On-going legacy arrangements for the ECoC are now with the regional Government and city rather than the independent Foundation. Around eight staff from the original Foundation were still in post in March 2019 who are mainly focussed on closing the ECoC programme down and implementing legacy plans.

A key strength of legacy arrangements was the existence of a specific fund to help take forward future cultural activities post 2018. A total of €2.4 million is available over 2019 and 2023 to support cultural activities on top of the normal funding available at city and regional levels for cultural projects, which will be managed and allocated by the local Government. In addition, the Iepen Up debate centre continued with an annual budget of €0.3 million. Furthermore, there is €0.5 million available for regional marketing to promote cultural projects, with the aim of helping to sustain the foreign visitor numbers experienced in 2018 with the City authorities. The Risk Fund of €1 million also still remains to further help encourage cultural activity by reducing the financial risk of poor ticket sales by guaranteeing a certain amount of income to cover production and development costs.

Another key aspect of legacy linked to Leeuwarden-Friesland was around the long-term impacts of the capacity-building programme described in the Cultural Capacity section above. This support programme helped build a range of skills into local communities on how to plan, deliver, perform, market and fund a cultural activity. These skills still remain within the communities post-2018 and will help sustain and encourage future cultural activities to take place more spontaneously, without the existence or stimuli of the ECoC. Linked to this, the networks that have been built up through delivering the cultural projects still remain which again should mean that future collaborations will take place without a need for the ECoC. It was felt to be too early after the ECoC year to properly assess whether these assumptions were right, but the strength of the capacity-building programme was felt by many to help organically sustain cultural activity post 2018.

A further legacy issue associated with the mienskip approach adopted by the ECoC was around the Foundation being focussed on using local people rather than those from outside of the region to deliver large parts of its cultural programme. Some stakeholders associated other ECoC as a 'travelling circus' that used high profile cultural projects from elsewhere rather than focussing their attention on local people to build up a longer-term and sustainable cultural movement post their ECoC year. As many of the performers were people who still live and work in Friesland then the longer-term legacy is likely to be greater. However, a counter argument to this held by some stakeholders was linked to the bottom-up approach that helped define the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC. Having a cultural programme that had a high number of small and amateur organisations or individuals involved meant that the likelihood of many of these projects continuing were less likely compared to a cultural programme that used a smaller number of more established organisations who had more established budgets, staff complements and medium to long term plans.

Despite some positives, the actual legacy plans in terms of priorities, structures and responsibilities are perhaps less clear and advanced than expected in Leeuwarden-Friesland. As of March 2019, there was no agreed legacy strategy in place and stakeholders were still debating the details of the legacy structures. However, on July 11th 2019 the legacy plans were presented, which set out plans up until 2028 (i.e. ten years after the ECoC) and with three key milestones set in 2022, 2025 and 2028. The legacy plans include a bid to the UNESCO City of Literature, the European Green Capital in 2025 and a cultural programme for the second half of 2019 and the whole of 2020. This programme has a main programme and a Mienskip programme and delivers arts and culture along with addressing ecological and social issues. It also builds on the ECoC networks and has a local and international approach to its programme content.

3.7 Conclusions

3.7.1 Successes

- The findings show that the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC was a very well run and delivered programme. Central to its focus, uniqueness and success was its mienskip principle. This bottom-up approach gave power, influence and cultural content to local people, seeing them as cultural producers rather than just cultural consumers. This helped create a movement with over 60,000 taking an active part in the delivery of the LF2018 programme. The

mienskip programme also helped stimulate large audience figures as people felt part of a bigger and wider programme and were more likely to attend other activities and cultural projects delivered by their friends, family and neighbours (rather than external operators).

- The Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC also used culture and a vehicle to highlight social change. Although this is not particularly unique, there did seem more of an emphasis to educate, promote and highlight social issues rather than simply put on a year of culture to entertain people. The emphasis on promoting a social rather than simply a cultural programme again helped to stimulate a wider appeal for the ECoC and higher audience figures as a consequence.
- The ECoC programme can also be commended for undertaking certain tasks early, well before 2018 meaning there was a strong build-up to the year. The Foundation opened its doors to the public three years before the ECoC year to gather ideas, Foundation staff planned a series of cultural projects in 2018 to help kick-start people's interests and conversations with Tour operators, the press and other stakeholders again led to the ECoC year having a running start.

3.7.2 Lessons in delivery

- The mienskip principles and associated open programme did bring about some unintended consequences. Firstly, the quality thresholds for the projects emerging from this part of the programme were lower than some stakeholders would have liked. Secondly, it was harder to support and promote such a large and dispersed programme containing 800 separate projects. Thirdly, the visibility of the open programme with international visitors was seen to be relatively low. The lesson for delivery is therefore to ensure that the wider effects of using local people to deliver the cultural programme are taken into account and that this model does have some connected key challenges.
- The legacy arrangements are unclear in Leeuwarden-Friesland with stakeholders admitting that their focus was on delivering the year rather than planning for what comes afterwards. Although some funding is in place and although capacity has been built greatly built up in 2018, there is still a concern that momentum will be lost and will not automatically spring into life post-2018. The lesson is therefore to not assume that 'strong' ECoC programmes will automatically have strong legacy plans or that legacy and sustainability will automatically flow from strong cultural programmes without a serious amount of planning and effort.

4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter sets out the overall conclusions and recommendations of the ex-post evaluation of the 2018 ECoC Action. It draws together the results from the chapters on Valletta and Leeuwarden-Friesland and conclusions are offered in relation to the evaluation questions (EQs) stated the terms of reference for the evaluation. As stated in the introduction chapter, the evaluation has not developed recommendations for the 2018 host cities because their ECoC has now finished but have rather been written with future ECoC applicants and title-holders in mind. Recommendations for the EU institutions have also been developed.

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Relevance

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

The objectives of both 2018 cities were relevant to the general and specific objectives of the ECoC Action, as set out in Decision 445/2014/EU.

For Leeuwarden-Friesland, the strategic objective linked to enhancing the range and diversity of the cultural offer was particularly relevant, as was the objective around widening access to and participation in culture. In particular, the ECoC used culture as a vehicle through which to engage with local people and saw the open programme (with its bottom-up principles) as the central spine of the whole project rather than a specific and separate community 'add-on', which was sometimes the case with past ECoC. The European dimension was integral to Leeuwarden-Friesland, both in terms of content (with the cultural programme giving prominence to European themes) and in terms of process (through the encouragement given to international collaborations), although this was sometimes a challenge given that a large number of projects were small and locally-run and thus found it harder to stimulate real European partnerships.

The original objectives of Valletta (as set out in the application) were relevant to the objectives of the ECoC set at EU level. As noted by the selection panel, the Valletta ECoC sought to provide a boost to the city's cultural sector and to develop the careers of artists. The panel also noted that the application was well connected with a strategic development plan for the city, having set the objective of establishing Valletta as a creative city. Explicit objectives were set relating to the European (and international) dimension, such as integrating Malta's rapidly-changing and diverse society into the programme, as well as engaging communities across and beyond Europe's borders. There were considerable changes to the artistic themes, governance and other aspects of Valletta 2018 during the development phase (particularly after the change of government in 2013). Nonetheless, the objectives of the revised programme remained consistent with the spirit of the original objectives and thus with the objectives set at EU level.

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

The cultural programme of Leeuwarden-Friesland was relevant to its own objectives and broadly consistent with the programmes proposed in the application. Leeuwarden-Friesland set out an ambitious objective in the bid-book linked with Mienskip and around engaging with local people, so they became the producers rather than simply the consumers of their

ECoC. Around 60,000 people were involved in the ECoC (as producers, volunteers or performers), which made up a significant proportion of the overall population of the region. Despite the Mienskip principle bringing challenges to delivery (in terms of its very wide scale and scope and a large number of amateur performers), the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC kept their promise to have this principle at the heart of their overall approach.

The cultural programme of Valletta 218 was changed considerably from the programme proposed in the original application, perhaps symbolised by the change of over-arching theme from “Imagine” to “Valletta 2018: An island-wide fiesta”. The eventual programme was, however, broadly consistent with three of the four objectives set in the original application, namely to “make careers of culture”, “grow internationally” and “establish Valletta as a creative city”. The focus on the fourth objective – “nurturing sustainable relationships with our environment” – was not absent from the programme but was not particularly prominent. Relevance was primarily ensured through the criteria were used to select projects, namely “artistic quality and innovation”, “participation: role of citizens”, “European dimension” and “legacy”.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

EQ3: To what extent were the EU-level objectives achieved?

The 2018 ECoCs made a significant contribution to the achievement of the four specific objectives of Decision 445/2014/EU and thus to the two general objectives of the Decision.

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation: Both ECoCs presented cultural programmes that were more extensive, diverse, innovative and international compared to the baseline cultural offering in previous years.

Leeuwarden-Friesland made a significant effort to produce an ECoC that was relatively ambitious in its scale and focus, particularly with it being seen as a social rather than cultural programme. Many stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation stated that it would have been far easier to produce a more “conventional” cultural programme with much less community participation and a larger number of “box office” projects that were bought “off-the-shelf. Instead, they used this funding to generate a cultural programme that looked for local people to come forward with their own ideas and projects rather than procuring safer and ready-made cultural projects from across the Netherlands and the EU. The LF2018 Foundation went out of its way to be innovative which helped it directly tackle the strategic objectives SO1 (around range, diversity and European dimension), SO2 (around access and participation in culture) and SO3 (around the capacity of the cultural sector). Leeuwarden-Friesland had a dedicated staff member to lead on the European dimension and also provided funding to help projects link up with European partners and also monitored closely the extent to which projects had a European angle to their work. These direct interventions showed that the LF2018 Foundation sought to make the European dimension integral to the cultural programme rather than hoping that this key ECoC principle happened naturally.

Valletta presented a cultural programme that was more extensive compared to Malta’s cultural “baseline” offering in previous years and which featured some events of high-quality. The public funding of Valletta 2018 represented a considerable increase in Government funding for culture during 2018 (and in the years leading up to it) and many events and projects were new for 2018. The programme featured a greater number and quality of performances by international artists and exhibitions of international works and

residencies by European artists compared to previous years, some of which were contemporary expressions new to Malta. At the same time, the departure of the Artistic Director and the artistic programme directors served to weaken the overall artistic direction of the programme. Linked to this, some stakeholders also reported that the programme did not strike the right balance between attracting audiences to mainstream “crowd-pleasers” and expanding the audiences for more challenging and avant-garde works.

SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture. Both ECoCs widened access to and participation in culture.

Audience figures for Leeuwarden-Friesland showed that 5.4 million people attended ECoC projects in 2018, a figure which increased by 5% each year from 2015 onwards. For some larger events, significant parts of the local population participated in ECoC activities with 71% of all 18- 84 years olds attending the Royal de Luxe Giants and 32% of this age group attending the Escher exhibition. 68% of the total population of Friesland felt involved in the ECoC meaning access and participation levels were deemed high.

Valletta 2018 attracted total audiences exceeding 400,000 people, although this was much less than the aspiration of 1 million. More than half of the total audience figure was accounted for by events that were new for 2018. There were new opportunities for citizens to be involved as creators, performers and audiences, including children and young people. In some cases, this involved working with international artists in productions of high professional quality, whilst in other cases it involved many small-scale events at local level or in schools. There were also new opportunities for citizens to be involved as volunteers in culture. Many of the new opportunities to access or participate in culture were available in different localities across the Maltese islands, thus bringing culture “closer” to many citizens.

SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its links with other sectors. Both ECoCs have helped strengthen the cultural capacity of the local cultural and creative sectors and their links with other sectors.

In Leeuwarden-Friesland, capacity was built both in terms of strengthening the skills and abilities of cultural organisations already established in the area and also in relation to the ‘new’ cultural players who were involved in the open programme. Helping build the capacity of grass roots organisations or individuals who often possessed very little cultural skills prior to 2018 was particularly driven by the 1.28 million euros that was spent on project support in the open programme. The LF2018 Foundation also developed an online toolkit specifically to help people develop projects by providing a step by step guide on issues including project design, funding availability, partner development, health and safety, marketing, securing permits finding venues and maximising ticket sales. The Foundation also organised six weekly meetings with all projects to bring them together in order to share news, requirements but also to share knowledge, good practice and advice.

Valletta 2018 has strengthened the capacity of the city’s cultural and creative sectors within the context of a wider culture-driven regeneration of Valletta. Unusually for an ECoC, the Foundation was responsible for implementing both the cultural programme and a number of major cultural infrastructure investments (notably the Valletta Design Cluster and the MUŻA). The consensus amongst all stakeholders interviewed was that the cultural programme had complemented these infrastructure projects by increasing the cultural vibrancy of the city and by attracting more tourists and Maltese residents into the city, particularly at night. The ECoC helped to develop and professionalise the sector, by

providing new experiences and better international connections. Some stakeholders felt that more could have been done in this respect. However, increased Government expenditure on culture in 2019 (compared to 2017) and the opening of the Valletta Design Cluster will ensure that many of the benefits to the sector will be sustained and built on beyond 2018.

SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture. The ECoC has raised the international profile of both cities, although with mixed results.

The international profile of Leeuwarden-Friesland was raised by the ECoC albeit from a low base. Some 7% of the audiences were international which was seen as a general success recognising that the region was not on the typical tourist route for many international visitors to the Netherlands and was comparatively difficult to access (compared to other areas in the Netherlands) from Schiphol airport. However, overnight stays showed an increase from 0.8 million in 2017 to 2.1 million in 2018. The team at the LF2018 Foundation undertook a series of activities before 2018 to help ensure as many people as possible were aware of the ECoC in 2018. In 2015, LF2018 staff worked with tour operators from across Europe to ensure Leeuwarden was on the operators map when they were designing their plans.

The evidence suggests that the ECoC contributed to an increase in tourists to Valletta. Of course, the overall trend of recent years is one of increased tourist visits to Valletta and to Malta in general and it is impossible to isolate the impact of the ECoC. However, there is evidence that incoming tourists had high awareness of Valletta 2018 and were in part motivated to visit by Valletta 2018. At the very least, it is safe to conclude that the overall Government strategy (of which the ECoC constituted an important part) to regenerate and promote Valletta as a cultural destination is proving successful. There was also some success in attracting the interest of the international media and in reaching an audience on social media. At the same time, the political controversy surrounding Valletta 2018 – which attracted condemnation from other ECoC, international writers, MEPs and others – caused considerable damage to the international reputation of the ECoC, Valletta and Malta generally.

EQ4: To what extent were the title cities' own objectives achieved?

Overall, Leeuwarden-Friesland kept to the bid-book very well and did not tend to deviate away from the main themes, projects and objectives set out at bid stage. The budget plans set out in the original bid were also generally followed in reality. The ambitious plans to have a programme that 'awoke' the cultural heart of the region really did come to fruition and the original city objectives around creating a social movement (rather than just a cultural programme) was often highlighted as a key outcome of the ECoC year.

In contrast, Valletta featured considerable changes to the artistic themes, governance, cultural programme and budget, largely reflecting the change of Government in 2013. The revised cultural programme was broadly implemented as planned and succeeded in reaching large audiences (though the audience target was not reached), but this was skewed toward the big outdoor events, rather than the more innovative projects. Two of the major infrastructure projects were not completed during 2018 (although the MUŻA had a partial opening in December 2018) and thus did not make their intended contribution during the title-year. They will, however, contribute substantially to the legacy. In terms of the original objectives, it is reasonable to conclude that Valletta 2018 contributed to the first three objectives, namely "make careers of culture", "grow internationally" and

“establish Valletta as a creative city”. There was limited focus on the fourth objective – “nurturing sustainable relationships with our environment” – and thus limited impact against this objective.

EQ5: To what extent has the Action resulted in unintended effects?

The ECoC action in Leeuwarden-Friesland generally did not have any significant unintended effects. This was not because the programme lacked ambition but rather that the bid-book and eventual programme sought to change a whole range of social, economic, environment and cultural issues meaning its effects were wide ranging and varied. At this stage, it is difficult to understand how the ECoC will impact on the environmental and ecological issue and also some of the outcomes related to poverty, mainly because these issues are longer term goals to be considered. Because the ECoC had ambitious plans, these longer-term goals are yet to show themselves fully.

Within Valletta 2018, two main positive effects can be observed that, if not unintended, were not foreseen at the time of the application. First, the application did not specifically refer to any legacy body, whereas, in practice, the Valletta Cultural Agency will play a very important role in sustaining the legacy of 2018 and in developing the future cultural offer of Valletta. Second, the original application offered a general aspiration to create creative clusters and cultural quarters that provide physical spaces to support creative industries. In practice, the experience of developing and implementing the ECoC has greatly influenced the decision to create the Valletta Design Cluster, which, when opened, will serve the city’s cultural and creative sectors.

EQ6: To what extent can the positive effects of the ECoC Action be considered to be sustainable?

The legacy plans for Leeuwarden-Friesland were relatively less developed compared to other aspects of delivery at the end of their ECoC year. There was no continuous and smooth transition into 2019 with a clear and immediate published plan for new cultural activity for the region. However, clearer and stronger legacy plans were announced part way through 2019 which gives clearer direction in terms of legacy and succession planning. The legacy issues relate more to people rather than bricks and mortar in that the ECoC was about getting people to participate in society through culture rather than building new cultural facilities and venues. This means the sustainability of the effects are partly up to whether local people continue to be engaged and whether any legacy organisation post-LF2018 continues to stimulate a bottom-up approach (rather than simply putting on cultural entertainment).

Many, if not most, of the positive effects of Valletta 2018 will be sustained and enhanced beyond 2018. The Maltese Government continues to prioritise culture and the culture-driven regeneration of Valletta, as evidenced by the 19% increase in its budget for culture in 2019 compared to 2018. A key factor has been the creation of the Valletta Cultural Agency “to carry forward the legacy created by Valletta 2018”, which will employ several staff members of the Foundation and operate from the same premises at the centre of Valletta. Some activities that were initiated for the ECoC or expanded in scope will continue in 2019, in some cases with support from the Agency.

4.1.3 Efficiency

EQ7: How did the management arrangements of each title city contribute to the achievement of outputs, results and impacts?

The management arrangements in Leeuwarden-Friesland were generally strong. The ECoC was well run with strong and robust systems, procedures, transparency and leadership. The joint working between the city and regional levels was also strong and there was a genuine link between the LF2018 Foundation and local people. This latter point is particularly noteworthy and the level of trust and openness between ECoC staff and local communities was higher than any other ECoC studied through the European evaluation. This trust and openness manifested itself in relation to an ECoC programme that had over 800 projects, spread across a series of social themes and a wide geographic area. The outcome and effects of this diverse and bottom-up approach relate as much to a sense of place and community belonging as they do to putting on a strong and entertaining cultural programme for the benefit of audiences. Managing an ECoC programme that had a large number of projects often run by amateurs rather than professionals was generally seen as challenging but also very worthwhile as it produced a cultural programme that local people felt part of and had a sense of pride towards.

The Valletta 2018 Foundation went through some considerable changes in personnel during the development phase, which ultimately impacted on the artistic direction and content of the cultural programme. Whilst views were divergent or even polarised, many key stakeholders (including those involved in implementing the programme and those external to the implementation) expressed the view that the overall artistic direction suffered from the departure of the Artistic Director and the Artistic Programme Directors following the change of Government in 2013 and later from the departure of the Executive Director and the Programme Coordinator in 2017. The political oversight of the Foundation ensured the strong backing of the Government. However, it also attracted criticism locally and internationally, which was damaging to the reputation of the ECoC and thus its impact, as evidenced by the letter from the ECoC selection and monitoring panel as well as the criticisms of other ECoCs, MEPs and international writers. Relations were also damaged with international artists responsible for key projects within the cultural programme.

EQ8: To what extent were the selection, monitoring and EU co-financing procedures, introduced by Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC efficient?

The ECoC selection procedure has ensured the selection of two ECoCs that were relevant to the objectives at EU level and that had the potential to achieve the intended effects. The procedure ensured healthy competition in the Netherlands, attracting five initial high-quality applications, of which three were sufficiently strong to proceed to the final selection stage. In Malta, the procedure provided sufficiently rigorous scrutiny of Valletta's ECoC application. The requirement for all panel members to be independent experts, of which the majority appointed by the EU institutions, seems to ensure impartiality in decision-making. However, the experience of 2018 suggests that the procedures introduced by Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC might not be appropriate to a situation in which the national Government not only organises the selection process but is also – by necessity – one of the key players in an ECoC application (even if indirectly, e.g. via a body under its control). In the meantime, based on a proposal by the Commission, the procedure has been revised

for future selection procedures through Decision 445/2014/EU, which specifies that a maximum of two (out of 12) members of the selection panel can be appointed by Member States, rather than six (out of 13) as was previously the case under Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC.

The selection and monitoring procedures, as well as the informal meetings with the panel have proven valuable in giving impartial advice and support to the ECoC from highly experienced experts, some of whom have implemented previous ECoC. Moreover, the formal meetings provided an opportunity for the panel to hold the cities to account, in terms of respecting the promises made in their respective applications. In the case of Leeuwarden-Friesland, the procedures were sufficient to ensure that the ECoC did not substantially deviate from its promises at the selection stages or ignore any of the issues highlighted at panel discussions. In the case of Valletta, there was considerable change from the themes and budget presented in the application. The ECoC panel also felt the necessity of writing to the Culture Minister and the Foundation Chairman to highlight concerns about the departure of senior staff during the development phase. The monitoring procedures have been strengthened by the 2014 Decision (which applies to the 2020 ECoC onwards), for example, by withholding the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize until the end of March of the title-year. The Commission may wish to consider whether the revised procedures have proved more effective in holding title-holders to account.

The selection process requires applicants to invest considerable resources in preparing a bid, and also involves significant input from the panel both in reviewing bid-books and – for a limited delegation of the panel – in visiting cities that progress to the final stage. It is therefore worth considering whether only two applicants should be invited to submit a full application.

**EQ9: To what extent did the title cities manage to raise the necessary resources?
EQ10: To what extent were the financial and human resources secured by each title city appropriate and proportionate?**

The original Leeuwarden-Friesland budget foreseen at the bid-book stage by the Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 for the delivery of the ECoC was estimated at €72 million, with the municipality of Leeuwarden, the other municipalities in the region and the province of Friesland contributing respectively €5.95 million, €11 million and €20 million. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Interior Affairs pledged to contribute €7.5 million. Expected income from private sponsors was estimated comparatively high, at €18 million or 25% of the total budget. By the end of 2018, the actual budget had increased to €104.6 million meaning spend on the ECoC increased by €30.3 million compared to the bid-book. The contribution from the public sector was €1.5 million higher than expected, partly due to an increase in funds from both the municipality of Leeuwarden and the province. Regional contributions were lower than foreseen at the bid-book stages. It is worth noting that the total spend on the Leeuwarden-Friesland ECoC is likely to be much higher because activities from the mienskip open programme were not included in the finances presented by the Foundation.

Valletta proved successful in raising sufficient resources to implement a cultural programme that was more extensive than the city's offering (or indeed Malta's offering) in previous years. It was considerably lower than the budget proposed in the application,

although this was in the context of a year-on-year increase in government funding for culture in the period 2013-19. The budget for the cultural programme was also complemented by significant Government investment in cultural infrastructure. Moreover, the overall budget was considerably higher than the budget for some previous ECoC in small cities or small countries, even after allowing for inflation.

4.1.4 Coherence

EQ11: To what extent was the ECoC Action coherent and complementary to other EU initiatives?

The ECoC Action is coherent and complementary to the Creative Europe Programme in that it promotes the objectives of Creative Europe and is distinct from the other activities supported by the programme. Valletta made use of funding from Creative Europe to support projects in their cultural programmes. One project in the city also secured funding from Interreg.

The ECoC Action is also coherent with and complementary to the European Structural and Investment Funds, depending on the context of each city holding the title. Most notably in Valletta, some significant investments in cultural infrastructure that were implemented by the Valletta 2018 Foundation were co-financed by the ERDF and will enhance the legacy of 2018 by providing new venues for activities.

4.1.5 EU added value

EQ12: What is the EU added value and the visibility of the ECoC Action?

The evidence from both cities shows that the ECoC provides title-holders with the impetus to implement more extensive cultural programmes than they would otherwise do. The title also helps them attract resources and increase their international profile. The title helped galvanise interest from funders from both the public and private sectors and therefore acted as a stimulus for funders to commit resources to a shared goal for the benefit of local, regional and national players.

For Leeuwarden-Friesland, the EU added value was often seen in relation to profile. The ECoC was successful in stimulating over 60,000 local people to become involved in the delivery of the programme in a way that no national or local 'brand' could ever achieve. The EU added value also related to helping 'externalise' the cultural offer in the region so that local people looked beyond Friesland for their cultural content. Some stakeholders felt that having a European Dimension meant that the cultural community of Friesland had to become more outward-looking, which many felt was a positive impact as it encouraged people to move away from their local comfort zones. Although the region and city could have attempted to deliver a cultural project by themselves and encourage local players to be more European, the likelihood of success was felt to be small.

In Valletta, the award of the title provided impetus to the wider culture-driven generation of Valletta, whilst the fixed timescale of the title-year provided greater focus than might otherwise have been the case. The national government's commitment to culture means that an increase in investment in venues and events may have taken place anyway. However, the opportunity of the title-year led to those investments being of greater scale

and ambition than would otherwise have been the case. The ECoC title also gave much greater international profile to the local and national cultural sector, for example, through increased attention from international media and growth in tourism. At the same time, the high visibility of the ECoC Action led to a local political controversy attracting much greater negative international attention than Valletta and its ECoC would otherwise have received.

As shown in section 1.1.2, the European Commission plays a key role in promoting the ECoC Action via publications, events and the Europa website. These activities support the ECoCs' own promotional activities, for example, by providing links to their websites. Whilst all the essential information can be found on the Europa website, the ECoC page is not particularly prominent and might not be found by the casual browser who is unaware of the ECoC or unaware that it is an EU Action.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the evidence offered in this report, the following recommendations for the EU institutions in respect of the ECoC Action are put forward.

1. The Commission should consider a review of the selection, monitoring and financing procedures introduced by the 2014 Decision, given that the titles for 2020-2023 have been awarded and the competitions for 2024-2026 have been launched. This review would compare the performance of the new procedures compared to the previous procedures (introduced by the 2006 Decision) and identify ways by which the new procedures could be strengthened.
2. The Commission should consider advising panel members to invite no more than two applicants per Member State to progress from the pre-selection to the final selection stage in each competition, given the resources required to prepare a full application and the time needed for panel members to review applications and – for a smaller delegation of panel's members – to undertake visits of pre-selected cities.
3. The Commission should consider whether the procedures introduced by the 2014 Decision will be appropriate to a situation where a national Government is likely to be both the organiser of the selection process and one of the key players in an ECoC application (even if indirectly, e.g. via a body under its control). This will be particularly relevant to the selection of the next Maltese ECoC in 2031. A key consideration will be whether the change to the composition of the selection panel (with 10 experts appointed by the EU institutions and a maximum of two by the Member State concerned, compared to the previous composition of seven experts appointed by the EU institutions and six by the Member State) has been sufficient to ensure that the process remains impartial and transparent.
4. The Commission should consider the effectiveness of the monitoring procedures introduced by the 2014 Decision have proved more effective in holding title-holders to account. In particular, this would consider the extent to which the later award of the Melina Mercouri Prize is helping to ensure that ECoC broadly fulfil the promises made in their applications. The

Commission may wish to consider in more detail – and to discuss with the monitoring panel – the circumstances under which the Prize might be withheld or the title removed.

5. Linked to this, the Commission should consider whether to introduce a written agreement with successful applicants, so that the Commission (acting on the advice of the monitoring panel) can decide whether any changes in the development phase are acceptable or not.
6. Given that the 2020 ECoC onwards are now required by the 2014 Decision to carry out their own evaluations of the results of the title-year, the Commission should consider organising an evaluation seminar for designated title-holders and current and future applicants. The seminar would build on the Commission's Guidelines on evaluation and indicators, provide examples of best practice and offer the opportunity for future ECoC to learn from past ECoC.
7. The Commission should review the different approaches to evaluation taken by previous and designated ECoC. The 2014 Decision requires the Commission to establish evaluation common guidelines and indicators for the cities holding the title. The EU-level evaluations of the 2007-17 ECoC have described the approaches by the ECoC to their own local evaluations and have drawn on any early evidence from those evaluations. However, the EU-level evaluations have usually been concluded before the local evaluations have completed their full programmes. A review of those local evaluations would provide evidence regarding possible methodologies, key success factors, strengths and weaknesses and good practice. Such evidence would then strengthen the Commission's guidelines and indicators and also prove useful to future title-holders.
8. To maintain a strong European dimension, the Commission should consider facilitating opportunities for current or potential applicant cities to network with key EU-level cultural bodies and networks and with cultural operators from other countries. This could take the form of dedicated sessions focussed on the ECoC within the European Culture Forum or similar events.

Annex 1: Interview list

Interviews undertaken in Leeuwarden

Interviewee	Position / Organisation
Leeuwarden- Friesland 2018 Foundation	
Jelle Burggraaff	International Cultural Cooperation, Management, Legacy
John Bonnema	International Cultural Cooperation, Management, Legacy
Oeds Westerhof	International Cultural Cooperation, Management, Legacy
Claudia Woolgar	Member Artistic Team of LF2018
Anna Tilroe	Artistic Director of 11 Fountains project
Sjoerd Bootsma	Member Artistic Team of LF2018
Oeds Westerhof	Director Legacy
Rikkert Kremer	Member Artistic Team of LF2018
Jurjen van der Weg	Programme Manager Municipality of Leeuwarden,
Nienk Hoepman	Programme Manager Province of Friesland
Meinke Noordam	Member Artistic Team of LF2018
Lieuwe Krol	Head of Marketing and Communication at LF2018
Immie Jonkman	Member Artistic Team of LF2018
Other local or national stakeholders	
Tjeerd van Bekkum	CEO of LF2018
Froukje de Jong	Producer of Potatoes Go Wild project
Dieneke Zwiers	Director at Kunstcade in Leeuwarden
Patricia Klomp	Manager Press & Information Centre
Siart Smit	General Manager at Lân fan Taal project
Sietske Poepjes	Provincial Executive for Culture
Esmeralda de Vries	Initiator of the Largest Crocheted Blanket in the World
Hooman Nassimi	Founder at Society in Motion
Ferd Crone	Mayor of the City of Leeuwarden
Sjoerd Feitsma	Deputy Mayor Culture at City of Leeuwarden
Martin Cnossen	Director Merk Fryslân
Herman Schreuder	Director Post-Plaza Hotel & Grand Cafe
Henk Leutscher	Owner & city guide at A guide to Leeuwarden
Kris Callens	Director Fries Museum & National Ceramics Museum Prinsessehof
International stakeholders	

Nadia Aguir	General manager, IN SITU
Ulrich Fuchs	Former member of the ECoC selection and monitoring panel
Steve Green*	Former member of the ECoC selection and monitoring panel

*response provided by e-mail

Interviews undertaken in Valletta

Interviewee	Position / Organisation
Valletta 2018 Foundation	
Jason Micallef	Chairman
Catherine Tabone	Executive Director
Joanne Attard Mallia	Programming Co-ordinator
Annaliza Borg	Communications Coordinator
Victoria-Martha Pace	Regional Co-ordinator (Gozo)
Graziella Vella	Research Coordinator (also Heritage Malta)
Aidan Celeste	Research Officers
Caldon Mercieca	Valletta Design Cluster Manager
Jean Pierre Magro	Special Adviser
Daniela Vella Blagojevic	Evaluation and Monitoring Group
Other local or national stakeholders	
Toni Attard	Head of Strategy, Culture Venture and former Director of Strategy, Arts Council Malta
Airan Berg	Independent Cultural Expert and International Artistic Advisor to Valletta 2018
Owen Bonnici	Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government
Deo Debattista	Parliamentary Secretary for Consumer Rights, Public Cleansing and Support For the Capital City
Alexander Debono	Senior Curator, MUZA - Muzew Nazzjonali tal-Arti, Malta National Community Art Museum
Maria Di Domenica	NGO Kopin
Alexiei Dingli	Former Mayor, City of Valletta
Adrian Debattista	Arts Council Malta
Angele Galea	More or Less Theatre
Malcolm Galea	More or Less Theatre
Ann Laenen	Co-ordinator, Artists in Residency Programme
Philip Leone-Ganado	Times of Malta
Christian Micallef	Mayor, City of Valletta
Russell Muscat	Heritage Malta

Carmen Sammut	Pro-Rector for Student & Staff Affairs and Outreach, University of Malta
Toni Sant	Artistic Director, Fondazzjoni Kreattivita
Maria-Angela Vassallo	Culture Directorate of Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government
Karsten Xuereb	University of Malta (formerly Executive Director, Valletta 2018 Foundation)
Ruben Zahra	Independent composer
Tony Zahra	President, Malta Hotels and Restaurant Association

International stakeholders

Tina Auer	International artist (Time's Up)
Ricardo Baptista	International artist (Ondamarela)
Airan Berg	Independent Cultural Expert and International Artistic Advisor to Valletta 2018
Tim Boykett	International artist (Time's Up)
Ana Bragança	International artist (Ondamarela)
Thomas Frank	International artist
Ulrich Fuchs	Former member of the ECoC selection and monitoring panel
Steve Green*	Former member of the ECoC selection and monitoring panel
Constanza Macras	International artist
Maren Richter	International artist

**response provided by e-mail*

Annex 2: Topic Guides

Topic guide for interviews

Questions	
Background	<p>Explore background of interviewee and his/her organisation</p> <p>Explore role of interviewee and in the ECoC</p>
Objectives	<p>Explore views of interviewee on the background context of the city (e.g. state of cultural sector, socio-economic context, etc.)</p> <p>What was their overall motivation? (motivation of the partner organisation and of the city as a whole)</p> <p>What was the process of determining objectives?</p> <p>(How far) did they adopt each of the objectives listed in the intervention logic?</p> <p>In particular, how was the European dimension taken into account? To what extent was the European dimension a bolt- on or integral?</p> <p>What was the relative importance of each objective?</p> <p>To what extent did objectives change in the 4 years between the application and the start of the title year? What were the most important changes?</p>
Application and planning/ development phases	<p>How did the City apply to its Member States for the nomination?</p> <p>How effective was the selection process at Member State <i>and</i> EU level?</p> <p>In what ways did the ECoC take into account the recommendations of the EU selection panel?</p> <p>In what ways have the mechanisms applied by the Commission for selecting the European Capital of Culture and the subsequent implementation and monitoring mechanisms influenced the results of the Action?</p> <p>What were the main milestones in the planning/development phase?</p> <p>What difficulties were encountered during the planning/development phase and how were these overcome?</p>
Inputs	<p>What was the process of securing the necessary financial resources?</p> <p>What were the inputs in terms of EU, other public and private funding?</p> <p>How effective were attempts to raise funds through sponsorship? How helpful (or not) was the ECoC brand in this?</p>

	<p>What was the balance of expenditure on infrastructure, events, management, communications, etc.? (NB: split between revenue and capital spend)</p> <p>To what extent did the actual financial inputs reflect those promised in the application?</p> <p>To what extent were the financial inputs sufficient to achieve the desired outputs, results and impacts?</p>
Activities	<p>What was the process of agreeing artistic themes and designing the programme?</p> <p>What were the artistic themes?</p> <p>What activities did they undertake?</p> <p>How did the European dimension feature in the themes and the activities? Again, how integral was it - or was it a bolt-on?</p> <p>How were activities selected, implemented and monitored?</p> <p><i>What was the local approach to evaluating the impacts of ECoC?</i></p> <p>How/how effectively was the cultural programme publicised (through a communications strategy)? What difficulties were encountered and how were they overcome?</p> <p>To what extent did the themes and activities change between the application date and the title year? (Which were achieved most/least?)</p>
Outputs	<p>How did the delivery mechanism contribute to the achievement of outputs?</p> <p>What outputs did they produce from the set in the intervention logic? (special focus on the European dimension)</p> <p>Any other significant outputs (not in the intervention logic)?</p> <p>To what extent did the ECoC achieve the outputs hoped for by the city (and as set out in the application)? (Which were achieved most/least?)</p>
Results	<p>How did the delivery mechanism improve management of culture in the city during the title year?</p> <p>What is the evidence that the results listed in the intervention logic were achieved? (special focus on the European dimension)</p> <p>Any other significant results (not in the intervention logic)?</p> <p>To what extent did the ECoC achieve the results hoped for by the city (and as set out in the application)? (Which were achieved most/least?)</p>

Impacts

What is the evidence that the impacts listed in the intervention logic were or will be achieved? (special focus on the **European dimension**)

Any other significant impacts (not in the intervention logic)?

To what extent did the ECoC achieve the impacts hoped for by the city (and as set out in the application)? (Which were achieved most/least?)

What elements of the delivery structure (will) continue to operate?

How will the city continue to manage its long-term cultural development following the title year?

What has been the contribution of the ECoC to improved management of cultural development in the city? (in the long-term)

Has there been a long-term impact on levels of funding for culture in the city? Are bids to other EU sources in train or planned?

Topic guide for interviews with ECoC stakeholders and partners

Questions	
Background	<p>Explore background of interviewee and his/her organisation</p> <p>Explore role of interviewee and his/her organisation in the ECoC</p> <p>Explore views of interviewee on the background context of the city (e.g. state of cultural sector, socio-economic context, etc.)</p>
Objectives	<p>What was their overall motivation for participating in the ECoC? (motivation of the partner organisation and their view of the motivation of the city as a whole)</p> <p>What were the key success factors and failure elements related to the process of consultation / partnership building to define aims and objectives? How relevant were the objectives chosen to the needs/potential of the city and the interests of the partner organisation?</p> <p>In their view, how/how far was the European dimension taken into account? To what extent was the European dimension a bolt-on or integral to the ECoC?</p>
Application and planning/development phases	<p>What difficulties were encountered during the application and planning/development phases and how were these overcome?</p> <p>If there was a new delivery agency / mechanism put in place to develop and deliver the ECoC, what were the key success factors and failure elements related to it?</p>
Inputs	<p>What were the key success factors and failure elements related to the process of raising the necessary financial resources (EU, public, private, sponsorship etc)?</p> <p>How helpful (or not) was the ECoC brand in attracting funding and sponsorship?</p> <p>In their view, to what extent were the financial inputs sufficient to achieve the desired outputs, results and impacts?</p>
Activities	<p>What were the key success factors and failure elements related to the process of agreeing artistic themes and designing the programme?</p> <p>What were the key success factors and failure elements related to the process of selecting, implementing and monitoring activities, events and projects?</p> <p><i>What was the local approach to evaluating the impacts of ECoC?</i></p>

	<p>In their view, how/how far did the European dimension feature in the themes and the activities? Again, to what extent was the European dimension a bolt-on or integral to the cultural programme?</p> <p>Explore key success factors and failure elements related to specific activities involving the interviewee's organisation</p> <p>What were the key success factors and failure elements related to the communication and publicity of the cultural programme?</p>
Outputs	<p>How did the delivery mechanism contribute the achievement of outputs?</p> <p>Explore key success factors and failure elements related to specific outputs involving the interviewee's organisation</p> <p>To what extent did the ECoC achieve the outputs they hoped for?</p>
Results	<p>In what ways did the delivery mechanism improve management of culture in the city during the title year?</p> <p>Explore interviewee's views relating to achievement of results i) involving the interviewee's organisation; ii) results in general</p> <p>To what extent did the ECoC achieve the results they hoped?</p>
Impacts	<p>In what ways has the ECoC improved the management of cultural development in the city? (in the long-term)</p> <p>Explore interviewee's views relating to achievement of impacts i) involving the interviewee's organisation; ii) impacts in general</p> <p>To what extent did the ECoC achieve the impacts they hoped for?</p>

Topic guide for interviews with projects

Questions	
Background	<p>Explore background of interviewee and his/her organisation</p> <p>Explore background information on the project (e.g. how project idea was developed, key activities)</p> <p>Explore views of interviewee on the background context of the city (e.g. state of cultural sector, socio-economic context, etc.)</p>
Development phase	<p>What are key success factors and challenges during development phase (e.g. selection of projects, feedback on activities of the key actors/stakeholders/promoters)?</p>
Project Activities	<p>To what extent ECoC objectives are relevant to culture sector in the city?</p> <p>Did the project exist prior to the title year?</p> <p>What difference title year made to the activities i.e. new cultural activities, different type of activities etc?</p> <p>To what extent development of European dimension, citizen involvement was important for your project?</p> <p>To what extent ECoC resulted in changes of audience numbers and visitors' characteristics taking part in activities of your organisation?</p> <p>What activities are likely to continue?</p> <p>What impact implementation of your project had on your organisation (e.g. development of partnerships, increased visibility, increased cultural offer, increased scope of activities)?</p>
Feedback on ECoC	<p>What effect ECoC had on culture sector in your city?</p> <p>How useful was support provided from the delivery agency for your project?</p> <p>To what extent the delivery agency/overall co-ordination organisation succeeded in marketing and communication activities especially in increasing visibility of the ECoC programme locally, nationally and internationally?</p> <p>Do you agree that culture programme was of high quality?</p> <p>To what extent ECoC achieved in attracting high numbers of visitors?</p>
Impact	<p>To what extent ECoC had an impact on increased cooperation among cultural operators?</p>

To what extent ECoC had an impact on increased cooperation with organisations outside culture sector?

To what extent ECoC had an impact on increased capacity of your organisation?

What activities of your project are likely to continue?

To what extent ECoC had an impact on increased vibrancy of cultural life in the city?

To what extent ECoC had an impact on improvements in culture infrastructure?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments regarding effects that ECoC had on your organisation, city and/or region?

Topic guide for other stakeholders (e.g. at EU level)

Questions	
Background	<p>Explore background of interviewee and his/her organisation</p> <p>Explore role of interviewee and his/her organisation in the ECoC</p> <p>Explore views of interviewee on the background context of the city (e.g. state of cultural sector, socio-economic context, etc.)</p>
Culture programme	<p>To what extent was the cultural programme balanced in terms of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. High profile events and local initiatives [some cultural operators mentioned that too much attention was given to big spectacles and productions from abroad and not enough to grassroots initiatives and trust in local cultural operators.] b. Artistic vision and political interests c. Traditional and contemporary culture d. City centre and suburban/regional locations e. "High" art and popular art/culture f. Established cultural institutions and independent groups and artists g. Attractiveness to tourists and the local population h. International names and local talent i. Usual activities and new activities

j. Professional and amateur/community projects

To what extent was the involvement of citizens part of the cultural programme?

To what extent did the programme reflect the potential of local cultural operators and build on local cultural innovation? What contribution did ECoC have on the cultural scene for the city hosting the title and the country as a whole?

In your opinion, would you say that ECoC was of high artistic quality? Please provide more information why?

To what extent did the cultural programme achieve prominence and recognition a) nationally; b) internationally?

What were the key strengths of the cultural programme?

What were the areas for further improvement?

Annex 3: Bibliography

Valletta

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V.18 Cultural Programme Budget (October 2012)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
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Report of the Second Informal Post-Designation Meeting for Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018 (November 2013)	ECOC Monitoring and Advisory Panel
Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018, First Monitoring Meeting: Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel (September 2015)	ECOC Monitoring and Advisory Panel
Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018, Second Monitoring Meeting: Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel (March 2017)	ECOC Monitoring and Advisory Panel
Monitoring Reports	
Informal Monitoring Meeting Report (October 2013)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
Informal Monitoring Meeting Report (November 2014)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
Monitoring Meeting Report (September 2015)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
Second Monitoring Meeting Report (March 2017)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
Reports of the Valletta 2018 Foundation	
Annual Report 2016	Valletta 2018 Foundation
Annual Report 2015	Valletta 2018 Foundation

Document / data source	Author / Source
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2018 Cultural Programme Preview	Valletta 2018 Foundation
2017 Cultural Programme	Valletta 2018 Foundation
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Research reports	
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Theme 4: The Tourist Experience – Evaluation & Monitoring Research Findings (2018, 2017, 2016, 2015)	Valletta 2018 Foundation
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SPAZJI TEATRALI: A Catalogue of Theatres in Malta and Gozo: 2016 edition	Valletta 2018 Foundation with Arts Council Malta
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Press and media (websites, publications, etc.)	
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Leewardern/ Friesland

Document / data source	Author / Source
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Final bid and supporting annexes (Iepen Mienskip)	LF2019 Foundation
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Report of the Informal Post-Designation Meeting for Leeuwarden European	ECOC Monitoring and Advisory

Document / data source	Author / Source
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Report of the Second Monitoring and Advisory Meeting for the European Capitals of Culture 2018,	ECoC Monitoring and Advisory Panel
Monitoring Panel	
Lock Measurement LF2018 – Research findings	LF2019 Foundation
Final Assessment LF2018 Research Results	LF2019 Foundation
Leeuwarden Friesland Monitoring plus annexes	LF2019 Foundation
LF2018 Monitoring of KPIs	LF2019 Foundation
Various correspondents between Monitoring Committee and LF2018 Delivery Team on progress of key aspects of the ECoC	LF2019 Foundation
Details of the cultural programme	
Strategic Business Plan	LF2019 Foundation
LF2018 Cultural Programme Outline	LF2019 Foundation
LF2018 Monthly/ Quarterly Programme Schedule	LF2019 Foundation
Press cuttings (local Media) on cultural content/ key projects	LF2019 Foundation
Press articles (local and national media) on critical analysis of the ECoC	LF2019 Foundation
Planning document (describing the themes, projects and activities throughout 2016)	LF2019 Foundation
Tourism guides linked to ECoC for national and international clients	LF2019 Foundation
Leeuwarden Friesland Education System paper	LF2019 Foundation
Initial internal assessment of audience figures of ECoC projects	LF2019 Foundation
Data and research from the local evaluation	
Questionnaires in ECoC events (summaries of results)	LF2019 Foundation Local evaluation report
Short interviews/questionnaires of artists and other people participating in the organization of LF2018 events	
Archival research (newspapers, blogs, websites)	
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Annex 4: Terms of Reference

SPECIFICATIONS

Ex-post evaluation of the two European Capitals of Culture 2018

Contracting Authority: European Commission

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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. Decision 1622/2006/EC governs the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019. A new Decision was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in April 2014⁴, but cities which were designated as ECOC for the years up to 2019 are still regulated by Decision No 1622/2006/EC.

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.

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).

⁴ 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 (OJ L 132, 3.5. 2014, p. 1). This Decision, which covers the ECoC titles 2020 to 2033, retains the general structure and main elements of the previous Decision while introducing improvements to maximise the benefits of holding the title as well as taking part in the competitive process for all bidding cities and their citizens. Improvements include among others the introduction of more explicit and measurable criteria, the reinforcement of conditionality for the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize and the obligation for the cities – instead of the Commission – to carry out the ex post evaluation of the ECoC year.

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.

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 2018 ECOC shall be evaluated. This hierarchy is based principally on the 2006 Decision (as this Decision provided the legal basis for the 2018 ECOC), but is also complemented by information in the 2014 Decision in order to reflect the evolving requirements and expectations for ECOC.

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 2018

1.3.1 The selection of the two European Capitals of Culture 2018

Under Decision 1622/2006/EC, the Netherlands and Malta are the two Member States entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2018. 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 at the latest 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 approximately 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 objectives and criteria laid down in the Decision.

Five cities from the Netherlands (The Hague, Eindhoven, Leeuwarden, Maastricht and Utrecht) responded to the call for applications. Eindhoven, Leeuwarden and Maastricht were preselected in November 2012. In September 2013, Leeuwarden was recommended by the panel at the final selection meeting. In May 2014, the Council officially designated this city as ECOC 2018 on the basis of the panel's recommendation⁵.

Malta decided to proceed with its selection procedure one year ahead of the normal time schedule. Valetta was the only city to enter the competition and was pre-selected in January 2012. It then got a positive recommendation from the panel during the final selection meeting held in Valetta in November 2012. The city was designated as ECOC 2018 by the Council in May 2013⁶.

1.3.2 The monitoring of the two European Capitals of Culture 2018

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).

⁵ Council Decision 2014/352/EU of 21 May 2014, OJ L 175.

⁶ Council Decision 2013/286/EU of 17 May 2013, OJ L 162.

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 under the EU Creative Europe programme and has a great symbolic value often triggering complementary sponsoring.

Regarding Leeuwarden and Valetta, the two monitoring meetings took place in September 2015 and March 2017. On the basis of the panel's positive recommendation, the Commission awarded the Melina Mercouri Prize to both Leeuwarden and Valetta in 2017.

The panel's reports (selection and monitoring) are available at the following address:

- https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en

1.3.3 Description of the two European Capitals of Culture 2018

1.3.3.1 Leeuwarden

With the concept of iepen mienskip (open community) at the centre of its programme, Leeuwarden aims to strengthen and connect communities from across the Friesland region and Europe, with more than 800 projects involving music, theatre, landscape art, opera, and sport taking place throughout the year.

An exhibition by Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, an opera about Mata Hari, an event with Frisian horse-breeders, and grassroots projects such as 'European sports for all' are just a few of the many projects that will be contributing to raising awareness and increasing understanding of cultural differences.

The programme is organized around five story lines, all of which arising from the themes Nature & Culture, City & Countryside, Community & Diversity, Royal Friesian and Lab Leeuwarden: Dare to Dream (main highlights in the programme), Dare to be Proud/Strong (focusing on the Frisian pearls), Dare to be Different (about social diversity), Dare to Act (about biodiversity) and Dare to Experiment/Change/Fail (about social laboratories). Cooperation with the twin ECOC Valletta is also foreseen with projects such as "Potatoes go wild".

In line with the aims of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, Leeuwarden 2018's programme includes projects promoting cultural tangible and intangible heritage.

The objective of the ECOC-year is to achieve 4 million visits to Leeuwarden and Friesland in 2018, to generate around €79 million in additional revenue and to develop culture-based tourism as a new pillar in the whole region in the long-run.

The ECOC year is developed by the Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 Foundation, which is a small, flexible organization. The management includes Lieven Bertels (cultural director and director until August 2017), Tjeerd van Bekkum (director since summer 2017), John Bonnema (business director) and Oeds Westerhof (director for legacy and network, who also led the competition phase from January 2013). The overall project is controlled by an independent Supervisory Board, supported by the municipality of Leeuwarden and the province of Friesland.

According to the information provided by Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 ahead of the second monitoring meeting in April 2017, their total budget amounted to € 72 million, with the municipality of Leeuwarden, the other municipalities in the region and the province of Friesland contributing respectively € 5.95 million, 11 million and 20.3 million. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of the Interior have pledged a total of € 7.5 million. The contribution from the private sector is € 18 million.

1.3.3.2 Valetta

Valletta's motto for the Year is "Imagine 2018". The Valletta 2018 narrative, An Island-Wide Festa, and the themes, (i) Island Stories, (ii) Future Baroque and (iii) Voyages, have shaped the development of the Programme and its dramaturgy.

The narrative adopts the traditional Maltese festa as a metaphor for a contemporary programme. The three themes intend to reflect the character of the Maltese Islands with realism and humour and to address the broader realities in Europe and the Mediterranean area. The Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme includes a collection of over 140 projects and 400 events taking place throughout the European Capital of Culture year. Highlights include the Opening Ceremony in January 2018, Pageant of the Seas, a large-scale celebration in June 2018, Orfeo & Majnun (working title), a large-scale participatory project in collaboration with La Monnaie (B) and Festival Aix-en-Provence (F) (funded under Creative Europe), the specially-commissioned opera *Aħna Refuġjati* (We are Refugees) addressing the human cost of large-scale migration, and the multi-site exhibition *The Sea Our Neighbour* (working title) from January to end of May.

The programme sees the involvement of around 1000 (local and international) artists, curators, artist collectives, performers, workshop leaders, writers, designers, choirs and film-makers. Around 200 international artists coming from countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, as well as Europe and the rest of the world will collaborate with locals throughout the 2018 programme. Likewise, Maltese artists are travelling to their twin European Capital of Culture, Leeuwarden in the Netherlands, as well as to other cities in Cyprus, Japan, Poland or Greece. Cooperation with Leeuwarden also includes projects such as "Potatoes go wild". Local audiences will be exposed to European and international perspectives, and the intention is to extend Malta's networks beyond its shores.

Linked to the project of Valletta 2018, the city is developing a new Museum of National Art (MUZA), the Valletta Design Cluster (incubator for design companies) and the transformation of the indoor market *Is-Suq tal-Belt* into a hub for cultural activities and leisure.

In line with the aims of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, Valletta 2018's programme includes projects promoting cultural tangible and intangible heritage.

The ECOC year is developed by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Jason Micallef is Chair of the Board of Directors of Valletta 2018 Foundation. Catherine Tabone has been the Executive Director of Valletta 2018 since July 2017 (replacing Karsten Xuereb) while Mario Philip Azzopardi is the Artistic Director – Special Events Valletta 2018.

According to the information provided by Valletta 2018 for the second monitoring meeting, their total budget amounts to € 46 million. 95% come from the public sector, the main contributor being the National Government with € 43.84 million.

1.3.4 Evaluations carried out by the two European Capitals of Culture 2018

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 evaluations.

The contractor will liaise with Leeuwarden 2018 and Valetta 2018 to see whether they have commissioned such evaluations and, if so, to which extent the results of such evaluations can feed into the contractor's own evaluation without extra costs for the Commission. The evaluators will consider cautiously the envisaged schedule for the delivery of the evaluation data and results from the ECoCs and the impact of delays in the schedule of this evaluation and foresee alternative methodologies in the contingency planning. This is particularly important in 2018 as the timing of the European-level evaluation has been advanced in comparison to previous years.

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 European Capitals of Culture 2018, Leeuwarden and Valetta.

The aim is to better understand how the two European Capitals of Culture 2018 contributed to the objectives of the Action, whether they have 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 European Capitals of Culture 2018 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 title city 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 title city'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 title cities' cultural programmes and associated activities relevant to their own objectives?

- To what extent were the activities consistent with the title city'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 title cities cooperate?

Effectiveness

EQ3: 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 taken 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?

EQ4: To what extent were the title cities' 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 title city?
- To what extent did the title city 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?

EQ5: 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?

EQ6: 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?

Efficiency

EQ7: How did the management arrangements of each title city 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?

EQ8: 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?

EQ9: To what extent did the title cities 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)?

EQ10: To what extent were the financial and human resources secured by each title city 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?

Coherence

EQ11: To what extent was the ECOC Action coherent and 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 title cities complemented other EU initiatives, e.g. European Youth Capital, European Green Capital?

EU added value

EQ12: What is the EU added value and the visibility 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?
- Was the fact that this is a European Union action sufficiently communicated by the cities?
- To what extent were the general public and the cultural operators in the cities and overall Europe aware of the event and of the fact that the title is a EU action?

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 2018 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 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.

3.4 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 10-page synopsis of all stakeholder consultation activities (including activities such as surveys, interviews with stakeholders, etc.), reporting on the methodology used to consult different types of stakeholders during the evaluation, the main topics/viewpoints emerging from the different stakeholder consultations and how the consultation work has been taken into account in the wider evaluation work;
 - 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.;
 - in case of need, a glossary of terms used.

3.5 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 8 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).⁷

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 Portal⁸. 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, Youth, Sport and Culture.

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 participate 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 **July 2018**. The contract will start after both parties have signed it. The period of execution of the contract is **12 months**. The contractor should note that no

⁷ 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.

⁸ For a list of shared data interoperability assets see the ISA program join-up catalogue (<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/catalogue/repository/eu-semantic-interoperability-catalogue>) and the Open Data Portal resources.

extension will be possible under any circumstances, due to the expiry of the Framework Contract.

The following outline work plan and indicative timetable are envisaged⁹:

Deadline	Task
<i>July 2018</i>	A kick-off meeting may be held after the signature of the contract.
<i>August 2018</i>	Contractor submits the inception report to Steering Group. At least one Steering Group meeting will be held remotely or in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>28 February 2019</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 remotely or in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>31 May 2019</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 remotely or in Brussels within two weeks after the submission.
<i>30 June 2019</i>	Taking account of the Commission's comments contractor submits the final report and executive summary to Steering Group.
<i>15 July 2019</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 title cities for 2018.

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;

⁹ This schedule might change in particular to take into account the results of the cities' own evaluations that might not be available in time for an interim report in April 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 2007-2016¹⁰;
- The panel's reports concerning the 2018 titles;
- Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of ECOC 2010-2017, Ecorys, 2011¹¹
- 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

When designing the evaluation methodology the contractor must take account of the following:

- The evaluation must be performed in accordance with the European Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines¹². A Better Regulation "Toolbox"¹³ is also available to support with

¹⁰ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm

¹¹ Idem

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc_guide_en.htm

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc_tool_en.htm

the implementation of these Guidelines. The contractor should note that the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox were revised in July 2017 and should familiarise themselves with any changes made in comparison to the previous version, so as to ensure to respect the current guidance.

- 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 2007-2017 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.
- 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.

Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

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