

BUDWEIS 2028

CREATING A (PERMA)CULTURE ENVIRONMENT

TOGETHER

(PERMA)CULTURE

Permaculture designs sustainable relationships between humans and the natural environment based on three ethical principles: caring for the Earth, caring for people, and fair distribution. Once these standards of ethics are met, permaculture can be used to design any area of life — including culture.



BUDWEIS 2028

BUDWEIS (CITY)

95 664

inhabitants

19 950

retirees

14 503

children 0-15

21 117

high school
& university students

BUDWEIS (DISTRICT)

6 464

employees in culture
and creative industries

155 mil. €

culture and creative
industries revenue

SOUTH BOHEMIAN REGION

631 803

inhabitants

38%

of the region
is covered by forest

24%

of all Czech water
areas located there

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INTRODUCTION

THE ONLY POSSIBLE FUTURE IS THE BETTER ONE

Q1+Q2

Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture? Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area? Explain this choice.

TESTIMONY

The candidacy of Budweis for a European Capital of Culture in 2028 is both a city strategic development goal and a grassroots project. Our bid grows from our neighbours, colleagues, communities, friends, elected representatives, guests, patriots. From those who have a voice, but also from those who were (temporarily) excluded from the debate. From our stories, life experiences, everyday struggles, needs, wishes, and expectations. It is diversified and homogenous at the same time. For a long time we weren't used to talking to each other, listening to each other's needs, sharing ideas, getting inspired, or cooperating enough. Yet we have so much in common. The candidacy has brought us together at just the right moment. It was about time!

OUR VISION: THE NEW REALITY

The world order is changing. We can hardly predict what the next year will be like. How could we predict the reality of 2028? Yet we can see the city is already transforming, as people's needs and values are changing in these turbulent times. The urgency for defining the vision of the city comes from our local government, as well as from our people. The candidacy has helped to create a synergy between them. All together, we can imagine the new reality that we will live in! **The new vision for Budweis.**

The preparation period unlocked so much Creativity, Activisation, Responsibility and Enthusiasm among Budweisers it proved that we are ready to accept this challenge. The Budweis 2028 bid is the result of our universal passion for the enthusiastic co-creation process, our deep trust in the power of the participative approach, strong belief in shared Western (European) values, but also responsibility for the inherited environment and its uncertain future. **Thus we imagine the (PERMA)CULTURE environment where change can thrive.**

THE PRESENT: CONTENTMENT

Budweis. A regional city with a multicultural history, rich cultural and natural heritage and a potential for sustainable growth that predestine it to be an inspiring centre of European importance. In 2028, Budweis may come to represent the Czech culture in Europe, and along with one French and one North Macedonian city, it may represent European Culture to the world.

Budweis. If cities had nicknames, our city would be called Contentment. Nothing defines the city and its people better than this state of satisfaction. No wonder: **Budweis is a beautiful, peaceful city at a confluence of two rivers, surrounded by scenic (agri)cultural landscape.** It has a great potential for sustainable urban and rural development. Its smart green city ambitions are laid out in the city development strategy, as well as naturally rooted in the city landscape and the region's natural environment, bounded by several protected natural areas including the Bohemian Forest national park. Ties with the natural environment are further strengthened by the presence of the University of South Bohemia and the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Budweis is the German name of the city that historically benefited enormously from multiculturalism and geographical affiliation to the naturally bilingual German-Czech speaking territory. The city has strong historic ties with Linz in Austria and Passau in Germany, hence re-establishing the tradition of close cross-border cooperation in an area historically rich with traces of other cultures is only natural. The city bears footprints of German-speaking, Jewish, Roma, Celtic, and other ancestors. Improved awareness of the multicultural history of the city and region will boost locals' trust in diversity, their openness and mutual respect, as well as encourage hospitality aimed at all the guests and temporary citizens, whether they come to spend a holiday, to work or study, or seek refuge when fleeing a war zone.

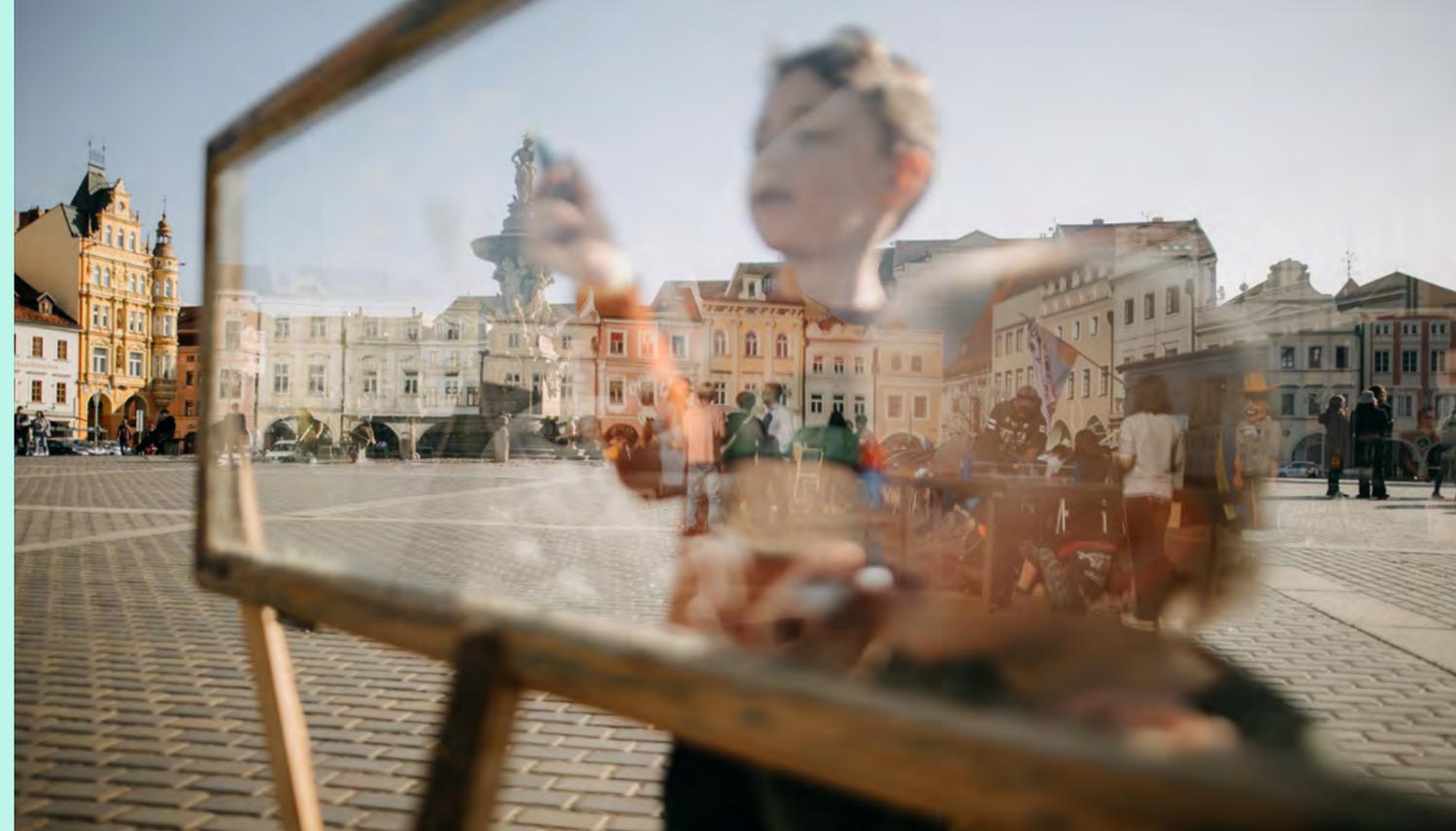
REGIONAL CULTURAL SYNERGY

Budweis is the natural and central point of the cultural infrastructure of the South Bohemian region, where diverse players co-exist in a symbiosis and cultivate the creative mycelium of the city and region. The cultural infrastructure, however, has been severely affected by the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, later exacerbated by the consequences of the Russian attack on Ukraine. It has caused previously unseen changes in the habits, needs and priorities of diverse players participating in culture. The candidacy, again, brings energy for the empowerment, motivation, and also strategic development of the cultural sector. It is a win-win project that cultivates existing cultural infrastructure with the principles of permaculture design.

Budweis 2028 connects cultural organisations, NGOs, the private sector, educational institutions, communities and the state administration. It creates a safe space for cooperation between women, men, children, artists, entrepreneurs, stakeholders, researchers, teachers, guests, scientists, parents or guests. They all have different needs, skills and powers. They all represent different perspectives. And each one can offer a unique contribution, be it space, attention, audience, money, experience, expertise, impact, education, care, creativity, community. Together, they can create a motivated, confident and sustainable **(PERMA)CULTURE environment that fundamentally improves the quality of life in the city, region, and community.**

(PERMA)CULTURE

Permaculture designs sustainable relationships between humans and the natural environment based on three ethical principles: caring



Window of Visions, KULTURISTA, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Pavel Balek)

for the Earth, caring for people, and fair distribution. Once these standards of ethics are met, permaculture can be used to design any area of life — including culture. We can see the principles in concepts such as regenerative culture, town planning, passive nature management, and community resilience. But we go even further. We apply these originally agricultural principles to cultural infrastructure. Our mission is to cultivate the socio-cultural environment of Budweis and the South Bohemian region into an environment guided by these principles. **To fulfil this mission, we came up with the concept of culture as CARE,** and curated the cultural programme of Budweis 2028 in line with all its principles.

after another rises in perfect harmony around the Baroque Samson Fountain. Renaissance and Baroque architects from all over Europe made their mark on Budweis' landmarks."



Juraj Thoma (53)
1st Deputy Mayor

The renowned **Budweis Square** is also one of the largest outdoor cultural venues in the city, filling up every year with thousands of guests from home and abroad for the famous Christmas Market. The historic centre, surrounded by a green ring of parks, is filled with cultural productions from spring until autumn.

"We enjoy public space and outdoor productions. There are around 100 performances staged every year on the unique revolving stage of the South Bohemian Theatre in the baroque garden of the Český Krumlov castle and at other cultural landmarks in and around the city. The South Bohemian Philharmonic Orchestra also performs outdoors at exceptional venues across the region. Each year, the city centre transforms into an open-air gallery of art and sculpture by visiting artists. Countless concerts take place on every corner... and the neighbourhood festival Město lidem, lidé městu ("City for the People, People for the City"), fills the entire city centre with a two-day programme."



Lukáš Průdek (41)
director of the South Bohemian Theatre

An important cultural event is the **Budějovický Majáles**, a traditional student festival held every May, whose history in Bohemia dates back to the 15th century and is associated with the spread of universities. In Budweis, since the new millennium, the event has been organised by local high-school students. Every year, over 70 of them constitute the organisational team and create a week-long multi-genre cultural showcase in which they show their passion for culture and social events in the city and acquire their first bits of experience with cultural production.

Q3

Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.

Culture is created through people. Behind every cultural organisation, creative group, and artistic project there are individuals who make up their core. Just as the city is connected by sidewalks, squares, parks and rivers, it is also connected by interpersonal relationships. The cultural profile of a city is made up of its museums, theatres, cinemas and libraries, but also directors, dramaturgs, curators, technical crew, and cashiers. Everyone has a slightly different perspective on the cultural profile of the city, as well as culture itself.

"Budweis is the unique combination of a city with a grand foundation dating back to 1265 and one firmly anchored in the legendary South Bohemian landscape. We have no castle or chateau, but we do have one of the largest squares in the country, where one townhouse

"I joined the organisational team at the age of fourteen and the Budějovický Majáles association gave me everything I needed at that time. It helped me find my own values, gave me a space for self-realisation and for learning how culture and its management really work. It taught me and gave me more than I ever imagined. I believe that I am not the only one whose life has been changed by the Budějovický Majáles."



Bianka Machová (23)
student and former director of the Budějovický Majáles student festival

Although Budweis has multiplied in size many times since its founding in order to reach its current population of 95,000, the historic city centre has remained the heart of the city's life. Today, all of the most important cultural institutions are located there, a stone's throw away from one another. An understated but vital cultural institution is the **House of Arts Gallery of Contemporary Art and Architecture**, which, thanks to the work of its curator Michal Škoda, regularly brings European and international creators of contemporary art to Budweis.

"For twenty years, the House of Arts Contemporary Art Gallery has brought forth discussions on the meaning of art for people, with a diversity of opinions. Our work enters the public space through interventions, such as when the architect Jan Šépka covered a part of Budweis square with his Perception installation and ignited a debate on the form and value of public space. Another example is of the independent association CBArchitektura, whose long-standing initiative led to a greater interest in the space and infrastructure of the city and stimulated its transformation."



Petra Lexová (33)
teacher and art historian

"Buildings serving cultural purposes were in short supply, but culture in Budweis showed that it can find its own way. Instead of building expensive new buildings, it made use of what was available. One of the few cultural institutions housed in a building that was built for its purpose is the South Bohemian Museum, but the House of Arts gallery is in an apartment building on the square, the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery is in a townhouse, the South Bohemian Philharmonic Orchestra is in a consecrated church, the South Bohemian Theatre was built on a brewery icebox and the Kredance dance space is in a heat exchanger."



Lukáš Průdek (41)
director of the South Bohemian Theatre

Although the most visible cultural institutions are located in the very centre of the city, they often have significant overlap with the city's outskirts and the region. The city's largest cultural organisation, the **South Bohemian Theatre**, is nationally known for its summer stage, the Rotating Auditorium, located in the Baroque castle garden of nearby Český Krumlov, which draws audiences from far and wide throughout the entire summer.

The **Astronomy Centre** has a world-renowned observatory on the nearby Kleť mountain. Its significance is evidenced by the fact that its director, Jana Tichá, is the chair of the International Astronomical Union's commission for naming and designation of small bodies in the solar system. Space exploration has a long tradition in the city and the region. The first European in space (not counting the Soviet Union) was Vladimír Remek, a native of Budweis, in 1978.

The **Aleš South Bohemian Gallery** has stunning gallery spaces in the popular Hluboká nad Vltavou castle and a gallery in Bechyně, which is entirely dedicated to ceramics. In collaboration between the gallery and the local Secondary School of Arts and Crafts, an annual ceramics symposium is held here, filling the gallery's collections with ceramic works by international artists for over 60 years.

"In the 19th century, we were at the cutting edge of innovation. A vision was carried out to efficiently connect the Danube, the Moldau region and Prague by means of transport. The original idea for the waterway was transformed by F. A. Gerstner into one incorporating thoroughly modern and advanced technology. Budweis and Linz, Austria, were connected by the first-ever railway on the European continent, the horse-drawn railway, Koněspřežka."



Juraj Thoma (53)
1st Deputy Mayor

Thanks to its many branches, the **South Bohemian Library** is often the only regularly operating and accessible cultural institution outside the city centre. At the same time, through its methodology and reservation system, it helps to ensure the operation of all regional libraries and small libraries located throughout the South Bohemian Region, of which there are over 600 in total, creating a unique network of low-threshold cultural institutions.

What seems to be missing in Budweis is often supplemented by the surrounding region. Budweis does not have a well-developed independent professional theatre scene, but a half-hour bus ride west will take the audience to Plum Yard, home to the renowned **Continuo Theatre**, which has been filling the landscape of South Bohemia with site-specific and immersive theatre for two decades. Another half-hour by bus, the audience will arrive in the town of Písek, which houses **Sladovna**. This unique exhibition gallery focused on creative education for the youngest audiences is part of the European network Hands on! Contemporary dance and movement theatre is the focus of the **Rezi.dance** space in Komařice, a sought-after residency venue for award-winning Czech and international troupes.

"Budweis is a unique historical city surrounded by a distinctive landscape with which it grows in a symbiosis. It is a city in a basin, with a pair of rivers at its centre, forests and fields around its perimeter and streams and ponds permeating its body. Its location and landscape shape the dynamics of the town and the people who live there. It is slow and quiet, but occasionally stricken with transformative force, as for example in the 2002 flooding or, 20 years later, with the preparation of the candidacy for the European Capital of Culture."



Petra Lexová (33)
lecturer and art historian

The South Bohemian countryside has always been a rural landscape deeply connected with rural society. Nature conservation and agriculture are the most important fields of study at the **University of South Bohemia** in Budweis, which has a student body of 12,000.

The city is also home to the globally respected **Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences**. The Ministry of Agriculture is the founder of the Exhibition Grounds, annually hosting the **Země Živitelka festival**, which with its 100,000 visitors is the largest social event in South Bohemia and the largest agricultural festival in the Czech Republic.

Q4

Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture



Speed networking, 2019 (Budweis, photo: Štěpán Skalka)

(PERMA)CULTURE

Our vision is to create a (PERMA)CULTURE environment. This means cultivating an environment where change can thrive. To fulfil our mission, we devised the concept of CARE, a gentle culture-induced transformation to a Conscious, Accessible, Regenerated and Empowered socio-cultural territory. In line with this concept, the Budweis 2028 programme is built on four robust pillars – Culture, Art, Research and Education – a blend of creative and scientific approaches allowing us to stimulate sensibility, consciousness and responsibility for the environment, and people. [\(Q10, pg. 17\)](#)

The artistic concept of Budweis 2028 is designed to create and maintain safe space to experiment. To open peoples' hearts and minds to the notions of our shared future. To ignite their imagination! To let them experience participative futuring and co-creation of a paradigm shift from culture as entertainment to culture as **CARE**.

Inspired by the permaculture agriculture, the Budweis 2028 programme is broken down into four life cycle phases: Sowing and sprouting (2022-2024), Growth (2024-2028), Harvest and celebration (2028), and finally, Regeneration and dissemination (2029). This division allows us to better plan and allocate our resources – human, financial, and creative. It also gives us a clearer view of the artistic projects' logical timelines. Some projects can begin already in the initiatory phase of observing and planning, some will prosper best in the harvest season, others can only be released in a specifically cultivated environment.

Our programme reflects and respects the current cultural profiles of the city and region, as well as all the city's strategic development goals. It has been modelled in accordance with the Culture Strategy, the Local Adaptation Strategy of the City of Budweis to Climate Change, and the Concept of Tourism Development in Budweis 2023-2025.

VALUES WE SHARE

The vision of Budweis 2028 is based on the values and principles of establishing transparent partnerships, enabling diverse and fair (co) creation, and ensuring authentic and responsible decision-making. These have been our values since the beginning of the candidacy. They are interwoven throughout the entire bid book and are reflected in the Budweis 2028 cultural programme, as well as in the artistic projects themselves.

CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Culture nurtures the quality of life for local residents, the development of public spaces, enhances guests' experience, and the overall flourishing of the city. And so do we: we care about each other's needs, our public spaces and natural environment. We value quality over quantity, relationships over performance, care and cooperation over competition.

COLLABORATION, CO-CREATION, PARTNERSHIP

Culture is made by people who are at the centre of our attention. We create the right conditions and stimulate effective cooperation, coordination, and partnership. We promote a culture of sharing between individuals and collectives across cultural institutions. We purposefully establish interdisciplinary relations (with activists, scientists, politicians). We build coalitions, yet respect each other's differences.

ACCESSIBILITY, RESPECT AND OPENNESS

Culture and art should be viewed as a common good for everyone's benefit and use. Our goal is to achieve an environment that reflects the needs of people and invites them to actively participate – an inclusive environment. We ask ourselves who can or cannot participate in our programme and why, and try to eliminate any barriers.

ENVIRONMENT

Natural and human resources must be treated ethically and sustainably. We make maximum use of locally available resources. We reduce our carbon footprint. We actively care for the environment. Applying such an approach, culture helps change the world and inspires other sectors of the local economy.

(EUROPEAN) CITIZENSHIP

We create conditions for the protection and development of European civil society. We stand for human rights and openly oppose all manifestations of intolerance or discrimination. We create opportunities for democratic participation of all in the public sphere.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS & CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Our decisions are fuelled by knowledge coming from research and supported by advice coming from experts, but are always based on reflection and open debate: never "about us, without us". We ask questions and look for solutions using our skills and imaginations. Always together.

LONG TERM STRATEGY

Q5

Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, including the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?

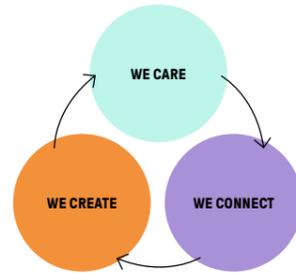
working on the modernisation of the city, the uniqueness of the offer, and increasing the city's attractiveness for the return of young people who studied outside the region, or for incoming guests and new residents to the city.

These valuable analytical outputs became the basis for the evidence-based creation of the Budweis Culture Strategy as well as for the bid book projects. [\(Q17, pg. 41\)](#)

PRINCIPLES OF THE BUDWEIS CULTURE STRATEGY

From the very start, the strategy as well as the bid were designed with the vision of **culture as CARE** and the principles of permaculture design in mind, with both concepts being anchored together later on. [\(Q4, pg. 7\)](#) **The cultural environment designed in the Budweis Culture Strategy creates the basis of the (PERMA)CULTURE environment curated by Budějovice 2028.**

The Budweis Culture Strategy focuses on three core areas – people, resources and infrastructure – which are held in a constant cycle of innovation by the principles of care, connection and creativity. It ensures quality relationships and connections so that new ideas can flourish. This way, similar to the idea of permaculture, it represents a closed loop of self-cultivation.



The Strategy aims to gradually prepare the environment at different levels in order to fully utilise the developmental potential of the Budweis 2028 project. In line with European trends, the strategy does not limit itself to a narrow concept of culture, but instead focuses on the potential of culture to develop the whole city (its physical environment, identity and brand) and its civil society (community development, learning, quality of life).

PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL PLANNING

The Budweis Culture Strategy 2023-2035 was approved by the City council on 13 June 2022, with immediate effect as the first-ever city strategic document dealing with culture. It was made by the culture planning agency KREIA under the curatorial supervision of the Budweis 2028 team.

The whole process was based on a participatory approach. The preparation and participation was an attractive and exciting process that served for both initial data collection and for onboarding diverse stakeholders. Municipal officials from the Department of Culture, representatives of all political parties, as well as cultural players from the city and the region, from established and independent non-profit organisations, representatives of universities, schools and important local businesses were involved. Thanks to the co-creation and involvement of all these subjects, who naturally positioned themselves as the bearers and future implementers, the sustainability of cultural activities is guaranteed far beyond the title year.

IN TOTAL, ABOUT 200 PEOPLE AND MORE THAN 50 ORGANISATIONS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION

ABOUT 2,200 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN THE FORM OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The Strategy is designed to run until 2035 and it will be accompanied by action plans in specific areas (every 2 years). Action plans will respond to current needs and a mid-term strategy vision, and will be connected with Budweis 2028 projects. This guarantees continuity, self-innovation, flexibility to respond to global challenges and permanent development.

It is also in line with the Strategic Plan of the City of Budweis 2017-2027, the main municipal conceptual document which determines the city's development priorities, including the attractiveness of the city as one of the main pillars with which it wants to actively work. It perceives the great, but not always utilised, potential of the city in its location: not far from natural sights and UNESCO sites, with a rich history, unburdened by heavy industry. Despite the relatively good offer of leisure activities, the plan recommends

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGY IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PRIORITY AREAS THAT CAPTURE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES:

WE CARE	WE CONNECT	WE CREATE
PRINCIPLE #1 NURTURING STABLE CONDITIONS FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	PRINCIPLE #2 CONNECTING, ENGAGING AND COOPERATING	PRINCIPLE #3 ACCESSIBLE, EXCELLENT, AND SUSTAINABLE CREATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – good conditions through sufficient personal staffing at the level of the city cultural department, but also through the backbone network of cultural organisations – stable and transparent financial conditions for culture (tenders, qualitative criteria, new grant schemes...) – suitable physical infrastructure and facilities for culture in the long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – not only cultural actors with one another, but culture with other disciplines and areas of life in the city – to result in new ideas, innovations, and new opportunities for new talents <p>> culture serves as a catalyst in this process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – merging spontaneously but in the strategically created conditions from the 1st and 2nd area
AREA: PEOPLE	AREA: RESOURCES	AREA: INFRASTRUCTURE
At the heart of the strategy are the PEOPLE , from the competent strategists to every resident and visitor to the city.	Culture needs RESOURCES in order to invest in the quality of the production and self-growth of the sector. To attract various groups of audiences and ensure social development.	Culture needs solid INFRASTRUCTURE and facilities to function well all year round: cultural institutions of all kinds as well as shared public spaces, and cultural and natural areas (parks, squares, waterfronts) that invite informal gatherings and cultural experiences.
In order to make a culture offering excellent, sustainable and accessible to ALL , first cooperation of many different stakeholders is needed.		

IN EACH AREA WE ADDRESS EACH OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED PRINCIPLES TO ENSURE CONTINUITY AND COHERENCE. THIS TABLE HIGHLIGHTS THE LOGIC OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARTICULAR MEASURES IN THE STRATEGY:

	PRIORITY AREA	PRIORITY AREA	PRIORITY AREA	
PEOPLE	1.1 WE CARE ABOUT COMPETENCIES AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CULTURE	2.1 WE CONNECT CULTURE WITH PEOPLE	3.1 WE CREATE A CULTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY	When developing human potential, we 1. focus on those who strategically create the environment, 2. enable creative people to bring their ideas to life (whether in culture, a school or business) and 3. focus on the public and offer the opportunity to participate in the culture to all.
RESOURCES	1.2 WE CARE ABOUT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES	2.2 WE CONNECT TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITY	3.2 WE CREATE A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY	Sufficient financial resources to support new ideas and talent, but also the creation of new opportunities to kick-start (not just economic) long-term sustainability of culture.
INFRASTRUCTURE	1.3 WE CARE ABOUT QUALITY FOUNDATIONS	2.3 WE CONNECT HISTORY WITH THE FUTURE	3.3 WE CREATE A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE	Creating suitable cultural spaces and bringing them alive with arts & culture resulting in a mix of the rich cultural heritage with the latest trends and innovations; stimulating the environment suitable for the creation of an excellent culture.
	We ensure stable conditions for the development of culture and innovation. These cannot be created without competent people, quality facilities and sufficient resources.	In good conditions, innovative ideas emerge by connecting the obvious but also the seemingly incompatible (cultural actors not only with each other but also with the public, emerging talents with opportunities, history with the future, etc.).	Through extensive collaboration and networking, we are creating a culture that is accessible, excellent and sustainable. One that can draw in every city resident, guest, and leading artist.	> The diagonal principle: Competent people at the beginning lead to excellent culture in the end

SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS

The municipality is opening up to the people through the newly redesigned Department of Culture and Tourism. In particular through the establishment of the Cultural and Community Coordinator and Guardian of the Implementation of the Budweis Culture Strategy positions. The organisational structure of the Strategy and roles of above mentioned subjects is elaborated upon in the following diagram:



THE NEXT STEP: STRATEGICALLY LINKING THE CITY AND THE REGION

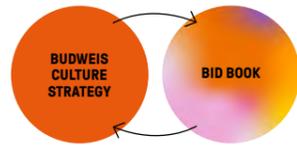
The next step is the regional cultural strategy. It should be in place by 2023. At the moment the University of South Bohemia in Budweis and The Department of Culture Regional Office of the South Bohemian Region are mapping cultural and creative industries. This will serve as a basis for the regional cultural strategy.

Q7

How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?

The Budweis 2028 project has been created in symbiosis with the priorities of the Budweis Culture Strategy. Although the Strategy does not depend on obtaining the ECoC title, it nevertheless perceives it as a significant positive driving force for the promotion of cultural and social progress and a space for change. This interdependency was achieved by the fact that both documents were created in synergy and supervised by the Budweis 2028 team, in cooperation with- and commissioned directly by the municipality of Budweis.

The Strategy clearly defines a gradual increase of the city's budget for culture in the following years to secure funding for the preparation of the ECoC, for the title year itself, and also for the sustainability of



Budweis 2028 projects after 2028. (Q20, pg. 48) "Obtaining the ECoC title" itself is listed in the Strategy as one of the indicators.

Another significant measure of the Strategy, which clearly follows the ECoC objective, is the provision and support of intercity, inter-regional, cross-border and international European cooperation, which is understood as important for the city development. Festivals, conferences, youth exchanges and other events with an international scope will be organised. It will be supported via Budweis 2028 projects such as **PLATFORM 28: CULTURE RESHAPED, TWINS** – capacity building of twin cities, or **PORTKEYS** – presentation of other ECoC cities.

In the Action Plan for the years 2023–2024, the following ECoC related activities are listed:

- Preparation of the bid book
- Realisation of the accompanying programme related to the candidacy
- Marketing activities related to the candidacy
- Capacity building activities
- Concept of a **Legacy fund** (Q20, pg. 48) within an interdisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation framework. The purpose of the fund is to help ensure long-term financing of development activities – particularly ECoC, but also a new theatre building, sculptures in the public space, etc.
- If it advances to the final stage of the selection procedure, the Budweis 2028 association will be transformed into a registered institute; this will allow both the city and the region to step into the association equally.

Besides those specific measures mentioned, the Strategy, above all, sets objectives and priorities which are subsequently met and further developed through bid book projects. The Strategy is designed in a way which creates conditions for the projects' thriving on their own, but in case of Budweis winning the title, it will provide the support for specific Budweis 2028 projects that meet its objectives and priorities.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE SPECIFIC BUDWEIS 2028 PROJECTS THAT ARE ALREADY ROOTED IN THE STRATEGY:

PRIORITY AREAS	THE BUDWEIS CULTURE STRATEGY PRIORITIES	EXAMPLES OF BID BOOK PROJECTS THAT ARE FOLLOWING UP ON THE BUDWEIS CULTURE STRATEGY
WE CARE	1.1 ABOUT THE COMPETENCES AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CULTURE	1.1.1 Create a stable backbone network of cultural organisations CULTURE ISLAND - strategic coordination / 28 HOUSES as a platform for programme coordination and capacity building / Local ECoC meeting platform
		1.1.2 Strengthen the position of the Department of Culture into a managerial and coordinating body Capacity building projects
	1.2 ABOUT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES	1.2.1 Ensure a transparent and motivating financial support for culture Budweis 2028 grant system
		1.2.2 Seek additional sources and alternative means of support Budweis 2028 projects financed from EU funds (IROP, Creative EUROPE, Interreg,...) / LEGACY FUND
WE CONNECT	1.3 ABOUT QUALITY FOUNDATIONS	1.3.1 We systematically take care of the infrastructure for cultural and social activities Exchangers / CULTURE ISLAND / PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS
		1.3.2 We care for public spaces and their cultural usability ROBIN PLAYHOOD / METALWORK HIGHLINE / HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL / KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM / KULTURISTIC TRAIL
WE CREATE	2.1 CULTURE WITH PEOPLE	2.1.1 We provide communication and coordination platforms for cultural actors and the public KULTURISTIC OFFICE / Information system → ECoC 2028 app
		2.1.2 Provide and support intercity, inter-county and international cooperation Cooperation within diverse international networks. / PLATFORM 28: CULTURE RESHAPED / PORTKEYS
	2.2 TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITY	2.2.1 Develop creative learning and involve the younger generation in cultural life CREATIVE MINDS / CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LEARNING MILLE FORMES / BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE / Projects which schools or led by youth / Supporting talents through Budějovický Majáles / NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE LEADERS
		2.2.2 Link culture with leisure activities, tourism and gastronomy CULTURE HARVEST / KULTURISTIC OFFICE / KULTURISTIC TRAIL / PILGERLAND / GIVE AND TAKE / CARP(E) DIEM / MERMAIDS & REDNECKS
WE CREATE	2.3 HISTORY WITH THE FUTURE	2.3.1 Care for the tangible cultural heritage and make it accessible to future generations SOUTH BOHEMIAN PECULIARE / ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE / international volunteer workcamps / REMEMBER ALL / KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM / KROJ PRIDE
		2.3.2 Care for the intangible cultural heritage of the city and present it in a modern way FINDING STORYLAND / WOMENPEDIA / THE FORGOTTEN JIROVEC
WE CREATE	3.1 A CULTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY	3.1.1 Developing our work with the public, accessibility Culture Harvest / Open Season / Accessibility capacity building / Accessible heritage
		3.1.2 Creating collaboratively, for cohabitation Participatory platforms and community grants / Community and civil society capacity building / Volunteering program / KULTURISTA
	3.2 A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY	3.2.1 We are environmentally responsible Hotspots of Survival / Ars Biologica / Public science laboratory / Metalwork highline / Carpe(e) Diem
		3.2.2 Encourage volunteering, patronage and general awareness of the importance of culture Capacity building programme for donors and business owners / Volunteering programme / Legacy fund
WE CREATE	3.3 A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE	3.3.1 Develop tools to support cultural and creative industries Creative Minds / Capacity building / Centre for creative learning Mille Formes
		3.3.2 Ensure professionalisation and capacity building of actors Capacity building programme

Q6

Describe the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city.

ECoC is an opportunity to strengthen the capacities for everyone involved, be it culture professionals, independent initiatives, artists, or volunteers. As soon as the process started, it was obvious there was a huge potential in ECoC to initiate cooperation between different players, either in terms of creating innovations or learning from each other.

Our strategy for building capacities will follow the life phases of the programme and will be mostly implemented throughout the phase Growing and sprouting (2022–2024) and at the beginning of Growth (2024–2028) to ensure a strong foundation for the title year.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR

To be able to continuously build the capacities of both sectors, it is important to strengthen them from within through strategic measures. The Budweis Culture Strategy and Budweis 2028 projects will contribute to the strengthening of the sectors in terms of:

Infrastructure – renovations (Culture House Slavie, House of Arts, Revolving Auditorium) and new constructions (South Bohemian Theatre, the Philharmonic), **CULTURE ISLAND** project.

Management – strengthening the Department of Culture and Tourism with two new full-time coordinators.

Finances – increase in spending on culture of up to 9% of the city's budget to support established as well as independent initiatives. Establishment of a new foundation fund, and search for financial opportunities (EU funds, support from the private sector).

Finances for development – modification of the grant system to support local projects with a purely educational and capacity building focus. It will also be possible to use grant resources for in-project training or mentoring.

Creative entrepreneurship – infrastructure in the form of a creative centre (Culture House Slavie) will provide start-ups in the CCI with methodological support, discounted services, or access to technologies. Mapping and research of needs or barriers of (potential) participants in order to provide effective services. Support of craftsmanship along with creating new tourism products and services.

Networking – introducing the community coordinator position

and interdisciplinary council to connect and support the scene. Supporting professional networking through events with an international scope or joint cultural projects.

Experience – enacting strategic measures supporting a system of volunteering and internships in established and non-established cultural organisations; this will also improve the professional skills of future cultural workers and help include the public as co-creators.

Knowledge – ECoC capacity building will be introduced (see below):

BUDWEIS 2028 ECOC CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is one of the pillars of our candidacy; therefore, we have already started with several activities in the pre-selection phase. Within the municipality grants, we created a programme that aims to support the Budweis 2028 principles. To ensure the quality of the projects, we prepared a how-to manual and led an online seminar and two follow-up accelerator workshops for applicants. Examples of the outcomes are listed below.

In total, 32 projects were proposed and 14 chosen in the following topics: Education and capacity building, Cooperation between stakeholders and/or with foreign partners, Environmental topics in cultural projects.

Research among cultural actors conducted 2021–2022 in the city and region showed they are struggling with a lack of funds and personnel in management, marketing and fundraising, as well as in developing audience engagement, strategic planning, and international cooperation. We will ensure easy accessibility of programmes with such content to everyone.

TARGET GROUPS – CAPACITY BUILDING

We will start with people at the core: artists, creatives, arts and culture managers, and professionals. Gradually, we will include a wider group of stakeholders from other sectors, who are key to co-creation of (perma)cultural environment in the city and region. The integration of different stakeholders (i.e. politicians, municipality office employees, tourism professionals, hospitality industry workers) into the capacity building will ensure interconnection between the sectors as well.

CAPACITY BUILDING GOALS

- Gaining specific skills needed for the implementation of Budweis 2028 projects: Our capacity building programme is constructed around different topics Budweis 2028 and the cultural players will need.
- Gain a better understanding of challenges across the sector and learn specific practical solutions.
- Strengthen the relations between culture professionals, institutions and individual actors.

- Reach out to new audiences, broaden the horizons and build stronger relationships with existing audiences.
- Training the trainers: from the pool of participants we will build a local trainers team to carry out the work beyond 2028.
- Magical word: legacy. All of the above has long-lasting potential.

Topics – capacity building

The following table shows examples of capacity building areas. They are simultaneously interconnecting different sectors, as they initiate or strengthen their cooperation:

	EXAMPLE OF PARTNERS
Management in the cultural and creative industries (lifelong learning course / Masters follow-up course)	University of South Bohemia / Leeds University / Nová síť / Arts Management VŠE / JCI / Theatre Faculty, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Grant support for The Academy of Performing Arts focusing on human resources development and education of leaders of cultural organisations across forms and types of cultural organisations in the South Bohemian region.
Next generation of creative leaders	Budějovický Majáles WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Grant support for Budějovický Majáles – incubator of young capacities. Project focused on developing the skills of members of the organisational team through workshops.
Accessibility See Q18 for more specifics.	Centre for students with specific needs / One world for all / Impact Foundation / Poland Without Barriers Foundation WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Discussion “The accessibility of cultural events and institutions” organised as part of the One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival by People in Need.
Audience engagement (learning by doing course)	Impact Foundation FUTURE EXAMPLE CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE: CULTURE ISLAND capacity building, see Q11, pg.19)
Cultural animation / Social arts courses (lifelong learning course / Masters follow-up course)	University of South Bohemia / Theatre Faculty, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague / Social arts, Warsaw university / Clermont-Ferrand 2028
Art of Science (courses connecting environmental sciences with artistic outputs)	University of South Bohemia / Biology centre / Czech Academy of Sciences / Linz Ars Electronica
Creative industries / sector	Make more / Maker Faire CZ / JVT, Art incubator / Michelin, Clermont-Ferrand 2028 / European creative hubs WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Grant support for Maker Fair to present fabrication workshops (fablab) to schools and the public. Participation in Kreativní přihraničí / Grenzländ Kreativ Interreg ZIEL ETZ - CCI regional mapping process leading to the upcoming regional cultural strategy.
Creative learning	SPKV / uMĚNĚM / Hands on! / Mille Formes (FR) / Faculty of Education, University of South Bohemia / Sladovna Gallery / UUL, / Teen theatre network, Aveiro 2027 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Preparation of a platform for creative education with local and international partners. To be introduced during Q4/2022.
Fundraising and Cultural philanthropy	Edu Art Experience / Nadace VIA / Michelin, Clermont-Ferrand 2028 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Seminar on European funding and partnership opportunities from Creative Europe for regional cultural institutions with good practices.

Projects evaluation and monitoring	NROS / Schola Empirica / University of South Bohemia / Civil society studies, Charles University WHAT HAS BEEN DONE “The accessibility of cultural events and institutions” organised as part of the One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival by People in Need.
Participation, Communities, Urban transformations	Nadace Via / Participatory city / EUREKA / MitOst / Actors of urban change / Rouen 2028 (FR) / Decider ensembler / Civil society studies, Charles University WHAT HAS BEEN DONE KULTURISTA, Socionaut workshops, manual for activities in public spaces, Via Foundation workshop
Environmental impact	Impact Hub / Kabinet CB, We love green festival (FR) / University of South Bohemia WHAT HAS BEEN DONE Grant support for newly established Reuse centre for cultural events, Kabinet CB
Volunteer work (Q17, pg. 41)	Local volunteer centers / charities and social facilities / ecology centres / youth organizations / schools / Scouts Institute / Volunteer platform Hestia / Centre for european volunteering / Bad Ischl (AT)
Youth work (Q18, pg. 41)	Europe goes local / Amiens European Youth Capital / Rouen 2028 / Youthwatch / Rural youth platform / Rural Youth Europe
Digital skills, digitalisation	Czechitas / Google academy / Tech soup
Partnership development and internationalisation	Nová síť, / IDU / Quo vadis culture platform / Art, Climate, Transition / Hands on! / Global Cultural District Network / Child Friendly Cities Initiative / European creative hubs
CZEXPORT / export office (support system for exporting artistic and cultural projects)	Czelo / CzechTrade Promotion Agency / Czech Centres / Czech communities living abroad / Czech mobility info

AN EXAMPLE CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE: CULTURE ISLAND CAPACITY BUILDING (Q11, PG. 20)

CONNECTING THE CULTURAL & CREATIVE SECTOR WITH THE SOCIAL SECTOR

Culture is an area which affects interpersonal relations, and which has the power to significantly influence social issues. That is why the long-term strategy includes measures and concrete activities that **aim not only to bring attention to themes such as sustainable development, education, social inclusion, and participation, but also to directly use the potential and power of culture to solve problems. We plan to do so in cooperation with NGOs by engaging our communities**, aiming to ensure equal rights to culture, including addressing the issue of accessibility and affordability of cultural events. As part of our candidacy, we support the creation of a **platform for creative learning (CREATIVE MINDS)** not only in schools but also informally. The Budweis 2028 **Volunteer system HAPPY TOGETHER** or various **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS** will ensure cooperation between fellow inhabitants, NGOs, and cultural organisations. More on the social art project, cooperation with schools and NGOs is described in the Outreach chapter.

CONNECTING CULTURAL & CREATIVE SECTOR WITH THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

We want to create opportunities for cooperation between business and the cultural & creative sectors. Based on Budweis 2028 principles and the (PERMA)CULTURE concept, innovative models and directions for cooperation will be introduced:

CSR: common projects based on common ground – linking the priorities of CSR business strategies with permaculture.

Janek Lesák: Humans of Budějovice, 2016 (Budějovický Majáles, Budweis, photo: Lukáš Neasi)



HR: developing corporate volunteering projects in different formats from basic dedicating time to long-term competence volunteering / work placements.
Creative input: e.g., creative residencies at business organisations contributing to employees' well-being and effectiveness, workshops for business led by creatives.

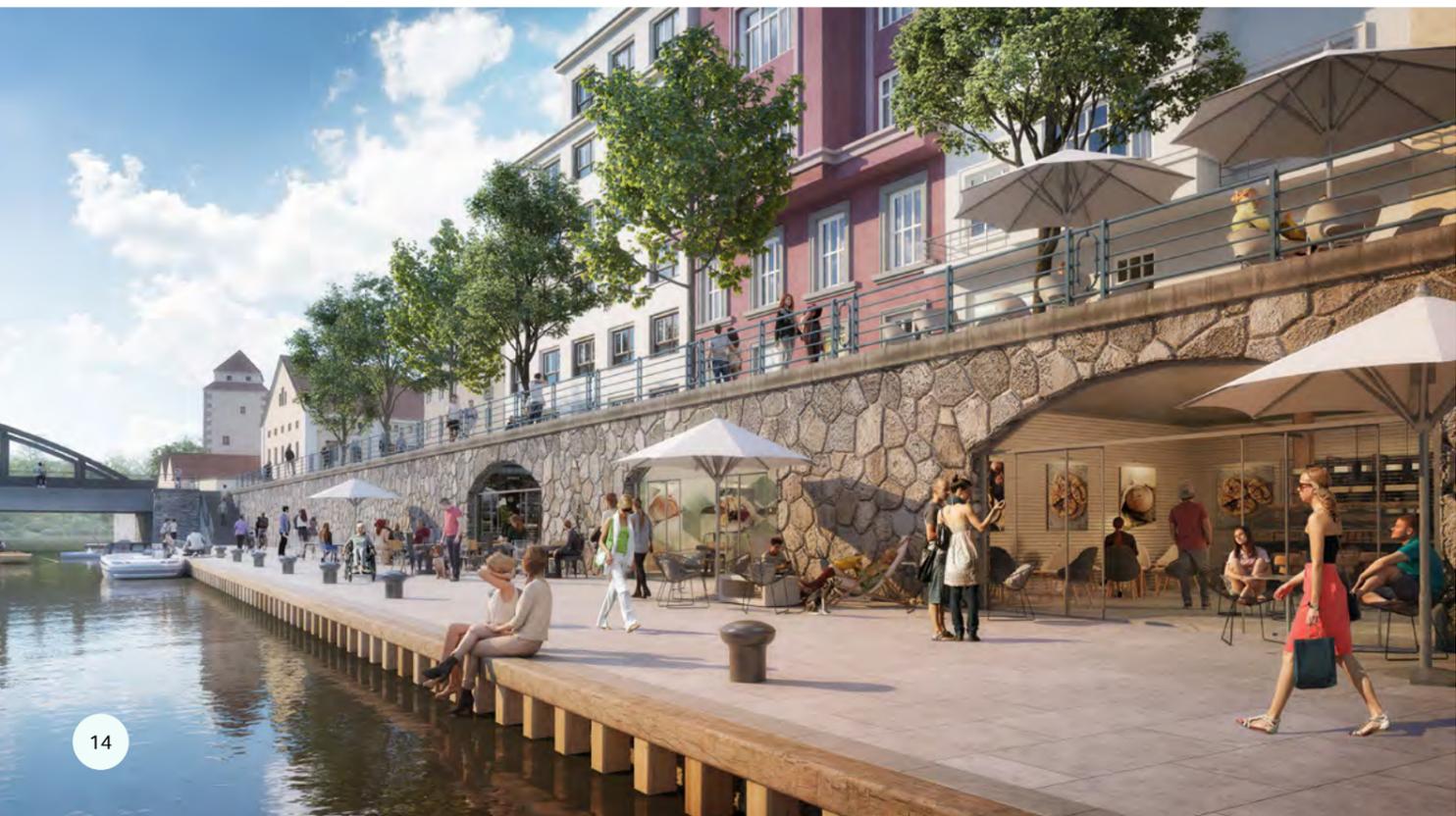
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THAT, OUR FIRST STEPS ARE:
Raising awareness among businesses based in the region and promoting the benefits of working with the cultural & creative sector,

Equipping creatives with the knowledge and skills needed to enter cooperation with businesses and use their artistic skills in a different context.

We are developing collaborations with institutions **promoting STEAM education**. Combining scientific knowledge with hands-on validation using available technologies, then viewing the results from an **artistic perspective** provides the best foundations possible (e.g., Maker Days, Maker Faire, cooperation with Linz).

Cultural grants provide support for the creation of pop-up fab labs (shared open workshops for digital fabrication) and the **maker movement**. It is a force for breaking down social and economic barriers in favour of creativity, ingenuity, craftsmanship and a democratic access to technology (e.g., the Make More initiative). Links to the economic dimension of cultural development can be seen through the strengthening of **cultural tourism projects**, where emphasis is placed on cultural heritage and positive externalities of beautiful nature in the South Bohemian region.

Water and City, future Zátka embankment (Budweis, visualisation: A8000 studio)



CONNECTING THE CULTURAL & CREATIVE SECTOR TO THE LOCAL ADAPTATION STRATEGY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Culture also plays an important role in the newly approved Local Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change. This is reflected particularly in the areas dealing with public spaces and parks (urban study City and Water 2020) and the newly-planned construction or reconstruction of cultural buildings. Its recommendations have been incorporated in line with the city's Strategic plan into the new Budweis Culture Strategy. Specific measures include establishing clear requirements for the sustainability and environmental friendliness of the construction or reconstruction of cultural infrastructure, mapping the environmental impacts of cultural productions, and creating an environmental plan for culture, but also by using cultural organisations and artistic projects to map and support biodiversity, to raise awareness of the state of ecosystems and habitats in the city, and to encourage a positive relationship with the environment.

Projects: HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL, ARS BIOLOGICA / PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY, PILGERLAND, OPEN SEASON (degrowth principles), Capacity building on environmental issues in culture, CARP(E) DIEM, METALWORK HIGHLINE

CONNECTING THE CULTURAL & CREATIVE SECTOR TO THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BUDWEIS 2022-2025

In 2022, the city developed a new Budweis Tourism Strategy. Working with the Budweis Culture Strategy preparation team ensured good alignment of both documents. The following areas of the tourism development concepts are connecting tourism with the culture: First, business environment, human resources, education, research and innovation with the objective to create a favourable business environment in the city and a system for better integration of foreign workers into society and orientation in the city. Improving the city's attractiveness has the objective of creating an environment that provides the inhabitants with suitable conditions for diverse cultural, sporting and social activities.

Projects: GIVE AND TAKE, KULTURISTIC OFFICE, PORTKEYS, PILGERLAND, KULTURISTIC TRAIL, MERMAIDS & REDNECKS, WE WANT MORE FRIENDS

AREAS / GOALS	EXAMPLES
ROLE OF CULTURE	in the city and region and its perception as inspiring visioner as well as strong and legitimate partner for change
CULTURE AS CARE	Budweis Culture Strategy, already based on (perma)culture principles creating sustainable environment
NEW CITY CULTURE BRAND AND IDENTITY	creating the CULTURE ISLAND connecting 13 institutions in a culture district, creating year-round production and Budweis 2028 cultural programme
INTENSIVE COLLABORATION OF STAKEHOLDERS	creating new cultural municipal and regional networks, platforms and projects where they can meet, number of participating people and organisations
CULTURE AS CONNECTION TO THE WHOLE EUROPE	finding new international partners for organisations involved in CULTURE ISLAND and 28 HOUSES , strengthening connections with our twin cities and number of other ECoCs presented in Budweis
CITY DEVELOPMENT	number of new/renewed cultural infrastructure buildings and public spaces
CULTURE WILL BRING UNDERSTANDING TO SCIENTIFIC AREAS IN AN ATTRACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE WAY	number of projects which connect art with science
CULTURE AS FACILITATOR OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION	number of artistic projects that reflect social transformation
PEOPLE	empowerment and co-creation of specific projects as well as overall city development:
PARTICIPATION	number of PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS , number of people in PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS , schools/pupils involved in participatory processes, number of grassroots activities
PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING	people involved in municipal researches, number of researches realised
GLOBAL, EUROPEAN AND LOCAL CITIZENSHIP	number of people who vote at the regional, national and EU level, number of people who are interested in European/global topics, number of young people participating in Erasmus+ projects or trips abroad
SOCIAL COHESION	level of trust and social capital of the population based on research w/ Institute of Social Capital, people involved in volunteering, charitable projects, number of newly established collaborations between initiatives/organisations
SOCIAL IMPACT	in terms of inclusion of ALL fellow inhabitants and openness towards differences in the local as well as European/international context:
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	people visiting cultural activities or cultural heritage, people co-creating cultural activities, members of Revolving Audience
INCLUSION	more varied (diverse) audience, more varied (diverse) population groups involved in the implementation of activities, number of social enterprises and non-profit organisations in culture
ACCESSIBILITY	removal of physical, communication and sensory barriers, geographical availability of culture
DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS	number of new projects and platforms for every stage of education from nursery schools to university education, schools involved in participatory projects (Q17&19) and in Creative Minds platform, number of international partners of local culture institutions

ECONOMIC IMPACT	on the city – Culture will become the financial priority for the city and will establish itself as a strong economic area:
TOURISM	average number of overnight stays, number of guests
LEGACY FUND	amount of funds raised, number of donors, number of sponsors
NEW CULTURE JOBS	number of people employed in the cultural industry, the creative sector, innovation, entrepreneurs, members of creative hubs, number of businesses operating within the creative sector
REVENUE SIZE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES	revenues size and share of creative industries
BUDGET SPENT ON CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	budget allocated by the city and region, finances spent by fellow inhabitants, number of applications for EU funding
ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS	following the latest EU sustainability trends/targets
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VISION OF (PERMA)CULTURE THAT REPRESENTS THE OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH OF BUDWEIS 2028	number of partners involved in Budweis 2028
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	number of projects fulfilling the implementation part of the new Local Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change
INCREASED INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITHIN CULTURE ORGANISATIONS	number of projects supported in calls for grants related to environmental issues, whether improving the environmental footprint of existing cultural projects or popularising environmental issues through artistic activities
INCREASED INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN PUBLIC SPACE	number of projects in Programme line Mother Nature
CREATION OF SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY FOR ARTISTIC PROJECTS	number of artistic projects with a sustainable strategy

Q8

If your city is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you think would be the long-term cultural, social and economic impact on the city (including in terms of urban development)?

A (PERMA)CULTURE environment represents a holistic approach that designs sustainable relationships between people and the (natural) environment based on caring for the Earth, caring for people, and fair distribution. This naturally translates to ecological, social and economic impacts. All of those impacts will be driven by the culture, as in a **stable permaculture environment, culture can become a legitimate tool for the sustainable development of the city and the region in all those areas**. And we go even further.

(Perma)cultural development will always have an impact on all the areas. We have prepared a long draft list of indicators for our future evaluation to track it. Those will be more closely determined during the final selection procedure together with the University and research agency, who will be responsible for the overall setup of monitoring and evaluation. We aim to bring about change in the following areas, listed with examples: *See table above*

Q9

Outline briefly the plans for monitoring and evaluation.

Data-based decision-making was a pivotal part of the candidacy process. Seven quantitative and ten qualitative researches have been done throughout the preparation of the bid. (Q5 & Q17). These researches have served as the basis for the new **Budweis Culture Strategy, while Budweis 2028 embedded them throughout the entire bid book.** These two strategic documents are interconnected, thus **the monitoring and evaluation of both will be connected as well.** The evaluation of the goals and project impacts is vital, as we claim culture is a catalyst of a process. To do so, we need to be able to continuously see if and how ECoC delivers the changes envisioned. We also see an opportunity in the dissemination of the methods and results we will be implementing in other organisations or other (ECoC) cities.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The research manager will be responsible for the implementation of monitoring activities as well as for their evaluation and will be working closely with the Executive director and Outreach manager with the help of cultural research specialists. Monitoring and evaluation will be performed in cooperation between the research agency, **the University of South Bohemia and the Czech Academy of Sciences.** ICC/ESOMAR standards will be fulfilled and followed. We are fully aware of the need for General Data Protection compliance, thus setting the processes with experts within this field is crucial for us

MONITORING

Monitoring will be mostly done by the research agency, the South Bohemian University, and individual organisations by performing regular quantitative and qualitative research. We will focus on the collection of data from fellow inhabitants on a yearly basis and evaluate the changes over time. Similarly to the pre-selection process, we will combine multiple research methods and projects to back our decisions (i.e. audience surveys, media monitoring, data collection in cooperation with the municipal/regional and cultural institutions, stakeholder interviews). Through **PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES** and artistic research, we will be able to include the broader public and innovative methods in the data collection.

The city will play a strategic role in the data collection and its data management. Strengthening the capacities and competencies of the Department of culture and cultural organisations is already incorporated in the Budweis Culture Strategy document. (Q5 & Q6)

This will include both monitoring and evaluation:

- Creation of data storage and its management
- Audience (citizens): research panel of 3000 respondents (already in place thanks to the candidacy)
- Tracking guest and cultural event participant data
- Evaluation of the city's financing of culture and its impact
- Regular mapping and evaluation of cultural offer
- Reach of cultural organisations and events

EVALUATION

Indicators we would like to monitor and evaluate primarily are listed in Q8 in each respective section. The evaluation will follow the standards of the ECoC guidelines for evaluation; all the general objectives (GO1 + GO2) comply with our priorities while recommended indicators will be followed. Another reference will be the goals set in the Budweis Culture Strategy, as well as in the New European Bauhaus, Creative Cities Monitor, and OECD indicators for resilient cities. The Budweis 2028 team will elaborate on different monitoring and evaluation processes during the final selection procedure in 2023, in cooperation with the University of South Bohemia and independent research agency. Each year, monitoring and evaluation reports will be compiled and relevant goals will be evaluated, if applicable for the year. A comprehensive report will be prepared at the end of each of the evaluated projects and in 2029.

We are planning to **cooperate with cultural organisations and other stakeholders** as well. Those who will be part of the research capacity building programme will be able to set goals at the beginning of the projects and evaluate them at the end. Their involvement ensures a democratic nature of the process and will help with more even distribution of the set outcomes, which is important for the desired permacultural environment. Starting in 2025, workshops and conferences will be held and publications compiled, either for local stakeholders as well as through our international network, to spread the data collected and know-how gained throughout the process. In 2029, after publishing the final Impact report of the whole ECoC, an international evaluating conference will be held.

2022-2024 – SOWING AND SPROUTING

Pre-selection phase

Culture and creative sector, audience, tourism, stakeholders researches

Final selection phase

Detailed indicators will be elaborated in accordance with Budweis 2028 goals

2024-2028 – GROWTH

Independent agency for research and evaluation will be selected

Research structure and design will be prepared

Capacity building training focused on research, evaluation and monitoring

Participatory approach in the setting of goals, as well as during the research process

Research implemented during artistic and participative projects

First evaluation of the relevant goals of the projects

Know-how transmission

2028 – HARVEST AND CELEBRATION

Data collection during project implementation.

2029 – REGENERATION AND DISSEMINATION

Final surveys and analysis will be conducted

Outcome and evaluation reports from different projects will be assembled

Impact report of the whole ECoC will be published

Know-how transmission – final conference

ARTISTIC CONCEPT

Q10

What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?

support of the other organisations that are part of the infrastructure, as well as of the audiences with whom it can maintain a long-term and systematic relationship. Such organisations should be existentially secure, self-confident, and motivated. Therefore, they can respond to local and global changes caused by diverse factors such as the arrival of war refugees, local flooding, rising inflation and associated price increases, the ongoing presence of Covid-19 pandemic, etc.

VISION: (PERMA)CULTURE ENVIRONMENT

We are the curators and designers of an environment where change can thrive. Our vision is to create a **conscious (PERMA)CULTURE environment.** Our mission is to cultivate the environment of Budweis and the South Bohemian region so they become such an environment.

Cultivation happens when people and ideas grow together. We can only be nourished from interactions with others and the environment. A permaculture community is aware of the needs of its individual components and their changes and can respond to them flexibly. A cultural organisation that operates in such an environment feels the

STRATEGY: CULTURE AS CARE

To fulfil our mission, we need to change our perspective. Instead of perceiving culture as entertainment, we must accept the concept of **culture as CARE.** Culture that sparks joy, yet acts as an equal partner in social and ecological responsibility. Culture that values love, openness and responsibility. Culture with the power to engage, inspire and unite. Culture that reflects the needs of people and the environment. Culture that is based on reciprocal relationships. Culture that cultivates behavioural patterns and generates conditions for social change or even a paradigm shift.

Jan Šépka: Perception, 2016 (House of Arts, Budweis, photo: Šépka Architects)



We are building the Artistic programme of Budweis 2028 on four robust pillars: **Culture, Art, Research, and Engagement**. These essentials of a conscious approach to culture prepare the ground for inspiration and a lifelong desire for learning and searching for sustainable and responsible creative solutions, shared in an engaged civil society.

Culture represents a multitude of meanings. What is culture and how much does it influence our lives? Or else, how different would our lives be if we were to lose it, as we briefly did due to Covid-19? We perceive it and describe it as everything that surrounds us, as a culture of living.

Art represents creativity, emotions, and beauty. Art is our independent and faithful partner in the bidding process. (Not only) excellent art is the key source of imagination, much needed for creative participative futuring. It's also the way to authentically fulfil our mission of cultivating the environment.

Research represents our deep respect for science and strong belief in sustainability of data-based projects. Most of the strategies and content we create are (designed to be) based on research, extended with artistic research and/or public science.

Engagement represents our undying curiosity and determination never to lose it. We believe that creative learning is the way to a conscious society that is both a creative power and a perceptive audience.

The principles of permaculture and care also naturally lead to the adoption of the concepts of sustainable development, climate neutrality and environmental protection in the entire environment. We perceive ecology as an immanent component of any process, including the process of creation. Together with the Institute of Circular Economy we will prepare a sustainable strategy for each project. We will focus mostly on material, energy, transport, and waste.

IT TAKES TIME

Inspired by permaculture farming, the Budweis 2028 programme is spread over **4 LIFE PHASES**:

Sowing and sprouting (2022-2024): This is a phase of observing the existing environment, researching, creating visions, and designing the changes. It's also the time to implement the principles of permaculture within the culture infrastructure.

Growth (2024 - 2028): We appreciate the principles of the de-grow movement, but the city environment can't get ready for the title year without growth. Yet, we prefer to replace this term with the cultivation and evolution of existing soft infrastructure. Therefore we are dedicating the four years after winning the title to the implementation of diverse concepts, such as **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS** in different neighbourgoods; a **CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME** including accessibility training and volunteer programme; a **CREATIVE MINDS** learning platform; projects co-created with youth in cooperation with schools and Budějovický Majáles; strategic cooperation between the Culture Island institution; or new artistic courses and degrees at the University of South Bohemia.

Harvest and celebration (2028): The title year is the year we CARE. The year we can finally taste the fruits of our shared effort. The annual culture harvest of what we've planted in our permaculture environment. The celebration of what we have gained from the process of cultivation and evolution in the previous four years.

The artistic programming will be mostly concentrated around four 'magic' dates: Vernal equinox, Summer solstice, Autumnal equinox, and Winter solstice. During the whole title year, there's always

someone to meet and a lot to experience: but the concentration of several programme activities around one date might be more suitable for the programme attractivity for potential audiences and guests outside the region.

Regeneration and dissemination (2029): In the end of 2028, the (PERMA)CULTURE environment will be exhausted. Therefore we suggest dedicating the following year to the evaluation and deep regeneration of the whole ECoCsystem. That is why we also propose many projects to be sustained, to continue as a biennale, to continually work toward regeneration.

IT TAKES PLACE

During the sowing and sprouting phase, we start with researching the environment, collecting and creating visions, and designing such changes that will bring about security, support and sustainability. In keeping with the Budweis Culture Strategy, we will build upon the existing cultural infrastructure in the city and region and enhance the network with supplementary platforms and institutions.

The existing cultural infrastructure will thus be complemented by the centralised district of the **CULTURE ISLAND, 28 HOUSES** network of municipal and regional cultural institutions ([Q25, pg. 56](#)), **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS** empowering local communities and connecting them to the projects, **TWIN HOUSES** offering spaces and inspiration for closer relationships with our twin cities, existing municipal and regional culture centres and venues, creating virtually unlimited space for the creative process. Above all this, there is an open umbrella of the **KUL.TURISTIC OFFICE**. Initiated as part of the bidding process, it will stay in the city to take over as the new tourist information centre, not only for the Budweis 2028 programme but also for the activities and events organised by local cultural institutions or communities.

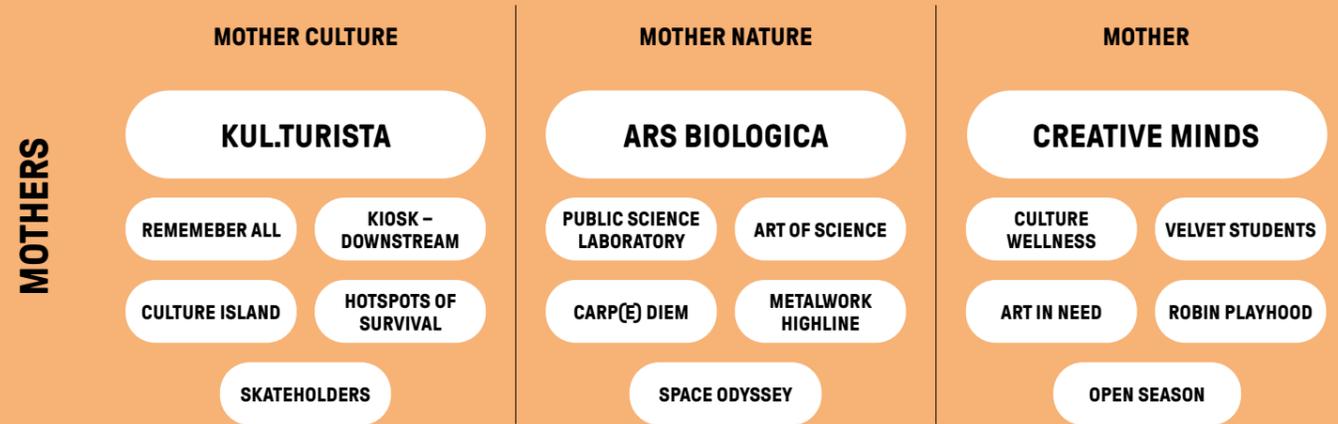
We want to bring in audiences from abroad as well as from within the country and region in the best possible and accessible way. Therefore part of our activities will be also accessible online or virtually for the audience that cannot or don't wish to attend in person. We have set up **Digitalisation processes** that will ensure the best possible transformation of our events into the Metaverse, web3, and AR/VR. A digitalisation manager will choose the best possible solution for each of the projects. This will also allow us to better connect with other ECoCs already during the Growth phase and literally transmit the idea of the ECoC to the city and region.

We have also devised the concept of the **Revolving audience** as a tool for audience engagement. This part of our marketing strategy is a tool for sustainable development and capacity building programme. ([Q23, pg. 54](#))

Q11

Give a general overview of the structure of your cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/ main events that will mark the year.

The Culture programme of Budweis 2028 is designed in the (PERMA)CULTURE environment and curated with the perspective of CARE. It is divided into three programme lines.



PROGRAMME LINE: MOTHERS

The MOTHERS line explores the unique nature of caring: about ourselves, about people around us, about the environment. We want to explore different aspects and forms of care and ways culture and art can be a caring element. CARE has become a frequent keyword, especially during the toughest times of the Covid-19 pandemic. This programme line is dedicated to mothers. Choosing mothers as ambassadors of the whole programme line gave us a chance to empower them and to pay tribute to those who care.

PROGRAMME BLOCK: MOTHER CULTURE

Projects under Mother Culture focus on care about **people, communities and relationships** between them. Various projects were designed to curate **memory and public spaces**, to cultivate **communities and urban environments**, to boost **the resilience** of the people and the city.

KULTURISTA (2022–2028) FLAGSHIP

CULTURE. RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

We are all guests in our own city and we all want to feel welcome here! Therefore we empower our fellow inhabitants to organise four-day festivals in their neighbourhoods.

KULTURISTA is a project intertwined into the bidding process, as well as throughout the city. It was created as a marketing tool, to spread the word about our candidacy to our fellow inhabitants. But it was also created to decentralise the living culture and to disseminate it to all neighbourhoods. It was created to initially activate the local communities and culture players, artists, as well as the diverse stakeholders in the city. It's been the first participatory project to involve our fellow inhabitants in the bidding process, to have them express their expectations, needs, wishes, dreams and stories.

KULTURISTA creates an opportunity to open the public space and make it interactive and creative through neighbourhood-based activities. It engages locals through workshops with the urban design studio Socionaut to create a vision for their city. At each **KULTURISTA** stop, a workshop will be dedicated to helping resolve one problematic public space in the neighbourhood. The outputs of these workshops will then be utilised in the **HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL** project, in which

selected local and international creators will propose solutions aimed at improving the socialisation qualities of the places in question.

KULTURISTA will also involve children in its discussions, as children also need to be included in the vision for the city. The children themselves join in the discussion on how to make their city a "child-friendly" one. We start with the idea that a child-friendly city is friendly to all. Thus, from 2023 onwards, **KULTURISTA** will include visioning workshops in collaboration with the organisation Child Friendly City. Through children's perspectives, open minds and imagination, we can look at our everyday environment in a new way. On the one hand, children can deal rationally with "adult" topics; on the other hand, they have a free imagination and are not afraid to come up with crazy ideas.

Project promoter: Participatory platforms (city)
National partners: Territorial Groups (city), Culture House Slavie (city), Via Foundation (CZ)
National partner: Child Friendly City (CZ)
International partners: Child Friendly Cities Initiative UNICEF
ECOC partners: Aveiro 2027 (PT), Braga 2027 (PT), Rouen 2028 (FR), Pilsen 2015 (CZ)

REMEMBER ALL (2027–2028)

CULTURE, ART, ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

Participative co-creation of collective memory and shared cultural heritage of the candidacy, reflecting on the changing roles of memory institutions.

With **REMEMBER ALL**, we want to take a different look at the functioning of heritage institutions: Who tells us the stories of the past and how? In cooperation with the South Bohemian Museum and regional memory institutions, we want to highlight Budweis's passion for history.

We will temporarily reverse the function of heritage institutions and activate local people to reflect on their relationship with the place (the South Bohemian region) they live in. Exhibitions of respected Czech and international artists in several selected memory institutions will then tell the story of Budweis 2028 as its inhabitants perceive it.

What's more, inhabitants of the city and the region as well as guests from home and abroad will be invited to join the narrative of the extraordinary time when Budweis won the ECOC title. Throughout 2027, they will bring items that they believe should be associated with Budweis' tenure as the European Capital of Culture to the heritage institutions of the South Bohemian Region and other places associated with the candidacy (**KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM, KULTURISTIC OFFICE**). A digital catalogue of the objects will be created in addition to the physical exhibition.

Project promoter: South Bohemian Museum (city), Aleš South Bohemian Gallery (city + region), House of Arts (city), Budweis City Archives (city), Culture House Slavie (city)
Regional partners: museums located in the South Bohemian Region
International partner: Kaunas Memory Office (LT)
Curators: Petra Lexová (CZ), Lucie Drdová (CZ), Jiří Ptáček (CZ)
Artists: Josef Bolf (CZ), Rudolf Samojel (CZ), Barbara Bloom (US)

KIOSK – DOWNSTREAM (2027–2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, REGION

What needs to be done to make a place, a village, a town come alive?

The answer is to revive the public spaces, points of gathering, spots that help us build and cultivate relationships with the places we live in, to foster civic engagement. Therefore, the **KIOSK** will be designed with the public space in mind. Basic amenities such as grocery stores, post offices and libraries are slowly disappearing from smaller neighbourhoods. A **KIOSK** can be a workshop, a bar filled with local specialties, a theatre, even a community garden, or a market with local crops. The **KIOSK** can become a stage for a concert, but also a place that will help improve more than just the cultural services of South Bohemia. It is a meeting place, a place for cultural programmes, but also a place for accompanying workshops and seminars.

Open calls to help interested individuals respond to the specific cultural needs of their respective communities and find support for cultural activities will be launched as part of the project. If residents express the desire to have a **KIOSK** in their area, but don't know how to draw up a proposal, **28 HOUSES** will be there to help. In this way, the European Capital of Culture will reach even the smallest villages of the region.

There will be five **KIOSKS**, one for each of the five ethnographic regions of the South Bohemian Region, and they will travel through towns and villages along the banks of the Vltava and its tributaries the Malše, Lužnice and Otava, which border each county. The design of the **KIOSK** should be based on the folk culture of each ethnographic area. An architectural/design competition will be launched for the design of the **KIOSKS**, which will be open to creators from all over Europe.

Project promoter: Kul.turistic office (city + region)
Local and regional partners: 28 Houses (city + region), CBArchitektura (city), MAS South Bohemia (region)
International partners: Prostorož (SI)
ECOC partners: Trenčín 2026 (SK), Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Clermont-Ferrand 2028 (FR)

CULTURE ISLAND (2024+)

CULTURE, ART, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

We're building a creative district based on connections and collaboration!

Budweis is in a unique situation where 17 of its cultural institutions are located in the city centre within walking distance of one another. Together they form an imaginary island of

culture. We see this as a great opportunity to create a cultural district based on common links and cooperation between cultural institutions located in the city centre.

The basis for the creation of such an art district will be a joint capacity building project called Fridays for Island (named after Man Friday from Robinson Crusoe) for all participating institutions with the involvement of experts from Global Culture District Network. The aim is for the actors involved to work together to determine how **CULTURE ISLAND** should function, how it will present itself to the public and beyond the city limits, and how the actors should use the public space around their institutions and care for it together.

A subsequent comprehensive year-long program, starting in 2024, will focus on the **CULTURE ISLAND** institutions and other independent cultural actors selected in an open call, as well as members of the Budweis 2028 team. Gradually through a series of seminars and workshops, skills will be strengthened, the management of organisations improved, and hands-on training provided in the following areas: strategic management and planning / research / audience engagement / accessibility / participation / digitization / cross-border cooperation / facing new challenges. At the end, processes conducted by the project teams will result in influencing the change in the organisations and bringing practical ready-to-use solutions and audience engagement plans that will complement each other.

The **CULTURE ISLAND** should also be a place for new multi-genre projects to emerge, based on the collaborative work of the institutions, which will complement the programme offer and transcend individual genres. **CULTURE ISLAND** will work closely with the **CREATIVE MINDS** platform, which will become a shared incubator of lecturers for the educational programmes of individual cultural actors.

Project promoters: the Department of Culture of Budweis (city), the Department of Culture of the South Bohemian Region (region)
Head of Capacity Building: Agata Etmanowicz (PL)
Participating Institutions: House of Culture Slavie, South Bohemian Theatre, House of Arts, South Bohemian Museum, Aleš South Bohemian Gallery, Háječek Summer Cinema, South Bohemian Scientific Library, Observatory and Planetarium Budweis, South Bohemian Philharmonic, DK Metropol, Rabenštejn Tower, National Heritage Institute, Faculty of Education of the University of South Bohemia, Czech Radio Budweis, Dům u Beránka, Primary Art School Piaristické náměstí, Budweis Conservatory
International partners: Museumsinsel Berlin (DE), Museumsquartier Vienna (AT), Copenhagen Cultural District (DK), Global Cultural District Network
ECOC partners: Oulu 2026, Reims 2028

HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL (2023–2028)

CULTURE, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

Hotspots of survival improve the public space in order to make it pleasant for everyone, from insects to people, to live and grow in.

In 2022, Budweis enacted a local Adaptation Strategy to help the city respond to ongoing climate change. Local adaptation strategy enabled artists, architects, designers and urban planners to identify places that need improvement. Alongside the adaptation study, research and workshops with the organisation Socionauts are being conducted. Interviews with city residents in each neighbourhood are mapping problematic areas of the public space and exploring how they could be transformed to better support their social function.

Alongside both the visioning workshops Child Friendly City and the **ROBIN PLAYHOOD** project, the **HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL** will also focus on younger users of public spaces: young children, schoolchildren, teenagers, and children with special needs. Playgrounds based on the increasingly popular Adventure Playground concept will be created in collaboration with children and artists; these are playgrounds built to better develop children's imaginations, independence, physical and motor skills, but also their sense of cooperation.

In cooperation with the Scouts Institute, which teaches young people to effectively care for places in their surroundings, we will jointly prepare a programme aimed towards caring for the places which to be developed within the **HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL** project.

During Summer Schools programmes for architecture and design students, excellent educators will lead selected implementations. Gradually, the project is to evolve into a symposium of experimental architecture in 2028, during which European creators will come to Budweis following an international open call.

Local partners: Municipality of Budweis - Chief Architect's Department (city), CBArchitektura (city), House of Art (city), South Bohemian University (city)
National partners: Socionaut (CZ), Scouts Institute (CZ)
International partners: Symbioscene (DE)
ECOC partners: Aveiro 2027 (PT), Rouen 2028 (FR)
Curators: Jiří Ptáček (CZ), Petra Lexová (CZ),

Michal Škoda (CZ), Pavel Karous (CZ)
Artists: Alžběta Brůhová (CZ), Petr Jakšák (CZ), R/FRM (CZ), Jan Šépa (CZ), Maly Chmel (CZ), Gerhard Feldbacher (AT/CZ), Balance is Motion (CZ), Jiří Pfiřhoda (CZ/US), KURZ architekti (CZ), Christine Saalfeld (NL), Filip Hauser (CZ), Jan Čtvrtník (CZ), R/FRM (CZ), Kryštof Kintera (CZ), Milena Dopitová (CZ), Federico Diaz (CZ), Dominik Lang (CZ), Petr Pufler (CZ)

SKATEHOLDERS (2026–2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

Skating is a lifestyle combining public space, sport, and culture, and it has always had its place in Budweis.

The most prominent local skate and cultural collective is Světdíl. Together with them and the architectural U/U studio, which focuses on connecting skateboarding and architecture, we will search for suitable neglected locales in the public space and transform them into spaces with high aesthetics value that serve as venues for skateboarding and other urban sports (street basketball, etc.).

The follow-up project will be focused on sports (in this case skateboarding) for youth development. In order to support a sense of belonging to the community, to create public spaces that are safer and more inclusive, and to support youth leadership, empowerment, and healthy lifestyles, we will introduce volunteer social skateboarding projects for the empowerment of children and youth of all genders, abilities and social backgrounds. Future Erasmus+ sports projects will focus on connecting with projects from abroad, including the Middle East, where such initiatives for youth development projects have been very successful.

Project promoters: Světdíl (city), U/U studio (CZ)
Local partners: Faculty of Education of the University of South Bohemia (city)
National Partners: Charles University - Faculty of Physical Education and Sport (CZ)
International partners: Skate Pal (UK/PS), Goodpush (international)
ECOC partners: St. Denis 2028 (FR), Broumov 2028 (CZ)

Klub Aktiv, KULTURISTA, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Petr Zákumund)



PROGRAMME BLOCK: MOTHER NATURE

Projects under Mother Nature focus on caring for the **natural environment**. Within projects combining **art and science**, we create a space for talking about the local effects of global **climate change**. We also aim to involve more female researchers and scientists in the process and help create safe spaces in this traditionally male-dominated environment, thus we can increase diversity in the field of science.

ARS BIOLOGICA (2028) FLAGSHIP

ART, RESEARCH, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

ARS BIOLOGICA is a complex of projects focusing on the artistic expression of environmental themes, and thus naturally overlapping with natural science and sociology.

The aim of this flagship is to use artistic activities to reflect the current state of urban, agricultural and cultural landscapes, and to propose solutions to pressing global environmental issues and in this manner raise public awareness of ongoing climate change.

Projects under this flagship utilise the extensive tradition of the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences located in Budweis, the natural science curriculum of the University of South Bohemia, and Země Živitelka, a major fair dedicated to land management as well as the relationship between humans and the landscape. Herewith, the projects will take a critical look at issues related to big agriculture and facilitate debate on the need for its transformation.

ARS BIOLOGICA consists of several interconnected parts:

ARS BIOLOGICA: EXHIBITION (2028)

Our environment consists of houses, streets, rivers, trees – but also of weather. Weather: an unseen force that influences our daily lives, our mood, clothing, traffic, natural ecosystems. We love it and hate it. We love to talk about it, and we naturally observe it. Therefore we can easily get engaged in a participative exhibition project mapping this fantastic phenomenon, from daily forecast to climate change.

ARS BIOLOGICA: CONFERENCE (2024–2028)

An annual conference focusing on how culture and art can help raise awareness about climate change and how art can communicate scientific outputs to the general public through forms of communication other than text or objective research. It is dedicated to presenting good practice examples linking environmental science with artistic expression. It also presents specific examples of how artists have engaged or can engage in scientific research and become an important part of research itself, rather than only illustrators of scientific outputs.

In addition to a section aimed at the professional public, the conference will have a section open to the general public (in collaboration with Pecha Kucha).

The conference will also include a Science & Art event focused on youth and their activities related to environmental art. The conference will host educational programmes for youth using AR/VR technologies, along with simple hands-on activities intended to help find the lost connection to our landscape and its sustainable management.

ARS BIOLOGICA:FIELD (2024–2028)

An urban city field and orchard will be created in collaboration with the secondary agricultural school. Students will be able to use it to practice organic farming; the site will also include community gardens for the public. Throughout the year, the Field will host public workshops on sustainable farming. Then, during the harvest season, a conference on responsible food consumption and a small food festival where professional chefs, together with students from culinary schools, will cook using only locally grown ingredients.

ARS BIOLOGICA: FESTIVAL (2028)

The festival will be the culmination of all the projects in the candidature which are dedicated to environment-oriented art with an overlap into science and sociology. The festival will start alongside an exhibition on weather, which will be one of the most prominent parts of the festival. It will also include the aforementioned conference. The festival will be complemented by performance art and public installations, or even land art projects dedicated to nature reserves around Budweis. It will also include performances by students from the **ART OF SCIENCE** project and artistic outputs from the **PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY**

Petr Wohlgenuth during Budějovický Majáles session, 2021 (abandoned quarry, photo: Kuba Zeman)



project. The festival will also feature a guide to the works created within the **HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL** project.

Project promoters: Biological Centre of the CAS (city), the Exhibition Grounds Budweis (city), Southbohemian Agricultural Museum (region), Faculty of Science of the South Bohemian University (city)
Local partners: Aleš South Bohemian Gallery (city + region), House of Art (city), Culture House Slavie (city) Secondary School of Agriculture (city), Pecha Kucha (city), TedxBudweis (city), Sladovna Písek (region)
National partners: Signal Festival (CZ), Luncheon Festival (CZ), Les – Institute of Anxiety (CZ) University of West Bohemia in Pilsen – Multimedia (CZ), UJEP (CZ), Academy of Fine Art Prague (CZ), Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (CZ), Center for Audiovisual Studies (CZ), Bazaar festival (CZ), Muovo Festival (CZ), Science Fair (CZ)
International partners: Ars Electronica (AT), Sensorium Festival (SK), Kikk Festival (BE), STRP Festival (NL), Nature of Us (Visegrad), Bioart Society (FI), Ars Bioarctica (FI)
ECOC partners: Tartu 2024 (EE), Trenčín 2026 (SK), Aveiro 2027 (PT), Braga 2027 (PT), Ponta Delgada – Azores 2027 (PT), Montpellier 2028 (FR)
Artists: Boris Vítáček (SK), Basia Goszcynska (PL/US), Daito Manabe (JP), Hehe (FR), Joanie Lemercier (FR), Marshmallow Laser Feast (UK), Memo Akten (TR), Olafur Eliasson (IS), Quayola (ES), Ramon Elias Weber (ES), Raumzeit Piraten (DE), Refik Anadol (TR), Robertina Šebjanic (RS), Roosegarde (NL), Troika (UK), Vladimír Turner (CZ), Daniel Červenka (CZ), Marek Šilpoch (CZ), Jiří Černický (CZ), Jakub Nepraš (CZ), Mária Jádová (SK), Andrej Boleslavský (SK), Pavel Mrkus (CZ), Hyphen Labs (international), Kateřina Blahutová (CZ), and many more

PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY (2024–2028)

ART, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION, EUROPE

Based on the Strategy AV21 of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Public Science Laboratory connects scientific research with civic science and artistic outputs.

The topics of the Strategy AV21 reflect current societal challenges and try to approach them from all possible angles, connecting different institutes of the Academy as well as other research institutions and industrial partners. Communicating their outputs to the general public remains a challenge; this is where we see great potential for cultural organisations and artists, and the **PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY** will encourage and enable their collaboration.

Examples of AV21 research topics are: Anatomy of European society – history, tradition, culture and identity; Society on the move and public policies; Resilient Society for the 21st Century; Potentials for Crisis and Effective Transformation; Sustainable Energy; Food for the future; Landscape conservation and restoration; Space for humanity; The city as a laboratory of change: buildings, heritage and environments for a safe and rewarding life; Water for life.

Each selected topic is then worked on by 3 artists ideally, selected by a curator and specialising in different types of art, together with the research teams of the Academy, in the form of artistic research, involving the public and schools in the project through public science. Each artist develops a theme for a different area: city, region and European partner cities (ECOCs and Twin cities); the

curator then creates a public presentation of the artistic output.

Curators: Šárka Zahálková (CZ), Tomáš Knoflíček (CZ), Milan Mikuláščík (CZ), Jan Dotfel (CZ)
Artists: Richard Loskot (CZ), Oldřich Moris (CZ), Petra Herotová (CZ), Matouš Lipus (CZ), Jasper Alvaer + Isabela Grosseov (CZ/NO), Epos 257 (CZ), Accurat (IT), Antoine Bertin (FR)
National partners: Biennale in the matter of Art – tranzit.cz (CZ), Czech Academy of Sciences – AV 21 Strategy (CZ)
International partners: Ars Electronica (AT), ECOC cities, Twin Cities

ART OF SCIENCE (2026–2028)

ART, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

International study programme at the University of South Bohemia focused on bridging the environmental sciences and artistic approaches.

The curriculum will include particular environmental topics and areas where these issues are evident. As a result of the study, the students produce semester works that address or highlight chosen issues using artistic expression.

Project promoters: University of South Bohemia (city), Czech Academy of Sciences (city)
National partners: The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (CZ), The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (CZ), Faculty of Fine Arts of the Brno (CZ) University of Technology (CZ), Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague (CZ), University of West Bohemia (CZ), UJEP (CZ)
International partners: Ars Electronica (AT), Bioart Society – Ars Bioarctica (FI)

CARP(E) DIEM (2024–2028)

CULTURE, REGION

It is said that we are like lazy carp in the ponds. Let's make our carp and ponds a point of pride again.

Ponds, one of the symbols of the South Bohemian Region, and the related tradition of freshwater fish – especially carp farming, are the focal points of **CARP(E) DIEM**. In order to popularise sustainable carp farming and this traditional, healthy South Bohemian resources, we want to create an organic pond in South Bohemia which will specialise in carp. The pond will feature an educational trail, explaining the differences between organic farming and today's conventional carp farming methods, which focus mainly on maximising the production.

The most significant part of the project will take place in the harvest season in autumn, but many more culinary as well as cultural events will be organised throughout the year. In autumn, apart from the cultural pond fishing event accompanied by music, theatre, dance, art installations, trails around the ponds and educational programmes for children, we will also visit school canteens accompanied by chefs, and introduce children and teenagers to the tastiness of carp when handled with care.

Examples from other countries will also be demonstrated to compare and be inspired by different fishing traditions, e.g. those in France, Norway, the Baltic States or the Azores.

Curator: Jan Čulík (CZ)
National partners: We Eat South (region), Bechyně Manor (region), Faculty of Fisheries and Water Conservation of the University of South Bohemia (city + region), FROV/Institute of Aquaculture – Fish Processing Plant (city), Environmental Commission of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic
International partner: Waldviertel Karpfen (AT)

METALWORK HIGHLINE (2028)

CULTURE, ART, CITY

METALWORK HIGHLINE enters contaminated public space to provide artistic enjoyment but also safe access to formal natural areas.

On the outskirts of Nové Vráto, Budweis there is a contaminated area dividing two green areas that could be used for recreational purposes by residents. Decontamination of the area is too costly and complicated at this time, so we would like to bridge it with an elevated path and enhance its appearance with quality design, turning the area into a new and attractive destination for local residents and guests alike. A neglected place on the edge of our town will rise to become a popular destination.

We will open the trail with an audiovisual trip into a magical world that will be transformed every year by poetic audiovisual art installations by European artists. From 2029, this audiovisual trip will be part of **ARS BIOLOGICA**.

Project promoter: Metalwork (city), Atelier A8000 (CZ)
National partners: Signal Festival (CZ), Blik Blik (CZ)
Artists: Kari Kola (FI), RaumZeitPiraten (DE), Tereza Bartůňková (CZ), Pavla Beranová (CZ), R/FRM (CZ), 3DSENSE (CZ), Atelier of Multimedia Pilsen (CZ)
International partner: Playable City (international)
ECOC partner: Pilsen 2015 (CZ)

SPACE ODYSSEY (2027–2028)

ART, CITY, REGION

Space Odyssey is a musical project that creates new music based on the exploration of space and the stars.

At the beginning of the project are the stars and the universe, and at the end of the project a collaborative music album by European artists who have been inspired by them. In addition to the music album, the output will be presented to the public in the form of silent night concerts in places with minimal light pollution or in planetariums accompanied by spherical visual works.

Project curator: Klára Boudalová (CZ)
Project partner: Observatory and Planetarium Budweis (city)

PROGRAMME BLOCK: MOTHER

Projects under the Mother line turn our attention to ourselves – to **self-care, regeneration, mental health**. It also introduces the concept of **Creative Learning Platform** and focuses further on **children and youth**, their needs and engagement, and their perception of **what a child friendly city environment and public space** look like.

CREATIVE MINDS (2024–2028) FLAGSHIP

ART, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION

An umbrella platform for creative learning, education, and therapy.

The **CREATIVE MINDS** platform will be a guide-post for research, networking, capacity building, development of new projects, and involvement of the public in artistic and creative activities. The platform will be established in cooperation with the University of South Bohemia, local cultural and educational institutions and our European partners and will serve as an umbrella platform for creative learning. Its purpose will be to develop cooperation between primary and high schools, and cultural institutions or artists, to increase their professional qualifications, to support interdisciplinary (science, social sector, NGO, business) cooperation, and to initiate new creative learning projects.

Ideas on creative learning and child friendly cities will be developed together with Clermon-Ferrand 2028 within the new international platform, to which can be involved also **STUDENTS CREATIVE THINK TANK** ([Q19, pg. 43](#)). Moreover, creative therapy projects will reveal new possibilities for solving problems in schools through the creative process.

Local partners: Faculty of Education of University of South Bohemia (city), cultural organisations (city), schools (city)
National partners: SPKV (Association for Creativity in Education) (CZ), Platform uMĚNÍM (CZ), The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (CZ)
International partners: Study program Social Art (formerly Cultural Animation) at the University of Warsaw (PL)
ECOC partners: Clermont - Ferrand 2028 (FR), Braga 2027 (PT), Broumov 2028 (CZ)

Specific projects are outlined below:

CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LEARNING MILLE FORMES

The Creative Learning Centre is an open physical space where children aged 0-6 experience their first exposure to creativity.

It is a safe environment full of inspiration, It is a safe environment full of inspiration, stimulus and opportunities for discovery, exploration

and creative play. It is a multipurpose place that serves as an interactive gallery, a playroom and a classroom. It is an incubator for aspiring teachers and emerging talent, as well as an inspirational place for educators. The entire space is wheelchair accessible and adapted to the needs of the youngest children.

The Creative Learning Centre is being created as a sister organisation to the Mille Formes Centre in Clermont-Ferrand, which will share its experience and the know-how of an established organisation focused on pre-school children with Budweis 2028. The CLC also functions as a practice space for students of cultural animation.

Project promoter: Aleš South Bohemia Gallery (city)
Local partners: University of South Bohemia (city), Atelier Gallery of the House of Art in Budweis (city), Sladovna Písek (region), Atelier 3D South Bohemian Theatre (city), Bude Cirkus (city), South Bohemian Museum (city), Objevárium (city)
National partners: Platform uMĚNÍM (CZ), Říčany Museum (CZ)
International partners: Mille Formes (FR), Hands on! (international)
ECOC partner: Clermont - Ferrand 2028

DANCE FOR SCHOOLS

Creative therapy project for primary schools

Together with the Dance for Schools initiative and the South Bohemian Theatre Ballet, we will bring an alternative arts education programme to primary schools, based on the principles of Dance and physical education/therapy methodologies. The programme will be led by professional dancers with teaching experience or with an accompanying teacher. Its aim is to promote the motor skills, creative self-expression, and of the students. To develop social skills such as mutual cooperation of pupils. To understand the connection between body - space - music - rhythm.

Project promoter: Dance for Schools (Tanec školám) (CZ)
Project partners: Nová Primary School (city), South Bohemian Theatre - Ballet (city), Dance Prague (Tanec Praha) (CZ), Kredance Budweis (city), Výměník 1 (city), Rezi.dance Komařice (region)

PERFORMING (digital) LARPS

LARPing is likened to theatre with an open end. As such, LARPs are beautiful tools for exploring stories – or even creating them. Their narration is specific, as the principle lies in playing roles and experiencing stories from unique perspectives. LARPs can be a way of learning, experiencing, strengthening collectives or even resolving conflict. Sometimes perceived as part of “geek culture”, we want to embrace the community to join the Budweis 2028 programme and introduce this game to the wider public. Some outputs will be part of the **CREATIVE MINDS** platform, involving children and youth in developing the scenarios, some will happen during summer camps or will emerge under the curation of artists, for example in the form of narrative spaces. The themes will involve different aspects of our shared European past, hence the international potential of the project. As LARPs are rooted in specific communities,

we connected with local one in order to co-design the projects together in the final selection phase.

Project partner: Festival Na tahu (city)
ECOC partner: Montpellier 2028 (FR)

CULTURE WELLNESS (2028)

CULTURE, ART, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION

We all need to regenerate deeply from time to time. Culture Wellness offers the time and space for regeneration, as well as new inspiration.

How do we care about ourselves and each other as artists? There is no perfect method that would teach us how to care about ourselves and about our organisations, teams, communities. You can talk and listen for hours but nothing gives you more than an experience of a caring session. Hence, the concentrated joy of live regeneration sessions. Through intense workshops in resonance, flow, or charging you can nourish yourself and pass this feeling to others. To let them spark and spread joy.

ORGANISATIONAL ARTIST

From time to time, each organisation gets into a phase when they need some advice, inspiration and motivation from the outside. When you’ve basically done your best but did not get the best, there comes the time for an Organisational Artist. For someone who comes in and takes your problem as an opportunity to do some magic. Who will overtake the burnt-out department’s office, ineffective team meeting, or dull schoolyards and turns them into epicentres of creativity through an artistic intervention.

Project promoters: Culture Island (city)
Local partners: House of Art (city), Třeboň105 (region), Artherapy atelier (city),
National partners: Studio Alta (CZ), Biennale in the matter of Art - Tranzit.cz (CZ), Efemér (CZ), Faculty of performing arts in Prague (CZ)
Artists: Petr Dlouhý (CZ), Lucie Králíková (CZ), Tereza Šilon (CZ)
International partners: Penguin Project Innsbruck (AT), Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (LV)
ECOC partners: Bad Ischl 2024 (AT), Trenčín 2026 (SK), Braga 2027 (PT), Reims 2028 (FR), Broumov 2028 (CZ)

VELVET STUDENTS (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION

From students to their classmates and teachers to commemorate the International Student’s Day and the Velvet Revolution.

Based on the Czech Thanks That We Can project, the topics of the festivals organised by students range from historical events of the 20th century to current hot topics such as human rights, democracy, media, disinformation, and ecology, reflecting the way students see today’s challenges. Due to the shared European history of the East Bloc countries, pan-European topics as well as current challenges we face together as Europeans are reflected.

Every year, but especially in 2024 and 2029 on the International Students’ Day marking the 35th and 40th anniversaries of the Velvet Revolution respectively, students will be given the opportunity to organise events in public spaces in their cities and across the whole region . These activities will be organised in cooperation with German schools from former East Germany as part of a cross-border project.

Starting in 2022, active students who organise festivals at their schools become local ambassadors who will support other teams from schools in the region.

Project promoter: Thanks that we can (CZ)
Local partners: Post Bellum (city), city and regional High Schools, Budějovický Majáles (city)
National partners: People in need (CZ), Amnesty international (CZ), Václav Havel’s library (CZ), Europeum (CZ), Eurocentres, Transparency international (CZ), Association for International affairs, Faketicky (CZ), and many Czech universities.
ECOC partners: Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Chemnitz 2025 (DE), Trenčín 2027 (SK), Liepaja 2027 (LV), Tartu 2024 (EE)

ART IN NEED (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION

Art in Need is a platform for scientific research on resilience and the application of its findings.

It is a means to prepare cultural organisations for new challenges and to add to their capacity building portfolios of cultural actors and artists; for example, preppers, futurists or climate change adaptation experts.

It is also a tool for implementing the findings of current research in these areas into the functioning of cultural organisations – and into their dramaturgy. The project includes workshops for resilient organisations and communities as well as artistic projects applicable where there is a need - whether it be in areas affected by a natural disaster or war conflict. The **ART IN NEED** project builds on the experience of the Czech non-profit organisation People in Need.

In times of crisis, culture seemingly becomes redundant. Yet, it is culture and the arts that can carry us through a period of crisis. At

the same time, art and culture have a unique ability to create and convey an image of a new reality and to prepare society for future challenges. In this way, they reinforce society’s capacity for resilience.

Local partners: Atelier of the House of Arts in Budweis (city), Atelier of Art Therapy (city), Dům U Beránka/Rabenštejn Tower (city), Rezi.dance Komařice (region), Continuo Theatre (region)
National partners: Alice Koubová (CZ), Petr Dlouhý (CZ), Academy of Sciences (CZ), Burantear (CZ), Studio Alta (CZ)
ECOC partners: Rouen 2028 (FR), Reims 2028 (FR), Amiens 2028 (FR), Bourges 2028 (FR)

ROBIN PLAYHOOD (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ART, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, ECOC FAMILY, CITY

If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for everyone.

In cooperation with the Child Friendly City initiative, this project engages children from an early age in the development of their neighbourhoods in a participatory way. Children definitely have a say in forming their environment. Listening to their opinions and needs can significantly contribute to improving our surroundings. **ROBIN PLAYHOOD** combats the poverty of experience and poverty of opportunity that can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

VISIONARY WORKSHOPS

for children of all ages within the **KULTURISTA** project. Children have a free imagination and are not afraid to come up with crazy ideas. So let’s take some inspiration from them! Visionary workshops are participatory workshops focused on the process of designing and planning of urban environments. With appropriately chosen methods of participation, children as young as 3 years old can be fully involved in all phases of the participatory process, from the analysis of the space to the actual implementation.

PLAYARDS

Creative workshops in cooperation with kindergartens and primary schools, where children will conduct a survey of schoolyards

or places in the immediate vicinity of their schools to identify which places could be changed and, in cooperation with artists, design and create creative playgrounds based on the Adventure Playground concept.

ROOMS OF REQUIREMENTS

Together with young people we want to re-think how youth clubs operate. We’ll create spaces and content based on their needs and to a large extent autonomously managed by them. From our initial conversations several topics emerged: low-threshold cafe, learning digital skills, photography classes, equipment for video editing, music courses, a reuse centre – and until 2028 many other topics will surely emerge. We will also create Maker space for girls in cooperation with Broumov 2028 and their project Make(her)s space.

ASPHALT ART

A project based on the Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative in which we want to use artistic interventions in collaboration with local communities to improve road safety in the city and revitalise and reinvigorate neglected or unpleasant public spaces. The project focuses exclusively on pathways, such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots, underpasses or crosswalks. The first implementation is already planned for 2023 for a large asphalt area in the city centre.

Project partners: Child Friendly City (CZ), Socionaut (CZ), Primary Schools (city), City tool box, Do It Together – Subtopia’s Youth Programme (SE)
ECOC partners: Clermont - Ferrand 2028 (FR), St. Denis 2028, Broumov 2028 (FR)

OPEN SEASON (2025–2027)

CULTURE, ART, ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

OPEN SEASON is set to make art exhibitions and cultural institutions more accessible.

To introduce existing artistic projects to new audiences, rather than creating new content. To give cultural institutions the means to accommodate every disadvantage. As part of **OPEN SEASON**, we want to focus the 2026/2027 cultural season on removing barriers embedded in cultural institutions. Therefore, the entire season will be dedicated to accessible capacity building, with an international conference on accessibility in cultural institutions, plus a series of projects focusing on good practice examples of accessible and inclusive cultural production and on strengthening the educational departments of art institutions.

Project promoters: CULTURE ISLAND (city), 28 Houses (city + region)
Project partners: One World for All (Jeden svět pro všechny) (CZ), Centre for Students with Special Needs (city), Zlín Design Week (CZ), Non-growth, Impact Foundation(PL)
International partners: Impact foundation, Europe Beyond Access
ECOC partner: Broumov 2028 (CZ)

Sabina Bočková, Jazmina Píktorová, Václav Kalivoda: Microworlds workshop, 2021 (Rezi.dance, Komařice, photo: Nika Brúnová)



PROGRAMME LINE: STORIES

The STORIES line focuses on our shared past, history and memories, on traditions and cultural heritage. We go back to our origins, roots and ancestors, searching, collecting, listening and also (re)telling. We get to know the past, to better understand the present. And we translate and upcycle what we have found into contemporary language.

PROGRAMME BLOCK: HARVESTING STORIES

We are harvesting stories, tales and notes that have shaped the city and region in memories of the last two or three generations. And that already creates the shared memory of this important period of the history of the city. It captures the very first moments of the bidding process and follows the story till 2028. This is just the beginning of the new **neverending story**.

FINDING STORYLAND (2024–2028) FLAGSHIP

CULTURE, ART, RESEARCH, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION
In search of the city's identity contained in everyday stories of our fellow inhabitants.

When trying to find the **STORYLAND**, we pick up the small stories of our fellow inhabitants. Stories that are not being definitive, universal or authoritative. We rather focus on the small intimate stories told by diverse narrators, from various perspectives, capturing everyday struggles and joys, describing social reality. We capture the history of the city and region over the past 100 years, seek the shared stories and co-create a memory on the Budweis 2028 all together.

The subversive character of the project creates an opportunity to include the stories of minorities or marginalised communities into the dominant public discourse from which they are often absent. Our aim is to conduct storytelling workshops for homeless people, prisoners, ethnic and national minorities, etc. This way we can also approach our Ukrainian guests who have found refuge in our city and region.

In its first phase, we collect the stories from people from the city and region through storytelling workshops. The partner in the project is Post Bellum, a non-governmental nonprofit organisation that documents the memories of witnesses of important historical events of the 20th century and passes these stories on to the broader public. Post Bellum has developed a methodology on the narrative collection process. We add poems, novels, tales, and chronicles to the collection of regional stories, in cooperation with the South Bohemian Library and South Bohemian University.

In the second phase, we analyse the narratives hidden in the stories. We do not seek the mainstream narratives that dominate the public discourse; rather, we look for the small stories of everyday lives.

The third phase is the multilevel installation that allows a display of the narratives and they intertwine in augmented reality. Lost and found stories will also be told through writings, movies, installations, audio guides, etc., to present the results of the artistic research. That's possibly handled remotely, but also in the actual locations of the stories in rural areas, countryside, or disappeared villages.

Project promoters: Pavel Štourač (CZ), Continuo Theatre (region)
Local partners: Post Bellum (city), Verbarium (city), Czech Radio Budweis (city), South Bohemian Theater (city), Nadjja (UA community centre)
Regional partners: FAMO Písek (region), South Bohemian libraries (region)
National partners: Museum Říčany (CZ), FAMU (CZ), Pomezí, Czechoslovak talks (CZ), Radek Ocelák (CZ), Fresh eye (CZ), Institute for Contemporary History of the AV ČR (CZ), Platform uMĚNÍM (CZ), Association for creativity in education (CZ), Slovo21 (CZ), Ara ART (CZ)
International partner: Istoriu Festival Kaunas (LT)
ECOC partners: Liepāja 2027 (LV), Bad Ischl 2024 (AT), Nova Gorica 2025 (SI)
Artists and Curators: Tomáš Kratochvíl (CZ), Lenka Veverková (CZ), Michal Kindernay (CZ), Michal Cáb (CZ)

DIARY (2024–2029)

ART, ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

A collective work of writers, poets, journalists, literature students, critics, guests to the city, and any artist/s who enjoy/s writing, which will map the timeline of Budweis as the European Capital of Culture.

There will be a different narrator and a different perspective on the city and the region each week. A weekly testimony about life in the city and region will be published in digital form on the candidacy website as well as during the title year itself. This diary will also be recorded in the form of podcasts by actors from the South Bohemian Theatre.

Project promoter: Literature Lives (Literatura Žije) (city)
Local partners: Milk & Honey, University of South Bohemia - Department of Bohemian Studies, Czech Radio Budweis (city)
Examples of involved local authors: Jan Štifter, Šimon Leitgeb, Jiří Hájiček, Markéta Lukášková, Miroslav Pech, Jan Cempírek, Jiří Březina, Lenka Veverková, Lukáš Csicsely, Viola Tokárová

WOMENPEDIA (2026–2028)

ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

Women in the stories and history of the region.

Most of the stories from our history speak about men and their work in the public sphere; the women's stories, whether they speak of an everyday life or of history-defining moments, are slowly disappearing.

In the first phase of **WOMENPEDIA**, we will be mapping and researching the territory. We have teamed up with the Prague-based Gender Studies organisation, taking inspiration from their international project "Toponyms for Equality and Awareness", whose methodology we will adopt. With the participatory involvement of heritage institutions, schools and volunteers, we will end up having a local database of stories and data about women that we will continue to work with in educational projects, as well as produce creative and artistic outputs.

We don't want to focus solely on the past, though. The absence of women in the public space is a problem of our time. We will create a local database of female experts

#womanexperts2028, who can actively engage in public debates, and offer their knowledge and perspectives.

Outputs: publications, website, statues, street names, comics
Methodology and partners: Gender studies (CZ), Post Bellum (city), Forum 50 % (CZ), AMO (CZ)
Inspiration: 100 women of Limerick (IR), Wiki Loves Women
Artists and partners: Klára Vlasáková (CZ), Bára Baronová (CZ), Markéta Lukášková (CZ), Marie Heřmanová (CZ), Lucie Klímová (CZ), Dory Hájková (CZ)
ECOC partner: Broumov 2028 (CZ)

LITERARY QUARTER (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ART, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, REGION

Many contemporary Czech award-winning writers come from Budweis or South Bohemian region: the concentration of such talented and productive novelists, poets, and screenwriters is remarkable.

We unite the authors under the brand of **LITERARY QUARTER** (literally present in the city) to display the richness of the local literary scene. We also want to encourage them to create the narrative of Budweis 2028 and let them tell the stories.

To introduce such talents to European readers, we aim to organise annual residencies for translators from around Europe, to encourage them to translate local authors. From 2025 onward, these regular translation symposia should focus on different authors each year. The translator should be always present to introduce their perspective, local context, or to discuss various linguistic challenges. Such a symposium would have a very positive impact on the authors and (their) translators, as well as on the final product, the book.

In order to attract European authors to come to Budweis, to introduce and to read their books at the local literary festival Literatura žije! ("Literature Lives!"), we aim to organise transversal residencies and invite European authors to assist Czech translators to translate their texts for the festival readings.

Project promoter: Literature Lives (Literatura Žije) (city)
Local partners: Milk & Honey (city), South Bohemian libraries (region), Rezi.dance Komařice (region), Naplaveno Jistebnice (region), Dům U Beránka (city)
National partners: Czech Literary Centre (CZ)
International partners: Tartu UNESCO City of Literature (EE) **ECOC partners:** Tartu 2024 (EE), Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Broumov 2028 (CZ)

Continuo Theatre: Monstre, 2020 (Plum Yard, Malovice, photo: Michal Hančovský)



POledne movie, Theatre Night 2020 (Plum Yard, Malovice, photo: Michal Hančovský)



PROGRAMME BLOCK: TRADITIONS IN EVOLUTION

This programme bloc focuses on our roots, traditions, and cultural heritage. We are exploring the cultural soil, which we nurture to keep it alive, what we remember about the place we live in and what we want guests of Budweis 2028 to remember. If we want to pass on our living traditions, we need to constantly recapture them and work with them in an up-to-date way; therefore, we are on a quest for (new) pathways to the roots. These new paths are also important ways to protect the values of the cultural landscape in which our traditions and history are embedded.

The programme is not only concerned with protecting cultural heritage and the past, but also strengthening our responsibility for the heritage we are creating for the future.

(e.g. display cases). It will combat the visual smog of the city and create a new artistic language of Budweis based on the relationship between en plein air and street art, and it will visualise what we take from the landscape and what we bring into it.

Project promoters: Aleš South Bohemian Gallery (city), Budweis House of Art (city)
Local partners: City Gallery of Týn n. Vitavou (region), Tabook (region), Literature Lives (Literatura Žije) (city), South Bohemia Scientific Library (city), St. Agnes of Bohemia Secondary School of Arts (region), Koh-i-nor Hardtmuth (city)
National partners: LÚSTR (CZ), Municipal Library in Prague (CZ), Art Universities - illustration, graphics (CZ), Bára Müllerová (CZ)
International partners: Art schools focusing on illustration, graphics (international), European festivals of illustration (EU), Rendez-vous de la bande dessinée d'Amiens (FR), Laydeez Do Comics (UK)
ECOC partner: Amiens 2028 (FR)

KROJ PRIDE (2028)

CULTURE, ART, RESEARCH, REGION

A powerful message of South Bohemian folk costumes transformed into a contemporary parade.

Although folk costumes are excellent works of art, they have practically disappeared from public life and fashion. A traditional folk costume is no longer practical to wear and has therefore disappeared from our everyday fashion.

Tanya Tur is a talented Belarusian artist who works with folk motifs in her design work. As part of her residency at Rezi.dance, Tanya will lead a workshop for fashion and set design students on reinterpreting elements of South Bohemian folk costumes for contemporary fashion.

The residency will also include a workshop with the Czech fashion designer Linda Havrlíková, who focuses on eco-friendly textile design. The wool fabrics that are created under her clothing label are natural, renewable and recyclable. They are made entirely locally from the wool of Czech sheep that she raises herself. The purpose of her work is to highlight the importance of the fact that buying a garment starts at the birth of the lamb.

The outcome of the residencies and workshops will be contemporary fashion creations based on elements of folk costumes, which will be presented to the public as an accompanying programme to the Prague Fashion Week and Designblok Prague shows.

The designs will also form the basis of a collection of fashion merchandise for Budweis 2028.

You can't dance contemporary dances in traditional folk costumes

However, the costume has always been worn for dance occasions. Therefore, we will create a dance and movement performance with the choreographer Michal Zahora, which will focus on folk dances and the dancers' outfits will be based

on elements of South Bohemian folk costumes.

To make sure we never forget what the famous Blato costume looks like in its original form, Smetana's opera "The Bartered Bride" will be performed in traditional costumes against the historical backdrop of the beautiful village of Holašovice, which is unique in its architecture, the so-called Rural Baroque (also typical for the ethnographic region of Blato).

Project promoter: Rezi.dance Komaňice (region)
Creative leadership: Tanya Tur (BY/PL), Linda Havrlíková (CZ), Michal Záhora (CZ), Markéta Málková (CZ)
Local partners: South Bohemian Theatre (city), Kredance - Výměník 1 (city)
National partners: Prague Fashion Week (CZ), Designblok Prague (CZ), Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague (CZ), West Bohemia Univerzity (CZ), The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (CZ)
International partners: International arts universities - fashion design
ECOC partners: Bodo 2024 (NO), Tartu 2024 (EE)

PILGERLAND (2022 - 2028)

CULTURE, ECOC FAMILY, REGION

The restoration and presentation of pilgrim paths leading from Bohemia and Austria is an important opportunity for sharing the common cultural and spiritual values of both countries, and for meeting and communicating with residents and guests from both sides of the border.

This project is a continuation of the joint research and joint activities of the association Krajina Novohradská and the "Weg des Friedens" Verein to help preserve and restore pilgrimage routes in the area of Novohradsko and its neighbouring district of Waldviertel in Austria to the pilgrimage site of Dobrá Voda, one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in all of Bohemia.

At the same time, through our cooperation we will create artistic projects and activities focused on the phenomenon of contemporary European pilgrimage, the restored pilgrimage routes, and the landscape of the Novohradské Mountains through which these routes pass.

Project promoter: KURZ architects (region)
Local partners: Krajina Novohradská (region), Světdíl (city), Hacienda South Bohemian Theatre (city), GOJO (CZ/DE), Hacienda Barcelona (region)
National partners: Saturdays for Neighbourhoods: Czech/Polish/German border group,
International partners: Verein Weg des Friedens (AT), Sunnseitn (AT), Gotthard Wagner (AT)
ECOC partners: Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Chemnitz 2025 (DE), Broumov 2028 (CZ)

THE FORGOTTEN JÍROVEC (2025-2028)

ART, RESEARCH, CITY

Our music history includes more extraordinary composers in addition to Dvořák, Smetana, and Janáček.

Classical music is the most significant artistic

product of Czech culture. The whole world knows our greatest composers. However, our musical history features many more significant European composers, so many in fact that some have fallen into obscurity.

Vojtěch Jírovec was an 18th century composer born and raised in Budweis, but during his lifetime he worked all throughout Europe, in Austria, Italy, France, and England.

The Forgotten Jírovec is a conference in the form of a biennale dedicated to the work of this important European musician. The conference will include a new staging of Jírovec's work as well as a residency for European sound designers and composers.

The theme of the conference is not Vojtěch Jírovec in the narrow sense, but rather the grand topic of composers of the late classical period, who remain under-documented by musicologists, and whose style may have been on the fringes of fashion in their lifetime, but whose qualities are undisputable.

Project promoter: South Bohemian Theatre - Opera House (city)
Project partners: South Bohemian Philharmonic Orchestra (city), Budweis Conservatory (city)
International partners: Universtät für music und darstellende kunst Wien (AT), Conservatorio di musica San Pietro a Majello (IT), Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (FR), Royal Academy of Music London (UK), London College of Music (UK)

ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE (2023-2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, CITY, REGION

For everyone to touch the art.

Together with University of South Bohemia we are creating tactile models of architectural elements of South Bohemian cultural monuments. These allow one to experience the architecture of the South Bohemian cultural heritage by touch, which makes it more accessible to people with diverse needs. Not only to those who are blind and visually impaired, but also to elderly people or anyone of small stature. Additionally, tactile models provide a new experience to everyone. The models can be created using 3-D printing or other creative means, such as clay modelling.

The models can be produced by students of craft high schools or they can be made in the Fab-lab Budweis. Here they are printed by primary and secondary school pupils, who thus acquire both new technological skills and get acquainted with historical architectural elements of South Bohemian monuments.

Project promoters: the University of South Bohemia (city), Make More (CZ)
Partners: primary and secondary schools (city + region), National Heritage Institute (CZ), Poland Without Barriers Foundation (PL), Impact Foundation (PL)
ECOC partner: Broumov 2028 (CZ)

Maryaša: The Story of a Murderer, 2021 (South Bohemian Theatre, photo Petr Zikmund)



PROGRAMME LINE: DREAMS

DREAMS are the most democratic participative processes that we incorporated in our programming, and in the bidding process itself. They are a tool that helps us to look beyond the horizon of what is normal. This has been desperately needed, yet not articulated, after the pandemic. We had to come up with a tool that can ignite a collective brain to express intercommunal desires, leading to co-creation with a collective responsibility for the results. Hence, we take the liberty of dreaming.

PROGRAMME BLOCK: WE WANT MORE AND MOŘE

Even if we can hardly predict the future, we have one fantastic, powerful instrument to visualise it: our imagination. This programme bloc is about our **dreams, desires, utopian visions, and fantasies**. To boost the imagination of our fellow inhabitants, artists, curators, but also local stakeholders, we use every possible method, from participative futuring to tarot card reading. We imagine what more we could have. We imagine what might happen if we could have a **sea – in Czech, moře**.

CULTURE HARVEST (2024, 2026, 2028) FLAGSHIP

CULTURE, ART, ECOFAMILY, CITY, REGION

CULTURE HARVEST is a new multi-genre biennial festival of immersive and site-specific theatre in the city and landscape. Organised in the company of culture organisations of the Culture Island, it is destined to become the highlight of the harvest season.

We need a festival loved by audiences under 35, but also one that will give you the opera glasses experience. We will build a festival that, thanks to its dramaturgy, will be unrivalled in the Czech Republic and far beyond its borders. It will be sought after not only by cross-border guests but also by locals for its unique approach to rediscovering the world beyond our doorstep. South Bohemia is the only place in the world where such a festival can be held. The possibility of staging theatre performances on the water surface, in the Rožmberk Castle, in a Gothic monastery, or in a 1990s revolving auditorium within a UNESCO-protected Baroque garden isn't conceivable anywhere else in the universe.

Although the festival is built on the foundations of **CULTURE ISLAND**, it is not limited to Budweis. Rather, it utilises the genius loci

of the entire South Bohemian region. The festival also represents a great opportunity to develop cooperation with other regional theatres in the Czech Republic and with the independent theatre scene. Last but not least, it will have an international dimension, as non-verbal and foreign-language productions will be open to both performers and audiences from abroad. The festival will also include an educational camp for young artists led by international experts and educators.

Barrier reduction and audience development are important aspects of the festival. All four ensembles of the South Bohemian Theatre will be presented in a completely unique way, using progressive dramaturgy to involve the audience and communities right in the heart of the performance, creating an unequalled experience.

Immersive projects and site-specific theatre can be demanding in terms of the amount of material consumed, as the performances shown are often one-offs. Therefore, elements developed for one festival should be used in its subsequent editions, just reimaged in a different context.- Recycling and a low carbon footprint are set as our priorities from the very start.

Project promoter: South Bohemian Theatre (city)
Local partners: Continuo Theatre (region), Culture Island (city)
National partners: The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (CZ), Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (CZ)
International partners: Teatro Regio Parma (IT), Armel Opera Festival Budapest (HU), Reykjavik Fringe (IS), Galway International arts festival (IR), Tallinn Fringe (EE), Opera fest Lisboa (PT), Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava (SK), and many more
ECOC partners: Liepaja 2027 (LV), Oulu 2026 (FI), Tartu 2024 (EE)

ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA (2027–2028)

CULTURE, ART, ENGAGEMENT, ECOFAMILY, CITY, REGION, EUROPE

It started with an idea to rename the river and grew into a manifesto for the challenges and importance of water protection.

Budweis is located at the convergence of two rivers, the Malše River and the most prominent Czech river, the Vltava. The latter is one of the longest and most significant in all of Europe. However, owing to a mistake of our ancestors, this famous river, which had inspired many artists in their work, ends just beyond Prague, its waters being carried on under the name of the Elbe, despite the fact that the Vltava is longer and wider at the confluence point.

We have decided to correct this mistake and to change the name of the entire river to Vltava, from its source in the southern mountains all the way to the North Sea.

This event will take place on the European Day of Swimming in Rivers, a somewhat unusual holiday held across Europe on the second Sunday of July, celebrating the improving

water purity of Europe's rivers. At the same time, it also draws attention to the challenges and importance of water protection.

The final outcome of the project in 2028 should be the recognition of this symbolic renaming for a period of 1329 hundredths of a second (1.329 km is the length of Vltava river from its spring to the North Sea) officially endorsed by the acting President of the European Commission. This historic event will be commemorated by a symphony orchestra playing the Vltava, the premiere of a new opera about the continuation of the Vltava to the North Sea, an exhibition of artistic works created as part of the cultural diplomacy behind the renaming process, and an attempt to set a world record in a mass jump into a river.

Project promoter: Povodí Vltavy (CZ)
Artists: Tomáš Pilař (CZ), Lukáš Csicsely (CZ), Petra Herotová (CZ), Richard Loskot (CZ), Janek Lesák (CZ),
ECOC partners: Amiens 2028 (FR), Aveiro 2027 (PT), Rouen 2028 (FR), Tartu 2024 (EE), Clermont-Ferrand 2028 (FR)

ADRIAPORT (2025, 2028)

CULTURE, ECOFAMILY, CITY, REGION, EUROPE

“True, we miss the sea. We miss the awareness that there is also a world on the other side. We sit like frogs in a pond and croak at each other.” T. G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia

In 1975, Karel Žilábek designed a railway tunnel from Budweis to Slovenia (former Yugoslavia), which was to enable a rapid connection between Czechoslovakia and the sea.

How did this very bold project turn out? It never materialised, yet for many it remains a dream.

We decided to take matters into our own hands and fulfil the original plan in our own way, by creating a tangible sense of the sea in Budweis, a sense of the Adriatic, so beloved by all Czechs.

In the middle of Stromovka Park, there lies the Bagr water reservoir. Today, nobody knows why and how this reservoir was built. The only thing people remember is that the area used to be heavily dredged and so the reservoir is now called Bagr (Excavator). What if somebody really were trying to dig a tunnel to the Adriatic?

Neither the park, nor the reservoir are currently fulfilling their potential, according to the residents of the city, so we would like to invite the great Slovenian urban planning studio Prostorož to explore and design modifications to the reservoir and its surroundings, to make it a pleasant place for people of all ages to come spend their leisure time. If a guest were to stop by the Bagr during the summer months, close their eyes for a moment, maybe get a little sleepy, they might think they had suddenly been transported to the Adriatic.

For us, **ADRIAPORT** is also a symbolic link with Slovenia and in the next layers of this project

we would like to focus on the artistic connection with Slovenia, and that not only with Nova Gorica, which holds the title of ECOFAMILY for 2025.

Local partners: South Bohemian Theatre (city), Regional Museum in Czech Krumlov (region)
International partners: Prostorož (SI)
Artists: Janek Lesák (CZ), Adéla Babanová (CZ)
ECOC partner: Nova Gorica 2025 (SI)

UTOPIC ZONES (2028)

CULTURE, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT, ECOFAMILY, CITY

Future: We are all in it together.

Imagining different societies can be an uneasy task for our imagination. Yet the world is struggling with complexity and uncertainty. It can be a really useful exercise for individuals or communities to bring people together in a dialogue and imagine possible scenarios for the future; and moreover, to invite people to actively shape them in order to create a sustainable, just, and beautiful world. We will use new technologies, embedding them in the city's and region's environment and public spaces, creating "utopian zones" in which participative futuring approaches with different communities will be embraced. This will serve as part of our research methods as well, and will be used as a participatory agenda setting tool. People will be involved either through Participatory platforms or schools.

Local partners: Festival Na tahu (city), Pomezí (CZ)
International partners: Youthwatch (SK), Zukunftsinstitut (DE)
Artists: Petr Dlouhý (CZ), Magdalena Jadwiga Härtelová (CZ), Joanna Klass (PL)
ECOC partner: Montpellier 2028 (FR)

G. F. Händel: Messiah 2022 (South Bohemian Theatre, Revolving auditorium in Český Krumlov, photo: Martina Root)

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED (2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOFAMILY, CITY

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED is a tool to give a voice to and empower marginalised groups, to involve the young generation in a participatory way, to transfer visceral experiences between fragmented groups (e.g. age groups), but also to raise awareness of current issues, local, European, and global.

We will use it both in the preparation phase of projects as a method for environmental research and as one of the outputs in which we will involve public audiences. Whether the issue is human rights violations or a political conflict, the workings of the class collective, disappearing biodiversity, the refugee crisis - the methods of the **THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED** can be a transformative experience for both actors and spectators, helping to find systemic causes of problems and solutions. The method will be used in Erasmus+ projects when working with young people to improve intercultural understanding and initiate intercultural dialogue when dealing with international issues.

One particular project will be the so-called Legislative Theatre, an offshoot of the **THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED**, which aims to map problems, look for possible solutions and make specific proposals for legislative change through bringing together as many different perspectives and opinions as possible. We incorporate the method in projects such as **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS, CREATIVE MINDS** or **KULTURISTA**, where we work with the public and seek consensus of a wide range of people with differing opinions in a non-violent way.

Thanks to our collaboration with the Faculty of the Humanities of Charles University, where

we are researching the impact of the **THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED** methodology, we will have the opportunity to participate in the development of this field in the European context and to evaluate our own projects mentioned in this collaboration.

Local partners: Budweis Charity (homeless theatre) (city), South Bohemian Theatre (city), Student University Theatre (city), U Kapličky Theatre (city), Pedagogic Faculty of the University of South Bohemia (city),
National partners: Dana Moree (CZ), Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed (CZ), Faculty of Humanities - Charles University (CZ), Antikomplex z.s. (CZ), Slovo 21, z. s. (CZ), Čojš (CZ/DE)
ECOC partners: Montpellier 2028 (FR), Rouen 2028 (FR)

BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE (2023–2028)

CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT, ECOFAMILY, REGION

Making youth a part of the Budweis 2028 programme development

BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE is a project aimed at involving secondary art school students in the ECOFAMILY candidacy. Its purpose is to involve students both in the preparation of the candidacy and in its realisation through practical assignments by participating schools, the Budweis 2028 dramaturgy team, and the participating cultural institutions.

The assignments will be gradually expanded to encourage students to collaborate internationally.

The first assignment for the St. Agnes of Bohemia Secondary School of Arts and Crafts in Český Krumlov will take place as early as during the 2022/23 academic year; additional secondary art schools in the region will be added later.

Participating secondary art schools: St. Agnes of Bohemia Secondary School of Arts (region), Secondary Art school of Bechyně (region), Conservatory of Budweis (city), Woodcarving Vodňany (region)
ECOC partner: Bad Ischl 2024



PROGRAMME BLOCK: WE WANT MORE FRIENDS

One of our big dreams is to have more **friends**. For cooperation, co-creation and constructive feedback. Friends who share our values, experiences and topics, but who might inspire us and lead us out of our comfort zone. Such friends may be found especially among cultural organisations from around Europe, our twin cities, the ECoC family – but they could also be our **temporary citizens** or expectedly unexpected **guests** who will be coming to the city and region thanks to Budweis 2028.

topic of tourism in general: What is its meaning in the 21st century and how should it be transformed? In addition to the head office in Budweis, a European network of branches will be created to attract and direct tourists to South Bohemia. The concept of networking (multiple cooperating places) would then be applied to accommodations, for which people would pay with a positive effect on the location. This is something the locals really need.

One of the key points of the whole project is the gathering of a list of activities that locals require. In artist Kateřina Šedá's experience, it is not just about manual tasks, some people are simply lonely and may ask for things that may not be so obvious: to have someone play a game with them, go to lunch with them, or just go for a walk. By gathering this data, we are not just getting a "dry" list of activities that guests will use to compensate for their accommodation, but we are undertaking a deeper inquiry into Czech society and its needs in the 21st century.

Project promoter: KUL.TURISTIC OFFICE
Artist: Kateřina Šedá (CZ)
ECoC partner: Bad Ischl 2024 (AT)

GIVE AND TAKE (2026–2028) FLAGSHIP

CULTURE, ART, ECOC FAMILY, REGION

**Re-thinking tourism.
Re-introducing South Bohemia.**

The pandemic has slowly subsided and we are once again seeing rivers of tourists pouring through European cities. Flow-through tourism is back in its crystalline form: walk through town, eat, dump your trash and leave. Even though there are reports from many quarters that this mode of travel has ceased to satisfy both guests and locals, no one has yet come up with a workable platform that meaningfully addresses how to not only keep guests in place, but at the same time motivate them to leave a positive footprint.

GIVE AND TAKE will be connected with **KUL.TURISTIC OFFICE**, which will offer guests an original way of travelling around South Bohemia and at the same time open up the

PORTKEYS (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ECOC FAMILY, CITY, EUROPE

PORTKEYS is a cultural transmitter that will transport the inhabitants of Budweis to the individual European Capitals of Culture that will be holding the title of ECoC from 2024 onward.

It is unattainable for some citizens to visit one of the cities holding the title of European Capital of Culture in a given cycle. **PORTKEYS** can make it possible for them to visit European Capitals of Culture and their cultural content practically every day.

Within the **PORTKEYS** project, an **ECOC PAVILON** will be created in which two to three current ECoC holders will be presented each year in the form of an installation and accompanying cultural activities ranging from concerts to virtual reality performances, giving guests and residents of Budweis the opportunity to "teleport" to the current ECoC.

THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP is a special edition of **PORTKEY**, in which we will be closely connected with French ECoC for 2028. We will create a magical shelter that will be placed in a public space in Budweis and the French city. It will serve as a port-key — as a place for the live streaming of what is happening on the other side, a place to visit, place to hold workshops, to share experiences, create performances. Thus we can share our common journey towards 2028 from the acquisition of the title to its realisation.

Project promoter: KUL.TURISTIC OFFICE
Project partners: Embassies
International partners: ECoC: ECoCs 2024–2028

TWINS (2023+)

CULTURE, CITY, EUROPE

How are our twin cities doing and how much do we have in common? Let's find out!

Budweis has five partner cities: Linz, Passau, Nitra, Lorient and Suhl, but cooperation with these cities is minimal. However, Budweis can learn much from its European siblings. Linz was awarded the title of ECoC in 2009, Nitra applied for the title for 2026. Lorient has a well-developed manual for public spaces.

From 2023 onwards, we would like to initiate regular annual meetings in the form of conferences to advise each other on how to improve our cities in different ways. How to take advantage of the opportunities that each city has and how to respond to the problems they face. But above all, to inspire and help one another.

The meetings would take place once a year in Budweis and until 2028 they would focus on the similar themes that Budweis emphasised in its application for the European Capital of Culture

Project promoter: the City of Budweis
Project partners: Linz (AT), Passau (DE), Nitra (SK), Lorient (FR), Suhl (DE), Goethe Institut (city), Alliance française (city)

PLATFORM 28: CULTURE RESHAPED (2024–2028)

CULTURE, ECOC FAMILY, COUNTRY

Sharing the bidding experience.

Together with candidate cities from the Czech Republic, we initiated the creation of the Culture Reshaped platform. Each candidate city represents a different model of cultural experience. That is why it makes sense to raise societal issues together, to inspire each other, to listen to each other and to learn how to deal with the challenges of the 21st century in the context of the role of culture in society. Candidate cities will share their experience in preparing cultural strategic documents and visions, break down myths about what cities of culture should look like and stimulate thinking about the use of culture and creativity in the development of municipalities in the Czech Republic. The platform will also manage an open library of ideas, projects and recommendations.

Project promoters: Liberec 2028 (CZ), Budějovice 2028 (CZ), Broumov 2028 (CZ), Brno 2028 (CZ)

MERMAIDS & REDNECKS (2028)

CULTURE, ART, ECOC FAMILY, REGION

Canoeing with CARE.

Water tourism is a traditional and popular summer activity on the rivers of South Bohemia. It used to be a romantic activity based on canoeing, tramping and with a closer connection to the river and the nature around it.

Today, this activity has grown into a mass tourism activity, which damages the surrounding landscape rather than helps to explore and seek harmonious coexistence with it and its history.

Together with Sladovna Písek, theatre director and set designer Tomáš Žižka, an expert in site-specific theatre, we will focus on the phenomenon of water tourism on South Bohemian rivers through performances and other artistic outputs, particularly art installations created from materials found around the rivers.

Project promoter: Tomáš Žižka (CZ), Sladovna Písek (region)
Local partners: Continuo Theatre (region)
National partner: The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (CZ)
International partner: August Festival Oulu (FI)
ECoC partners: Bourges 2028 (FR), Tartu 2024 (EE), Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Clermont-Ferrand 2028 (FR)

KUL.TURISTIC TRAIL (2028–2029)

CULTURE, CITY

KUL.TURISTIC TRAIL will close the gap in the long-distance route and imaginatively connect the city with the rest of Europe.

The Czech Republic has a unique network of hiking trails. For decades, the Czech Tourist Club has been working here, taking care of the signage in this colourful network with the strong support of many volunteers in order to help guests keep from getting lost in the lush Czech forests and groves.

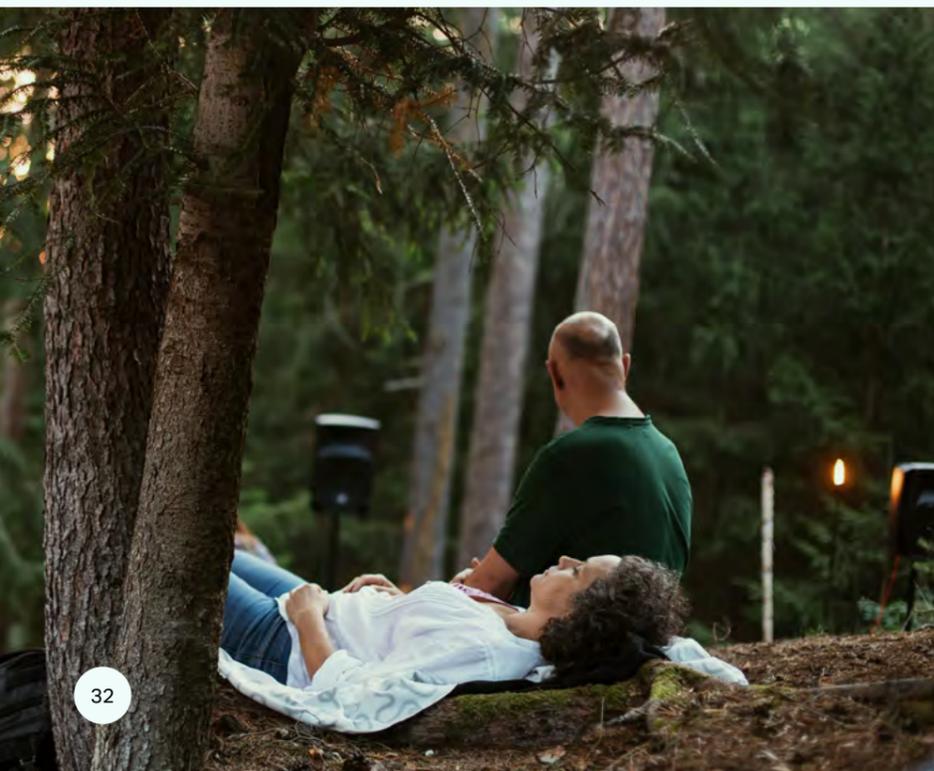
Budweis is located on the European long-distance route E10, which connects the northern and southern parts of Europe. However, the signage of this route terminates just before the city limits and only resumes again once past the city.

KUL.TURISTIC TRAIL represents a new route through the city, creating a path connecting the realisations and projects that will be created from the beginning of the candidature until the end of the titular year. The path will take on many different forms, linking cultural history to the present and telling the story of the city through sensations, sound recordings and augmented reality. The journey will thus tell the story of Budweis as the European Capital of Culture.

Project partners: Czech Tourist Club (CZ), Virtual - Lab (city), Brainz Studios (CZ)



Cirk La Putyka at a community gathering in Komařice, 2022 (Rezidance, Komařice, photo: Daniela Pexa)



Světladina: Zlatý Zbuh tramp settlement, 2020
(Dobrá Voda u Českých Budějovic, photo: Kristýna Padrtová)

Q12

Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?

Just as we perceive culture in its broadest sense, we also perceive the cultural heritage of our region in the same way. We are proud of our excellent monuments, natural assets and cultural landscapes that attract guests from all corners of the world. We imprint local culture and heritage onto the Budweis 2028 programme and thereby preserve it for future generations by using new, experimental and innovative means of its presentation. We place a special emphasis on folk culture, which has been traditionally associated with **caring for the landscape, for people and co-sharing**.

FOLK CULTURE

Authentic folk culture, or what is left of it, is disappearing as the last of its storytellers and keepers die out, and as the landscape and the ways of caring for it are changing. Innovative approaches to its presentation give us the opportunity to keep our cultural roots alive and pass them on to the next generations. We will be recreating traditional cross-border pilgrimage routes and making them accessible through different art forms (visual arts, architecture, sound recordings, audio documentaries, performances) by means of the **PILGERLAND** project. The **CARP(E) DIEM** project will focus on the cultivation of our farming tradition and traditional autumn fish harvests. **FINDING STORYLAND** will be dedicated to the search for the stories of our region, especially those of the last three generations, their analysis and subsequent presentation. Folk culture in dance and costumes. Taking the motifs of folk costumes as inspiration, the **KROJ PRIDE** will create contemporary garments for contemporary dance as a source of present-day identity. Folk culture in traditional craftsmanship will be embodied in **KIOSK – DOWNSTREAM**, which will combine contemporary design and artisanal folk elements. Folk culture in fairs and celebrations of the annual cycle will be further developed throughout the title year programme, which will be centred around the solstice and equinox dates. Women not only sewed and embroidered the folk costumes, but they also played an important role in rituals and celebrations of the annual cycle. With the **WOMENPEDIA** project, we want to correct the widespread perception that it was only the strongly accentuated men in our history who were behind the significant transformations of the region. The **REMEMBER ALL** project will allow the general public, along with visual artists, to put together exhibitions in memory institutions, bringing new perspectives on the process of artefact collection and their presentation.

PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC SPACE

It is in participation that we see a means of rediscovering forgotten traditions and creating new ones. **KULTURISTA** is aimed at strengthening neighbourhood ties, creating a common low-threshold cultural programme and cultivating public space through the involvement of all inhabitants. **HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL** will cultivate the public space in an innovative way. With the help of participatory workshops and the city's Local Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change, experimental architecture and public art installations will neaten public spaces to provide a better living-space for all of its users.

SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

While society is plagued by one crisis after another, and the media space is often occupied by loudmouth laymen instead of erudite experts, we are observing innovative methods of culture and art being used to help communicate scientific research outputs to the public. That is why we are developing projects such as **ARS BIOLOGICA** and **PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY**. **ARS BIOLOGICA** also lead us to think about how we should alter our attitude to land and agriculture, helping to push the traditional Země Živitelka festival towards a more sustainable future.

ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE, ACCESSIBLE ART

Accessibility is an essential value of the entire candidacy. Through **ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE**, we will make the perception of monuments accessible to visually impaired guests using advanced technologies, such as 3D printing. Simultaneously, cultural heritage can make contemporary art accessible to the general public. The backdrops of cultural landscapes and monuments often bring contemporary art to audiences who would not visit it in theatres or galleries.

MANUFACTORIES AND FORGOTTEN CREATIONS

The 19th century was the most glorious period for Budweis, which then flourished both culturally and economically. Two world-famous Budweis-based companies, KOH-I-NOOR HARDTMUTH and Budweiser Budvar, were founded during that period as well. KOH-I-NOOR, in particular, is closely linked to the cultural sphere through the production of art supplies and is the inspiration for the **SOUTH BOHEMIAN PECULIARE** project. Vojtěch Jírovec, an often overlooked but nonetheless brilliant European composer from Budweis, was also active in the 19th century and will be rediscovered via the **JÍROVEC FORGOTTEN** project.

CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural heritage is closely linked to tourism, which in South Bohemia applies to both the landscape and historical heritage sites, such as Český Krumlov, which is overloaded with one-day tourism, or the Vltava River, which has slowly become a hotspot of summertime water-based mass tourism. **KULTURISTIC OFFICE, GIVE AND TAKE**, and **MERMAIDS & REDNECKS** are trying to introduce innovative approaches to tourism. **KULTURISTIC TRAIL** will draw attention of the rest of Europe to the quality and history of Czech tourist trail signage.

Milan Cais: Night Watchman during Art in the City festival, 2018 (Temelín, photo: Petr Kubát)



Q13

How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?

PRESELECTION PHASE

Our candidacy based on permacultural principles helps itself to nurture local cultural actors, and at the same time helps broaden their horizons and motivates them to step out of their comfort zone and pursue their dreams through new collaborations at the municipal, regional, national and European levels. This process can turn cultural institutions into more accessible organisations that care for their city and region and develop the whole of society. For this reason, inviting diverse players to participate in the candidacy was vital from the very beginning.

LOCAL CULTURAL ACTORS

Once the city had made its decision to run for the ECoC title, the first steps of the organising team led to virtually every cultural actor operating in the city. This was so that we could hear their stories and allow them to speak of their needs and dreams. In the first weeks of the bid preparation, we held over 50 meetings with all city cultural actors from both the nonprofit and public sectors, with their artistic directors and the representatives of the city. These meetings were also important for us to discuss the meaning and mission of the European Capital of Culture, and to communicate our commitment to involve many diverse players in order to make the necessary changes on the way to the title.

CULTURAL PLAYERS FROM THE REGION

Our meetings with the city's cultural actors were followed by conversations with regional ones, utilising the new Quo Vadis Živá Kulturo platform, which was created to connect independent and public cultural stakeholders from the entire South Bohemian region. Since the beginning of the bid preparation, 5 meetings have been held, each time in a different cultural organisation in the region (MěKS Vodňany, Sladovna Písek, Plantáž Blatná, City Cultural Centre Bechyně and Švestkový dvůr - Continuo Theatre). At every meeting, candidacy of Budweis for the ECoC and the cooperation with regional players was discussed.

WORKING GROUPS

As a result of all these initial meetings, four main themes and working groups were generated: City, Nature environment, Living together and Regional Attractiveness. We brought together 75 experts (both city and regional) from different fields - from cultural players and artists to politicians, scientists, educators, social workers, experts on the topics as well as "ordinary" neighbours who wanted to express their views and thus participate in the candidacy. Members were nominated through snowball effect from participating institutions or individuals.

DRAMATURGICAL COUNCIL

Suggestions made by working groups were then elaborated on by the dramaturgical council of the candidacy, composed of local curators and artists whose work reaches beyond the borders of the Czech Republic. Members of the dramaturgical board are: Lucie Marková - curator with a focus on creative education, Tomáš Ondřej Pilař - artistic director of the South Bohemian Theatre Opera, Rudolf Samohejl - Czech and South

Bohemian visual artist currently based in Brussels.

Virtually all cultural and artistic projects are designed to be carried out by or in partnership with local institutions and to involve our outstanding South Bohemian artists, along with whom they have been and are being developed.

LOCAL ARTISTS AND CURATORS INVOLVED

Petra Lexová, Michal Škoda, Jiří Ptáček, Rudolf Samohejl, Petr Jakšík, R/FRM, Gerhard Feldbacher, Kurz architects, Bude Cirkus, Víta Marčík Theatre, Já to jsem Theatre, Kejklíč Slávek, Petra Herotová, Pavel Štourač, Jan Štifter, Šimon Leitgeb, Jiří Hájiček, Markéta Lukášková, Miroslav Pech, Jan Cempírek, Jiří Březina, Lenka Veverková, Lukáš Csicsely, Viola Tokárová, Markéta Málková, Tomáš Pilař and many more!

Important components of the design and implementation of an artistic programme are its placement and its ease of connection to individual locations. To this end (among others), **CULTURE ISLAND**, a platform bringing together 17 cultural institutions from inside the city centre and regional **28 HOUSES** network. [\(Q25, pg. 56\)](#)

14 PROJECTS SUPPORTED UNDER THE GRANT CALL LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT THE CANDIDACY

In addition to the process of creating the programme of the candidacy, we created a special grant call to accompany the candidacy which helped cultural actors and artists to create projects to be implemented during the candidacy period. The main themes of the grant call were 1) collaboration between cultural actors on a local and international level, 2) capacity building for cultural actors and 3) projects dealing with environmental issues, whether it was improving the environmental footprint of existing cultural projects or popularising environmental issues through artistic activities.

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Partnerships with institutions and artists from across the country help us fill the gaps in the cultural scene of Budweis. There is no arts college in Budweis, therefore we want to cooperate with art schools from Prague (Academy of Fine Arts, Theatre Academy, Film Academy, Academy of Arts, Design and Architecture), Pilsen (Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Art) and Ústí nad Labem (Faculty of Art and Design). Through our cooperation with the most important Czech festivals, such as Signal Festival, Designblok or Prague Fashion Week, we want to gain experience in creating cultural events for tens of thousands of guests that will also attract guests from home and abroad. Collaborations with organisations that have similar views on the mission of art and culture in general are important to us. That's why we develop cooperation e.g. with organisations such as Tranzit.cz - Biennial matter of Art, Prague or Woods - Community for Cultivation, and Theory and Art.

FINAL SELECTION PHASE

During the final selection, we will create working groups for each programme line composed of local promoters and partners of each project, and complemented by national and international experts.

At the same time, we plan to launch an open call for cultural actors who are not yet involved in any of the planned projects to propose projects they would like to implement within the narrative of the candidacy. Such open calls should be repeated annually to ensure that local culture organisations, independent companies and individual artists will create and lead up to 30% of the Budweis 2028 projects.



Map of Europe, KULTURISTA, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Petr Zikmund)

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Q14

Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:

PROMOTING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF EUROPE, INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND GREATER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EUROPEAN CITIZENS

SHARED SPACE

Based on the premise of creating the (PERMA)CULTURE environment, **building long-lasting extensive collaborations** rather than cooperation on specific small projects is our main strategy towards our international partners. **Collaborative development of our programme** is therefore our main approach to international cooperation.

Creating networks and taking part in existing ones, joining think tanks and various cooperation platforms, we want to make Budweis a part of the colourful and diverse European social, natural and cultural environment.

When looking for our international partners, we build on the programme lines and the main topics they are focused on – MOTHERS, STORIES and DREAMS. We look for values we share and topics we mutually care about. Moreover, we are building on our geographical position in the very heart of Europe and historical links, which connect us to our closest neighbours as well as to friends all over Europe. We find partners in nearby towns and cities, twin cities of Budweis, ECoC title holders and candidates, but also in Czech communities abroad and foreign institutions with existing links to partners in our city.

TRIPPOINT

Our immediate relationships with our Austrian and German neighbours especially in the bordering areas have not been looked after well in the recent past and we wish to change that. In order to secure our goal of re-establishing cross-border cooperation in our region

and exploiting the full potential of our geographical positioning and historically multinational environment, we will create the position of a coordinator of cross-border relations within our team. We not only want our city and region to become more active participants in existing networks and societies, but we want to be the architects of our new tripointian cross-border cooperation and make it present in as many of our projects as possible.

The **PILGERLAND** will rediscover historical routes and pilgrimage paths that can reconnect municipalities from different sides of our Austro-Czech-German borders and retell the stories of our common history through art. Moreover, cross-border collaboration is also a topic we share with some ECoC cities: Braga 2027, Graz 2003, Nova Gorica 2025 and Czech candidate cities Brno 2028, Broumov 2028, Liberec 2028.

SHARED PAST

The Velvet Revolution, dissolution of Czechoslovakia, entry into the EU and the Schengen Area – these are only a few of the **recent milestones in the history of the Czech Republic**, all of which left their mark in our society and culture. The recent **totalitarian chapter of our history** is projected in many areas – culture, politics, civil society, and civilian trust and participation in public institutions. These can be researched and reviewed across the former Eastern Bloc, but also in contrast with our Western neighbours. **VELVET STUDENTS** and **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS**, among other projects, will touch on these topics and try to find a contemporary language to discuss them, and perhaps even a cure for some aspects of them. ECoC cities Chemnitz 2025, Nova Gorica 2025, Trenčín 2026 and Liepaja 2027 will partner with us in search for similar stories and experiences.

Due to the recent Russian attack on Ukraine we wish to highlight the situation of people fleeing their homes and finding temporary shelter in our city, and embed their participation in the city's life in our projects. Working with local Ukrainian associations, and under the **FINDING STORYLAND** project, we wish to collect and tell the stories of Ukrainian refugees in our region.

SHARED FUTURE

Young people represent not only the future of our diverse, cultural, political and economic realities, but also the future of mutual understanding and communication among us as Europeans. For many years now, Budweis has proudly hosted a unique spring art festival called Budějovický Majáles. Organised by high school students, it stands as a great example of young people's participation in cultural activities. What's more, the festival largely takes place in the public space, allowing for a broad audience to find its way to its diverse programme. Building on our experience and joining forces with other ECoC cities and partners from abroad, we want to spread this joyful celebration of youth and culture and enjoy it on a wider international scale. We feel an especially strong connection with French candidate cities Amiens, Montpellier, Rouen and St. Denis and ECoC Tartu 2024. Former festival leaders will be trained in experience sharing and given the opportunity to help students in other cities or organisations in engaging young people. As the first step, in June 2023 the Budějovický Majáles team members will take part in a conference in Rouen 2028, co-organized by the Decider Ensemble platform.

What's more, making Budweis a part of a wider community of European cities through existing networks, such as Eurocities, and bringing us closer to our fellow inhabitants of the European Union is one of our priorities. Not only our past but more importantly our future is intrinsically linked to our neighbours and co-members of the EU, and art and culture is the best communication tool we have. We will ensure a deeper collaboration with our existing partner cities, widen this network to celebrate our cultural riches, and jointly tackle future challenges.

HIGHLIGHTING THE COMMON ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN CULTURES, HERITAGE AND HISTORY, AS WELL AS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND CURRENT EUROPEAN THEMES

The transformative potential of the candidacy and its nascent projects lies in **rethinking urban, cultural, social, educational, environmental or economic narratives**. These are currently, as well as historically, intergenerational, intersectional, and international. How do we best facilitate cross-generational or cross-sectional dialogue and reverse growing societal fragmentations? By creating a common space, common ground for debate, imagination, shared experience, for an opportunity to change our perspectives – by promoting diversity.

Our goal is to **find congruences** within our different European cultures in terms of how culture reflects global issues, threats to our security and culture, fears and emotions. We then identify how **culture CARES** for people who are facing them, or **develop ways** in which it can. With the help of information we collected during our largely **participative bidding process** we managed to define topics and issues concerning the people of Budweis and the affiliated region that we can further develop into collaborative projects with our partners abroad. Already during our first debates with potential partner cities and institutions we made use of this and found many areas in which we feel connected.

STORIES WE BEAR

Our different European cultural histories are linked by stories of entwined roots and life routes creating European identities with shared footprints. Roots that grow into societies spreading globally and creating a wide international network of islands of European cultures in the world. Czechs have been spreading European culture and lifestyle throughout the world. By **telling the stories of personalities who built on their Czech-European heritage and made an impact in distant countries we want to make a connection between geographically, historically, politically and culturally divided spaces**. And what's more, bringing separate endeavours leading to common goals to our attention will develop curiosity and impart optimism regarding tackling pressing global issues. We explore the phenomenon of stories in the programme line Harvesting stories and diverse projects, such as **DIARY** or **FINDING STORYLAND**.

VALUES WE SHARE

Democracy, accessibility, social protection – these are some of the most debated European concepts, yet also poignant issues which deserve to be addressed with concrete action. Together with our European friends, we aim at discussing and developing examples of good practices for a **democratic access to culture and creativity**. How do we best decentralise cultural offerings within our city and region? How do we involve all citizens beyond the narrow notion of an audience? How do we ensure cultural rights of future generations and of new residents and refugees? These are some of the central questions for our endeavour. Furthermore, we want to connect our fellow inhabitants with their counterparts from other European countries; exporting the **KULTURISTIC OFFICE** concept to our partner ECoC cities should help with that. Other projects with special focus on addressing such questions are **KULTURISTA, KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM, OPEN SEASON, CREATIVE MINDS, TWINS**, and many others, especially those coming under the outreach chapter of this bid book.

The Vltava river becomes a symbol of European cooperation and exchange, but also a foundation for further debates on **ecological, social, or economic interdependencies**. River water turns into a metaphor for solidarity and responsibility for each other, a much-needed cultural dimension of the **European Green Deal**. River, ocean, and groundwater protection, related research and artistic response, or

conversely drought and its impact – these are topics we share with many other ECoC cities, for example Amiens 2028, Clermont-Ferrand 2028, Montpellier 2028, Rouen 2028, Trenčín 2026, and Nova Gorica 2025.

All in all, the main common aspect and value we are finding and accentuating in our bidding process is CARE. The Covid-19 pandemic showed us that larger parts of the cultural and creative sectors survive in unsustainable working conditions. This topic is now largely addressed on the EU level with the related OMC groups and with the engagement of some EU Member States for Fair Payment in Culture. Budweis 2028 will mainly explore new takes on Access to Finance and test a long-term cultural fund through **LEGACY FUND**. We also commit to fair payment and transparent contracting. In addition, the topic of art, well-being, and social cohesion will be tackled in our cultural programme in projects **CULTURE WELLNESS, ORGANISATIONAL ARTIST** and **ART IN NEED**.

FEATURING EUROPEAN ARTISTS, COOPERATION WITH OPERATORS AND CITIES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, AND TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS.

BETTER TOGETHER

An international dimension with an accent on shared European stories and challenges is present throughout the Budweis 2028 programme. Cooperation with European and other international partners is a key element of many proposed projects. Whether it be **participation of individual artists from abroad, focus on international audiences, collecting supportive data for projects in cooperation with foreign partners**, or direct collaboration with other ECoC cities, cultural institutions and various incidental stakeholders.

On one level, we develop networks of partner cities among ECoCs, candidates, and twin cities. Another level of networking runs among different institutions – cultural, research and educational. On the base level, we connect communities, NGOs, various local groupings, and individuals. Working with all of the partners within these networks is a two-way street, on the one hand we are promoting our culture, on the other we bring other viewpoints and cultures to our city.

TWINS FORWARD

We are determined to strengthen and elaborate on existing ties with Budweis's twin cities - Linz (AU), Lorient (FR), Nitra (SK), Passau (DE) and Suhl (DE). The **TWINS** initiative will focus directly on building on current ties with these cities and establishing regular annual sessions, during which we could share our experiences and discuss common issues.

One of Budweis's most important partners in science and education is Linz, thanks to the advanced collaboration between the Johannes Kepler University Linz and University of South Bohemia, which we plan to enhance through their joint participation in our projects. Furthermore, the collaboration with Ars Electronica in Linz should serve as a platform for developing **ARS BIOLOGICA**, a large annual conference and research popularisation event focused on natural sciences and art. The University of Art and Design Linz will become yet another important partner, not only for **ARS BIOLOGICA** but other projects too, such as **KROJ PRIDE, CULTURE ISLAND** or **SOUTH BOHEMIAN PECULIARE**.

Nitra, not only our twin city but also an ECoC candidate for 2026, is our partner in theatre related projects, such as **CULTURE HARVEST**, and especially the Festival of immersive art.

Q15

Can you explain your overall strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

ATTRACT

What speaks better to every person on the planet than a good story, whichever way it is told? Whether it be by a narrator, book, film, picture, or in person, we all like to come to know them. Throughout our programme we find pan-European stories, memories, experiences, emotions related to issues common to everyone. By highlighting the cross-border aspects of the topical focus of each project and advertising it to international audiences through our partners, we can attract a wide spectrum of participants and viewers. **We invite experts to curate, artists to create, institutions to participate and guests to enjoy.** Through open calls we can bring the best of European artists to Budweis and with the help of partner institutions, Czech artists, diplomats, and businesses abroad, we can spread the word all over Europe.

Already today, the South Bohemian region is one of the most visited in the Czech Republic. This fact brings us to the idea of **rethinking tourism** and redirecting the attention of guests in our city and region to new experiences. Inspired by the new tourism strategy of Linz, we aim at establishing relationships with (temporary) guests instead of promoting mass tourism. A sustainable offer is one transformed in view of lessening our carbon footprint as well as encouraging social interaction. While our ECoC will not be able to achieve a full transformation of a broad and diverse (cultural) tourism infrastructure, we will invest in innovative projects to show that change is feasible and economically viable. We will also build on the related tourism transformation experiences of Bad Ischl 2024. In a similar way we want to work with guests staying longer than just a few days. This commitment has been already reflected in the new Budweis Tourism Strategy. On top of that, a new approach to engaging temporary citizens in artistic projects and outreach activities should come out of our Budweis 2028 project as well.

ENGAGE

The **KULTURISTIC OFFICE** will be a flagship project for our guests, an accessible, sophisticated, and user-friendly way to be guided through the artistic programme and to connect guests to the sightseeing spots and cultural heritage. Working with the concept of a Revolving audience, **KULTURISTIC OFFICE** will also deliver special programmes to towns in the vicinity of Budweis and will bring audiences to as well as out of it. **28 HOUSES** and **2000 PLACES** will then open doors to new places and experiences and create an easy-to-follow network of venues to visit.

Not only historical sites and traditional events have the ability to attract guests' attention. We are convinced that artistic content, including topics relevant to all Europeans, such as resilience, crises, climate change, self-care, participation, or youth can draw diverse audiences. To address such topics we work with other sectors, such as various research and educational institutions, participatory platforms, private sector, and the Czech Academy of Sciences.

RE-CREATE

For many decades now, Budweis has been home to the biggest agricultural fair in the country called Země Živitelka ("Nourishing Earth"). Every August, tens of thousands of people come to the exhibition grounds to explore the most recent developments in agriculture and related businesses. **ARS BIOLOGICA** is designed to make the best out of this tradition while turning the focus more towards scientific knowledge and environmental issues. This interdisciplinary festival of art and science will have the potential of attracting a large international audience and Ars Electronica will not be the sole international partner helping to achieve its goal. Partners will be found among educational institutions, especially art schools, as well as events, such as the Sensorium Festival, the Kikk Festival, the STRP Festival and the Nature of Us projects. ECoC cities that have already expressed their interest in this project are Tartu 2024, Trenčín 2026, Aveiro 2027, Braga 2027, Ponta Delgada 2027 and Montpellier 2028. Given the close collaboration with the University of South Bohemia and the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences, we also plan to involve their international partners in science and education.

The tradition of outdoor theatre, that has been very popular by locals as well as guests in our region, and which has been mostly created by the revolving auditorium in the gardens of the castle in Český Krumlov or through the works of the Continuo Theatre, will be further developed into a Festival of immersive art under the **CULTURE HARVEST** project.

GIVE AND TAKE, a project designed to help us work with tourism in ways we have not explored before by creating new guest platforms and giving the stakeholders and guests a chance to make the most out of their South Bohemian "tripointian" experience.

Continuo Theatre: ROOMS, workshop, 2021 (Plum Yard, Malovice, photo: Klauďie Moravcová)



Q16

To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

From the very beginning of our candidacy preparations, we made it a priority to make contact with all candidate cities for ECoC 2028 in France and North Macedonia. They are the most natural partner cities for our candidacy and developing common links in our programmes will continue to be on our agenda.

With the principles of accessibility and design for all in mind, the **BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP** under the **PORTKEYS** project shall inform audiences in all ECoC 2028 cities about planned and ongoing events. Starting as early as 2024, the **PORTKEYS** will establish a so-called ECoC PAVILION at the Budweis exhibition grounds, presenting ECoC cities in each given year. That way, local audiences will get to experience the cultural programme of other ECoCs. The project will also improve awareness of the ECoC benefits for participating cities. We also hope that most ECoCs will participate in the **PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY** project, which is designed to connect scientists and artists working on current societal issues, and more.

Building partnerships with ECoC cities, we bear in mind our commitment to legacy. This is why we make an effort to establish ongoing contact with ECoC candidates for years after our title year. So far, we have made contact with Brussels 2030 and Gent 2030, but we will be sure to communicate also with all the ECoC candidates for 2029 and others.

The table below shows the currently discussed collaborations with ECoC cities. In general, we tend to aim at project-based collaborations with ECoCs in years close to our title year (e.g. France, Portugal), and partnerships built predominantly on inspiration, exchange of knowledge and experience sharing rather than developing specific projects with ECoC title holders more distant in time.

CITY	SHARED TOPICS	BUDWEIS 2028 PROJECTS
AMIENS 2028	Environment - WATER / Youth / Accessibility	ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA / ART IN NEED / SOUTH BOHEMIAN PECULIARE / PORTKEYS / BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES*
BOURGES 2028	Environment	ART IN NEED, MERMAIDS & REDNECKS / PORTKEYS
BRNO 2028 LIBEREC 2028		PLATFORM 28: CULTURE RESHAPED
BROUMOV 2028	Literature / Pilgrim roads / Public space / Women / Youth / Accessibility	ROBIN PLAYHOOD / WOMENPEDIA / CULTURE WELLNESS / CREATIVE MINDS / LITERARY QUARTER / OPEN SEASON / PILGERLAND / PLATFORM 28: CULTURE RESHAPED / ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE / SKATEHOLDERS
CLERMONT-FERRAND 2028	Creative learning / Environment / Landart / Mobility / Youth / Children / Philanthropy / Site-specific Theatre	ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA / CREATIVE MINDS / CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LEARNING MILLE FORMES / KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM / PORTKEYS / MERMAIDS & REDNECKS / ROBIN PLAYHOOD
MONTPELLIER 2028	Art and Science / Environment / Resilience / Water / Youth	ARS BIOLOGICA / BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES* / THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED / UTOPIAN ZONES / PERFORMING (DIGITAL) LARPS / PORTKEYS
REIMS 2028	Care / Creative learning	ART IN NEED / CULTURE ISLAND / CULTURE WELLNESS / PORTKEYS
ROUEN 2028	Art and Science / Creative Learning / Community Engagement / Environment / Water / Youth / Twinning Cities	ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA / ART IN NEED / PORTKEYS / KULTURISTA / THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED / PORTKEYS / BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES* / HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL
ST. DENIS 2028	Community Engagement / Youth / Public Space	ROBIN PLAYHOOD / SKATEHOLDERS/ BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES* / PORTKEYS
AVEIRO 2027	Community Engagement / Environment / Resilience / Sustainability / Creative Learning	ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA / PORTKEYS / KULTURISTA / HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL / ARS BIOLOGICA
BRAGA 2027	Art and Science / Community Engagement / Creative Learning / Traditions	ARS BIOLOGICA / CREATIVE MINDS / CULTURE WELLNESS / KULTURISTA / PORTKEYS
LIEPĀJA 2027	Accessibility / Care / Stories / Post-socialist and socialist history / Site-specific Theatre / Joan Brems	CULTURE HARVEST / FINDING STORYLAND / VELVET STUDENTS / PORTKES
PONTA DELGADA - AZORES 2027	Art and Science / Community Engagement / Environment / Participation / Public Science	ARS BIOLOGICA / PORTKEYS
OULU 2026	Creative Learning / Sustainability / Volunteering / Site-specific Theatre	CULTURE HARVEST / CULTURE ISLAND / PORTKEYS
TRENCÍN 2026	Accessibility / Capacity Building / Culture Wellness / Environment / Water	ARS BIOLOGICA / PORTKEYS / KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM / VELVET STUDENTS / PORTKEYS / CULTURE WELLNESS
CHEMNITZ 2025	Accessibility / Community Engagement / Post-socialist and socialist history / Stories	PILGERLAND / PORTKEYS / VELVET STUDENTS
NOVA GORICA 2025	Cross-border Cooperation / Participation / Post-socialist and socialist history / Stories	ADRIAPORT / FINDING STORYLAND / KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM / LITERARY QUARTER / MERMAIDS & REDNECKS / PILGERLAND / PORTKEYS / VELVET STUDENTS
BAD ISCHL 2024	Ceramics / Environment / Water / Rural Development / Sustainability / Tourism / Traditions	BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE / CULTURE WELLNESS / FINDING STORYLAND / GIVE AND TAKE / PORTKEYS
BODO 2024	Traditions / Water / Youth Engagement	BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES* / KROJ PRIDE / PORTKEYS
TARTU 2024	Environment / Art and Science / Volunteering / Youth / Post-socialist and socialist history / Site-specific Theatre	ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA / ARS BIOLOGICA / CULTURE HARVEST / KROJ PRIDE / LITERARY QUARTER / BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES* / MERMAIDS & REDNECKS / PORTKEYS / VELVET STUDENTS
PILSEN 2015	Pilsen 2015 Legacy	KULTURISTA

* Budějovický Majáles capacity building projects in cooperation with Budweis 2028

7

four-day urban festivals

7

different neighbourhoods

143

events*

98

people involved in preparation

3 500

local residents attending in person

KULTURISTA IN NUMBERS

*The events took place from MAY to SEPTEMBER. In time of submission of the bid book, the last event was still ahead of us.



Public reading, KULTURISTA, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Petr Zikmund)

OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

Participation and audience engagement co-create the vision of (PERMA)CULTURE environment of the city and the region and ensure the long-term impacts of Budweis 2028 activities. First, with accessibility and inclusion in mind, people's needs are being mapped; through them, people are being mobilised and invited to participate in cultural projects. Similarly, ongoing relationships with audiences are built through engagement in positive cultural or artistic experiences. Participation and audience engagement lead to the fulfilment of the needs of those involved. This creates continuous energy for further and deeper involvement of more people and in many different ways. To achieve that, an investment in the professional development of the cultural sector is needed to gain specific knowledge and tools. Therefore, capacity building is an important input into the process. In the later stages, sharing know-how becomes also important and vital for the environment.

Q17+Q19

Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year + Explain your overall strategy for audience engagement and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

Our commitment to the participatory bidding process is rooted in the very origin of our team. In the past, most members of our team were active in grassroots cultural or civic activities in the city. We started preparing the bid as a non-profit association selected by the local government. And we couldn't wait to spread the news about the candidacy and take more people on board to create the Budweis 2028 vision. The following table (inspired by the ladder of citizen participation concept by Sherry Phyllis Arnstein) **provides an overview of different possible levels of engagement / participation during the preparation as well as in the ECoC implementation:** (See Participatory table on the next page)

PARTICIPATORY LEVEL	WHAT & WHY	PRE-SELECTION PHASE ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF BID BOOK PROJECTS
KEEPING WELL INFORMED	Generating interest and building awareness. The foundation for further engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing communication Newsletter communication KUL.TURISTA Participation in external events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information portal about culture KUL.TURISTIC OFFICE Citizen's culture pass
OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPRESSION	Activities with room for everybody to express one's position to identify needs and obtain feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Public debates Map of Europe, Coffee for a story Socionaut research workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FINDING STORYLAND PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL ROBIN PLAYHOOD
PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT	Projects that require personal and active involvement to activate and network diverse players.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture Strategy Workshops Involving volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOCAL ECOC MEETING PLATFORM VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME PUBLIC SCIENCE LABORATORY GIVE AND TAKE
PARTNERSHIP	Collaborative search for solutions, shared responsibility to increase the relevance of results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working groups Capacity building events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CREATIVE MINDS projects Projects implemented by partnership organisations
DELEGATED AUTHORITY	Shifting organisational tasks or decisions to a target group to strengthen the ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership of local stakeholders in the broader organisational team KUL.TURISTA (local coordinators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS (coordinators) Budějovický Majáles programme cooperation Open calls for projects (e.g. KIOSK – DOWNSTREAM)
INDEPENDENT LEADERSHIP	Independent decision making in activities that affect the candidacy through their process/ outputs to build capacities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects under grant call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects led by partner institutions / initiatives CULTURE ISLAND 28 HOUSES

In 2021, we were dealing with covid-19 restrictions. We organised 84 % of the meetings and activities online or in a hybrid way so everyone felt safe to participate.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES DURING THE PRE-SELECTION PHASE

- Stakeholder analysis**
We identified stakeholders to collaborate with in fields such as the arts, culture, and the creative sector, civil society, politics, businesses, sports. The list consists of 861 people or initiatives, both from Budweis and the South Bohemian region. According to our 2021 research, 88 % of stakeholders support the candidacy.
- Meetings with stakeholders** [\(Q13, pg. 35\)](#)
- Working groups** [\(Q13, pg. 35\)](#)
LOCAL ECOC MEETING PLATFORM will be following up on those after the final selection phase.
- Budweis Cultural Strategy workshops** involving diverse players, including civil society, [\(Q5, pg. 8\)](#)

- Research**
During the preparation of the Budweis Culture Strategy and the bid book, we conducted qualitative research among stakeholders, as well as quantitative research (more than 2200 individuals) focused on analysing the current state: key problems and opportunities of the cultural field, audience behaviour, but also attitudes towards different topics (either local or european). We invited a cultural anthropologist who helped us gain new perspectives.
- KUL.TURISTA**
Our main outreach project in 2022 – an urban festival travelling through the city for 7 months. Through the “**coffee for a story**” scheme, people stopped by and talked with us about their lives, dreams, issues in the city – and about the candidacy. **Interactive map of Europe** helped us understand how people relate to EU countries. **Seven urbanistic qualitative research workshops by Socionaut** in public spaces involved approx 230 people. (**KUL.TURISTA**, [\(Q11, pg. 20\)](#)) The programme was organised by schools, NGOs, local businesses, artists, sports and hobby clubs, and churches. We held a workshop on community engagement and prepared a how-to manual on community activities.



Future development of KUL.TURISTA: We will continue our work to ensure every neighbourhood has a vibrant community (see Participatory platforms below). We plan to extend the project into the region in the final selection phase via our 28 HOUSES network. From 2024 onwards, the project should spread all over the region with the help of our local partners. [\(Q11, pg. 20\)](#)

- Newsletter, website, social media:** Since October 2021 we are communicating through ECoC monthly email newsletter with more than 900 subscribers. We launched a website in May 2021 and social media profiles in February 2022. Until August 2022 our Facebook and Instagram page have reached 97 725 people. For more interactive and up-to-date communication, we are working with a Facebook group gathering more than 740 people, mainly culture players. In summer 2022 a podcast series with influencers was introduced. During **KUL.TURISTA** events, we invited local influencers to be part of the programme. The candidacy was regularly part of local television broadcasts, inviting people to events and introducing the concept.
- Participation in 19 public events**, where we have presented the candidacy, gathered feedback and inputs, i.e. through Mentimeter or emotional maps.

LEARNINGS & INSIGHTS

Based on the interpretation of quantitative data collected in late 2021, 87 % respondents perceive Budweis as a good place to live. Yet only 50 % of respondents were happy with the current cultural offer in the city, another 35 % neutral, 8 % unhappy and 7 % expressed no opinion. Culture as an advantage of the city was more highly rated by people with a lower level of education (66 %) while it was rated in a neutral or negative way by people with postgraduate education (30 %). **This is an opportunity to bring more demanding art genres and diverse forms** – also for those who are currently travelling to other cities for cultural offerings (70 % of the 15-24 age group). Only 30 % of those aged 75+ are happy with the cultural offer, claiming they receive the least amount of information; 30 % of them only attend admission-free

events (which is above the average in the general population, where it stands at 20 %). **The accessibility of culture is therefore a pledge for Budweis 2028.**

It is clear from our data that there is a **large group of residents who have been affected by restrictions and the Covid-19 pandemic**. A total of 44 % of the population is less likely to attend cultural events even after the end of the pandemic measures and 16 % of people have ruled out attending cultural events altogether. It is therefore necessary to ensure that **there won't be fellow inhabitants for whom culture is unavailable or irrelevant**. Those who would like to be more engaged lack information about what is happening, which is an **opportunity for ECoC in terms of marketing**.

The local identity is mostly rooted in the past, history, heritage and landscape. Identification with the city as a societal system and with fellow inhabitants in terms of civil society is lacking – when present, it is in some cases built on “empty patriotism” which has characteristics of conservatism. This is surely one of the biggest challenges which we are determined to overcome by sensitively chosen programme and outreach strategies. **We will build on our fellow inhabitants' current needs and affinities**, at the same time inviting them to explore and open up to new experiences and each other. As people **miss more possibilities for community engagement** and perceive community life as one of the weakest cultural spheres of the city, this is a potential for activation.

Our meetings, qualitative and quantitative research conducted in the pre-selection phase helped us understand the **challenges regarding audience engagement and participation**.

Based on challenges we identified five areas of focus. Through our co-creation process, we were able to design on-point strategies in each of these areas. See following table:

CHALLENGES WE IDENTIFIED	AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION – AREAS OF FOCUS	STRATEGIES
Institutions would appreciate more information about audiences. Capacities and strategies on working with audiences are lacking. Human-centred approach in cultural institutions is not standard.	STRATEGIC AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Capacity building modules Audience engagement plans
People prefer grassroots instead of top-down approaches. People would appreciate more opportunities for community activities and platforms for communication.	OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AND CULTURAL SPHERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME LOCAL ECOC MEETING PLATFORM
Opportunities for using arts and creativity in education or social projects are lacking. Culture and the arts are perceived mainly as leisure activities.	CREATIVE LEARNING AND SOCIAL ARTS PROJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic support of artistic and cultural projects overlapping with education and social sphere CREATIVE MINDS
The young generation is lacking space for self-realisation. Most people are not used to being proactive, they are not involved in public affairs or politics.	ENGAGING THE YOUNG GENERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-directed youth projects Cooperation with schools
Not everyone has equal access to culture. Active overcoming of the barriers of participation is yet not strategically supported.	OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL (Q18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific artistic projects Accessibility advisory board Cultural accessibility plan Accessibility training

STRATEGIC AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Going beyond marketing-oriented audience development, we stress audience engagement and long-term internal processes of change within cultural organisations. We see working with audiences as a shared responsibility of the Budweis 2028 team and the whole cultural sector to ensure the long-term sustainability of results.

We don't want to speak about audience engagement without accessibility, therefore specific tools for accessibility will be introduced. Their goal is not only to make culture offering inclusive for audiences with different disabilities; it benefits all the audiences and helps establish relationships with those who are currently non-audiences.

Strategies on the level of Budweis 2028 team:

- **Support the culture sector** with skills by organising capacity building programmes for culture professionals in audience engagement and introducing specific skills.
- **Facilitate cooperation** between culture organisations and introduce specific projects and tools. [\(Revolving audience, Q23, pg. 54\)](#)
- **Conduct research**, introduce specific actions and tools based to increase the knowledge about the needs of various audiences.
- **Plan marketing and communication activities** to reflect the audience segmentation and their different needs.

Strategies on the level of municipality and culture organisations:

- Support ongoing audience research.
- Introduce audience engagement process into organisations resulting in the creation of individual audience engagement strategies (based on the overall organisational strategy).
- Active participation in cross-sectional cooperation in order to outreach to potential audiences.
- Raise the inclusivity by introducing the tools for accessibility.

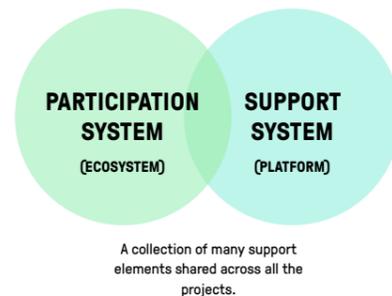
To RESEARCH: We are aware that in order to conduct the audience engagement process, knowledge about the audiences is needed: both existing audiences and future potential audiences. This is why we pay so much attention to continuously conducted audience research (see above) and sharing and reflecting on research results. **Research panel on high school and primary school students will be created** in the selection phase. We will cooperate with Youthwatch, slovakian organisation focusing on identifying and analysing trends among young generations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AND CULTURAL SPHERE

Regarding citizen involvement in the public sphere, we face similar problems most of the former East Bloc regions do: the participation in politics or in public life is rather low (only 28% citizens are at least once quarterly actively involved) and means of engagement are passive. We see huge potential in ECoC bringing the spotlight to the European and global issues which go beyond the concerns of everyday lives (i.e. democracy, human rights, inclusion, equal rights, racism). To increase interest and participation in such issues as prioritised by the European Democracy Action Plan, we believe the right way is to start the involvement of our fellow inhabitants on a local level. Culture and community activities will serve as a way to engage in broader issues.

PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS

In every single neighbourhood of the city, a **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORM** will be created with the help from Budweis 2028 team and the municipality. **PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS** will create **participation ecosystems** in the neighbourhoods.



Platforms will serve:

- communities as an autonomous platform,
- city government to engage citizens in a participatory manner,
- Budweis 2028 institute in co-creating ECoC participatory programmes.

Projects to be implemented in collaboration with Participatory platforms:
KULTURISTA, Finding Storyland, Robin Playhood (Child Friendly cities), Give and Take, Public Science Laboratory, Hotspots of Survival, Remember All, Lanovka, Utopian Zone.

In 2028, there will be one participatory platform in every district. For each, a suitable location will be determined and provided (i.e., former shops or offices at street level) and teams will be formed. The platform leaders will be trained and continuously educated in our **CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME**. To ensure participation for all, we will adopt the "14 design principles for inclusive participation" of the Participatory city model.

Main partner: Participatory city (London, UK)
Local partners: Nadace Via, Nadace Proměny
International partners: Rouen 2028 (FR) and the participation network Decider ensemble, Clermont-Ferrand 2028, Child friendly cities platform, Mit Ost, Prostoroz, European Urban Regenerators Knowledge Alliance (EUREKA)

VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME: HAPPY TOGETHER

Volunteering should engage people who will co-create the conscious permaculture environment. We will include our long-term cooperating volunteers in specific capacity building modules, as well as initiate company volunteering projects. **A new ECoC cultural volunteer platform** will be established in cooperation with current local volunteer centres, with which we co-designed the programme. In the following table different areas of volunteering projects are listed – involving either new Budweis 2028 volunteers (the goal is participation of 2 % of citizens) or offering cultural programmes for current volunteers and clients in social organisations and volunteer centres. Inclusive volunteering will be introduced as a tool for integration and empowerment.

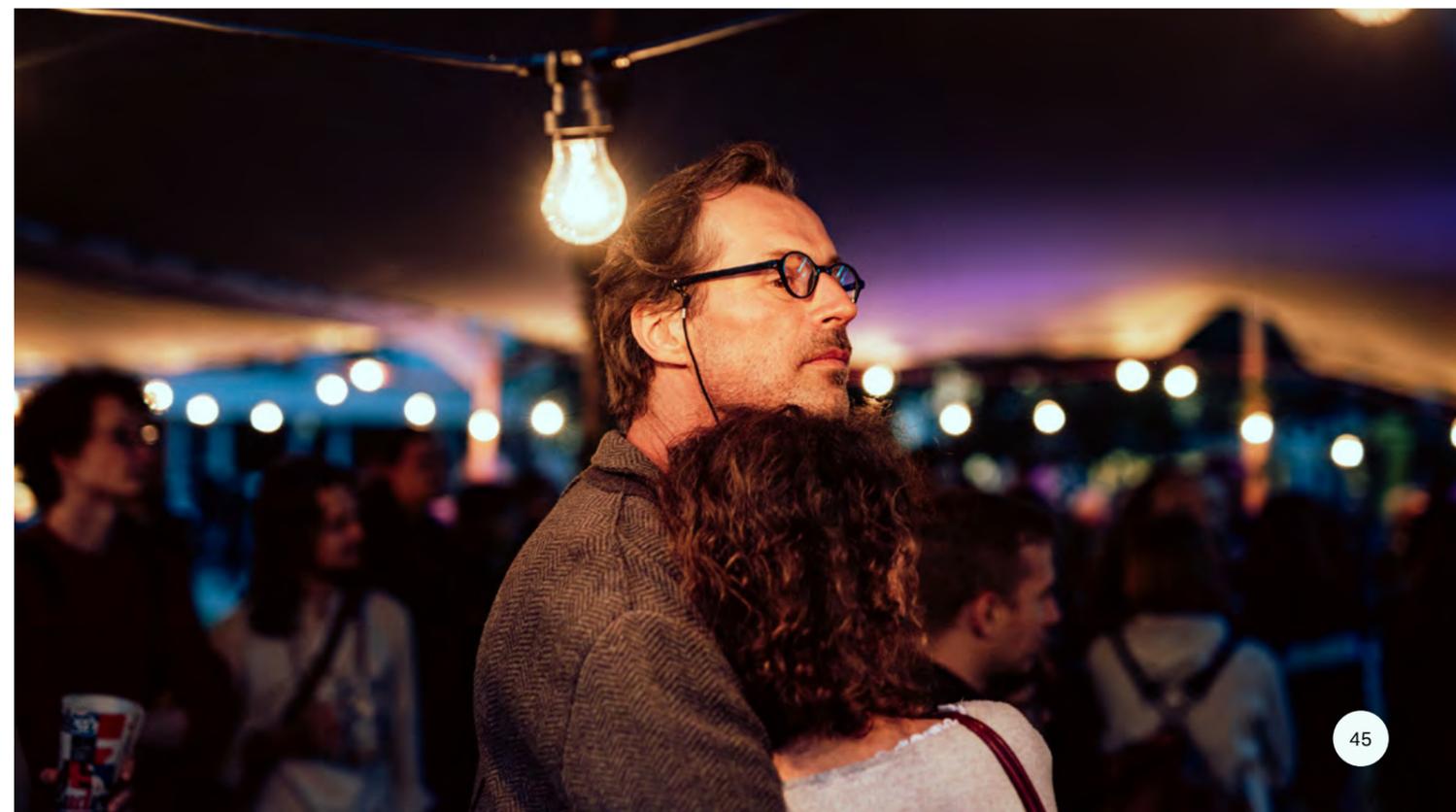
For example programmes see the table on next the page.

Local partners: Adra, Arpida, Charity, Senior clubs, Senior houses, Social facilities, Hospitals, Churches and religious associations, Centre for students with specific needs, South Bohemian university, Budějovický Majáles, Scouts Institute, Cassiopea,
National partners: volunteer platform HESTIA, Civil society studies at Faculty of Humanities Charles University
International partners: Bad Ischl (AT), European Volunteering centre platform

HAPPY TOGETHER (2023+) MAIN VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

BUDDY PROGRAMME TWO WORLDS	Connecting different groups who can spend some cultural time together: single seniors and families with little children, connecting lonely people, people with disabilities, students, etc. Culture will visit people who aren't able to leave their homes or facilities.
ACCESSIBILITY AMBASSADORS	Our volunteers will participate in extensive accessibility training to design usable solutions for increasing accessibility. (Q18, pg. 47)
GUEST'S COMPANIONS	City guests (either artists, visitors or partners from other cities) will be welcomed and accompanied by our volunteers in a hospitality programme developed with Českobudějovicko destination management.
ARTISTIC PROGRAMME	Participation in the organisation of events and activities: cooperation with the Budweis 2028 team and various cultural organisations on the implementation of their programmes and getting valuable experience and enjoyments from backstage.
SKATEHOLDERS	Sports for youth development project will be implemented via volunteer collectives. (Q11, pg. 19)
URBAN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE	Establishing cooperation with the Scouts Institute to support young people to effectively care for selected places in their surroundings.
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES	International exchange and VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES , cultural heritage preservation workcamps.

Budějovický Majáles, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Kuba Zeman)



LOCAL ECOC MEETING PLATFORM (2024-2029)

We will establish the platform to ensure the involvement of different people throughout the entire preparation and implementation process. It will be connected to the intersectional board. [\(Q5, pg. 10\)](#) This will serve as a platform for people to be more involved in the Budweis 2028 projects as well as being better informed. This will allow for the engagement of people with limited time. From our experience, it is critical for people from different sectors and organisations to meet and share their ideas, give and receive feedback from each other, and connect their projects. **In the forum, members of the following bodies will be included:** working groups established for the candidacy, partner institutions, **VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME, PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS, ACCESSIBILITY BOARD, YOUTH'S FORUM**. It will be open for participation of the public as well.

CREATIVE LEARNING AND SOCIAL ARTS PROJECTS

We perceive our fellow inhabitants and guests not as a passive audience we want to entertain, but as active partners who can co-create projects with us. Everyone should have the opportunity to feel like an artist, enjoy the creative flow, express oneself and experience the creative process. This can be mediated through creative learning and social arts projects. To support the development of such projects, the creative learning platform – **CREATIVE MINDS** will be launched. Through involving the public, it will build (lifelong) relationships to culture and art, inspire critical literacy and active citizenship and increase the well-being of participants. For examples of specific projects implemented by the **CREATIVE MINDS**. [\(Q11, pg. 24\)](#)

ENGAGING THE YOUNG GENERATION

Gen Z claims to be more civically responsible and sensitive towards global issues than previous generations. And yet, almost 40 % of young people claim that society does not allow them to show their potential and 70 % feel they don't have the influence to change anything in the society (People In Need research, 2021). And that is what we want to help to change. **To make this happen, autonomously run projects as well as engagement through schools will be embraced.**

(see tables on the next page)

CAPACITY BUILDING ON YOUTH WORK

We want to bring more opportunities for growth to those working with young people – both in formal education and governmental projects, or informally. We will cooperate with the Europe Goes Local platform, Structured Dialogue with youth, European Youth Forum (and specifically two of the members – Amiens 2028 (FR) and Trenčín 2026

YOUTH SELF DIRECTED PROJECTS HAPPY TOGETGER (2023-2029+)

Following projects will be implemented in cooperation with young citizens and visitors:

YOUTH FORUM (2023+)

To engage young people in co-creation of the bid book projects and city development, a youth forum of 15 young people will be introduced in 2023. To turn their suggestions into actions, there will be an annual budget (to be set in the selection phase) for the implementation of projects developed. Members of the youth forum will be included in the **LOCAL ECOC MEETING PLATFORM**.

STUDENTS CREATIVE THINK TANK (2024+)

Pupils and students would connect with creative people, artists and institutions operating in the city and region, and together they would work on specific projects, which they would solve in new, creative ways. The think tank will be part of the **CREATIVE MINDS** platform. [\(Q11, pg. 19\)](#) It will cooperate with the platform EU Youth Dialogue, which will enable young people to be part of a broader discussion about European topics and implement projects based on common European youth priorities.

SUPPORTING TALENTS THROUGH BUDĚJOVICKÝ MAJÁLES (2022+)

Unique festival organised by volunteers – mainly high school students. With 19 years of tradition, the organisational team changes from year to year, giving opportunities to younger generations through experience-sharing from older members. We don't want to set the agenda for generations who are yet to come. But there are some principles we developed with the current members:

We already cooperate with Budějovický Majáles in capacity building projects which will be further developed in the Next generation of leaders program. Exchange of projects as well as internships and job shadowing will be supported. There is a growing trend towards year-round activities in the project. We will support it by creating opportunities for the team members to develop their own side projects within ECoC's programme.

We will support the project team in development of specific programmes with partners and artists from the EU. Every year, an artistic residency for young foreign artists will be open and an output presented during the festival.

(SK). We will work closely with local departments of education (either municipal or regional) and local youth organisations. The involvement of youth from rural areas will be done in collaboration with the local Rural youth platform as well as the Rural Youth Europe (EU). In our youth projects we will follow the European Charter on Local Youth work principles and motivate our local partners to adopt it as well.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION THROUGH SCHOOLS

Besides **CREATIVE MINDS** being the main platform for bringing artistic and creative content into schools, we will develop several projects to be implemented during the school year. Some of them are project-oriented, others are focused on systemic improvement of the culture and climate in the school. Special focus will be given to projects contributing to the wellbeing of the students, their healthy self-esteem, active citizenships and building relationships in the collective. Opportunities for inclusion and participation of all will be provided.

STUDENT PARLIAMENTS

Will be introduced in elementary and middle school in the region in cooperation with national partner CEDU (centre for democratic learning), through which we will implement several artistic or participatory projects in the future 2023+

WORLD SCHOOL BY PEOPLE IN NEED

Supports teachers in working with global topics. The basic philosophy is built on three simple steps: learn - find out - act. Regional schools will be invited to join the program 2023+. As the program is also implemented in other European countries, in 2028 we will invite schools from all over Europe to take part in "Summit of European world schools" organised in South Bohemia.

ARTISTIC EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Series of artistic educational workshops will be prepared within the **CREATIVE MINDS** for high school and primary school students. NGOs, artists and institutions' lecture departments will be involved and students from the University trained to introduce the lessons via our **CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME**.

GET TO KNOW YOURSELF AND EUROPE (2024+)

Our **VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES** will be open for youth as well, offering specific projects and motivating young people to join via benefits such as backstage experience, free admission to events, cultural trips to other cities etc. We will encourage cultural and civil society organisations to offer paid internships for students. International exchanges will be realised through Erasmus+ or European solidarity corps (i.e. with partner organisation Egysesek Youth Association from Hungary).

SPECIFIC ARTISTIC PROJECTS

Pecific artistic projects such as **BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE**, **VELVET STUDENTS** or **DANCE FOR SCHOOLS** are directly implemented in schools. [\(Q11, pg. 19\)](#)

Q18

Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

In the previous chapter we outlined how we determined the needs of our fellow inhabitants, and how we decided to respond to them with tailor-made projects and tools, making sure to involve everybody in the project. However, when we say 'everybody', there are still some groups that, we feel, deserve additional support; either because our research showed that they are at higher risk of exclusion, or need special opportunities to participate. Moreover: everyone has special needs in some situations. Whether it is wheelchair or baby stroller access, film subtitles (whether to combat a language barrier or poor hearing).

We strive to integrate people from spatial (horizontal) and social (vertical) periphery. To support their (local) identity rather than colonise their space and impose a culture of the centre. We worked with diverse players, such as CPSSP (Centre for students with special needs at the University of South Bohemia) and several other social services and target groups. We designed the artistic projects in a way that makes them more accessible; in some cases, the specific group is directly included in the programme as co-creators. **Examples are listed →**

How do we want to systematically overcome different types of barriers and motivate people to engage in cultural activities? Making culture spaces, programming and communication accessible to ALL AUDIENCES is part of our mission. The Budweis 2028 projects will establish a baseline in cultural accessibility.

STRATEGY FOR ACCESSIBLE CULTURE

Map and analyse overall accessibility, barriers and needs regarding cultural institutions and events.

Form an **accessibility advisory board** to discuss policies and issues relating to accessibility and co-create projects.

Develop a Cultural Accessibility Plan. Prepare Cultural Accessibility Guide and training for event promoters and cultural institutions.

Introduce a "Citizen's culture card" for low income households or individuals to increase opportunities for culture attendance.

Bring more culture to public spaces and to places and institutions people visit regularly, in their everyday life.

To involve **people from wider region**, more opportunities to visit cultural institutions will be introduced, and the other way around: institutions and artists will visit remote locations with cultural production.

[\(Revolving audience, Q23, pg. 54\)](#)

Support digitalisation for accessibility.

Events organised online will pledge "minimum requirements for accessibility". We will provide institutions and initiatives with tools to be used (i.e.: sign language interpretation, live subtitles captioning, pre-guide explaining rules, transcript). The recordings of live events will remain available online, in an accessible format. All of the live official meetings, public working group sessions or workshops will be accessible for online attendance.

In order to be able to implement these changes, a **CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME** for future accessibility coordinators, volunteering coordinators and cultural institutions will be run. Another module will focus on **learning and implementing specific accessibility tools** and will be open to a broader set of participants. Thought the training a specific tool will be explored (i.e., audio descriptions or subtitles). As an exemplary output, one of the permanent museum exhibitions will have a new layer accessible to all guests and even remote audiences – audio description made by the participants.

Jobs and possibilities for active participation in culture are limited for people with lower opportunities. Moreover, the cultural sector is depriving itself of different perspectives. We are in a broader sense inspired by the EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation. **We will create a more inclusive working environment**, by measures such as equal gender representation in management, quotas for people with lower opportunities or disabilities, inviting local social businesses into Budweis 2028 tenders. We will introduce specific training and programmes for cultural institutions to meet those criteria. We teamed up with the Gender Studies (CZ) association and after the pre-selection process, we will do gender mainstreaming through gender impact assessments for bid book projects. After the selection process, we will introduce a workshop on gender sensitivity as part of a broader diversity training for core co-creators of the projects.

CHALLENGES OR BARRIERS	TO BE ADDRESSED BY	EXAMPLE OF BUDWEIS 2028 PROJECTS
LOW OPPORTUNITIES to combine family / work / social life	Cultural offer adjustable to family lifestyles and children's needs. Flexible opportunities for active participation.	OPEN SEASON / MILLE FORMES CENTRE / ROBIN PLAYHOOD
LOW INTEREST social media / games a more interesting alternative	Creating a space and programme to socialise, meet arts and culture, discover talents and interests.	Participation of youth (Q19, pg. 46)
SOCIAL EXCLUSION	Inclusive opportunities for active participation. Presenting culture in diverse spaces.	SURVIVAL HOTSPOTS / Culture Pass / THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED
NOT FEELING RELEVANT OR WELCOMED low social capital, lack of information	Create opportunities for participation and integration.	PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS / OPEN SEASON / FINDING STORYLAND / Project of cultural well-being for retirees
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, SPECIFIC NEEDS (ie. in terms of concentration, noise levels..)	Cultural offer adjustable to specific needs. Flexible opportunities for active participation.	OPEN SEASON / CULTURE WELLNESS
MAJORITY CULTURE / PARTICIPATION NOT RELEVANT not enough opportunities to present or participate in minority culture	Flexible opportunities for active participation and presentation of culture.	FINDING STORYLAND – minorities storytelling workshops, podcasts, festivals / Activities presenting Ukrainian culture
PHYSICAL BARRIERS complicated access to cultural events and institutions	Bringing culture closer, initiating and supporting rural cultural / community activities Revolving audience.	ACCESSIBLE HERITAGE / OPEN SEASON / 28 HOUSES, KIOSK – DOWNSTREAM / KULTURISTIC OFFICE
LANGUAGE BARRIER in accessible content	Increase overall accessibility of projects and institutions.	Accessibility plans / OPEN SEASON
NO ACCESS TO ART (due to illness, staying in facilities)	Create opportunities and motivation for connection with the outer world.	Buddy programme Two worlds / Letter writing, Prison literature

MANAGEMENT

Q20

Finance

CITY BUDGET FOR CULTURE:

WHAT HAS BEEN THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR CULTURE IN THE CITY OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS (EXCLUDING EXPENDITURE FOR THE PRESENT EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE APPLICATION)?

The city of Budweis spent approximately 6,6 million EUR on culture in 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic. Cultural spending increased in 2020 and 2021. It was mainly due to the need to make up for the pandemic-related loss of revenue at the South Bohemian theatre. Therefore, in 2022, the approved budget for the City of Budweis plans for a reduction in the contribution to the South Bohemian Theatre and reduction in the total cultural expenditure to an amount equivalent to 2019.

The goal of Budweis 2028 and the Budweis Culture Strategy is to gradually increase the share of spending on culture to 9 % of the city's total expenditure. We believe this will ensure sustainability and legacy of projects envisioned in this bid book.

The ECoC title and the candidacy itself is a healthy reboot after years of dealing with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, as well as showing the power of culture as an instrument of change in its broadest sense.

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET FOR CULTURE IN THE CITY (IN EUROS)	ANNUAL BUDGET FOR CULTURE IN THE CITY (IN EUROS) IN % OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET
2018	€5,996,160	6,8 %
2019	€6,575,680	6,9 %
2020	€7,622,040	7,7 %
2021	€7,668,880	7,8 %
2022	€6,702,040	5,7 %

This doesn't include the capital expenditures of the city, nor region/EU.

IN CASE THE CITY IS PLANNING TO USE FUNDS FROM ITS ANNUAL BUDGET FOR CULTURE TO FINANCE THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT, PLEASE INDICATE THIS AMOUNT STARTING FROM THE YEAR OF SUBMISSION OF THE BID UNTIL THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE YEAR.

The city council plans to allocate 20 million EUR from its budget to finance the Budweis 2028 projects from 2023 to 2029. This amount will be released gradually (see table below). The total for financing

the ECoC is already included in the planned and gradual increase of the city's cultural budget through 2035, thanks to the new Budweis Culture Strategy in place.

We are in the ideal situation: the city has approved the Budweis Culture Strategy, which provides for a significant increase in the city's cultural budget. Since this strategic document was created in accordance with the objectives of the candidacy, including financial planning, we can say with certainty that financing of the ECoC will not have a negative impact on the financing of other cultural institutions/ events/actors in the city. The ECoC funding will not compromise or limit existing or already planned projects.

YEAR	CITY CONTRIBUTION
2023 - Q4	€210,420
2024	€1,518,360
2025	€2,254,480
2026	€3,481,740
2027	€4,475,000
2028	€6,060,000
2029	€2,000,000
TOTAL	€20,000,000

*Those are the additional amounts which are foreseen for the ECoC contribution from the city.

WHICH AMOUNT OF THE OVERALL ANNUAL BUDGET DOES THE CITY INTEND TO SPEND FOR CULTURE AFTER THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE YEAR (IN EUROS AND IN % OF THE OVERALL ANNUAL BUDGET)?

As mentioned above, the Budweis Culture Strategy accounts for an increase in the total cultural budget from 5.7 % to 9 %, thus giving us a guarantee of cultural funding to this extent for at least 7 years after the title year of the European Capital of Culture. This will ensure a sufficient budget for the sustainability and legacy projects of ECoC. The Strategy also incentivizes incremental steps to invest in the cultural infrastructure, namely the new theatre building, the reconstruction of Culture House Slavie and the House of Arts, as well as the repair of municipal cultural centres ("cultural houses"), city parks and waterfront. None of these capital expenditures are part of the cultural budget and are considered as standalone investments in the city budget.

OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE TITLE YEAR:

INCOME TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE:

We have prepared a total operating budget of 51.5 mil EUR – see table below. This will be covered by the public as well as private sector. Private sector funding includes all the incomes to the **LEGACY FUND** funding from various foundations, sponsorships, merchandise, and ticketing.

From the public sector	€48,100,000	93,5%
From the private sector	€3,350,000	6,5%
Total Income to cover operating expenditures (in EUR)	€51,450,000	

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR:

WHAT IS THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INCOME TO BE RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE?

YEAR	CITY	REGION	MINISTRY OF CULTURE	EU	TOTAL
2023 - Q4	€210,420				€210,420
2024	€1,518,360	€600,000	€1,100,000		€3,218,360
2025	€2,254,480	€800,000	€1,600,000		€4,654,480
2026	€3,481,740	€1,000,000	€2,800,000	€300,000	€7,581,740
2027	€4,475,000	€1,600,000	€5,500,000	€300,000	€11,875,000
2028	€6,060,000	€2,000,000	€8,500,000	€1,000,000	€17,560,000
2029	€2,000,000	€0	€500,000	€500,000	€3,000,000
TOTAL	€20,000,000	€6,000,000	€20,000,000	€2,100,000	€48,100,000
	42%	12%	42%	4%	100%

HAVE THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITIES (CITY, REGION, STATE) ALREADY VOTED ON OR MADE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE?

Discussions were held at both the City and County level during 2021 and 2022. The City is counting on providing financing for the Budweis 2028, both for the preparatory process (2022–2027), for the titular year of 2028, as well as for the sustainability of the legacy projects. The amounts that the City will release over each year to finance the candidature have been agreed upon in advance (see the table above), totalling 20 million EUR. The approval of the budget projection and the confirmation of the pre-agreed amounts will take place in the spring of 2023.

The South Bohemian Region has already expressed its support for the ECoC by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2021 and with a donation of 60,000 EUR to Budweis 2028 in 2022. This amount is intended to support the pre-selection phase. The preliminary pledge of the South Bohemian Region for the financing of the Budweis 2028 between 2023 and 2028 is 4-6 million EUR. Just like the City, the Region will further approve and specify the pre-negotiated amounts in the spring of 2023, especially in the context of the contemporary (global) situation.

A decision on the final level of support from the Ministry of Culture will not be known until 2023. The preliminary amount, which should be released from the budget of the Ministry of Culture, has been discussed as approximately 20 million EUR.

INCOME FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR:

WHAT IS THE FUND-RAISING STRATEGY TO SEEK SUPPORT FROM PRIVATE SPONSORS? WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR INVOLVING SPONSORS IN THE EVENT?

In South Bohemia and the Czech Republic in general, there isn't a strong tradition of cultural philanthropy, nor is the legislative climate particularly friendly to it. Our long-term goal is to help create an environment where private donorship plays a respected and significant role in the financing of cultural activities. We believe we are able to demonstrate a more sophisticated approach to brand presence in culture than the prevalent model provides, and change the public's perception of cultural events as dispensable advertising vehicles to that of projects that meaningfully contribute to greater quality of life and thus provide meaningful opportunities for brand engagement.

As mentioned above, the Covid-19 pandemic and the attack on Ukraine are changing the world as we know it. There is massive inflation in the Czech Republic affecting all businesses. This will have necessary repercussions for any private short term contributions to the project; to combat this, we believe we need to introduce new comprehensive and innovative ways for donors and companies to get involved in the development of the city and region. We are convinced our approach is able to contribute to the sustainability and legacy of ECoC beyond 2028.

LEGACY FUND

The **LEGACY FUND** will be one of the main projects intended to secure funds from the private sector. The fund will not only work as a South Bohemian foundation, but will also boost the sense of ownership of cultural projects by fellow inhabitants and local donors. We will establish a new foundation, owned by the city and region, managed by an independent board of directors assembled from the local community. All the contributions from donors and the fellow inhabitants throughout the Budweis 2028 projects will be collected by the foundation itself. The **LEGACY FUND** will not only be supporting the ECoC projects and their development and legacy, but will also contribute to the long-term development of the whole region. The final structure of the foundation and links to the Budweis 2028 organisation will be determined and worked out throughout the final selection in cooperation with our partner, Via Foundation.

The foundation streams are both local entrepreneurs donating to the whole foundation rather than particular projects, and fellow inhabitants supporting various artistic projects via the dedicated ECoC app. Melina Mercouri prize will be fully allocated in the foundation and will be used for the Legacy projects.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

We are finding good practices and philanthropy leaders, who can share their specific motivations, inspire others and lead by example as individual philanthropy is now not well developed in the region. Together we will build a network of donors, associated under **LEGACY FUND**, where philanthropy will be further embraced and specific projects will be developed. This will be also supported via our **mecenas CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME**. It will create both local, and international opportunities for donors involved. [\(Q6, pg. 13\)](#)

PARTNERS

We have already discussed the fundraising strategy towards donors with the Clermont-Ferrand 2028 team and will be collaborating with them on its development. They have already offered us a visit for our potential donors to their city and meeting with their globally known donor, the Michelin company.

FELLOW INHABITANTS + GUESTS

DIGITAL APP will serve as one of the channels for ticket distribution to Budweis 2028 projects. People will be able to support every ECoC activity through this app via crowdfunding. Those donations will be contributions to the **LEGACY FUND**. The app will be connected to the Culture Pass, allowing people from low-income households to access activities for an affordable price. We will be able to collect data together with people using the app and conduct targeted research on specific user groups.

SPONSORS

It's beneficial for any company to position itself as socially responsible whilst contributing to the development of the region and promoting regional uniqueness in the global campaigns. This also contributes to the attractiveness of the company as an employer, and to the well-being of its employees through their engagement with local communities and events, such as **VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES** for employees and crowdfunding among employees for certain community projects relevant to the company.

FOUNDATIONS

We will establish partnerships with existing local and international foundations. They can provide, together with financial support, valuable expertise, best practices and networking opportunities to projects and teams with similar goals. In the selection phase, the Budweis 2028 fundraising manager will focus on establishing relations and finding specific fundraising opportunities for particular Budweis 2028 projects in the following fields (examples included): **community projects** (Open Society Fund, VIA Foundation), **socially excluded groups** (Tesco Foundation), **public spaces** (Zeměkvět Foundation), **culture** (EEA and Norway Grants, Visegrad fund), **cultural heritage** (Nadace pro rozvoj architektury), **participation, creative industries** (EIT Culture & Creativity), **international relations** (Česko-německý fond budoucnosti)

PRIVATE SECTOR INCOME

YEAR	DONORS	FELLOW INHABITANTS & GUESTS	SPONSORS	FOUNDATIONS	TOTAL
2023 - Q4				€10,000	€10,000
2024	€5,000	€5,000	€50,000	€20,000	€80,000
2025	€25,000	€25,000	€50,000	€40,000	€140,000
2026	€70,000	€70,000	€100,000	€80,000	€320,000
2027	€100,000	€100,000	€200,000	€150,000	€550,000
2028	€200,000	€200,000	€1,000,000	€300,000	€1,700,000
2029	€100,000	€100,000	€200,000	€150,000	€550,000
TOTAL	€500,000	€500,000	€1,600,000	€750,000	€3,350,000
	15%	15%	47%	22%	100%

LEGACY FUNDS TOTAL

Donors	€300,000
Fellow inhabitants & guests	€300,000
Melina Mercouri prize	€1,500,000
TOTAL	€2,100,000

OPERATING EXPENDITURE

PLEASE PROVIDE A BREAKDOWN OF THE OPERATING EXPENDITURE

	%	IN EUROS
Program expenditures	63,28%	€33,507,660
Promotion and marketing	15,24%	€8,070,000
Wages, overheads and administration	17,51%	€9,272,340
Legacy Fund (including Melina Mercouri prize)	3,97%	€2,100,000
TOTAL OF THE OPERATING EXPENDITURE		€52,950,000

BUDGET FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE :

WHAT IS THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INCOME TO BE RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IN CONNECTION WITH THE TITLE YEAR?

At this time, we anticipate the following capital expenditures for projects implemented within the city and region related to Budweis 2028 from public sources. The amounts shown are based on the city's 2023–2027 financial balance sheet and the region's projected costs. The specific amounts are shown in the table below, with EU co-financing currently including projected grant amounts submitted by the city and region themselves. Voting on the final funding amounts for each project implementation will take place in subsequent years depending on the specific project. The contribution of the region to capital expenditures is higher than their contribution to the operating budget. It is due to the need for a new building for the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery, an important hub for the Budweis 2028 programme.

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE	%	IN EUROS
National government	10%	€14,000,000
City	51%	€68,668,440
Region	25%	€32,900,000
EU (without the Melina Mercouri Prize)	14%	€18,317,160
TOTAL		€133,885,600

YEAR	PPL	WAGES	%	MARKETING	%	PROGRAM	%	TOTAL
2023 - Q4	15	€120,420	1,30%	€50,000	0,62%	€50,000	0,15%	€220,420
2024	30	€642,240	6,93%	€330,000	4,09%	€2,321,120	6,93%	€3,293,360
2025	40	€963,360	10,39%	€485,000	6,01%	€3,321,120	9,91%	€4,769,480
2026	60	€1,605,600	17,32%	€1,405,000	17,41%	€4,821,140	14,39%	€7,831,740
2027	90	€2,087,280	22,51%	€2,200,000	27,26%	€8,037,720	23,99%	€12,325,000
2028	110	€2,729,520	29,44%	€3,100,000	38,41%	€13,230,480	39,48%	€19,060,000
2029	40	€1,123,920	12,12%	€500,000	6,20%	€1,726,080	5,15%	€3,350,000
TOTAL		€9,272,340	17,51%	€8,070,000	15,24%	€33,507,660	63,28%	€50,850,000

HAVE THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITIES (CITY, REGION, STATE) ALREADY VOTED ON OR MADE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE?

The Statutory City of Budweis has prepared the Financial Balance for the years 2023–2027. This plan includes investment subsidies for the new building of the South Bohemian Theatre, reconstruction of existing cultural buildings, public spaces and riverbanks, etc. ([detailed in the table Q26](#)).

The budget for 2023 will be drawn up in the period September–November 2022 and approved in December 2022.

The City Council has already approved the following cultural projects:

Architectural and design solutions for the Culture House Slavie (2023–2025), Reconstruction of the House of Arts (2023–2025) – call for tenders, Urban planning of Senovážné Square.

The Regional Assembly has not yet voted on the plan to build a new building for the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery on Senovážné Square, Budweis. The announcement of the architectural competition is to take place by the end of 2023 and with it, the Regional Council's vote.

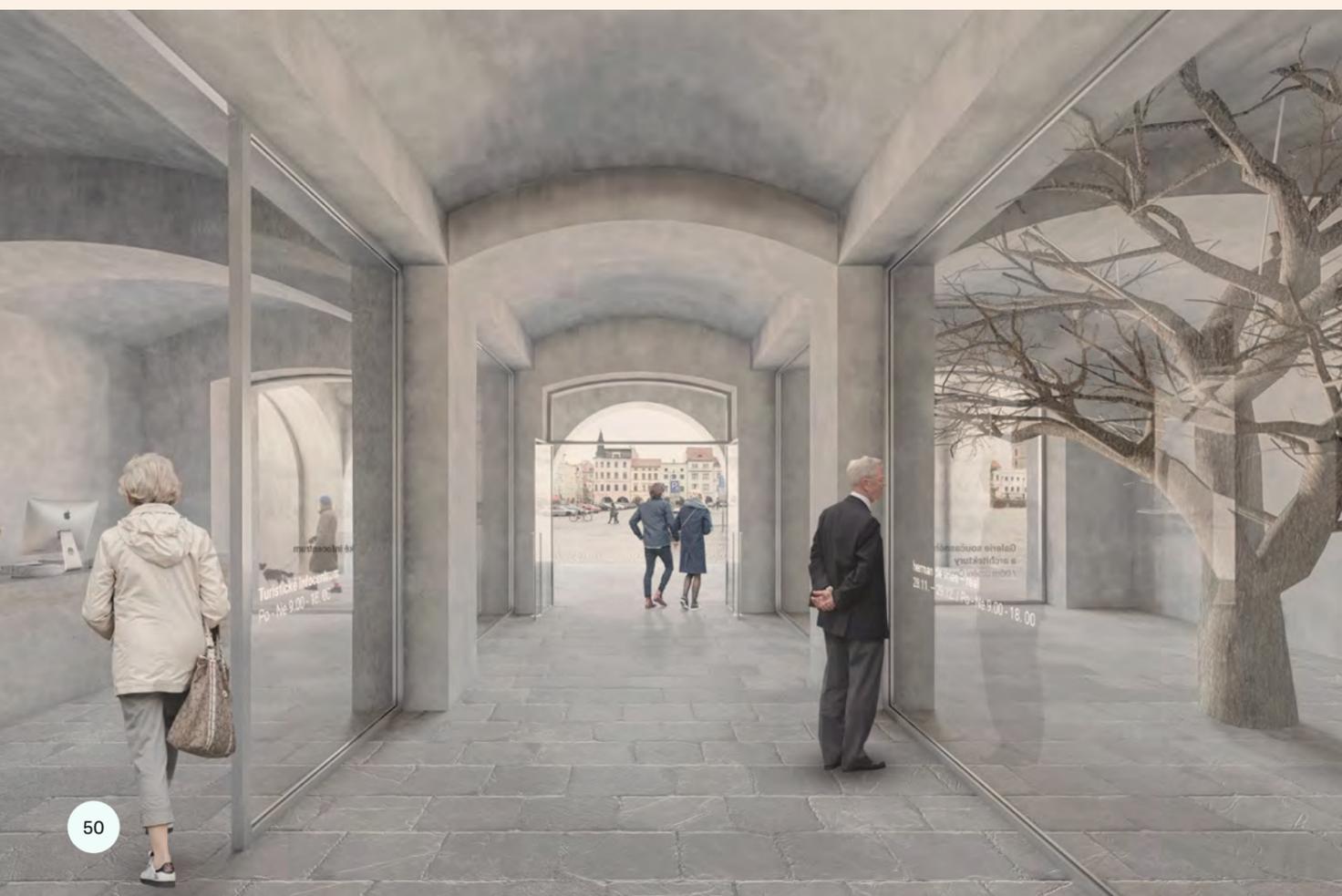
WHAT IS YOUR FUNDRAISING STRATEGY TO SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM UNION PROGRAMMES/FUNDS TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE?

The Department of Development and Public Procurement is taking care of all the administration and finding specific calls for co-financing capital investments. The department is very well managed and is well versed in co-financing opportunities from European grants and other sources and actively seeks them out itself. We will also cooperate in the preparation of documents for individual grants, their management and administration.

A full-time position of a fundraiser in the Budweis 2028 team will be created. This person will focus primarily on the private sector and on the possibilities for additional EU funding. A more precise listing of specific grants for individual projects and the possibilities for using EU funding will be addressed in the selection phase. His/her task will be not only to actively search for current opportunities and calls, but above all, to link specific planned projects to individual calls. We plan on using the following sources of European funding.

We have prepared a long list of EU funding opportunities for our fundraising manager. We will be working closely with Creative Europe (e.g., the following systems: European Solidarity Corps, European networks of cultural and creative organisations, Erasmus+, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – including Interreg and Cohesion Fund (CF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, National Regeneration Plan (NPO), OPŽP, etc.) A goal is to be included in the New European Bauhaus project network as well ([see the Exchangers project, Q26, pg. 58](#)).

IF APPROPRIATE, PLEASE INSERT A TABLE HERE THAT SPECIFIES WHICH AMOUNTS WILL BE SPENT FOR NEW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO BE USED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TITLE YEAR. See Q26



House of Art (Budweis, visualisation: Maly Chmel)

LEGAL FORM

The Budweis 2028 association will transform itself from an independent non-profit organisation to a registered institute founded both by the municipal and regional governments. It will be responsible for the delivery of ECoC in 2028 and all the legacy projects. The registered institute is the most effective legal form allowing independent management of Budweis 2028 activities. The overall transition will be managed by the current team and the legal framework of the organisation will be created in cooperation with city legal counsels. It has been already agreed on transforming the organisation on 1 January 2023 in case we make it to the final selection phase. The organisation will be led by the current leadership team until the final results of the bidding process.

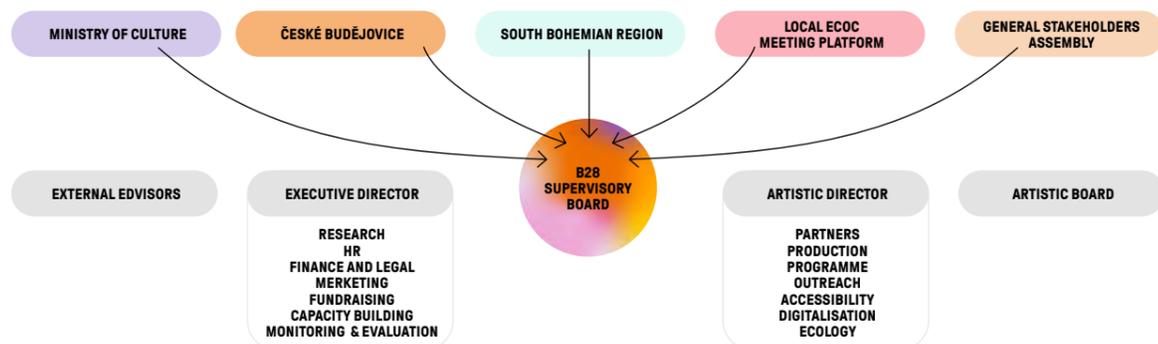
The whole organisation will be responsible to the supervisory board assembled from the nominees of city, region and general stakeholders meeting. The supervisory board will be selecting the executive director as well as the artistic director. As per the Budweis Culture Strategy the executive director and artistic director will be selected for a period of 6 years based on their presentation of future vision for leading the organisation and plan for achieving the goals set up in the bid book. All the employees will be selected in transparent and open selection processes. Budweis 2028 registered institute will be working closely with respective departments in the city and region on common projects, including culture, economic, environment, educational and future marketing departments.

GENERAL STAKEHOLDERS ASSEMBLY (GSA)

GSA platform will ensure the transparent discussion about strategic decisions and future development of the city and region, involving the broad group of regional stakeholders. The general stakeholders meeting will be proposing and advising on the future development of the city and region through ECoC, but sole responsibility will be on the executive director and artistic director. The GSA will be assembled from regional stakeholders nominated by their respective organisations.

BUDWEIS28 SUPERVISORY BOARD

The main goal of the supervisory board will be to support the leadership team of Budweis 2028 and ensure connection to their respective governmental bodies. The board will be assembled from five people: city nominee, regional nominee, GSA nominee, local ECoC meeting platform nominee, and ministry of culture nominee. Executive and Artistic directors will be responsible to the supervisory board of Budweis 2028 foundations. The Supervisory board will be meeting at least three times a year.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive director will be responsible for the overall management and leadership of the team, overall delivery of Budweis 2028 and together with the HR manager for hiring of all employees in the organisation (except Artistic director). S/he will be also responsible for the representation of the organisation in front of city and regional governments.

EXTERNAL ADVISORS (INTERNATIONAL + LOCAL)

Throughout the bidding process, we have been cooperating with international as well as local experts. This very much contributed to the final content of the Budweis 2028 bid book. As we consider their expertise, insights and advice as a pivotal part of the project, we will cooperate with external experts throughout the whole ECoC process. Those will be selected and coordinated by relevant departments within our organisation.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The main responsibility of the artistic director will be the successful implementation of the envisioned artistic programme, ensuring its connection with international partners as well as the involvement and engagement of local ones. S/he will be leading the entire programme, split into different departments.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME TEAM

We propose that at least 20% of the programme team comes from abroad, to ensure different perspectives on the envisioned programme of Budweis 2028. The programme team will be working on-site or remotely with the rest of the team.

DRAMATURGICAL COUNCIL

We are going to follow up and elaborate more on our current dramaturgy council as their involvement was very much beneficial throughout the preparation of the pre-selection bid. (Q13, pg. 35) We are involving two more international members of the artistic board to bring in new perspectives and partners to the Budweis 2028 project.

LOCAL ECoC MEETING PLATFORM

Local ECoC meeting platform will serve as a platform for people to be more involved in the ECoC process as well as to be informed, without having to be part of the team. Members of former working groups and other advisory bodies will be included. This will make it possible for people from different sectors and organisations to meet and share their ideas, to give and receive feedback from each other and to connect their projects. (Q17&19, pg. 45)

STRENGTHS

APPROVED WIDE RANGE OF LINKED STRATEGIES

- 1) Strategic plan of the city for the period 2017 – 2027.
- 2) Local Adaptation Strategy of the City of Budweis to Climate Change
- 3) The Budweis Tourism Strategy 2022-2025
- 4) The Budweis Culture Strategy 2023-2035

LOCAL RELEVANCE, GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE.

Reflection of pressing global, social, political and climate challenges with strong linkage into our programme & core themes of our bid book are affecting the lives of every EU citizen.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Held throughout the pre-selection phase is connecting artistic and cultural programme with most regional cultural institutions.

ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Connecting culture with other sectors and science disciplines.

LOCAL INITIATIVE

IMPACT

All of these will contribute to the future sustainable development of the city, provide a new framework in which the city will operate, and ensure stable conditions for the creation of the Budweis 2028 vision and its implementation.

The cultural and artistic programme is built on the uniqueness (themes + issues) of the city and region relevant for local citizens, but presents them in innovative ways and from a European perspective.

The artistic programme and projects were developed in a participative process which will ensure easier implementation and execution of the envisioned programme.

This approach allowed us to embed social and scientific dimension into artistic programme and address unique needs of the region.

The team preparing the bid emerged from the pool of local cultural professionals experienced in global and national event production. This ensured the broad acceptance of the team as well as the whole candidacy (88% of cultural actors support the candidacy).

YOUNG GENERATION OF CULTURAL LEADERS

(Budějovický Majáles) ready to participate.

Budějovický Majáles is educating dozens of young professionals every year; they are a great source of energy and support for the whole Budweis 2028 project and future managers of the regional cultural scene.

REASONABLE OPERATING BUDGET

The contribution to the operating budget from the city is being fixed by the Budweis Culture Strategy and to the capital expenditures by the financial outlook approved by the city board. Those contributions allow for more space for the programming team and possibility of implementing more complex and developed projects within the city.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING APPROACH

We have decided to focus on showcasing the impacts of the candidacy in the pre-selection phase to ensure support for the bid from the general public. This will secure a deeper understanding of the ECoC project among our fellow inhabitants.

CHALLENGES

NON-EXISTENT REGIONAL CULTURAL STRATEGY

TO AVOID

Region plans to create a new cultural strategy that will be linked to the Budweis Culture Strategy and ECoC. Monitoring activities are currently being done.

NON-EXISTING CREATIVE / ARTISTIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CITY

We are currently discussing the creation of a lifelong educational programme with University of South Bohemia, as well as a master's programme with a specialisation in creative industries management. (Q6, pg. 12)

LEGACY OF TOTALITARIANISM

Resulting in low diversity and openness of citizens.

We believe by our strong participation processes included in our approach, we will be able to secure the support of fellow inhabitants.

LACK OF EU CONNECTION OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

No strategy in place currently to connect with other organisations.

The ECoC candidacy is the first strategic document in place, outlining the connection of organisations in South Bohemia to Europe.

GLOBAL CRISES, WAR, COVID-19, INFLATION

The world is changing and in the Czech Republic, culture is one of the first areas where is being cut.

We have worked on the diversification of fund streams and developed innovative fundraising strategies. We have accounted for the inflation in our financial plans.



Budweis 2028 appears to the city, 2022 (Budweis, photo: Petr Zikmund)

Q23

Marketing and communication

Please provide with an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.

Marketing, as we have come to know it, has been more often than not part of the problem and not part of the solution: Pushing unsustainable agendas, promising consumption nirvana, making people buy more stuff they don't need for money they don't have to impress people they don't care about. Marketing has a bad name, even more so in post-communist countries like ours. With its relatively short history, it often serves as an easy scapegoat for many social pain points and a target of popular hatred, resentment and scorn.

This is one of the reasons why the permacultural marketing engine we are building around the Budweis 2028 project strives to be different: It actually brings back the old idea that marketing is 1) about finding out the true needs of people and then 2) about informing the design of solutions that meet those needs – ideally in a continuous, sustainable and meaningful manner. Marketing communication is just a part of this formula. We made sure to plan and design the marketing & communication strategy for Budweis 2028 with this in mind.

PRE-SELECTION PHASE

The core essence of our communication in the pre-selection phase was experience/event marketing, because we believe in spreading the

information about candidacy and what it brings to the city through lasting personal experiences. This is also the reason why we have very much focused on connecting outreach activities and marketing together to ensure the understanding of ECoC and what it may bring to the city. We tackled the marketing with care and we plan to do so in the final selection phase as well as in the title year. In later phases, we would like to spread the experience - rather than broadcast the news about Budweis 2028.

During the pre-selection phase we were cooperating with an external agency which was responsible for marketing activities and execution of marketing communication in line with all of our activities. We have also teamed up with seasoned cultural and destination marketing experts who helped us with the development of the Budweis 2028 marketing strategy. All the data collected throughout the pre-selection phase will be also used for the development of the new city marketing strategy, which will be important for the promotion of ECoC itself. The need of the marketing strategy is also part of the action plan of the newly adopted Budweis Culture Strategy. Since 2017, it has also been part of the strategic plan of the city. This is yet another example of how the candidacy acts as a catalyzer and triggers long-awaited processes and changes the city needs.

Our communication strategy revolves around the core values of our Budweis 2028 project: (PERMA)CULTURE and Marketing as CARE. We have started with generating deep ethnographic knowledge about the needs, wants and pain points of our stakeholders and fellow inhabitants. We designed the research in such a way that it itself becomes the primary communication vehicle of the project, getting local communities, creative professionals, businesses, city and regional representatives on board of the Budweis 2028 mission.

Through authentic stories which evolve along the lines of the organic growth of the Budweis2028 ECoC idea, we present "the thing in the making". Rather than focusing on sheer volume and mindless visibility games (both digital and offline) we seek to create a meaningful integrated "phygital" experience and in that way engage with local, regional, nation-wide and European audiences.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

We want to bring the audiences abroad as well as in the region in the best possible and accessible way. Our experiential marketing activities will be done mostly through "2000 Places" will be spread throughout the whole of Europe and will allow us to bring Budweis 2028 experiences to those locations and to people visiting those places. On top of that we will be also using standard communication channels to create the awareness of Budweis 2028, in line with the current marketing best practice, we will be focusing on the reach (penetration) as well as distinctive communication assets through relevant marketing channels. To promote Budweis 2028 abroad we will be mostly focusing on experiential (**2000 PLACES**) and PR activities (**ALONG THE VLTAVA TO THE NORTH SEA**) and Digital. Part of our activities will be also accessible online or virtually, for the audiences that can't or don't want to make it in person. We have decided to set up Digitalisation processes that will ensure the best possible and available transformation of our events into the metaverse, web3, VR/AR. Digitalisation manager will choose the best possible solution for each of the projects. This will also allow us to better connect with other ECoCs already during the Growth phase and literally transfer the idea of the ECoC to the city and region.

We also come with the concept of the **Revolving audience** as a tool of audience engagement, as part of our marketing strategy and contribution to sustainable development as well as part of the capacity building programme. It is a way to support shared and sustainable mobility and shared cultural offer at the same time. Instead of making extra productions in the city or region, we rather propose to create extra tours for the audience (but also professionals, stakeholders or volunteers). We arrange buses and trains that take people to Budweis

and, at the same time, people from Budweis to the region. We also want to allow the audience to attend others' ECoC during the Growth phase. We especially aim to focus on closer cooperation with Bad Ischl, that is in the closest distance to Budweis.

The overall marketing communication will be handled together with following stakeholders: JCCR - the regional tourism agency, CzechTourism national tourism agency, Budějovicko-Hlubocko agency and city of Budweis. This will ensure effective communication in the whole Czech Republic, but also abroad. On the international level, we will be working mostly with the experienced agencies of JCCR and CzechTourism, and with the Budějovicko-Hlubocko agency on domestic marketing. All the marketing activities will be in line with the communication of the city itself, as Budweis 2028 project will be supporting the new vision and perception of the city.

HOW DOES THE CITY PLAN TO HIGHLIGHT THAT THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IS AN ACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?

It's more important than ever to promote the activities of the EU and their effects on our lives. Budweis 2028 project already has a positive effect on local communities in Budweis and in the following stages will be influencing more and more people in our region, country and EU. All of our activities are linked to European partners or other EU projects and this will not only promote ECoC as a project of the EU, but also promote other EU initiatives, other ECoCs and EU partners. As an example we are planning to host the **PORTKEYS** project in cooperation with at least 6 ECoCs and present their programmes directly in Budweis.

We have established cooperation with the Creative Europe desk and Europe Direct office Budweis already. We will cooperate with those organisations on securing funding for our projects as well as supporting local organisations in their activities. We are already cooperating with 20 other ECoCs and we are planning to work with the following European platforms or schemes: Eurocities, New European Bauhaus, Trans Europe Halles, Europe Goes Local, Structured Dialogue, European Youth Forum, European Volunteering Centre.

In addition to the above, we will highlight the EU logo in all communications; our communication strategy will make sure that the whole undertaking is positioned and perceived as a project of the European Union, especially in front of stakeholders, partners, donors and fellow inhabitants.

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Q24

Please confirm and supply evidence that you have broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national public authorities.

The candidacy period has allowed us to establish strong roots for a potential ECoC in 2028. While the Budweis 2028 team is in charge of the operational implementation of the candidacy preparation, the city administration provides organisational and budgetary support. The governance structures with the political level included weekly briefings with the deputy mayor in charge of culture as well as monthly reporting with the city council.

SUMMARY OF THE VOTED SUPPORT:

- The candidacy was voted on city and region level (Spring 2021, Autumn 2021)
- A cooperation agreement (Memorandum) was signed between the city and the region to run the bid and implementation together (Autumn 2021)
- The candidacy budget was voted on the city and region levels (Spring 2021, Summer 2022)
- The bid book was approved on the city level (Summer 2022)
- The Budweis Culture Strategy was approved by the city council (Summer 2022)
- The aforementioned investment projects were voted in the city council (2021, 2022)

Our goal was to be perceived as an apolitical project open to all political parties, therefore we have organised 6 seminars and workshops for city representatives across the parties to secure the support of the candidacy even after the elections. Communal elections will take place in September 2022.

The city and the region have signed a memorandum of mutual cooperation in regards to the candidacy. The regional government financially supported the preparation of this bid in the first round and have pledged to financially support the final selection phase as well as the realisation of Budweis 2028.

Meetings with the Ministry of Culture were held throughout 2022 together with other candidate cities, the general cooperation was outlined mutually together, including the discussion about the financial support.

Q25

Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title. To do that, please answer the following questions:

EXPLAIN BRIEFLY HOW THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE WILL MAKE USE OF AND DEVELOP THE CITY'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

Entering the Sowing and Sprouting phase, we have started observing the environment, researching, creating visions and designing the changes. In accordance with the Budweis Culture Strategy, we build on an existing network of culture organisations in the city and region and complete the infrastructure with supplementary platforms and institutions. Using public space and re-developing it for social and cultural purposes is part of city strategic plan (i.e. Water and the City – urban study) as well as several bid book projects (i.e. **ROBIN PLAYHOOD, HOTSPOTS OF SURVIVAL**), as we perceive it as an important part of the infrastructure.

Formal culture infrastructure that will be used and partially developed throughout the ECoC consists of:

Centralised district of the Culture Island

In 2028, **CULTURE ISLAND** is a diverse space for the presentation of contemporary art. The historic centre of Budweis is unique not only in its urbanism and architecture, but also in the fact that the majority of the city's and region's most important cultural institutions are located within a few metres of one another. **CULTURE ISLAND** will strengthen their relations, will empower strategic shared programming as well as interlink the public space they share.

Culture House Slavie (visualisation: Atelier Chaix & Morel et Associés and architects Pichler and J. Proksa)



Culture House Slavie, South Bohemian Theatre, House of Art Budweis, South Bohemian Museum, Aleš South Bohemian Gallery, Hájček Summer Cinema, South Bohemian Scientific Library, Planetarium, South Bohemian Philharmonic,

DK Metropol, Rabenštejn Tower, National Heritage Institute, University of South Bohemia - Faculty of Education, Czech Radio Budweis, Dům u Beránka, ZUŠ Piaristické náměstí, Budweis Conservatory

The 28 Houses platform

28 HOUSES will be a new network of cultural organisations where municipal, regional, and independent cultural institutions can connect with one another. Today, these are cultural actors and houses that serve as hotspots of culture in their regions and neighbourhoods; in the future, they will become important carriers of the cultural, artistic and participative programme of 2028. This network builds on the Quo Vadis Živá Kulturo platform ([Q13, pg. 35](#)) and, in addition to presenting the programme associated with the European Capital of Culture, it will also serve to share experience and projects between the different organisations involved.

Bude Circus, Karmášek Printing House, Kotva Cinema, Světadílina, Plum Yard (Švestkový dvůr), Rezi.dance Komařice, Malt House Písek, Oskar Nedbal Theatre Tábor, Cesta - Tábor, Egon Schiele Art Centre, City Gallery Týn nad Vltavou, Dačice Museum, Prachovice Museum, AJG - Hluboká n. Vltavou, AJG - Bechyně, Museum of Central Pootaví Strakonice, Ostrov 1415 - Strakonice, MěKS Vodňany, Municipal

Cultural Centre Bechyně, Volyňská kultura, Kultura, Vimperk / MěKS Vimperk , Cultural Plantation Blatná, Naplaveno Jistebnice, Social House, Slavonice (Spolkový dům), Třeboň 105, Kraffer's Garden Jindřichův Hradec, Špejchar Měšice , Villa Prachovice, Krumlov Laundry, Krumlov Monasteries, Budweis Exhibition Grounds, Výměnik

Budweis Exhibition grounds is a huge exhibition area just on the edge of the city centre. Most of the exhibition buildings have been renovated in recent years and we are working closely with the management to bring new projects (e.g. **ARS BIOLOGICA**) to the grounds, as they are currently struggling with insufficient use of the grounds throughout the year and are looking for opportunities for innovations.

Bid book project KIOSK - DOWNSTREAM delivering the content to the regional structures.

Connecting the local wide network (over 600) of **Libraries** and reaching out to their audiences.

Bid book project TWIN HOUSES creating spaces and opportunities for closer relationships with the twinning cities.

Formal **Culture Houses** in the region, becoming again houses of culture.

PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS empowering local communities and reaching out to fellow inhabitants (at least 5 platforms in the city in 2028).

Residency places in the city and region creating unlimited space for the creative process.

There will be an open umbrella of the **KULTURISTIC OFFICE**. Formally opened as part of the bidding process, it stays in the city to overtake the position of the touristic informational centre for the Budweis 2028 programme, but also for the activities and events organised by local cultural institutions or communities.

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S ASSETS IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY (REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT)?

Budweis is the regional capital and therefore the transport hub of the whole region. The city can be reached by bicycle, train, bus, boat, car, and by air.

Trains of the Czech Railways (ČD) are part of a comprehensive transport system in Europe. The tracks do not end at the border line; direct or connecting trains run several times a day to Linz in Upper Austria and to Vienna. ČD's regional trains connect the most important settlements of the South Bohemian region and also naturally connect

Budweis with the airports in Prague and Vienna. Czech Railways operate a bicycle rental service, transporting bicycles free of charge and directing travellers to attractive bicycle routes.

Bus transport to and from the city is provided by a number of transport companies. There are several daily bus connections from larger cities (Prague, Brno, Pilsen, etc.) to Budweis. A total of 87 bus lines are included in the integrated transport system of the South Bohemian Region.

Cycling is one of the most popular modes of transport for many citizens of the city. It is also a favourite and common mode of regional commuting. Nine cycling routes pass through the city's territory. The association CykloBudějovice is represented at the town hall in the form of a cycling coordinator. The city and region are planning to invest in the development of a region-wide cycling infrastructure that would connect to major European routes.

Planá Airport is a public domestic and private international airport; is mostly used for sport and private flights.

A major development is the completion of the D3 motorway. The South Bohemian part of the D3 motorway, which will connect Prague with Budweis and then Linz in Austria, should be completed by 2025.

Promoting sustainable means of transport is naturally rooted in the area of the city and the whole region and in line with the concept of **Revolving audience**. As part of the candidacy, we will focus on increasing connections in the evenings and other peak times for culture in order to ensure seamless transport to and from cultural events throughout the region.

WHAT IS THE CITY'S ABSORPTION CAPACITY IN TERMS OF TOURISTS' ACCOMMODATION?

South Bohemian region is a popular tourist destination in the Czech Republic, being the 3rd most visited region in the country (2021). Over 1.7 mil guests visited our region in 2019, before the pandemic. There are over 62,533 beds available in the region. As 70% of all international guests visit Český Krumlov, Budweis and Hluboká nad Vltavou, the infrastructure in the city and region is ready for accommodating guests of Budweis 2028. There are 4,149 beds in the city of Budweis. Currently, the city is lacking 5* hotels, but those are available in close proximity – in Hluboká nad Vltavou. A private investor is currently exploring the possibility of building a 5* hotel directly in Budweis.

REGION / CITY	TOTAL	BEDS
South Bohemian region	1 320	62 533
Český Krumlov	122	3 503
České Budějovice	59	4 149
Lipno nad Vltavou	34	3 617
Třeboň	70	3 090
Hluboká nad Vltavou	23	1 558

TYPE	NUMBER	ROOMS	BEDS
Hotel (motel, hotel) ★★★★★	0	0	0
Hotel (motel, hotel) ★★★★	7	597	1230
Hotel (motel, hotel) ★★★	11	217	471
Hotel (motel, hotel) ★★	0	0	0
Hotel (motel, hotel) ★	1	-	-
Hotel garní	1	-	-
Pension	24	-	-
Camp	2	-	-
Tourist cabin	3	92	236
Other	10	685	1 611
TOTAL	59	1 871	4 149

Q26

In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure, what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plans to carry out in connection with the European Capital of Culture action between now and the year of the title?

A year of intensive preparations for the ECoC candidacy not only activates cultural actors and institutions in the city and the region, but also focuses attention on the cultural infrastructure in the city. The projects, whose importance was the subject of endless discussions with unclear solutions, suddenly have clear outlines and their importance or necessity are clearly defined. Among the most important are (see table below for a full list):

Reconstruction of Culture House Slavie (2025)

Creative and community centre located in the city centre will serve as culture house. Its historical building will be completely renovated, making sure to preserve its historical value. The project has been already approved by the city government and the building shall be built by 2025.

Senovážné square (Budweis, visualisation: Pavel Hnilická Architects+Planners s.r.o.)



Reconstruction of the House of Arts (2025-2026)

Since 1998 the House of Arts has been operating in Budweis; thanks to its curator Michal Škoda, it brings contemporary art and architecture to our city. The new renovated building will be an experimental and interactive space for contemporary art and architecture in the region. The building will also create space for a new tourist information centre and educational hub.

Reconstruction of KD Vltava

Creative and community centre located in the outskirts of the city is an important part of the cultural infrastructure in the residential area. The renovated building will be used mostly by local actors and communities.

Construction of a new building for the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery (2028)

The Aleš South Bohemian gallery is a regional organisation and the only museum of art in the South Bohemian region. Currently, the gallery is housed in the former stables and riding hall of the Hluboká nad Vltavou chateau. Due to unsatisfactory conditions, it will be moved to a new building in the heart of Budweis and Culture Island.

Public spaces renovation

A number of public spaces, embankments, cycle paths (see table) will be built; we are planning on using those spaces for our programme as we consider them very important for the cultural life in the city (e.g., Sokol Island, Háječek Park).

City and Water

Budweis lies on the confluence of two beautiful rivers, but they flow through the city somewhat unnoticed. Instead of being an integral part of the urban landscape, they divide the city and its inhabitants. Therefore the city has prepared an urban study titled City and Water. Most of the important projects are scheduled for realisation before 2028 (e.g., the Malše embankment, Sun Island, Zátka's Embankment, left bank, parking by the courthouse).

An important step is to decentralise culture in terms of community infrastructure and extend it to the city districts, as it was one of the pain points discovered in our research. Through the accompanying **KULTURISTA** project and urban planning workshops, we are gradually probing the spaces of individual city districts; for example, buildings that are underused (houses of culture, libraries) or completely closed (Mír Cinema). We are looking for potential spaces and their future use. Výměníky (Exchangers) project will bring a major shift in this regard.

Výměníky project

VÝMĚNÍKY project is a transformation of eight formal heating exchange stations to culture and community hotspots. This is a chance to preserve their unique architecture, to benefit from their dispersed placement in the city, and to transform their formal function to serving as exchange stations for culture and community services.

Metalwork highline

The **METALWORK HIGHLINE** project transforms a contaminated public space to provide artistic enjoyment but also safe access to formal natural areas.



Water and City, Zátka embankment (Budweis, visualisation: AB000 studio)

PROJECT	CATEGORY	SOURCE	BUDGET
Reconstruction of Culture House Slavie	Culture	🏢	€31,264,000
Construction of the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery – Senovážné Square	Culture	🏠	€24,000,000
Reconstruction of Senovážné Square	Public Space	🏢	€22,807,800
Total cycling paths	Public Space	🚲	€10,742,800
Ponds in Vrbné - Visitor centre	Tourism	🏠	€8,000,000
Exhibition grounds – Multifunctional halls	Tourism	🏠	€8,000,000
City and Water - Zátka embankment (Malše embankment)	Public Space	🏢	€7,502,800
Exhibition grounds – Reconstruction of congress centre	Tourism	🏠	€6,000,000
City and Water – Vltava River – Sun Island	Public Space	🏢	€2,542,920
Reconstruction of House of Arts	Culture	🏢	€2,452,400
Reconstruction of KD Vltava	culture	🏢	€2,400,000
Park Háječek and open air cinema	Public Space	🏢	€1,800,000
Park Dukelska	Public Space	🏢	€1,320,000
Touristic information centre - part of House of Arts	Culture	🏢	€1,268,680
Park 4D public spaces	Public Space	🏢	€1,234,200
Reconstruction of revolving auditorium - Týn nad Vltavou	Culture	🏠	€800,000

The green-blue heart of Nové Vrato (pavements, school playground/gym)	Public Space	🏢	€600,000
South Bohemian Theatre – new Mariánské Square building, project documentation	Culture	🏢	€600,000
Park Polní 1 & 2	Public Space	🏢	€370,000
Historical core - transport and pedestrian zone Krajinská, square	Public Space	🏢	€80,000
Art in Nature	Culture	🏠	€60,000
Classroom in the nature - Boršov n. Vltavou	Culture	🏠	€40,000

Budget for the following projects will be defined in the final selection phase together with the city and region governments: Výměníky, Mír Cinema, Sokol Island, Metalwork highline

🏢 CITY 🏠 REGION 🏠 NATIONAL

BUDWEIS 2028 CANDIDATE FOR EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

WRITTEN BY:

Lucie Bílková, Lukáš Černý, Barbora Geny,
Anna Hořejší, Ondřej Kašpárek,
Karolína Rachačová, Matěj Vlašánek

CONSULTED BY:

Sylvia Amann, Agata Etmanowicz, Agnieszka Wlazel

POWERED BY BUDWEIS 2028 TEAM:

Lucie Boušková, Jana Částková, Hedvika Drenčeni,
Anna Fabiánová, Petra Helmél, Tomáš Hrivnák,
Roman Hřebecký, Adam Jestřáb, Martin Kalenský,
Dana Kalistová, Martin Kolář, Bianka Machová,
Lucie Marková, Radek Matoušek, Petr Meškán,
Tomáš Ondřej Pilař, Rudolf Samohejl, Iveta
Šindelářová, Zdenka Škopková, Michal Tošner

CO-CREATED BY (PARTNERS, MEMBERS OF WORKING GROUPS, CULTURE STRATEGY WORKSHOPS):

Budlana Baldanová, František Batysta,
Dagmar Baumruková, Miroslav Boček,
Barbora Buliščáková, Jitka Čapková, Vilém Čekajle,
Michaela Čeňková, Iva Černá, Patrik Červák,
Jan Čtvrtník, Jan Čulík, Miroslav Dobiáš,
Vladimír Dolejšek, Alena Doležalová,
Johana Fuxová, Libor Grubhoffer, Petr Hašek,
Pavla Heyduková, Petr Hornát, Michal Hořejší,
Lenka Chrobočková, Karla Chromá, Tomáš Chovanec,
Petr Jakšík, Petr Klika, Kristýna Koutská,
Adéla Kolářová, Lucie Kolářová, Šárka Kovárnová,
Jan Krajhanzl, Martin Krupauer, Filip Landa,
Jaroslava Janečková, Daniel Jirotko, Adam Langer,
Jindřiška Kavalírová, Ivo Kareš, Vlastislav Klimeš,
Lucie Kohoutová, Tomáš Kollarczyk, Šárka Kosová,
Jiří Kopáček, Nina Kubešová, Jarmila Kytlicová,
Kateřina Landová, Jan Hošek, Hynek Látal,
Janek Lesák, Petra Lexová, Stanislava Lustyková,
Marie Machalová, Marčík family, Markéta Málková,
Jan Mádl, Martin Malec, Bianka Machová ml.,
Lenka Marcínová, Jana Mazurová, Hana Meškanová,
Martin Mičák, Stanislav Mičoch, Ivo Moravec,
Marie Machalová, Petr Matějka, František Nestával,
Michaela Novotná, Martin Novotný, Martin Pavlík,
Barbora Paulátová, Martin Pikous, Vít Piskala,
Tomáš Polanský, Jaromír Polášek, Martin Pražák,
Daniela Procházková, Světlana Procházková,
Lukáš Průdek, Jiří Ptáček, Karey Rewitscher,
Jiří Řehounek, Iva Sedláková, Aleš Seifert,
Eva Semančíková, Mojmír Severin, Anna Davis,
Martina Schlegelová, Paulina Skavová, Petr Soukup,
Lukáš Slavický, Jura Švehla, Eliška Štěpánová,
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Dagmar Škodová-Parmová, František Štangl,
Štarkovi, Růžena Štemberková, Pavel Štourač, Renata
Švestková, Štěpán Tesárek, Jana Tichá, Tomáš
Trantina, Ondřej Trojek, Zdeněk Toušek, Jan Turinský,
Tomáš Vaněček, Katka Vaněčková, Marta Vaverková,
David Veis, Viktor Vojtko, Zdeněk Volf, Mirek
Vodák, Petr Vodrážka, Marek Wohlgemuth, Monika
Zárybnická, Petra Zimmelová ... and many more!

2.200 respondents of quantitative research and
3.500 local residents providing inputs during

KUL.TURISTA

RESEARCH AND STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS BY:

INBOOX, KREIA group, Nová síť, Socionaut,
Mariana Chytilová, Lumír Kajnar, Petr Peřinka,
Tomáš Poucha, Adam Uchytíl, Jiří Suchánek

EMPOWERED BY:

The City of Budweis, represented by:
Jiří Svoboda – Mayor
Juraj Thoma – 1st Deputy Mayor

The South Bohemian Region, represented by:
Martin Kuba – Governor
Pavel Hroch – Deputy Governor

CULTURAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BUDWEIS:

Radim Dušek, Jiří Heller, Vladimíra Hrušková,
Petr Kolář, Jan Kubeš, Hynek Látal, Jan Piskač,
Michala Piskačová, Daniel Podroužek, Jiří Svoboda,
Daniel Turek

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Tomáš Vrba

TYPESETTING:

František Kast

PROOFREADING:

Kateřina Pavlitová

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www.budejovice2028.eu

PARTNERS:



Českobudějovicko
Hlubocko