

Reimagine International Touring

March 2026

VOLUME 1

The Perform Europe Guidebook

Joris Janssens and Eglė Valintėlytė
(IDEA Consult)

Perform Europe is co-funded by the European Union and co-initiated by a consortium of six organisations.

Perform
Europe



International network
for contemporary
performing arts



EUROPEAN
FESTIVALS
ASSOCIATION



CIRCO
STRADA
EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR
CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS
AND OUTDOOR ARTS



EDN European
Dance Development
Network



PEARLE*
Live Performance Europe



idea
consult
moving society



Co-funded by
the European Union

Contents

- 03 Introduction
- 07 Ambitions and priorities
- 14 Obstacles and challenges
- 29 Strategies & Tools
- 62 Closing reflection: from experiment to enabling conditions

Before you start reading 

Reimagine International Touring Volume 1: The Perform Europe Guidebook presents a narrative account of Perform Europe 2nd edition. It offers readers an overview of the ambitions that drove Perform Europe projects, the obstacles they encountered, and the strategies and tools they developed in response. This part situates individual project experiences within a broader field of transition, linking day-to-day practice to wider structural, organisational and policy contexts.

Complementary to this text, you can also explore:

[Perform Europe Toolbox](#)

The collection of practical resources designed to support **performing arts practitioners, networks and policymakers** looking to rethink international touring in their own context. **The toolbox is a practical translation of this Guidebook** which can be used and applied to anyone interested in exploring specific themes – such as slow touring, local anchoring, inclusion, ecological production or governance models – and draw on concrete methods and templates.

[Reimagine International Touring Volume 2: Levers for Future Policy Development](#)

This second volume addresses **policy makers at different levels, cities, regions, and national governments**, to explore recent developments, emerging risks, and potential leverage points for supporting transformative change in international performing arts touring.

This publication was co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Perform Europe and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Introduction

Context

In 2020, Perform Europe was launched with a clear ambition: to “**reimagine international touring**” in the performing arts. In its early framing, this meant responding to an increasingly overheated and unequal performing arts ecosystem – characterised by fast-paced circulation, environmental impact, precarity, administrative burden and uneven access to international opportunities. Touring had become both exhausting for some and inaccessible for others. Over the past years, the need for change has become even more profound. The climate crisis has intensified. Inequalities across Europe remain deeply entrenched. In several contexts, artistic freedom and democratic processes are under pressure, and underrepresented communities face open hostility. In this evolving landscape, reimagining touring is no longer only about reducing pressure within the sector. It is about redefining what international collaboration in the performing arts stands for, in a broader societal context.

Perform Europe, across its two editions (2021-2022 and 2023-2026), created space for this deeper shift. As a funding scheme covering the 40 Creative Europe countries, it invited artists and organisations not merely to optimise existing touring circuits, but to question their underlying assumptions. Why tour? For whom? At what rhythm? Under which conditions? And to what societal purpose?

In its second edition (2023-2026), with explicit priorities on **fighting climate change** and **fostering inclusion and diversity**, Perform Europe framed these questions through a value-based lens. These priorities were not intended as technical criteria, but as orientations for open experimentation. Projects and partnerships were encouraged to test new touring models: slower itineraries, longer residencies, shared authorship, alternative production formats, partnerships beyond the traditional arts infrastructure, and deeper local anchoring. As a response to increased social urgencies, many projects moved beyond adapting logistics. They embraced a strong sense of agency. Touring became a vehicle to amplify marginalised voices, to build solidarity networks across borders, to address urgent political and social questions, and in some cases to actively defend artistic freedom. **What emerged was not simply a greener or more inclusive version of existing practice, but early prototypes of different ways of working – grounded in care, reciprocity, long-term relationships and civic engagement.**

During its second iteration, Perform Europe supported [42 touring projects](#) that engaged with these priorities in diverse ways. Together, they demonstrated that international touring can shift from a model centred on visibility and circulation towards one centred on exchange, responsibility and shared transformation. At the same time, their journeys revealed the structural constraints – funding mechanisms, policy frameworks, infrastructure gaps and political pressures – that shape what is possible.

Recognising that experimentation needs collective reflection to generate broader impact, Perform Europe 2 was designed as more than a funding programme. Alongside financial support, it included **training** and a [Learning Trajectory](#) that connected projects, enabled peer exchange and documented change in practice. This guidebook gathers the insights that emerged. It documents the ambitions, dilemmas, strategies and tools developed by the 42 selected projects. Rather than presenting a single blueprint for “better touring,” it offers a set of value-driven approaches that can inform future practice and policy. Reimagining touring today is not only about making mobility more sustainable. It is about **redefining the purpose of cross-border collaboration in a time of ecological urgency, social inequality and democratic fragility.**

This guidebook invites artists, presenters, intermediaries and policymakers to reflect on their roles in shaping touring models that are slower where needed, fairer where access is limited, and stronger in defending the values that underpin cultural exchange in Europe.



Insights from the Learning Trajectory

In different ways, the 42 Perform Europe projects responded to a shared sense of urgency to rethink international touring in greener, more inclusive, and more diverse ways. While this common direction was clear, how it was put into practice varied widely. The open call set two priorities – fighting climate change and fostering inclusion and diversity – but projects interpreted and applied them in line with their artistic choices, working realities, and local contexts. Rather than promoting a single model, Perform Europe enabled multiple, context-specific shifts in practice, shaped by each project’s capacity, ambitions, and constraints.

The Learning Trajectory was designed to ensure that the insights generated by Perform Europe 2 projects extend beyond the funded partnerships. To create broader impact, experiences needed to be documented, analysed and shared in ways that could inform future practice across the Creative Europe region. Led by IDEA Consult, the Perform Europe research team developed a collective monitoring and learning methodology focused on inclusive, diverse and green touring. The approach was inspired by *Reflexive Monitoring in Action*, developed by DRIFT and Wageningen University for tracking processes of systems innovation.

Over more than a year, representatives of all selected projects – the “**Log Keepers**” – met regularly to reflect on their ambitions, challenges and strategies. Between sessions, they gathered insights from their project partners. These reflections were analysed, published on a shared blog platform, and discussed in online and offline knowledge-sharing sessions, where tools were tested and emerging approaches were explored with the wider performing arts sector.

The Perform Europe Learning Trajectory was set up to make these different processes visible and easier to understand collectively. It supported the observation, documentation, and exchange of practices among performing arts professionals across Europe, and created structured moments for reflection. Within this framework, projects shared not only *what* they were doing differently, but also *why* – clarifying their aims, values, and motivations, and openly discussing the obstacles they faced when trying to turn intentions into everyday practice.



Learning Trajectory workshop at IETM Focus Bradford 2025 © Nida Mozurkijte

In this publication, you will follow the Perform Europe projects on this journey. It begins with the ambitions that motivated the artists, presenters and other partners to rethink international touring and shaped their understanding of what changes were needed. It then turns to obstacles they encountered. These are the proverbial bears on the road: structural, organisational and contextual challenges that constrained or complicated these ambitions. The chapter subsequently explores the strategies and tools developed in response, highlighting concrete approaches tested in practice. It concludes with a reflection on the collective journeys of the Perform Europe projects, considering how they experimented with value-based touring practices and the conditions that supported these shifts in practice.

Ambitions and priorities

The Learning Trajectory started from a shared starting point: **purpose**. In its first phase, Log Keepers and project partners exchanged on the change they wanted to make through their Perform Europe projects. They were invited to reflect on a simple but fundamental question: *what is the main change you want to contribute to in relation to Perform Europe's priorities?* While the open call named two priorities – fighting climate change and fostering inclusion and diversity – these were not treated as top-down requirements. Instead, they acted as an open invitation to define what felt most urgent and meaningful from within each project's artistic practice, working reality, and local context.

Throughout the Learning Trajectory, it became clear that these ambitions were rooted in a widely shared sense of urgency across the performing arts field. Projects engaged with sustainability and inclusion not because they were expected to, but because existing touring models increasingly conflict with artistic values, social responsibility, and ecological limits. The ambitions articulated by projects reflect a desire to work differently – in environmentally responsible, socially fair, and artistically relevant ways. They also reflect a desire to use the specific strengths of artistic practice – imagination, cocreation, embodied knowledge, collaboration – as a lever for wider social and ecological change, grounded in lived experience and concrete local conditions.

To make sense of this diversity, project ambitions were grouped into four interrelated domains, capturing the types of change projects aimed to support through their touring practices. Together, they offer a shared language for understanding where projects sought to make a difference, even when their methods, scales, and contexts varied widely. Two of these domains closely align with Perform Europe's stated priorities – ecology and inclusion and diversity – while the other two, though less explicitly named in the programme framework, proved essential in practice. Taken together, they show that Perform Europe projects approached touring as artistic and value-driven work: using artistic methods to test, express, and make visible the values guiding their practice. In doing so, they not only changed how touring is organised, but also demonstrated how the performing arts can actively contribute to broader social and ecological transitions.

Ecological ambitions: cross-border touring within planetary limits

The ecology-related ambitions unfold on two interconnected levels. **On the one hand, projects aimed to reduce the environmental impact of touring and production practices by rethinking mobility, formats and resource use. On the other hand, many projects designed their projects as artistic contexts to engage audiences and communities in broader reflections on ecological matters, climate urgency, interdependence and humans' place within wider ecological systems – using artistic practice to cultivate awareness, sensitivity and responsibility.**

Obviously, Perform Europe projects are about making touring and production more ecologically sustainable. Many projects focus on reducing the environmental impact of the performing arts sector while fostering a broader culture of care and accountability towards the broader ecologies we are part of. Projects embody a deep sense of responsibility for both natural and built environments in their operational processes. In some cases, this manifests itself as a desire to slow down, and make responsible use of natural resources while going on tour. Some projects are opting for not only traveling by land or other forms of reducing carbon emission within current, dominant touring logics. Many projects are also developing and prototyping new forms of circuit-based touring, opting for walking, hybrid presentations, or not traveling at all. They plan to implement their ideas by sourcing and collaborating locally and sustainably, fundamentally re-examining their resource use and rethinking touring concepts.

Across Perform Europe projects, ecological ambition was not limited to reducing carbon footprints. **While greening touring and production practices was an important driver, projects articulated a broader desire to rethink how international touring relates to planetary limits and to humans' place within wider ecological systems.** Many projects aimed to raise ecological awareness and sensibility through artistic practice itself. Through their work, projects aimed to challenge dominant ways of thinking that place humans above or outside the natural world. Instead, they explored how artistic practice can foster new relationships between humans and more-than-human actors – for instance by giving agency to materials, landscapes or natural elements, or by creating spaces where humans, non-humans and environments interact on more equal terms. In doing so, projects sought to influence not only what audiences think, but how they sense, feel and relate to the world around them.

Rather than treating climate change as a theme to be explained, projects sought to engage audiences emotionally and bodily, making ecological interdependence tangible through experience. [Transgeographical Hydro Bodies](#), for instance, aimed at “promoting a paradigm shift in relations between humans and non-humans”, in stimulating awareness of the role of bodies of water in our present and future.



Inclusion and diversity: rebalancing access, voice and agency

Community-related ambitions across Perform Europe projects were driven by a strong bottom-up urgency to rethink *who* international touring is for, *who* it engages, and *how* relationships with communities are built. Projects consistently expressed a desire to move away from extractive, short-term audience encounters towards forms of engagement based on trust, reciprocity and care – particularly with communities that are structurally underrepresented or marginalised, not only in the performing arts field but in society as a whole.

Many projects aimed to expand access and accessibility by working with artists and communities that are often excluded from cultural production and presentation because of social, economic, geographic, linguistic or physical barriers. Projects are contributing to more equal participation for diverse artists and audiences, by aiming to include them in creation processes and through expanding accessibility for blind, disabled, or young audiences.

A key focus in a number of projects was on reaching and engaging marginalised communities – and specifically citizens and communities affected by trauma, native and migrant communities, in conflicted areas and communities of those that are isolated and discriminated against. Projects hoped to have a lasting impact, creating hubs, encouraging creative interaction and redistributing resources.

At the same time, **community ambitions went beyond access to address how touring projects can relate to and engage with local contexts differently.** Several projects articulated the desire to invest time in listening, relationship-building and contextualisation – recognising that meaningful engagement requires presence, continuity and responsiveness. Rather than treating communities as audiences to be reached, projects aimed to work with communities as equal partners in dialogue and co-creation.

Specifically in the often traumatised and conflicted areas projects engaged with, community ambitions repeatedly foregrounded safety and care. Projects working with children, people with disabilities, displaced communities or groups affected by trauma expressed a strong desire to create safe spaces – emotionally, socially and physically. This included developing trust-based working methods, adapting formats to different needs, and recognising the responsibilities that come with inviting participation, before and after the touring stops.

Taken together, **these ambitions place community engagement at the core of rethinking international touring, not as an added activity but as a central purpose. They challenge the idea of touring as simply moving finished productions from one place to another for predefined audiences. Instead, projects explored more adaptive ways of working that allow for meaningful exchange, dialogue, and responsiveness to local contexts.**

From this perspective, **touring becomes a process of encounter rather than one-way presentation.** It creates space for local experience, practical knowledge, and voices that are often missing from established touring circuits to shape artistic work and public conversation. By working with underrepresented communities not only as audiences but as partners, Perform Europe projects aimed to anchor international touring in a diversity of local social contexts. This approach prioritised long-term relationships, care, and mutual learning, and contributed to more inclusive cultural ecosystems beyond the lifespan of a single tour.

Artistic ambitions: spaces for shared meaning and collaboration

Across Perform Europe projects, artistic ambition was closely linked to the belief that the specific strengths of the performing arts can actively contribute to social and ecological change. Artists and presenters sought to create artistic encounters as democratic spaces for inquiry, encounter, co-creation and shared experience. Rather than using art to convey predefined messages, projects tested artistic approaches that could generate concrete outcomes: new forms, different relationships with audiences and communities, and working methods capable of addressing complex social and ecological questions without simplification. **Artistic work became a way to hold multiple perspectives, contradictions and lived realities in tension, opening space for more nuanced understandings.**



Many projects used artistic practice to bring together diverse forms of knowledge, including local experience, embodied and tacit knowledge, and perspectives often excluded from dominant cultural circuits. Through collaborative and context-responsive creation processes, these forms of knowledge directly shaped both content and form. In doing so, projects expanded whose experiences were visible on stage and in public discourse. As physical spaces of encounter between bodies, voices and environments, the performing arts offered a counterweight to the abstraction, polarisation and disconnection often reinforced by digital media, allowing for shared attention, presence and nuance.

In several projects, this translated into a deliberate shift in authorship and representation. Marginalised voices and bodies were not only represented, but actively involved as creators, performers and decision-makers. This changed who speaks, who is seen, and whose stories travel across borders. By redistributing authorship, projects challenged dominant narratives that are often shaped by colonial legacies, extractive logics and unequal power relations in international cultural exchange. Artistic work became a site where these inherited hierarchies could be questioned, reworked and, in some cases, undone through practice. This shift had tangible effects on artistic ownership, professional visibility and longer-term opportunities for those involved.

Projects also highlighted the specific strength of the performing arts in engaging audiences emotionally and physically. Performances created shared experiences in which people could connect with social and ecological questions – with each other and with their environments – through presence, emotion and sensory engagement. These encounters often led to deeper audience involvement, sustained dialogue and stronger connections between artistic work, local communities and broader ecologies.

Finally, **artistic ambition was expressed through new forms of collaboration.** Projects worked in dialogue with communities, places and partners from fields such as education, science or social action. These collaborations influenced how work was developed, presented and contextualised, while allowing artistic practice to retain its autonomy. In doing so, projects aimed to create artistic work that is not only relevant on stage, but also meaningful within a diversity of social, cultural and ecological contexts – locally grounded, yet connected to wider transnational conversations.

Organisational ambitions: testing grounds for value-based practice

In the domains of organisation and collaboration, projects sought to embed values more strongly in the performing arts ecosystem. Throughout the Learning Trajectory, Log Keepers emphasised that reimagining international touring also means changing how people work together. The intention to position the performing arts as a driver of wider social and ecological transition was closely linked to a desire to foreground values such as solidarity, care for communities, and responsibility towards ecosystems.

Rather than treating values as abstract principles, projects set out to put them into practice through concrete choices: in artistic development, in how relationships with communities and places were formed, and in how partners collaborated across borders. Projects expressed clear intentions to organise touring around care, fairness, ecological responsibility, and shared learning, and to let these values guide decisions about collaboration, planning, and the distribution of time and resources.

A key intended outcome was to align organisational and partnership structures with these values. Projects aimed to work in ways where caring for communities also meant caring for collaborators; where ecological responsibility influenced pace, workload, and travel choices; and where inclusion required active attention to access, power, and responsibility within partnerships.

Framing ambition in this way makes clear that reimagining touring was not only about changing where or how work travels, but about shaping the kinds of relationships the performing arts seek to build. The intended change was to develop touring practices in which the values promoted through artistic work are also reflected in everyday working methods and collaborations.



Project *Resisting Extinction* © Piotr Nykowski

Synthesis: interlinked ambitions and a shift in touring practice

Taken together, the ambitions expressed by Perform Europe projects point to **strong connections between ecological, social, artistic, and organisational change**. Projects did not see these areas as separate working areas. Reducing environmental impact was closely linked to inclusion and care. [Sense-ational Circus Cabaret Tour](#) is a good example. This project toured with a carbon-neutral van as the venue for the performances. This was not solely for ecological reasons. This is also important because projects touring towards traumatised contexts and communities should not extract natural resources in spaces where they are already scarce. There are many other examples where ambitions interlink. Artistic purpose is shaping community engagement. Solidarity values influence not only how projects engage with communities, but also how partners work together. Central to all these ambitions was a move towards more adaptive, context-oriented ways of artistic practice, allowing touring practices to respond to local conditions and ecologies rather than follow fixed models.

Many ambitions focused on improving existing touring models – making them more accessible, more inclusive, less environmentally damaging, and better adapted to different contexts. These intentions aimed to adjust current practices to reduce harm and open international touring to a wider range of artists, communities, and places. At the same time, many projects articulated more transformative ambitions. Beyond improving how touring currently operates, they set out to rethink what touring is for and how it should be organised. This included intentions to move away from the circulation of finished works through standardised circuits, towards flexible models that prioritise co-creation, local anchoring, longer-term engagement, and shared learning, shaped by the specific social, cultural, and ecological contexts involved.

From this perspective, **reimagining touring is not only about moving work across borders. It is about redistributing time, resources, attention, and decision-making power in fairer ways – between artists and presenters, between well-connected centres and less-represented regions, and between international circulation and local ecosystems.**

Obstacles and challenges

Perform Europe projects operate within an existing European touring landscape shaped by **long-standing structures and policy choices**. To understand this context, the [mapping study](#) carried out during the first iteration of Perform Europe remains a relevant reference point. Although published in 2022, it offers a rare system-level view of cross-border touring in the performing arts across the Creative Europe countries.

Based on a large-scale sector survey, the mapping confirmed the continued importance of international touring for artistic development, organisational learning, peer exchange, and audience engagement. At the same time, it identified a set of interconnected pressures affecting the sector: unequal access to resources, accelerated production and touring rhythms, environmental impact, precarity, limited space for care and learning, and uneven infrastructure across regions.

Since then, these pressures have intensified in a post-pandemic context marked by wars and armed conflicts, rising geopolitical tensions, inflation and budget cuts, growing social polarisation, and increasing pressure on artistic freedom in several parts of Europe. These developments have further reduced financial margins, increased uncertainty, and made international collaboration more complex and fragile.

Crucially, the mapping already showed that these challenges were not limited to contexts with weak policy support for international mobility. They were also present in countries and regions with comparatively strong touring and funding frameworks. In many cases, existing policies continued to prioritise circulation, visibility, and quantitative output, while offering few incentives for slower, greener, more inclusive, or care-based approaches.

As a result, **support for international touring – even when well intentioned – has often reinforced acceleration, fragmentation, and ecological and social strain.** The social, economic and political context obviously challenged Perform Europe projects in their ambitions towards fairer, greener and more inclusive touring practices. **As part of the Learning Trajectory, the Perform Europe projects were invited to also discuss the obstacles they faced along the way, trying to achieve these objectives: *What are the main challenges your partnerships face when trying to achieve these ambitions?***

In the Learning Trajectory, Perform Europe projects identified a wide range of challenges they faced – ranging from navigating bureaucratic hurdles to adapting plans around weather and seasonal uncertainties. In what follows, we synthesise these obstacles with insights from the mapping research conducted during the first iteration of Perform Europe.



Cross-border mobility

→ FAST-PACED PRODUCTION AND TOURING CYCLES IN AN OVERHEATED SYSTEM

The [Perform Europe mapping study \(2022\)](#) showed that international touring is still largely organised through **short-term, project-based frameworks and accelerated production and touring cycles**. This creates a very competitive, ‘overheated’ system in which artists and organisations face constant pressure to produce, circulate, and adapt quickly, often under precarious working conditions.

Time pressure and short-termism function as structural constraints. They limit the ability of organisations to plan ahead, build lasting partnerships, or align touring practices with ecological and social ambitions. Reflections from the Learning Trajectory confirmed that fast-paced cycles leave little room for care, collective learning, audience engagement, or more sustainable mobility choices.

→ **UNEQUAL ACCESS TO MOBILITY AND ASYMMETRIC DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY SUPPORT**

Access to international mobility, touring circuits, resources, and visibility remains uneven across Europe. **Market dynamics, combined with unequal public support, infrastructure, and policy attention, strongly influence who can tour internationally, under what conditions, and with what degree of continuity and risk.**

Perform Europe research highlighted significant differences between countries and regions in funding availability, infrastructure, connectivity, and access to touring networks. These gaps often follow geographic lines and reflect the presence – or absence – of national and regional mobility policies, creating persistent imbalances between well-resourced centres and less-represented contexts.

Reflections from the Learning Trajectory showed that unequal access not only limits opportunities for many artists and venues, but also affects how partnerships function. Differences in resources and policy backing translate into power imbalances, shaping decision-making, risk-sharing, and the ability of partners to negotiate fair conditions or experiment with alternative touring models.

→ **GEOPOLITICAL INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT SHAPING MOBILITY CONDITIONS**

During the first iteration of Perform Europe, international touring was already understood to take place within very different political and socio-economic contexts, marked by varying levels of stability, freedom of expression, and cultural policy support. In the second iteration, geopolitical instability and armed conflict have become a much more visible and pressing factor, not only shaping mobility conditions but also increasing the urgency to support and engage with artists and communities under huge pressure.

A number of projects engaged with artists and communities affected by war, displacement, and political violence. Learning Trajectory reflections show how **these realities disrupt touring routes, increase uncertainty and risk, and place additional emotional, ethical, and organisational demands on artists and partners.** Their experiences reveal how conflict and instability intensify existing inequalities and expose the limits of touring models that are not equipped to address care, safety, and long-term responsibility in fragile and high-risk contexts.

“Green travel: [some] geographical location requires travel via air and car,... prices are very expensive in general, which yet again would exclude the peripheral places of Europe”

– Animalariums'
Constellations

Ecological sustainability



GREENER TRAVEL AND LOGISTICS REMAIN COSTLY

[Perform Europe Mapping Research](#) showed that **lower-carbon travel options and greener logistics often require higher budgets, additional planning, and longer timelines.** Rail travel, alternative routes, and reduced touring intensity frequently exceed standard budgets or fall outside eligible cost categories. As many Perform Europe projects aim to pilot greener touring practices, they encounter concrete constraints when trying to balance ecological ambition with limited financial and organisational resources. Reflections from the Learning Trajectory confirm that, despite strong commitment, current funding and planning frameworks often fail to reflect the real costs and conditions of environmentally responsible touring.



ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES CLASH WITH (FAST) PRODUCTION AND TOURING NORMS

The first iteration of Perform Europe identified an “overheated” touring system driven by speed, volume, and frequent circulation. Within this context, **ecological practices such as slower travel, longer stays, or fewer tour dates often conflict with established production norms and expectations.** Reflections from Perform Europe 2 confirmed this as a major obstacle. Several projects struggled to align partners around more environmentally responsible ways of working and to integrate sustainability considerations into planning from the outset, particularly when these changes challenged existing timelines, budgets, or touring habits.



ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY IS SHAPED BY UNEQUAL CAPACITIES AND SOCIAL PRIVILEGE

Perform Europe research and Learning Trajectory reflections show that the **ability to adopt ecological practices is unevenly distributed across the performing arts sector.** Access to greener options depends on resources, time, location, and organisational capacity, which vary widely between practitioners and regions.

As a result, ecological sustainability is closely linked to broader inequalities. Organisations with more resources are better placed to choose lower-impact options, while others face difficult trade-offs between environmental responsibility, accessibility, and financial viability. These challenges are intensified when working with disabled artists or crews, or when touring in remote or less-connected regions with limited infrastructure and travel options.



“Ensuring that accessibility is consistent across venues and countries, as facilities and inclusion support vary significantly... Furthermore, balancing environmental sustainability with inclusive and equitable mobility models presents logistical and financial complexities that require innovative and collaborative solutions.”

– Dance ALL IN

Accessibility and inclusion



TOURING PROCESSES INSUFFICIENTLY ACCOUNT FOR ACCESS AND CARE NEEDS OF ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES

Perform Europe projects reported that **touring processes rarely provide sufficient space, time, or resources to address access and care needs in a consistent way.** Even when venues and partners are willing to host inclusive, adaptive, or relaxed performances, many lack the practical frameworks, training, and tools required to do so. As a result, access and care often depend on ad-hoc solutions and additional effort by artists and producers, rather than being built into touring structures.

These touring-level constraints reflect deeper structural issues across the performing arts value chain. Because international touring takes place at a later stage, many forms of exclusion linked to education, professional development, infrastructure, and access to resources have already occurred. This limits who is able to tour and sets clear boundaries on what inclusive touring can address on its own, pointing to the need for coordinated action earlier in the value chain if access and care are to be sustained.

→ **ACCESSIBILITY CONDITIONS VARY WIDELY ACROSS VENUES, REGIONS AND TOURING CONTEXTS, INCLUDING RURAL AREAS**

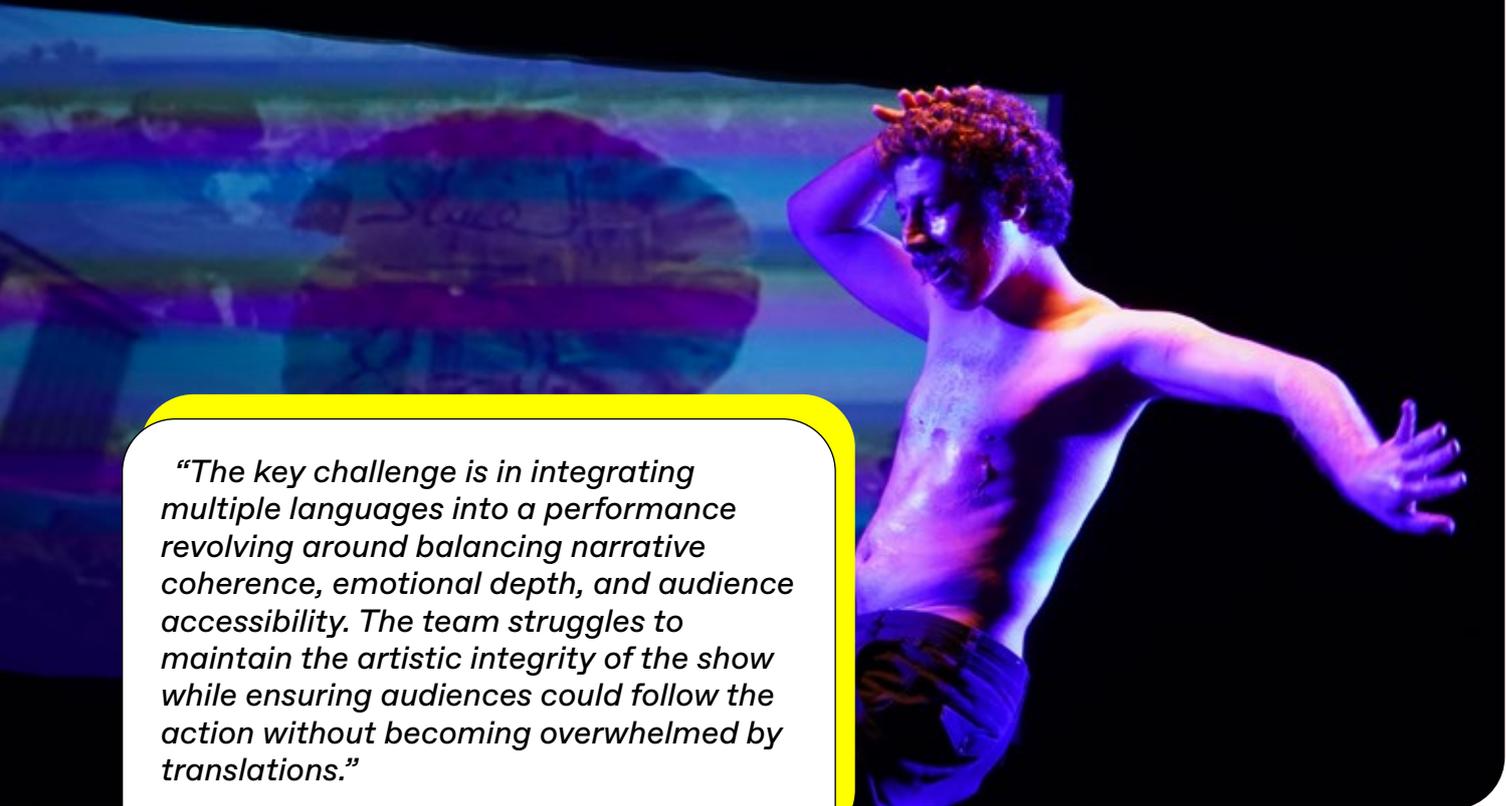
Even when performing arts venues are excited about making showings inclusive, adaptive, or relaxed, few have the frameworks for it. As Log Keepers testified, venues and partners also face a lack of proper accessibility and inclusion training, awareness, and tools and resources. **Insufficient physical accessibility infrastructure makes creating safe and participatory spaces especially difficult.**

[Perform Europe Mapping Research](#) highlighted uneven accessibility conditions across venues and touring contexts in Europe, including rural and non-metropolitan areas. Learning Trajectory experiences confirmed that these uneven conditions affect both artists' mobility and audiences' access, complicating planning and making it difficult to guarantee accessible touring experiences across regions. As touring takes place at a later stage in the value chain, these challenges often reflect exclusions that have already occurred earlier, leaving accessibility highly dependent on local conditions rather than supported as a shared responsibility within international touring systems.

→ **PRECARITY STRUCTURALLY LIMITS WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL TOURING**

International touring often presumes the ability to absorb financial risk, uncertainty, and unpaid or under-recognised labour. These conditions disproportionately affect practitioners in more precarious positions, including disabled artists, freelancers, artists with care responsibilities, and those based in less well-resourced contexts. Moreover, longer trips and staying away from home is challenging for people with families, especially with young children or family members that need care. As a result, access to international touring is not equally available across the sector.

Learning Trajectory reflections confirmed that **precarity closely intersects with accessibility and sustainability**. Additional costs linked to access measures, care needs, adapted mobility, or longer stays are difficult to absorb on an individual basis. Participation in international touring – especially under inclusive and sustainable conditions – therefore remains structurally limited to those who can manage risk, reinforcing existing inequalities rather than addressing them. In a transnational context, this is further complicated by the absence of a shared understanding of what fair practice and fair remuneration mean across different countries and working cultures.



“The key challenge is in integrating multiple languages into a performance revolving around balancing narrative coherence, emotional depth, and audience accessibility. The team struggles to maintain the artistic integrity of the show while ensuring audiences could follow the action without becoming overwhelmed by translations.”

– Honig, سمش & de l' Or

Engaging with communities

→ **DOMINANT TOURING MODELS PRIORITISE CIRCULATION OVER RECIPROCITY AND CONTEXTUAL ADAPTATION**

[Perform Europe Mapping Research](#) identifies a dominant touring logic that values circulation, reach, and visibility as key indicators of success. Within this logic, **touring is primarily understood as the movement of finished works across borders, while reciprocity, local anchoring, and contextual adaptation – including linguistic adaptation, bridging cultural differences and integrating local references – receive limited structural support.**

Learning Trajectory insights confirm that adapting work to different cultural, social, political, and linguistic contexts often depends on individual commitment and informal arrangements, rather than on incentives embedded in touring and funding frameworks. This creates a mismatch between ambitions for meaningful audience engagement and systems that reward speed and reach, limiting the scope for reciprocal exchange and locally responsive practices.

→ **LACK OF TIME AND CONTINUITY FOR LOCAL EMBEDDING AND RECIPROCITY**

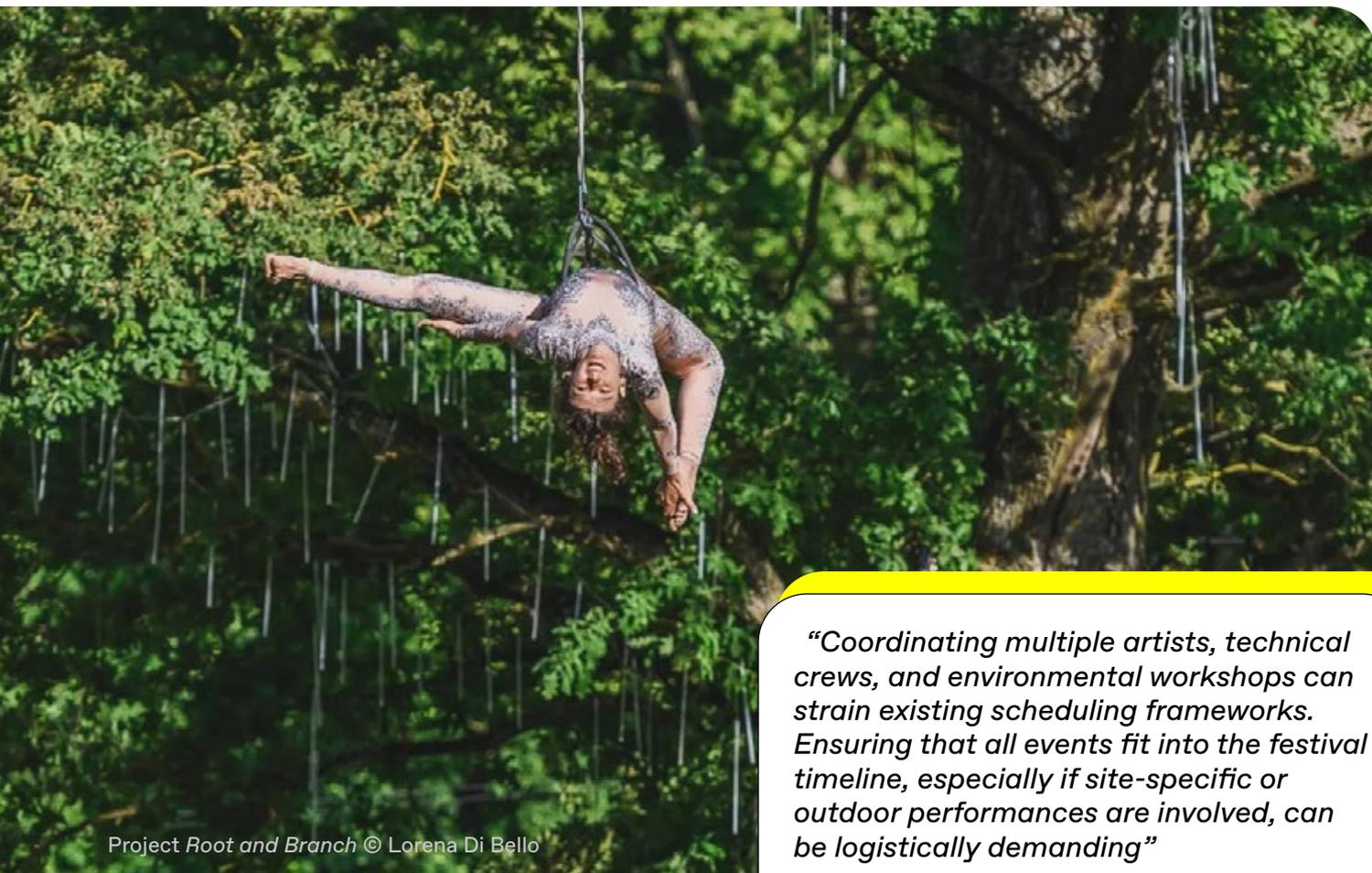
Learning Trajectory discussions showed that the **limits of short-term touring formats become particularly visible when projects work with traumatised or at-risk communities, including those affected by conflict, displacement, or social marginalisation.** In these contexts, engagement cannot be reduced to a single encounter. Building trust, ensuring emotional safety, and working responsibly require time, continuity, and repeated presence, which current touring schedules rarely allow.

Projects noted that without sufficient time for follow-up, care, and mutual exchange, engagement risks remaining superficial or placing unintended emotional strain on participants. This highlights how time pressure in touring raises not only artistic and organisational challenges, but also ethical questions about how and with whom engagement is possible.

→ **CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, AND ACCESS BARRIERS REQUIRE MEDIATION THAT IS INSUFFICIENTLY RESOURCED**

Perform Europe projects showed that **working across cultural, linguistic, and access barriers depends heavily on strong local partnerships and mediation.** Many projects invested in language strategies – such as translation, multilingual formats, interpretation, subtitling, or working in non-dominant languages – to make work accessible and meaningful to local audiences.

However, artists and touring organisations often lack the contextual, cultural, or psychosocial knowledge to carry this work alone. Local partners play a crucial role in providing linguistic mediation, guidance, trust, and continuity, yet these forms of support are rarely fully recognised or resourced within touring frameworks. When mediation is under-supported, touring models place unrealistic responsibility on artists and limit the reach and quality of audience engagement.



Project Root and Branch © Lorena Di Bello

“Coordinating multiple artists, technical crews, and environmental workshops can strain existing scheduling frameworks. Ensuring that all events fit into the festival timeline, especially if site-specific or outdoor performances are involved, can be logistically demanding”

– Root and Branch

Finances and resources



DEPENDENCE ON SHORT-TERM PROJECT FUNDING, LIMITING LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

[The Mapping Research](#) from the first edition of Perform Europe already showed that international touring is mainly supported through **short-term, project-based funding schemes**. This reflects a funding logic in which success is measured through predefined outputs delivered within tight timelines. While such frameworks support circulation, they **limit the ability of artists and organisations to plan over longer periods, invest in relationships, or adapt touring practices over time**.

Reflections from the Learning Trajectory confirmed that financial and resource-related constraints remain a major obstacle. Many projects pointed to the lack of stable public or private funding and the administrative burden involved in accessing public support. The short-term focus of dominant funding models reinforces speed and predictability, making it difficult to embed learning, care, and adaptation into touring practices – precisely the shift many Perform Europe projects aim to achieve.

→ **HIGHER COSTS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGICAL, INCLUSIVE AND CARE-BASED PRACTICES**

Across both iterations of Perform Europe, practitioners reported growing expectations to integrate ecological responsibility, accessibility, and inclusion into international touring. These practices involve real and recurring costs – such as longer stays, alternative travel modes, accessibility measures, mediation, and care-related work – which are often only partly eligible or insufficiently recognised within existing funding frameworks.

As a result, **many artists and organisations** struggle to sustain these practices financially. They are **forced to rely on internal cross-subsidisation or to make trade-offs between policy ambitions and practical viability**. This points to a clear misalignment between policy goals and funding conditions, rather than a lack of commitment from practitioners, and makes it difficult to ensure fair pay, accessibility, and environmentally responsible touring at the same time.

→ **LOGISTICAL HURDLES FOR ADAPTIVE, CONTEXT-BASED WORK**

Projects working in more adaptive, context-based ways face increased logistical complexity. **Planning, scheduling, coordination, and reporting become more demanding when projects involve larger partnerships and when artistic work is tailored to different local contexts and shifting needs.** Learning Trajectory reflections show how teams had to balance strategic priorities with artistic intentions, often stretching organisational capacity beyond established routines.

These challenges are compounded by factors outside the control of project partners, including geopolitical instability, restrictive political contexts, weather conditions, and other external disruptions. For many Perform Europe projects, the core logistical challenge lies in the need for anticipation, flexibility, and rapid adjustment across diverse scenarios, while operating within existing administrative, financial, and time constraints.



“Coordination across diverse partners: Aligning visions, objectives, and methodologies between different partners, each operating within distinct cultural, social, and logistical contexts, is inherently complex.”

– Hand in Hand

Partnerships and networking



PARTNERSHIPS ARE SHAPED BY SHORT-TERM, PROJECT-BASED COLLABORATION

[Perform Europe Mapping Research](#) shows that international partnerships are often formed around individual projects or touring opportunities, shaped by short-term funding cycles. While this enables collaboration, it limits the development of longer-term relationships based on trust, reciprocity, and shared learning.

Learning Trajectory reflections confirm that **short-term partnerships tend to prioritise delivery over experimentation**. They make it harder to share risk, adapt working methods, or build durable collaboration structures across borders, especially when projects aim to work in more sustainable, inclusive, or context-responsive ways.



UNEQUAL POWER AND RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION SHAPES PARTNERSHIPS

For many partners, it is the first time working in such broad and multinational collaborations. As such, it is no surprise that in **pushing the envelope towards sustainability, diversity, and inclusion, various challenges arise in navigating ways of working alongside each other.** Issues emerged with regards to unequal engagement and workloads among partners, difficulties in finding and aligning values, objectives and methodologies, and, notably, in coordination and communication. During the first workshop, discussion revealed that to truly make a difference, the projects must directly address the challenge of ensuring each partner has an equal voice. This means establishing mutual understanding as a foundation, and deliberately allocating time, attention, and resources to create collaborations that are fair and grounded in principles of care.



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION REMAINS CONCENTRATED WITHIN EXISTING NETWORKS

Perform Europe research shows that international touring often relies on established networks and trusted relationships, which help reduce uncertainty and risk. However, this **reliance also limits opportunities to work with new partners, regions, or practices, particularly those outside well-known circuits.** Learning Trajectory discussions highlight that while digital matchmaking tools can help initiate new contacts, they are not sufficient on their own. Building shared understanding around artistic visions, working methods, and values requires time, mediation, and trust-building. These processes are often to be situated in the (unpaid) development stage of project applications. They are rarely resourced within short-term touring formats, resulting in partnerships that often reproduce familiar patterns rather than supporting more diverse and balanced international exchange.



Skills, capacities and learning

→ NEW EXPECTATIONS EMERGE WITHOUT SUFFICIENT TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

[The Perform Europe 1 Mapping Research](#) and [Policy Recommendations](#) already identified a **structural skills gap in international touring, particularly in relation to sustainability, accessibility, inclusion, and new collaborative working methods.** They pointed to the need for targeted capacity-building, peer learning, and dedicated support structures to enable practitioners to adapt their practices. Across both iterations of Perform Europe, expectations in these areas increased further, and Learning Trajectory reflections showed a strong shared sense that change is both necessary and urgent.

At the same time, projects consistently reported limited opportunities to develop these skills in a structured way. Training, guidance, and shared tools remain unevenly available or insufficiently resourced, leaving many practitioners to rely on self-learning, peer exchange, or trial and error. While this supported experimentation, it also limited the ability to consolidate learning and embed new practices beyond individual projects or funding cycles.



WORKERS AND TEAMS OPERATE UNDER PERSISTENT OVERLOAD

Learning Trajectory reflections repeatedly highlighted that **artists, producers, and organisational teams operate under sustained workload pressure**. Efforts to work more sustainably and inclusively often add layers of coordination, care work, mediation, accessibility planning, and administration on top of existing responsibilities, rather than replacing other tasks.

In a context shaped by short-term funding, limited staffing, and precarity, this accumulation of responsibilities leads to persistent overload. This affects well-being, increases the risk of burnout, and reduces the space available for reflection, learning, and longer-term change – even where there is strong motivation to work differently.



KNOWLEDGE REMAINS FRAGMENTED AND LEARNING SYSTEMS ARE WEAK

Perform Europe 1 Policy Recommendations highlighted the **need for stronger research and knowledge infrastructures around international touring, including better data, shared insights, and overview mappings on sustainability, accessibility, inclusion, working conditions, and mobility patterns**. The mapping study itself demonstrated how limited and unevenly distributed such knowledge remains across the sector.

Learning Trajectory reflections confirmed that, in practice, knowledge is still largely generated on a project-by-project basis. Insights about what works, under what conditions, and at what cost are rarely consolidated, shared, or supported through longer-term learning systems. As a result, similar challenges are repeatedly addressed in isolation, and valuable experience risks being lost once projects end. This weak knowledge base limits the sector's collective capacity to learn, adapt, and inform policy with evidence grounded in real working conditions.

Strategies & Tools

If the Perform Europe priorities define the *why* of the projects, the Perform Europe strategies and tools focus on the *how* and the *what*. They respond to a practical question shared by many practitioners and policymakers alike: **how can international performing arts touring become greener, more inclusive, and more diverse despite the obstacles outlined above?** What concrete choices and actions allow these shifts to happen in real working conditions?

Reflecting on these questions through the Learning Trajectory made one thing clear: efforts to reduce environmental impact, broaden access to marginalised voices and bodies, and diversify authorship and agency do not happen in a single place or through a single intervention. They unfold across multiple layers of practice at the same time. In line with the ambitions presented earlier, the strategies developed by Perform Europe projects can be grouped into four interconnected domains: artistic practices, community engagement, environmental approaches, and organisational practices. These domains do not function as isolated tracks; strategies often intersect, reinforce one another, and require clear, sometimes radical choices to generate change.

The Perform Europe strategies and tools bring together 12 strategies and more than 130 concrete tools developed, tested, and documented by projects across Europe during the Learning Trajectory. The following paragraph can be paired with the [Perform Europe Toolbox](#), offering a practical entry point for anyone looking to rethink touring in their own context – whether starting from artistic choices, organisational change, or broader structural conditions.





Project *Performing Memory*
© Néstor Romero Clemente

ARTISTIC STRATEGIES

Artistic strategies refer to the creative and performative choices projects make to realise their artistic ambitions while touring across borders despite the structural conditions shaping international circulation. As outlined earlier, many Perform Europe projects aimed to use artistic practice as a space for inquiry, encounter, and shared meaning-making. At the same time, they operated within touring models that prioritise the circulation of fixed works, leaving limited room for contextual adaptation and reciprocity.

In response to these constraints, projects anchored their artistic work deeply within a diversity of local contexts. **Artistic strategies incorporated diverse forms of knowledge, including local and embodied knowledge, as well as marginalised or underrepresented perspectives.** They encouraged open, adaptive, and collaborative creative processes and formats that could respond to different social, cultural, and linguistic environments. Through these approaches, projects adjusted how work was created and shared in response to the people, places, and conditions they engaged with, rather than applying fixed formats across contexts.

Pooling diverse perspectives and forms of knowledge

Projects working with this strategy focus on amplifying marginalised voices by rooting artistic creation in local realities and lived experience. They draw on a wide range of knowledge sources – including local, embodied, experiential, scientific, and more-than-human perspectives – so that artistic work becomes a space for exchange rather than representation alone.

Through inclusive, cross-sector co-creation and the involvement of diverse artistic teams, projects bring together hybrid perspectives that respond to specific contexts and needs. Performative practices are used as tools to surface, share, and test different forms of knowledge, while co-creation with underrepresented communities helps ensure that work remains grounded, context-aware, and responsive.

By opening up creation processes and inviting participation, this approach broadens representation, supports shared authorship, and gives concrete agency to groups that are often excluded from cultural production.

TOOLS

- Involve local stakeholders and NGOs from the earliest phases of planning
- Create local project teams with lived experience
- Collaborate with researchers in artistic research
- Integrate science into dramaturgy and scenography
- Host open and inclusive calls for performers and collaborators
- Organise knowledge sharing via panels and discussions
- Host co-creation workshops (story donations, sensory and embodied reflection)
- Include more-than-human perspectives by giving ecological systems and landscapes a symbolic voice.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



EUROPEAN ROMA THEATER FESTIVALS



CHAPTER 1: SUGAR



LIFE'S FORM(S)



BUILDING BRIDGES



Project photo credits:

Project *European Roma Theatre Festivals* © Ihász Tina Photography

Project *Life's Form(s)* © Shonen - Victor Zebo

Project *Chapter 1: Sugar* © Ivan Galasse

Project *Building Bridges* © Playback Theater Vakhtery

Developing artistic formats and scenarios adaptive to contexts

Projects engaged with this strategy balance a clear artistic vision with responsiveness to context. **Rather than fixing the work in advance, they develop modular and flexible scenarios and formats that can adapt to the spatial, social, cultural, linguistic, and economic realities of each new environment.** The work is shaped by the places and communities it meets, allowing local meaning-making and cultural specificity to emerge. Context is treated not as a constraint but as a force for meaningful creation.

Artistic processes remain open and responsive, grounded in dialogue with those who host, interpret, and experience the work. Mediators, translators, and local collaborators often help ensure that the work resonates and speaks clearly across differences without losing its artistic intent.

TOOLS

- Prepare multiple scenarios in advance to stay flexible in new contexts
- Stage site-specific versions of the work that respond to the physical environment
- Design modular formats that can be reconfigured for different spaces, budgets, conditions, and scales
- Work with local hosts or cultural mediators to translate context, references, and sensitivities into the project
- Co-create with local participants to embed community experience in the work
- Use multilingual teams and performers
- Incorporate soundscapes, memories, and local references into the work
- Build performance structures that are partly fixed and partly created on site

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



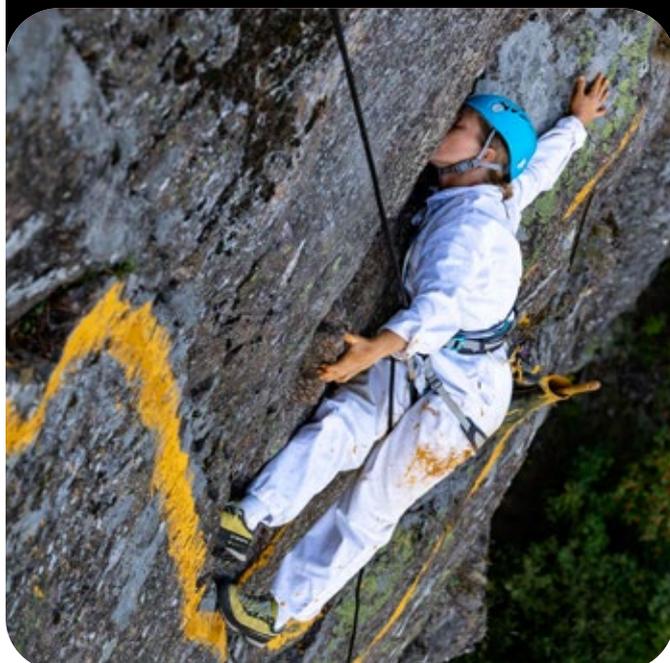
HAND IN HAND



BOYS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN



THE MOUNTAIN RANGE, BEYOND BORDERS



PERFORMING MEMORY



Project photo credits:

Project *HAND IN HAND* © Caterina Moroni

Project *Boys Just Want To Have Fun* © Derek Pedros

Project *The Mountain Range, Beyond Borders* © Tormod Granheim

Project *Performing Memory* © Anastasiia Telikova

Engaging and mobilising participants via interactive experiences

Projects applying this strategy create participatory and interactive formats that engage audiences through affect, embodiment, and creative exchange. **Performance is approached as a shared space, where the boundaries between performers, participants, and spectators are intentionally blurred. Active involvement, feedback, and improvisation shape each performance, allowing audiences to influence how the work unfolds.**

By inviting audiences into the work, these projects soften the divide between experiencing and doing. Bodies, emotions, and stories collide in ways that turn every performance into a shared act of creation. Artistic work often explores social or issue-based themes through personal, human and embodied perspectives, making complex topics more accessible and emotionally resonant.

This approach values the pleasure and unpredictability of participation and supports the development of non-traditional, experimental formats. At the same time, projects place strong emphasis on creating environments where people feel safe, welcome, and empowered to take part, enabling new ways of engaging with art and with one another.

TOOLS

- Invite audience input through workshops, one-on-one encounters, or live contributions
- Include (multi)sensory installations, movements or processions to engage participants; design responsive performances
- Close the experience with collective reflection – debrief circles or conversations
- Create collective songs, chants, or rituals that bring everyone into a shared rhythm
- Design artistic entry points – short introductions, guided warm-ups, or rituals of arrival
- Share the creative process – through open rehearsals, work-in-progress moments, etc.
- Create playful spaces for interaction and discovery.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



RESISTING EXTINCTION AT THE PERIPHERIES



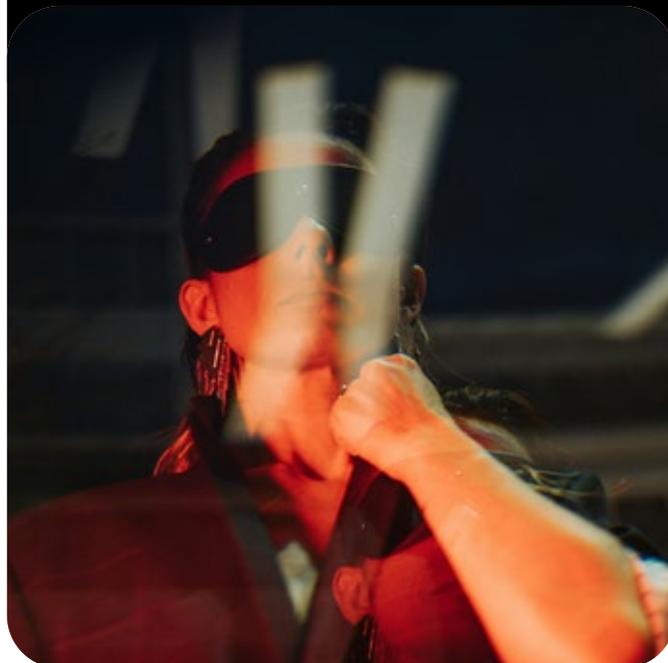
MEDITERRANEAN CROSSING:
A LAMENTATION FOR THE SEA



WHEN THE BLEEDING STOPS



THE CREATURES OF TOMORROW



Project photo credits:

Project *Resisting Extinction at the Peripheries* © Maria Lothe

Project *Mediterranean Crossing* © Margherita Caprili

Project *When the bleeding stops* © Owen Fiene

Project *Creatures of Tomorrow* © Pawel Szvmanski



Project *Moving Kinship* © Sandis Lazda

Moving Kinship is a project that champions inclusivity, decolonises artistic practice, and nurtures feminist micro-cultures of belonging and care. Audiences were invited into the work through interactive procession and communal chanting, dissolving the line between performers and participants. By activating bodies, voices, and shared movement, the project generated collective energy and emotional connection in real time. Complex historical and multicultural narratives were experienced not as distant themes, but as a shared, embodied journey, shaped by those taking part. Pleasure in participation and co-presence became central, opening new ways of engaging with stories through collective making and exchange.



Go to the Toolbox:

Perform Europe Strategies & Tools poster set and card set



Project *Bringing Family Theatre to Villages across Europe* © Maciej Zakrzewsk

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Community strategies focus on building inclusive and responsible relationships with diverse communities as a core part of international touring. As outlined in the ambitions section, many Perform Europe projects aimed to **move beyond one-off audience encounters and to engage communities as partners in artistic processes**. This involved building trust, providing context for artistic work and its themes, and designing touring practices with accessibility and care for diverse audiences and artists in mind.

At the same time, projects operated within a context where dominant touring models limit community engagement. Short stays, tight schedules, language and cultural barriers, uneven local infrastructure, and limited resources for mediation and follow-up often constrain the depth and continuity of relationships. These obstacles are particularly visible when working with communities that have been historically excluded from the performing arts or that require additional care, time, or support to engage safely.

In response to these obstacles, **projects developed community strategies that prioritise local partnerships, mediation, and context-specific engagement formats**. Through these strategies – and the tools that support them – projects created spaces for dialogue, trust-building, and shared responsibility, enabling more accessible, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships between artists, organisations, and communities despite the constraints of international touring.

Building trust and relationships with communities and ecosystems

Partnerships using this strategy centre on **building trust and deep understanding by meeting communities and ecosystems where they are**. They prioritise presence, attentive listening, and long-term engagement as the foundation for meaningful artistic work.

Rather than entering a context with predefined agendas, these projects invest time in understanding local histories, sensitivities, and needs, allowing lived realities to guide the process. Presenting partners play a key mediating role in this work, helping to connect artistic teams with local communities, contexts, and ecosystems, and translating between different cultural, social, and ecological perspectives.

Trust is built gradually through repeated encounters, shared experiences, and collaboration with local organisations, community figures, and cultural intermediaries. By creating time and space for relationships to develop, and by working with care and responsiveness, these projects turn each context into fertile ground for lasting connection, mutual respect, and sustained exchange.

TOOLS

- Listen with care – give space for stories, needs, and concerns to surface
- Collaborate with local mediators who know what is safe, sensitive and of interest
- Partner with trusted local institutions to reach broader networks
- Plan audience and community development long-term
- Organise face-to-face meetings and informal gatherings in local spaces
- Create intimate, local events that are physically and emotionally accessible
- Identify community needs and co-design action around them
- Share material and relational resources
- Use accessible channels and language to reach people where they are, both online and offline

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



HONIG, سمش & DE L'OR



BRINGING FAMILY THEATER TO VILLAGES ACROSS EUROPE



DIVERSELY TYPICAL – EMBRACING NEURODIVERSITY THROUGH MOVEMENT



Project photo credits:

Project *HONIG, سمش & DE L'OR* © MED amir el ameri

Project *Bringing Family Theatre to Villages across Europe* © Maciej Zakrzewsk

Project *Diversely Typical* © NEB Festival



Project *Honig*, سمش & de l'Or
© AHMED BOU SNINA

Honig, سمش & de l'Or is a touring theatre project built around “translation in the act”, drawing on a personal story of migration, exile, love, and belonging. Engaging with these themes shaped not only the artistic form, but also how the project related to its audiences. The team stepped outside the theatre to meet people in their own neighbourhoods, opening face-to-face dialogue with communities who would not normally attend performances. Taking time to listen and respond to local realities, the project worked with local community organisers as bridges during workshops, creating spaces of care through attentive listening and culturally sensitive exchange. By placing community needs at the centre of the process, the project opened up safe spaces where connection could take root and grow over time.



Go to the Toolbox:

Perform Europe Strategies & Tools poster set and card set

Creating a context for complex themes

Collaborations working with this strategy set the stage for **deeper engagement by shaping how audiences enter into, experience, and carry forward the themes of a performance**. They work across the full arc of the audience journey – before, during, and after the event – to ensure that complex or difficult subject matter is approached with care, relevance, and intention. By engaging audiences early, framing the work thoughtfully, and offering moments for dialogue and reflection, these projects create conditions where challenging themes can land, resonate, and continue to echo beyond the performance itself.

This approach avoids assumptions about audience responses and instead creates space for connection, critical thinking, and emotional processing. Educational formats, contextual programming, and sustained communication all contribute to keeping the work open, accessible, and anchored in the realities of those who encounter it.

TOOLS

- Spend time in the local context to understand how the topic resonates with local realities
- Co-design contextual activities with target communities or local partners
- Engage audiences early, starting communication well in advance
- Build a thematic program around the performance – discussions, panels, or related events
- Welcome audiences into physical spaces: actively receive and guide, Create pre-events or warm-ups – talks, or workshops that introduce the themes
- Create space for reflection and dialogue so audiences can process and respond
- Offer follow-up resources or actions; plan longer preparation times to allow meaningful audience development

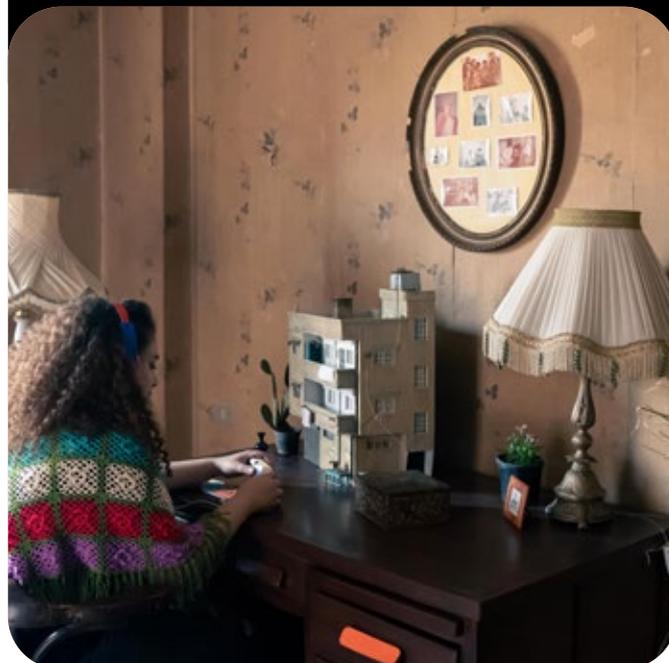
STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



FROM THE FIRST STEP ON TOUR



HOME



(M)OTHERS ON TOUR



WOUNDS OF THE COLONIAL PAST –
HEALING TOGETHER FOR A SHARED
FUTURE



Project photo credits:

Project *From the First Step: A Rooted Tour* © Jovana Semiz

Project *HOME* © Mohab Mohamed

Project *(M)others on Tour* © Vlad Brăteanu

Project *Wounds of the Colonial Past* © Cirkopolis / David Konečný

Designing inclusive and accessible activities

Projects working with this strategy focus on **shaping every aspect of their work from the perspective of diverse artists and audiences**. Rather than designing for inclusion as an add-on, they see it as a core principle of production and touring. They **integrate accessibility and flexibility into the earliest decisions around concept, recruitment, process, and production**.

This approach avoids general solutions and focuses on the specific needs of clearly defined communities, recognising that meaningful inclusion begins with listening and learning. Projects work with communities rather than for them. They centre the lived experiences of participants, when making artistic or organisational decisions.

Building inclusive work means also building capacity – bringing in expertise, adapting formats, and committing to ongoing reflection so that all those involved can participate fully, creatively, and with agency.

TOOLS

- Involve accessibility experts early
- Ensure sound and visuals are accessible – moderate volume, avoid overstimulation, ensure clear sightlines
- Co-design with disabled, neurodiverse, and migrant community members
- Adapt sensory and technical conditions with subtitles, relaxed formats, and adjustments to sound, lighting, staging, and setup
- Train staff, artists, and volunteers on access, inclusive communication, and bias
- Document and share learning to improve practices
- Create flexible audience experiences that allow movement and varied seating
- Budget for interpreters, captioning, mobility support, and sensory adaptations
- Test prototypes with people of varied abilities, languages, and backgrounds

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



DANCING WITH EXCESS



SYN.TROPIA



THE METIS METHOD:
CHOREOGRAPHIES FOR A GENDER
GEOGRAPHY



BREAKING THE HAMSTER WHEEL



Project photo credits:

Project *Dancing With Excess* © Beat-pix with HeartXX

Project *SYN.Tropia* © Alexandra Matos

Project *The Metis Method* © Raffaello Rouge Rossini

Project *Breaking the Hamster Wheel* © Thomas Aurin



ECOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

Ecological strategies are about **reshaping relationships to the environment, both within the performing arts and beyond**. As articulated in the ambitions section, many Perform Europe projects set out to take ecological responsibility seriously – not only by reducing the environmental impact of touring practices, but also by making artistic contributions to broader social and ecological transitions.

These ambitions unfold within dominant touring models that remain highly resource-intensive. International touring is still shaped by carbon-heavy mobility, accelerated schedules, and production norms that leave limited room for slower travel, longer stays, or ecological experimentation. Financial constraints, eligibility rules, and uneven infrastructure further restrict the feasibility of greener choices, even where motivation is strong.

In response, **projects developed ecological strategies that operate on two interconnected levels. Inwardly, they experimented with greener touring practices, adapting mobility, production, and planning to reduce environmental impact. Outwardly, they used artistic processes and encounters with audiences and communities to engage with ecological questions, fostering awareness, reflection, and shared responsibility.** Together, these strategies – supported by concrete tools – position artistic practice as an active contributor to ecological transition, despite the structural limits of prevailing touring practices.

Greening touring and production practices

Projects adopting this strategy **reduce the environmental footprint of travel and production or they reimagine touring altogether**. They move away from hypermobility with slower, more mindful rhythms, grounded in care for people, places, and long-term collaboration.

Touring is approached as a responsive process rather than a fixed route – formats are adapted to local conditions, materials are sourced sustainably, and production scales flex to meet ecological limits. Many projects develop new touring concepts that prioritise proximity, continuity and co-creation. They optimise schedules to reduce distance and deepen impact.

Sustainability is not treated as a constraint but as a creative framework – shaping how, where, and why work moves, and embedding ecological responsibility into the heart of the artistic process.

TOOLS

- Adopt concept touring: smaller teams, working with local performers
- Track carbon footprint and resource use, review after each tour, and adjust practices for the future
- Build modular, lightweight production formats that adapt to different spaces and require minimal setup
- Plan “slow touring”: stay longer in one place, cluster performances
- Integrate digital or hybrid exchange formats to reduce travel
- Provide green training for partners and collaborators so everyone shares responsibility
- Source materials and services locally

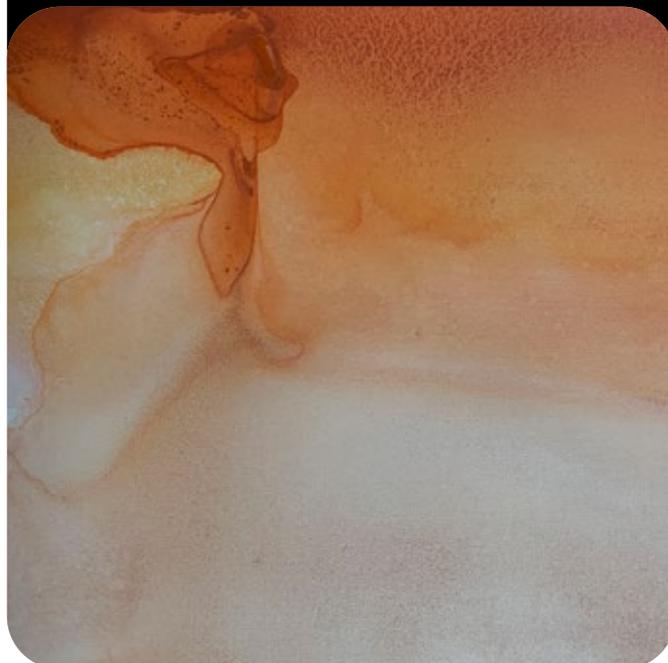
STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



SPREADING THE ROOTS



ANIMALARIUMS' CONSTELLATIONS



SENSE-ATIONAL CIRCUS CABARET TOUR



ROOT AND BRANCH



Project photo credits:

Project *Spreading the Roots* © Nina Pernat

Project *Animalariums' Constellations* © Agneta Ekman Wingate

Project *Sense-ational Circus Cabaret Caravan Tour* © Flying Seagull Project

Project *Root and Branch* © Sette Voci



Project Sense-ational Circus Cabaret Caravan Tour © Flying Seagull Project

The Sense-ational Circus Cabaret Caravan Tour brought inclusive, immersive circus and performing arts experiences to marginalised communities and people with disabilities across Europe. Through colourful, interactive performances, the project shared the magic of circus with children in crisis and underrepresented or displaced communities. Using a self-sufficient, solar-powered van as both transport and performance space, the tour functioned as a mobile micro-theatre. This approach reduced the resources required from host communities, removed the need for formal venues, and enabled performances to take place in contexts with limited infrastructure, making touring both more inclusive and less resource-intensive.



Go to the Toolbox:

Perform Europe Strategies & Tools poster set and card set

Blending art with environmental activism

Partnerships engaging with this strategy deepen the **connection between artistic practice and environmental activism by creating spaces for exchange between artists, activists, scientists, citizens and more**. They work across disciplines and sectors to develop performative formats that merge artistic expression with ecological consciousness and political urgency. Familiar boundaries are challenged – between art and activism, audience and participant, human and more-than-human – making space for bold, experimental practices grounded in care.

This approach infuses **activist movements** with creative strategies, raises awareness around climate justice, and supports new forms of action through co-creation and shared learning. Labs, residencies, and field-based projects become places where performance is not only a form of expression, but also a tool for mobilisation, reflection, and transformation.

TOOLS

- Create multi-format performances (installation, debate, action, data visualisation)
- Facilitate interdisciplinary labs or residencies for shared research
- Organise dialogue sessions between environmental experts, local communities, and artists
- Build transdisciplinary project teams
- Host activist skill-sharing events (direct action training, legal rights sessions)
- Include citizen-science components (data collection, testimonies,...)
- Develop immersive experiences that let participants feel ecological perspectives (soundscapes, sensory walks, VR)
- Curate citizen assemblies or open forums

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



HAND IN HAND



TRANS-GEOGRAPHICAL HYDRO
BODIES



REFLECTING PRESENCE RETHINKING FUTURE



Project photo credits:

Project *HAND IN HAND* © Caterina Moroni

Project *Transgeographical Hydro Bodies* © Nuvola Ravera

Project *Reflecting Presence Rethinking Future* © Otero Tillmann Filme

Raising ecological awareness through art and education

Projects taking up this strategy **use performance and education to make ecological issues tangible, shared, and emotionally resonant**. Rather than treating climate as a separate topic, they approach it as a lens that shapes the entire project – embedded in its vision, artistic and organisational choices, training, and day-to-day practice.

This environmental perspective guides how projects engage with audiences, partners, and participants, combining artistic and educational methods to foster understanding that is relational, experiential, and embodied. Performances become moments of collective reflection, while workshops and learning spaces support deeper awareness through preparation, contribution, and dialogue.

By blending together knowledge, emotion, and lived experience, these projects nurture forms of ecological consciousness which are lasting and meaningful, beyond the immediate moment of performance.

TOOLS

- Collaborate with schools for joint programmes or workshops
- Create site-specific performances where landscapes and ecosystems shape the work and become co-authors
- Provide training for teams and partners (workshops, online modules) to build ecological literacy
- Use sensory and material dramaturgies to reveal energy flows, resource use, and ecological interdependence
- Budget time for awareness-building and learning
- Design participatory learning formats: discussion circles, co-creative classrooms, experiential labs
- Transform local testimonies and data into embodied stories that connect global issues to lived realities

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



GREENHOUSE



BURIED SECRETS



MANUAL OF ADAPTATION TO THE PLANET



Project photo credits:

Project *Greenhouse* © Ivanka Kate Yakovyna

Project *Buried Secrets* © Michał Rogulski

Project *Manual of Adaptation to the Planet* © Loïc Nys



Project *Dance All In*
© Dmitrijus Matvejevas

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

Organisational strategies focus on building sustainable organisational practices and partnerships for the long term. As described in the ambitions section, many Perform Europe projects aimed to work in ways grounded in care, openness, collective learning, fairness, and adaptability, and to align internal working methods with the values they promote through their artistic work.

However, these ambitions are pursued within dominant organisational and funding structures that favour short-term projects with fixed roles. Limited time horizons, unequal access to resources, administrative pressure, and asymmetric power relations within partnerships often restrict the ability to share risk, invest in learning, or adapt ways of working over time.

In response, **projects developed organisational strategies that nurture collaboration as an ongoing practice rather than a one-off arrangement.** Through new partnership models, shared decision-making, adjusted rhythms of work, and spaces for reflection and learning, projects tested ways of working that support long-term cooperation and resilience. These strategies – and the tools that support them – aim to embed care, fairness, and adaptability into everyday organisational practice, despite the constraints of prevailing systems.

Caring and sharing, when working together

Partnerships embracing this strategy **build collaborations grounded in shared values, mutual care, and long-term commitment**. They approach **partnership as a living process** – shaped by trust, nourished by dialogue, and sustained through attentiveness to the people involved.

Leadership becomes a shared responsibility, responsive to different roles, rhythms, and capacities within a team. Rather than seeking uniformity, these projects welcome difference and asymmetry, working in ways that remain flexible, respectful, and human.

Care is expressed in both structure and atmosphere: through open communication, shared responsibilities, time for rest, and practices that make collaboration safe, supportive and sustaining for everyone involved.

TOOLS

- Facilitate dialogue to align needs, objectives, and emotions
- Co-create values and ethical guidelines
- Plan moments of rest during tours, rehearsals, and creation processes
- Make decision-making visible
- Distribute authority by sharing and rotating leadership
- Ensure diversity and inclusion (representation across gender, culture, ability, and background)
- Implement care-focused practices (wellbeing check-ins, flexible scheduling)
- Provide conditions of care for touring – safe travel, pacing, accommodations, and access to wellbeing resources
- Invite input from all partners, ensure every voice is heard (e.g. round tables, rotating facilitators)

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



ORCHESTRATING SPACES



ALASKA



BOREAL: SLOW CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN TREES AND PEOPLE



Project photo credits:

Project *Orchestrating Spaces* © Claudia Corona

Project *Alaska* © Eduard Liashenko

Project *Boreal* © Jack Offord



Wounds of the Colonial Past is a project that traces the intergenerational wounds of European colonisation through an Afrodiasporic lens, opening the work to local marginalised voices in each place it travels. Working with heavy and emotionally charged themes, the partnership placed care at the heart of collaboration. The project created a living document of access needs, co-developed with deaf, hard-of-hearing, and disabled collaborators, which guided daily ways of working. Schedules, communication methods, and workflows were adapted through ongoing dialogue, allowing collaboration to grow with trust, attentiveness, and respect for different rhythms. By caring and sharing responsibility in this way, the partnership fostered inclusive working conditions where everyone could contribute fully.



Go to the Toolbox:

Perform Europe Strategies & Tools poster set and card set

Designing projects as spaces for collective learning

Partnerships using this strategy approach **collaboration as a continuous process of learning, reflection, and shared growth**. They create space within partnerships for joint exploration, allowing teams to **reflect on their ways of working, test ideas, and adapt together**.

Structured moments for exchange – such as training sessions, feedback loops, shared goal-setting, and the involvement of external expertise – support learning around themes like inclusion, adaptability, and care. Projects draw on facilitators, researchers, access experts, community practitioners, or other specialists to bring in perspectives and skills that are not always available within the partnership itself.

At the same time, these projects look beyond the lifespan of a single tour. They plan with longer-term impact in mind, using qualitative tools to trace change and designing ways to share their insights with the outside world. In this approach, touring becomes more than movement across borders: it becomes a process of growing together, where learning is made visible and can travel further than the project itself.

TOOLS

- Ensure continuity by documenting processes and planning follow-up initiatives
- Design projects to “leave something there” – resources, networks, or capacity in the local context
- Dedicate time for joint reflection – through residencies, study circles, or peer-to-peer exchanges
- Integrate monitoring and qualitative evaluation – capturing participants’ experiences and local effects
- Share insights publicly through reports, toolkits, or conferences
- Organise partner education programs: lectures, research sessions, co-learning workshops
- Plan and evaluate for impact, focusing on transformation, resonance, and long-term relationships
- Encourage experimentation by providing resources and flexible timelines.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



FLOWERS OF SREBRENICA



DANCE ALL IN



CONNECTING SILENT VOICES



Project photo credits:

Project *The Flowers of Srebrenica* © Maja Salkić Burazerović

Project *DANCE ALL IN* © Esko Koivisto

Project *CONNECTING SILENT VOICES* © Asia Culture Center

Planning for adaptive, fair and slower processes

Projects working with this strategy treat **planning not only as a logistical task, but as a shared and evolving process shaped by dialogue, trust, and clarity. They plan adaptively and with a long-term perspective**, guided by shared values that act as a collective compass across changing contexts.

Touring practices are refined through ongoing input from local partners, artistic teams, and performers, allowing processes to remain flexible without losing coherence. Time is treated as a core resource, enabling care, learning, and meaningful relationships to develop alongside production.

These projects build collaborative structures that support flexibility, ensure transparent distribution of resources, and make room for different working rhythms. A shared vision, developed through open communication and consensus, anchors decision-making and helps teams respond to change while remaining grounded in fairness and mutual respect.

TOOLS

- Plan time explicitly for relationship-building, training, and collective reflection
- Treat time as a funded resource – budgeting for slower processes, emotional labour, and audience preparation
- Draft shared organisational plans with built-in flexibility and clear decision protocols
- Develop value-driven budgets that reflect ethical priorities and balance inequalities
- Value slower rhythms as essential to fair collaboration, inclusion, and ecological balance
- Use flexible budgeting to reallocate resources when circumstances change
- Acknowledge care and rest as integral parts of professional sustainability
- Conduct risk assessments for travel, political contexts, and logistical challenges

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



THE LONG SHADOW OF ALOIS BRUNNER



BODY LANDSCAPES. AN ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE



MEDITERRANEAN CROSSING: A LAMENTATION FOR THE SEA



MOVING KINSHIP: TOURING FEMINIST PERFORMANCE HUBS IN EUROPE



Project photo credits:

Project *The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner* © Tom Dachs

Project *Body Landscapes. An Ecofeminist Perspective* © Adi Bulboacă

Project *Mediterranean Crossing* © Tomè-Manon Cotte

Project *Moving Kinship* © Neil Max Emmanuel

Closing reflection: from experiment to enabling conditions

In this guidebook, we have looked back at the collective journeys of the 42 projects supported by Perform Europe 2. We traced the ambitions that motivated artists, presenters and partners to rethink international touring, the obstacles they encountered, and the concrete strategies and tools they developed to work differently within existing constraints.

What became clear is that **ecological sustainability and inclusion were not treated as external requirements. They functioned as starting points. Values such as care, reciprocity, accessibility and ecological responsibility shaped both artistic vision and organisational choices.** Projects tested what it means to work from these values under real-world conditions – conditions marked by persistent inequalities within the performing arts field and across society more broadly. **Questions of access, representation and redistribution were not abstract debates, but lived realities in diverse geographic, social and historical contexts.**

Through this experimentation, Perform Europe projects demonstrated that alternative touring models are possible. By slowing down rhythms, embedding accessibility from the outset, grounding work locally while strengthening transnational exchange, and building partnerships around shared values, they developed concrete prototypes of value-based practice. These shifts do not resolve systemic constraints, but they show that even within pressure, different choices can be made.

Perform Europe itself played a catalytic role. By combining funding with structured reflection and peer learning, it created rare space and time: space to test alternatives without immediate pressure to optimise output; time to build trust, learn and adapt. In doing so, it enabled not only new practices, but shared knowledge – knowledge that travels beyond individual tours and partnerships. The Perform Europe Strategies & Tools framework captures these experiences and makes them transferable. The tools presented in this publication – and in the accompanying [online toolbox](#) – invite further experimentation and adaptation in new contexts.



At the same time, experimentation alone cannot shift an ecosystem. If value-based practices are to move beyond isolated projects, they require enabling conditions. Funding frameworks, mobility schemes and cooperation programmes at European, national and local levels must recognise care, relational work and ecological responsibility not as secondary criteria, but as structural principles. Embedding these values in policy design calls for adaptive and context-sensitive approaches that take into account different histories, capacities and starting points across Europe.

Perform Europe functioned as a testing ground within a broader transition. The question now is how its lessons can be scaled, mainstreamed and structurally supported. [*Reimagine International Touring Volume 2: Levers for Future Policy Development*](#) takes up this challenge, exploring how the insights generated through Perform Europe can inform funding logics, policy frameworks and institutional practices, and identifying concrete levers for shaping the future conditions of international touring.

Perform Europe

Reimagine international touring with us

Developed by IDEA Consult and Perform Europe:

Joris Janssens and Eglè Valintélytė with inputs from Margherita Petti, Mariam Lezhava, Ása Richardsdóttir, Kathrin Deventer, Alice Brunot, Eva Broberg and Anita Debaere.

Special thanks to Perform Europe 'Log Keepers' for their contributions during the Learning Trajectory sessions.

Design by Milton Pereira.

This publication should be mentioned as follows:
J. Janssens, E. Valintelyte, 'Reimagine International Touring Volume 1: The Perform Europe Guidebook', March 2026. Link: https://performeurope.eu/perform-europe-reimagine-international-touring-volume-1-guidebook_2026/