

WAVE OF CHANGE



Dear Europe

Here we are, on a small peninsula like many others around our beautiful continent. We have a story to tell to Europe about a wave of change, a story which we need to shout out. It is your story too. Borders are everywhere here; mobile on land, undefined at sea, mental in our heads. For centuries local inhabitants have been struggling with borders. Yet the Istrian Peninsula is geographically united. Since the Sixth Century at least three different cultures and four languages have coexisted in this territory. In our geographical area there are common elements yet many differences between people, mainly with regard to our sense of belonging. And look what happens today: from the Adriatic Sea, the only line that we thought was serene, comes the worst flood in the last 60 years.

So, why do we need the ECoC title? To enable a wave of change to spread through culture, to invite a reconciliation with our past through culture, at a crossroads in Europe where East meets West. We need to be an ECoC that sends a peaceful message and guides us beyond the divisions that keep our families and

communities apart, for we live across three states and numerous municipalities with no regional dimension that could enhance new ways to act. This, too, is our lived experience of Europe. As anxieties around multiculturalism increase and issues of social cohesion become crucial, Istria wants to offer an example of how different cultures have survived, coexisted and profited together. It is not a simplistic example however, as this land has been witness to frequent waves of population transfer. But we are here and determined to share our story of the Europe we know, and of the Europe we want.

We want to let everybody know that these borders hurt like salt in a wound, that our destiny brings us together and apart again in the same wave (Sea contains and divides us), and that it could take back the land from us any time now. Let's connect and care by building a society where our youngsters will live better futures. Let's invite that wave of change and tackle the divisions, nationalisms, and this recent fence made of steel.

Sincerely yours,
PI2025 Ecoc Team

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PI2025
Candidate
City

INTRODUCTION

1 Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆

This is the first time since World War II that the whole Slovenian and Croatian Istria with Trieste (Italy) are embarking upon a common cultural European project! Istria, the name of our peninsula, is divided between three states. It has experienced tumultuous change and various political reconfigurations. Istria has a truly European legacy in so many aspects. But not all legacies are positive. The relatively recent border between the Slovenian and Croatian parts of Istria (Schengen border) has complicated the lives of many families and placed a burden on socio-economic and cross-border cultural initiatives. These concerns are real and contemporary; they are our lived experience. 'Living legacies' have created conflicts, sometimes superseded by a sense of apathy and cynicism. The four municipalities bidding in Slovenian Istria, led by Piran, share this regional mood. Our sense of broken identity, lack of regional structures and the multiple borders, past and present, scar our land.

Our vision is to let a [Wave of Change](#) transform Istria into a place that will no longer be hindered by the past, yet will acknowledge it while moving forward. Culture, and the development that comes through culture, will help us achieve this goal. We are talking about a contemporary culture defined by dialogue with others, beyond borders, beyond differences of perception and understanding that keep us apart, still. In other words: a European culture. Our aim is to integrate into our cultural scene contemporary art forms, connect people, enhance transnational mobility of artists, and reach a new - European - dimension. Slovenian Istria needs to rebuild an intense cultural cooperation at a national level too, overcoming issues of provincialism versus centralism. That is why we want to be Slovenia's European Capital of Culture 2025. An ambitious and multi-layered ECoC is the best tool to reach our goal. Our challenge is to be deeply European and demonstrate how culture can stimulate urgent social change at the local level and within a wider European debate:

- Why are our European provinces stripped of their young generation? And equally important: why is there a general inability to manage the conflicts which divide us?
- Where is the investment in culture, a tool widely acknowledged for its significant developmental role in any ambitious, democratically vibrant society?
- Where is the new blood, the new thinking we need so urgently to address the climate emergency that affects all Europeans?

Our municipalities of Piran, Koper, Izola and Ankaran are all located at sea level and even a slight change to the climate will have enormous consequences. Piran is named 'little Venice' and, as we write these words, it is, just like Venice, under water. It is more than just the postcard city of Slovenia where culture seems to have become simply a tourist product for the summer. We need to move beyond the stereotypes: Koper is much more than the only Slovenian port, Izola isn't just a cute fishing village and Ankaran isn't just a nice beach.

In 2025, through the ECoC process, we will become a dynamic region, connected nationally and transnationally, with a new generation of European cultural operators growing in experience and confidence. Through intercultural dialogue we will generate a [Wave of Change](#) and greatly increase cultural excellence, fuelling the creativity that will shape a better, inclusive society. We are ready to welcome that [Wave of Change](#).

2 Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area? Explain this choice.

Yes, the whole Slovenian Istria, with the cities of Koper, Izola, Ankaran are supporting the bidding process PI2025! In June 2019, the four municipalities of the Slovenian coast decided to be partners in this bid; they were joined at an early stage by the Cities of Trieste and Muggia, as well as by the municipalities of Pula, Rovinj, Umag, Buje, Novigrad, Opatija and Poreč from the Istrian Region in Croatia. This has expanded the scope of our bid from national to multinational: Italy, Croatia and Slovenia are in it together! A wave of energy is passing through the region and the involvement is truly contagious. According to the latest census, there were 350,000 people living in Istria, 80,000 of them on the Slovenian coast, 250,000 in the Croatian Istria and 20,000 in the Italian part. Therefore, almost 25 percent of the Istrian population is in Slovenia. Territorially, Slovenia owns about 11 percent of Istria.

3 Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.



'PIRAN as a multicultural city with stories of exile, post-war killings, revenge, and hatred, but also forgiveness and reconciliation': This is how Goran Vojnović's recent movie 'Piran-Pirano' (2010) explained the cultural profile of Slovenian Istria from an artist's perspective.

Adapt and thrive

People perceive Piran and Slovenian Istria as a place with few cultural possibilities, particularly regarding contemporary art forms. Access to cultural venues is difficult, especially in summer due to intense tourist related traffic congestion. On the other hand entrance is mostly free while the cultural offer is of varied quality. While existing cultural institutions are mainly public, the end of socialism (more than 29 years ago) fostered a growing generational divide between young and old people working in culture. As a result, many people associate cultural activity with the socialist era – something which contrasts dramatically with the cityscape made of pre-war buildings from the Venetian and Austro-Hungarian tradition, as well as religious institutions given Koper's role as the seat of the Catholic archdiocese. Nevertheless important names and cultural initiatives are clearly associated with the cultural profile of the area; [The Tartini International Piano and Violin Competition](#), [The Tartini Festival](#), and [The Forma Viva Open Air Stone Sculpture Collection](#), where visiting stone artists and sculptors have been creating new works for over half a century. [Anton Biloslav](#), one of the most innovative and key figures in post war Yugoslavian - Slovenian visual arts left a significant legacy in Piran. Book publishers, editors and bookseller [Libris](#) thrive in Koper and act somewhat as a hub for local writers and translators such as nationally recognised [Gašper Malej](#).

While Istria is quite heterogeneous regarding its confessions what is amazing is the extended use of churches for cultural events related to the socialist past of the region. From the outside, Piran and the wider region are known mainly as a lovely summer tourist destination but this is not enough for sustainable regional development, particularly given how undervalued the area is in the wintertime. The ECoC can change this mindset by addressing the problem of seasonality. A common denominator for the four municipalities and their cultural practice is provincialism; at present everything is done under the influence of a centralized state. Piran city centre is a monument of national interest with important cultural infrastructure. Auditorium Portorož is the Municipality's cultural centre. City-run institutions, such as the Maritime museum, Piran's Coastal galleries, Koper's Regional Museum, Koper's Theatre, are co-financed by the National Ministry of culture. The only truly national institution is the Regional Archive, which has a strategic role in an area whose past is constantly being questioned. A new established institution is the Catholic Church archive. The Gallery Insula in Izola is a private gallery established by local visual artists, enhancing mobility of artists in Europe.

Cultural NGOs are present and co-financed in Piran (4% of the Municipality budget), Izola (3,6 % of the Municipality budget), Koper (1% of the Municipality budget) and in Ankaran (1,2% of the Municipality budget). Interesting output is coming from NGOs that are independent from local financial injections such as the [platform PiNA](#) and [Zavod Otok](#). Non-professional groups are guided and supported by organisations such as JSKD (Public fund for cultural activities) and ZKD (Union of cultural associations) in all the Municipalities of Slovenian Istria. NGOs operate in various thematic fields; for example, the historians of the association Histria are renowned for their international academic approach to Istrian topics, while the yearly Forum Tomizza unites Italian, Slovenian and Croatian poets around the works of Fulvio Tomizza, an Italian author whose identity represents the typically atypical Istrian soul. The non-governmental entities are active also in the hinterland, where various associations work on the preservation of the historical cultural identity. The Association for cultural and natural heritage [Anbot Piran](#) breaks new ground in the field of intergenerational dialogue among children, youngsters and older citizens concerning the importance of our common heritage.

Festivals everywhere

Open-air activities in summer, such as the large international sculpture biennale Forma viva, the International Ex-tempore in Piran, Koper's City library on the beach, ethno-folk concerts in city gardens organised by the Italian Communities, are hugely successful outdoor events. Outstanding events include also the [Tartini Festival in Piran](#), [Festival of Slovenian Film in Portorož](#), [Festivals of Performing arts Primorski Poletni Festival \(PPF\)](#) and [Kino Otok](#)

– *Isola Cinema*. Their potential has been widely recognised throughout Slovenian public bodies, such as the Slovene Ministry of Culture and Slovene Film Centre. The *Tartini Festival* is an international high-quality music platform; the *Festival of Slovenian Film* is a springboard for national and European film productions; PPF is recognized as the main outdoor festival started decades ago to regain outdoor spaces for culture; *Festival Kino Otok – Isola Cinema* offers first-rate film screenings to local cinephiles as well as guests from all over Europe. Important pedagogical activities in the realm of culture include excellent local public musical schools, the *University of Primorska* and the outstanding *ZRS – Research Centre*.

Outstanding nature

The natural beauty of the Istrian seaside is probably the most remarkable characteristic of the area. The salt pond parks of *Sečovje* (Natura 2000) and *Strunjan*, the Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Strunjan, the wet-area in Koper, the Marine Protected Area in Ankaran and the historic biking trail *Parenzana* are some of the best known. In particular, *Parenzana* symbolizes friendship among nations as it runs along the route of the old train linking Trieste (IT) with Poreč (HR). In addition, paths along the seashore, vineyards and olive grooves offer stunning sites of the hinterland. Modern sport facilities are located mainly in the Bonifika area in Koper – an area ‘taken away’ from the sea over time.

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



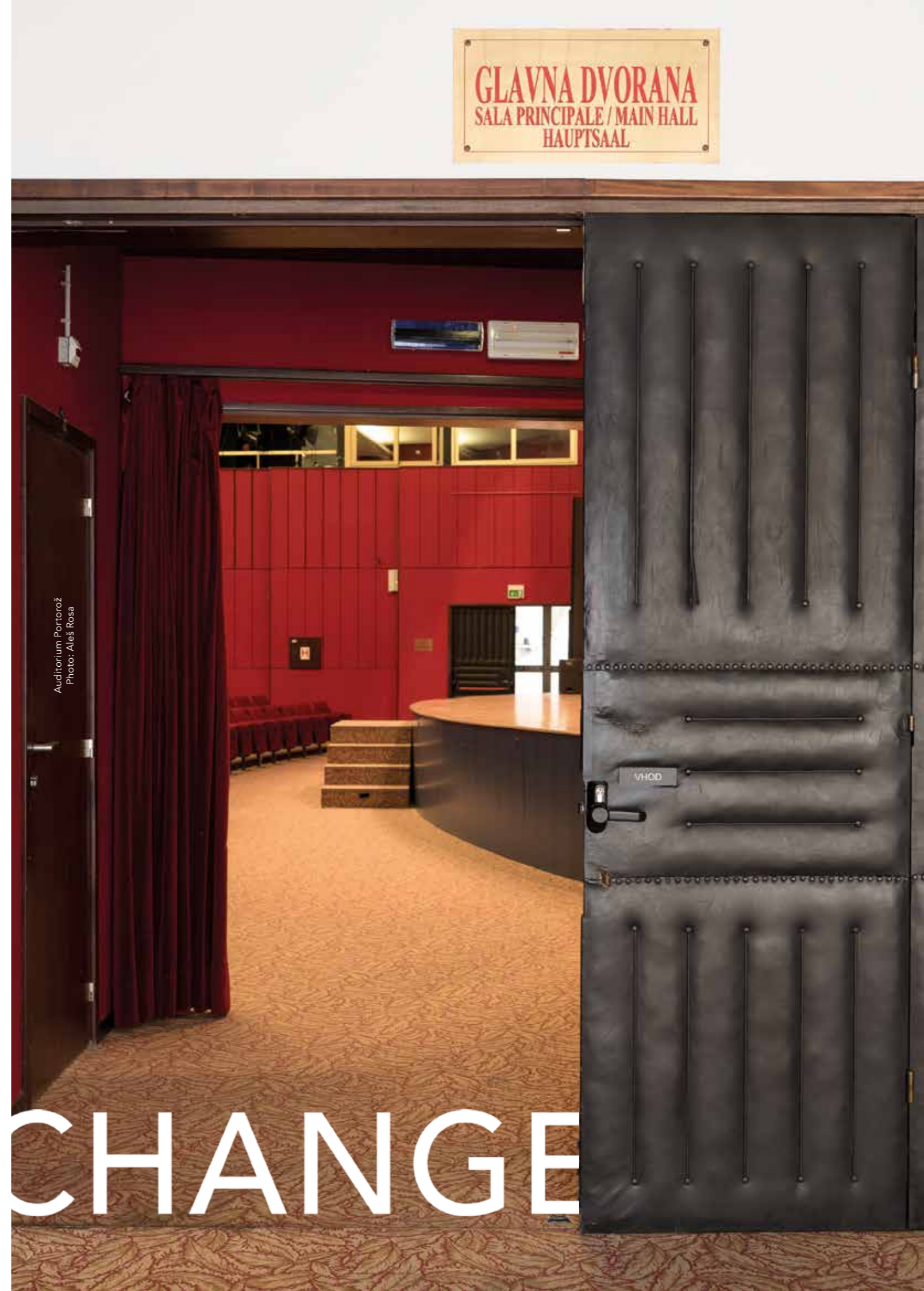
Wave of Change

For almost a century Piran and Istria have experienced tumultuous change and political reconfigurations. It is not unusual to talk to senior citizens who have witnessed populations being swept away and new ones take their place, lived through three or four political systems and seen borders appear and vanish. They know that legacy is not always positive. The relatively recent border between the Slovenian and Croatian parts of Istria (the Schengen border) has complicated the lives of many families and socio-economic initiatives. Such social concerns are our lived experience. These ‘living legacies’ have created conflicts sometimes superseded by a sense of apathy and cynicism. Yet things have begun to shift considerably in recent years and we aim to reinforce these by catalysing a cultural *Wave of Change*.

Yet over the past few months we have had to face a transcendental emergency - something which has reinforced and informed our slogan *Wave of Change*. As we write this bidbook our municipalities are under water, flooded by the Adriatic Sea. We have a climate emergency we need to respond to. This is why the *Wave of Change* concept is so important to all of us, those who live here in this particular place and also every single European.

The restructuring of economic models, the tangible and intangible legacy of socialism, bad banks and linguistic ebbing and flowing. These ideas and realities are addressed and questioned through our slogan *Wave of Change*. It allows us to ask how conflicts can be turned into opportunities to develop new humanist and civic outcomes through culture and art. Our relationship with our natural world is broken and not just for those of us who live along the coast. Scientists and artists increasingly demand we ‘pull the emergency break’. We act as if we are inheriting endless riches from the past rather than borrowing from the future. We say again: Our coastal towns are flooded as we write these words. *Wave of Change* will help us move beyond old dualities of ‘extract’ and ‘consume’ and propose new ways of working, thinking and feeling about nature, hinterlands, navigation, the legacy and future of tourism, seasonality and salt.

But if the changes we so urgently need are to be sustained we must invest in supportive, human ecosystems, ones which recognise the interdependence of all living things. How do we design our future using cultural and artistic tools in multi-disciplinary settings? How do we move *beyond* throw-away thinking? *Wave of Change* enables youth and cross generational cultural initiatives, digital art, human and European/international networks. Socially. Environmentally. Culturally: We need *Wave of Change*. We have chosen culture and dialogue to drive that change both here and on a broader European stage.



LONG-TERM CULTURAL STRATEGY

5 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?

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆



The cultural strategy of Piran was produced in a participatory and inclusive way open to all citizens. It involved 50 operators from the cultural and tourist sectors, NGOs, educators, journalists and people from the institutional sphere.

A state-of-the-art, visionary action plan with measurable indicators was defined and from this ambitious paper, the ECoC candidacy process was launched. The cultural strategy was formally endorsed by Piran's City Council in December 2017 and revised in December 2019. Evaluation of the strategy is planned for 2020 and 2027. From some renowned institutions to small points run by artists or associations, cultural actors and operators are contributing to the development of the cultural scene in Istria. Cultural operators gathered in Koper in 2018 to prepare a joint cultural strategy and identified 4 milestones for the regional cultural profile:

1. The Slovenian coast is a single large city – audience development and strategic decisions need to be defined together. The whole territory has 47 km of coast line and a vast hinterland. Piran is traditionally devoted to cultural tourism and music, Izola is the city of quality cinema and the Film Festival, Koper has developed sport facilities for its citizens and Ankarán is moving towards a fusion of nature and culture. Hence, the cultural offer of the area arises from both natural heritage and cultural content.
2. The multicultural identity of the territory is our treasure. Because the number of people actively speaking Italian is diminishing the four Italian communities should prioritize actions enabling cultural and creative players to cooperate internationally.

3. To provide a caring and supporting human ecosystem for youngsters. Despite the presence of public institutions devoted to youth, such as Epicenter in Piran and Youth centre in Koper, youngsters prefer to hang out in piazzas and streets and move to a bigger city after high school. Unfortunately, too few decide to come back, which has led to an older and less mobile population. While the University of Primorska is partially stopping this trend there needs to be more support for creative industries and hubs that strengthen the competitiveness of cultural and creative sectors to favour intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs for a younger generation.

4. Increase the quality of the local cultural output. In spite of numerous EU cooperation projects, cultural operators need ongoing support to strengthen networking at a European and international level in order to facilitate access to professional opportunities.

To overcome different strategic interests between the four municipalities, Piran, Izola, Koper and Ankarán (so called PIKA) launched and endorsed the first Strategic Statement regarding Culture.PIKA (or Kultura.PIKA in Slovenian). This is not yet a full-scale strategy, it is rather a result of the first steps of cooperation and results of preliminary consultations.

Looking forward. Kultura.PIKA 2030

The cities see further potential in Kultura.PIKA in a 2030 timeframe. For us, the PIKA cities, this strategy can become the very first step towards a full integration of our settlements into a bigger development area which includes the cities of Piran, Izola, Koper and Ankarán.

Strategic Objectives

Kultura.PIKA will be built on a layer of three specific objectives completed by a horizontal one.

CREATE. Establishing the PIKA Cultural Space as a pioneer of a full integration of the four cities. **OFFER.** Rethinking and consolidating the cultural offer of PIKA towards locals and visitors. **EXTEND.** Extending the European outlook of PIKA through culture. **CONSOLIDATE** (horizontal). Increasing the capacity of the cultural sector to deliver on the three specific objectives through support, capacity building and audience development.

Developing the final version of the Kultura.PIKA strategy it will go through the following participatory steps:

INFORM (January-February 2020) Cultural actors, stakeholders and other actors in the local community will be informed about this strategic statement. Various national and

international partners will also be informed. **CONSULT** (February-March 2020) We will organise stakeholder level and thematic consultations addressing issues such as the envisioned future, our mission and objectives and streams serving this general outlook.

ACTIVATE (March-April 2020) We will invite interested parties to co-create specific measures, activities and projects, which promote all streams.

COLLABORATE (April-May 2020) We will enable workshops during which we deconstruct and reconstruct the structure and working principles leading up to a full-proof strategy, focusing especially on enhancing its streams and supporting measures.

EMPOWER (June 2020) We will enable co-decision mechanisms of cultural stakeholders in finalising and adopting the final form of the strategic framework.

ECoC legacy beyond 2025

The ECoC process cumulates with such a high wave that, without a solid follow-up plan, a significant decline in the cultural sector would be unsurprising. The final criteria and the list of legacy programmes will be selected in line with the new emerging Strategic Statement Kultura.PIKA and - if we get the chance - with further development of the bidbook at the 2nd stage. Nevertheless, we would like to mention some examples from our existing plans that are good candidates for support after 2025:

- **Monfort, Piran** - an interdisciplinary centre for culture, digital arts and climate change, **The Open Design Centre**, **The Cultural Embassy for Climate Change** and home to the post-ECoC Regional Cultural Agency.
- **Libertas, Koper** - cultural and creative industries hub bringing port, city, municipality and education sectors together to develop a third and influential part to the local economy along with the port and tourism.
- **Trevisini Palace, Piran** - to become a music hub and the home to significant music projects; **The Tartini International Piano and Violin Competition**, **The Tartini Festival** and the **Baroque Instrument Museum**, and **Ethnohisteria Festival**.
- **Beyond Borders Festival**: A new, large scale event focusing on international contemporary art, nature

2100. PIKA. THE FUTURE

Welcome to the recreated augmented exhibition of the former cities of Piran, Izola, Koper and Ankarán (PIKA). We are in 2100 and we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the creation of PIKA on the foundations of the four past cities. This takes place while also celebrating 70 years of existence of the PIKA Regional Cultural Agency which serves cities all around the world on how to transform culture as a key element of urban development in small and medium-sized settlements. We also celebrate the most peaceful century of our history ever where no war and conflict emerged on the Slovenian shores of Istria.

art and environmental sustainability, aimed at challenging locals and other Europeans with questions about borders and limits (and how to overcome them). • **KROG, Piran** - a new European centre for the preservation and

development of skills associated with Venetian Istrian stone heritage. • **Cross Generational Cultural Centre, Izola** - home for **Ship of Tales Theatre** for children legacy project and other projects.

6 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.



The long-term strategic framework (Strategy for Culture and Strategy for Tourism of both Piran and Koper Municipalities,

Regional Strategy for the Integration of the Creative Scene for Multifunctional Development in Rural Areas of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the joint Strategic Statement Kultura.PIKA) puts capacity development of the cultural and creative sectors at its core. **The role of this strategic framework is to provide a supportive ecosystem for any stakeholder in culture (local, national or European) in delivering cultural content.** Measures enabled by the strategic framework will also contribute to the development of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches in culture. Finally, the implementation of the strategic framework will increase the economic output of the cultural and creative sectors.

The agenda for the city of Piran also includes the development of a separate audience development and capacity building regional plan for the cultural and creative sectors. This decision comes from revising the cultural strategy and it will be jointly prepared by the four Municipalities. The drafting of this new Plan is to be undertaken as a collaborative effort between the Municipalities economic departments, the University of Primorska, and associations representing the creative industries, such as platform PiNA (Koper), Abakkum Institute (Piran), etc. This work aligns with the objectives set forth in the Strategic Statement Kultura.PIKA with respect to the following horizontal aim: consolidate (see Q5). Increasing the capacity of the cultural sector to deliver on the three specific objectives through support, capacity building and audience development.



Stone pavement in Piran
Photo: ABAKKUM, Romana Kadič

The ECoC process should boost capacity building of the cultural and creative sector in a strategic way and in line with the long-term goals of the region. This is why we set up **Tlakovec**, a five-year strategic approach to capacity building for local cultural operators and institutions responding to the needs of a new generation of cultural leaders and projects. International leaders and experts in the fields of project management, audience development, innovative governance will be among those invited to work with us. We will move beyond a culture of managing crisis and neglect within our sector.

LEADERS: ECoC PI2025 and PiNA- Association for Culture and Education (Koper, SI).
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: EUNIC Slovenia - European Union National Institutes for Culture Slovenian Cluster (Ljubljana, SI); ECoC Kaunas 2022 (LT); A Soul for Europe Initiative (Berlin, DE); AEIDL - European Association for Local Development, European Cultural Foundation (Brussels, BE) Tandem ECoC.

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



Favourable wave

The PI2025 action builds upon a cross-municipal cultural collaboration strategy which was started by Piran in 2017 and extended to the four coastal municipalities of the Slovenian Istria. For the first time since the emergence of Slovenia as an independent state the four coastal municipalities affirmed their commitment to cultural diversity, equal participation and cultural integration. The Strategic Statement Kultura.PIKA now offers an integrated cultural plan for the area, which regards culture as a shared harbour: the space where artistic dialogue goes beyond the borders that still divide us and, in doing so, enhances cooperation, exchange, and renewal. Furthermore, they identify the common

8 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)?



The title of the European Capital of Culture, and the 5-year process of preparing and delivering the proposed programme, will create the setting for the cultural integration of the four cities involved in this effort.

The four municipalities will implement new participatory models for spatial planning, strategic planning, budgeting and policy development that will go beyond the perception of culture as a mere public cost.

The grassroots and participative approach to culture, that will continue to shape the PI2025 development process will create the habit of **shared decision making** and strengthen **active citizenship**: citizens and tourists alike, will be proactive partners (similarly to the ECoC Matera project, tourists will receive a passport and became 'residents

necessity to create a new, organic, integrated regional cooperation infrastructure. After a 30 year gap in cross-municipal cultural coordination, the wind has changed. In this regard, PI2025's programme and its strategic statement align with the navigation course set forth by Strategic Statement Kultura.PIKA

While extending PIKA's European outlook, PI2025 will also increase the cultural sector's capacity to deliver on the three specific objectives: support, capacity building and audience development, increasing PIKA's ability to create a cultural space where European synergies can come together and thrive.

for a day') in the joint creation of new paths, channels, and forums of public engagement, dialogue and exchange. **A new generations of cultural operators** will be educated through the ECoC implementation processes.

This generation will transform the creative and cultural sector in the region; it will become cross-sectoral, intergenerational and internationally connected. The increased cultural output of the area and audience capacity will attract a new generation of European cultural operators, effectively shifting the tide that saw the younger population leave this region. This combination will create and strengthen the habits of cultural engagement shaping a better, more inclusive society for years to come.

The ECoC Foundation will be transformed into the Regional Cultural Agency with the task of producing synergies between the creative and cultural sector entrepreneurship,



economic growth and social progress that will usher in a process of redefinition and reshaping of the cultural region, merging policies and strengthening both cultural operators and audiences.

This change of air will bring about a wave of urban renewal and increased public access to the Istrian industrial and historical architectural heritage. The action will also affect the general perception of the region stimulating a shift from a mere touristic destination to a landscape dotted by attractive cultural harbours where European synergies can form and thrive.

One such harbour will be **Palazzo Trevisini** in Piran - a fully restored neoclassical building featuring a beautiful historic auditorium. Currently closed after having been owned and sold by the Slovenian MBAC, it will be opened to the public and transformed into the new **Centre for Music** - a new teaching and performing musical hub that will house significant music projects; **The Tartini International Piano and Violin Competition**, **The Tartini Festival** and the **Baroque Instrument Museum**, and **Ethnohisteria Festival**.

Like **Palazzo Palazzo Trevisini**, many other iconic sites will be **given back to the public**. Among them, the **Libertas** former salt warehouses located in Koper and the **Monastery of Saint Onophrius** in Sečovelje will become attractive, vibrant cultural locations. Financially self-sustaining, these cultural spots will house activities that will continue beyond 2026, especially **Monfort** in Piran, and will have a positive impact on the local economy. In the years leading up to the ECoC, these activities will be set up, monitored and developed by grassroots umbrella organisations.

The completion of these infrastructural projects depends very much on winning the ECoC title. The current absence of administrative/political regional bodies in Slovenia means that joint cross-municipality efforts such as these cannot rely on a formal support system and therefore lack the financial resources and cross-institutional collaboration required to develop the projects. But with the ECoC title all this would change.

9 Outline briefly the plans for monitoring and evaluation



WHY MONITORING AND EVALUATION IS IMPORTANT FOR US? A properly designed and executed monitoring and

evaluation process will help us to:

- preserve PI2025 as a transparent and community-based project;
- recognise in time all issues that may endanger the implementation of our plans, the achievement of our goals or the process of decision making;
- communicate and disseminate all tangible results of our project to a wide public;
- analyze where we are on the way to success, to measure the change that we want to achieve using culture as a catalyser.

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE EVALUATION?

We are going to establish an independent consortium of three parties, led by the University of Primorska. A private research company will be chosen via public call and the PI2025 management. Two independent international experts will also join the consortium (a cooperation with the international platform Culture Action Europe is conceivable). The body established will receive 1 percent of the total operating budget of the whole ECoC project on a 6 year basis to ensure uninterrupted work until the end of 2026. The members of the consortium will have access to and a wide cognition of baseline studies and surveys already available in the region and the country.

WHAT DO WE MEASURE AND HOW DO WE DO THAT?

Our basic theory is that PI2025 opens a fast lane for Slovenian Istria to reach the goals laid out in the Strategic Statement **Kultura.PIKA**. It helps us formulate the following basic questions: How does this project help us offer something new, extend our horizons, create a new qualitative space and consolidate the foundations of the sector? We will set up four milestones for the monitoring plan:

1. 2021: **Establish** an assessment of the current situation, generate initial data and agree key performance indicators;
2. 2022 to 2024: **Continuously monitor the**

development of the programme, the involvement of the communities, track the level of awareness of the project and the national image of our ECoC;

3. 2025: **Map and monitor all cultural events**, both those executed in the frames of ECoC and the ones running independently. Regular data collection across a wide range will ensure quantitative and qualitative data about participation. Media content analysis will enable us to see how media coverage of the project will be developing;

4. Follow-up year: To measure and document changes and to publish and disseminate the results of the impact the ECoC generated in the cultural and creative sector and in the mindset of Istrians, which will help us achieve the long-term objectives laid out in the Strategic Statement **Kultura.PIKA**.

Key performance indicators shall be relevant, achievable, accessible, measurable and action oriented. Their selection will be in line with the focus areas of the long-term objectives set up in the strategy and tell us how the ECoC programme contributed to a new and integrated cultural space as the **PIKA** region, to a revised cultural offer which has an extended European outlook and to a significantly strengthened capacity in the sector making the legacy of PI2025 sustainable for decades.

A strong theoretical methodology will ensure that the proper manner of measuring will be chosen from a wide range of accessible methods: data collection from baseline studies, surveys (using also value, attitude, opinion or satisfaction scales), mental mapping, focus group and in-depth interviews and media content analysis will all be used.

Success for us is if we achieve our goals and legacy projects in a measurable way. Success comes when an evaluation shows that the results and outcomes are similar to what we expected. Success is if stakeholders and citizens share these feelings across a wide range of issues. But the biggest success is if we feel like riding the wave of change - even beyond 2026.

150/27=PI2025



Festival IZIS #7 Invasion
Photo: Sead Hrustanović, PINA

ARTISTIC CONTENT

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

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆



THE title *Wave of Change* is our overarching slogan driving forward a five-year social transformation process led through culture.

Over the run-up years (2021 to 2024) and during 2025 three programme platforms will guide the development of much of the programme; *Lost and Found*, *Connect and Care* and *Salt and Sea*. Our vision is based on a commitment to social dialogue through the widest possible interpretation and celebration of arts and culture. But this social dialogue is not a neutral one. It is aiming to promote social change regarding our relationship with our natural environment and the social hurdles complicating such change.

Over 150 cultural projects have been gathered as a result of a local open call to communities and cultural operators, who were guided by the concepts of salt and sea, connect and care, and lost and found. From these, 27 projects are presented here below. In addition to the artistic programme, we include in the platforms six key infrastructure plans called infrastructure-based milestones, aimed at offering new, innovative cultural hubs and venues for several projects and long-term community spaces for co-creation. We refer to them in our artistic programme as their concept development cannot be divided from our artistic vision and strategy. Without these milestones the creative programme would lack its skeleton.

Many proposals came from new cultural players; others came from long-established cultural institutions. After this intense process we consulted with our advisory artistic board and political leaderships across all four municipalities and have settled upon a creative programme clustered around the above three platforms.

The year 2025 has an additional layer to its design. Four cornerstones, overtly celebrational and fun in conception and delivery, will point up key moments: *Wave of Change - Opening Weekend and Ceremony*, *The Sea Contains the Sea Divides (Summer 2025)*, *Mobile Borders (Autumn 2025)* and *Svetilnik/Faro (Lighthouse) - Closing Weekend and Ceremony*. Our summer months are highly influenced by the large influx of tourists to the region. Our cornerstones are designed to be for many kinds of audiences at one time; young and old, local or visitor, bringing the special, unique celebratory magic of art and culture to audiences enjoying the outdoors both day and night.

The emphasis of the creative programme is on innovation; enabling a younger generation of artists to break through to prominence and to determine the conversation they wish to have with audiences. It celebrates contemporary interdisciplinary work and a thirst to develop European partnerships; without European partners the ambitions described here are unimaginable. The European dimension is not just a chapter heading - it is the *raison d'être*. Cultural traditions and heritage, both tangible and intangible, are also woven into the cultural programme because a region so influenced by everything from the Venetians to socialist architecture could not do otherwise. Outreach and audience development are essential elements built into the fabric of each project and management strategy. That is why we have designed an approach to capacity building to be implemented from day one (see also Q6, Q19). In this way we can best guarantee that culture can drive change on a wider social level. If we successfully move to

the second phase of selection, we will further deepen and enrich the cultural programme. Nevertheless, the present programme already attracts wide support, identifies thematic platforms and clusters of projects, and proposes an ambitious series of infrastructural developments. Our priority has been to design build-up activities and the vision for the ECoC legacy, giving shape to a transformative process we want to unleash in order to help drive the social change required to address the present climate emergency and its relationship with our wider social mindset.

Platforms:

LOST AND FOUND: Tumultuous change and political reconfigurations, population exchanges, restructuring of economic models, the legacy of socialism (tangible and intangible), bad banks and linguistic ebbing and flowing. This platform will support the development of projects, which focus on the present and past history and identity of Istria, its mentality and languages – factors that have both divided and united us in the past. It will also enable us to ask how conflicts can

be turned into opportunities to develop new humanist and civic outcomes through culture and art.

CONNECT AND CARE: If the changes we welcome are to be sustained, we need to invest in supportive, human ecosystems; those that acknowledge the interdependence of all living things. How do we design our future using cultural and artistic tools in multidisciplinary settings? This platform combines cross generational and youth initiatives that use culture as a vehicle, digital art, human and international networks and municipality driven co-initiatives.

SALT AND SEA: Our relationship with our natural world is broken. We act as if we are inheriting endless riches from the past rather than borrowing from the future. Our coastal towns are flooded as we write these words. We will explore ways of moving beyond old dualities, of extract and consume and propose new ways of working, thinking and feeling about nature, hinterlands, navigation, the legacy and future of tourism, seasonality and salt.

11 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.



Lost & found:

Infrastructure based milestones

TREVISINI PALACE PIRAN: A palace near the main square of Piran to become a music hub and the home to significant music projects; The Tartini International Piano and Violin Competition, The Tartini International Bi-annual Music Festival and the Baroque Instrument Museum, and Ethnohisteria Festival.

LEAD: Municipality of Piran (infrastructure) and PI2025.

BAROQUE INSTRUMENT MUSEUM: A priceless collection of musical instruments owned by Piran Municipality to be a new centre for music incorporating The School of Music,

The Tartini Piano and Violin Competition and Tartini Festival.

LEAD: Municipality of Piran
PARTNERS: PI2025; Maritime Museum (Piran, SI); Regional Museum (Koper, SI); School of Music (Koper, SI); Ambrož Čopi (musician, SI); Friends of Music Association (Koper, SI); Meila Tomé Pihler (musician, SR).

FORUM BABYLON TRANSLATION CENTRE, KOPER: A centre for the translation of literary texts in and between Slovenian, Italian and Croatian. Residential facilities for translators, meeting space and digital archive.

LEAD: Foundation Forum Babylon.
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Municipality of Koper and the Ankaran's Unit (SI); public libraries of Koper (SI), Trieste (IT) and Umag (HR) add KUD AAC Zrakogled (Koper, SI); University Library (Koper, SI); Faculty of Humanities - University of Primorska (Koper, SI); JAK - Slovenian Book Agency (Ljubljana, SI); TRADUKI - European network for literature and books (Berlin, DE).

KROG, PIRAN: A new European centre for the preservation and development of skills associated with Venetian Istrian stone heritage based in the restored Monastery of Saint Onophrius in Sečovlje. The centre will focus its interventions on the streets of Piran and its hinterland, contributing to the restoration of public space. Its projects will apply solutions that fit environmental/ ecological, functional, aesthetic and sustainable criteria adapted to the historical core of the coastal Mediterranean cities of Piran, Izola and Koper. Conferences, seminars, workshops - international, national and local integration with different actors related to cultural heritage, traditional building, craft skills and tourism.

LEAD: Municipality of Piran

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Abbakum Architects (Piran, SI); UNESCO (Dry Stone Walling Initiative), ZVKDS - Centre for restoration (Ljubljana, SI); Higher Vocational College (Sežana, SI); Open University (Poreč, HR) - as coordinator of the project Montraker Sculpture Symposium.



Giuseppe Tartini statue
Photo: Touristic Board Portorož

Highlights

BEYOND BORDERS FESTIVAL: Nature and culture know no borders, yet a very real political border between Croatia and Slovenia has an enduring impact upon our daily lives in Piran. This environmentally friendly festival will take place in the strip around both sides of the border and show the region and Europe that people here live in peace and together with nature, and that dialogue, solidarity and culture have the magical power to make borders disappear. Access to the festival will be guaranteed with a Culture Passport and credits will be gained by visiting events ('check-points') in an environmentally friendly behaviour (e.g., arriving by bike, having no plastic with you).

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: PI2025 and Cultural Embassy for Climate Change (Piran, SI); PiNA - Association for Culture and Education (Koper, SI); University of Primorska (Koper, SI); University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu/ Kuopio, FI) - as coordinator of the project EUBORDERSCAPES; ECoC Tartu 2024 (EE); ECoC Kaunas 2022 (LT); Belfast-Derry (UK) - former ECoC candidate city for 2023; Übergänge/ Přečody Festival (Gmünd, AT and České Velenice, CZ).

FORMA VIVA: For over fifty years stone artists and sculptors have been visiting Piran and creating new works of art - displayed in the open, for all to see and enjoy. Many renowned 20th-century sculptors have left their mark, literally, in the open sculpture centre overlooking Piran. PI2025 offers a new phase in the life of this extraordinary cultural and historical resource. To assert the importance of the park and symposium in the wider European context (a network of stone sculpture parks in Europe) an itinerary of best stone sculpture parks in Europe (where symposia are still active) will be created. Together with the Coastal Galleries Piran, we will present the exhibition "Anton Biloslav and Andrej Medved, visionaries", a retrospective display their international cooperation.

LEAD: Piran Coastal Galleries

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Austrian Sculpture Park (Graz-Premstätten, AT); Stone Sculpture Park Vilnoja (Vilnius, LT); COAL - Coalition for Art and Sustainable Development (Paris, FR); AEOM - Association of European Open Air Museums (Stockholm, SE); NEMO - Network of European Museum Organisations (Berlin, DE); EXARC - Organisation for Archaeological Open-Air Museums, Experimental Archaeology, Ancient Technology and Interpretation (Leiden, NL); Umedalens Sculpture Park (Umeå, SE); Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2028 - ECoC legacy (Leeuwarden-Friesland, NL); ICOM - International Council of Museums (Paris, FR); Culture Action Europe (Brussels, BE); Open University (Poreč, HR).

Projects

ETNOHISTERIA FESTIVAL: Connecting the hinterland with the coastal urban areas, this one-week on-site festival plans to change location to reach different villages in Istria, bringing together artists from all over Europe and beyond. Following a disperse format, all stages will be DIY, set up in courtyards, under the trees, or behind hedges. The festival will include the hinterlands of all four municipalities.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Open Design Centre (Piran, SI); Matija Solce (musician and performance artist, SI); Aindrias de Staic (musician and performance artist, IE); Male Instrumenty (band, PL); Welcome to the Village Festival, (Leeuwarden-Friesland, NL); ECoC Veszprém 2023 (HU).

FORUM BABYLON: The centre for the translation of literary texts in and between Slovenian, Italian and Croatian will design an innovative programme. Beside residential facilities for translators, it will serve as a meeting space and digital archive. International workshops, seminars and conferences will be held. The programme will explore the (non) existing borders between literature, music, graphic design and other genres. Forum Babylon will be a place for attractive cross-border artistic and cultural experiences with a special emphasis on the communication methods for people with disabilities (sign languages, Braille alphabet). Special weekend programmes about the languages of the world will attract families and children.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Gašper Malej (translator, SI); Public Libraries of Koper (SI) and the Ankaran's Unit (SI); Trieste (IT), and Umag (HR); University Library (Koper, SI); Faculty of Humanities (Departments of Slavistics and Italian) - University of Primorska (Koper, SI), JAK - Slovenian Book Agency (Ljubljana, SI); TRADUKI - European network for literature and books (Berlin, DE).

UPROOTED - PAN-EUROPEAN ART AND HISTORY INITIATIVE: The consequences of population transfers between 1945/1954 are a major highlight in the history of the Slovene Istria as well as in many other European countries. They represent a great challenge for society and artists; collective traumas, silenced memories, rootlessness, "hunger for memory" underpin the idea of merging academic research with performance and art, and transform these submersed, still existing tensions into an open field of creativity and interaction. Parallel and intertwined activities will consist of major conferences,

performances, exhibitions and works of art. International artists and researchers dealing with population transfers and post-conflict trauma will be invited to work through different expressions (digital art, photography, literature and performance). Creating a photographic archive of the territory is one of the aims, as the cities are mainly without archives due to the World War II. A project component would include the development of a joint Slovenian-Croatian-Italian history book for Istria created by artists coworking with children and young people from all 3 countries.

LEADERS: Neža Čebren Lipovec (architectural historian, SI) and Katja Hrobat Virloget (ethnologist, SI) - University of Primorska (Koper, SI); Italian Community (Koper, SI); **PARTNER:** PI2025; Mediadom Phyrani (Piran, SI).

ARCHITECTS OF LEISURE: The architectural heritage of all four municipalities on the Istrian coast is marked by a number of iconic buildings from the socialist period designed for mass tourism and leisure time. This project examines the nature of the legacy, its counterparts across ex-socialist Europe and how transformation over the last thirty years throws light onto changing patterns of behaviour, values and beliefs. It will lead to a major public exhibition and a permanent digital archive.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: PI2025; University of Primorska (Koper, SI); Tina Cotič (architect, SI); Matjaž Uršič (sociologist, SI) - University of Ljubljana (Ljubljana, SI); Daniel Novakovič (photographer, SI) - Slovenian Press Agency (Ljubljana, SI); Peter Sägger (architect/photographer, CH) - Archive for Post-War Modernism in Central and Eastern Europe, (Bern, CH); Plovdiv ECoC 2019 (BG); ECoC Wrocław 2016 (PL); ECoC Novi Sad 2021 (RS); ECoC Rijeka 2020 (HR); BAF - Balkan Architecture Forum (BG).

THE BAD BANK LEGACY: Across our four municipalities a significant number of buildings are owned by the Slovenian BMAC, a state-owned bank managing the bad debts of failed banks from the 2008 economic crisis. In a perilous state, these buildings constitute an important civic and industrial heritage and a resource locked-up and stymied in legal battles. This project will comprise two parts. It will analyse the situation through a photographic and archival intervention leading to a photographic exhibition and an online resource. It will also be a European research project looking for similar phenomena in other countries



Monfort, future Open Design Centre and PI2025 offices
Photo: Aleš Rosa

and creating strategies, plans and proposals for solutions together with artists and young people in creative workshops. Our aim is to finance this project with the help of EU-fundings like the Creative Europe Programme or Europe for Citizens.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: PI2025, Novi Sad ECoC 2021 (RS); ECoC Rijeka 2020 (HR); ECoC Plovdiv 2019 (BG); Centrum Historii Zajezdnia, Wrocław (PL); WhAT Association (Sofia, BG); UIA - International Union of Architects (Paris, FR); BAF - Balkan Architecture Forum (BG).

Connect & care

Infrastructure-based milestones

MONFORT, PIRAN: A 4000 m² salt warehouse situated on the Piran shoreline will be adapted to become the office space for ECoC, a contemporary art and digital culture gallery and home to The Open Design Centre and Cultural Embassy for Climate Change (in 2 of the 4 spaces), overcoming our current shortage of contemporary art spaces. Monfort will also



be home to ECoC's legacy for the region, the Regional Cultural Agency.

OWNER AND LEAD: Piran Municipality, managed by PI2025.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: International Centre for Contemporary Culture (Donostia-San Sebastian, ES); ERIH - European Route of Industrial Heritage (Meerbusch, DE); ECoC Plovdiv 2019 (BG); ARos Art Museum (Aarhus, DK).

LIBERTAS, KOPER: A new cultural and creative industries hub, Libertas requires the reconfiguration of a salt warehouse located between the port of Koper and the old city. By bringing the port, city, municipality and education sectors together, a third and influential backbone of the local economy will be developed along with the port and tourism.

LEAD: Municipality of Koper with content support from PI2025.

CROSS GENERATIONAL CULTURAL

CENTRE: A new initiative for cultural projects reaching across generations and ethnicities including the home for *Ship of Tales* Theatre for children. It is cross-generational because every phase of the work actively involves citizens and encourages their participation. Will host workshops and events, asking in exchange for feedbacks and cocreation. The community will meet artists from EU networks like IN SITU, ON THE MOVE, and reprofile the cultural identity of the city, mainly based on now Music and Cinema.

LEAD: Municipality of Izola.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: IN SITU led by Lieux publics - European and national center for artistic creation in public space (Marseille, FR); ON THE MOVE - European Network for Cultural Centres (Bruxelles, BE).

Highlights

OPEN DESIGN CENTRE: Based at Monfort, this legacy project offers activities with European designers and artists working on products and projects related to climate change research, experiments and the building of prototypes in an interdisciplinary context, social innovation, audience development, social design and non-formal and formal education development. Extracting plastic from the sea and making useful projects, proposing interventions in sustainable tourism, zero kilometre food production and drinking water resilience, new participation and inclusion models, innovative creative pedagogical models and non-formal

education methodologies, re-humanisation are some of the ideas presently discussed. By working closely with Matera 2019 and Bad Ischl 2024 Open Design School we will *be moving towards a model in which good practice from other ECoCs* informs the present generation of ECoCs.

LEADER: PI2025 in close partnership with the Open Design School - ECoC Matera 2019 (Matera, IT) and ECoC Bad Ischl 2024 (AT).

THE WAVE (DIGITAL EUROPEAN

CONNECT): One of the main events taking place over 2024 and 2025 will be a curated series of exhibitions and performances dedicated to the digital arts at the Monfort in Piran. Interacting closely with international artists and the Centre for Open Design the project will create, amongst others, a conversation about our relationship with the sea as a living place and our human understanding and experience of it.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Tadej Droljc (curator, SI); PI2025; Open Design Centre (Piran, SI); Open Design School - ECoC Matera 2019 (Matera, IT); PiNA - Association for Culture and Education (Koper, SI); Kallipolis (Trieste, IT); Technical Gymnasium (Koper, SI); Prostoroz - Cultural Association (Ljubljana, SI); Ars Electronica Center (Linz, AT); Transmediale/CTM (Berlin, DE); L.E.V. International Festival of Audiovisual Creation (Gijon, ES); Semibreve Festival (Stockholm, SE).

Projects

BEYOND VOCALS: The project will develop workshops, masterclasses, concerts and an annual vocal festival in Izola. The project encourages European cultural diversity and intercultural communication through collaboration with a wide range of European musicians, artists, songwriters and vocal tutors with the aim to produce performances that represents vocal music from across Europe. Led by contemporary jazz musician, **Emilia Martensson** (Swedish / Slovenian heritage).

Potential partners: Serious (London, UK); Dario Marušič (musician, SI/HR); Marino Kranjac (musician, SI); Tamara Obrovac (musician, HR); Janez Dovč (musician, SI); Drago Mislej - MEF (musician, SI); Embers Collective (story-telling and music group, UK); Irena Preda (vocalist, SI); Music Centre Öst (Stockholm, SE); Izola's Male Choir (Izola, SI); Conservatory of Music (Trieste, IT); Koper Music School (Koper, SI); Music School 55 (Trieste, IT).

PRIMORSKI POLETNI FESTIVAL (PRIMORSKA SUMMER FESTIVAL): This festival is one of the most famous names in

the annual cultural calendar with ambitions to forge a new era in cultural programming, financial structures, human resources and audience development. A younger generation of cultural leaders is ready to develop a format which already attracts thousands of visitors and dozens of performances each summer in some of the most spectacular settings along the Adriatic coast. A perfect vehicle for developing international collaborations with other coastal European festivals this renewal comes at a key moment in the cultural transformation of Koper as its cultural strategy identifies *Libertas* (Salt Warehouse) as a centre for cultural industries.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Koper's City Theatre (Koper, SI); Maribor National Theatre (Maribor, SI); Auditorium (Portorož, SI); Belfast International Arts Festival (Belfast, UK); Tärrega International Street Festival (Tärrega, ES); Circostrada (European Network for Circus and Street Arts) coordinated by ARTCENA, National Centre for Circus and Street Arts and Theater (Paris, FR and Europe).

KOPER BI-ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC: The Port of Koper will host concerts of classical music, as the one performed for the first time in 2019, enabling large audiences to encounter classical music in highly controlled yet beautiful industrial settings. ECoC PI2025 will work with both festival organisations and the Municipality of Koper to usher in a new and coherent approach to programming and financial management in order to secure the long-term health and ambition for these summer festival initiatives.

LEAD: Friends of Music Association (Koper, SI); Koper Music School (Koper, SI).

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Verdi Theatre (Trieste, IT); MusikFabrik Ensemble (Köln, DE); Goethe Institute (Ljubljana, SI); Enno Poppe (conductor, DE) - Berliner Festspiele (Berlin, DE); Marco Stroppa (composer, IT); Musik Universität Stuttgart (Stuttgart, DE); Conservatory of Music (Trieste, IT); French Institute (Ljubljana, SI); Ensemble Recherche (Freiburg, DE); Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt, DE).

MOBILE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS: Literary and ideas-led programme across three cities and three countries (Trieste, Umag, Koper), it will include symposia, readings (at midnight, sunrise and on the beach), connecting literature and visual arts, literature and music, literary contest for the best short story, creative writing workshops, meetings with writers ("duels" with audiences), sociological and philosophical public debates, connecting writers with sportsmen, inviting journalists to write a common news in verses.



POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Public Libraries of Koper (SI), Trieste (IT) and Umag (HR); UP University Library (Koper, SI); Slovenian Writers' Association (Ljubljana, SI); Faculty of Humanities (Departments of Slavistics and Italian) University of Primorska (Koper, SI); JAK – Slovenian Book Agency (Ljubljana, SI); TRADUKI – European network for literature and books (Berlin, DE)

ISTRICINE, ISTRIAN FILM CONSERVATION CENTRE AND 'CINEMAS AS INNOVATION HUBS MODEL FOR CROSS BORDER COLLABORATION' (OTOK INSTITUTE - INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL):

OTOK Institute for the development of film culture has produced Kino Otok and Isola Cinema International Film Festival in the coastal town of Izola since 2004. Through collaboration with PI2025 it will ambitiously augment activities to become a regional cross-border hub for film distribution, festival development and working with European media and film networks. The need for this, already been recognised by Slovenian public bodies (Slovenian Ministry of Culture and Slovenian

Film Centre) and through successful Creative Europe MEDIA sub programme support for festivals (2016, 2018) will use PI2025 to create the strategic framework for sustained cross border development (IT, SI and HR), an Istrian Film Conservation Centre together with additional local audience development in Izola and Koper. OTOK is initiating a cultural cross-border film festival and 'Cinemas as Innovation Hubs' for local communities with Motovun Film Festival (HR) with the support of Creative Europe. With the help of PI2025 the project will be implemented across all border zones once commonly named as Istria.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Slovenian Cinematheque, Ljubljana's city art-house cinema Kinodvor, Centre for culture, sport and events Izola, Italian Autonomous Community in Izola, Slovenian Ministry of Culture, Slovenian Film Centre, Municipality of Izola, Art Cinema Network - Slovenia (SI); Kinoatelje Gorizia (IT); Cinemazero Pordenone (IT); Cineteca del Friuli (IT); Cineteca di Milano (IT); EUNIC Slovenia Cluster (SI); Film festivals: Rotterdam Film Festival (NL); Innsbruck Film Festival (AT); Crossing Europe Film Festival Linz (AT); Zagreb Film Festival (HR); Alpe Adria Trieste Film Festival (IT); Festival Internacional de Cine de San Sebastián (ES); Northern Film Festival Leeuwarden (NL).

ANIMATE! CKSG - Hearing and Speech Centre Portorož is a pioneering special needs school co-creating opportunities to connect adolescents and adults with disabilities and others with the aim of empowering individuals of vulnerable groups to participate actively in selected cultural events. The project will extend work, research and activities in two ways; develop a Slovenian wide research programme into creative arts education within the special needs sector and create a training programme which responds to the needs identified. The aim is to create a national festival of art and performance by special needs children from across Slovenia and associated European partners.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CKSG- Hearing and Speech Centre (Portorož, SI); Marko Strle (director, SI); Patologico Theatre (IT), Haringey Shed - Theatre and Performing Arts Company (London, UK); Riverside International School (Prague, CZ); Stephen Wiltshire Gallery (London, UK); Pablo Pineda (actor, ES); University of Helsinki (Helsinki, FI), Carinthia University of Applied Studies (Villach, AT); UCC - University College Copenhagen (Copenhagen, DK).

ARTIST AND THE HINTERLANDS:

Argonauts International Artist Residency Programme, in conjunction with PI2025, is a quest to explore the relationship between art, technology and local heritage. It will encourage applications from European artists whose research and practice engages in the intersections between science, art, technology, creative industries and society. We will organise meetings with artists and the public, as well as with the press and media, art critics and art students. We will also facilitate encounters with scientists from partner universities, science institutes and environmentalists.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Marko Vivoda (curator, SI); PI2025; DDT - Cultural Centre (Trbovlje, SI); Marine Biology Station (Piran, SI); Osmo/Za - Cultural Consortium (Ljubljana, SI); KID KIBLA - Association for Culture and Education (Maribor, SI); AKSIOMA - Institute for Contemporary Art (Ljubljana, SI); MUTEK - Digital Creativity Organisation (Toronto, CA); British Council (Ljubljana, SI); ECoC Matera 2019 (IT); ECoC Plovdiv 2019 (BG); ECoC Wrocław 2016 (PL); Goethe Institute (Ljubljana, SI); Strip Core - Comic Arts Production wing of Forum Ljubljana (Ljubljana, SI); IJS - Jožef Štefan Research Institute (Ljubljana, SI); KI - National Institute of Chemistry (Ljubljana, SI); UP - University of Primorska (Koper, SI); University of Ljubljana (Ljubljana, SI); University of Minho (Braga, PT); University of Guanajuato LIM (MX); ECoC Veszprém 2023 (HU).

CURATORIAL PORTS: How do we talk about culture? What are the responsibilities of artists to explain or co-create their work to

a general public in a language that is neither uncommon or unwelcoming? What do curators offer when mediating the relationship between artist and onlooker (from adults to children)? Can artist-curators facilitate a new kind of creation and event making with a broad section of citizens? This is a European port for curators; a word commonly used but with significant and demanding expectations. We will invite young European curators, artists interested in participatory practices, critics and analysts of contemporary art, speakers about new trends and paradigms of a social role of arts, art behaviour, technology and ecology. Between 2022 to 2025 Curatorial Ports will help explore the role of the curator in helping us tackle the Wave of Change.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Tilen Žbona (artist, SI); Coastal Galleries (Piran, SI); University of Primorska (Koper, SI); Italian Community (Koper, SI); Pistoletto Foundation (Biella, IT), La Masabevilqua Foundation (Venice, IT); Maria Campitelli (curator, IT) - Gruppo 78 International Contemporary Art Association (Trieste, IT); Tate Britain (UK); House of Culture (Pivka, SI); Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Rijeka, HR); Austrian Gallery Belvedere (Vienna, AT); Neue Pinakothek - Art Museum (Munich, DE).



Salt consumed church
Photo: Aleš Rosa

Salt & Sea

Infrastructure based milestones

MONFORT, PIRAN: as described above in this section in 2) Connect & Care

Highlights

THE CULTURAL EMBASSY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE: The outreach wing of *The Open Design Centre* working with schools, communities and organisations across Slovenia and internationally to transmit and share new knowledge. Programmes could include: *Our Sea* (Plastic and Sea with children, transport and municipality management); *Our Water* (looking at water supply, tourism and sustainability); *Our Lands* (food production and distribution with farmers and urban dwellers); *Our Light* (power supply and generation).

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Trajna - Collective (Ljubljana, SI); Prostoroz - Cultural Association (Ljubljana, SI); IRSNC - National Institute for Nature Conservation (Ljubljana, SI); Julie's Bicycle (London, UK).



THE SALT OF EUROPE: The importance of salt from ancient times until today. The popular and visible story will link salt-extracting places from all over Europe and be a joint development of two ECoCs. Salt as a European economic, trade and cultural heritage and a source of artistic inspiration linking salt mines and pans (salinas) from all over Europe. A spectacular exhibition about the history of salt and its routes will also appear in a multilateral artistic exchange and co-creation programme (residency) project lead by PI2025. In Piran international artists will be inspired by the saltpans close to the residency place and participating artists will work together with nature scientists, sea pan workers or fishermen.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Sečovlje Salina Nature Park (Sečovlje, SI); Strunjan National Park (Strunjan, SI); Italian Community (Piran, SI); ECoc Bad Ischl 2024 (AT). Additionally - locations with seaside salinas such as: Salin-de-Giraud, Municipality of Arles (FR), Municipality of Ston (HR), Municipality of Guérande (FR), Municipality of Pomorie (BG); and salt mines locations: Municipality of Bad Ischl (AT), Municipality of Wieliczka (PL), Municipality of Halle an der Saale (DE); Piran Maritime Museum (Piran, SI).

Projects

SHIP OF TALES: Theatre for children as a place where integrated expression combines different fields of art. Theatre is a place where we learn about the whole perceptual apparatus: hearing, smell, touch, movement, sound, word and sometimes taste. A project built from scratch which will invite the very best operators from across Europe to come and create performances and festivals for children. It will be a ship of tales. A potential location is Izola's new cross-generational culture centre.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Samanta Kobal (dramaturg, SI); Koper Theatre (Koper, SI); Dedalo Furioso - Art Production Cooperative (Vicenza, IT); Teatro Delle Briciole - Performance Art Theatre (Parma, IT); Teatercentrum - Theatre Centre (Copenhagen, DK); Babaró - International Arts Centre (IE); ASSITEJ - International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (Copenhagen, DK).

ZVOKI SOLIN - DANCE AND PERFORMANCE (SEČOVLJE/STRUNJAN SALTPANS)

RESIDENCIES: Artist-in-residence project at the saltpans (a month each summer). Artists from across Europe will live with the place, create a symbiosis with the peculiarities of that place (salt, mud, work tools of the salt workers, herons, the pans). Saltpans enjoy

their natural light at sunset, at dawn, or at different times of the day or in different months of the year. Venetian-style rowers will bring the public to the place for the events.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Voga Veneta - Rowing Team (Piran, SI); PI2025, ECoC Bad Ischl 2024 (AT).

SALT MEMORIES INTERNATIONAL MUSIC PROJECT WITH ANDREW ALAMANGO (MALTA)

Salt holds form, shape and memory. Harvesting salt is fading away from our lives but is a deep and rich traditional craft. Salt preserves not just food but artifacts, memories, stories, melodies and song. This project brings musicians together from across the European (and wider afield) saltpans to give music inspired by the salt and the saltpans a new lease of life.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Andrew Alamango (musician, MT); Marino Kranjac and Vruja (musicians, SI); Dario Marušič (musician and musical anthropologist, SI/HR).

EROSANTEROS - LARGE SCALE SITE SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME

Italian-Slovenian company *ErosAntEros* (artistic co-director Agata Tomsic and Davide Sacco) will build a multi-year project aimed at revitalizing the territory and industrial heritage through contemporary performing arts, with the aim of becoming an international centre for contemporary performing arts in industrial heritage settings. In a historical period in which divisions and nationalisms risk destroying the collective dream of the European Union, the project will use theatre as a driving force for community participation, the integration of migrant voices and populations and the involvement of young local artists through encounters with international specialists. Between 2023 and 2025 *ErosAntEros* will produce three big site-specific shows choosing three great theatre classics to interact with the history of the territory, in the encounter with its citizens.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: *ErosAntEros* - Contemporary theatre Company (Ravenna, IT); PI2025; Odin Teatret/ Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium - Avant-Garde Theatre Group (Holstebro, DK); Grotowski Institute (Wrocław, PL); Sibiu - International Theatre Festival (Sibiu, RO); ERIH - European Route of Industrial Heritage (Meerbusch, DE).

The 2025 Cornerstones:

Four cornerstones, overtly celebrational, popular and fun, will help us point up the key moments designed for many kinds of audiences at one time.

Local residents will walk alongside the tens of thousands of guests and tourists to enjoy four extended weekends of free-to-enter, large-scale and intimate events. One hundred and ten years ago Koper was the venue for the Prima Esposizione Provinciale Istriana - an early Expo in function and design and hugely successful which consisted of four pavilions each dedicated to a theme: *society, nature, economy* and *technology*. The region has changed dramatically since this event. Borders have been redrawn, political regimes imposed and imploded, people moved and replaced. But much also remains recognisable as Istria. We will take the four themes of the original Esposizione and give them a modern interpretation;

ECONOMY: *Wave of Change* - Opening Weekend and Ceremony

NATURE: *The Sea Contains, the Sea Divides* (Summer 2025)

SOCIETY: *Mobile Borders* (Autumn 2025)

TECHNOLOGY: *Svetilnik/Faro* (Lighthouse) - Closing Weekend and Ceremony

Wave of Change, our slogan, will also be the name of the co-created *Opening Weekend and Ceremony*: Artists from across Slovenia named in the bidbooks of other Slovene ECoC candidate cities will be invited to take centre stage alongside citizens in this weekend event placing collaboration through creativity at the centre of the event. Involved artists from the three 2024 ECoCs will relay the title to the artists from Slovenia.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: ECoC Tartu 2024 (EE), ECoC Bad Ischl (AT), and ECoCs Bodø 2024 (NO)

THE SEA CONTAINS, THE SEA DIVIDES (SUMMER 2025): A time when the Istrian coast and economy are transformed by the arrival of tens of thousands of tourists from Europe: A summer celebration weekend followed by a summer festival dedicated to our relationship with the sea. Large-scale performance and intimate, co-created experiences in spaces usually hidden from the casual visitor. 3D digital media (mappings and holograms) and sound installations exploring sea and culture.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Slovenian National Theatre Maribor (Maribor, SI); Slovene Theatre (Trieste, IT), tourism sector (hotels, gastronomy), heritage and industrial buildings associated with the sea, White Night Festival (Bratislava, SK); Zsolnay Light Festival (Pécs, HU); Solid Light Festival (Rome, IT); Festival of Lights (Berlin, DE); Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2028 - ECoC legacy (Leeuwarden-Friesland, NL); ECoC Galway 2020 (IE); ECoC Rijeka 2020 (HR); ECoC Bodø 2024 (NO).

MOBILE BORDERS (Autumn 2025): Three projects from our platforms come together to explore this vital European concern: *Uprooted – Pan-European Art and History Initiative* and its joint Slovenian-Croatian-Italian history book for Istria created by artists coworking with children and young people from all 3 countries; *ErosAntEros* – Large-Scale Site-Specific Performance Programme Beyond Borders Festival will demonstrate how culture has the magical power to make borders disappear.

Together with the Coastal Galleries Piran, we will launch the exhibition “Anton Biloslav and Andrej Medved, visionaries”, a retrospective of their international cooperation.

LEAD: Piran Coastal Galleries (Piran, SI).

SVETILNIK/FARO (LIGHTHOUSE) - CLOSING WEEKEND AND CEREMONY: A jointly curated co-created event between artistic groups from PI2025 and the two winning ECoC cities in 2026.

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

Many of our programme proposals trace their roots to local cultural heritage and traditional art forms and connect them with innovative expressions including contemporary, experimental and interdisciplinary approaches. They place particular attention to contemporary or future-oriented technologies (digital and virtual approaches):

- *Forma Viva* celebrating stone artists and sculptors will be extended across the region and neighbouring countries to promote experimental cultural expressions in stone.
- *Ethnobisteria Festival*, an experimental music initiative which combines classical and Baroque traditions with contemporary musical expressions.
- The exhibitions *The Salt of Europe*, *Zvoki Solin – Dance and Performance Residencies* at Sečovlje/Strunjan salt pans and *Salt Memories International Music Project with Andrew Alamango (Malta)* will examine, from various perspectives, the importance of salt from ancient times until today; thus making salt and cultural heritage as a source of contemporary artistic inspiration.
- *ErosAntEros* The Italian-Slovenian company *ErosAntEros* will build a multi-year project

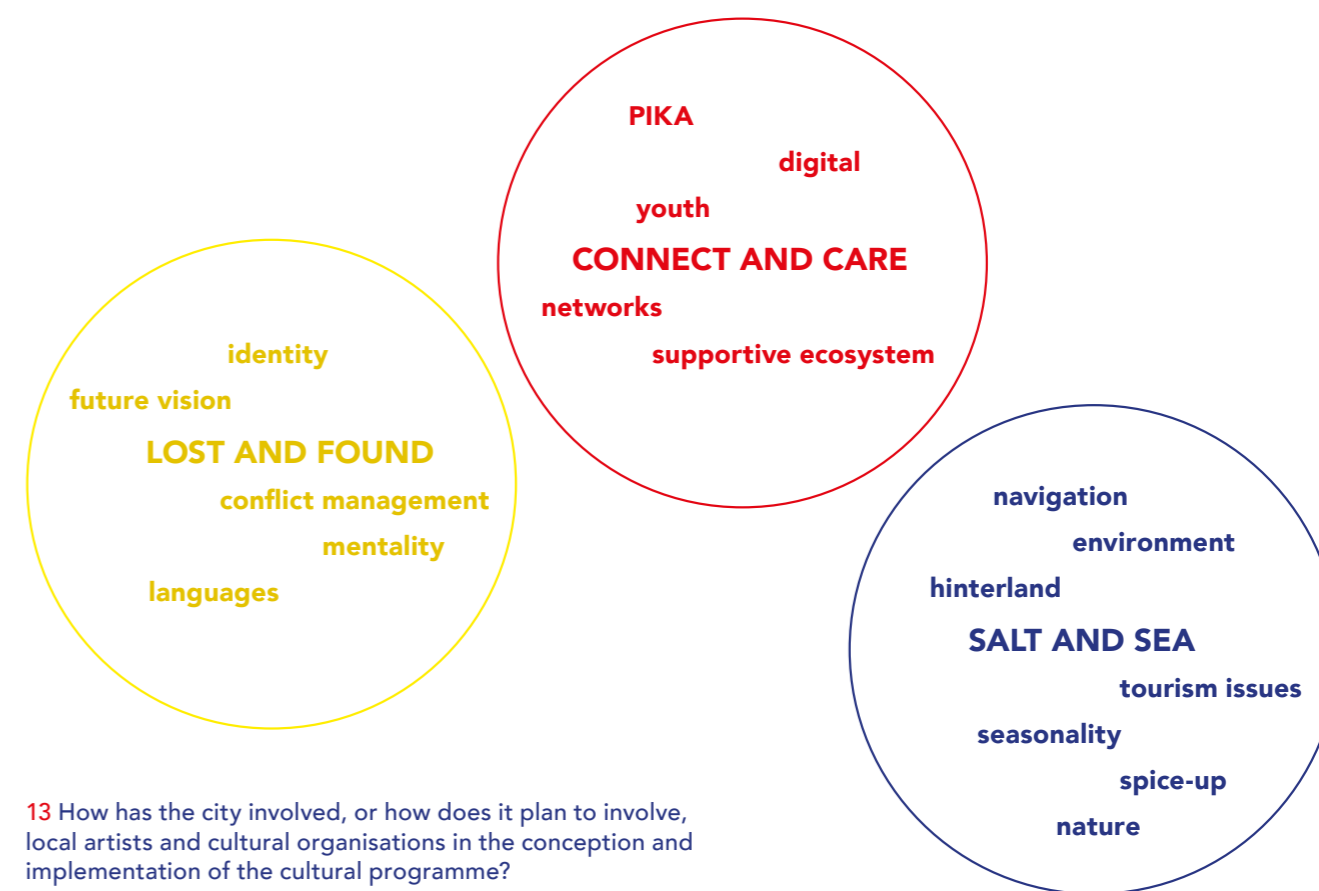
revitalizing the territory and industrial heritage through contemporary and digital performing arts.

- The *Trevisini Palace*, Piran’s new hub for music will include musical activities and didactic programs covering centuries of music history.
- *Architects of Leisure* will use digital art forms and a permanent digital archive to explore the legacy of numerous iconic local heritage buildings from the socialist period that dot the Istrian coast.
- *Forum Babylon Translation Centre* will focus on the translation of classic and contemporary literary texts in and between Slovenian, Italian and Croatian and make these works available through a contemporary digital archive. Forum Babylon will explore the cross-over creativity potential among literature, music, graphic design and other genres.

• The Open Design Centre will focus on international collaboration between designers and other artists in an interdisciplinary context.

• Both *Monfort, Piran* and *Libertas, Koper* constitute significant heritage buildings reconfigured as cultural hubs and centres with emphasis on digital and emerging art forms. KROG, Piran is a new European centre for the preservation and

development of skills associated with Venetian Istrian stone heritage based in the restored Monastery of Saint Onophrius in Sečovlje. The centre will focus on the streets of Piran and its hinterland. Its projects will apply solutions that fit contemporary environmental/ecological, functional, aesthetic and sustainable criteria adapted to the historical core of the coastal Mediterranean cities of Piran, Izola and Koper.



13 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?

The bidbook contains 27 projects which have been selected by the cultural coordination team of PI2025 and submitted as the result of a local open call.

During the bidbook preparation we involved cultural professionals, NGOs in culture, as well as young artists and creatives into the project development. Our democratic and participatory process is described in Q17 - including the role of artists, artistic groups and NGOs. Please find the list of all participating artists and creatives on the inside page of the cover.

During 2020 we will continue to work with these project proposers and identify the concrete management and delivery mechanisms,

partners and European collaborators required to support the programme. we will initiate our capacity building project, *Tlakovec*, immediately after the first round of selection in march 2020. A five-year strategic approach to capacity building will be developed responding to the needs of a new generation of cultural leaders and projects. International leaders and experts in the fields of project management, audience development, legacy planning, innovative governance will be invited to work with us from 2020 onwards.

BEYOND DIVISIONS

Piran city centre
Photo: Ales Rosa



EUROPEAN DIMENSION

14 Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:
a) Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens; b) Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆

K *ISTRIA has always been in the centre of European affairs (...). Its people have followed and also often directly taken part in the major political, economic and ideological changes which have taken place, but they have always somehow been pushed into the background and marginalised and have found themselves on the outer limits of various civilisations, ethnic groups and national entities. They have been made the subject of the spheres of interest of 'major' politics and (...) the great powers. This is the picture that Istria shows even today, after Slavs and Romans, Croats, Slovenians and Italians have lived in its territory for more than a millennium (...).*

— A Brief History of Istria by Darko Darovec.

While it was not the people of Istria who initiated the major **conflicts** during history it is now up to us to bring them to an end. We have to understand the waves of history and to actively move beyond what divides us. But we are not alone. Many transnational cities and regions in Europe are facing visible or latent challenges of national, historical or economic conflicts. It is our task to show alternatives through cultural cooperation. Building on the historical experiences of Istria, we would like to become co-moderators of this approach. Projects like *Uprooted – Pan-European Art and History Initiative*, *Architects of Leisure* or *The Bad Bank Legacy* will involve the youngest generation and several countries to find models to overcome such divisions.

Numerous cities and regions in Europe are suffering from changing **borders** or new border regimes. The people of Northern Ireland are completely confused by the border issues threatened by Brexit; the people of Eastern Ukraine or Crimea struggle to accept new borders; and then there is the Catalan quest

for independence, which would automatically lead to new borders, tensions between Vallons and Frisians, and the uneasy relationship between Scotland and England. The flagship project Beyond Borders Festival will bring an international and local audience to a border strip that is still causing international disputes. It will show how senseless and ambiguous this division is compared to the power of cultural cooperation or the shared desire for climate protection.

As you take a walk through the wonderful Venetian streets and small piazzas of Piran and its associated municipalities you will see four official flags fluttering on the façade of every public building: the flag of the municipality, of Slovenia, of Italy and the EU. There are many multicultural regions in Europe – in hardly any you will see the flag of the “big neighbour” with whom you share a difficult history.

But it is precisely this, the starting point of our European cultural way for the ECoC journey and beyond. Address your own limits, find your local identity within a multicultural region of Europe. Instead of licking old wounds and deepening divisions we take our chance to change, to cooperate. We will establish an alliance of transnational and **cross-border cultural regions** in Europe. We have some good examples in the Luxemburg Greater Region, which includes parts of Germany and France. Similar attempts in the Lausitz region of South-East Germany opening towards the Polish and the Czech neighbours also come to mind. In the frame of our ECoC we will seek strategic cultural exchanges with such regions for mutual learning and to demonstrate the opposite of division.

We also experience the consequences of **exploitation of nature** by humans, the loss of quality

of life through mass tourism and heavy traffic. As if this was not enough, the entire Istrian coast is threatened by the waves from the Adriatic, with Piran, Izola, and Koper suffering severe flooding in late 2019. Other beautiful places in Europe such as the Dutch coast are facing the same predicament. All of Slovenia, Croatia, parts of Italy, Austria and Germany become one gigantic traffic-jam during the summer season as tourists arrive from everywhere. With the establishment of a permanent Cultural Embassy for Climate Change we will explore how culture can contribute to the climate change discourse and offer visions for environmental sustainability. The Embassy will integrate environmental aspects with our own cultural operations in the region.

We will also reflect on our economic tradition of the salt-pans, a wonderful resource that was provided to our region by the sea (and likewise to Bad Ischl (AT) by the mountains). Through projects like *Zvoki Solin – Dance and Performance Residencies*, *Salt Memories International Music Project* or the *Salt of Europe* exhibition, a new, cultural, historical and social approach to the theme of salt will be possible from the European perspective.

c) Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.

We thought we would list here the existing international contacts of our municipalities, institutions and festivals. Of course, there are many of them and we will use them when developing our future programme. But according to the aims of the long-term cultural strategy concept and our ECoC plans, we want to reach a new quality level of European partnership that we will establish during the bidding process and deepen during the preparatory years.

Our aims can only be fulfilled if we carry out the majority of our projects in cooperation and co-creation with artists, curators, operators and organisations from all over the continent. At this early stage of the artistic programme design we have included international partnerships into almost every proposed project in this bidbook. Partners from Trieste and the Croatian Istria

Another cultural and social topic in several European countries is the future role of *rural areas* or peripheries. We ask how to better connect the coastal hotspots and the Istrian hinterland. The project *Etnohisteria Festival* will bring a tailor-made and dialogue-based new European cultural perspective to the hinterland. Along with other projects such as *Artists and the Hinterlands – Argonauts International AiR Programme*, it will lead small groups of locals and visitors to hidden or unknown places, secret gardens and natural jewels.

PI2025 ECoC will be a platform to develop visions and strategies for these very relevant European themes. These topics radically influence *our future in Europe* (and the Globe). Therefore, it is not by accident that the themes for the cornerstones of our ECoC year 2025 will be dedicated to the fields of society, nature, economy and technology – going back to the names of the pavilions of the early expo Prima Esposizione Provinciale Istriana. Thus, in the upcoming years or in a century's time, the common language of debate, cooperation and strategic development will be through culture and the arts.

will always be our natural and systematic regional partners like the municipalities of Croatian Istria in the highlight *Beyond Borders Festival*, Trieste (IT) and Umag (HR) in the *Forum Babylon Translation Centre*, the Maria Campitelli_Gruppo 78 in *Curatorial Ports* or the Trieste Music School in *Beyond Vocals*.

But the partnership goes far beyond this regional neighbourhood: partners from UK to Bulgaria, from Finland to Greece, Poland, Malta and Ireland are represented in our plans regardless of their status of EU-membership. A broad coverage for delivering our message could be provided by the Executive Secretariat of the Central European Initiative (CEI ES), seated in Trieste, with its long-lasting experience in the promotion of transnational cultural events and cooperation activities, suitable to multiply

the visibility of our projects and the connections of their operational partners. A partnership between CEI ES and the Municipality of Piran has brought to life tangible results to improve access to European cultural heritage and equal opportunities for all through the COME-IN! project. The COME-IN! Guidelines, elaborated to allow museum operators to crosscheck the different dimensions of accessibility throughout the service chain; the Handbook for Museum operators to guide museums and galleries on how to train their staff and to design and organise accessible exhibitions, and the COME-IN! Label, as an internationally recognised tool promoting accessibility and inclusion are just some examples of this effort.

Some of these relations will be based on co-creation from the very beginning – on so-called strategic partnership: The highlight exhibition *Salt of Europe* together with Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut ECoC 2024 and several 'salty' cities and places in Europe, the *Embassy for Climate Change* with the organisation Julie's Bicycle (UK) and the children and youth project *Ship of Tales* with partners from Denmark, Ireland, Belgium and ASSISTEJ International.

Beside institutions and organisations, we will cooperate with acknowledged European artists, curators and directors like Andrew Alamango (MT) in the project *Salt Memories International Music Project* or Aindrias de Staic (IE) in the *Etnohisteria Festival*.

Our programmes are full of new, specific partners for several projects (see Q11). We will deepen and specify these partnerships at the 2nd stage of the competition.

15 Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.

ONE of the main goals of the PI2025 candidacy process is to make a huge step forward towards a wide European visibility through culture. The year 2025 should put us onto the often-quoted cultural map of

PI2025 will become an international meeting point and platform for dialogue. In his first weeks in office the new Mayor of Piran, Mr. Denio Zadković, started to intensify the international relations by meeting delegations, ambassadors and attachés of different countries to discuss future cooperation potentials. Just recently, we had high-level visits e.g. from Austria, China and Japan, and the Mayor met his colleagues from different cities abroad including Rijeka, Belgrade, Trieste, Elefsina and Matera.

Besides this enhanced municipal foreign affairs policy and partnerships building for deeper cultural cooperation networking is another key area of future internationalisation in our city and the region. We will build up a network of *partner municipalities* of Piran, Koper, Izola and Ankarán. We will approach the EUNIC Slovenia Cluster to develop joint programmes with and get support from the cultural institutes of other EU countries. Through the project *Forum Babylon Translation Centre* project initiative we will involve the international network TRADUKI, a Europe-wide organisation for literature translation from and within South-eastern Europe.

As an active European player, we will approach European platforms and networks to explore cooperation potentials: Joining *Culture Action Europe* (CAE) would help us to get more access to European organisations and networks. CAE could also act as an international external partner of the evaluation and monitoring of our ECoC. We will approach the *European Cultural Foundation* (ECF) as we are especially interested in their Europe-wide Tandem ECoC exchange programme in cultural capacity building – an area that truly needs international impulses and improvement in our region.

Europe. We have already tackled the change: In August 2019, chamber musicians from the Scala in Milan with soloists Massimo Mercelli and Massimo Quarta played a wonderful concert of works by Tartini in Piran enjoyed by an unprecedented audience. Before this we had *I Solisti*

Veneti playing in front of a huge audience on the Tartini square. In 2020, a pilot edition of the large-scale international Tartini 250 anniversary celebration festival will take place, involving 10 institutions. With our ECoC programme we will offer unique highlights that will attract a broad European and international public:

- unique place and message, new forms of artistic expression: *Beyond Borders Festival*;
- large-scale, high visibility contemporary art: *Forma Viva, Primorski Poletni Festival*;
- secret hidden places, participation for everyone: *Etnohisteria*;
- broad European collaboration: Salt of Europe exhibition;
- cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue: *Beyond Vocals*;
- innovative virtual/digital approaches: *Waving – Digital European Connect*.

Some of the projects are targeting new audiences such as children and youth from several countries (theatre and performance making *Ship of Tales*). Through famous artists, performers and well-known cooperation partners (Andrew Alamango, Aindrias de Staic, Janez Dovč), as well as the effective international communication (including digital social media, live streams, own ECoC-YouTube channel) and marketing

we will ensure that our ECoC becomes visible beyond the neighbouring countries. In this respect, a close collaboration with the German ECoC 2025 will be established. Together with local and national tourist operators, we will develop attractive and innovative packages and offers for cultural tourism that take into account alternative options and seasons (new offers for spring and autumn) as well as the problems generated by mass-tourism (hinterland specials).

The programme will strengthen the feeling of local citizens that they belong to the same European cultural area – no matter what fences or other borders cut up the region (e.g. with the help of *Beyond Borders Festival, Salt of Europe* exhibition, hosting artists in residence in the frame of *Zvoki Solin – Dance and Performance Residencies* and *Artists and the Hinterlands*).

In order to reach various European communities we will approach the numerous citizens from abroad having a 2nd residency in our municipalities. We will contact our Slovenian fellow citizens originating from the coast and living throughout Europe to support us along with all the embassies of Slovenia. We will target the diaspora communities (so called Esuli in Italian) of people that had left Istria after 1955 both in Trieste and Italy.

2018/28 (sustainable environment issues, relation to the sea) and Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024 (*Salt of Europe* exhibition for joint development and other salt-related projects).

During the development of our programme platforms (see Q10), we identified several exciting common interests with other former, current or future ECoCs and candidate cities. This confirmed our hope that we address and represent relevant European issues with our bid:

LOST AND FOUND: multicultural regions with heavy history (1 Novi Sad 2021, 2 Nürnberg ECoC 2025 candidate, 3 Kaunas 2022, 4 Esch-sur-Alzette 2022); borders in Europe (5 Belfast-Derry 2023 candidate); legacy of socialism (6 Plovdiv 2019, 1 Novi Sad 2021, 7 Timișoara 2021, 8 Rijeka 2020 etc.)

Project samples: *Uprooted – Pan-European Art and History Initiative* (Novi Sad 2021), *Beyond Borders Festival* (Belfast/Derry 2023 candidate)

SALT AND SEA: the future of tourism and seasonality (10 Veszprém 2023, 11 Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024); nature and sea (12 Leeuwarden 2018, 13 Galway 2020, 8 Rijeka 2020, 9 Bodø 2024, 14 Tartu 2024); salt (11 Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024)

Project sample: *Salt of Europe* exhibition (Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024)

CONNECT AND CARE: centre-periphery and hinterland theme (15 Matera 2019, 16 Elefsina 2021, 10 Veszprém 2023, 17 Wrocław 2016)

Project samples: *Etnohisteria Festival* (Veszprém 2023), *Artist and the Hinterland – Argonauts International AiR Programme* (Wrocław 2016, Matera 2019, Plovdiv 2019)

At the final stage and during implementation, we will further extend our ECoC-partnership to joint capacity building programmes (exchange of volunteers and cultural managers), best practices in establishing the ECoC-management, and especially the legacy organisation as well as fund-raising practices.

In 2025 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ECoC initiative with a special exhibition project: one part of the show will be dedicated to the exciting life and person of initiator Melina Mercouri and the history of ECoCs. For the second part we will ask former and present ECoCs to send us one small but very characteristic object that was/is encapsulating their ECoC programme, along with a short explanation. It can be also something funny or unexpected but typical. If we are awarded the ECoC 2025, we would like to use an amount from the Melina Mercouri prize for the realisation of this project. After presenting this exhibition in Piran, we will offer it to other ECoCs as well. Our aim is to jointly develop this project with our 2025 twin from Germany.

16 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?

ONE of the most valuable benefits of the growing Europe-wide ECoC family is the knowledge transfer from former ECoCs and candidates to new candidates. The PI2025 ECoC team and the municipalities actively gathered experiences, best practices and potential pitfalls to avoid from previous or future ECoCs and candidates:

- Through our international external ECoC expert team members - who have been involved in several previous ECoCs - we learned a lot about the concepts and the challenges of Wrocław 2016, Plovdiv 2019, Matera 2019, Galway 2020, Cluj-Napoca 2021 candidate

city, Novi Sad 2021 and Debrecen 2023 candidate city. Our expert colleagues help us with their know-how and new project partners in these ECoCs and cities. Besides, we will establish a first contact to the CultureNext Network and will join the activities of this candidate cities forum in the future.

- In the last months, we have organised study visits to the ECoCs Novi Sad 2021, Rijeka 2020, Elefsina 2021 and Matera 2019 to gain insights of best practices for our bid, to discuss our concept and to develop joint projects. Further visits are planned for the 2nd stage of the bidding process e.g. to Plovdiv 2019 (cooperation and legacy), as well as to Leeuwarden

LEGEND



COUNTRIES OF THE PARTNERS WE HAVE INCLUDED IN THIS BIDBOOK

- Italy,
- Croatia,
- Serbia,
- Austria,
- Germany,
- Lithuania,
- France,
- Sweden,
- Finland,
- United Kingdom,
- Czech Republic,
- Ireland,
- Hungary,
- the Netherlands,
- Bulgaria,
- Switzerland,
- Poland,
- Spain,
- Belgium,
- Denmark,
- Portugal,
- Romania,
- Norway,
- Greece,
- Slovakia,
- Malta,
- Estonia,
- Luxemburg



Izola, Argo industrial site, future cultural spot
Photo: Igor Opasi

OUTREACH

17 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.

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆

In 2016, 2017 and 2018 the municipalities (Piran, Koper, Izola) were preparing their cultural strategies.

The preparation was similar among all of them: all relevant cultural stakeholders were involved in a series of workshops to identify a common vision for the development of the cultural sector. The strategic goals were defined, crucial missing infrastructure was mapped and the implementation plans were developed. One point clearly emerged from all the processes: the PIKA area needs a common cultural basis in order to realise potentials and synergistic effects. Among its strategic objectives, the strategy for Piran envisaged the candidacy for the ECoC title.

In 2018 in Slovenia, participation in local elections was approx. 50%. In the PIKA municipalities the response of the voters was significantly higher, in Koper for example 65% of the citizens decided to go to vote. In Piran, Koper and Izola the vote was a *vote to change*. Ankarán is a special case, it has not changed but reconfirmed the mayor and awarded the council with an even wider majority than before. In Ankarán, the vote for change, came 10 years ago with the referendum that marked the secession from the Municipality of Koper. Right after the recent election, however, the four new mayors decided to hold monthly meetings and start to collaborate on strategically important themes. Almost immediately the question of a common cultural strategy emerged. Piran's mayor proposed to begin a common path of preparing the candidacy for the ECoC title. The decision was made by the new mayors with a fresh democratic mandate from the bottom up.

A team of cultural professionals was formed to lead the process. The municipalities jointly established the *artistic board*: seventeen professionals and 2 coordinators, proposed by

the 4 mayors. Each municipality defined one internal coordinator and at least one administrative support. The project team with the artistic board (25 people in total) prepared the strategic approach for the development of the proposal – the main key words were culture from and for citizens and participation.

First, we identified various target groups and built up the contact database, combining the databases of recipients of municipal funds, professional partners, various institutions and NGOs. With the groups we organised workshops where we developed the ECoC narrative basis:

YOUNG ARTISTS AND CREATIVES (74 members): Young people working in creative industries, freelance artists, young professionals, students, etc.

EDUCATION (73 members): Teachers and professors of high schools and faculties, educators, non-formal education trainers, cultural education professionals, social workers, etc.

ENVIRONMENT (18 members): NGOs dealing with environment, local and national institutions, municipalities, professional services, etc.

NGOS IN CULTURE (152 members): NGO's directly and indirectly, professionally and non-professionally involved in the cultural sector

BUSINESS (12 members): Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of crafts, business incubators, entrepreneurship capacity building institutions, Employment service, etc.

Secondly, we developed an online inquiry in both official languages (Slovenian and Italian) to softly check on the level of satisfaction of the PIKA region's inhabitants.

On the basis of the first narrative developed in the workshops and already including three thematic platforms (see Q10), we have created a forum for local creatives to share and further discuss their project ideas with the ECoC team - especially with the artistic coordinator, Chris Baldwin. This was the so-called **Programme Clinic**. We used our contact database to invite people to propose cultural and creative projects, emphasizing that it doesn't necessarily have to be elaborated. We wanted project ideas, visions. During the Clinic we received more than 150 project ideas, had 50 meetings and developed 26 artistic, capacity building and infrastructure projects to be included into this bidbook under the slogan **Wave of Change**.

This platform has been extended to incorporate a creative mapping exercise. This participatory model, through an online survey form, invited the local population and civic society to generate ideas and data about potential venues and spaces which could be used for cultural events. The form was designed to stimulate the person who fulfills it to think beyond established standards. In this way we mapped 97 potential cultural venues, all with important information regarding location, ownership, condition, necessary interventions, etc. In this way, a permanent mechanism has been established which is still collecting project ideas and ensuring efficient collection of data (presently administered by Piran but from March 1st, 2020 by the PI2025 ECoC Foundation).

The wave of change is spreading to the municipalities policy making approaches. Koper and Ankarán implemented participatory budgeting, Piran, Koper and Ankarán are using participation in the preparation of the municipality main spatial plan. The political support for participatory processes has increased significantly since the last local elections. In Piran the elected mayor emerged from a Facebook group of concerned citizens who demanded a change in the municipality's current policy. All the initial programme goals were debated among a large group of people, openly, inclusively and publicly online. In Izola the vote was against the continuity of the ever-present

party and in favour of the development of common goals. In Koper the coalition of all the parties choose to support the new mayor against the previous mayor who had been in power for 16 years. Ankarán was established just 4 years ago after severing ties with Koper as a result of the then imminent danger of losing one of the most valuable natural sites on the Slovenian coast. Now that site is protected as a Landscape park. PI2025 will further amplify this wave of inclusivity and participation. We divided the cooperation of citizens in the programme implementation into four intertwined participation levels:

1. Experience (Feel It!)
2. Co-Create (Make It!)
3. Collaborate (Share It!)
4. Use (Use It!)

EXPERIENCE (FEEL IT!)

The European Parliament's study 'European Capitals Of Culture: Success Strategies And Long-Term Effects', published in 2013, stated that the most commonly reported and evidenced effects of ECoCs were increases in audiences at existing venues in cities; beyond this, there is some evidence of diverse audiences cultural engagement. This is also the goal of PI2025. A 30% audience increase in existing venues and a 40% increase in new cultural and creative venues. Besides traditional promotional approaches and the ECoC inherent attractive energy, in order to achieve that increase, we will stimulate the involvement of citizens in the other three levels using also digital and virtual experience.

CO-CREATE (MAKE IT!)

People, organisations and institutions will be invited to help create and design significant parts of the ECoC programs and projects in particular. This will be encouraged from the very start by inviting artists and curators to train in citizen-centred art practice in Curatorial Ports - a framework that examines the responsibility of artists to facilitate new kinds of creation and event making in collaboration with a broad section of citizens.

Programme platforms are conceived in a way that allows for involvement and collaboration between professionals and amateurs, creatives

and pragmatics, technicians and thinkers, locals and foreigners. An example of this approach would be *Uprooted - Pan-European Art and History Initiative* which examines the consequences of population transfers between 1945/1954. Activities will consist of major conferences, performances, exhibitions and works of art primarily produced as a result of citizen engagement about the nature of these events on lived experiences. The ECoC leadership will continue to promote the engagement of the local population throughout the programme planning and implementation phases via a volunteer programmes based on ECoC best practices (e.g., Wrocław 2016 and Plovdiv 2019). *The Open Design Centre and Embassy for Climate Change* will promote a citizen-focused dialogue leading to products and projects related to climate change research, experiments and building of prototypes in an interdisciplinary context, social innovation, audience development, social design, as well as informal and formal education development.

COLLABORATE (SHARE IT!)

Interaction will be the main focus of the participation processes of PI2025 and will be implemented on various levels. Interaction means the reciprocal action or influence between two or more realities. The basic level will be the interaction between the audience and the projects. The majority of the cultural and art projects are already set in this bidbook as the result of work with many creative groups, institutions and individuals. Yet a lot more will emerge over the years which will be implemented or developed in a participatory, interactive way. During the ECoC the involvement of individuals, groups and institutions from all over Europe will increase exponentially.

The next levels of interaction will be between civil society, NGOs, freelancers and public institutions, 95% of which have not been reached so far. While the established **Programme Clinic** platform already started working with a wide range of cultural organisations the ECoC Foundation will systematise it with the goal in 2025 for an ecosystem of synergies and growth including open calls to citizens, micro-granting for small groups and individuals, participatory budgeting and a volunteers programme.

The third level is the interaction between the municipalities. As pointed out in the Strategic Statement Culture.PIKA the municipalities want to set the grounds for a culture-based transformation for the four municipalities leading to the de facto creation of a new organic and integrated regional cooperation and - prospectively - a new region. A new region that will draw fresh energy from the interaction between the municipalities and the ECoC programme.

The fourth form of interaction will be the systematisation and implementation of intersectoral collaboration framed during the ECoC. The PI2025 programme outcomes will transcend the cultural scene, some projects will consider social, entrepreneurial and environmental issues, providing new approaches and social innovations.

USE (USE IT!)

The ideas, platforms and infrastructure developed for and during ECoC will be at the disposal of all interested parties, regardless of background and purpose. Monthly citizen-focused meetings will take place to discuss the developing programme and participation opportunities. The community formed in and around ECoC needs to be provided with total freedom in order to grow organically. The frame of creativity and openness will assure the growth of the community in an intersectoral, interpersonal, intergenerational way, which is the basis for maintaining and upgrading programmes even after the end of 2025.

PIKA CULTURAL CURRENCY

The PIKA Cultural Currency is like Bitcoin but not quite! It is a currency for exchanging attendance and cultural participation to economic benefits such as some incentives in local taxes or various incentives and perks provided by local commercial units in exchange of citizen owned cultural currencies. The cultural currency will stimulate citizens (locals and Europeans included) to attend cultural events but also to get involved as volunteers or as part of informal groups which proposed specific initiatives and interventions in the local community during the

ECoC year. The currency will be introduced gradually, starting from 2023. Management will work with IT developers and members of the community in co-developing the solution using the method of Design Thinking.

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

During the Programme Clinic we identified various marginalised and disadvantaged groups: children and young people, homeless people and migrant communities and LGBTQ communities. Young people and children in the hinterland will be encouraged to interact with Etnohisteria Festival, Beyond Borders Festival (nature and culture know no borders), The Cultural Embassy for Climate Change, the outreach wing of The Open Design Centre and Ship of Tales. Our initial project with children with special needs and people with physical disabilities and/or disabilities associated with mental illness is AnimatE! a project by CKSG Portorož co-creating opportunities to connect adolescents and adults with disabilities and others with the aim of empowering individuals of vulnerable groups to participate actively in selected cultural events. Forum Babylon will include methods of communication for people with disabilities (e.g., sign languages or braille alphabet), as well as the groups themselves into the creative process of programming. The Red Cross youth recovery and holiday resort in Ankarán, which hosts either sick children or socially disadvantaged children from all over Slovenia and abroad, will be used as a vehicle for much broader outreach of the programme's goals.

ErosAntEros – Large-Scale Site-Specific Performance Programme: will build a multiyear project aimed at revitalizing the territory and industrial heritage through contemporary performing arts and integrate the voices of homeless people, migrants and other populations into all productions. Together with micro grants co-creation opportunities will also be designed as part of the Wave of Change - Opening Weekend and Ceremony, The Sea Contains, the Sea

Divides, Mobile Borders and Svetilnik/Faro (Lighthouse) - Closing Weekend and Ceremony.

PI2025 is committed to reaching out to the LGBTQ community across Slovenian Istria. As in other ex-socialist countries, the LGBTQ community is less visible at a socio-cultural level and is poorly represented in this bidbook. During the next phase of development, we aim to build a constructive dialogue with this community across Istria and Slovenia and look for a positive path together.

All the mentioned groups will be included at all participation levels – Attend, Create, Interact, Use. Some groups will need professional support in order to fulfill their full potential in engaging in activity phases. We already established connections with institutions and non-formal groups in the region who are professionally engaged with particular marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as CKSG Portorož, Science and Research Centre (Koper), KUP Kultura, Local Community Strunjan, Strunjan Nature Park, INDE, Association for Urban Development and Alternatives, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Matija Solce (Puppet Theater), Samanta Kobal (Cultural Association Gajbla).

Through and with the Open Design Centre, and together with these professionals, we will develop methods and approaches for the integration of the marginalised and disadvantaged target groups during programme development and implementation. Some programme outputs and projects will be dedicated especially to the increasing the visibility and social inclusion of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

19 Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

“...the active and deliberate process of creating meaningful, long-term connections between people and an art organisation. Strategic audience development goes beyond increasing visitor numbers, aiming to build community ownership, participation, relationship with, and support for the organisation, its programme and its people”

— (B. Lipps, Theatron, 2015 in Study on Audience Development - How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations, European Commission, 2015)

Across the PIKA region there are already some **existing good practices** in the field of audience development including:

GLEDGA, a journal of Koper Theatre and Regional Galleries on audience development;

THE LIGHTHOUSE, a publication for young enthusiasts, intended for pupils in the first triad of elementary schools and parents or tutors of preschoolers. The publication introduces young readers to the activity of six Istrian institutions: Koper Theater, Provincial Museum of Koper, Provincial Archive of Koper, Italian

Community “Giuseppe Tartini” Piran, Central Library Srečko Vilhar Koper and Zavod Otok, an institute of film culture and education;

THE SOCIAL INNOVATORS HUB of the association for culture and education PiNA which presents an innovative model that simultaneously addresses the challenges of high rates of youth unemployment and low employment rate in NGO sector, supporting participants to create their own jobs within the social sector, where their educational background is essential for further development.

These practices, while isolated and small, will be built upon by the ECoC title in order to create an ambitious, strategic approach to audience development across the whole programme and legacy. Our strategic capacity building project *Trakovec*, a five-year strategic approach to capacity building for local cultural operators will include a dedicated strand for audience development.

We will focus on **four target groups** which need to be strengthened and developed if we are to reach the long term goals of the Kultura.PIKA Strategy Statement. The target groups are:

- Children, pupils and teachers
- Tourists, summer visitors engaging with local populations.
- Adults and children with disabilities
- Organisations and individuals involved in environmental awareness and associated behavioral change, sustainable social development and social innovation.



Koper, Performance on the bell tower
Foto: Jaka Ivačić, Koper Italian Community

Target Group 1: Children, pupils, teachers and parents

There are limited initiatives in the region responding to the needs of children as proactive cultural players or audiences. PI2025 will promote, develop and implement a new cross-sectoral approach for this target group. Besides the participation of children in programme development and implementation at all 4 participation levels (Attend, Create, Interact, Use), PI2025 will support cultural players in ensuring that work is co-devised and co-created with children. Such opportunities exist within,

- *Ship of Tales* (Salt & Sea): Theatre for children as a place where integrated expression combines different fields of art.
- *AnimatE!* (Connect & Care): CKSG Portorož's pioneering special needs school co-creating opportunities to connect adolescents and adults with disabilities and others with the aim of empowering individuals of vulnerable groups to participate actively in selected cultural events.

- *Cultural Embassy for Climate Change* (Salt & Sea): The outreach wing of The Open Design Centre working with schools, communities and organisations across Slovenia and internationally to transmit and share new knowledge. It is as a wide opportunity for engagement and establishment of new approaches, especially in schools. A big, and often neglected part of this development process is constituted by the parents, meant not as the adult consumers of culture that happens to take place in schools, but as partakers of the educational process. As much as the teachers have difficulties to grasp the rapid changes in the social life of children and youth, there is also a growing gap, a divide between parents and children, fueled by lack of understanding and sometimes even knowledge of contemporary communication. Culture with its universal language could be a successful tool for closing this gap and reestablishing communication between generations. Ankaran elementary school has a great propulsion towards innovation and fresh takes in education and is a potential partner for this process.

- *Curatorial Ports* (Connect & Care): A space for curators and artists mediating the relationship between artist and citizen (including children) as co-creators.

- The cross-generational *Cultural Centre* (Isola).

- *The Embassy for Climate Change* will combine the knowledge and experience of working with young people with the work carried out by The Open Design Centre creative sector enabling programmes to reach their full potential.

Target Group 2: Tourists, summer visitors engaging with local populations.

Tourism plays a major role in our lives and economy across the 4 municipalities. While the issues of traffic congestion created by the border between Slovenia and Croatia are discussed elsewhere (see Q38) the fact that such a large influx of European visitors (tourists) occurs annually is an opportunity to see them as a strong, culturally-orientated audience whom to include, too. Hence a series of summer activities are designed for local and tourist audiences.

Across all four platforms we are designing moments and events which would attract both local and visiting audiences. Some of these include, *Beyond Borders Festival*, *Forma Viva*, *Etnohisteria Festival*, *Architects of Leisure*, *Monfort contemporary art and digital culture gallery*, *Open Design Centre*, *The Wave* (Digital European Connect), *Primorski Poletni Festival* (Primorska Summer Festival), *The Salt of Europe* exhibition, *ErosAntEros* the large-scale site-specific performance programme.

Encouraging people to visit across the whole year and not just in the short summer season is crucial to addressing many issues around sustainability of this economic sector. Our four cornerstone projects, *Wave of Change* - Opening Weekend and Ceremony, *The Sea Contains, the Sea Divides* (Summer 2025), *Mobile Borders* (Autumn 2025) and *Svetilnik/Faro (Lighthouse)* - Closing Weekend and Ceremony will all contribute to this end. Furthermore all other projects taking place

across the year will be designed to encourage stays in the area outside of the high season.

It is not just a question of numbers of summer visitors. Tourism is of central importance to all, whether they live here all year round or visit for a few weeks or days. Water consumption, traffic, borders, employment, coastal erosion have an impact upon all of us. Our cultural programme therefore treats the complex issues of tourism, seasonality and ecological sustainability as important audience development opportunities within the prism of creating encounters and dialogue between visitors and residents. Apart from the four cornerstone events there are also *The Salt of Europe*, our exhibition about the history and the roads of salt, *Architects of Leisure*, *The Bad Bank Legacy*, *Mobile Borders*, *Bi-annual of Contemporary Music*, *Beyond Vocals*, *Zvoki Solin - Dance and Performance* (Sečovlje/Strunjan salt pans), *Salt Memories International Music Project* (Andrew Alamango, Malta). These are just some of



the examples where such encounters will be encouraged and promoted.

Target Group 3:

Adults and Children with disabilities are a key focus in audience development plans. Our approach here is both vertical and horizontal.

Vertical: Specific projects designed to respond to this target group are being designed. *AnimatE!* CKSG Portorož, a pioneering special needs school co-creating opportunities to connect adolescents and adults with disabilities will develop a Slovenian wide research programme and create a training programme responding to the needs identified. A national festival of art and performance by special needs children from across Slovenia and associated European partners will take place in 2025.

Horizontal: We will ensure that the majority of projects and performances, including all major events and cornerstones, will be designed to respond to the needs of this target group at physical, organisational and intellectual levels.

Target Group 4: Organisations and individuals involved in the development of environmental awareness and behavior change

The Open Design Centre will work with artists, communities and organisations across Slovenia and internationally to transmit and share new knowledge regarding environmental questions, problems and challenges.



Port of Koper
Photo: Ivo Pervan

MANAGEMENT

20 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)?

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆

A) Finance

CITY BUDGET FOR CULTURE

K The Municipality of Piran is applying for the ECoC title together with the other three Slovenian Istrian municipalities: Izola, Koper and Ankaran. In the following pages we present the budget for culture for the city of Piran and, separately and additionally, the joint budget for all four Istrian municipalities (termed collectively as PIKA based on their initials) participating in the bid. The percentage of the budget allocated to cultural activities has been decreasing steadily over the years even if the absolute amounts have remained relatively stable. The reason for this

apparent discrepancy is that the Government has delegated more and more obligations to the municipalities, straining their budgets and driving up their indebtedness. Slovenian Law does not allow the Government to allocate more financial resources to the municipalities. There are 212 municipalities in Slovenia, of which 11 have the status of City municipality. As there are no intermediate administrative entities, such as provinces or regions, it is difficult for single municipalities to voice their concerns to the Government. This situation has led to increased centralisation and the inadequate financing of local communities.

Year	Annual budget for culture in the city of PIRAN (in euros)	Annual budget for culture in the city of PIRAN (in % of the total annual budget for the city of PIRAN)
n-1	1.712.355,32	6,25%
n-2	1.564.283,49	6,91%
n-3	1.574.087,05	7,16%
n-4	1.821.584,01	8,55%
Current	1.774.162,63	6,70%

Year	Annual budget for culture in the four Istrian municipalities (PIKA) (in euros)	Annual budget for culture in the four Istrian municipalities (PIKA) (in % of the total annual budget for the PIKA municipalities)
n-1	5.236.139	4,08%
n-2	4.661.612	4,80%
n-3	4.664.321	5,21%
n-4	5.407.117	6,02%
Current	5.227.660	3,96%

21 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.

K THE four Istrian municipalities (PIKA) do not plan to use funds from their annual budgets for culture to finance the ECoC project. Instead, they will create a specific ECoC fund, to which they will allocate additional financial resources.

The only exception is the budget for the year 2019, during which the overall national budget for culture is funding activities related to the candidacy for ECoC 2025. The amount of EUR 250.000 covers the costs of compiling the bidbook, drawing the plans and producing all relevant financial documentation for investments, travel expenses, workshops, promotional costs, as well as the costs of municipal staff and external advisors participating in the candidacy process. For the year 2020, the four municipalities have set aside EUR 750.000 to continue

the candidacy. This amount will cover the preparation of additional content, investment plans, promotional expenses and the cost of internal and external staff involved in the project and will ultimately result in the documentation required for the second phase.

The co-financing scheme follows the same framework as that defining the operating expenditure for the ECoC period 2020-2026. The only difference is that during the preparatory phase, no sources of financing are expected to come from the private sector.

22 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)?

K In the year after the title year the joint budget for culture of the four Istrian municipalities will be clearly higher than in the current year.

Year	Annual budget for culture in the city of PIRAN 2026 (in euros)	Annual budget for culture in the city of PIRAN (in % of the total annual budget for the city of PIRAN)
2026	2.000.000	8%

Year	Annual budget for culture in the PIKA cities (in euros)	Annual budget for culture in the PIKA cities (in % of the total annual budget in the PIKA cities (in %))
2026	6.150.000	6,03%

OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE TITLE YEAR
Income to cover operating expenditure

23 Please explain the overall operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure). The budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities.

K The total income of the four municipalities, together with funds provided by the national government and the private sector, and which is intended to cover operating expenditures amounts to EUR 23.216.500.

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (%)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (%)
23.216.500	22.015.000	94,82%	1.201.500	5,18%

Income from the public sector

24 What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure?

K INCOME from the Government is based on the Official Decision dated 12th of December 2019.

According to that a maximum of EUR 10 million would be provided by the Government to cover operating expenditures and investments.

In the table below the entry for City includes the total income of all four Istrian municipalities (PIKA). As Slovenia is not divided into legally and politically separate regional entities this entry has been left void.

Based on the precautionary principle we have not included in the table below any sources of financing from the EU as the operational programmes (and corresponding co-financing) have not been approved yet. However, we have identified potential projects in line with the ECoC programme content which we could apply to. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Theatre project Ship of Tales and new mixed media forms of the project The Wave (Digital European Connect): Creative Europe, Big Cooperation projects;
- Embassy of Climate Change: MED, Alpine Space...;
- Saltpans Festival Zvoki Solin: to be awarded the European Heritage Label Europa Nostra;
- Open Design Centre: Erasmus+;
- Remembrance project Beyond Borders Festival: Horizon V

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	In euros	%
National Government	10.000.000	45,42%
City	12.015.000	54,58%
Region	0	0%
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	22.015.000	100%

25 Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?



The city councils of the four Istrian municipalities have already approved the financial plan that covers operating expenditures in the years prior to and one year after the title year for ECoC. The city councils have also agreed how to share and cover costs arising from operating expenditures as outlined in the table below. The necessary amounts have been allocated to a specific, independent budgetary chapter – termed the operational budget for ECoC – that has been

established by each participating municipality in accordance with its development plan.

Partners who have confirmed their support of the PI2025 candidacy will host an important event during the title year. All of them signed a Letter of Intent endorsing the candidacy and asserting its commitment to it. The following table outlines the financial obligations of the four Istrian municipalities set aside to cover the operating expenditures for ECoC 2025:

	Piran	Izola	Koper	Ankaran	Municipalities Total
2021	256.500,00 €	87.750,00 €	229.500,00 €	33.750,00 €	607.500,00 €
2022	380.000,00 €	130.000,00 €	340.000,00 €	50.000,00 €	900.000,00 €
2023	760.000,00 €	260.000,00 €	680.000,00 €	100.000,00 €	1.800.000,00 €
2024	1.900.000,00 €	650.000,00 €	1.700.000,00 €	250.000,00 €	4.500.000,00 €
2025	1.140.000,00 €	390.000,00 €	1.020.000,00 €	150.000,00 €	2.700.000,00 €
2026	636.500,00 €	217.750,00 €	569.500,00 €	83.750,00 €	1.507.500,00 €
TOTAL	5.073.000,00 €	1.735.500,00 €	4.539.000,00 €	667.500,00 €	12.015.000,00 €
%	38%	13%	34%	5%	100%

Income to cover operating expenditure

26 What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?



The outlook for the economy in the region is not particularly bright as several once strong companies (e.g., Cimos, Istrabenz) have filed for bankruptcy.

Additionally most tourism-related enterprises have been rescued by the State, their assets are administered by the Slovene bad bank (DUTB) and the entire sector is chronically under-funded. Luka Koper – Port of Koper, which represents the most important local economic entity, is facing reduced demand for its services. Nevertheless we take these poor indicators as a challenge and a reason to reinvent ourselves as a destination capable of looking ahead. ECoC projects regularly serve as catalysts for new ways of communication between culture and business - ones that surpass the traditional cultural sponsorship and that involve companies in a much deeper way.

As a vehicle to attract sponsors and donations we will establish a committee and specific fund within the Foundation, whose task will be to advertise support of PI2025, and culture in general, as a way of giving back to the local community. To achieve such goal, the committee will employ marketing and promotional activities, as well as personal ties. Any donations will be made public and sponsors will be acknowledged as socially responsible contributors.

We count on strong participation from family-size, small and medium enterprises as these kinds of businesses represent the driving force of economic development in the region and are mostly locally owned. To ensure their involvement, we will rely on interpersonal relationships. For this type of enterprises, we plan to establish a 'PIKA Culture Club' as a community of our supporters, where membership comes with not only the prestige, but with discounts for ECoC activities and also some exclusive events.

Multinationals and large corporations with a recognisable and strategic presence in the region will be approached in an innovative way that

can help them to become main sponsors of PI2025, being involved deeply into the ECoC idea. Possible candidates include Mercedes-Benz and Hyundai, whose joint car shipping operations through Luka Koper are estimated at EUR 15 billion per year. We want to focus on environmental issues together with these companies and plan to motivate them to take part in finding sustainable solutions concerning culture together while also giving them a possible new artistic point of view. We count on a strong support of local entrepreneur MK group d.d.. The insurance company Adriatic Slovenica, Banka Intesa Sanpaolo and some hotel chains are also potential supporters of the programme, we believe in joint development of new ECoC content with them also, where they can feel that we are not only interested in them for their money. We intend to use a shared value approach to fundraising - where companies find business opportunities in social and cultural issues.

Fresh ways of funding projects in culture shall play a very important role in fundraising. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding will be used and also supported if it comes from the bottom. The PIKA Cultural Currency (described briefly in Q17) can also become a way for small local businesses to support the PI2025 Project - while it also motivates people to become an audience, as we cannot forget about sales of tickets and personal donations when it comes to fundraising.

Our most important goal is to achieve a mindshift among business leaders; we want to encourage them to see culture in the future not as something wishing to take away resources from them but as something with which they can build new and creative ideas and through which they can be proud of being part of an innovative and supportive creative and cultural ecosystem.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE

27 Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below.



In the table “Operating expenditure”, the entry “Other” includes funds set aside for unforeseen expenses. The operating expenditure

will be scheduled for the whole ECoC period in the following phases: Preparation period (2021-2024): EUR 15.086.377, Title year (2025): EUR 5.217.191, Follow-up year (2026): EUR 2.912.932

Programme expenditure (in euros)	16.251.550
Programme expenditure (in %)	70%
Promotion and marketing (in euros)	3.482.475
Promotion and marketing (in %)	15%
Wages, overheads and administration (in euros)	2.785.980
Wages, overheads and administration (in %)	12%
Other (please specify) (in euros)	696.495
Other (please specify) (in %)	3%
Total of the operating expenditure	23.216.500

BUDGET FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

28 What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year?



We count on all costs related to capital expenditure being covered from the four Istrian municipalities (PIKA) own budgetary sources as well as from contributions provided by the national government through the Ministry of Culture and the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy. The figure in line ‘City’ includes the joint

income of all four Istrian municipalities (PIKA). The candidacy application falls at an unfortunate moment regarding the availability of EU funds. The Financial Framework 2014-2020 is coming to an end, while the operational programmes for the upcoming framework have not been defined yet - as explained in Q30. Finally, Slovenia is not divided into legal and political regional entities - so the entry ‘Region’ could not be filled in.

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	In euros	%
National Government	5.197.200	30,76%
City (the four PIKA cities)	11.700.000	69,24%
Region	0	0%
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri Prize)	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	16.897.200	100%

29 Have the public finance authorities (city, region, state) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?



The city councils of the four Istrian municipalities have already voted in favour of funding to cover capital expenditures.

The corresponding funds have been included in the budgets of the single municipalities or in their planned development programmes. It should be noted that the municipalities will carry out several of the planned capital expenditures irrespective of whether the candidacy for ECoC 2025 is successful or not. That is because the candidate municipalities recognise the value of culture as a source of economic and social growth at the local level. However these investments can be identified as ECoC infrastructural

projects as they are strongly related to the artistic content of this bid and contribute to the change which we want to achieve with the help of the ECoC idea (this is why we mention some in Q11 as infrastructural milestones). Capital expenditures are planned for the construction of new buildings, the renovation of existing ones, the purchase of cultural infrastructure and its accessibility to all users in the title year and beyond. The investment plan which was voted by the municipalities is included in Q31.

As described in Q25, the national government has undertaken to provide its financial contribution in a formal way.

30 What is your fundraising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?



At present we cannot anticipate which EU funds will be available because investments are planned for the Financial Framework

2021-2027 and as the corresponding operational programmes have yet to be approved. The inclusion of any financial support from the EU is currently not in line with the precautionary principle; that’s why we left the relevant line of the table in Q28 empty. In spite of this we would like to stress the fact that the Istrian municipalities have been extremely successful in the past in applying for EU funding. Their high success rate derives from employing specially dedicated staff and collaborating with experienced external advisers. Therefore, we can attest that the municipalities will apply for all potentially available EU funds, with which to co-finance the intended capital

expenditures. In the past the municipalities have taken advantage of such sources to co-finance investments and programmes in the field of culture, including the following:

- HERA – Interreg Central Europe,
- Mala barka 1 & Mala barka 2 – Interreg Slovenia-Croatia,
- Parenzana 1, 2 & Parenzana Colours – Interreg Slovenia-Italy, Slovenia-Croatia,
- REVITAS 1, 2 – Interreg Slovenia - Croatia,
- YouInHerit – Interreg Central Europe,
- COME-IN! – Interreg Central Europe,
- REFRESH – Interreg Central Europe,
- tARTini – Interreg Slovenia - Italy.

The municipalities plan to apply for funds from Interreg cross border (Slovenia-Italy, Slovenia-Croatia) and transnational (Central Europe, Adrion, Mediteran, Alp Space) cooperation programmes, as well as centralised programmes (Creative Europe, Erasmus, LIFE, Horizon V). With the exception of pilot projects, most of these programmes cover only a minor part of capital expenditures; hence, we count on additional ERDF funds through the Ministry of Culture and the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy.



31 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.

NEW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE	AMOUNT IN EUR
PIRAN / Renovation of two halls in Monfort - Open Design Centre	900.000
PIRAN / Forma Viva – renovation of green areas, car park, access roads and sidewalk	2.050.000
PIRAN / Purchase of Trevisini Palace – Centre for music activities	3.000.000
PIRAN / Krog – Centre for the conservation of Istrian stone heritage	1.000.000
IZOLA / Cross generational centre	7.000.000
KOPER / Libertas warehouse – festivals and theatre	2.000.000
KOPER / Forum Babylon - centre for translation, public events space, digital archive, residences	397.200
ANKARAN / Floating movable stage	550.000
TOTAL	16.897.200

New cultural infrastructure and its functions will be described in detail in Q38.

B) Organisational Structure

32 Please give an outline of the intended governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year.

To ensure proper management for the PI2025 project, the municipalities will establish a Foundation in accordance with the relevant Slovenian Laws (Uradni list: 60/1995, 53/2005, 70/2005-UPB1). The Foundation will be in charge of organising the content, management, marketing and promotional aspects of the project.

Investments are at the discretion of the single municipalities.

The Foundation will operate according to the following principles:

- Broad social and sectoral representation,
- An extremely high level of transparency,
- Being not-for-profit,
- Working independently from political influence.

While the Foundation and its senior managers will be responsible for the implementation of the project and all management issues,

a strategic body, the Steering Committee will ensure the comprehensive, conceptional supervision of the project and make fundamental decisions.

The Steering Committee

The main strategic decision-maker body will be the Steering Committee: The task of the Steering Committee is to guide and oversee the leadership of the ECoC Foundation (i.e., the work and also the selection of the Executive and Artistic Directors). As we do not want the Steering Committee to become a partisan body its members will include the mayors of the four Istrian municipalities and representatives of civic organisations (NGOs) plus various cultural organisations following the principle of parity. This principle will ensure a high level of independency and professionalism to be represented in the body which is responsible for the most important decisions.

An Supervisory Board will also be formed: it will ensure that the activities of the ECoC Foundation are properly run (also from a legal point of view) and its funds properly spent. It will be composed of representatives from the four municipalities’ own Oversight Boards, as well as representatives of civic and cultural organisations.

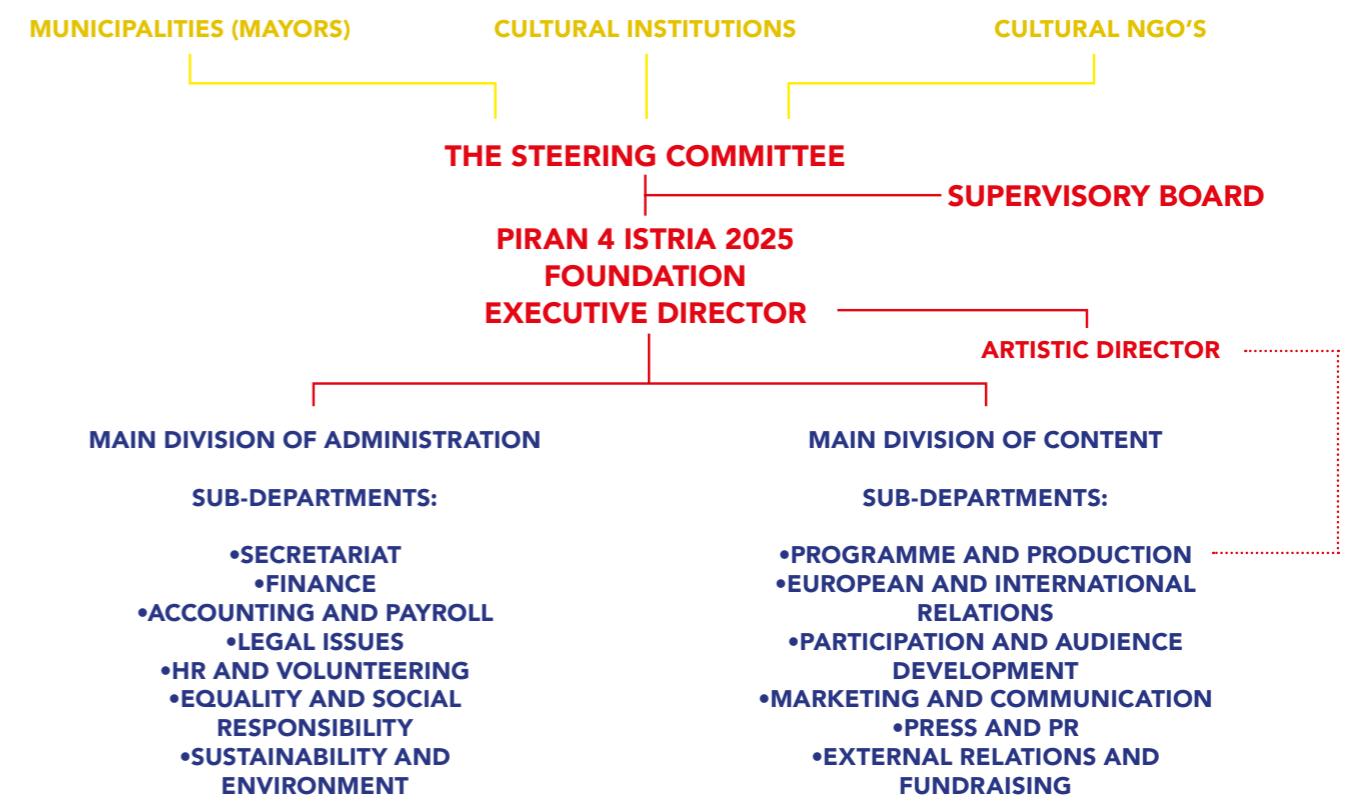
The Foundation

The Foundation will be guided by the Executive Director , who will be responsible for the management of the PI2025 project.

The Executive Director will ensure that the ECoC Foundation’s goals are achieved and aligned with the planned content, deadlines, and financial resources. The Executive Director will hire the necessary staff and oversee the legal compliance of all procedures and procurements. S/he will also oversee the expenditure approval, the management of human resources and the reporting to the

Steering Committee. Additional tasks include applying for national and EU funds as well as soliciting support from sponsors and donations. In order to support the implementation of the activities, the Foundation will establish two main divisions. The first department will manage the administrative, legal, accounting and HR aspects of the Foundation; the other will guide the artistic content creation process, marketing, PR / communication, external and international relations and sponsorships. The Executive Director will oversee both main divisions. The **Artistic Director** is a key leadership figure of the ECoC Foundation. The Artistic Director’s task is to prepare and carry out the proposed cultural programme and lead the team in charge of cultural programming in order to achieve intended goals. Both the executive and the artistic directors will be chosen in a fully transparent way and as the result of an international call for candidates.

The planned organisational structure is outlined in the following chart:



C) Contingency Planning

33 What are the main strengths and weaknesses of your project? How are you planning to overcome weaknesses identified?



DURING the preparation period we compiled a number of SWOT analysis charts. The following table contains a summary of this continuous

analysis (restricted to the strengths and weaknesses). It also features the relevant possible interventions or factors that might help avoid or mitigate these issues during the implementation phase.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES AND RISKS	CHANCE	MANAGEMENT
The candidacy enjoys support from the political leadership of the four participating municipalities, the representatives of cultural organisations and NGO's.	Though it's the Municipality of Piran applying for the title, we run a project for all PIKA cities which may lead to some dissent.	+	The Kultura.PIKA guidelines were agreed by all municipalities so ECoC will open the doors for an even higher level of integration.
Slovenian Istria has one of the most multinational population structures in the country.	The regional economy is in a poor state. We have limited financial resources and little prospective for strong supporters.	++	We don't want the ECoC to be a monumental project with extreme expenses - but we want it to accelerate the creative sector.
There is a good existing cultural infrastructure and a dedicated and committed staff operating in the field of culture.	Local elections in 2022 can lead to a restricted political support and legitimacy.	++	A strong support from the civil society and a well established initiative can minimise the effects of a potential new leadership.
We have a well developed tourist sector that can cater to a large number of visitors.	We are threatened by a possible economic crisis, which may lead to decreased tax revenue and increased social transfers, with potentially negative consequences for the cultural budget of the cities.	+	ECoC financing is accurately planned and the actual cultural spendings by the cities will not affect the budget of the PI2025 project.
We have good transport connections to some important hubs.	Mass tourism makes the summer tumultuous, while the region suffers from seasonality, which may affect the interest in ECoC.	+++	Our ECoC concept strongly reflects on this problem and will emphasise the importance of a new approach.
We have a strong willingness to learn lessons about sustainable cultural growth.	We have a weak experience about the approach of the Slovenian Government to ECoC projects in general (see the example from Maribor 2012).	+	Candidate cities together shall take a stand. The four mayors who will also be members of the Steering Committee have to use their lobby force to overcome this.
We recognised the importance of climate change issues and their consequences.	Brain drain of young and talented people can result in capacity problems in the field of management.	++	ECoC brings an intensive capacity building, attractive perspectives and also a strong international dimension.
Last but not least: we feel the magic of greater recognition of the Istrian region and we have a positive attitude towards fruitful integration, a future PIKA.	ECoC projects are generally regarded as being a playground for a few cultural actors and consumers.	+	As a result of the participatory methods employed during the preparation phase, the PI2025 is already a bottom-up project informed by grassroots initiatives.

D) Marketing and Communication

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



SINCE the outset of the PI2025 ECoC candidacy the communication strategy has focused on reaching out to a wide and

diverse group of stakeholders. As a result, the candidacy has attracted more than 150 proposals from local stakeholders (people of all ages with an interest in the arts, culture and environment protection). Through a participatory and open approach the candidacy has seen the involvement of artists, cultural organisations, NGOs and educational institutions from the entire geographic area covered by the four participating municipalities as well as the municipal authorities themselves who have actively supported the candidacy (100% support).

It is precisely because of the ideas put forward by the abovementioned stakeholders that we have decided to redefine the programme so it employs culture as a vehicle to reflect shared EU values. Moreover, the programme will give culture a new, stronger role in promoting cultural awareness and tackling of climate change. Rising sea levels pose a serious threat to the cultural and natural heritage of all four Istrian municipalities. An active response to climate change is supported by the vast majority of local inhabitants and the awareness is rising throughout the EU (based on the EC report from August 2019 it is the second biggest worry for EU citizens). We will therefore promote creativity, innovation, local and international cooperation in a bid to find adequate solutions.

Communication goals

- Use culture and a joint European perspective to bring together the local population, cultural content creators and marginalised groups, and have them look for common solutions to the threats posed by climate change, as well as for the revitalisation and preservation of our cultural heritage, • Redefine Piran and its wider area as a sustainable cultural tourism destination, • Allow all inhabitants of Europe and

beyond to experience a virtual tour of PI2025, • Mark the 40th anniversary of the ECoC initiative by highlighting the long-lasting benefits it brings to the host city, • Promote culture and creative industries - a key pillar in regional economic development.

Target audiences/stakeholders

- The population from the four Istrian municipalities (a bilingual culturally mixed area stretching between the borders with Italy and Croatia), • Culture enthusiasts from Slovenia, Italy, Croatia and Austria, • Individuals with an interest in cultural dialogue and a reduction of the consequences of climate change; this includes particularly children and youth, as well as online opinion-makers across the EU, • Providers of cultural activities in the ECoC area, in the cross-border regions of the EU, in the 23 twin towns (from 17 countries, of which 8 in the EU) and in the more than 70 cities already bestowed with the title of ECoC.

A more precise breakdown of the different categories will be ready during the first preparatory year and will be updated in 2024.

Key message and its implementation phases

'Wave of Change' is the key message. It sees culture as a creative force of the human condition and a universal language for collaboration; hence it can represent a common driver against the threat of climate change. #waveofchange will be our key hashtag and social media aggregator at the same time. The integrated communication strategy will encompass four phases or, more appropriately, four waves of change: **LET'S JOIN FORCES (2021-2023) = Wave 1: Bringing together.** This phase has already begun, connecting and including a wide range of participants, their ideas and proposals. The wave will build momentum as it will be followed by public debates and

consultations across sectors about the role of culture as a driver of change, common policies and target groups. The wave will then merge into an integrated campaign with visualised stories about cultural practices and natural heritage of the Istrian coast (i.e: the ECoC area). The stories told by locals and educational institutions will be intertwined in 2023 with modern art performances. Schools and other educational institutions will reach out to previous ECoC nominees to hear about the long-lasting benefits of being awarded the ECoC title. **PUSH FOR A CHANGE (2024) = Wave 2: Creating sustainable solutions.** Key stakeholders in the ECoC area have already publicly presented sustainable solutions that tap into the creative potential of youngsters, overlooked groups and the rural Istrian hinterland. An integrated campaign across different platforms will represent a tangible overture into the year 2025. Change is coming! **WAVE OF CHANGE (2025) = Wave 3: Celebrating the values of the EU.** In connection with the 40th anniversary of the ECoC initiative and in partnership with the German ECoC 2025, we will present the long-lasting benefits of the ECoC legacy. This will be achieved through traditional and digital channels of communication and will see the collaboration of a national media outlet and its offices across the EU, as well as the Representative Office of the EC in Slovenia (see also Q35).

Online platforms will come alive to support and help spread the ECoC programme.

We will use different formats, from traditional and new media, to communicate the proposals formulated by the general public, young artists and cultural operators about a culture of dialogue that seeks to respond to the threats posed by climate change. An integrated campaign will include private citizens and research/educational institutions, who will present personal stories about the local cultural and natural heritage. At the same time, workshops will inform local communities and stakeholders about sustainable forms of tourism. To mark the annual Day of Culture (8th of February) the ECoC initiative will host celebrations involving all the schools in the country, as well as those serving the Slovene minority abroad. **THE WAVES KEEP ON ROLLING (2026) = Wave 4: Experiencing sustainable solutions.** New information and solutions

to the questions brought by the first wave will become part of everyday life. Local inhabitants and tourist operators will benefit from the new cultural content, infrastructure and knowledge acquired during the ECoC year. These will entrust them with new tools to respond to climate change and to develop a sustainable cultural tourist offer. The experience will result in a shared tangible and intangible cultural space: a new generation of users and providers of culture, an improved and more modern cultural output, and the perception of creativity as a means towards a more inclusive society. ECoC 2025 lives on!

Digital strategy

Besides postings online the programme for PI2025, ECoC will also be broadcast live through different platforms (broadcasting, live videos) and available to a Europe-wide and global public and to all target groups including those who cannot usually access such events.

The communication strategy will include virtual reality to showcase the underwater world of the ECoC area, as well as talking robots (known as chatbots), which have already been employed by the municipality of Piran. Furthermore, we plan to take full advantage of the benefits offered by digital networks.

We will be active via all digital channels (FB, Instagram), including those still in their infancy (like Tik Tok, LI), as we expect that by 2024, they will be the ones dictating the tempo in online communication and will best allow us to reach out to the target audiences. We will collaborate with initiatives like Parole Ostili - Social awareness project against the use of hostile language on the web.

Partnerships with the media

Partnerships with the media will be established in four countries: Slovenia, Italy, Croatia and Austria. In addition, a media exchange collaboration with the German ECoC 2025 is conceivable. Even though PI2025 covers a relatively small geographic area, it enjoys a rich presence of media outlets, such as the regional centre of the national Slovenian TV and radio broadcaster (RTV SLO) with its programme in Slovene and

Italian, a regional newspaper, and correspondent offices for Slovenian and Italian media. The primary tourist markets the area caters to are Italy and Austria. Besides traditional forms of output, media partnerships will be instrumental in publishing digital editions and in delivering content through online opinion-makers at an EU level. The marketing and communication

35 How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?



TODAY, the European Capital of Culture programme is considered to be the most successful cultural initiative of the EU. PI2025 will be a perfect opportunity to communicate a positive EU-image to our local citizens and the whole of Slovenia but also to Italy and Croatia through our cross-border cooperation region. We have already started to spread detailed information about the ECoC programme among our citizens (local and regional media, social media) making clear that ECoC is an EU initiative. Our topics - rethinking borders, addressing the nature of conflict, seeking sustainable solutions for the environment and discussing alternatives to mass tourism - are all **on the agenda of the EU**. Piran and its coastal partner municipalities will have the chance to approach and communicate EU issues through culture and the arts. Piran offers itself as a place for European dialogue having strong connections to both the Central European area and the Mediterranean and by being on the edge of the East and the West.

- VISIBILITY: We will use the EU-ECoC logo and the inscription 'European Capital of Culture' in all analogue and online communication. EU and ECoC flags will be raised across the Slovene territory between the borders with Italy and Croatia, as well as at the border posts, on the first day of 2025 to mark a symbolic union between the three countries.

- INSTITUTIONS: We will greet EU-institutions (EC, EP) and high representatives at the celebrations of the year such as the opening and closing ceremonies, and other programmes. We aim for permanent cooperation with the EU Representation in Slovenia, the Creative Europe Desk Slovenia and the EUNIC Slovenia Cluster.

strategy will provide not just support but also an active means to bring about the organic change envisioned by the ECoC 2025 candidacy, such as sustainable revitalisation of the ECoC area. At the same time, it will highlight the benefits brought to previous ECoC nominees, while putting into practice the values and common goals of the EU.

- INTERNATIONAL EVENT DAYS AND EU-INITIATIVES: We will take advantage of European and international event days (particularly International Women's Day, World Press Freedom Day, Europe Day, European Day of Languages, European Heritage Days) to convey to the local, national and EU-wide audiences a shared message of peace, cooperation and need to tackle climate change as promoted by both the EU and ECoC initiative. We will prove how to link EU-initiatives like the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe or the European Heritage Label to our projects to identify potentials for cooperation.

- JOINT CELEBRATIONS: We will celebrate the opening of our ECoC year together with our ECoC-friends from Bad Ischl - Salzkammergut 2024, Tartu 2024 and Bodø 2024, as well as the closing of the season with the ECoC cities 2026 from Slovakia and Finland. Our exhibition dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the ECoC initiative will be further contribution to these celebrations (see more in Q16).

- TWIN-ECoCs: We will establish a special close cooperation (in terms of co-creation) with the ECoC city from Germany 2025 and approach all candidate cities from Germany and Slovenia. Among the Slovenian candidate cities, with whom we have collaborated, Lendava is the one most similar to us as we share minority issues, official bilingualism, etc. Involving our German ECoC twin, we plan to establish a permanent virtual connection in public space (mutual broadcasting, information display and citizens' live-chat). In addition, we will offer the German city to jointly develop an exhibition celebrating the 40th anniversary of the ECoC (see Q16) which will underline that ECoC is a success of the cities and the EU.

TRUST

Placement of the restored angel statue in Piran
Photo: FPA Agency, Koper

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

36 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.

RATE THIS CHAPTER: ☆☆☆☆☆



On the 31st of May 2018 Piran's Municipal Council adopted the Local Culture Programme - a document in

which the city expressed its willingness to join the bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2025 in a joint candidacy with the other coastal municipalities of the Slovenian Istria - Izola, Koper, and Ankaran. This first official decision marked the beginning of the PI2025 application process. On the 1st of April 2019 the Mayor of Piran, Mr. Denio Zadkovič, informed the Slovenian Ministry of Culture that the city will start the candidacy application process for the ECoC 2025 title.

On the 22nd of June 2019, after months of intense cooperation and coordination, the mayors of the four Slovenian municipalities (Piran, Izola, Koper and Ankaran - PIKA) signed a joint letter of intent, which already contained the substantive justification for the candidature and its regional dimension. The mayors established a permanent PIKA Committee which convenes at regular monthly meetings.

Soon after, the four municipalities jointly set up the PI2025 project groups and encouraged a participatory approach to the bidbook creation process.

To accomplish the task, the four municipalities established:

1. PI2025 Inter-municipal Task Force, consisting of the Culture and Social Affairs delegates of the four PIKA municipalities.
2. Technical working group - comprised of five local experts and four foreign consultants who have coordinated the bidding development process.
3. Artistic Board with 16 prominent cultural actors (the representatives of local,

national public cultural institutions and NGOs) who provide cultural and artistic guidance and have actively co-created the application process.

The bidding process gained official support in November 2019 when Piran's Municipal Council voted unanimously in favour of the PI2025 candidacy. In December 2019 the current bidbook went on to receive the official endorsement of Piran's, Izola's, Koper's, and Ankaran's Municipal Councils. In addition, it was agreed that the four cities would share the candidacy's financial expenses. The candidacy process thus provided the first example of regional policies coordination in the PIKA area and was the starting point for the first Strategic Statement regarding Kultura.PIKA - later fully endorsed by all parties.

Furthermore, at the time this document was printed, the PI2025 candidacy could count on the formal support of:

1. The Istrian county (HR);
2. Seven (7) Croatian municipalities (Pula, Opatija, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag, Buje);
3. Two (2) Italian municipalities (Trieste, Muggia);
4. The University of Primorska and the Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper);
5. The umbrella coastal institution for the Italian minority (Coastal Self-managed Community of the Italian Nationality)

Letters of support are available at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/pi2025-support>. The hundreds of projects received by dozens of associations, business and individuals proves that our candidacy is a bottom-up, grassroots project that has enjoyed strong support from the entire Istrian territory - finally united in inviting a Wave of Change.

37 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.

Culture will become part of **everyday life** towards 2025 in an extended, decentralised way. We consider almost every place, courtyard, seaside, hinterland, house and corner as potential cultural spaces - even the sea itself. We aim to support alternative tourism and the inclusion of the hinterlands, especially less known, hidden or abandoned places will be highlighted.

An important part of the PI2025 programme will be housed in the **established venues** for cultural activities in the PIKA area: theatres and auditoriums (Tartini Theatre, Auditorium Portorož, Koper Theatre), galleries (Piran Coastal Galleries, Insula Gallery), cultural centres (Tartini House, Palazzo Manzioli, Forma Viva Sculpture Park), university spaces (University of Primorska, ZRS), public libraries, museums (Maritime Museum Piran, Koper Regional Museum) and many others. Several public spaces, **natural** (Strunjan and Sečovlje nature parks) and **urban** (piazzas and gardens, industrial spaces) will also host PI2025 projects and events.

The PI2025 programme will operate as a connector between the cultural institutions of the area, merging policies, strengthening collaboration, attracting new resources to increase the output capacity of these venues, and attract a wider, European audience.

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

SEA-CONNECTION: A cruise terminal in Koper receives 75 cruise vessels bound for the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Several operators offer regular boat rides from Venice to the PIKA area, while a seasonal ferry

service transports passengers between Trieste and Piran during the warmer months.

The roads along the coast are heavily used during the tourist season making movement between these very close neighbours time consuming and ecologically deeply problematic. In order to mitigate these problems, the municipality of Trieste (IT), along with Koper, Ankaran, Piran and Izola have launched a new initiative: **The Adriatic Taxi**, a water taxi service that will operate among the cities overlooking the Gulf of Venice. Founded by the Municipality of Trieste, this alternative water connection will shorten commuting times and bring new audiences to the PI2025 program. It will remain in place after the ECoC year to bring communities of the Northern Adriatic area closer together.

LEAD: Municipality of Trieste (IT)
PARTNERS: Municipalities of Piran, Izola, Koper and Ankaran.

MOTORWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT: The PIKA area is accessible by car and bus - well developed highways connect the PIKA area with Ljubljana, neighbouring Trieste (IT), and Pula (HR). A web of bus routes also connects the PIKA municipalities. **Electric bus** adoption in public transport is growing as is the number of **electric vehicles charging stations** available in all four municipalities. One of the key challenges of the PI2025, however, will be geared towards the identification of environmentally sustainable connections as car traffic collapses in the summer, due to an increased influx towards seaside tourist destinations, with serious implications for the local natural ecosystems and the everyday life of the locals.

RAILWAY: The closest railway station is Koper, which connects to Ljubljana, Hungary, and Austria. The Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) is planning a direct RailJet (high speed train) connection Vienna-Trieste from 2021 which will provide a carbon neutral fast connection.

AIR-CONNECTION: The closest international airport is Portorož Airport, the smallest of three international airports in Slovenia. It is located near the Croatian border and serves the PIKA area along with a number of other tourist destinations in the region, namely Trieste (IT) and Umag (HR). Bigger international airports are also located close-by: Trieste (IT) - Ronchi dei Legionari Airport (82 km); Ljubljana - Jože Pučnik Airport (142 km); Venice (IT) - Marco Polo Airport (190 km); Pula (HR) - Airport Pula (94 km). Accordingly, Piran and the coastal area is easily reachable by plane from basically any point in Europe.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS: The PIKA area is connected to the EuroVelo **long-distance cycling routes** and widely accessible by bike: **Eurovelo 8** and **9** run around the perimeter of the Istrian peninsula while the urban areas have ample cycling lanes and routes.

Several private rental services offer a wide array of environmentally friendly vehicles such

as electric bicycles, mopeds, and e-rollers. The Municipalities of Piran and Koper also offer a public bicycle-sharing service.

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

The PIKA area is a popular seaside destination, with the four municipalities presenting significant differentiation in their touristic offer. Koper, the administrative centre of the area, is especially geared towards big international sports events and business travels. Ankaran, the youngest coastal municipality has yet to establish its profile, although several high-profile medical facilities make it a promising health tourism destination. Izola has a well established reputation as a family-friendly, artsy spot for active holidays. While Piran, along with Portorož, represents one of Slovenia's most renowned and recognised thermal spots, offering a wide array of accommodations of all categories with a focus on spa and wellness services.

Statistic data 2018

CAPACITY	HOTELS	CAMPS	OTHER	TOGETHER
PIKA				28.696
Municipality of Piran	6.310	1.934	6.516	14.760
OVERNIGHT STAYING BY GUESTS	HOTELS	CAMPS	OTHER	TOGETHER
PIKA				3.011.244
Municipality of Piran	1.273.447	104.594	504.341	1.882.382

Sources: Statistic office RS, Touristic board Portorož

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



The PI2025 project will breathe new life into some iconic heritage buildings that will become centres of international cultural collaboration, adding to the cultural infrastructure of the PIKA area to ensure a wider regional and

European outlook for the territory. By bringing cultural activities to these new venues and weaving the programme into the fabric of everyday life, PI2025 will increase audience participation and engagement while steering development towards sustainability and social inclusion.

NEW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Cost of the investment	City budget	National Government – Ministry of Culture	Year of completion
PIRAN / Renovation of two halls in Monfort - Open Design Centre	900.000	450.000	450.000	2024
The former salt warehouse Monfort occupies an area of 4000 m2 right by the sea. Substantial works were carried out in previous years, but the space requires a final renovation phase and furnishings to create office space for the headquarters of PI2025, a gallery focused on modern art and digital culture, and an Open Design Centre that promotes intelligent and sustainable solutions to tackle climate change. Two previously untouched halls of the warehouse will be renovated to house the Regional Cultural Agency, which will represent the legacy of the ECoC 2025.				
PIRAN / Forma Viva – renovation of green areas, car park, access roads and sidewalk	2.050.000	1.025.000	1.025.000	2022
Stone is everywhere in Istria and the Forma Viva open-air sculpture gallery has, for more than 50 years, hosted international symposia for sculptors to work on the Istrian stone. The park requires improvements: the main entrance, the green areas, the car park, the access road, the sidewalk from Lucija to Forma Viva and the public illumination system need to be upgraded.				
PIRAN / Purchase of Trevisini Palace – Centre for music activities	3.000.000	3.000.000	0	2020
The Municipality of Piran is planning the purchase of the Trevisini Palace. The building has already been renovated and does not require any investment in infrastructure. Its purpose will be to house a music centre and international music school. Besides teaching activities, it will host the Tartini international Piano and Violin Competition, the Tartini International Bi-annual Music Festival the Baroque Instrument Museum and Ethnohistoria Festival. The municipality of Piran has already set aside its own funds to buy the building in 2020.				
PIRAN / Krog – Centre for the conservation of Istrian stone heritage	1.000.000	500.000	500.000	2024
Krog is an old monastery located in the hinterland. Part of it will be renovated and become a European knowledge-centre for the preservation and development of skills associated with Istrian stone heritage. Owing to its resistance to water erosion, Istrian stone is found in bridges, palaces and fountains of Venice. Therefore, preserving such monuments requires first-hand knowledge of Istrian stone carving and conservation. Four of the residences will house guest artists and experts. The investment is linked to a successful bid for ECoC.				
PIRAN - TOTAL	6.950.000	4.975.000	1.975.000	

NEW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Cost of the investment	City budget	National Government – Ministry of Culture	Year of completion
IZOLA / Cross generational centre	7.000.000	5.000.000	2.000.000	2025
Izola has both a very old population and a very young one. To bring the two closer together and encourage mutual understanding, the municipality plans to build a cross generational cultural centre, which will benefit the entire coastal area. The centre will span 3.200 m2 and include a large multipurpose outdoor events space, as well as offices for the local Centre for Culture, Sports and Events. The investment is not linked to a successful bid for ECoC.				
IZOLA - TOTAL	7.000.000	5.000.000	2.000.000	
KOPER / Libertas warehouse – festivals and theatre	2.000.000	1.250.000	750.000	2024
The now abandoned salt warehouse next to the port once hosted the Libertas rowing club and, more recently, some local artists' studios. As it represents a monument of local cultural importance, the municipality plans to renovate it to create a hub for cultural festivals, modern theatre performances and creative industries.				
KOPER / Forum Babylon - centre for translation, public events space, digital archive, residences	397.200	200.000	197.200	2022
The building is located along the very central Čevljarska ulica in the old town and rests mostly unused bar for a showroom for local art associations. The plan is to renovate and furnish it so it can host a centre for translating literary works in Slovene, Croatian and Italian, i.e., the languages of the Istrian Peninsula. The new structure will include working spaces, a public events space, a digital archive and residences for guest translators.				
KOPER - TOTAL	2.397.200	1.450.000	947.200	
ANKARAN / Floating movable stage	550.000	275.000	275.000	2023
The municipality of Ankaran is surrounded by the sea; hence, the idea to use the sea as a natural setting for cultural events. To this end, the municipality plans to order the manufacturing and delivery of a floating movable stage that can be placed at different locations along the shore.				
ANKARAN - TOTAL	550.000	275.000	275.000	
TOTAL	16.897.200 69,24%	11.700.000 30,76%	5.197.200	



Artists, cultural operators and institutions who responded to the call include: Teo Tavželj, Jana Kandare (OK - Coastal creatives); Tomi Purich; David Morgan; Miha Rolih; Marko Strle (CKSG - Hearing and Speech Centre, Portorož); Vesna Mikolič, Cécil Meulenberg, Lenart Škof, Lucija Čok (Science and Research Centre Koper); Lara Jeranko Marconi; Valentina Petaros; Zora Mužinič (Local Community of Piran); Tina Cotič, Nina Krivec Rudolf (OPEN GARDENS, Koper); Aljaž Kužner, Mojca Kužner; Metka Magdalena Šori, Vanja Stojanović, Katja Mijajlovič (KUP KULTURA - Ecological, Cultural and Social Society); Slobodan Simič (MEDITERANUM - Institute for Mediterranean Culture Revitalisation, Piran); Nina Mršnik (TOASTED FURNITURE, Koper); Emilia Martensson (BEYOND VOCALS- Festival, Izola/London UK); Neva Čebtron, Tjaša Vilotič (Confucius Classrooms Institute, Koper); Milka Sinkovič (FRIENDS OF ST. GEORGE's - Association, Piran); Maja Bjelica (MUZOFIL - Association for music Awareness, Piran); Darja Vuga; Mateja Kefer; Siniša Bukinac; Brina Knez (Local Community of Strunjan), (Strunjan Nature Park); Tilen Žbona (Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Primorska, Koper); Marko Vivoda (IZIS Lab, Izola); Neža Mekota, Katja Pahor (STRAN 22 - Interdisciplinary Collective, Koper); Marko Čeh; Andrej Koruza (TRAJNA - Collective, Ljubljana); Toni Bračanov (INDE, Association for Urban Development and Alternatives; Koper); Kristina Geogijević; Voga Veneta Group (Italian Community Piran); Urška Bradaškija (TALIA - Theatre School, Koper); Blaž Gracar; Gašper Malej; Damir de Simone (ČAS - Association for Arts and Culture); Matjaž Borovničar, Ana Papež (Piran Coastal Galleries, Piran); Martina Grmek (DANCING DREAMS - Association for Arts and Culture); Tina Trampuš (Slovenian National Conservation Institute); Matija Solce (FLOATING CASTLE - Festival); Alenka Malej (Slovenian National Biology Institute, Piran); Val Apollonio; Samanta Kobal (GAJBLA - Cultural Association, Koper); Jezerka Bešovnik (MIRTA

- Association for Arts and Culture, Izola); Zorko Cerkvenc (Men's Choir, Izola); Agata Tomšič and Davide Sacco (EROSANTEROS - Contemporary Theatre Company, Izola / Ravenna IT); Tatjana Jercog (FRIENDS OF MUSIC - Association, Koper); Renata Kačič, Mojca Fabbro, Noemi Zonta, Josephine Mair (ABBAKUM - Institute for Landscape, Culture and Art, Piran); Igor Likar (ARS RTV Slovenia, Ljubljana); Tadej Droljč; Luka Bevk; Ana Beguš, Katja Hrobat Virloget (Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska); Nevija Božič.

Members of the Artistic Board who have been consulted regularly throughout the process: Irena Urbič, Cultural operator and head of the literary initiative Forum Tomizza; Mario Steffè, Deputy Mayor of the City of Koper and coordinator of cultural events for the Italian Community of Koper; Aleš Gačnik, lecturer at the Faculty of Tourism Studies - Turistica, University of Primorska, expert in cultural heritage, museology and cultural tourism; Franco Juri, Director of the Maritime Museum Piran; Katja Pegan, Director of Koper's Theatre; Lorena Pavlič, Director of Film Culture Institute Otok Izola; Matej Mljač, Architect and founder of the architecture, design and engineering studio DRAFT; Neva Zajc, journalist at the regional centre of RTV Slovenia in Koper and Director of the Primorska Summer Festival; Neža Lipovec Čebtron, Lecturer and researcher of architectural history, conservation and cultural heritage at the University of Primorska; Zvonka Radojevič, Director of the Centre for Culture, Sport and Event Organisation, Izola; Patrik Greblo, orchestra conductor for the public broadcaster RTV Slovenia; Dean Mehmedović, art critic, curator and Director of the Insula Gallery, Izola; Majda Božeglav Japelj, art critic and board member of Piran Coastal Galleries; Simon Krečič, Artistic Director of the Slovenian National Opera Theatre Maribor; Aleksandar Popovski, Artistic Director of the Slovenian National Drama Theatre, Maribor; Nadja Štante Furlan, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Philosophical Studies - Science and Research Centre Koper.

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WAVE OF CHANGE

PIRAN2025 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE – CANDIDATE CITY

Piran2025 Mesto kandidata
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PIRAN-PIRANO 4 ISTRIA 2025

