

European capital of culture candidacy

GO! — — BOR — DER — — LESS

Nova Gorica • Gorizia

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INTRODUCTION AND LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Turning the spiral upwards by building
a new cultural ecosystem.



photo: Alan Marc

Mayors Klemen Miklavič and Rodolfo Ziberna and EGTC GO president Matej Arčon on the new cross-border bridge.

Q1. CONCEPT OF THE PROGRAMME

It may be a bit awkward to stick with a borderless concept, while Europe seems to be going in the opposite direction. It only took a couple of covid weeks to dangerously shift the European political thought toward self-sufficiency, economic isolation and nation-first politics, causing new tensions and forms of mistrust. In the midst of what appears to be the dreaded second wave, we do not know what the post-pandemic economic situation will bring: it may cause a lowering of standards in human rights and social welfare or a backlash on sustainable politics, bringing back the "profit before environment" paradigm. Our dream, a transnational European city, a place where people and ideas are treasured and respected regardless of their cultural, national, linguistic or any other background, today seems even a bigger illusion than a year ago.

But difficult is our trade. We chose to launch a cross-border candidacy, fully aware of the complications. While the world stood still, in the middle of the lockdown, we actively created digital content, producing more than 20 videos and hosting on-line Slovenian and Italian language courses. We squeezed eight live events in the short, almost covid-free months and turned GO! 2025 in a lively on-line and off-line community, that reaches more than 40,000 people a week. When we have to be physically distant, we can, paradoxically, become socially closer.

And Europe, really, had never been easy. The so-called Paris treaty, establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, signed in 1951, states: "Europe can only be built through concrete activities that create above all a de facto solidarity."

De facto, in 2020, two lovers, a man from Switzerland and a woman from Germany, met on Lake Constance's shoreline. They put a blanket on the ground and held hands under an iron fence. The good people of Lauterbach (Völklingen) in Germany, used to their cross-border French croissants and baguettes, came to the border every day to buy them. Some even with a fishing rod, to respect social distance. It happened in the common square between Nova Gorica and Gorizia and all over the continent: the same exchanges, the same vibe, a strange mix of anxiety and excitement. Strangely, even the fences looked the same, as if made in one single factory, in a Steel Community. Well, a baguette on a fishing rod might be a form of de facto solidarity, but maybe not exactly what the founding fathers had imagined for the European union. We would have thought by 2020 borders were a beast, docile and tamed. What creates the lover's dilemma

and the croissants affair is the rigid and lifeless understanding of how people live and what European regions are. A cold war approach we still cling to. The planned conurbation of Nova Gorica and Gorizia challenges this approach. We want to show that border cities and regions can be an opportunity for Europe. People from Lauterbach could have worked out their epidemiologic issues with the neighbouring French baguette paradise, named Carling. And people of both Gorizias could have agreed upon a safe exchange of coffee and cheese. If they had only let them. The EU is a union of national states. But only when we will be able to see it also as an alliance of regions and a community of people, will we truly live as Europeans, building that long lasting peace and prosperity we dream about.

We have spent most of our March and April on the border. We played, sang, painted, working with the local art community, trying to find a creative way to respond to an unprecedented crisis. We opened The Window, a small hole of hope in the fence, a symbol of what our ECoC wants to be: "The GO! 2025 window for kisses and a coffee with friends, handshakes and high-fives."

The fence eventually fell, but only for some time and only for some of us. Yes, you could cross the border between two European states, but not if you were Syrian or Nigerian. For refugees and migrants 2020 has brought an even higher level of uncertainty and despair. And a new wave of hate and fear. If so far in a typical xenophobic rhetoric foreigners were stealing our jobs, threatening our culture and way of life, now they are also a walking infectious disease. For a while, you could go to a concert, but not if you had hearing problems or a social anxiety disorder. You could get out of the house, if you were not 85 and living alone on the fourth floor without an elevator. Or if you even didn't have a house to get out of. You could go back to work, if you had a job at all and return to the shops, if you had money to spend. We might wear the same masks, but we are definitely not on the same boat.

The second lockdown hit just days before we had to finish this bid book. Closed schools, closed theatres, closed shops. And closed borders quickly followed, again with little regard to the borderless everyday reality of many European regions.

So: we need a much bigger window in our European fence. For GO! 2025 this was the most important lesson of 2020.

Q2. CULTURAL STRATEGY

As we described in the preliminary application, the cultural strategy for Nova Gorica was approved in November 2019 by the city's municipal council. The **5 key goals** which were identified in the strategy remain in place and we explain below how we have prioritised the delivery of those goals both strategically and through the projects of our artistic programme.

Our other, more ambitious cultural **goal was to develop a ground-breaking cross border strategy** across our two bordering municipalities. Strategy goes borderless. Then of course corona struck. Bringing our borders back. This meant that we didn't quite "zoom" towards the complete creation of our "declaration of cultural borderlessness". And yet despite the forced erection of new physical borders, we have managed a formal approval by both municipalities. We mapped the existing situation in terms of cross-border cultural production and audiences. We created a digital survey for cul-

tural associations in Italy and Slovenia and hosted dedicated talks with cultural institutions from both sides of the border. We especially focussed our analysis on what it would take to grow a cross-border audience. It showed us that the potential was there, although we also focussed on barriers such as language, ticketing etc. Those practical issues that often trip up the clever strategic thinking.

Equipped with data and input, in collaboration with the two municipal administrations we defined the strategic goals of the cross-border cultural strategy as described in the table below. We worked with the two administrations in finding the way to include the strategy in the existing legal framework, ensuring a real impact of the strategy on future cultural policies of both Gorizia and Nova Gorica.

The draft was approved by both municipal administrations and is ready to be presented to both councils.

Nova Gorica Strategy goals	Cross border Strategy goals	Potential benefit	Reflected in GO 2025
An important cultural and creative centre	Shared system for cultural production Cross border cultural production	Shared resources Ability to access more cross-border funding Audience growth Sector capacity building	EPICentre GO2GreenGo DESTYniation Cultural Improvement District, the Episcopo
Revitalising cultural heritage sites	Culture as a force for development – the modernisation of cross-border heritage	Using the strength of our shared history to unite us for the future rather than using our past relationships to divide us	Sounds of Nature Brave New World Future of Food cultural sites as venues
A strong cultural tourism model for the region	A shared "conurbation brand"	Increasing long term economic benefit through visitor and investment of new businesses in the region	Rescuers of Memory Art as Refuge Into Nature cultural products development marketing strategy
Nova Gorica innovative city	Culture as a major force for cross border development	Promoting the region as a location for social and cultural innovation. Jointly addressing the different but connected issues of the "twin city centres"	Pixxel-X Cantaquartieri Borderless Body residencies digital outreach school related activities
Nova Gorica - European city	European conurbation	Bringing best practice and shared ideas to create a significant, dynamic and forward-thinking region Addressing post-covid challenges to city and town centres	All Man's Land March for Europe Borderless Wireless capacity ABC residencies international network

Q3. LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Our long-term goals remain the same. GO! 2025 is a stepping stone toward a cross-border conurbation, a green, vital, sustainable city, open to Europe and the world, dynamic and entrepreneurial-minded. A city to become and remain a pleasant, happy, creative environment for its citizens and a beacon of solidarity and collaboration across all kinds of borders.

Building on pre-selection

We had to plan, defend and explain the foreseen long-term effects of our activities in a period of deep crisis, economic and social pessimism. This forced us to be more concrete and clearer in presenting our project to stakeholders in different fields. And clarity only comes from conviction.

The covid crisis pushed us to critically re-examine the foreseen long-term effects set as described in the pre-selection phase. Saying that the ECoC is even more important in difficult times and that culture is a catalyser of social and economic growth, is easy. Convincing an artist, that hasn't been paid for months, a politician, forced to cut budgets or a bar owner who had to let go half of his staff, that GO! 2025 is exactly what they need, is much more difficult.

And we feel we have to be convincing, because an ECoC will hardly achieve any long-term impact if its delivery is not firmly linked to the existing and emerging strategies. To strengthen the conviction, we:

- **visited all the 13 Slovenian municipalities in the included area.**

Talking with mayors, municipal administrations, cultural and other stakeholders, we discussed the impact of the project on specific needs and ambitions of the involved communities. We entered in a dynamic exchange, following up on our discussions and we reflected those conclusions throughout this document

- **extended our area of interest.**

We gained the formal support of 27 municipalities in the province of Gorizia and beyond. We are aware that widening the area at this point of the bid could create management issues. However, we engineered a new level of partnership with local communities, which can raise our content diversity and capacity to deliver in terms of accommodation, infrastructure, logistics and mobility.

- **initiated a broad dialogue with the economic sector**

We presented our candidacy to all relevant economic institutions in the region. The Chamber of industry and the Chamber of crafts in Slovenia and the Chamber of Commerce and Confederations of industry, crafts and commerce

(Confindustria, Confartigianato, Confcommercio) in Italy. All signed a formal letter of support. We talked with leaders of other economic alliances, formed mostly during the covid crisis (Rešimo Goriško - Let's save the Goriška region, Association of Nova Gorica IT businesses etc.) and with over 30 singular companies (from big industrial companies to craft breweries). With the University of Nova Gorica we organised a World cafe workshop for 40 CEOs of regional companies.

- **included the goals of our bid in existing or forming strategies.**

With the regional managing authority (The Posoški development centre) and the municipalities we started including GO! 2025 in the draft of the Regional development plan (expected to be confirmed at the beginning of 2021). We are developing tools to connect the bid to the Project of territorial development, which will be a basic document in the next programming period Interreg Italy-Slovenia mechanism.

- **connected GO! 2025 with the Pilot cities program of Agenda 21**

Nova Gorica is among Agenda 21 Pilot cities. The workshop conclusions have shown that the city can bring together and galvanise a diverse and engaged group of local actors from diverse backgrounds, as stakeholders in what are early steps in a collaborative process of planning and change. But the workshop has also shown several weaknesses, one of them being a lack of platforms and networks across several fields of development, a mechanism to build transparency, openness and broaden participation. We contributed to the first draft of the Work Programme and we are preparing an extended version to further explore programs and tools for a more efficient cross-sectoral collaboration.

2 cities, 3 goals

When in 2016 the idea of the GO! 2025 candidacy was born, it raised from the bitter realisation that the region is slowly spiralling down and is in desperate need of turning the spiral upwards. "30 years ago, when we came to the capital, we would talk about the latest trends, now we can only listen," the director of the Chamber of Industry **Nevenka Volk Rožič** puts it.

The answer to our many challenges is our "new cultural ecosystem". It is built upon values and ambitions we identified in the pre-selection phase and clarified and sharpened in the selection phase. We take the term "cultural ecosystem" from priority 3 in the Council of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022. In the chart below, we explain how our levels of activities bring the two cities toward the achievement of the three strategic goals, set as a long-term impact on the cultural, economic, urban and social field in our pre-selection bid.



photo: Jure Batagelj

Spiral down (our challenges)

Degraded urban areas

Degraded border economy

Demographic issues, braindrain

Language barriers, the burden of history

Economic marginalisation



New cultural ecosystem (our values)

Urban development, new neighbourhood

Conurbation, European citizenship

Rise in awareness, culture as catalyser

International profile, multilingualism

Innovation, out of the box thinking



2021 - 2025 - delivery

Urban development strategy



Cross-border cultural strategy



GO! 2025



Regional development plan (Interreg, IT)



Tourism development and common city brand



Legacy - long term impact

Nova Gorica and Gorizia - one cross-border European city

A green, vibrant city with high quality of life

An innovative, entrepreneurial-minded city

Goal1: Nova Gorica and Gorizia - one cross-border European city

Sometimes we feel we are almost there. But the past months have shown us **how fragile our collaboration really is**. It only took a restaurateur, who decided to sell his hamburgers across the border in the middle of the lockdown to re-inflate the debate about Slovenian businesses stealing money from Italians and vice versa. GO! 2025 will raise the share of cross-border audience on cultural events, it will promote multilingualism, it will find new solutions for the post-border economy and it will transform the degraded border area.

To cement this beyond the risk of remaining inconsequential we will:

- **make sure that the Cross-border cultural strategy is included in the legal frame of both communities as a long-term policy that future administrations will be bound to implement;**
- **push the municipal administrations to start working on a common urban development strategy and a tourism and city-brand strategy not later than 2021;**
- **use the build-up phase to open a ruthlessly honest debate about why language is still an ideological issue;**
- **stick to the bottom-up approach, working with and for the citizens, embracing their sensibilities, gently and respectfully pushing their boundaries.**

Goal2: A green, vibrant city with a high quality of life

Where will your children work? Will they have to move to the big city? Funny enough, this seems to be the basic common denominator for most of Nova Gorica's and Gorizia's population. The catastrophic demographic trends, the painful brain-drain, the closing shops, the empty flats: these are the real issues of the territory. GO! 2025 will attract visitors and develop new products in cultural and gastronomical tourism, it will change the two cities' atmosphere and make them a more desirable place to come and live, it will get us in touch with contemporary approaches and life-styles. But to reach the most ambitious part of this goal, reducing the gap between age average in the cities and nation-wide by year 2040, a consistent and well-planned long-term work is needed. We will:

- **include the ECoC goals in the Regional development plan, which is being drafted currently, and in future development plans, fully aware that we have to coordinate our efforts;**
- **raise the role of creative industries in our program and put more emphasis on job creating activities (new tourism offers, IT products etc);**
- **engage the population in discussions about green mobility and sustainable housing.**

Goal3: An innovative, entrepreneurial-minded city

A **basic lack of ambition** and spirit of entrepreneurship is what binds all our challenges. Winning the ECoC title should be the first step toward a deep change in our mind-set, a proof that success is reachable, that change is possible and that creativity and creative people are our best assets. And yet, we must also learn to connect art and technology, to engage in cross-sectoral cooperation, develop creative, social, artistic entrepreneurship. Art transforms cities, but it is not a magic wand.

"My biggest fear is that culture, as always, will be the first victim of the economic crisis," the local new media artist **Sendi Mango** said during one of many GO! 2025 virtual talks. And it is, along with science. GO! 2025 will build platforms for all kinds of innovation, it will bring together art and technology, culture and economy, foster cultural entrepreneurship with European and international links. But convincing decision makers to invest in activities today, expecting added value tomorrow, is a continuous struggle. Motivating people to invest their time and energy in culture, empower them to dare making creativity their trade is a goal GO! 2025 has to achieve. To do that we will:

- **continue working with the economic sector from the get-go, listening to stakeholders and finding a way to promote a real, direct dialogue between companies and institutions;**
- **produce a dedicated five-year work plan to expand the territory's international connections on all fields;**
- **introduce innovative tools, e.g. in urban planning (the Cultural District Improvement) and cultural tourism (The Experience Factory).**



Q4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

GO! 2025's definition of success is to overcome tangible and intangible barriers between our cities and in our societies (as easy as it sounds, this is by no means trivial). To prove how a borderless life (and cross-border management) can be relevant for strengthening the peripheries and creating precedents **at the seams of the European patchwork**.

Success for us is to witness multilingual discussions in theatres, bars and supermarkets. Success is to have an integrated cross-border cultural offer, attended by a multicultural and intergenerational audience, in cultural venues that are committed to promote accessibility for all. Success is to appreciate sustainable farming, gardening and our (agri)cultural heritage for innovative solutions in greener European cities. Success is to be a proud, entrepreneurial-minded city with opportunities that benefit the locals and attract visitors and new residents from all over.

GO! 2025 will open new cultural landscapes, bring about mind-shift, gather and reconstruct differences as perspectives: it is the process as much as the goal. It is about outcomes more than outputs.

But can we measure those success factors? We certainly intend to try. We have clear objectives, milestones and KPIs and a solid Monitoring and Evaluation strategy, conceived to become a useful tool for pursuing, assessing and meeting the key goals and objectives we set for GO! 2025. At the same time, we intend that this process will provide valuable information, lessons learnt and good practices for future ECoCs and also for local and national cultural projects of a significant scale. More generally, we would like to contribute with new data and insights to the overall assessment of ECoC as an EU action.

Our strategic plan for Monitoring and Evaluation is based on the following multi-step strategy.

9 step strategy and the Curriculum of Space

1. Appoint an independent institution/company to oversee the process, such as the Institute of International Sociology - ISIG, based in Gorizia, which has already been involved in the bidding process, and designed this M&E strategy. This body will benefit from the support of other

local research institutions (i.e. University of Nova Gorica – Research Centre for Humanities and School of Engineering and Management; University of Trieste – Departments of Economics and Statistics and of Social and Political Sciences; University of Udine – Departments of Economics and Statistics and of Humanities and Cultural Heritage; Slovenian Research Institute – SLORI). Furthermore, the Company BonsAI will integrate the M&E with a multilingual sentiment analysis in order to monitor how locals and visitors feel about GO! 2025 and our cross-border area.

2. Establish a solid cross-border framework to demonstrate measurable progress. In elaborating such a system for GO! 2025, the first and foremost challenge is represented by the cross-border nature of the project itself. This affects monitoring and evaluation on different stages, from the cross-border harmonization of pertinent indicators to the process of cross-border data gathering. In our specific situation, the cross-border base-line studies available are very limited, such as:

- **"The strategic role of the EGTC GO** for the socio-economic development of the Cross-border Area" (2017, Chamber of Commerce of Gorizia/ISIG/IRES), providing a statistically significant background of data and proposing a strategic work program for local development shared by all relevant stakeholders.
- **DIVA strategic Interreg IT – SLO** project's overall objective is to create an ecosystem of cross-border cooperation in which social and technological innovations for the future society will emerge. By mapping, analyzing, encouraging, modelling and piloting the creative and economy sector. With the DIVA results (tools) we will enable the inception of an innovation, production and user ecosystem, in which chain structures will be established connecting innovators and creatives with the economy, so that the flow from idea to verified and practical solution becomes fast, successful, and sustainable in the long run.
- **The mapping of Gorizia's high school** students' cultural consumption realized during the preparation phase to foster the elaboration of a common audience development strategy. This will be extended to the entire cross-border region.
If the two cities will become ECoC, in 2021 it will be then imperative to conduct several base-line surveys to establish the situation before the beginning of the process (i.e. cultural vibrancy of the area, levels on integration of the cultural offer, ...).

3. Adopt several fundamental criteria informing the M&E:

- internal and external coherence: that is the logic between both the levels of the ECoC activities as well as between ECoC activities and policies;
- effectiveness of the action;
- efficiency of the action;
- fair distribution of benefits and costs between stakeholders;
- sustainability;
- multiplier effect.

4. Design strategic sets of objectives and dimensions

that manage both to capture issues specific to GO! 2025 and its context and to link them to larger M&E frameworks. These include UNESCO 17 sustainable development goals and its Culture 2030 indicators, and the EU Cultural and Creative Cities monitor.

5. Select the relevant cross-border indicators for each dimension and design the related data collection tools, both qualitative and quantitative. Some examples:

- statistics (eg. GDP, number of hotel bed increase, number of tickets, etc.)
- in-depth interviews with key stakeholders;
- focus group interviews with cultural, economic, third-sector actors;
- citizens surveys;
- "customer" satisfaction;
- sentiment analysis, with both a local focus (to see, for example, if we are impacting the integration discourse), and at EU level (to see if we manage to reach out to international audiences). Sentiment analysis may indeed be carried out both in person, with interviews or facial-recognition tools, and remotely, via digital surveys or analysing customer feedbacks (i.e. social media trends and discussions);
- monitoring of managing authority performance (e.g. openness on budget, effectiveness, etc.).

6. Start the first stage of monitoring process in January 2021 (ex ante evaluation).

7. Implement the data gathering, monitoring and analysis on regular intervals (in itinere evaluations). The strategy foresees a regular implementation every 4 months until December 2026. This is when the final evaluation (ex-post) will be performed to assess the overall implementation as well as the cultural, social, economic and urban impact of ECoC. The 4-month periodicity allows for adjustments to be introduced in timely contingency plans to ensure not only monitoring of the progress but also the prompt implementation of effective adaptation strategies in line with our overall objectives. Every year, starting, in March 2021 a yearly report will be drafted summarising monitoring efforts as well as highlighting deviations and responses.

8. Our strategy identifies the GO! 2025 **Curriculum of Space** as its main dissemination tool, fuelled with data and inputs gathered through monitoring. If a CV is a detailed document highlighting one's professional history, the Curriculum of Space is the way in which we will provide an updated overview of the cross-border space life, depicting in an engaging way the rise of the actual social and economic capacity of GO! 2025 ecosystem in an accessible and engaging way. Furthermore, it aims at fostering comparability of results and providing insights on successes and failures to previous and future ECoCs – not only cross-border – and other large-scale events, thus promoting effective transfer of knowledge. A protocol based on the GO! 2025 M&E strategy and the Curriculum of Space will be adopted by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – EGTC GO in order to regularly assess the cultural environment of the area after 2025.

9. Dissemination of the results. In order to make the results of the evaluation accessible and useful for different targets, the dissemination strategy that we will implement will make use of different channels, activities and materials.

- **GO! 2025 platform.** It will host the Curriculum of Space as well as the reports produced every 4 months
- **Public presentations** (every 4 months). To show to citizens and local stakeholders the progress of GO! 2025, receive their inputs, further engage them in the activities and build their ownership of the project.
- **Social media.** To announce the presentations, the publication of the reports as well as the update of the Curriculum of space. Social media will be also used to regularly diffuse specific results of the M&E through infographics, short clips and slides.
- **International conferences.** To attend international conferences in order to present the development of M&E as well as its results.
- **International networks.** To apply/join international network to present evaluation results and foster exchanges and knowledge transfer (i.e. UNESCO Creative cities; Capitales Européennes de la Culture et Cohésion Urbaine transfrontalière).
- **Publications.** To publish the M&E final report and make it freely available from the GO! 2025 platform.

The tables on page 11 and 12 aim to give an overview of the structure of the M&E, linking the general objectives with more specific goals. Also dimensions and key indicators that will ensure their measurability and, in the end, map the GO! 2025 road to success.

Not only will we see lots of multilingual cultural discussions in our coffee shops and bars, but we will also be able to measure them!

Objective 1:	NOVA GORICA AND GORIZIA - ONE CROSS-BORDER EUROPEAN CITY		
	Specific Objectives	Dimensions	Indicators (examples)
Culture	To establish a cross-border cultural ecosystem in the two cities	Cultural institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in cultural institutions participating in the GO! 2025 network; Increase in cross-border partnerships, co-productions and collaborations for cultural events.
		Cross-border Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of cross-border participation in cultural events.
		European networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the joint participation of the two cities in European networking and projects (i.e. Network of towns).
Social	To foster a multicultural environment	Multilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of multilingualism (i.e. Slovenes speaking Italian, Italians speaking Slovenian, inhabitants speaking more than two languages); Increase of cultural activities fostering multilingualism;
		Proximity to European values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of events highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history; Increase in the number of events fostering cultural diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding between European citizens
Economic	To foster cross-border cultural, oenological and gastronomical tourism	Attractiveness of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in Tourism Direct Gross Domestic Product of the area; New sustainable tourist integrated offers (i.e. cultural, oenological, gastronomical).
		Attractiveness of the cultural offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in museums' visitors; festivals' and cultural events' participants;
Urban development	To give new life to border areas	Border area mobility and urban design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in urban cross-border cycling paths; Number of new cross-border urban corridors; quality of revitalisation of degraded border area.
Objective 2:	A GREEN, VIBRANT CITY WITH A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE		
	Specific Objectives	Dimensions	Indicators (examples)
Culture	To improve the cultural vibrancy of the area	Cultural offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of cross-border cultural events and visitor numbers; Increase in satisfaction rates.
Social	To moderate demographic ageing and brain drain	Opportunities & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of career paths and guidance for young people in the field of culture; Increase of internships/stages in the field of culture.
		Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New residents in the area; Reduction of the gap to national age average.
Economic	To contribute to the economic prosperity of the area	Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New companies (i.e. creative industries); New technological / sustainable solutions offered by local companies;
		Jobs and careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in average wage; New creative & knowledge-based jobs.
Urban development	To foster cross-border urban integration	City centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in motorised traffic in city centres; Increase of bike sharing opportunities;
		Suburban and rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in suburban and rural cycling paths; Increase in public transport connecting suburban and rural areas with city centres;

Objective 3:	AN INNOVATIVE, ENTREPRENEURIAL-MINDED CITY		
	Specific Objectives	Dimensions	Indicators (examples)
Culture	To increase capacity in cross-sector cooperation	Co-productions and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cross-border/cross-sector co-productions for cultural events; • Increase partnership between education institutions, cultural associations and economic sector;
		Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of capacity of cultural sector to access funding from international and from private sources; • Increase of the overall culture budget.
Social	To promote participation and inclusion	Associations and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of new associations and NGOs; • Increase in membership of associations and NGOs, especially age group 15-25).
		Inclusion and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of cultural activities/events aimed at including marginalised groups; • New innovative community networks; • Decrease of digital divide across socio-economic and age lines; • Increase in the accessibility of venues and cultural offer (borderless spaces).
Economic	To increase the weight of cultural/creative and sustainable economy	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New start-ups; • Increase of regional GDP from hi-tech and e-mobility industries.
		Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of zero-waste/low-impact cultural events; • Decrease in environmental impact of the agricultural and tourism sectors.
Urban development		Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovated heritage sites; • Increase of public programs organised in heritage sites.
		Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of citizens with access to a common cross-border free internet connection; • Increase in zero emission vehicles, smart grids and networks; • Increase in applications to innovative pilot urban development projects.

CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT

With our GO! Borderless we want to activate
all of the deep potential of our people,
places, languages and cultures.



The cycling tunnel in the All man's land is to become a show-room for GO! 2025 launch.

Q5. ARTISTIC VISION

With our artistic vision and strategy GO! Borderless we want to activate all of the deep potential of our people, places, languages and cultures. Full of dynamism and energy we launch: All Systems GO!

To bring out that cheerful and lively dynamic we literally need some systems to go. As in: really go away forever. The ideological systems of the 20th century and their sad remains we still cling to when we don't have anything to look forward to. The language system that is still prey to ideology and encourages us to be monolingual in a multilingual world. The narrow systems of our preconceptions and prejudices. The systematic disregard towards ethnic, cultural, social and other minorities.

What we want to create is a new cultural ecosystem, a new sense and culture of being one city in two countries. A truly borderless and multilingual shared cultural space in which everyone can finally feel at home and be heard. Our artistic strategy is our GO! 2025 countdown.

3 - Communication GO!

Our stories are European stories. And yet we are too concentrated on our border and what lies left and right of it, as if it was the only border area in the world. (Come to think of it – the majority of borders around the world have been created by Europeans. Perhaps we do have “Borderitis” in Europe.)

We think we can learn to let GO of some less useful systems if we connect our stories (which are often hidden and difficult to tell) with those of other border areas around Europe. And beyond. We know that, out of fear and disillusion, too many times our doors stay shut, making it harder to really communicate. That we are too often hostages of our past, incapable of looking outward together. And if this is true for our small area, how much more for our communication and view towards the bigger European context. This has to change. Culture and artistic interpretations as a common language allow us to tell and understand all these stories – ours, yours and theirs – in a more common and permeating way, transcending the blockages impeding their free circulation. **The EPICenter, the Rescuers of Memory, Art as a Refuge** will make those electrons flow in the wires that connect us.

2 – Navigation GO!

What lies ahead? What are we looking at? If we put our stories in order, open our historical doors, where will we go? For the last decades we have not been very good in making strategic plans and now that we have taken a good look at one another, across the border, and realize there are more people in similar situations all around the world, it is time

to set the course. Projects like **DESTINYation, Borderless Body, Pixel-X** are there to show the way toward the future. Artists, researchers, cultural operators will come to make us realize how wide and bright the world out there is. A world we want to see and that wants to see us.

1 – Engines GO!

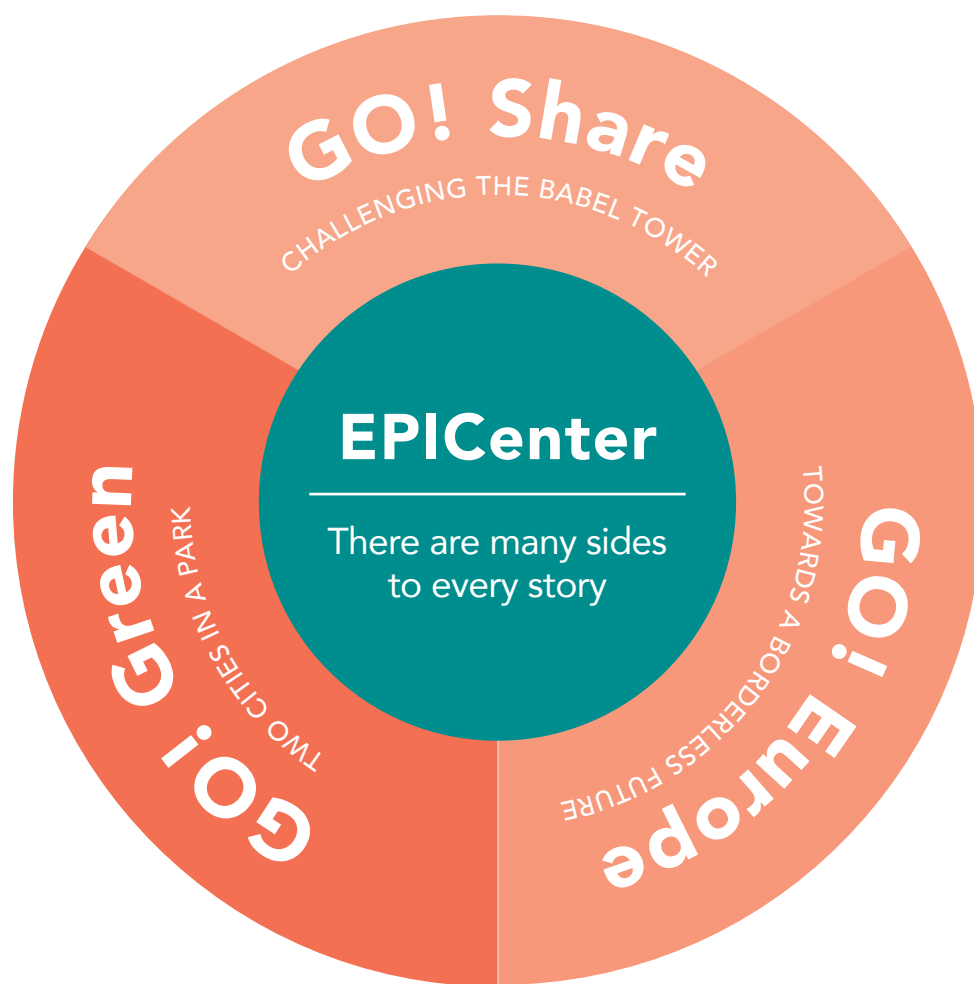
We can. But we can't. We have knowledge, creativity, we have top of the world artists and scientists, we are capable of winning European and World championships in many disciplines. But we are unable to gather our forces, coordinate our efforts and make the so needed step forward. It is almost as if we were talking about Europe here, but, no, in this case we are talking about our GO-GO area. We remain a periphery, though we would not need to. **Neighbourhood, Experience Factory, Cinecittà** will check the turbines. **ISOlabs, Meeting Point, The March of Europe**: big, inclusive and loud projects will be the fuel we need to make us proud, to make us roar.

0 – GO! Launch.

All of the efforts come together to launch the 2025 year and its legacy. A look at Q3 and the graph it contains makes clear how our artistic vision and strategy of GO! Borderless connects to long-term strategies and objectives.

The vision of GO! Borderless translates our challenges into the new cross-border cultural ecosystem and the values we share with each other and across Europe. Our artistic vision links into the 2021-2025 delivery strategy. Creating synergies between the European Capital of Culture and the urban and cross-border cultural strategies, the regional development plan and the tourism and city brand development scheme. The objectives set out for GO! 2025 can only be reached if the artistic vision and strategy is supported throughout city administrations, regional and national government(s) along with partners from the economic, urban, and social sectors. It is inherent in the European Dimension and a pillar of our approach in Outreach.

The orchestration of all elements taken together, all playing the same tune on different instruments determines the capacity with which we can deliver an exceptional European Capital of Culture.



Q6. CULTURAL PROGRAM

The common square between the cities remains the centre of our cultural and artistic program: the EPICenter, the location of our candidacy office, the spot we would like to become the entry point into our GO! Borderless universe. We put the square in the EPICenter of the cultural earthquake we would like to provoke, because we do not see it just as a meeting point between our two cities, but also as a symbolic stitch of European diversities: the cultures, languages, traditions, experiences this continent is made off and from.

From this focal point three rays reach out, three topics we see as crucial for our future: collaboration, connectivity and sustainability.

We dedicated special attention to the **digital extension** of our program.

Projects with content, which can be produced and shown to the public through digital channels and regardless of potential social distancing measures are marked with an icon.

GO! EUROPE

is about becoming one city, facing each other instead of standing back to back, connecting, being open, being close and orienting towards a borderless future.

GO! SHARE

is about all our languages and codes which we communicate with, about passive bilingualism.

GO! GREEN

is about green, sustainable, promoting the local food, vine, fusion cuisine of different types of food from both sides and concerning all of us, our health, our wellbeing in Europe.

Each of the cornerstones encompasses a flagship project and 4 clusters of projects.

All partners are confirmed unless otherwise stated.

DIGITAL



EPICENTER

THE SQUARE

The complete renovation of the shared urban area.

With this project triggered and driven by the GO! 2025 bid we are creating a joint living room for the two cities. Each city has their main squares, but this one will become the point which will belong to us in common. Both municipalities have voted on a complete reinvention of the square and, in February 2020, with the support of the GO! 2025 team, launched an international architectural competition to bring in new ideas.

The competition was conducted in accordance with the Union International des Architects – UNESCO standard regulations for international architecture and urban planning competitions, which guarantees excellence in the fields of architecture, sustainability and cultural diversity. 54 projects from 18 countries, such as Italy (19), Slovenia, Spain and France (5), as well as Uganda, the Russian Federation and Japan were received.

The first prize has been awarded to the Rome-based **Studio Associato di Architettura Baglivo Negrini**. Their project sees our beloved square as a roof for a new, underground multifunctional space for social aggregation – the EPIC. On the Piazza itself, several mobile platforms can lower and rise, becoming seats, tables, square, a stage or a space with umbrellas or deck chairs. A square that represents Europe with many faces that are however ready to move in harmony.

That way the new square will serve three purposes: it will become the home of our new EPIC-building in two states, an open-air venue for concerts and other events and a city point where people from both sides of the border will come together to enjoy events, food, drink and socializing.

The International jury has chosen the most significant works that best represent the idea of a new common territory straddling the border, a European and cultural mending, which assists the candidacy of Nova Gorica and Gorizia as European Capital of Culture 2025.

But what is a shiny new square if people are not used to visit and live it? GO! 2025 is a perfect opportunity to bring this new space to life with numerous activities.

EPIC – A STEP INTO THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE



A new physical and digital exhibition space in a building in two countries, hosting a unique exhibition that will encourage the audience to reflect not only on historical, but also on present events, promoting human rights and European values.

If the square is a representation of Europe, then what lies beneath? What are the hidden layers of our unity and diversity? How is it like to see, hear and feel the story of the terrible and magnificent 20th century in a building, literally divided by a national border?

The EPIC will reflect the legacy of both world wars, migrations, family divisions and different interpretations of the contested cities' histories. It will highlight national idiosyncrasies and the cities' common European values. It will develop a new understanding of the complex relationships between historical narratives, including those of minorities, marginal communities and newcomers. It will use and compare hidden cultural heritage as a platform to empower people, enabling a greater sense of European inclusion, while promoting human rights and unique identities.

The EPIC will be a learning and education center that will tell locals and international visitors about the region's turbulent past. And it will be a social arena for interpretation and creativity, as it will not only show our common story from two different perspectives, but also discuss and integrate in the storytelling the third, external, European and global point of view.

The permanent part of the EPIC exhibition will explore three crucial historical periods:

- **The new century:** 1900 - 1920 (Austro-Hungarian Gorizia, national movements, multiculturalism and development, WWI, Isonzo Front and its battles, refugees, art and literature).
- **Europe in Totalitarianism:** 1920 - 1947 (new borders, rebuilding Gorizia, the rise of fascism, migrations and colonialism, WWII, foibe massacres, period of allied military government).
- **Postwar Europe:** 1948 - 2004 (building Nova Gorica, postwar politics and relations between Italy and Yugoslavia, escaping to the West, everyday life by the iron fence).

The topics will be presented with the use of innovative approaches, new multimedia technologies and intercultural mediating methods. A Board of Trustees, nominated by the municipalities, will supervise the general management of the project. An Academic Committee, composed of state-of-the-art historians and museologists, will supervise and advise on the curatorial content. Curatorial groups from Italy and Slovenia will build different, but connected narratives. But the EPIC will not only be a permanent exposition. It will host temporary exhibitions, chosen to either show comparable historical experiences from other parts of Europe and the world or to explore contemporary phenomena, dilemmas about truth, narratives and points of view in the digitized, informatized 21st century. If EPIC would already stand today, for example, it could not avoid a project about the covid pandemic criticism and conspiracy theories.

And finally, EPIC will be a platform of dialogue, a venue for events. In 2025 an augmented edition of the international **festival èStoria** will animate the cross-border area to involve the broadest and most composite possible public closer to the great themes of historiography.

Partners: Goriški museum; ERPAC - Museums provinciali; National Museum of Contemporary History Ljubljana; èStoria Association (SLO & IT) History museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Elma Hašimbegović, Sarajevo (BIH); Topography of Terror Foundation, Dr. Thomas Lutz, Berlin (DE); Museum of Yugoslavia, Neda Knežević, Beograd (SRB); EUROM European Observatory on Memories of the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation, Jordi Guixé i Coromines, Barcelona (ES); European University Institute, Dr. Pieter M. Judson, Firenze (IT); State Ethnographic Collections Saxony (DE).

-  FROM 2022 ON, OPENING FEBRUARY 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  300,000 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OF 10M € FOR THE TRG EVROPE / PIAZZA TRANSALPINA PROJECT AS EXPLAINED IN Q25 AND Q27

FROM STATION TO STATION GO! 2025 OPENING

A music festival and an artistic adventure in the border area. The perfect opening event for our ECoC year!

They say that, on a winter night of 1975, David Bowie arrived with a bus in Nova Gorica. Apparently, he passed the entire night walking around, writing down ideas, humming melodies. So many swear they met him, but no pictures were taken, smartphones not existing yet. One year later, his new album *Station to Station* was published. They say that the experience of that night in the two cities was fundamental in shaping one of Bowie's "most accessible yet most impenetrable" albums. Fake news? Urban legend?

From station to station (S2S) will be a unique urban festival. Participants will be able to wander freely or to pick a volunteer guide who will lead them through several possible itineraries connecting five thematic music "stages" managed by local NGOs in collaboration with international curators (a jazz club cabaret hidden in the streets of Gorizia, a rock stage in Nova Gorica's travnik, an international folk hub, etc.).

Reality will interact with fiction and memory thanks to the site-specific **Audio-video Memory Experiences** created by the NGO Associazione quarantasettezeroquattro and the company aquasumARTE: three itineraries pushing the boundaries of space and time in which the participants, equipped with headphones and tablets, can meander between the present of S2S and those same streets of 1975 in which Bowie was possibly seen and, perhaps, even meet him. As many festivals, S2S will also have an **underground dimension** ... this time though, this has to be interpreted in the most literary sense of the term: thanks to the Seppenhof Centre for Research of the Carst, those that are brave enough will be able to take a stroll in an alternative Gorizia: underpasses and walkways from the medieval period, air-raid shelters that smell of limestone, mysterious crypts and tunnels ...

We will also stream S2S in the stations of our European partner cities so to increase our audience and to promote GO! 2025. Bars, pubs and restaurants will also be involved, enriching this atmosphere, each with their personalized offer of food, wine, music and culture.

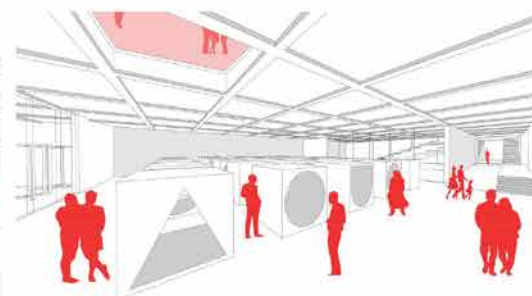
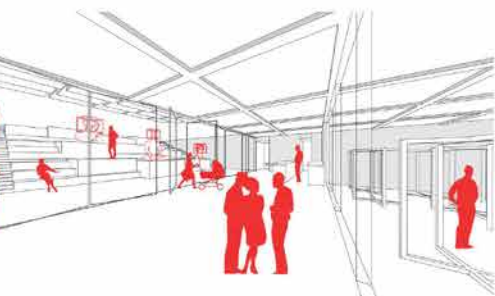
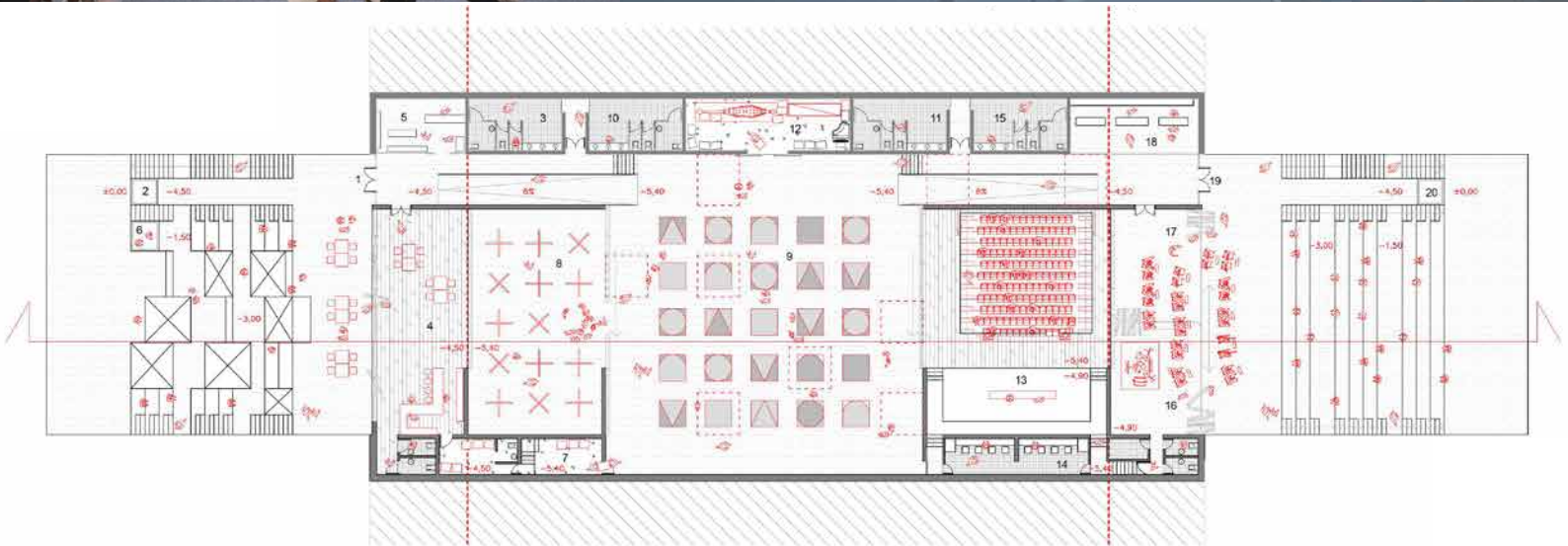
At the same time, S2S wants to be a **social experiment**, in connection with the EPIC project. The mysterious tale of David Bowie's night in the area will be diffused among the population and visitors. Will it take root and become a pride for our citizens, as it was for Ernest Hemingway's fighting days in the area during WWI? Will an uncertain rumor become a spectacular truth or be rejected? Our aim is to investigate these dynamics and to expose the results during S2S to shed more light on the relations between buzz, truth and belief.

They say that, late at night, S2S will end with a final event in Trg Evrope/Piazza Transalpina, the epicenter of GO! 2025. But what are we going to witness there? The reappearance of Ziggy Stardust? The resurrection of Thin White Duke? Will there be another star? A Blackstar? Or maybe a new, still unknown, Rising Star?

In order to discover it, during S2S participants will have to collect clues, interact with artists and performers and solve their riddles, taking part in a treasure hunt to finally gain their ticket to this mysterious event ... Come and see!

Partners: SIGIC - Slovenian music information centre; ASSCOM - Traders Association of Gorizia; KUD Morgan Association; Association Controtempo; Mostovna Institute; Punto Giovani youth centre; Public fund for cultural activities Nova Gorica; Association of cultural organisations Nova Gorica; KUD Krea Association; Association Etnos, Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia; Associazione quarantasettezeroquattro; Slovenian Cultural and Economic Association Gorizia; aquasum ARTE; Association of Slovenian Cultural societies Gorizia; ProLoco Gorizia; Seppenhof Centre for Research of the Carst (SLO & IT), Magdeburg 2025 (DE) and other European partner cities.

-  JANUARY 2025
-  NOVA GORICA GORIZIA
-  350,000



The future of the Evropa/Transalpina square as envisioned by the Baglivo Negrini studio.



GO! 2025
Nova Gorica • Gorizia

photo: Aljoša Kravanja

GO! Borderless dance event by
M&N Dance Company, a GO! 2025
co-production, August 2020.

GO! SHARE

Borderless Body

Dance and multimedia performance exploring limits of the body and artificial intelligence, performed in the attractive and apocalyptic atmosphere of the local quarry.

Leading artists will be the **M&N dance company**, located in Nova Gorica, led by artistic directors, choreographers and dancers **Michal Rynia** and **Nastja Bremec Rynia**, both graduates of CODARTS – Rotterdam Dance Academy.

After extensive research with partners like dancers and choreographers **Darrel Toulon** from Austria or **Teet Kask** from Estonia and scientists from all over Europe we will use the gained knowledge to create a dance performance in a very special environment. The still operational local quarry, with its apocalyptic look, will be used as the scenography whilst the machinery used for the work in the quarry will join the human dancers with their robotic dance of giants.

The project will research limitations of the body and connect dance with artificial intelligence and robotics. A two-year exploration will take the artists and researchers on a journey through the artistic implications of what it means when human bodies can be "optimised" through technology - beyond the replacement of single joints or teeth.

What will define the "body" in the future and will the mind necessarily need a body to function? Can the body be force-moved by artificial intelligence algorithms? The Cyborg vision has become a reality already with robotic arms and legs able to be moved by brain power. The question is not whether we will become more and more "hybrid" beings as medical technology advances. The question is how we respond to it. Will we be able to keep it open as an option to serve us rather than a compulsory means of imposed self-optimisation forced on anyone who is "not perfect"? These are scary but inevitable questions for the human future but may also contain the hope and new solutions for an aging society. The project will connect researchers, artists, scientists and social workers from different disciplines. We will work with organizations for people with disabilities and retirement homes, where artists and researchers will work with users, exploring new technologies for their needs. We will cooperate with companies which develop innovative tools to overcome barriers. How do new technologies change our ability

to move and will the apparently "perfect" body of the dancer be the less able compared to the technologically enhanced of persons with disabilities? We will also research how to help elderly people to improve quality of life with technical support and innovative tools for increased wellbeing.

M&N dance company performs at many international dance festivals, they teach Master Classes around the world, as well as educating young dancers at the acknowledged MN Dance School. **Matjaž Farič**, choreographer, stage director, dancer, founder and artistic director of Flota Institute and Front@ Festival (Slovenia), will be the creative and managing coordinator of the project. After graduating from the Maribor Ballet School and the Palucca School of Dance in Dresden, Germany, he also graduated from Theatre Directing at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana. He is a recipient of several domestic and international dance awards.

Partners: Darrel Toulon, dancer, choreographer and The Alpha group production Company; D.I.D. Dance Identity (AT); Teet Kask, dancer, choreographer (EE); Pro-Progressione, (HU); Hipp – Croatian institute for movement and dance (CRO); Artisti associati Association Gorizia; Theater Center Animazione e Figure; Arctur computing; Gallery Kapelica Ljubljana; Ažmurk – Institute for the Development of Cultural Activities of Vulnerable Groups; University of Nova Gorica: Laboratory of Quantum Optics, Centre for Astrophysics and Cosmology, Centre for Information, Technologies and Applied Mathematics, Center for Cognitive Science of Language, School of Arts (SLO&IT).

 JUNE 2025
 NOVA GORICA
 350,000

CANTAQUARTIERI

From children to seniors, from artists to residents,
from the new city square to the small hidden corners
- this cluster of events will involve the whole city
and its citizens.

COMMUNITY STAGES AND LOBBY GALLERIES

A season of participatory micro events.

During the 1980s and the 1990s the Cantaquartieri was a recurrence of Gorizia summer. Music schools would organize small amateur concerts in different open-air venues located throughout the city's neighborhoods. It felt like home.

Due to lack of funding and the increase in security regulations the manifestation was gradually downsized until it almost disappeared. Nevertheless, its nostalgic memory is still present in the population of the area and GO! 2025 is the perfect opportunity to give new life to it. From June to September 2025, accessibility-oriented micro events will be organized in suggestive locations throughout the cities (i.e. gardens, piazzas and venues, courtyards, private houses, etc.). The GO! 2025 budget will cover actual costs so that local artists and amateurs – i.e. bands, choirs, music schools, dance schools, comedians, etc. – will be empowered to propose and design site-specific performances. Citizens will participate actively by proposing locations and booking their favorite performances on the GO! 2025 digital platform. With the help of the Association "Nuovo Armenia", backyards and courtyards will become perfect locations to host a program of extra European movies rarely shown in theatres. This part is connected to the Cinecittà capacity building program.

The lockdown led us to change our perception of what home is. The Tunisian/Italian theatre company Collectif corps citoyen will work with the inhabitants of the area to develop their **HO(ME) project**, an itinerant and open performance to explore whether home is really where our heart is.

Partners: Cultural NGO Maestro Rodolfo Lipizer; NGO Seghizzi; music school from the cities and region; Cultural Cooperative La Contea, Museum Stazione Trieste Campo Marzio Association; Cultural NGO Street drums; (SLO & IT). CIOFF (International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts) – Southern Europe Section (FR); Nuovo Armenia NGO; Collectif Corps Citoyens (TN/IT)

 APRIL TO OCTOBER 2025

 GORIZIA, NOVA GORICA

 120,000

CLOWNCITY

The two cities will be flooded by clowns and their funny skills in this stop-the-city event. Performances will amuse children and families and take them to the playful and charming world of words and silence.

Clown language is the most universal language in the world. It doesn't matter where, every child understands it without words. That's why we will combine the clown universal language with the two languages of our two cities for easy and playful learning. On the other hand, many other world languages will be used too, so children may hear the richness of this human music in all its colors – language.

We will invite clowns from all over the world to come and spend a few days in both cities, where they will show their performances on squares and streets, courtyards, atriums and places people frequent in their daily lives outside the city center. Wherever you will go you may find a clown or a group performing, so the goal for families would also be to find as many of them as possible throughout the cities. The clowns would interact with the public and play with words through the clown language of gags, jokes and tricks so people, especially children, would learn some easier words. In some places there will also be clown classes or circus school workshops for children and adults, with the focus on different languages. This way we will also promote and make alive some remote places of the cities which are not in use for cultural and other public events. In the late afternoon all clowns will join on square Europa Transalpina, where their joint performance I Say It with Silence (created especially for the occasion) will be held.

Partners: leading partner Zavodbufeto and Klovnbufo festival (SLO) with co-founders Natalia and Ravil Sultanov, graduates of the Moscow Academy of Circus Arts, and many renowned Slovenian and world theatre creators; Paolo Nani (IT, FR); Fraser Hooper (UK); Komik-Trust teater St.Petersburg, (RU); Lesamovar (FR)

 21ST AND 22ND JUNE 2025

 GORIZIA, NOVA GORICA

 130,000



photo: David Verlic

MEETING POINT

Come! Home with Alexander Gadjiev

A magical experience that will combine classical music and nature with a piano concert in the air, high above the wild river Soča.

Alexander Gadjiev, born in Gorizia (1994), studied at the Salzburg Mozarteum, is one of the few Slovenian musicians who have garnered lavish praise from the international music community. Currently living in Berlin, he is the winner of many prestigious awards. Alexander has performed extensively in Japan, at many of Europe's major festivals and all over the world. Gorizia, a natural crossroads of peoples, cultures and languages, had a determining influence on his natural ability to absorb, process and rework, to his own taste, different musical styles and languages.

We will make Alexander's "come home" an extravagant and very special moment putting his concert to a magical place – a new bridge over Soča river standing just next to the old railway Solkan bridge, bearing the prestigious title of "the world's longest stone arch bridge".

The beautiful and wild surroundings also have a highly symbolic meaning as the point where the Soča river crosses the border between Slovenia and Italy. With the evening lighting of the concert hovering high above the river and a great view of the neighboring mountains and the Soča rapids, we will create a magical experience of music and nature in all of its beauty.



JUNE 2025



SOLKAN BRIDGES NOVA GORICA



110,000

CALCETTO

A borderless table football tournament and a VIP charity football match.

Since both cities are big fans of football we will arrange a special football match connected with a typical local tradition called Calcetto, Calciobalilla or table football which used to be played in the evenings in local bars on both sides of the border. Local bars and residents will join the project bringing the calcetto tables to the main Gorizia square where the huge match with hundreds of teams will play on a sunny Sunday. We will put together mixed cross-border teams from border cities from all over Europe. Weeks before the big match we will organize workshops to make original calcetto tables from wood or recycled materials.

The project also shows that not all fun games have to be digital and played alone in a room. Gaming can also mean laughter, good company and fresh air. We will tie the event to less known stories about the connections between sports and art in the territory: the legendary **Pier Paolo Pasolini**, for example, was a decent football player, grew up in Friuli Venezia Giulia region and spent one of his childhood years in Idrija, part of our included area.

The main attraction of the day will be the football match with invited VIP football players from all over the world. With the help of collaborators, especially world class football coach and GO! 2025 ambassador **Edy Reja**, we will try to invite top football players of 2025 to play a game and raise money for chosen humanitarian organizations.



JUNE 2025



GORIZIA, NOVA GORICA



50,000

ALL MAN'S LAND

A cluster of infrastructural projects and cultural programs transforming the degraded border area between the cities into a new, contemporary neighborhood with an open, international vibe.

It is usually called the no man's land. The strip of territory everybody claims and nobody cares about. The EPICenter project will transform the square between the cities, but north of it a large, mostly green area calls for a new purpose. We will develop the border area through the concept of Cultural Improvement District, largely explained in our Capacity Building chapter. The process will consider existing elements in the area: The youth cultural center **Mos-tovna**, the **Muca CUPatarica** reuse center, the cultural hub **Carinarnica**, The **Museum of the Border**, The **Smuggling Museum**. The area will be crossed by a new cross-border cycling path which will be connected to the existing one and a new environment and citizen's friendly green corridor will be created toward our cultural and green gems: The monastery of **Kostanjevica** with its splendid rose garden, The **Villa Laščak** with a lush exotic garden and the medieval **Castle of Gorizia**, surrounded by a beautiful park.

SUPER 8 (OSMICA/OSMIZZA)

by: **Gregor Božič, Ivan Antić, Sandra Jovanovska, Mateja Fajt, Luca Chinaglia**

A new community centre, combining cultural and artistic content with local gastronomy.

Super 8 will be a versatile space serving as a play area of culture. The name super 8 comes from the local tradition of "osmice" or "osmizze" in Italian. It dates back to the 18th century, when farmers were allowed to sell their products directly and without paying taxes for 8 consecutive days a year. "Osmica" are still organized today, they are lively, improvised meeting places where people spend their evenings while indulging in local wine and appetizers.

Super 8 will include a multifold gastronomical bistro, bar, gallery, stage, living room, market and culturotheque (book, cinema and audio digital library). All structures will be modular and open for co-curation. Apart from the flexible side of this hub, the vision is to have several fixed happenings occurring on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. The offered agenda would include a monthly debate, a weekly cooking contest with local ingredients, etc. The concept includes curated spaces and program as well as open-to-all parts where anyone would have the opportunity e.g. to exhibit their own piece of art or do their own stand-up comedy show. In a way the city will become its own curator. This approach aims at motivating young people who moved away to come back and participate in the renewal of their home-based culture.

We will introduce a digital equivalent, which will consist of an archive of all enrolling activities.

Partners: *Topolove Station Festival; DAMS University Gorizia; Punto Giovani Youth Centre; NGO Agorè; Lojze Bratuž Cultural centre (IT); Nova Iskra cultural center Belgrade; KC GRAD cultural center; Kula center (SRB); MKC cultural center Skopje (MKD); Wolf kino Berlin (DE); Sydhavn station Copenhagen (DK).*



FROM NOVEMBER 2024 ONWARDS



NOVA GORICA



120,000 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PART OF TRG EVROPA / TRANSALPINA PROJECT, SEE Q25/26

JUNGLE BASKET

by **Gregor Božič**

A new basketball court on the border, built in a botanical park and illuminated with led lights to create an artistic, healthy and fun space for young people to enjoy.

We want to create a space where young people can play and train sports, along with their international peers, while being mesmerized by its natural beauty and mystery. It will not only be a basketball court, but also a small botanical garden lit with modern light creations made by successful regional lightning companies and international artists. It should be a place of encounter, too beautiful to be ignored, too precious to be neglected, an art piece disguised as a sports place. Stealth art. In short: the most beautiful basketball court in the world.

In times when modern technology took over a big chunk of our children's attention, we want to use modern technology to brighten up outdoor activities for youth and the importance of green islands in urban areas and reforestation as one of the most important topics for global society in the years to come. We want to promote the idea that culture does not need to be "elitist" or closed in classic established cultural venues, but that it can inspire through outdoor activities like sports and botany. The project will target youth in a very direct way so that they take a fundamental and active part in the making of GO! 2025.

In the first phase there will be two international open calls: the first one for the botanic landscape design of the area

and the second for the light installations that will light the court and the garden by night. In the second phase, on the opening of the court there will be an international European basketball tournament for children, which should become a regular annual event.

Additionally, the court and garden will be an yearlong playful social meeting place, with tournaments and courses organized for the trans-border wide public, with special attention and promotion between immigrants and migrant workers. Beyond 2025 the court will be used and maintained as a sport facility and event venue by the two municipalities.

Partners: *Intra lightning; Led Lux; Arboretum Volčji Potok; Športni zavod Sports Centre Nova Gorica (SLO); Unione ginnastica Goriziana Sport Association Gorizia; ZSŠDI – Union of Slovenian Sport Associations in Italy; Union Sport per tutti Gorizia; Association Smilevents (IT); to be confirmed: Botanic gardens conservation international (UK); Botanic conservation National Méditerranéen Borquerolles (FR)*

-  FROM NOVEMBER 2024 ONWARDS
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  80,000 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PART OF TRG EVROPA / TRANSALPINA PROJECT, SEE Q25/26

TUNNEL GALLERY

An old gallery, transformed in an outdoor ECoC flagship office.

Just around the corner from the square there is an old railway tunnel, today used as a cycling way. The walls of the passage are an ideal canvas to promote our GO! 2025 project. In the title year we will use it as an artistic bulletin board, a space to communicate our goals and achievements, our projects and values, keeping in touch with the local population and giving every visitor an immediate chance to find out, where the fun is.

THE PLAYGROUND

A children dedicated area for cross-border learning.

Passive bilingualism and multilingualism are key topics of our candidacy. Children are the best starting point, if we want to widen the knowledge of each other's languages and the best way to learn a new language is: the funny way. Most of the post-war generation learned Italian, watching cartoons and shows on television. It would be ideal if children could engage in shared activities, learning the language literally by the way. But it turns out it is not so simple to take a group or a class on a field trip abroad. And yes – Nova Gorica is for Gorizia a foreign country and vice versa.

We want to create a free zone for our kids. A playground, where swings swoosh over the border line and slides can either

take you here or there. And an open-air classroom, equipped with all the digital infrastructure for high quality learning. We are sure teachers from both cities will thankfully use this space for shared activities. Built from natural materials, designed by artists, chosen through an international open call, the playground and classroom will be a safe, healthy space for our children to take their first, borderless steps.

-  FROM NOVEMBER 2024 ONWARDS
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  60,000 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PART OF TRG EVROPA / TRANSALPINA PROJECT, SEE Q25/26

THE LANGUAGE CASINO AND DIGITAL HEALTH

An interactive gaming installation.

What if people could learn other languages by gambling with roulettes or by playing black jack, baccarat and chemin de fer? What if, instead of money, the winners can take away words, verbs, phrases and learning opportunities in any language they fancy? For decades, the gambling economy has been part of the cultural and economic landscape of the area. It still plays a role in determining cross-border mobility and exchange. The Language Casino aims to address game addiction (gambling and digital) and language barriers. As in a "normal" casino, the audience can participate in games and play with devices, designed by artists, linguists and gamers to promote language learning and multilingualism. The open-air installation will be placed directly on the border.

Since the digital addiction is becoming more and more present today and the problem will grow in the future, we will refer also to this issue by supporting the clinic in Nova Gorica, (founded by doctor **Miha Kramli** and the only one in Slovenia) by providing artistic contents for addicted children and adolescents, who will join specific workshops (dance, theater, sports, drawing etc). Under supervision of dr. Kramli, the School of arts will also present a special and unique program for animation – encouraging youngsters with digital addictions to approach the screen in a creative way.

Partners: *Health centre Nova Gorica - clinic for non-chemical addictions; Kulturhaus Görz NGO; Slovenian Club Triest; University of Nova Gorica -Academy of Arts; University of Udine - Centre for Plurilingualism; HIT Casinos; Spintec gaming company (SLO&IT); to be confirmed: Duolingo (USA).*

-  FEBRUARY TO DECEMBER 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  70,000

ART AS A REFUGE

A cluster of projects about art and artists in difficult and extreme circumstances. Exhibitions and theatre productions to discover the healing and constructive power of creativity.

MUŠIČ - LANDSCAPES OF THE BODY

Mušič - landscapes of the body: an exhibition project, dedicated to the work of the Dachau survivor modernist painter Zoran Mušič.

Our main exhibition project will be dedicated to the painter Zoran Mušič (1909-2005). Born in the region, Mušič is the only Slovenian modernist painter who achieved international fame. An artist with a rich opus and a strong cosmopolitan character who lived most of his life between Paris and Venice. A concentration camp survivor, Mušič is mostly known for his so-called Dachau Sketches, more than 150 secretly created drawings. After the war he evolved his art through a series of cycles in different techniques. With his visual language Mušič speaks about horrors and the borders of human evil, but he also expresses his faith in life and humanity.

Curated by historian of art and best expert on the painter's work **Nelida Nemec**, the exhibition will spread across different locations. In the castle of Štanjel the main topic will be the Karst landscape as inspiration, in the Dobrovo castle and the Attems Palace (Gorizia) the landscape of the human body. In the painter's birthplace Bukovica we will create a multimedia overview of the artist's life and work, which will be the basis for a permanent installation.

Partners: Goriški museum; municipalities Nova Gorica, Brda, Komen; Lah Museum of Contemporary Art Bled (SLO); ERPA - Musei provinciali di Gorizia; Galleria Contini Venezia; Galleria Torbandena Trieste (IT); Foundation Gabriele e Anna Braglia Lugano (CH); Musée National d'Art Moderne Paris (FR); other galleries and private collectors.



FEBRUARY 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026



GORIZIA, DOBROVO, ŠTANJEL, NOVA GORICA



350,000

ART AGAINST THE RIFLE

A series of events, dedicated to war-time and war-zones art.

The region has two sites with the European heritage label. The secret partisan hospital in Franja, deep in the woods in the Idrija-Cerkno region is a unique monument to humanity. Slovenian partisans were the only ones in the world to

build field hospitals during WWII. The barracks now host a museum. The church of Javorca, in the municipality of Tolmin, was erected during WWI just behind the front line. Built entirely in wood by soldiers of various ethnicities fighting on the Isonzo front, the church in Art Nouveau style was meant as a memorial for fallen soldiers regardless of their cultural or religious background. Besides these, other locations hold a particular meaning for locals and Europeans, such as the Peace park on the Sabotino Mountain, theater of some of the harshest battles of WWI. The three sites will host five events each, curated by artists, chosen through an international open call. The aim is to open up a dialogue between historical and contemporary soldier art and artists.

Partners: Mestni museum Idrija; Tolminski museum; Museum of the Great war Gorizia; Cultural consortium Monfalconese; MINK Institute; Walk of peace foundation; èStoria Association; Cultur-Arti Assosiation; Jewish heritage of Italy Foundation (SLO & IT).



JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2025



CERKNO, TOLMIN, GORIZIA



100,000

ARTISTS OUT OF RESIDENCE

A series of exhibitions, dedicated to contemporary refugee artists, and a sensorial theatre installation to evoke the painful experience of being an "illegal" human being.

There are hundreds of refugee artists in Europe – and for many, art is the only refuge. Inspired by the story of **Abdul Haya Hamed**, an Afghan painter living in Gorizia, we will do outdoor exhibitions on the border, so the works will be visible from both sides. We will invite refugee artists from all over Europe to send us their works or we will make replicas of it and exhibit them on the border fence. That way also Abdul, who cannot leave Italy because of his refugee status, will have the opportunity to be present at his exhibition opening in a foreign country – Slovenia, although he will physically stand on Italian land.

The second part of the project is for us, European citizens who haven't experienced the terror of war. But our ancestors and neighbors have. We will set up a Sensorial theatre installation, dedicated to the act of crossing the border. We will re-create the experience of being without the "right" passport, without a homeland, friends and relatives, like so many fellow human beings we encounter every day in European cities. The visitors will be able to experience a wide range of

sensations and emotions through public interaction, multisensorial perception and interculturally understandable content. We will collaborate with the co-founder of Sensorium Institute, **Barbara Pia Jenič**, a pioneer of sensorial theatre in Slovenia with broad international experience.

Partners: artists - refugees (international open call); Associazione Qcode; Tenda per la pace e i diritti Gorizia (IT); Amnesty international Slovenia and Italy; Sensorium institute Ljubljana (SLO).



THROUGHOUT 2025



GORIZIA, NOVA GORICA



130,000

BASAGLIA'S CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH



A playful series of drama duels, inspired by Gorizia based psychiatrist Franco Basaglia, who revolutionized the approach to mental illness and institutionalization.

Everybody is crazy! You can see them walking around, convinced to be some local "celebrity" from the past: the poet Srečko Kosovel just passed by, the architect Max Fabiani was spotted at the mall while Marshal Tito was seen having a coffee with Emperor Otto III. They are from the past but they are concerned about the present: when they bump into each other, they start arguing about stereotypes, nations, borders ...

The project tells the story of how madness and sanity are intertwined and not two different, separated states. It addresses the growing polarization of ideas and the incapacity of building common grounds of communication on difficult topics. Throughout 2025, several "rhetoric duels" will be organized in unusual and public settings. Actors will impersonate local celebrities; comedians/screenwriters will prepare the scripts. Each duel is moderated by an actor impersonating psychiatrist Franco Basaglia who, right in Gorizia's asylum, first experimented with his idea of de-institutionalization. Are the contenders mad? Is the public mad for listening to them? The duels will be recorded and proposed as a podcast through the Borderless Wireless platform. The audience will interact with the actors in different ways, from Q&A to a live tweet feed. Different linguistic solutions will be implemented in order to allow the participation of a wider public and the experience of different bridging techniques. The big final event will take place in the Parco Basaglia and will crown the maddest of them all.

Partners: Artisti Associati Association; Association Scar-amouche; ŠENT association for mental health; Terzo Teatro group Gorizia; Slovene student home - Casa dello studente sloveno Simon Gregorčič; Cooperative La collina/ Parco Basaglia; Miela Bonawentura Theater Triest - Pupkin Kabarett; Lunatico Festival Triest; Invisible Cities Festival Gorizia (SLO&IT).



MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2025



NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA



120,000

THE TACTILE GALLERY



by Katarina Kogoj

Touching art - physically and in extended reality

We learn about the world through all our senses. Discovering the art through touch adds on a more layered and personal experience to sighted and visually impaired or blind alike. In this museum with 3D relief paintings and statues visitors will be asked to discover the artworks by the sense of touch. Part of the experience will also be enhanced by expanded reality. Haptic technology provides the means to enter the museum in Slovenia and touch the artworks of partner museums hundreds of kilometers away. However, we will not stop at the touch, but through numerous events involve also other senses. Blind and visually impaired actors, guides and youth will take the visitor through various experiences. We are designing this project with a strong support from local and international stakeholders of this marginalized group.

Partners: Museo Omero (IT); Theatre of Blind and Visually Impaired Novi Život (CRO); Regional association of blind and visually impaired Nova Gorica; Centre IRIS - Centre for Education; Rehabilitation; Inclusion and Counselling for the Blind and Partially Sighted; Goriški museum (SLO); NeuroDigital (ES); ONCE Museo Tifologico (ES); Lighthouse for the Blind (GR); Lathatatlan (HU).



JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2025



NOVA GORICA



200,000

STANDING ON MESSERSCHMIDT'S HEAD(S)



A virtual reunion of 54 astonishing statues.

Bavarian sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt created the sculptures Kopfstücke (head pieces) between 1770 and his death in 1783. They were to represent the full range of human expressions, which he reckoned to be 64. Today, 54 of them still exist. Crazy enough, two of them are in Gorizia. Researchers have interpreted Messerschmidt's obsession with these busts in different ways: amulets that were to protect him from dangerous spirits, signs of his mental illness or a way to perfect his way of representing flesh and bones. For GO! 2025, we want to reunite all the Character heads so that everybody can enjoy them together, for the first time since Messerschmidt's passing. Sure, it might look like we are in over our heads, but technology can be of help... What about a video call with 54 silent though very expressive participants? The project includes a program of lectures, workshop and performances.

Partners: Coronini-Cronberg Foundation; Alienazioni Festival; Lunatico Festival; Parco Basaglia (IT); Museum Belvedere Vienna (AT); Museum of Fine Arts Budapest (HU).



JANUARY 2025



GORIZIA



100,000

MOVING LITERATURE

A cluster, challenging the perception of reading as a solitary and stationary activity, pushing literature across the borders of book covers.

HOPSCOTCH




A comic book, written in murals across the two cities.

Inspired by the work of Argentinian writer Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch* is an art project that aims to create a series of large-scale comic strips on walls and buildings in raw/abandoned/derelict areas. It will be realized in close cooperation with the Magdeburg 2025 project Urban Colors.

The mural art-works, designed by the main author, the Udine raised Parisian-based graphic novelist and illustrator **Manuele Fior**, are conceived as part of a unique and "open" comic story, with multiple plot lines unravelling throughout the Nova Gorica-Gorizia area, regardless of any administrative and linguistic division. In this way, the "readers" become "wanderers" that discover new paths and itineraries in the often-forgotten marginal texture of this cross-border area.

The comic story bubbles will use multiple languages and each strip will be equipped with a QR code giving access to the GO! 2025 app, through which the audience will participate. From 2021 local and international mural artists will be invited to specific workshops in schools, introducing their arts and crafts to students and realizing with them murals to revive their school walls. In 2025, an international summer training program, dedicated to young European illustrators and muralists will be developed.

Partners: Manuele Fior - artist; University of Nova Gorica School of arts (SLO); Cultural Association Vivacomix, Association Uk-kosen Teatteri (ITA); Magdeburg 2025 – Urban Colors (DE); Lyon BD Festival (FR); Stichting Cultura Nova – Street art foundation (NL).

-  2021 TO 2025
-  GORIZIA, NOVA GORIZIA
-  130,000

TWENTY SOMETHING

A traveling installation, dedicated to the poet Srečko Kosovel and the philosopher Carlo Michelstaedter.

Srečko Kosovel (1904-1926) is one of the most interesting Slovenian poets. Despite his short life, he left an impressive artistic opus. His outbursts of constructivist energy, called "Kons", place him among the most powerful European voices of his generation. "*Millions are dying, / but Europe lies. Demolish. Demolish. Demolish!*" (translated by David Brook); a cry of the poet in a 20th century of hate. Carlo Michelstaedter (1887-1910) was a philosopher, born and raised in the Gorizia

Jewish community. He graduated in Florence, his thesis a study of persuasion and rhetoric in ancient philosophy - a masterpiece, born from a brilliant young mind. Michelstaedter shot himself only days after finishing his masterpiece. "*The one who fears death, is already dead,*" he wrote. What about fear, destruction, Europe and life in the 21st century? We will build a traveling installation, a "think tend" and we will conquer main squares around the continent, with an emphasis on ECoC cities. We will raise the international profile of Kosovel's and Michelstaedter legacy and invite young poets and philosophers into the tent, where they will create new verses and thoughts for Europe. In 2025 participants will meet in Vojsko, a small village with a festival, dedicated to poet Črtomir Šinkovec and a fully functioning partisan printing set, which the young thinkers will use to print their work.

Partners: Mestna knjižnica Library Idrija, Kosovelov dom Cultural centre Sežana (SLO), Biblioteca Statale-Isontina di Gorizia Library; Jewish Heritage of Italy Foundation; Museum of Italian Judaism Ferrara (IT); Novi Sad 2021 (SRB); Esch 2022 (LUX); Veszprém 2023 (HU); Bad Ischl 2024 (AT); Tartu 2024 (EE); Chemnitz 2025 (DE).

-  2023 TO 2025
-  EU
-  110,000

BIBLIOBUS

A former "book truck" as a mobile literary stage.

We will become literature vagabonds. We will use an old Bibliobus (a bus, equipped to bring library books to villages and remote areas, a kind of "book truck") to present different cultures during the year 2025. For instance, the little known Friulian culture will be presented by the bus filled with Friulian books, native speakers, poets, writers ... they will travel around with readings, discussions: a mobile literature and culture stage. We will do the same for Italian and Slovenian of course, but also for cultures of national groups living in the area (from ex-Yugoslavian countries to China).

Partners: Goriška knjižnica Franceta Bevka Library; Biblioteca statale Isontina Library; Friulian Filological society; Kulturhaus Görs Association (SLO&IT); embassies in SLO and IT.

-  2025
-  REGION
-  30,000



THE OTHER RADIO 📻

by: **Stazione di Topolò/Postaja Topolove Festival and Association Robida**

An internet platform, podcast and internet radio, connecting all kinds of minorities.

The project is built around the idea of passive multilingualism, of hearing different languages, not only the ones of ethnic minorities, but also the marginal discourses of different marginalized groups, and getting to know them, understand them, but not necessarily speak them. The Other Radio wants to deal with marginal themes, bring the specific themes and problematics of other ethnic and cultural minorities into our local minoritarian territory. It would also focus on the language we consider universal – sound. Through sound and field-recordings, we can get to know remote places, people and their daily routines, their everyday lives. This section will

be curated in collaboration with the project by Radio France International titled *Ecouter le monde* (Listening to the world). Stazione di Topolò/Postaja Topolove is an art festival located in a small village on the border, in the region of Benečija, when an important part of the Slovenian minority lives. The festival connects artists and visitors from all over the world and brings contemporary art to secluded places.

Partners: *Radio Onde Furlane in Friulian language (IT); BRBA Irratia – Free Basque art radio curated by sound art collective Audiolab (ES); Radio France International (FR); Radio Študent Ljubljana (SLO).*

- 🕒 2024 AND 2025
- 📍 EU
- 💶 40,000

GO! EUROPE

DESTINYATION - TOUCH OF DESTINY

Come! home project with Tomi Janežič and Simona Semenič

A new theatre performance of two recognised Slovenian authors, as a result of a two-year research with psychodrama psychotherapy.

The topic of the play questions fate and our attempts to escape from it. It's based on the fact that we have the grave of the last French king Karl X and his Bourbon family in Nova Gorica. Ironically, he is also the only king buried in Slovenian soil. Karl X was born in Versailles, died on 6th November 1836 in Gorizia and was buried in a small church on the Kostanjevica hill, which is today a part of Nova Gorica. He was a refugee although with the best connections and wealthy friends all over Europe, but still – he and his family had to flee from France because of the revolution. He settled in Prague but left it because he was afraid of the cholera epidemic and came to Gorizia. After just two days he became ill and died of cholera. From his room in the Coronini palace he had a view to the church and monastery on Kostanjevica hill, which is today in Slovenia, and his last wish was to be buried there.

Karl X was one of only a few victims of this fatal disease in the Gorizian region. Running from it he met his destiny in this remote area he never knew about before. This reminds us of a story called "The Appointment in Samarra", about a man trying to escape Death whom he saw in Baghdad, by running to Samarra, where he finds Death again, who tells him that she was surprised to see him in Baghdad since they had the appointment in Samarra. Can we escape from ourselves, can we overcome our destiny? Is running the best way or should one resist and confront the circumstances? In the light of the recent pandemic, when the whole world seems to be running away from an invisible enemy, this story becomes even more intriguing.

In the process which starts at least two years before the premiere in 2025, the creative team will hold the workshops in different cities and partner institutions and in different languages. In the end they will choose the actors between the participants and do the final work in Nova Gorica National Theatre where the opening premiere will take place. The result of the project will be a theatre play and performance,

including different European destinations, languages and an Oedipus dilemma.

The leading artists are the theatre director and psychodrama psychotherapist **Tomi Janežič** and playwright **Simona Semenič**, both coming from our ECoC area (Nova Gorica and Ajdovščina) but who made their careers in Slovenia and abroad.

Tomi Janežič is a known theatre director who works in theatres all over Europe and also a professor at the Academy of theatre, radio, film and TV in Ljubljana. Janežič's unique technique, profound work with actors and psychodrama approach to theatre work is a "game changing" experience for actors, co-workers and the audience. Simona Semenič is one of the most awarded and translated playwrights in Slovenia. Her plays have been translated into nineteen languages and they are staged in several countries in Europe, USA and in the Middle East and published in several countries. She also writes, directs and performs autobiographical, experimental theatre shows and cooperates with prominent theatre directors as a co-author and a dramaturge.

Partners: SNG National Theatre Nova Gorica; Krušče Creative Center for Artistic Research, Creation, Residency and Education (SLO); Association Artisti associati Gorizia; SSG Slovenian minority theatre Triest (IT), Mittelfest festival Cividale del Friuli (IT); Outis center Milan (IT)



FROM 2022 ONWARD (PROCESS), FEBRUARY 2025 (PRODUCTION)



NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, EU



350,000



THE MARCH FOR EUROPE

A cluster, dedicated to the ancient, simple and yet so meaningful act of walking and to the power of people walking for, against, over and beyond.

THE MARCH OF FRIENDSHIP

A symbolic march on May 1st, linked with various cultural events, will happen in Nova Gorica in Gorizia and simultaneously in partner cities all over Europe, which are divided by a national border.

We want to reflect on walking, here, in central Europe, nestled between the Alps and the Mediterranean Sea, defined by paths that crossed our territory from the dawn of times. On their way from Amsterdam to Athens, from Constantinople to Rome, from Venice to Beijing, merchants, soldiers, kings and pilgrims had walked the valleys of the Soča and Vipava river for centuries. Now we walk to stay in shape, to find our interior balance, to gain physical and spiritual strength. That is, if we are lucky and rich. If we are desperate and poor, we pilgrim from Aleppo to Hannover, from Kabul to Stockholm, from Tripoli to Milan. We stumble upon borders, dragging our feet in worn shoes, fighting, like our long-lost ancestors for mere existence. Looking closely, in both cases we walk toward something better. The walks, the marches, the movements diverted the course of history many times. Walking, the peoples of Europe pushed toward a better, more just and humane society. Is Europe today worth walking for?

The "March of friendship" (Pohod prijateljstva/ La marcia dell'amicizia) was a large sports event which took place once a year during the 1970s and 80s, on a Saturday in spring, and for one day it opened the borders. People, Italian and Slovene, walked together on a circular path between the cities, passing the border line freely, without even showing their documents. All they needed was a humble participants tag, issued by the organizers. It was truly a Schengen experience long before anyone could even dream about a Europe with no border control. The first march took place in 1976, nine years before the Schengen Agreement was even signed. Citizens participated in the initiative enthusiastically. In its primes, the march attracted several thousand participants. The final act was a common meal on one of the city squares: pasta, of course, cooked and served from large pots. 21 years after joining the EU Nova Gorica and Gorizia do not want to just look towards one another, but together towards Europe. Which is why they are inviting other cities to join the walk, to march together for cultural diversity, solidarity and cooperation.

The cities will be the scenario of a daylong event. It will all start with **Bonfires** lighting up peaks all along the border, evoking an ancient, pre-Christian ritual of bringing light and hope. And then, from midnight to midnight, cultural, scientific, sport, culinary and other events will be held on various locations in collaboration with local associations and artists. The idea is to open the door to proposals and initiatives as widely as possible, involving and engaging the communities.

Projects which involve the public, giving it an active role, will be favored. In how many ways people can cross the border? In a boat, in a plane, on a paraglide, on a rope or by a slackline. How can art cross the border? With a note on a long string, a laser beam, a dance step. It will be a funny day finding out other answers ...

In the afternoon the main walk will start simultaneously in all the involved cities. Screens with cameras will be installed on the way, so while walking in Gorizia or Nova Gorica, you will be able to wave to your fellow European, walking in Görlitz or Narva.

Partners: Görlitz /Zgorzelec (DE/PO); Český Tešín/Cieszyn (CZ/ PO); Narva/Ivangorod (ES/RU); Valga/Valka (ES/LTV); Brod (BiH); Chemnitz (DE); Klagenfurt (AT) and others; cultural; humanitarian and sport associations (SLO&IT).

CROSSINGS

By **BridA/Tom Kerševan,**
Sendi Mango, Jurij Pavlica

An interactive installation, transforming movements across the border in video and audio art.

As a vital part of the March of friendship the **collective BridA** will create an art installation and performance. Crossing the border becomes a symbol of the living tissue that forms the conurbation. With artistic transformation, control systems lose their negative connotation because instead of control they represent free movement. The project will cover different locations of border crossings or different city squares. On each location it will use motion tracking to build various audio-visual effects which will be then complemented by selected music creators. Captured locations will be projected on large video walls at the Evropa/Transalpina square. The sound and image of the projection will consist of data, captured on location, musician interventions, and algorithmic calculation of tracking people's movements on markets and streets. The animated image and sound will respond in real time and reflect the hustle and bustle. Through layering of audiovisual information and with an adapted app the project will create a unique dynamic image of the conurbation and erase abstract boundaries which pointlessly separate space. It is a project based on the study of dynamic structures in urban spaces with emphasis on building audiovisual content using cyber surveillance applications.

-  MAY 1ST 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, EU
-  180,000 (MARCH AND CROSSINGS)



YOUR BORDER IS MY BORDER 📍

A traveling exhibition, a series of talks, a social research and public awareness campaign.

The 2020 pandemic has shown once more, how closely related our stories are. We will produce a light, traveling photo exhibition, showing divided squares and streets and we will invite border people of different backgrounds to travel between the cities and share their stories.

The world "borderness" does not exist in English language. Well, it should. What in Slovene we would call "mejnost" and in Italian "frontalierità" is the state of being on the border. A social state, an economical one, as well as a cultural state and a state of mind. This "borderness" was key in shaping the union. The borders do not only divide but also stitch together the European diversity. Is Europe aware of that? Gathering information from the Your border is my border talks and joining researchers, who deal with the topic, under the patronage of the European Association of Border regions we will produce a manifesto.

Partners: Cultural information point KIT; Evropska hiša/European House Association (SLO); Incontri Culturali Mitteleuropei Association; Cultural NGO Porte a Nordest; Club Unesco Gorizia; ISIG Gorizia (IT); Association of European Border Regions (EU).



FROM 2023 ON



NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, EU



90,000

THE WALK OF PEACE

The Walk of Peace, from the Julian Alps to the Adriatic, interconnects the areas the onetime Isonzo Front. It promotes the value of peace and the opportunities for common development.

WWI has left a permanent imprint on our territory. Until today, abundant material heritage has been preserved along the former front line: fortresses, trenches, observation posts, cabins, caves, military cemeteries, chapels, monuments and memorials. The Walk of Peace transforms these silent monuments of the horrible past into messengers proclaiming peace and coexistence between nations.

We intend to connect many new projects to this initiative which is already nominated for the Unesco tentative list. From the project **Find your grave** where the grandchildren will have the opportunity to explore where their grandfathers fought and are buried, to the **Park of nations**, where representatives of formerly hostile nations will meet, discuss and plan their common European future.

Partners: The Walk of Peace foundation; PromoTurismo FVG; ERPAC; VEGAL Eastern Veneto development agency (SLO&IT); In Flanders Fields Museum Ieper (BE); Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge (DE).



FROM 2022 ON



REGION



80,000

RESCUERS OF MEMORY

A series of coordinated activities to preserve intangible heritage and transform it through contemporary art and digital tools.

MEMORY AMBULANCE AND ARCHIVE BRIGADES

A participatory “memory collecting” project, involving volunteers.

A **Memory Ambulance** with artist and researcher **Anja Medved** will drive through urban and rural communities - a mobile unit, equipped for filming, photographing and scanning will motivate citizens to join memory collecting local events, share their stories, anecdotes, photos, letters. Volunteers in the **Archive Laboratory** will digitize archive material, especially lists and registers, e.g. military draft lists, parish records, pass-port registers etc. to rescue names and stories, there is no one left to tell. The digital archive of memories will then be given back to the communities through a specially created platform, which will be also used as a database for scientific researchers and individuals from all over Europe, discovering the fate of their ancestors.

Partners: Zavod Kinokašča documentary production and memory storage; Pokrajinski archive Nova Gorica; Walk of peace foundation (SLO); Association èStoria; Cultural Consortium del Monfalconese; National Archive Gorizia, ISIG Gorizia; Association Ukkosesn Teatteri (IT).



FROM 2021 ONWARDS



REGION



80,000

IT'S STORY PICKING SEASON!

by Tereza Gregorič and Ana Perne.

An interdisciplinary and participatory project for inter-generational cooperation, which includes workshops, field research, work with young people and professional actors and other theatre creators.

The project will be based on collecting material that gives a different view of life along the border; it will build the theatrical narrative through a set of testimonies, by developing documentary and experiential material, while also combining the languages present in the wider Gorizia area. Exploring Mediterranean comic genres will be essential for the performance itself. In the first phase Selected high school students from both sides of the border, working within the ambulance and brigade project, will explore the myths of the wider border area under the mentorship of local experts in the field of history and other humanities or social sciences. Different generations of the population will be consid-

ered: representatives of those who experienced the establishment of the border, further those who directly felt the consequences, and finally the younger generation, which is already far from the times of the border, but stems from this story, but at the same time they can vividly testify to today's perception of the border. Workshops will be organized for young theatre creators, led by established experts in various fields of theatre practice.

The second phase will be with the creative process itself. The team of young theatre creators, which will consist of both Italian and Slovenian young people, will be divided into several linguistically mixed groups, which will work under mentorship of young theatre professionals. The material obtained by researchers will be used as a creative starting point, and young theatregoers will design several theatre events of various characters (short play, sketch).

The documentary starting point will be preserved in individual facts, but it will be redirected to the noble comedy genre to speak through the comical about the myths of everyday life along the border. The project will use towns /villages as a stage. With the support of the **Let me tell you a story**, and interdisciplinary storytelling project by the association Mink, the created theatre events will be the backbone of an all-year storytelling festival. All experiences and results will culminate in an original dramatic text: the premiere production with young and established professional actors will be premiered in November 2025.

With the cross-border cities in **Your Border is My Border** we have agreed that we will help expand this program to their areas and make it a long-term project that continues beyond 2025 - with results being shown in a recurring event in GO.

Partners: Young Stage of Slovene national theatre Nova Gorica; Scaramouche Institute; Mink association Tolmin; Tolminski muzeum; JSKD public fund for cultural activities Nova Gorica (SLO); Punto giovani Gorizia; Slovenian Student Home Simon Gregorič; Delle Ali Theater Sulbiate; Puntzero social cooperation Udine (IT); Das Letzte Kleinod theatre (DE); Art Mine association Trofaia (AT); Rima project (MT); high schools of Nova Gorica and Gorizia and other associations from all municipalities.



2022 TO 2024 (PHASE 1-3), NOVEMBER 2025 (FINAL PRODUCTION)



REGION, NOVA GORIZIA



120,000 (PLUS 120,000 FOR THE EXPANSION TO OTHER BORDER AREAS IN EUROPE)

INVISIBLE WOMEN

by Sanja Popov Leban

A series of interviews, exhibitions, mixed media installations, video, and photography, produced with migrant women.

An international project about difference and uniqueness, about the cultural diversity of contemporary Goriška society, through the eyes of women who currently reside in the region but are born and raised in different cultures. The project motivates immigrant women from China, USA, Russia, Uganda, Bulgaria, Madagascar, Columbia, Peru, United Kingdom, Spain, Brazil, Ukraine, EX Yugoslavia and other countries to share their own experiences and thoughts on how immigrants should be welcomed.

The project uses the term invisibility because it sets off to explore and uncover aspects of the everyday cultural diversity that has become hidden or is generally overlooked. The project wants to make invisible dimensions of diversity visible through a series of interviews, exhibitions, mixed media installations, video, and photography giving the participating woman not a role of object of study, but the role of active participants, creators, who will tell not only their story of migration, but also the story of our cities and valleys from a new perspective. Including the local population is a vital part of the project and the first entry point is cuisine.

Partners: Miha Kozorog - ethnologist (SLO); Dominique Pozzi - photographer; SOS Rosa Association (IT); Zvezdan Reljić - photographer (MT); Marija Belić Bibin - journalist (SRB); Katrina Squire - artist (USA).

 2024 AND 2025

 SOČA VALLEY

 80,000

DOT MUSEUMS

Developing dot museums in smart houses.

There are a lot of already existing dot museums in the region, which - connecting the dots - give a unique insight in the history and identity of the territory. Together they present an exciting tourist offer. The main issue of these exhibitions is that because of a lack of funding and staff they are mostly unattended, and visits are possible only by previous agreement. With the support of local hi-tech companies, we want to develop and install systems, which make the museums accessible to visitors 24 hours a day. Not only will the door open automatically with a code, bought on-line or in tourist offices in the region. When visitors will enter, heating and lights will turn on and an audio and video guide will start in the chosen language. The content of the guides will be created in dedicated workshops with experts and members of local history associations, local guides, pupils, and students. The pilot museum for the project will be the House of the **aleksandrinke**, an existing permanent collection, dedicated to women, who migrated from the Goriška region to Egypt

in the period between 1850 and 1960. This unique phenomenon of woman migration is rich in personal stories and deep emotional elements and offers an ideal opportunity to connect the intangible history to today's social and economic reality in which migration plays an important role. With the mechanism we will also build two new dot museums in the city of Kanal: a multimedia room and a black box, dedicated to the traditional masks of **Liški pustje** and a multi sensorial museum, dedicated to **ancient beliefs**, connected with the Into Nature projects. Both stories have a contemporary twist: through masks we will explore on-line identity and avatars and through the ancient faith the topic of ecology and our perception of time and space in the digital era.

Partners: Association for the cultural heritage of the aleksandrinke; Liški pustje association; Municipality of Kanal; Municipality of Nova Gorica; GOAP smart houses; Arctur computing; 4-design studio (SLO); Base-2 multimedia company (IT).

 GORIZIA, NOVA GORICA

 FROM 2021

 150,000

LITTLE JERUSALEM

Researching and renovating a jewish cemetery and unveiling the stories of those resting there.

In Gorizia, as in other cities of Central Europe, the Jewish presence has ancient roots. In the past, the fame of the community was such that the city was also known as the "Little Jerusalem on the Isonzo". The Jewish community was practically wiped out with deportations and extermination in the concentration camps between 1943 and 1944. Despite this, the synagogue, built in 1756 and now housing the "Jerusalem Museum on the Isonzo", and the ancient ghetto represent one of the most important heritage sites in the cities. Another important evidence of the Jewish presence in the area is the ancient cemetery of Valdirose, one step away from the border into Nova Gorica, which houses also the grave of the philosopher Carlo Michelstaedter. In 2016 the Foundation for Jewish Cultural Heritage in Italy began to take an interest in the restoration and enhancement of the cemetery. The work will start in 2021 and their conclusion is scheduled for 2024. The restoration aims to allow the rediscovery of this heritage in a national and international key, so that a border territory, can regain a shared memory also through the common Jewish Heritage. In 2025, we want the cemetery of Valdirose to become one of the symbolic places of our ECoC and a major pole of a cross-border thematic itinerary.

Partners: European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (LUX); Jewish heritage of Italy foundation; Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah Ferrara; Amici di Israele Association Gorizia (IT); Jewish Cultural Centre Ljubljana; researcher Renato Podbersič (SLO); Žilina 2026 (SK).

 FROM 2021 ONWARDS

 REGION

 500,000 (450,000 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE COVERED BY THE FOUNDATION)

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

A cluster of projects, dedicated to the industrial heritage of the region and the development of Nova Gorica, a new town, an urban utopia, created to be self-sustainable with economic, infrastructural, cultural and educational solutions intertwining in a unique pattern of industrious ambition.

AB INITIO – AN URBAN UTOPIA by Blaž Kosovel

A project about rediscovering the value of Nova Gorica's modernist heritage and researching the process of building a new urban area from scratch.

Nova Gorica is a town, built *ab initio*, from scratch, the first planned new town in post-war Yugoslavia. However, the original plan was never completed due to lack of finances and changing of state priorities. The aim of our project is to rediscover the modernist heritage of the city. The research phase includes a first ever in-depth analysis of all the literature about the town, the exploration of good practices in other European countries and a series of interviews with locals. Nova Gorica is only 73 years old, which means that many of the inhabitants are even older than their town. The outcome will be an online museum that will not only represent the history and heritage of Nova Gorica, but also anchor the networking of knowledge, stories and insights between experts and the local population and compare Nova Gorica to other new towns. The most interesting information will be presented in a tourist guide. A virtual museum will be created, which will interpret a digital database containing all the information gathered during the research process.

Nova Gorica has as many layers as much older cities, even though most of them remain on the drawings and renderings of long forgotten plans. What became the new city is an agglomeration of fragments and compromises of these plans. Getting to know the abandoned and unrealized layers of their city is like doing archaeological research. **Nonument Group** proposes a VR tool for reading multiple layers of the young yet complex city. This VR immersive archaeology of the never-completed spatial visions will enable the inhabitants as well as visitors to experience the pre-1947 fields and suburban areas where the city was later built, the original plan, as well as later plans – all simultaneously as they will move through the space and experience the city as it has become. The experience of multiple urban visions will draw attention to the richness and complexity of the young city's history – as well as pointing out the opportunities for development in the future.

In collaboration with representatives from other European new towns, we will prepare a draft for the creation of an international European cultural route through new towns. Thus far, ATRIUM is the only EU cultural route, and it focuses solely on totalitarian cities and towns.

Partners: ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts - Institute for Culture and Memory Studies; Humanists Association from the Goriška region (SLO); Nonument group partnership: CCEA Prague (CZ), WH Media / Beamy Space Vienna (AT), Tačka Komunikacije Belgrade (SRB), House of Humor and Satire Gabrovo (BG), ARTos Foundation Nicosia (CY); MoTA - Museum of Transitory Art Ljubljana (SLO); Chemnitz 2025 (DE); City of Milton Keynes (UK).



FROM 2022 ONWARDS



NOVA GORICA, EU



140,000

MINERS FESTIVAL AND DWELLING

By Matevž Straus (ID2020)

A festival and a heritage renovation project to rethink and reuse miner's heritage.

Industrial areas have always been a breeding ground for special cultural patterns – from factory architecture, work ethic, mining parades and processions, crafts and engineering skills. UNESCO protected mining town Idrija is one of such places. **Industrial Culture Festival** and **Mining Housing on the Intersection between Heritage and Creativity** are projects designed to strengthen the culture of pioneering and research, linking the "old" (industrial heritage) with the "new" (**Industry 4.0**), highlighting opportunities for the transformation of abandoned areas into opportunities and last but not least to highlight the creativity and innovativeness of the "little man". The first Industrial Culture Festival will take place in 2021 as a part of the **YouInd project** (Interreg Austria-Slovenia). The work on the second project has this year materialized in the ID20's acquisition of a rundown mining house. The process of the renovation itself (architectural workshops, out-

reach programs, summer camps, restoration and craft actions) is as important as the final content of the house, which will host art residences, foreign experts and volunteers interested in heritage on the intersection with creativity.

Partners: ID20; Municipality of Idrija (SLO); Magdeburg 2025 - Working Generations; ExtraSchicht Festival of Industrial Heritage Ruhr (DE); Bad Ischl 2024 - New Salt Festival (AT).

-  FROM 2022 ONWARDS
-  IDRIJA, REGION
-  110,000

ECOTHEADS AND BIEN by Zala Orel (Kranj 2025 candidacy)

Innovation in eco materials, sustainability mind-set, exhibitions, community art, fashion shows.

The project connects two neighboring regions, Goriška and Gorenjska, which were particularly affected by the collapse of the textile industry and the reorientation of production to Asian markets for cheap labor. It is a tribute to the traditional textile industry, which will connect with contemporary artists in a participatory program. We connected the Ecotrails project with the programs created for the bid book candidacy of the city of Kranj and which are already being created under the BIEN brand (Biennial of Well-Being, Simplicity and Sustainability). Apart from the biennial festival that will be launched in 2021 and will connect Kranj, Bohinj and Nova Gorica, 5 programs will be developed.

Fashion is the second largest pollutant in the world after oil. 20% of the world's water pollution is the result of the textile industry, and biodiversity is disappearing with excessive chemical treatment of the soil and other environmental pressures. Clothing and interior design manufacturers are already looking for more ethical ways to design resources and production, and designers are exploring new materials and processes that would reduce negative impacts.

New materials and fashion: The sustainability project with fashion designer **Mateja Benedetti** who uses recycled materials and invents new, eco, animal free and biodegradable materials, for example made out of apple juice waist (called Appleskin leather) or pineapple leaves (called Pinatex) will be in focus in this program.

Knowledge & textile: Workshops for sustainability mind-set for different age audiences but also material producers will be led by Slovenian and foreign trendsetting textile designers and people of craft and forgotten knowledge. Participatory interactive workshops are intended for students, children, seniors and disadvantaged groups.

Heritage & residencies: The main purpose of the program is to encourage students to group, research and produce public installations and art exhibitions. In collaboration with **Chiara Bonfiglioli**, the author of a book "Women and Industry in the Balkans".

Silkworms & contemporary: Gorizia and the surrounding population produced silk until almost the middle of the 20th century and there are still a lot of old mulberry trees to be found. We will try to invent new silk-like, but environment friendly materials.

Public & trends: Fashion shows with upcycling materials and temporary studios will be set in the idyllic setting of a museum train connecting Goriška and Gorenjska.

Partners: Museum della Moda; Mittelmoda International lab (IT); Goriški museum; Carnica Institute Kranj; Museum of Gorenjska; Kreativnice creative hub Škofja Loka; Regional Development Agency of Gorenjska; Benedetti Life (SLO); Croatian Association of Artists of Applied Arts (ULUPUH) (HR); Partners of project Manchester United: Tampere 2026 (FI), Chemnitz 2025 (DE), City of Manchester (UK); Universities and Institutes: University of Ljubljana; University of Nova Gorica (SLO); Manchester Fashion Institute, Fashion Design and Technology; Manchester School of Art, Textiles in Practice (UK); Faculty of Textile Technology University of Zagreb (HR); Faculty of Applied Arts Beograd (RS); Biennale of Western Balkans - History of Art Laboratory, School of Fine Arts, University of Ioannina (GR); Łódź Academy of Art and Design (PL).

-  FROM 2021 ONWARDS
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, KRANJ, EU
-  180,000

SOČA POWER CHARGER

Museum of Energy and Renewable Energy Sources on the Soča River

The company Soške elektrarne (Soča power plants) owns several pearls of industrial heritage, power plants on the Soča river basin, which began operating in the first third of the 20th century, and three are located within the Triglav National Park. With the museum we will establish inside the complex of the operating Doblar power plant, we want to draw attention to the importance of the Soča in the electrification of Slovenia and arrange advanced programs for children and youth in the field of energy. A museum trail will be set up in the power plant, where it will be possible to see the impressive architectural heritage with remnants of infrastructure such as a turbine and generator. In a new building, the natural side of the area will be presented, from geological and geographical features to the flora and fauna.

At the same time, HPP Doblar will become a new entry point for tourists on the way to the upper Soča valley with a tourist information center, a motorhome station with electric chargers for cars and bicycles. The project is led by the Posoški razvojni center (Soča Development Center).

Partners: Municipalities of Nova Gorica, Kanal, Tolmin; Slovenske železnice (Slovenian railways); SENG Soča Power Plants; Saloniit Anhovo; Elektro Primorska; E3 energy (SLO).

-  FROM 2024 ONWARDS
-  NOVA GORICA
-  80,000 (CAPITAL EXPENDITURE COVERED BY COMPANIES)

PIXXEL-X

A cluster of intermedia projects and cross-sectoral programs not only critically addressing the impact of new technologies on society, but also positively integrating them as key assets of development in local communities and the economies of the cross-border region, supported by referenced international partners.

PIXXEL-POINT FESTIVAL

An established festival as the backbone of a new media art program.

The "X" indicates a special expansion of Pixxelpoint International Festival of Contemporary Art Practices that will in 2025 culminate in its 26th annual edition. Next to the process of expansion, the "X" also indicates the shift towards crossings of different artistic, scientific and high-technological realms as well as fostering entrepreneurial attitudes in contemporary (media) artistic practice, including deep collaborations with key regional hi-tech companies. Next to the festival, the manifold programme builds several international bridges to the burning topics of the 21st century, such as post-mobility or digital knowledge sharing. This supports the emergence of new cultural assets in the form of sharing platforms or artistic r&d laboratories. Seeking to both critically question as well as practically test the new digital tech such as AR and VR, AI and big data, DIY and open (innovation) technologies, etc.

Pixxelpoint 2025 in will bring high quality productions from the field of contemporary and new media art, embed them in the cross-border regione and interlink both producers and artists from different backgrounds and territories. In resonance with this important legacy in computer-based arts, the festival will serve also as the backbone of consistent programme evolution in this cluster between 2021 and 2024. The hitherto practice of renowned international and domestic guest curators changing annually will in 2025 be replaced by an international joint curatorial programme board represented by the key Pixxel-X projects' representatives. An important element of the festival will be interactive experiences and hands-on technological art for everyone to touch and feel.

Partners: Cultural center Nova Gorica; Peter Purg; Cultural center Gorizia; BridA art collective; University of Udine; Cultural center Lojze Bratuž; Invisible Cities Gorizia; Association Agorè Gorizia; Lucide cultural association Gorizia; University of Nova Gorica School of Arts and LOUI (SLO & IT); gruentaler9 (DE); Sensorium festival (SK).

-  NOVEMBER 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  230,000

POST MOBILITY

Exploring re-use of transport infrastructure through art.

Post-mobility potentials and cultural reuse of transport-infrastructure related brown fields such as disused garages and abandoned railway platforms shall be explored through art. Media-artistic interventions will point to new purposes for these degraded locations.

The sharing of insights and good practices will build on joint curatorial work and artistic collaborations between the **POCHEN (Chemnitz2025, Germany)**, and the **Pixxel-X** programme based in Nova Gorica, also including selected post-industrial legacy of Gorizia and the surrounding region. In particular the cross-border urban area features many micro-locations of great potential for such interventions.

Partners: University of Nova Gorica School of Arts; X-center Nova Gorica; Invisible Cities Gorizia; Prologo cultural association for promotion of contemporary arts (SLO & IT); POCHEN Spinnerei e.V. Chemnitz/Leipzig; gruentaler9 Berlin (DE)

-  FROM 2023 ONWARD
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, CHEMNITZ
-  110,000



X-MOBIL FROM X-CENTER

The project produces a working prototype of a solar-powered investigative-art module in the format of a car trailer that empowers creativity and innovation in remote locations.

The mobile system is derived from a standard car trailer, containing equipment for AV production and playback (DJ, VJ, video, + VR/AR), also designed to support research in **Art-Science-Technology projects**, including basic natural sciences, field sociology and visual anthropology. It is geared towards the development of social and technological innovations in limited-access conditions or in (remote rural and natural) locations that do not have an electrical supply, thereby also expanding the local outreach of ISOLabs.

The art-thinking based design and fab-lab prototype development will take place in the »X-center for creative practice« to be fully opened in the beginning of 2021, founded in partnership by the Nova Gorica municipality (E-House, Youth Centre), the University of Nova Gorica, Kersnikova Institute and local businesses on the most central town location (pedestrian zone) in direct context with our cultural improvement district (CID). It shall offer an important space for the EcoC programme with different generations engaging in new-tech innovation intertwined with art and design, offering STEAM-based workshops and mentorships, DIY and start-up support as well as a co-curated gallery space. According to regional industry and sponsorship support, several units of X-Mobil shall be produced throughout 2023 and 2024 through local cross- sector collaboration.

Partners: Sajeta festival Tolmin; PIFcamp Bovec; Kersnikova Institute Ljubljana; konS platform partners; DIVA Interreg cross-border project partnership (SLO & IT); Madeira Institute of Interactive Technologies (PT); Technical University Graz (AT); Culture Action Europe (B); Akumulator (CRO).

-  2022 AND 2023
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA, REGION
-  140,000




BULEVAR TO THE HUTURE

by Arctur d.o.o

A new urban nexus and a new hub for artistic and scientific creativity.

At the western entrance to the Kromberk industrial zone, the **HUTURE Center** will become a nexus connecting artistic and scientific creativity with business and industry. HUTURE stands for creation of #future collaboration connecting #human, #nature, #technology and #culture. Its program will foster cooperation of creatives with the economy sector. **bulevAR** started to develop during the 2019 edition of Pixxelpoint festival, when a depleted back street, running from Nova Gorica city center to Kromberk industrial zone – ending adjacent to the lot reserved for the Huture Center building – was transformed into an open-air gallery of extended reality (XR) installations. Local and visiting creatives from artistic,

technological and scientific fields were invited to contribute, and this collaboration model will be developed all until 2025, when the XR vision is to be materialized completely. A permanent open space for visual representations of critical ideas will reflect the tensions and transitions between bulevAR's both ends - the town center and its industrial zone. The now forsaken pedestrian pathway will become a distinctive feature and unique attraction of Nova Gorica, acting as an actual and symbolic link between culture and industry.

-  FROM 2021 ONWARD
-  NOVA GORICA
-  50,000 FOR BULEVAR (EXPENDITURE FOR HUTURE CENTER EXCLUDED, FINANCED BY ARCTUR D.O.O.)

DIAL 1024

By Miran Brumat (Fluks in Decibel)

A multi-media installation on the border.

The project rewinds the dial 1024 years back to reflect the mediated heritage of the area's cultural industries. It is based on an interesting number coincidence between years 1001 and 2025, the first representing the earliest written record of the area's settlement. The time span covers exactly 1024 years of co-existence on this language and ethnic border that is today symbolized in the two quite separately developed cities. This media installation piece is both virtual and physical, thus the project covers a physical installation and at the same time a virtual 3D session, with a daily interaction between physical visitors and virtual tourists.

Partners: Fluks in Decibel (SLO); Kennell sas; pro audio video equipment Torino; Ligna DS srl (Piacenza) (IT); dr. Matija Brumat mechanical engineer Zurich (CH); Akcent Studio; Labin (CRO).

-  THROUGHOUT 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  70,000

GO! GREEN

ISOLABS

Come! home project with Marko Peljhan

A landscape of forensic situations between art and science, from the source to the estuary of the river Soča-Isonzo, comprising field work, field exchanges, environmental and remote sensing, charting and mapping, reflection, local community and global encounters.

With the accessibility of contemporary environmental sensing and recording instruments, be it on biological, chemical, physical or visual levels, the human ability to understand the components of what we deem "nature" has expanded exponentially. But to completely expand our view on complex biospheres and grasp them as ecosystems, we need to encapsulate cultural, historical and geological realities alike. How can an Alpine river flowing into the Mediterranean contribute to the ecological thought through its sedimentary deposits, physical and cultural ones?

Soča is both a particularly fragile biosphere and a contested cultural landmark, associated with a hardly bearable mix of historical wars, hydropower harnessing, sports tourism exploitation, extreme pollution and geological damage already in its Alpine section. Further downstream it presents a subtle trans-urban micro-sprawl around the towns of Nova Gorica/Gorizia, followed by a brittle estuary ecosystem at its contact with the Adriatic Sea.

A highly necessary critical reflection and activist intervention, including concrete (inter)actions in situ is the main aim of ISOLABS, where ISO evokes the notion of isolation/in-sulation of IsonzoSOča, while LABS denotes multiple laboratories. The activities of ISOLABS will be comprised of the following elements:

- **Remote sensing** of the environment through the use of air, satellite and ground-based sensors;
- Collecting **local histories** through interviews and the organization of gatherings both in local communities' public spaces and schools;
- Organization of **localized public presentations** in town halls, debates and setting up of situations in seven locations in Slovenia and Italy;

- Commissioning of 7 **artworks** by local and international artists who may use the wealth of gathered scientific and cultural data in order to provide ecosystemic feedback to the cultural, industrial and natural environment;
- Finishing with a setup of **the central lab**, possibly in the alluvial transborder fields of Solkan. It presents both a location for the presentation of the works in an exhibition and a starting point of a longer-term research station, modeled around the award-winning **Makrolab project** of Marko Peljhan.

This permanent and final ISOLAB will function as a future hub for the joint work of artists, engineers and scientists and will enable future cross border collaboration in these domains, completely and deeply connected to other ongoing activities in the region. ISOLABS will connect the local population of all ages, including younger audiences with artists, scientists and local knowledge experts working within the "ecological" ethos paradigm from all over Europe and wider.

Partners: Projekt Atol Institution; Ljudmila Kersnikova center (SLO); SOLU-BIOART society RIX-C Riga (LV); FOAM - a network of transdisciplinary labs (EU); TBA-21 foundation (AT); Berggruen Institute Los Angeles (USA); the Natural Parks of Friuli Venezia Giulia (IT); local councils; Universities in the wider region, including Venice, Padova, Ljubljana, Villach, Trieste and Nova Gorica and other industry, institutional and academic partners in Italy and Slovenia (SLO, AT, IT).



THROUGHOUT 2025



REGION



900,000 (350,000 THE EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION FROM GO! 2025)



INTO NATURE

Reviving and preserving the old beliefs and places of our ancestors, transforming them into art and making a circle: artist - art - audience - nature.

Traditional natural faiths and other pre-Christian beliefs are a European and world-wide phenomenon but in the last few years this topic has been coming more into focus also in the territory of Slovenia. Recently exposed traces of natural faith or so called "old faith" which in Soča valley mountains obviously survived hundreds of years of suppression until today cause a big interest and a new era of how we understand and respect nature.

CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS HERITAGE




An event with scientists, historians, researchers of ancient religions from all over the world

Kobarid is a town in the Soča valley known mostly for the heavy battles of the Isonzo front. But the town does not want to be known only as a war zone site. They want to reveal also other historical and geographical facts, like the incredible archaeological site called Tonovec Castle, or the beauties of surrounding mountains and Nadiža river.

Kobarid is also a city visited in the Middle Ages by an inquisitor's army sent by the Aquileian patriarchs to cleanse it of false religion and destroy the sacred sites that the inhabitants still worshiped despite Christianization - these were mainly a tree and a well in the middle of the city. In memory of this event, one of the most important Slovenian writers, France Bevk, wrote the novel The Dying God Triglav. Based on historical facts and the above-mentioned novel, Kobarid began to develop activities that revive nature and raise awareness of the customs and beliefs of our ancestors.

They are preparing a conference that will be extended to an international level by 2025. Scientists, historians, researchers of ancient religions from all over the world will be invited to it. At the place where they have already planted a new tree and reopened the water spring, they will set up a concert venue in harmony with nature, where concerts of original folk music from all over the world will take place.

Partners: Municipality of Kobarid; Association Slovenski staroverci (SLO); To be confirmed: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs Copenhagen (DK); United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (USA). different partners from the EU.

 AUGUST 2025
 KOBARID
 30,000

THE SECRET KNOWLEDGE

A permanent collection of ethnographic objects.

Artist and collector **Pavel Medvešček Klančar** passed away on October 23rd 2020. He revealed the secret knowledge of natural faith in his books also has collected around 1,000 objects related to pre-Christian beliefs and the traditional way of life in the decades of exploring Posočje naturalism. We will establish the Museum of Nature in an old homestead in Cerkno, located deep in the forest, with its own water source and surrounded by intact nature. The children and adults will come to learn how our ancestors once lived, what they believed in, practice different skills like how to make a fire, what you may eat in the forest, how to follow the traces of wild animals etc. Different art workshops for children and young will be also held there.

Partners: Municipality of Cerkno; municipality of Kanal; "Matjar" Research Society for Posočje Natural History (SLO)




 JANUARY 2025 (OPENING)
 CERKNO
 60,000

BURGUNDY FIELDS

A virtual and material exhibition to raise the visibility of bronze- and iron-age heritage.

The area of western Slovenia is intertwined with the remains dating from the Bronze and Iron Age. Archaeological discoveries confirm that this is a legacy of the people who brought agriculture, metallurgy and other elements we now consider basic building blocks of culture, in Europe. And yet, not even the locals are aware of this heritage. Kilometres of walls, remains of the ancient "gradišča" - fortified settlements, are hidden under the vegetation and mostly detectable only with modern technology (sonars and radars). The project will explore the historical period through conferences and lectures, it will map and digitalize archeological findings, it will connect stakeholders in different fields with the aim of raising awareness toward this part of our heritage and connecting it with the cultural and tourism offer of the territory.

Partners: Krasen Karst Institute; Municipality of Komen (SLO).

 FROM 2022 ONWARDS
 KOMEN MUNICIPALITY
 80,000

GO! FOR LUNCH

A cluster of projects, using science and art to research the delicate question of what we eat and how we produce our food and to raise awareness of the importance of local, sustainably grown ingredients.

FUTURE OF FOOD

by Jurij Krpan

A project to develop the region into an international gastro destination.

The Nova Gorica and Gorizia geolocation lies on a strategic intersection of six agricultural axes. For its extraordinary natural characteristic, the region in the Austro-Hungarian era earned the title "Garden of Vienna."

Though quick changes in the last century have substantially decreased the importance of agriculture for the regional economy, people maintain a strong emotional connection to their farming past. Fruits and vegetables, wheat and corn still form an important part of the local identity.

The gastronomy in the region has gained a world reputation, and the average food culture is gradually increasing every year. The process of developing the region into an international gastro destination starts with collecting historical evidence through anthropological studies. Findings will be extensively published, reflected with public debate and exhibited in a way that everyone can understand the cultural dimension of growing, processing and eating local food.

WHAT COLOUR IS THE SMELL OF GRAPES

In collaboration with food producers and restaurant owners/chefs we will draw a timeline of yearly events. Wine is celebrated in November, asparagus in May, roses in June, peaches in July, the typical red radicchio in January and so on.

For each month of the year, an ingredient will be chosen. Teams, formed by young European artists and young European chefs, chosen by international open calls, will work together in tandem residencies, creating new tastes, combined with visual, musical, performative and other art creations.

The teams will create an organic, holistic experience for the audience, pursuing exciting quests: how does a rose sound? What colour is the smell of grapes? Which form describes the bittersweet taste of asparagus? How many shades of red are there in a red radicchio leaf?

THE FIELD FROM OUTER SPACE

The scientific and high-tech approach using new technology from internet of things, block chain, custom online platform, remote sensing and earth observation systems from space will introduce solutions for sustainable precision farming.

Contrary to the industrial use of high tech, this approach will enable small food producers to emancipate themselves and grow the ingredients safer and with higher end value. The artistic, scientific and technological investigations, experiments and prototypes will be developed in different creative hubs in the region involving kids and youngsters.

FUTURE OF FOOD ACADEMY

The mix of excellent gastronomical science, production and hospitality will bring together distinguished individuals who should establish the academy for the future of food and responsible gastronomy. The academy will be inaugurated in 2025 and become an international centre for future top and responsible chefs.

Partners: Michelin stars regional chefs Ana Roš, Uroš Fakuč, Joško Sirk; Tomi Kavčič; Faladur gastro & wine Ajdovščina and further gastronomy providers (SLO&IT); Bødø 2024 Via Quaresima project (NO); Andreja Lajh (UK).



FROM 2021 ON



REGION, EU






60,000

GUSTI SENZA FRONTIERE/ TASTES WITHOUT BORDERS

The art of food and art with food. Is there anything better? Yes, to become a Guinness record holder for it...

Every year, the food festival Gusti di frontiera (Border tastes) is one of the most attended events of the cross-border area, with more than 600,000 visitors. With food tasting as its core business – with stands from more than 50 countries from all over the world – the festival hosts concerts, conferences and performances. In 2025, we will bring it to the next level: more stands, further involving local innovative producers and international partners; jaw-dropping innovative artistic performances, so that the visitors can take a break from their meals; multilingual and accessibility-oriented cooking courses, masterclasses and competitions with local and international chefs from our “Celebrating food” project and the “Food academy”; a strong commitment towards sustainable food and biodiversity.

Our goal: to reach 1,000,000 visitors but, most of all, to get the Guinness record for the biggest dinner ever organized!

-  NOVEMBER 2025
-  GORIZIA
-  200,000

THE ATLAS OF ORCHARDS

By Gregor Božič

A virtual map of orchards and a new distillery.

With the atlas of forgotten orchards, we will bring back some glamour to the agriculture in the region, promote the ancient local fruit varieties and preserve the cultural tradition connected with them as well as create a platform for showcasing the attractiveness of the field for younger audiences and the importance of agriculture in today's society.

A virtual map of all abandoned orchards in the region will be made and if possible the most preserved ones will be restored. The map will include stories and legends connected to fruits and the places where they were cultivated. A small-scale distillery will be established, that will distil the harvested fruits from the abandoned orchards and promote it as a high-end product. The distillery could be installed in one of the other already established venues, making it an installation and a public attraction at the same time. A clone of the already existing **gene-bank orchard** in Kojško (Goriška Brda/Colio) will be planted in the city of Gorizia, near the location where the famous Gorizia agricultural school was located before WWI.

Gregor Božič is a researcher of old fruits and a film director. His feature film *Storiest from the Chesnut Woods* is the Slovenian candidate for the Oscars. He is currently working in Lille (FR).

Partners: Delfina foundation; Sustainable food trust (UK); Cepika institute Nova Gorica; Faculty for biotechnology Ljubljana; National institute for agriculture (SLO); Capovilla distillati Rosa; University of gastronomical sciences Pollenzo; Produttori Radicchio Rosso di Gorizia Association; ERSa FVG (IT); Slow food Slovenia and Italy (SLO&IT); Etter distillerie (CH); Chemnitz 2025 - Parade of the Appletrees (DE).

-  FROM 2023 TO 2026
-  REGION
-  110,000

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

An enlightened closing ceremony.

For almost each ECoC, closing time is Christmas time. That end of December should be about family and is very often about food. About a hearty, healthy, home-cooked meal. In 2025 we literally want to invite Europe to celebrate with us, to sit at our dinner table, to rejoice over the newly found union, the rekindled warmth between two European cities, languages, states.

We will start our closing period in November with the opening of a **Share fair**, a big culinary and artistic festival, featuring the very best from the Future of food and hosting food-related projects from our partner cities, our ECoC family. And we will start December by flipping the switch of a grandiose Christmas light installation.

In partnership with Intra Lighting (our globally successful light design company) we will invite an international group of artist to create light installations in both cities, concentrating on the border area, which, by then will become the All man's land. 2025 will also be the first of many, many years in which Nova Gorica and Gorizia will plan and execute their holiday decorations together, family style. Hoping our 21st century will be merry and bright and all our Christmases – borderless.

Partners: Intra lighting company; Magdeburg 2025 - Flowing lights of Europe (DE); Sonic art festival Glasgow (UK).

-  DECEMBER 2025
-  NOVA GORICA, GORIZIA
-  250,000



Gusti di frontiera
festival, Gorizia

GO2GREENGO

Go2GreenGo will connect all green content in the city, the conurbation and their surroundings, and by focusing on urban antiquities, parks, gardens and forests, highlight the importance of sustainability and a permaculture approach to the design of all-important conurbation systems.

LIBRARY OF SEEDS

We will establish a "borrow, cultivate, share" circle to educate and make aware of plant varieties and their invaluable value.

Libraries are not just about books, they are more and more about sharing and meeting. In the Seeds Library citizens will bring and borrow seeds from surrounding gardens, vineyards and orchards to preserve and exchange seeds from the region, renew knowledge about the autochthonous species and exchange experiences. The project promotes biodiversity, local food production, sustainable land use, self-sufficiency and, above all, the return of seeds to human hands. We want to encourage the individual to take an active part in their community and to preserve the cultural and natural heritage. We will connect with other libraries in the region and in Europe and exchange seeds, as well as experiences.

Partners: France Bevk Public Library Nova Gorica; Isontina National library Gorizia; Slovenian National Library Gorizia, Museum of natural sciences A. Comel Gorizia (SLO & IT); Chemnitz 2025 - Apple trees parade (DE).

-  FROM 2021 ON
-  NOVA GORICA
-  50,000

GREEN SPOTS AND MOVEMENT

A new green map of the urban area and a series of activities to promote a creative approach toward greening the city centers.




The basic plan for the construction of Nova Gorica, in the spirit of the Athens Charter of Modernist Urbanism, planned spacious green areas, with a tree avenue on the main street. But because the planned construction of the city was never completed, no trees were planted either. But at the spontaneous initiative of some decision makers with a green soul, many different trees were planted in the city and so instead of a modernist city park, a city in the park was created.

GreenSpots is a platform that will gather all the important information for locals and visitors about the green, sustainable contents of the conurbation. The interactive map, accessible online and several large touch-screens in the urban area, will present the locations of green info points, parks, botanical gardens, city forests, rose beds, green playgrounds, creative green installations, drinking fountains, city bike rental, public transport stops, as well as the routes of green themed trails that will connect all of the above.

Tree Houses will be built at three strategic locations - one in the central Nova Gorica park the other in the central Gorizia park and on the border. The cottages will be a green info space and a signpost for the city's green content. We will take care of the efficient **greening of parking lots**: setting up a network structure and planting climbing plants for shading. In urban areas, we will establish **vertical gardens** on the walls of city buildings. In various residential neighborhoods, we will arrange **urban composters**. We will put small **fountains with drinking water** all over the cities. At the ECoC offices and other points, sustainable water containers will be available, on which a QR code with the map will be printed.

To promote greening of the city, sustainable lifestyle and strengthening the green movement, we will organize presentations, workshops and competitions for citizens, with particular emphasis on the presentation of good practices of lowering the temperature in the city and self-sufficiency of the population. As part of the green activities, there will also be guided tours along green themed trails, in the event of a space closure in an interactive form.

Partners: Komunala company Nova Gorica; Arboretum Volčji Potok; Parco Viatori Gorizia; University of Nova Gorica – Urbanat green corridors project; Markacija Agency; (SLO&IT)

-  FROM 2022 ON
-  NOVA GORICA
-  120,000

THE SURVIVAL KAKI TREE

We will plant the saplings from the bombed Kaki Tree from Nagasaki as a symbol of peace and proof that life always finds its way.

Revive Time - Kaki Tree Project is an international art project initiated in 1996 by tree doctor **Masayuki Ebinuma** who saved seeds from the fruits of the Kaki tree which survived the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki. He carefully grew them and together with contemporary artist **Tatsuo Miyajima** started a project to promote peace. The project has taken place successfully in more than 270 places in 24 countries. We would like to welcome the Nagasaki tree descendant to GO! 2025 and vice versa, putting the GO area on the map of this world-wide family of Revive Time project. Our area is ideal for kaki trees; people here consider it as a plant of Eden so we are sure that seedlings from the bombed kaki tree would find a proper home here.

Partners: School of arts University of Nova Gorica and artist Rene Rusjan (SLO); Nagasaki - Brescia Kaki Tree Project - Europe, Francesco Foletti (IT); Kaki Tree Project Executive Committee Tokyo (JP).

-  NOVEMBER 2024
-  NOVA GORICA
-  € 30,000

THE FOREST HOUSE (Park Pečno)

Park Pečno is a place where nature, culture, sport and various events go hand in hand. It has been developed by the O.Z.O.N. association since 2014 with the selective cleaning of overgrown forest. The park contains a forma viva with a gallery in a forest house, a reading "room" with books, the open-air cinema and many other attractions. All events are accompanied by dishes, cooked with natural ingredients gathered in the surroundings. In 2025, we will expand activities mainly with international artists, while maintaining a limited number of audiences and thus maximally the sensibility of this unique space.

Partners: Municipalities in the included region; O.Z.O.N. association and partners (SLO); Museum of natural sciences A. Comel Gorizia (IT).

-  2025
-  KANAL
-  € 40,000

NO TIME TO WASTE by Sanja Popov Leban, Janez Leban

The initiative principles of the project offer the opportunity to the festivals and cultural events in the region to

jointly increase their capabilities in the implementation of innovative actions in the management of Zero Waste.

Nova Gorica and Soča Valley are already having a title Slovenian Green Destinations (Gold) as a part of the national program Green Scheme of Slovenian tourism but we have to improve and promote a tourist economy where conservation, recycling and recovery are keywords of a new cultural approach by developing integrated and specialized festival packages.

Our starting point is Tolmin (Soča Valley) as a city with the biggest number of an international audience in Slovenia coming every year because of music festivals. The region has positioned itself in the minds of the local and international audience as one of the most beautiful festival destinations in the world.



Adriatic Alps Festivals Network (AAFN) is established from cross border alliance of long-time supporters of the "off-track/non-mainstream" art and music scene whose members are going to collaborate in the investigation, and sharing of innovative ideas, new methods and key insights in making festivals a driver of a sustainable future by zero waste management.

As a supporter of this issue, AAFN is fostering festivals and organizations cooperation in the Adriatic Alps area by enhancing the number and strength of connections implementing sustainable tourism policy which can be achieved with the adoption of "green" actions to lower the negative impact on the environment caused by large gatherings, and to transform the waste originated by tourist flows into a new resource for local communities both from a social and economic point of view. The key to transforming waste into a resource is to lower the waste produced at its source and to strengthen the recycling chain.

The No time to waste initiative offers the opportunity to create a green network of existing events and festivals in the Adriatic Alp area, thanks to the adoption of green solutions through the implementation and use of web application with practical guidelines made by organizers with long experience and municipalities in cooperation with international partners reaching the goal Zero Waste.

Those solutions will ensure the continuity of the introduction of good green practices in the urban and rural local areas in order to increase the sustainability of green destinations. 2025 is reserved for the three days' international conference No Time to Waste with creative workshops, discussions, talks and networking events, best practices exchange, comparison of the situation, adoption of shared Zero Waste strategies solutions (guidelines), result presentations, and certification procedures.

Partners: Zavod MINK Tolmin (SLO); Adriatic Alps Festivals Network (EU); various festivals.

-  FROM 2022 ON, CONFERENCE MARCH 2025
-  REGION
-  € 110,000

SOUNDS OF NATURE

Music in the embrace of nature and nature as a source of music - projects that connect man and art with the natural environment, from which artists draw inspiration.

THE CHOIR OF EDEN

A choir concert in the beautiful scenery of a vineyard in the Brda/Collio region.

We have a saying: who sings, thinks no evil. The two things that throughout history brought delight to the simple inhabitant of the region, but also dignity and independence, were wine and songs. Since the 18th century wine has been the prime source of income and even in the darkest times of fascism, when Slovenian language and culture were banned, people continued to sing: secretly and at the risk of being arrested. Choir singing for Slovenes and for the Primorska region especially is much more than just fun or a nice hobby. Vineyards in the Brda/Collio region are shaped like amphitheatres. One of them will host a spectacular choir concert with more than 500 singers from all over the region. Each participating choir will be encouraged to invite a vocal group from a European country. The concert will host a world-renowned choir or a top solo singer as the special guest. Streaming will be set up, so Slovenian immigrants all over the world will be able to enjoy the concert in real time.

-  SEPTEMBER 2025
-  BRDA/COLLIO
-  120,000

TREE ORCHESTRA

by Markus Rindt and Dresdner Sinfoniker, Dresden (DE)

A musical installation in the beautiful park of the Laščak villa, which by 2025 will be renovated and revitalized.

Amidst the hustle and bustle, the visitor will enter a mystical world. In a tranquil forest, the murmur of the trees will transform into a symphony orchestra. Music and nature merge into a unique artwork, resonating the call of romanticism: Back to Nature. The forest takes center stage as a musical refuge, reflecting our innermost feelings.

In a Nova Gorica park or suburban wood, up to 80 trees will form a designated stage for the installation. All trees will be in close proximity and equipped with invisible loudspeakers, each representing one orchestra member. Their individually recorded soundtracks will form a synchronized performance

of symphonic works, played at a faint volume. Imagine the visitors, stepping into the orchestral forest, listening to barely audible music of exceptional beauty.

Whenever they get closer to a tree, the volume of its soundtrack will increase according to sensors, calculating everyone's distance. What a rare opportunity to listen to individual musicians fading in and out as you walk from tree to tree whilst the overall performance goes on! The more visitors walk in the installation, the more complete the musical jigsaw will be. In addition, our sound engineers will have full acoustic control and might orchestrate the timing of the tracks or play them all at full volume.

The installation will have the possibility to be set in a way that a person has to step close or hug the tree and only then the tree plays. The repertoire is encompassing classical and contemporary works, famous masterpieces and newly commissioned compositions. All of them will be inspired by nature and the forest as this project is putting its critical focus on environmental destruction, land clearance and deforestation, making an appeal to protect nature.

The Dresdner Sinfoniker will embrace musicians from all countries of the European Union. They will come together in Nova Gorica for the joint recording of their individual soundtracks, each of them featuring on a website, specifically set up for this project. Photos and videos will introduce them individually, presenting their instruments as well.

The proposed collaboration of Nova Gorica and Dresden will be suitable for groups of all ages and perfect for school outreach. After being developed and tested (parts of) the installation could tour other European cities (perhaps ECoC in Germany) as an interactive exhibition.

Partners: *The Dresdner Sinfoniker orchestra (DE); Villa Laščak managing authority (yet to be defined); Biotechnical school Šempeter pri Gorici (SLO); Parco Viatori park Gorizia (IT); European Spirit of Youth Orchestra (EU).*

-  FROM MARCH TO DECEMBER 2025
-  NOVA GORICA
-  150,000

BAT SYMPHONY

An audio and visual installation and a series of events, exploring bats, sounds and movement.

The mighty castle Rihemberk in Branik which once belonged to the Lantieri, one of the most famous noble families from Gorizia, is one of the few medieval castles in the Primorska region. In addition to its medieval history, the recently renovated and newly opened castle with European funds has a special added value - a rich roosting place for ten species of bats, which roost there from April to October and return to their native castle after wintering elsewhere.

These protected animal species are a landmark in itself, and at the same time they play an important role in maintaining the dynamic balance in nature. During the renovation, the protected bats were unharmed and part of the castle remained unrestored, closed to visitors and preserved just for them. We would like to draw attention to this rich heritage of biological diversity, giving visitors the opportunity to experience a colony of these wonderfully interesting nocturnal animals, but by avoiding any contact with them and protecting them. The castle's cellars were included on the list of Internationally important underground bat shelters by EUROBATS, and two Natura 2000 sites were designated to protect the castle's bats.

In individual emptied parts of the castle, we will set up video and audio installations, created by carefully recording the life of bat colonies and their distinctive ultrasonic vocalisations in cooperation with bat researchers from University of Ljubljana, which will be assembled into various art videos and sound images. We invited the exceptional, award-winning Slovenian artist **Andrej Zdravič**, who creates films through long-term observation and recording of nature and its elements, and sound processing (exhibitions with a permanent installation of his works are Water waves in Exploratorium, San Francisco and Secrets of Soča and The forest in Triglav National centre Trenta).

The other important artist **Boštjan Perovšek**, a musician, composer and soundscape pioneer artist, composes experimental electro acoustic music, specially bio-acoustic music based on the sounds of animals, especially insects. Perovšek is also awarded with the prestigious Valvasor award for sound in museums. The installations will not be simple arranged recordings of animal movements and sounds, but will artistically reinterpret topics, which are bat-related, but

inherently human: how do we move in our analogue environment and how we recognize, push and build obstacles in the digital one? How do we perceive space and how are we influenced by different layers of the material world: especially those we are not able to see, hear?

The "bat adventure" will be an event for a limited group of visitors, a kind of guided night tour of the castle. In the evening, the group will be greeted and addressed by a costumed actor, who will lead them through the castle and courtyard, through the story of the castle and the bats. In order to be able to hear their inaudible sounds and observe them, when it gets dark, visitors will have to hear and track the bats in dark and silence, with special devices and headphones

Partners: Municipality of Nova Gorica (Nataša Kolenc); Institution Svitar; Dr. Klemen Koselj; Fluks in decibel (SLO).



FROM JANUARY 2025



BRANIK



70,000

THE OLDEST FLUTE

A participatory project and an open-air concert, dedicated to the oldest instrument in the world.

The oldest musical instrument in the world, a 60,000-year-old Neanderthal flute is a treasure of global significance. It was discovered in Divje babe (wild women) cave near Cerklje and has been declared by experts to have been made by Neanderthals. The natural shape of the chosen left thigh bone, its size, and artificial redesign are ergonomically sound and adapted for a right-handed musician. Therefore, it cannot have formed randomly. Using a special technique of playing makes it possible to perform complex music. The project will present the sounds of the oldest instrument in the world. Concerts with the orchestra and the whistle will be held in the open air near the cave and elsewhere. Cerklje music schools will teach kids how to play this strange instrument and replicas will be made as souvenirs.

Partners: Municipality of Cerklje; Jazz Cerklje festival (SLO).



FROM 2023



CERKLJE



50,000

ART RESIDENCIES

We see art residencies as a crucial part of our program to GO! Borderless. The exchange of experience and a widening of the horizon is exactly what our territory needs to GO! toward a European future. Some of the residencies are encompassed in cultural projects. In this section we list some additional initiatives we find of exemplar value.

R.o.R. – RURALLY ORGANISED RESIDENCIES by BridA institute

The program brings contemporary and intermedia artists to a rural environment, encouraging them to collaborate and engage with the local population. Seven residencies will take place in the title year with artists from France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, and other European countries.

The BridA Institute has a long and outstanding experience in organizing residencies and has so far hosted a number of internationally renowned artists who presented the general public with a unique experience. Exciting contemporary art is far from being limited to galleries and cultural centers in urban areas.

DOWN BY THE RIVER

The Soča River springs in the Slovenian mountains, crosses the border near Nova Gorica and Gorizia and flows into the sea on the Italian side. It thus symbolically and realistically connects the northern and southern parts of the candidacy area, crosses two countries and several municipal borders.

There are several walking or cycling routes along the entire route, the most famous of which is The Walk of Peace. Municipalities are planning to build a cycling route on the territory, which will connect the entire area from the source to the estuary. Along this route, we will set up fine art installations.

Each municipality will organize an art residency for international and domestic artists, who will first explore the territory with the help of locals, get acquainted with its features, potential materials (stone, wood, clay...) and create their works of art based on these findings, which will be placed in designated areas along the river.

It will be up to the artist to decide whether the installation will be a playground, a memorial to a historical event, a musical instrument or anything else, as long as the piece is in harmony with space and nature. In collaboration with: Walk of peace foundation, Kulturni dom cultural centre Nova Gorica, municipalities of Bovec, Kobarid, Tolmin, Kanal.

ARTEFICI RESIDENCES by Artisti Associati organization

ARTEFICI ResidenzeCreativeFVG puts artists and performing arts companies in dialogue with the Gorizia area. The residence is conceived as an opportunity for stimulation and research for artists but also for the territory and its inhabitants, imagined not as mere guests or spectators, but as architects, of that process of growth and development that is at the base of creation. Starting from 2020, ARTEFICI intends to expand in a cross-border and international key, becoming one of the main "source" of performers for projects such as Basaglia's celebrity deathmatch.

THUMBS-UP FOR BOTTOM-UP!

It can be a residency, an artistic project, a one of a kind event, a book or a workshop. As long as it has a borderless and international dimension.

From 2021 to 2025, every year we will set up an open call for four small (up to 3,000 €) and two medium-sized up to 10,000 €) cultural projects, activities or events. Everyone can participate and propose their ideas: locals and "foreigners", NGOs, artists and simple citizens. The winners will be selected through popular vote by a jury composed of volunteers drawn by lot.

Because GO! is everybody's (and for everybody).



THE THINK TANK TRAIN

by Lev Fišer

All aboard! Think Tank Train is an initiative to invite students from social sciences, humanities and European governance to Gorizia-Nova Gorica to form a think tank on the topic of European dimension. Carefully selected individuals will work to provide a clear representation of what European dimension is and will propose a strategic plan to enhance the term's capability to advocate freedom of movement to a wider international audience. In the last quarter of 2025, the Think Tank Train will earn its name. Advocating sustainable mobility, participants will embark on a railway European tour. In collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica.

THE ART MACHINE

In cooperation with technological and other companies in the territory (such as Intra Lighting, Arctur, GOAP, Spintec and others) young artists will be selected through an international open call and invited to work with companies to create technological and social innovations. Co-financed by the economic sector the residencies aim to create an innovation environment related to the economy, which will successfully perform on the global market. The program will organically grow from the Interreg project DIVA (2019- 2022).

€ 350,000

CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS

Following the ABC (Affirmation, Bettering, Collaboration) capacity building program outlined in the preselection phase, in this section we present our capacity building activities and projects, aimed to foster collaboration between culture and other sectors and to boost the GO! 2025 legacy.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD – CULTURAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Culture can be a major driver for regeneration and economic growth within our cities because culture is largely what created them. A combination of what people did and the landscape shaped the development of our cities. Those who lived, worked and visited created environments to support the lives they wanted to lead. Their Culture. Who they were. Over time this function has been replaced by consumption driven models which displaced many local businesses and skills. The purpose of the city center has shifted to function as a retail destination. But now as the retail industry scales back from smaller cities in particular, the proliferation of out of town malls and now internet shopping, city centers need a new purpose. This is even more necessary post covid. Led by rediscovering and harnessing the culture of a place and its people.

This is a pan European issue. But here we have a special combination of a traditional, but slowly dying Italian town and a Slovenian "new town". Nova Gorica to a degree has greater economic vibrancy but also lacks the sense of place which more traditional city centers (like Gorizia's) have been able to develop over time.

The Via Rastello in Gorizia is a good example of how city centers should be much more than retail areas. A street of blooming shops just three decades ago, via Rastello is still beautiful but the hustle and bustle vanished with the border economy. The Bevkov trg, Nova Gorica's main square on the other hand is a good example of how centers are not just stone, lights and infrastructure. After going through a carefully planned and rather expensive renovation, the square remains mostly silent, even on a starry July evening, let alone on a rainy November afternoon. In between, there is our emerging third center, the Evropa/Transalpina square, a project for the future, an area where we do not want to repeat past mistakes.

Our aim is to turn our twin centers into launch pads that drive economic growth, cultural activity and wider social benefits. Each with a clearly defined purpose that complements the other. Where Slovenians and Italians truly benefit from having two different but complementary city centers and are capable of creating a third, common urban space.

But how?

Our concept is Cultural Improvement District (CID). The Business Improvement District has been successful in the past but is primarily retail focused and seems to have lost its transforming power. Creating cultural quarters on the other hand means closing up culture and art in separated, unconnected spaces. The CID is a creative mix of everything a city has to offer: industry, gastronomy, retail, entertainment and of course heritage, art and culture. It is for the citizens and the visitors a leisure-based experience that is fun and different, something that cannot be replicated on-line. And would drive people away from internet shopping, back to the city centers. **Our CID looks like this:**

Social and economic innovations

We will explore new models of collaboration. For instance, giving local businesses more flexible lease terms based on turnover and community contribution. This could involve a new control model over the assets – ideally building a shared ownership model. We will enable creative industries to try, test and experiment, encourage pop-up activity to create the evidence required to secure further investment. This approach is not initially about looking at grand capital projects although they should follow once the vision and soft infrastructure has been created. It is about creating an experimental mind-set that everyone can buy into that has the political and stakeholder support to enable ideas to happen. Why shouldn't GO! Borderless write a new blueprint for the towns we live in?

Participation

Workshops, public debates, open calls and other engaging activities will support the process. A new mind-set is not an easy goal and participation in urban planning is a struggle for many environments in Europe. "Why should we even talk

to people," an urban planner once said, "if all they ever want is more parking?" A stronger community ownership and a clearer link between urban planning and the local culture, the sense of place, an atmosphere that allows people to co-create, imagine, acquire skills and will, might be a good answer to this dilemma. A well-planned digital engagement will reach out to young people, who certainly do not see parking as an absolute priority.

Increasing knowledge

We will encourage the two cities to join international organisations, built around specific urban issues (new towns, split cities etc.) and to host events which will bring a diverse international experience and expertise in the territory.

Urban planning

We will include the CID model in the cross-border urban strategy the cities are starting to prepare. We will connect the strategy with existing city plans.

Supporting

We will create a shared support service both for small businesses and homeowners. Especially those Italian citizens who want to live or operate in Slovenia, and vice versa, have already expressed a dire need for a permanent desk, which would give advice on the legal and administrative issues and give access to a library of experiences and solutions.

€ 220,000

EPISCOPE – A GO! PALIMPSEST

By Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), Research Station Nova Gorica

Researchers in social science and humanities know a lot. But do we listen to them? Do we even have an opportunity to grab their rope of knowledge, when we are drowning in a sea of information overload? EPIScope is an observatory of the GOscape. The events will be oriented toward a broad audience: citizens of the GO area from all walks of life, schools and pupils, students, visitors.

EPIScope will look at pasts, presents and futures of the layered Nova Gorica/Gorizia palimpsest and reflect upon the topics addressed by the EPICenter. Each constellation, i.e. each month of 2025, will be dedicated to a theme, that will accommodate several events – lectures, roundtables, talks, meetings, formats for schools and children as well as presentation and exhibition of an artwork in dialogue with the main monthly theme. Constellations will resonate with three programme lines – GO! Share, Go! Green, and Go! Europe as follows:

GO! Share:

In the Beginning was the Word (our general language embeddedness, as well as GO specifics, composed of different languages, dialects, vernaculars, and multilingualism); **Voices** (the phenomena of local storytelling, oral tradition and folk songs); **Memory of Humanity** (written word - li-

brary, book storage, book trade, and publishing); **Words and Things** (how man came to be an object of knowledge, as well as its ability to link words and nonmaterial memories with tangible objects and heritage)

GO! Europe:

Making Europe (what and who is Europe, Europe's past and present real and imaginary borders); **Religiosity/scrutiny** (pre-Christian remnants, Christianity and other past and present religious' practices and its impacts on the GO region); **Alternatives** (past and present alternative movements and border regions as latently potent for social and cultural transformations); **Borderless Futures** (possible participatory, inclusive and multi-perspective urban futures).

GO! Green:

New Cities – Old Aristocracy (a juxtaposition of the new and the old city, the circumstances and potentials of their urbanity); **On the Wings of Migration** (the settlement of Nova Gorica, as well as on other past and present migration phenomena); **Modernism** (philosophical and art movements); **Green City** (the squares, the parks, the urban green belt, botanic and rose gardens).

The events, prepared in collaboration with various regional and European institutions and hosting a wide range of international participants, will take place at the ZRC SAZU Bookstore Café, Nova Gorica. They can also be delivered virtually.

€ 120,000

THE GONG – PRODUCTION

Building on our pre-selection phase idea of creating an umbrella brand for events and festivals we engaged in conversation with stakeholders in the region. We realized that a common brand is perceived by many as a superstructure, which will complicate processes and interfere with their independence and autonomy. Hence, we redirected our GONG idea toward building a support mechanism. The main issue for the cultural NGO sector is the lack of funds. The fact that most NGOs must borrow all production equipment and services from commercial providers only deepens that problem.

This is why we are developing GONG as a cooperative. We will encourage NGOs to invest in the cooperative, funded partly by ECoC funds, which will buy basic production equipment (sound and video technology, chairs, mobile stages etc.) and allow its members free use of the equipment. It will also run an office, connected with the Cultural district improvement shared service, which will gather and distribute knowledge on funding strategies, legal framework, administration procedures etc. to facilitate and support event organizers cross-border.

We believe that through this process cultural NGOs will connect in an organic, bottom-up way and will gradually grow into a civic force which will slowly change policies and perception, creating a long-term impact on the role and importance of independent culture in the cities and the region.

€ 240,000

THE EXPERIENCE FACTORY – CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Nova Gorica and Gorizia have long ago recognized their touristic potential in heritage, gastronomy, festivals and events. It is not just an economic opportunity in a fast-growing sector (which is even more true for Slovenia, where tourism represents 13% of the GDP and 8% of the export value) but also a chance for people from different backgrounds and diverse experiences to meet, for the regional territory to grow and for innovative, sustainable solutions in heritage and culture. GO! 2025 is a unique opportunity to develop new, innovative products in cultural tourism.

The Experience Factory is a long-term, complex capacity building process directed toward:

- **small business owners,**
- **touristic operators,**
- **technology developers,**
- **cultural stakeholders,**
- **local politicians and administrators**
- **schools and youngsters,**

In collaboration with two major touristic organizations: **Institute for tourism of Nova Gorica** and **Promoturismo Friuli Venezia Giulia** region from 2021 on the Factory will develop, produce, promote and sustain new products, which will be: inventive, experience based, responsible toward the community and friendly toward the natural environment. New trails and itineraries, new digital products, innovative and alternative accommodation facilities are among the elements of this new touristic offer we want to help build. The program works with four methods:

The crossings:

through lectures, workshops and “field events” we will cross the knowledge between sectors. The participants will be alternatively mentors and pupils: artists learning about the hospitality business from hotel owners, restaurateurs learning about heritage from historians, local administrators learning about digital technology from IT companies etc.

The ventures:

we will set up speed-dating events in which owners of ideas will interact with established companies and political decision makers.

The possible:

We will systematically increase the knowledge of stakeholders in public and private funding and work with local authorities to find practical solutions for financing ventures (private-public partnership, loan guarantees etc.).

The impossible:

in collaboration with the Primorski tehnološki park business incubator we will launch a “crazy ideas” contest for youngsters. Everything is possible. We will focus on four pilot topics, which in the participatory process during the preparation of the bid stood out as most

promising for cultural tourism storytelling:

- **The County of Gorizia** (for centuries the Gorizian counts have dominated a big part of central Europe, the magnificent mediaeval castle remains witness of these times of glory, but what is their story and can it be told with a captivating, “Game of Thrones” power?).
- **The last French king** (Charles X died in Gorizia, after running from the revolution and chasing his destiny across Europe, his tomb at the monastery of Kostanjevica, surrounded by a lush rose garden, is the perfect place to tell the story of powerful individuals, social struggles and rebels from the past and today).
- **The smugglers** (for centuries people in this land of shifting borders survived thanks to their ability to go around and under boundaries and limitations – a perfect scenario for live gaming experiences, escape rooms and routes, and other engaging activities).
- **The regimes** (statues, plaques, traces of the 20th century regimes: whole cities are monuments of stories which went terribly wrong but are still worth telling and give a chance for the visitors to experience the past and reflect the regimes of the present, when “the big boss” doesn’t watch from the statue on the square, but through algorithms and applications).



110,000

CINECITTÀ – THE CITY OF FILM

With the idea of how to empower all aspects of the film industry sector in our borderless town, we decided to focus on programs that will have sustainable and long-lasting effects. We have solid bases. The territory is known as the birthplace of many internationally proclaimed film directors like **Jan Cvitkovič, Matteo Oleotto, Gregor Božič, Ivan Gergolet** and others. They all claim the region inspires them and they place the stories of their film and TV series in this multicultural and multi-ethnic environment.

In 2014 Croatian Audiovisual Center (HAVC), Friuli Venezia Giulia Fondo Audiovisivo and Slovenian Film Centre (SFC) established the project RE-ACT (Regional Audiovisual Cooperation and Training) that is empowering the cooperation, supporting development of film projects as well as training emerging filmmakers and producers from all three involved countries. In 2018 the Slovene Animated Film Association (DSAF) started presidency and coordination of the activities of CEE Animation initiative, a network of film animation professionals from Central and Eastern Europe with members from 19 countries.

The University of Nova Gorica, School of Arts runs the best programme for studies of animation in Slovenia and the Gorizia based DAMS program of the University of Udine is a unique programme for restoration and digitization of old and

rare film formats associated with a well-known laboratory. Production companies with strong international presence like Staragara, Transmedia, Kinoateljje and others focused their activities in the region lately. Film festivals like **Premio Sergio Amidei** and **Poklon viziji – Hommage to a Vision** established their strong presence.

Borderless Script Writing Residency

The basis of every successful film is a perfect script. Our team of experienced advisors will carefully select about six projects every year and offer to the writers a month long possibility to write a new version of a script, guided by the tutors. Tutors: **Alessandro Gropplero**, **Srdjan Koljević**, **Ognjen Sviličić**, **Matevž Luzar**, **Matthieu Darras**, **Isabelle Fauvel** and others.

Partners: project Re-act (SLO, IT, CRO, SRB), Slovenian Film Centre, Association of Slovenians film directors, Staragara productions (SLO), Friuli Venezia Giulia Fondo Audiovisivo, Transmedia Productions (IT), Initiative films Paris (FR) and others.

Animation production lab and hub

Animation is the fastest growing branch of the audio-visual industry. During the lockdown, it was not so strongly affected. Partnership with Academy of Arts and the network, connected to CEE Animation, will bring to the project both institutional and non-institutional training possibilities. Italy as the third strongest audio-visual market in the EU (besides France and Germany) has great needs and interests, but almost no tradition in animation. Both Italian and Slovenian broadcasters and the cinema sector are hungry of new IP formats developed for their markets. The plan is to approach cohesion funds in the new EU financial perspective, focusing on a stronger cooperation between the public, private and NGO sector. Head of the project: **Matija Šturm**, **Boštjan Potokar**

Partners: Slovene Animated Film Association, Academy for Arts University of Nova Gorica, Finta studio Ljubljana (SLO), CEE Animation Network (IT, SLO; PL, CZ, SK, CRO), DAMS programme University of Udine, Base2 video Factory Gorizia (IT) and others.

GO! film commission

The area is becoming very popular location for shooting films and TV series. A joint Nova Gorica/Gorizia city film commission, established in collaboration with regional and national stakeholders, will provide permissions for shooting, easier access to public spaces and promote the region among film crews, making the borderless territory even more attractive for productions.

The Cinema hub

Beside programming of different audio-visual events during GO! 2025 in Kinemax in Gorizia, Kulturni dom Nova Gori-

ca and Kinogledališče in Tolmin, there will be many special open-air events organized in different locations in town. Our idea is to create a sort of traveling cinema that will organize and visit also some smaller towns and villages in the region and offer the experience of watching films under stars. Both contemporary films as well as classics and retrospectives will be programmed and accompanied with live talks with guests and an active participation from the audience. Head of the project: **Mateja Zorn**, Kinoateljje cinema association Gorizia.

€ 350,000

BORDERLESS WIRELESS – A DIGITAL PLATFORM

Our digital outreach during the past year and especially during the lockdown is an important source of experience. Lack of connection between citizens and stakeholders in the area has been identified as a serious issue in many interactions. We will create a GO! 2025 digital platform called Borderless Wireless. The platform will provide a single access point for all GO! 2025 activities. It will have one digital entry point through which all information and tools will be available to facilitate cooperation and make it more transparent. It will use all the necessary open data both from national, regional, local as well as business sources. The users will access the platform through:

- **the GO! 2025 website:** will be also the landing page for the new cross-border W-lan we are already creating and will give free internet access to citizens and visitors in the whole urban border area. The page will be our prime communication tool, it will connect to our social media platforms and will change and evolve to support different phases of the GO! 2025 process.
- **the GO! app:** a new mobile application, designed in collaboration with regional IT companies, will be a multipurpose digital tool. It will give access to digital extensions of our projects (Hopscotch, Basaglia celebrity death match, From station to station and others), it will provide information about events, support ticketing and services in urban mobility, accommodation etc. In 2026 it will evolve in a permanent city-app.
- **the GO! TV** will be a platform for live-streaming of events and a video archive.

Above all, Borderless Wireless will ensure that events also take place in the case of natural and other impacts such as e.g. covid 19, that users still receive information and are involved in active participation through digital connectivity. Thus, many projects in the cultural program have their own mirror in the virtual world.

€ 400,000



REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Our main regional projects are included in the core Cultural Program. However, through our process of engaging across the towns and villages we identified a number of additional projects which have a deep significance locally and for the long term cultural development of our region. They will be co-created and co-financed by the municipalities themselves. See also map on front page flip.

Ajdovščina

THE MILL OF TIME: An in-situ exhibition to showcase industrial heritage: workshops, the old water mill, the iron-works.

KLEMENTINA PUPPET FESTIVAL: A participatory event dedicated to the legacy of local puppeteer Milan Klemenčič (1875-1957).

Bovec

TONE KRALJ – THE FRESCOS STORY: During the fascist occupation of the region the painter Tone Kralj (1900-1975) was commissioned to paint frescos in local churches. He would depict notorious regime leaders in negative roles and express the suffering of the population. The project aims to mark all of Kralj's work in the region.

Brda

HOME OF REBULA: The special local white wine Rebula will be celebrated through international events, bringing "home" all the rebulas of the world – back from the regions where the vine was exported.

UNESCO: The cross-border territory of Brda/Collio candidates for the UNESCO tentative list in 2021 with the aim of preserving the typical vine cultivating terraces.

Cerkno

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASKS: "Laufarji" are one of the oldest carnival groups in Slovenia. The project researches the language used in carnival rites, which is in many ways "endemic" to the group.

THE BEVK STORIES: France Bevk (1890-1970) was a Slovene writer, poet and translator and an antifascist freedom fighter. For the last 10 years a festival has been celebrated. It will be upgraded with innovative cultural programmes.

Idrija

THE MELHIORCA: The actress Metka Pavšič brings to life an extraordinary female character from the past. Melhiorca was a lace-maker, a smuggler, a brave, witty, intelligent woman.

PASOLINI – A FREE MAN: Since the film director spent part of his childhood in Idrija, the city is twinned with his birth town Casarsa. With the Pier Paolo Pasolini institute they will dedicate a project to tolerance and inclusivity.

Kanal

INDUSTRY, HUMANITIES, ART: Workshops and residencies in local, active industrial buildings, celebrating big local creative names from the past.

THE MULTISENSORIAL: Two new permanent exhibition spaces will be created, dedicated to the traditional masks of Lig and to the ancient, pre-Christian beliefs.

Kobarid

HOP-ON, HOP-OFF CULTURE: A marathon of cultural events with local artists and NGOs on sites, spread across the municipality and connected with a hop-on, hop-off bus.

Komen

KAMENICA - THE STONE MUSIC: The creation of a sound gallery, dedicated to traditional instruments, made of stone.

WINE ACROSS THE BORDER: A space, dedicated to Slovenian and Italian wine makers in the territory. An enoteca and a space for cultural exchange.

Miren-Kostanjevica

GUARDIANS OF PEACE: A meeting of European UNESCO schools by the Cerje tower.

SOUNDS OF THE UNDERGROUND: A cycle of concerts in the many underground caves in the municipality.

Renče-Vogrsko

BUILDING A FUTURE: A participatory project, dedicated mainly to youngsters, to evolve an abandoned industrial area (The Brickyard) in a cultural and creative industries hub.

RETURNING TO THE RIVER: A cluster of activities to recreate the bond between people and the river Vipava, which had been polluted for years and is now clean.

Šempeter-Vrtojba

THE PATHS OF THE CORONINI: A cluster of activities to create a guided tour through the intriguing history of the most important noble family in the area.

Tolmin

PUNT SCULPTING: An international wood sculpting workshop, dedicated to the Tolmin punt - a great peasant uprising in 1713.

JAVORCA, MEMORY OF EUROPE: An international annual political and cultural event, gathering ambassadors from all European countries with European heritage site venues.

Vipava

CHILDREN'S FUN TRAIL: A series of family walks through culture and nature with fun activities along the way with special attention to organoleptic experiences.

THE APITOURISM: Beekeeping is an essential part of Slovenian culture. The project will develop a series of learning and experience activities.

Q7. CHOOSING EVENTS

We built the basis of our cultural program and artistic vision through an extensive and dynamic process of participation, which started in 2017 with the first GO! 2025 public discussions. In the buildup years we will continue this process of inclusion and participation. We see the program director as guardian of our vision: together with program managers the director will lead a process to evolve and implement the artistic program. From 2021 we will further develop existing projects, working with the original authors, including further content, artists and partners in existing program frames and sharing content with institutions, existing festivals and EU projects, continuously defining our common ground. Approximately half of our envisaged budget for the program has been allocated so far. We will launch international calls to choose additional content, participating artists and partners.

It is very important for us to widen the European dimensions of our activities, keeping in touch with the regional cultural and artistic reality and ensure a deep and lasting impact of GO! 2025 projects. To do that, we have created the **PERMA.lab** mechanism. It is based on permaculture, a set of design principles, originating in agriculture. From agriculture, the mechanism quickly spread in other fields. Using ecosystems as role models of development and sustainability permaculture defines 12 design principles: we turned some of them into a valuable framework to help us choose activities, which are compatible with our goals and vision.

In accordance with the United Nations Sustainability Development goals, the PERMA-lab principles will make sure that all program elements of GO! 2025, across a time span of a decade (2021 - 2030) will positively influence a wide range of domains, from health and labor to climate protection and gender equality. Essentially in line with the priority of culture being a key driver for sustainable development, the PERMA-lab mechanism also maps all of the GO! 2025 activities to the EU's priorities in cultural heritage, social cohesion and wellbeing, gender equality and international cultural relations.

OUR METHODS OF CHOICE:

- open calls,
- direct choice (eye to eye dialogues),
- workshops, public talks and other participation tools.

OUR CONTENT SOURCES:

- European artistic community,
- regional artistic community,
- institutions, companies and associations (in the cultural, social and economic sector),
- local communities,
- citizens (with special emphasis on disadvantaged groups and youngsters).

OUR SELECTION PRINCIPLES (PERMA.LAB):

From patterns to details

The big picture goes first in every design or planning process. We will choose projects with the ability and the will to go over all kinds of borders: regional, national, between social groups, fields of work etc, but also out of the boxes of public expectation and preconceptions.

Small and slow solutions

A step-by-step approach brings less risk than big leaps and sudden accelerations. We will choose feasible activities and favour projects which grow gradually and respond to feedback from the territory.

Value the marginal

If Europe is a patchwork of languages, cultures, traditions, the seams are what holds the continent together. We will look for projects which value and showcase these seams and we will search for content not only on the edges of national countries but also of social groups and especially those connected to the outer borders of the fortress Europe. No one is excluded, no idea goes to waste is an ideal we can't reach, but we will continuously aspire to.

Design for change

To creatively respond to environmental evolution and community development, use change as an inevitable and omnipresent fact of all processes. We will choose projects which are capable of both embracing and enhancing inevitable changes in culture, technology, economy, society.

Embrace diversity, maintain respect

Enable different people to work together, create new communities, always respecting the individual with their personal dignity, creative and artistic autonomy.

We will favor projects which include a wide range of collaborators, coming from different fields and backgrounds.

Q8. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NEW EXPRESSIONS

From all the project ideas, submitted on our open calls, more than 70 per cent were related to tradition and history. It is not difficult to stay in touch with our heritage - it lies on the streets, you can smell it in the air, we put it on our dinner tables, we whistle it while working, we could not have avoided it even if we tried. But we also see GO! Borderless as a program which challenges our ways. It has to. Otherwise it would be just a useless repetition of old patterns, it would mean doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results - the basic definition of insanity.

And we are not just a land of choirs and castles. But also, the homeland of flight pioneers, the Rusjan brothers, of the revolutionary poet Srečko Kosovel. Of exiting temporary artists and curators like Marko Peljhan, Jurij Krpan and Peter Purg, we are the place, where in the 80's the concept of a new hotel was commissioned to OHO, an avant-garde art group. Our School of arts is the only one in the country with a new media art program, we invented the Pixxelpoint festival of contemporary art and we are home to high tech companies, globally successful in the fields of smart houses, supercomputers, biotechnology and others.

CHALLENGE THE WAY WE SEE OURSELVES

We tend to feel marginalized and very special at the same time. We don't need to be either of that. With **March for Europe** we will show that our experiences and life-style are unique, but comparable. There are many other border cities, small cities, regions with demographic issues, multilingual communities and rural areas on the continent. With **Future of Food** we will open a new view on our agricultural tradition, exploring it through a creative industries approach, art installations and performances. With **Pixxel-X** we will recreate the image of our own creativity, with **Borderless Body** we will reopen the concepts of strength, capability, old age and cross-generational relationship and through contemporary dance we will tackle the question: is a new, cyborg era coming?

CHALLENGE THE WAY WE SEE OUR HISTORY

No, history did not start with our grandfather's war stories. And yes, it is completely acceptable to have different stories. Our **EPICenter** will become an important European power-

ful platform that will help us make peace with past conflicts. It will tell the story of the 20th century, engaging the audience by innovative, contemporary digital tools, linking the history topic with the big "social dilemma" of today: what is fake news, how do we create our opinions, how stories shape our values? Our **Rescuers of Memory** will digitize elements of intangible history and transform it with a playful storytelling approach. We will go further back in time and discover the 18th century with the **DESTINYniation** theatre project, which brings the tale of royal destiny in contemporary theatre using the psycho-drama approach. With the **Episcope** we will engage our researchers to unveil the exciting GO! palimpsest, using contemporary scientific methods.

CHALLENGE THE WAY WE SEE OUR ENVIRONMENT

Gorizia, the one with no life, and Nova Gorica, the one with no soul, are getting a chance to redeem themselves. We will discover new ways of creating and transforming urban spaces through projects like **Super 8, From Station to Station** and capacity building programs like **Cultural Improvement Districts**. We will explore new connections between culture and nature with the **Go2GreenGo** and we will take a contemporary twist on revitalizing our heritage sites, creating a **Tree Orchestra** and writing a **Bat Symphony**.

CHALLENGE THE WAY WE PRESENT OURSELVES

Heart of Europe? Crossroads of culture? Sure. But we must find new words and new tools to explain that. The covid crisis has given us a unique opportunity to get creative and explore alternative ways for the analogue and the digital to interact. The pilot project **Dot Museums** aims to use the latest technology to present and promote heritage. The **BoulevAR** is, at the same time, a real street which needs revitalization, and a digital arena for utopian projects. We are building the **Borderless Wireless**, a digital entry point to our heritage, art, culture, present and past. Throughout the build-up period this core project will be a learning tool and an innovation platform which will enable us to join the exploration of new links between art and technology, go beyond simple live-streams and zoom debates and find ways to present our content to the public, even if traveling and social gathering in 2025 will still (or again) be restricted.



Thetare group Scaramouche
in Sunday of the Brooms, a GO! 2025
production, August 2020.

Q9. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ARTISTS

The basic premises of our candidacy belong to local artists, cultural institutions and associations. In two open calls in 2018 and 2019 we received project ideas from cultural stakeholders in the city and the region. In the selection phase we entered a more concrete, operational dialogue with them, upgrading the process, refining the structure and content of our cultural and artistic program.

DIRECT INPUT FROM ARTISTS

We invited associations and artists, which participated in the open calls, to develop their ideas. We used a substantial part of our candidacy budget to finance their work, also in the light of their struggles due to the covid crisis. We also encouraged group work, cross-border collaboration and the active inclusion of European and international partners in drafting the projects.

As a result, we obtained a number of well-developed projects, some of them are already in the operational phase. In the artistic program we only present abstracts and we have only included part of the developed program. In the implementation phase the local artists, producers and researchers will play an active part in most projects and we plan for GO! 2025 to strengthen the local cultural field.

DIRECT INPUT FROM COMMUNITIES

We visited all the municipalities of the included area, talking with administrations, but also local artists and associations. We listened to their ambitions and goals, we created a map of existing projects and activities and we helped them develop their own project ideas. The chosen projects became part of our cultural and artistic program and will be co-financed by the municipalities. With this process:

- **we created a comprehensible and acceptable model of financial input of the region,**
- **we confirmed GO! Borderless as a truly regional endeavor and**
- **we raised the capacity of the stakeholders.**

We will continue the exchange with local communities up to 2026 and include the regional stakeholders in our monitoring and evaluation activities.

SELECTION PHASE EVENTS AND PROJECTS

Despite the lockdown we managed to organize a number of cultural events for the general public. All events were co-produced with local associations and institutions (KUD Morgan, Terzo teatro, Slovenian national Theatre, Goriški regional museum and many others) and featured local artists and artist groups (M&N dance Company, Scaramouche theatre group etc.).

The same goes for our digital content - we hosted local artists in the Virtual cafe project, we created videos with local musicians, we produced an art film with a young local director and composer. All activities turned out to be a small but useful rehearsal for the delivery phase.

The local cultural scene has strengths we want to use and upgrade (basic quality, wide net of associations etc.) and weaknesses we want to address up to 2025 (low level of international collaboration, shortage of financial sources etc.)

We have created strong ties with the artistic community both in Nova Gorica and Gorizia. Most of the artists in the region feel a strong moral and creative, but also material and operational connection to the project. It is a good legacy for the buildup phase, in which (as described in Q7) we see the local artistic community and their European partners as one of our primary content sources.

Our cultural and artistic program features more than a 100 local artists and local cultural associations and institutions. In the table below, we give a few examples of concrete names and their involvement in specific projects.

Q10. EXAMPLES OF ENVISAGED COOPERATION

Project	Artist and form of involvement
The March for Europe (Crossing project)	BridA art collective created an art installation and performance for the event.
Destinyation	The theatre director Tomi Janežič will stage a new text, written by Simona Semenič with local professional actors.
Borderless Body	Nastja Bremec and Michal Rynia will be the main choreographers and dancers in the dance production.
Super 8	Video maker Luca Chinaglia co-created and will co-curate a new cultural hub.
The Atlas of Forgotten Orchards	Movie director, photographer and researcher of old fruit traditions Gregor Božič created the project.
Meeting Point	Pianist Alexander Gadjiev will be the main performer.
Hopscotch	Graphic novelist and illustrator Manuele Fior will lead the team of artists, creating a comic book, written in murals.
ISOlabs	New media artist Marko Peljhan is the author of the project.
Future of Food	Architect and curator Jurij Krpan will lead a creative industries process.
ECOthreads and Bien	Fashion designer Mateja Benedetti will design a line of clothes from sustainable materials.
Cinecittà	Movie director Matteo Oleotto will be one of the mentors for capacity building activities.

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Where are you, Europe?

Up left with John Wayne riding free in the sunset?

Bottom right in the land of iron curtains and
barbed-wire fences? Stuck in the middle?

And where is your real dimension drawn?

Q11. EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Too many border iterations for you? Let's flip the perspective for a moment. What is a border? The margin of a system. What is a system? Anything from a geographical area, a community, a group of people, a single person... the identity of that person or rather the identities of that person.

Systems are not operating in a vacuum. They are composed of subsystems and they interact with other systems. We are sitting at a table, just people, trying with feverish idealism to make the world a better place and at the same time striving to make it to the end of the day, to dinner time, to Friday, the week off, the covid vaccine.

I am a father, a classic car fanatic, a colleague, an idiot... I am a mother, a cat person, a bookworm, a coffee drinker... I am a daughter, a graduate, currently unemployed, and I love soccer... all that goes on in me and it interacts with plenty other fathers or mothers or sons or daughters, motor heads or cyclists, dog persons, colleagues or competitors... and surely plenty other idiots. We are Slovenians. We are Italians. We are Friulians, Albanians, Bosnians, Syrians, Chinese. And there is this table between us, the place we meet, the field of thought we want to call Europe, we want to call home.

Where is this border between us, then? What is it? How easy it is to cross? What makes it strong? What makes us strong in our will to go over it?

If the border is the margin of a system, then it can be open, like a cell membrane or closed like a black hole event hori-

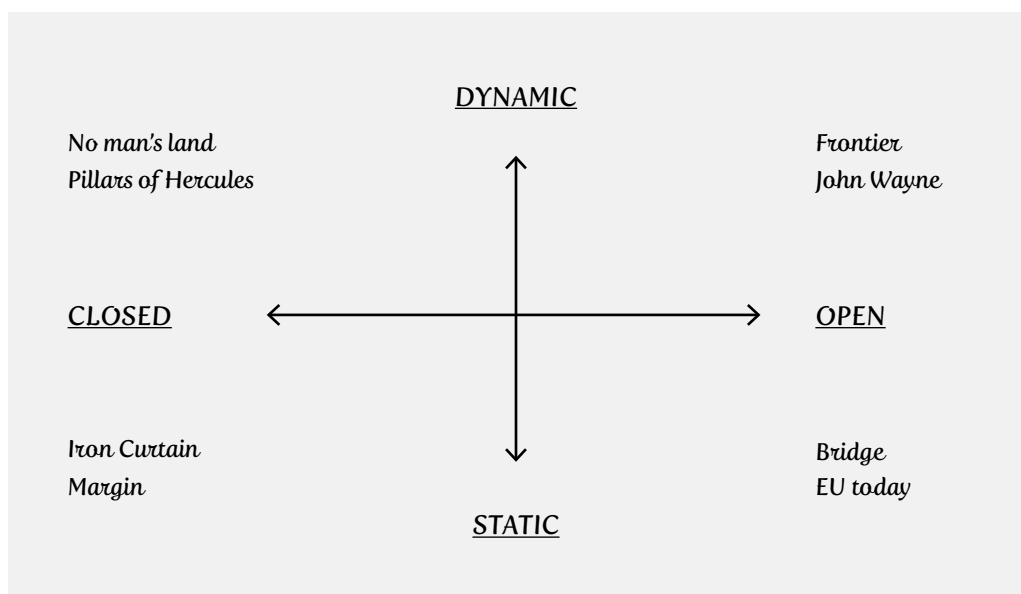
zon. It can be dynamic as the outer border of the expanding universe or static like a classic car lover in the rush hour queue.

Let us play a game. Europe, play with us. Where are you on the chart, Europe? Up left with John Wayne riding free in the sunset? Bottom right in the land of iron curtains and barbed-wire fences? Stuck in the middle? And where is your real dimension drawn?

Are you traveling on the x axis, horizontally, toward the disappearance of border lines, a future of solid bridges and open crossings? Are you scaling the y axis, vertically, toward new frontiers, beyond the Pillars of Hercules in the unknown, toward innovative solutions for an ever changing reality? What do you say, Europe? And what would your quarantined, your rejected and your redistributed people of 2020 say?

We, Nova Gorica, Gorizia, with our table in between and our thousand suitcases of memories, with our language dispute and the sweet potica putiza we all like and call the same way, where are we? United, we think, we are everywhere.

We know our iron curtain and our beautiful free sunset moments, with our fair share of crumbling pillars, we, "pioneer plants, mediators, bridges builders, wall jumpers and frontiers explorers", as Alexander Langer brilliantly put it, we dare to invite Europe to dance on this destabilising, confusing border tune. Just today, 25 years after the devastating Srebrenica and 0 years after the first covid pandemic. And, yes, this border tune has many titles.



AGING SOCIETY, BRAIN DRAIN

The borders of my backyard

"Born on the borders of periphery, from where the trams don't move on," Eros Ramazzotti used to sing. Back in the 90s, when for any ambitious young human being there was only one possible direction – toward the lights, where the trams go.

Whole parts of eastern and central Europe are turning into demographic deserts. 40,000 people a year leave Croatia, their average age: 33. More than three million Romanians work abroad.

Since 2015, the Italian migratory balance has been negative. The country loses an average of 70,000 residents per year. Of all the regions, Friuli Venezia Giulia is the one with the highest emigration rate, with almost 5,000 residents who leave the area every year. More than 15,000 people (almost an entire generation, giving that 18,000 is the country's yearly birth rate) have left Slovenia in 2019 and almost as many moved from periphery regions into the capital Ljubljana. More than 10 percent of the population in some of the less fortunate European regions is "lost" to emigration. The **brain-drain** means brain-gain for some European regions, but the gain comes with a price in environmental burden, infrastructural cost, social changes.

From the borders of empires, a region, which has been a periphery for centuries, in a society where soon the **average age will reach 50**, we see the need for a shift in direction. As Andrej Sluga, a successful owner of an IT company and a craft brewery with clients on all five continents puts it: "Young people should understand that the 21st century gives them a fair opportunity to succeed. If they have creativity and passion they do not have to live in New York or Berlin to go global." We see the European Capitals of Culture as a crucial tool, a strategy to make **half-forgotten peripheries**, like ours, exciting and attractive again. And to push Europe to re-evaluate its **migration policies**, make them fair toward internal migration and toward people waiting outside the old fortress' walls.

With our cultural program we are making young people participants and co-creators. They will create murals in the **Hopscotch** project, choose and participate in events in the **Cantaquartieri**, go on stage in our opening **From Station to station** event, curate content in the **Super 8** cultural center. With this and other projects in the **All Man's Land** we will create a new, European and future oriented atmosphere, which will allow young people to think and breathe. Through residency programs like the Think tank train, and projects like **Twenty Something**, we will give the opportunity for young creators from all over Europe, especially from our fellow ECoC cities, to meet and breathe together. We will give our young citizens more opportunity to go and see, for example, the exciting Luxembourg learning center in **Esch**

or contribute to the Pochen festival in **Chemnitz**. With **Invisible Women** and **Art as a Refuge** we will give visibility and opportunities to young migrants, who live in our communities. With the **Borderless Body**, we will explore what digital technology and artificial intelligence will bring to the reality of our bodies and how it will change aging and disabilities significantly for those who are young today. With new tourism projects in the **Experience Factory**, the development of the region as a film destination in **Cinecittà** and other **capacity building projects** we will create new employment opportunities.

(AGRI)CULTURE, BIODIVERSITY

The border between apricot and jam

"What you eat is political. ... I think that we need to persuade the public that if they want to eat sustainably and healthily, they need to link their future diets to what can be grown in their country," Patrick Holden, founder of Sustainable Food Trust said.

Europe is facing an important issue with self-sustainability. Today only 5 percent of farmers in Europe are younger than 35 years. Who will produce the food in the years to come? GO! 2025 wants to promote the **cultural side of agriculture** and thus encourage young people to cross the border of perception. To outgrow the mass-media idealisation of high starred top chefs. Cooking is fun, while farming is sweaty, tiring and anachronistic? Not quite so. Taste comes from the ingredients, their local origin, history, culture, the care of people. The positive aspects of **local food resources and biodiversity** should be promoted and practiced if we want to imagine a sustainable farming future in the EU. While fruits were considered gifts from divine forces in the past - and have inspired kings, poets and painters throughout the history, the global economy of the 20th century degraded them to a fabricated promise of taste - mirages on the shelves of supermarkets. We want to restore and promote the beautifully rich image that fruits of the earth once had.

The **Future of Food Academy** wants to be an international platform for chefs from all over the world. The **GO! for Lunch** cluster aims to connect agriculture, an economical branch, but also a deeply European cultural tradition, with creative industries and high technology. **ISOLabs** creates a completely new point of view of green areas, discovering the river Soča as one of many spiral cords of a green and sustainable European future. **GO2GreenGO** finds new approaches to self-sustainability and urban gardening, **Eco-threads** shows how we can also wear apples, not just eat them. **It's Story Picking Season** encourages new generations to discover intangible heritage in rural, agricultural areas. We believe a new balance between rural and urban, natural and cultural, will become more and more important in the ECoC family and we are looking forward to further explore food production, gastronomy, sustainable tourism, urban green areas with our colleagues from **Bad Ischl Salzammergut**, **Veszprém** and **Novi Sad**.

REPURPOSING CITY CENTRES

The walls we love

Everybody likes to visit archaeological sites. Nobody wants to live there. Shrinking cities are a demographic, but also an economic phenomenon.

There is nothing more depressing than walking a street with closed shops, counting shut windows in an apartment block, looking at factories falling apart and watching helplessly as the sun and the rain destroy a movie poster, a poor reminder of a once glorious cinema theatre. It doesn't matter if city centres lose their power to other cities or to suburbs and shopping malls – the process is devastating and it takes a creative, artistic, innovative and careful urban planning to turn it around. GO! 2025 wants to be the catalyser of such a process. Foster participation, support out of the box thinking, exchange experiences and ideas with other European cities, which, like ours, are facing the dreadful spiralling down or are just looking for new ways of interpreting and developing their urban tissue.

Gorizia is an ancient city and Nova Gorica a new, top-down built urbanistic utopia: this unique situation gives us a fascinating palimpsest to discover and write on. With our **Neighbourhood**, a program based on the principle of **Cultural Improvement District**, we will seek innovative solutions for our two city centers. Through internationally shared knowledge we will discover how to push urban planning across borders, the national border being just one of them. Our **BulevAR**, for example, creates a new axis, bridging the border between the cultural center of town and the industrial area. **Ab initio** gives a chance to reflect on ideas and ideology in architecture and urban planning, on participation and dialogue. We will do it with **Magdeburg's** Urban Colors or Pretty Urban Life. With our **Miners festival and dwelling** we are looking at our industrial heritage as inspiration for future urban projects. We found an excellent interlocutor in the **Bad Ischl** team with their Building a future Architecture Week, New Salt Festivals and other projects. We will be working with locally based, but internationally connected companies to explore new connections between the digital and the analogue urban space, creating, for example, immersive virtual experiences in the Gorizia castle or the picturesque ex Jewish ghetto.

Yes, there are many systems. Between analogue and digital, city and countryside, centre and periphery, East and West, those within the fortress walls and those outside, rich and poor: at the end it is always about borders. Migrations and climate change – the two big European and global challenges are about borders (national, philosophical, political) and the capability of the decision makers to cross them. Brain drain and economic marginalisation – the two big GO! challenges are about borders as well and our GO! Borderless is about facing them together, in an open and dynamic way. On the x and y axis, dear Europe, let's dance.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Our partnership includes 118 confirmed international partners among artists and artistic groups, institutions, NGOs, cities, European Capitals of Culture and candidates for the title. We will engage in different forms and levels of collaboration. Some examples:

Artists

Dancers and choreographers **Darrel Toulon** from Austria and **Teet Kask** from Estonia will perform in the **Borderless Body** production. Denmark based clown **Paolo Nani** and British performer **Fraser Hooper** will be guests of **Clowncity**. For our Flagship project **DESTINYation** an international ensemble of professional actors will be chosen. The Spanish art collective **Audiolab** will co-create **The other radio**. The **Dresdner Sinfoniker** will curate and perform the Tree orchestra.

Curators

Festivals from Berlin and Bratislava will send guest curators to the **Pixel-X festival**. We will borrow works for our **Mušič – Landscapes of the Body** exhibition from various European galleries and museums (Venice, Lugano, Paris) and collaborate with their curators. The curators from the **Flanders Fields Museum in Belgium** will provide content for **The Walk of peace**, various curators (e.g. **Thomas Lutz** from Berlin or **Jordi Guixé** from Barcelona) will co-create the permanent exhibition in the **EPICenter**.

Capacity and participation

The Italo-Tunesian theatre company **Collectif corps citoyen** will lead a participatory process in the **Cantaquartieri**. The international partnership of the **Nonument project** (Prague, Vienna, Belgrade, Gabrovo, Nicosia) will create an augmented reality tool in the **Ab Initio**. To build **Super 8** we will use knowledge and experiences from similar existing centres in Belgrade, Serbia (**Nova iskra**) or Skopje, Northern Macedonia (**MKC**). Tactile museums from Florence, Italy, and Madrid, Spain will help us create our **Tactile Gallery**. **Universities** from various European cities (e.g. Manchester, Helsinki, Budapest) will participate in a creation of a program for textile industry students in **ECOthreads**.

We will also include cities as host of our activities, for example our **Twenty Something** installation and the **March of friendship** initiative.

OUR NETWORK: 118 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

AMONG THEM:

- 023** ARTISTS AND GROUPS
- 035** NGOs
- 046** INSTITUTIONS, CITIES AND NETWORKS
- 014** UNIVERSITIES

FROM:

- 028** COUNTRIES
- 092** CITIES



- ECoC cities and candidates
- other cities

Q12. ATTRACTING A BROAD EUROPEAN AUDIENCE

This question makes us realise how far we have come. Two neighbouring cities who, smuggling apart, lived in separate worlds not so long ago. Now planning a joint campaign to attract the broad European public (to be honest we are happy if the thin European public comes, too). That is quite a breakthrough.

It used to be a gamble to come to Nova Gorica. Literally. Because our main source of visitors was (and to a degree still is) the Italians who came to play in our casinos. Can we be a serious European cultural destination by 2025? You bet we can.

Our strategy is clear. Move over Buda-Pest. 2025 is GO-GO. Two cities, two countries, one cultural ecosystem and a beautiful, undiscovered region which is full of history. What more could you want? Well, how about an outstanding programme of events, exhibitions and activities which we really love? We know Europe will love it too.

What are people looking for when they plan their holiday adventures? We know that there are ECoC "regulars" who make their annual pilgrimage to the cultural capitals of the year. Included amongst these will be the many culturally curious Germans who will want to see whether their 2025 partner city can match the offer of Chemnitz. (We'll certainly try!). And then there are those travellers who are always looking to find the next "undiscovered gem".

We tick all of those boxes. The Goriška is an incredible European region most have not visited yet. Absolutely a region you have to put on your discovery list. And what better time to do it than in the GO! Borderless year?

We're easy to get to. Nearer to Trieste airport than Trieste is. Brilliantly connected by road. And whilst our railway is a little creaky, probably the best way to get here is to take a rail trip through Austria, via Lake Bled, and enjoy one of Europe's most breath-taking train rides.

However, you get here, our programme will make your journey really worthwhile. You will truly be at the EPICenter of Europe. This is the must-see European venue of 2025. The unfinished playground for your imagination we spoke about during pre-selection will be ready for your imagination to run riot.

The EPICentre itself has to be **the go-to European building for 2025** (sorry Germany!). It will be the only place in Europe where you will be able to experience the story of European 20th century in a building which literally crosses a border. Not just a border between two EU member states, but also two major European groups (Romanic and Slavic) **and** the border between the former East and West. Between capitalism and socialism. Now that is what you call a go-to cultural space.

But it is not the only one. Other really special venues like the **quarry** for **Borderless body** or the **Park Pečno** and other natural sites will provide special moments for our guests. And great nature not only allows us to enjoy art in nature - it is better, healthier (and, let's face it, covid safer).

These **special experiences** form a core part of our strategy. It also involves close working with our Institute for Tourism to link GO! 2025 with a major EU funded **gastronomy tourism** project for this region. Working with outstanding local providers to welcome visitors in alternative and niche accommodation such as touristic farms, camping facilities in the beautiful Soča valley. Apartments in Gorizia city centre and other places that give the visitor a vital connection with us and allow them to embrace the region. **Come and GO...** could be our motto!

Already in fact, we play host to many savvy tourists who have discovered our region for hiking, skiing or outstanding regional gastronomy. Those who have time to stop and learn also tell us that our history is absolutely fascinating too. Northern Europeans will discover the stories of the "other front" from WWI, and will have the chance to join in large-scale active history experiences like the **Walk of Peace** or **March of Friendship**. History can be moving in more ways than one.

Music fans may not find David Bowie here when they come for **From Station to Station**. But they won't be disappointed with this amazing musical travelogue across our 2 cities where different stages share the universal language of music across international borders. We will also tackle different tastes, taking the audience to and over the edges of music. Can a tree play? Can a bat sing? We will find out in **Tree Orchestra** and **Bat Symphony**.

Other **Flagship events** with international relevance include **ISOLabs** with Marko Peljhan and a number of other internationally acclaimed new media artists or the big theatre production **DESTINYation**. At the moment this project seems almost prophetic as it tells the story of the Bourbon King who fled across Europe to evade cholera, only to catch it and die near Nova Gorica. It sounds almost too close for comfort just now. Hopefully by 2025 we will enjoy a happier ending.

And even if we won't. A big part of our content comes in **pixels**. And we are not just talking about the new media art **Pixxel-X** festival. Live feeds from the **Cantaquartieri** concerts and events, a digital repository of intangible heritage in **Rescuers of Memory**, exhibitions in the **Super 8** and many other interesting features will be accessible from our **Borderless Wireless** platform and app. Who knows, which exciting possibilities technology will offer in 2025? We are eager to find out and integrate them in a simple, user friendly



photo: David Verlić

digital tool. Because we want to cover all kinds of distances: geographic, physical, social, mental, linguistic. Everybody, near and far, should be able to **Come and GO!**

For those who want to engage with serious and challenging subjects, **Invisible Women** explores the situation of women from migrant communities who quietly give so much to the communities where they settle but also face difficult struggles and even danger. We also have several projects where we explore the role of art in tackling conflict and racism including **Art Against the Rifle**. In **Standing on Messerschmidt** head(s) we explore the relationships between art, culture and mental health.

We have developed some great connections with other European "New Towns" and many urban planners and academics who are fascinated by modern city and post war

developments will be excited **by A Brave New World** and our **Cultural Improvement District** model.

We also want people to have a lot of fun when they come here. **Clowncity** hits that spot, as does **Hopscotch**. **The Language Casino** is a creative approach to learning a new language and an auto-ironic reflection on our "gambling addiction." And if all this does not work, our magnificently crazy characters in **Basaglia Celebrity Deathmatch** will make sure you will go completely and madly LOL.

To be honest, people can simply **Come and GO**. Our calendar is full of interest and excitement. Monthly events such as **Go! for lunch** or **Art against the rifle** and permanent exhibitions and installations like **Dial 1024**, **Mušić - the landscapes of the body**) ensure that if you come, you will find something for you. You bet.

Q13. LINKS WITH OTHER ECoCs

2020 was not a great year for international networking, to say the least. Being almost unable to travel and since most of the events were cancelled due to the covid situation, we have mostly communicated through online conferences. We feel this kind of communication can only partially replace an eye to eye discussion. We tried to develop and capitalize on personal connections we had already established in 2018 and 2019. Epidemiological situation permitting, we intend to visit most of our potential partners in the build-up years to deepen the collaboration and move it to an operational phase.

EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

MARIBOR 2012 (SLOVENIA) - we analysed the first and only Slovenian ECoC experience and exchanged information with former members of the team (Zdravko Duša, Peter Tomaž Dobrila and Tomaž Kancler among others).

MATERA 2019 (ITALY) - We received guidance from the team on topics of delivery structure and financing. We hosted team members at our events. Salvatore Adduce, the president of the Matera 2019 foundation helped us present the impacts of an ECoC project to regional economic stakeholders. We will host their Humana Vergogna project in the build up phase. We are also planning on visiting Matera again in 2021 to discuss their evaluation.

PLOVDIV 2019 (BULGARIA) - We visited the city and had constructive discussions with Plovdiv 2019 team about production and tender issues for artistic content.

RIJEKA 2020 (CROATIA) - We invited the former general manager to speak at the conference we organised in 2018 for Slovenian NGOs. Two team members held an audience development workshop for our cultural operators in 2019. We consulted former team members on capacity building, audience development and management and included their input in our selection phase bid book.

ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE 2022 (LUXEMBURG) - We attended a conference in the city and exchanged ideas and experiences about the topic of border cities and we developed a collaboration in our Store room project.

VESZPRÉM-BALATON 2023 (HUNGARY) - We discussed the bridge between culture and tourism in connection to their Wonderland program and our Experience Factory capacity building. We are looking at their Let it Sound cluster as a good model to refer to for our From station to Station project.

NOVI SAD 2023 (SERBIA) - We would like to participate in the Peace Chapel project and include the conclusions in our March for Europe project. We plan to attend the Boom 21 rock spectacle and invite chosen participants to our music events.

BODØ 2024 (NORWAY) - We are connecting their project Via Querinissima and Feeding Europe to our GO! For lunch program. From their experience in the Cold War Hotspots Project we hope to pick ideas about presenting 20th century history in a contemporary, innovative way and use it for our EPICenter.

BAD ISCHL 2024 (AUSTRIA) - We shared experiences on industrial heritage and culture, building on tradition to find solutions for the future. We also reflected together on the topic of counterculture. We are connecting our Brave new world cluster with their New Salt Festivals and Building a Future Architecture week.

TARTU 2024 (ESTONIA) - We believe the Arts of Survival Urban Nature Festival will offer good experiences for our No Time to Waste project. We will connect partners in the Into Nature program, with the planned Enter woodland spirits digital art festival.

CHEMNITZ 2025 (GERMANY) - We met several times live and decided upon a specific collaboration, connected to their project Parade of Apple Trees. We created a connection between their Pochen and our Pixxel festival; we fostered networking among various stakeholders from both cities (e.g. the ZRC SAZU research center on the topic of modernism).

FORMER CANDIDATES FROM GERMANY

MAGDEBURG - We exchanged views on different topics (new media art, creative industries, new towns, modernism etc.) We will participate in various projects, e.g. Reform Lab; A MDsummer Night's Dream, European Memory WWII.; Pretty urban life, Flowing lights of Europe, The cyber Experience and others.

HANOVER - We discussed different perspectives on memory politics in Europe in connection to our EPICenter and their projects dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII.

OTHER CANDIDATE CITIES

NARVA (ESTONIA) / 2024 shortlisted candidate - as a split border city, with the neighbouring Ivangorod in Russia will participate in our March for friendship initiative.

ŽILINA (SLOVAKIA) / 2026 candidate - a natural partnership since Žilina is a border city and borders are one of their chosen topics. We will collaborate in our March for Europe cluster and in other projects such as Little Jerusalem across the border, about the history of the Jewish communities in Gorizia and Žilina.

PIRAN 2025 (SLOVENIA): We have agreed upon an exchange of content in case any of the cities wins the title.

OUTREACH

Our cities, a stage for everyone

Q14. Q15. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, VOLUNTEERING

So, it is like you are doing some kind of two-laps running race, right? You finish the first lap and you are doing good. Breath is good, legs are good, morale is high, friends cheering from the sides. Still with us?

But let's say that, unexpectedly, all the contenders stumble, one after the other... and then the judges stumble, and your friends cheering from the sides, and then the rest of the public. But also the people passing by, and those that are home, they fall too. Everyone is on the ground, everywhere. March 2020 was a bit like this for us. For all of us, actually.

Here, the covid-19 emergency hit first those of us living in Gorizia and, more generally, in Italy. Then, with the pandemic hitting Nova Gorica and all of Slovenia, meetings and weekly opening hours of our office in Trg Evrope / Piazza della Transalpina were no longer possible.

All those "intangible" borders that we always talked about suddenly solidified. A brand-new fence running through Trg Evrope / Piazza della Transalpina became their main symbol, taking some of us back in time. A new barrier that was supposed to block the sanitary contagion as much as the old one, the ideological one.

Yet the principle that we used during the Preliminary Phase – **that citizens' involvement was at the core of GO! 2025** – continued to drive our approach. But we realised that with covid our Outreach strategy had to be fully rethought. Going borderless was not a motto anymore. We needed a new plan to make it happen.

LET'S GET DIGITAL!

Between March and April, our Facebook and Instagram pages started to be at the centre of our **short-term outreach strategy**. We had to create an interactive digital platform through which to involve the public in the ongoing GO! projects and development. At the same time, we aimed to connect to the citizens of our two cities in activities that could involve them in our candidacy and, possibly, put a smile on their face in a very difficult time.

In that specific situation Outreach became a lot about keeping alive the communication with our citizens and civil society. But we did not want this communication to be – and it has not been – one sided. Of course, we were the senders of many messages and inputs but, at the same time, we have been the receivers of constant feedbacks, suggestions, appreciations and criticisms that not only shaped the rest of our outreach but, most of all, the priorities of our bid book and the contents and activities of its cultural program.

In a way, all the events and activities we proposed in these months were pilots to see the reactions of our citizens and to test, in a reduced scale, the capacities of our management system. We threw at them everything we had to foster their participation: funny surveys, small contests ... because, in the end, it was about community, about keeping alive and strengthening the cross-border bonds we had created in the previous phase.

In person, everything would have been different ... How many times have we all said this in the last months? But let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater. With our digital outreach we went from 827 in March followers to 4.035 at the end of October. And we are talking about responsive people, actively involved also once we went back to reality. We talk about bilingualism and multilingualism, about how important it is to understand each other's languages and communicate on an eye to eye level.

But do people want to learn new languages? Yes, they do. More than 2.500 people from both cities enthusiastically participated in our on-line courses of Italian and Slovene. And fun fact – eight months later people are still asking to join the Facebook group and they watch the recorded lessons.

We talk about building a common, cross-border European city. But are our citizens ready for that? Oh, yes. They have been ready for a while. Our covid documentary brought their stories, the tales of a deeply connected and intertwined urban territory, to a wide and international public.

And finally: do our citizens want this title? Not only do they want it, they know we need it. From retirees who would like to see their grandchildren move back into town to young graduates, looking for an exciting career start, from teachers



Artist Nina Bric, creating the GO! 2025 borderless colouring book.

in schools to small entrepreneurs, from little bar owners to big shot CEOs and Michelin star chefs – they all passed on the same message: guys, GO! Europe, go win this thing. When summer came we were already aware that people are not only eager (when we asked famous football coach Edy Reja to be our ambassador, he replied: “Where do I sign”) but also far ahead. It is not about dragging them along. It is about catching up.

THE SUMMER OF “NEW NORMALITY”

If the transition towards a digital approach in our Outreach strategy had been essential, once the sanitary measures were softened it was time to go back to reality. Real life activities and events were essential for our Outreach for three main reasons:

First, because it was time to reach all those that, for age or for other reasons, are not active on social media and, therefore, could not feel as involved in GO! 2025 as we wanted.

Second, because we wanted to give a strong sign to audiences and operators, to let them know that we are (still) here and can help, and that ECoC could be a big opportunity to rethink to work together and produce culture that is pas-

sionate, innovative and open to everybody, even in a time of crisis.

Third, because we really missed it. We missed cinema, events, talks, and dance. We missed being together, working with our citizens “live”, so that GO! 2025 can further become the project of all and for all, as we always said.

And, as in the Preliminary round, we have directly shaped our programme from what we learned from the ideas and aspirations of local people. Using social media to directly connect with citizens gave us the idea about opening a cross-border urban office (as described in CID, Q6). Parents gave us the idea of the water fountains in **GO2GreenGO**. Cultural operators, shop and cafe owners gave us input to shape the **Experience Factory**. People reminded us of the need to do something connected to **Cantaquartieri**, which we transformed into a huge participatory event and they also voted on how to renovate Villa Laščak.

They helped us find a name for our borderless bike sharing system we are putting in place just now. The multilingual debates of participants to the language courses we organised digitally fuelled the conception of language projects like **Your Border is my Border** and **Language Casino**, as well as those that use movement as common idiom, **Clowncity** and **Borderless Body**.

NEXT STEPS: NEVER WALK ALONE!

Turning to the implementation of the year, participation of local citizens and civil society will be even more pivotal. They will become co-creators of most of the projects of the programme (e.g. **Clowncity**, **Ecothreads**, **Language Casino**, **Hopscotch** and many more) that will be co-produced by some of the most interesting European artists.

In this perspective, the amateur culture that constitutes the texture of the artistic reality of the two cities will become a major asset for networking possibilities amongst operators and citizens' involvement. Additionally, this dense network of amateur cultural organizations will also provide the ideal foundation for a volunteer programme that will also include local secondary schools and universities (see Q16).

Participation of civil society is also embedded in many of our projects. In the **March of Europe**, local artists and associations will organize a day of small-scale cultural, scientific, sportive, and culinary events throughout the cross-border area. The family and personal stories and artefacts of the citizens of the area will be the true foundation of the project cluster **Rescuers of Memory**. **The Choir of Eden** will unite singers and those who never dreamed of belting out tunes outside of their showers while **Cantaquartieri** will give the possibility to music schools to become the true soundtrack of Gorica's "summer of 2025".

We also want to engage urban communities through the concept of **Cultural Improvement District** (see Q6) and the creation of new spaces for art and culture, strongly rooted in the urban texture of the two cities with the projects **Jungle Basket** and **X-center**. Here, another example: the city of Nova Gorica is planning a complete infrastructural renovation of the biggest residential area in the city, the Cankarjevo naselje. It is not a gentrification project, but one aimed to raise the quality of life and satisfaction of the current residents. The GO! 2025 team has been deeply involved in this which has included creating common urban areas for cultural and social activities, like playgrounds, small parks, mini stages, sitting areas.

We see the urban neighbourhood as the social heart of our ECoC and these district venues are spaces for events, chosen by the community. A GO! 2025 managed group will help design the open spaces and implement the programme. The residents may play ping-pong or chess and cards, transform their front yard in an open-air cinema, take tai-chi lessons, compete in karaoke or tango until morning. And then, by all means, borderlessly talk about it.

Our cities – a stage for everyone

Our Outreach strategy also identifies a number of specific groups in order to foster their participation in cultural activities and events. Borderless, right? Because, in the end, borders are also barriers that need to be addressed and tackled. We are committed to doing just that. Challenging obstacles that specific groups face on an everyday basis, especially when they attend cultural events or engage in cultural practices.

From this perspective, we define marginality and disadvantage in terms of (lack of) possibility to attend or engage in cultural events. In this second phase we conducted many interviews and exchanges with NGOs and activists working with some of the groups that we identified as people who face major barriers. Youngsters; the elderly; individuals suffering from non-chemical addictions, especially gaming; people with physical, psychic, sensory disabilities; national communities/minorities.

In 2025, we intend to transform the entire urban area and parts of the surroundings in one big stage to organise events and activities. We will not only involve communities, but will make all our citizens feel closer to culture. Removing the barriers to entering cultural life and cultural spaces. Involving all those who are not used to or do not feel comfortable to enter a theatre or art gallery. With new experiences we hope to give them one more reason to fill this gap.

We have included our focus on Young People in Q16. Our ideas for other groups facing the biggest barriers are set out below.

Accessibility and inclusion

"The inability to do things we should know how to do, the inability to see, hear, remember or walk is not an exception, but a destination. We all become disabled sooner or later." These words by writer Claudia Durastanti emphasize how promoting and implementing accessibility in our societies concerns us all and our future. In one of our meetings, the coordinator of the Regional association of blind and visually impaired of Nova Gorica, told us "You should aim at full accessibility to your cultural events and activities, nothing less".

It was something that made us think: is it too unrealistic, too bold? Possibly. But still, in our first bid book we stated that our ambition was to create as many "borderless spaces" as possible and we are sticking with that!

We intend to improve the accessibility of our venues and of our shows, thus encouraging the establishment of a culture based first and foremost on the idea of inclusion, working on three different levels of accessibility.

SMASHING physical barriers

When asked to outline the main challenges to their participation in cultural events, NGOs working with people with disabilities are in agreement: physical barriers and insufficient mobility services are still their main problems.

To address this, we want to capitalize on the experience we already have – in 2012 Nova Gorica was awarded with the title "Municipality tailored to the need of the people with disabilities" – and continues to work closely with different stakeholders, embracing the principle of the European Disability Forum: "Nothing about us without us". However, in the preparation phase, we will also invite project managers of previous and current ECoC to share with us their experience and best practices of accessibility models.

Concretely, this is translated into ramps, elevators, floor markings, but also different colour icons that help people with Alzheimer's disease to orient in the space, easy to read formats of texts and detailed descriptions of our venues and shows to make attendance easier for people with autism spectrum disorders and other mental health issues preventing them to engage in cultural activities. In this process, we aim to make use of new technologies, collaborating with experts in the field such as the Berlin-based company Panthea, the European leader of surtitling solutions for the performing arts whose mission is to tackle the critical barriers for accessible live performance. The priority on accessibility will translate also into binding facts: we will insert an accessibility clause in the contracts with our partners (venues) and The GONG, our cultural production support mechanism, will purchase inclusive tools and tech so that also independent cultural operators can offer them for their events.

Theatre Comes Home!

We will bring cultural events to our citizens' doorsteps so that also those unable or unwilling to attend events far from their homes can still feel our borderless atmosphere. The project Cantaquartiere is an example of this commitment: we will bring music, cinema and performances literally, in the citizens' courts and backyards. Rescuers of memory with their Memory ambulance will knock on the doors of citizens in the region to collect memories; small towns and villages will host events and activities connected to projects such as Into nature, Moving literature and Miners festival and dwellings while the Bibliobus will wander on their streets. Let's keep it real, though: we cannot be everywhere all the time. That's why we decided to create our digital safety net with Borderless wireless, the GO! platform that will stream events and promote active participation through digital connectivity so that everyone can be part for free of our events (the platform will be implemented following the most recent Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).

Everybody's stories

Many times, people experiencing a condition of marginality or disadvantage are excluded from the creation of cultural content. Their views, identities, experiences and stories are not equally represented (or represented only by others) and their cultural practices are not taken into consideration. With GO! we establish an inclusive practice of cultural creation that is really accessible for all. For Borderless body, one of our flagship programs, people with disabilities as well as elderly will work together with artists, dancers and researchers to explore the limits of the body and artificial intelligence. The project Please Touch! was conceived in strict collaboration with local and international NGOs expression of the blind and visually impaired community in order to discover art through all human senses. In the framework of projects such as Standing on Messerschmidt's head(s) and Basaglia's celebrity deathmatch, space will be given to people with mental health issues to express themselves through artistic practices or performances in public spaces, along with debates on de-institutionalization and broader acceptance of mental health issues.

During lockdown we were acutely aware that the elderly are among the most vulnerable groups, especially those in a retirement home closed for visits by relatives for several months. For them, we recorded short videos in which actors read famous works of literature, travelled around the surrounding places, or told stories. Now, in the autumn lockdown, we are continuing with the project and include students of the School of Arts, who can benefit from this for their learning process. In the implementation of the title year we will turn the elderly from story listeners to storytellers. **It's Story Picking Season** will bring young, bright people with a powerful imagination to mature people with bags full of wisdom.

According to Eurostat, as in so many other European countries, in Slovenia a slightly higher number of women participate in cultural events and are employed in the cultural sector than men. At the same time, women artists have generally less opportunities to present their work and are often paid less. And what about the discrimination that is still too often experienced by LGBTQ artists? This cannot stand, not for us. GO! 2025 has been about gender equality since day 1, fostering opportunities for all, promoting gender equality in the organisation and refusing every kind of discrimination, starting with our team.

In conclusion, removing barriers must go hand-in-hand with promoting interest and providing easy access to our cultural activities. A lot of them will be free of charge and reduced pricing measures will be implemented for specific groups (hasta la vista economic obstacles!). The communication will make use of plain and audience-tailored language (au revoir education background obstacles!) and implemented using different channels, from (recycled) leaflets in mailboxes to tiktok videos (bye-bye digital divide!).

THIS IS NOT A (VIDEO)GAME

Non-chemical and gaming addictions and digital health are topics we aim to address through our cultural programme itself. The number of individuals suffering from these phenomena is increasing constantly, especially affecting younger generations. Stakeholders and NGOs in both Gorizia and Nova Gorica highlighted the importance of cultural events and activities in dealing with these problems, both as a way to raise the awareness of the public and to support the individuals affected. Strengthening their self-awareness and the sentiment of being part of a larger community.

With the project **Language casino**, we will collaborate with the *Health centre Nova Gorica - clinic for non-chemical addictions* lead by doctor Miha Kramli and *ASUGI - Giuliano-Isontina Universitarian Health Authority* providing artistic contents especially conceived for addicted children and adolescents, who will also be able to take part in specific workshops (dance, theatre, sports, drawing etc).

We will also collaborate with the University of Udine – with a site in Gorizia – that organizes an interdisciplinary course to train experts and consultants on these issues. The School of Arts in Nova Gorica will also present a unique program for



animation, encouraging youngsters with digital addictions to approach the screen in a creative way.

WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES

We are sometimes so focused on the Slovenian/Italian relationship that too often we can forget that our territory is home for many other national communities and families that have built their lives and their families here. They see themselves as Goricans, even if we still do not. And the two cities are, or hopefully will be, home also for those that had to flee their countries and found refuge here. These silent and silenced groups, whose voices you can barely hear in the streets, most of the time do not have access to our cultural offer, not even simply as audiences.

But we are done with silence and silencing. We need their words, stories and ideas to give real meaning to our borderless action. Our **EPICenter** will be a true multicultural house of culture, hosting multiple perspectives on past and contemporary issues. Fostering the communication of different traditions, values and perceptions that, intertwining, can create our future. With the project **Artists Out of Residence** we will give visibility to artists that are experiencing the painful and limiting condition of asylum seekers in our countries. At the same time, raising awareness and fighting against the hostility and stereotyping that people from asylum backgrounds can face.

However, if we really want to help them to be heard, language accessibility has to be another key priority. First, we will offer multilingual cultural products using local languages – Slovene, Italian and Friulan – but also exploring the vast territory of idioms that are already present in our area – Croatian, Serbian, English, Albanian, Romanian, German, Chinese, etc. With projects such as **Language casino**, **Moving literature**, **The playground**, **Hopscotch**, **Destinyation** but also **Clowncity** we will play with, work and build with multilingualism but also searching for ways to make languages a ground for cultural enrichment and not for political manipulations. The expertise and particular “bridging” position of the Slovenian Community in Italy will be an essential asset for this process. Its members are not marginalized, but the community represents a fundamental junction to foster the cross-border cultural identity of our cities. Because, in the end, not being the only ones can also mean being less lonely.

LET'S GO VOLUNTEER!

Small-scale volunteering activities have already played a significant role during the bidding phase. Experts collaborated voluntarily in consulting for the preparation of the bid book. Citizens volunteers acted as ambassadors of the candidacy, contributing in raising the awareness of the public with their channels, in a period in which traditional public presentations and events were impossible to organize.

From 2021, for our volunteering program we plan to involve about 1.000 active volunteers, for one-shot, short-term and long-term activities. The programme will be developed and implemented in coordination with local volunteering NGOs and their activities so we can build on and support existing volunteering activity.

The **GO Volunteer** programme will be open to all citizens, regardless of their age and background, especially volunteers from marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Also, international volunteering experiences will be promoted in collaboration with schools, local universities and cultural institutions to provide European opportunities.

Go Volunteers will be involved in a wide range of activities relating to the implementation and promotion of the cultural programme. Management and administrative tasks, logistics, welcoming the artists and participants, information services for visitors, diffusion of advertisement materials and much, much more.

More specifically, in the framework of the capacity building project **The Experience factory**, volunteers will take part in the development of new cultural products. For example, as multilingual tourist guides or storytellers. The volunteering program will also have a strong **commitment towards accessibility**: an educational peer-to-peer model in the fields of inclusion will be created involving local and international experts on these issues as well as members of NGOs of marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The trained volunteers will then support cultural operators and institutions in implementing accessibility measures, as well as supporting participants with specific needs.

Finally, projects such as **ISOLabs**, **Dial 1024**, **Miners festival and dwellings**, **From Station to Station** are conceived to involve specifically trained volunteers in their activities.

Q16. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT?

A wide-ranging GO! 2025 cross-border audience development strategy which includes activities directly managed and delivered by GO! 2025 itself.

A specific capacity building programme to support our main cultural institutions and operators long-term in developing individual audience development strategies tailored or their specific contexts and needs.

WHY?

If we had to paint the average audience of a cultural event, well, we would mostly have to use shades of grey. Our small culture scenes surely give us our everyday satisfactions, but the region does not have enough audience to attract bigger events.

At the same time, if we had to paint the average knowledge and expertise regarding audience development in the area, we would most likely need to go buy loads of black paint ... Audience development know-how is still extremely limited and, when used, some of its tools – such as audiences mapping – are underdeveloped, implemented sporadically and without any coordination.

However, stakeholders from cultural institutions and cultural operators are fully aware that a strategic reflection is needed and that adequate measures can really help them in strengthening their relations with their usual audiences, as well as diversifying and enlarging them. At this stage, what is missing is a coordinated effort and the resources to coach our operators through the process as well as providing a cross-border strategic framework to increase their reach, harmonisation and efficiency.

The research we conducted in the last months show without any doubt that cultural institutions and operators in both cities would enthusiastically support such a programme. In the digital survey we prepared to identify the priorities for our future cross-border cultural strategy, 91% of the 43 Slovene and Italian operators selected the “coordinated diffusion of knowledge and tools of audience development” as one of the key goals for the years 2021-2025.

HOW AND WHEN?

Our next steps, starting in 2021 include

- A programme of Audience Development workshops in our region involving international experts from the ECOC Capacity Building project and previous ECOCs, such as Rijeka 2020 team with their capacity building program Učionica (Classroom) where we have already started with a pilot workshop.

- Encouraging regular workshops at each ECOC family meeting dealing specifically with the exchange on good and best practices for Audience Development in existing cultural institutions/NGO.

The preparation of GO! 2025 will last 4 years, not centuries. We want to use 2021 and 2022 to map needs, provide audience development knowledge and tools, support audiences mapping and preparation of individual strategies and of the cross-border strategic framework. 2023 and 2024 will be the time for testing, implementation and eventual modification, so that in 2025 it will be All Systems GO!

WHO AND HOW?

We identified 3 main target groups: young people, cross-border audiences and national minorities.

The not so grey audience

How old are you? That's a very sensitive question to ask, especially in our area. Nobody wants to be labelled as old, everybody should be young. Young, but not too much. Because to be too young can also be a problem, as an easy way to say that your life is ahead of you, that you should not expect too much now, that you should quietly wait in line for your turn at the adults table.

You might have read about the average age of the area being significantly higher than in the rest of the two countries and brain drain being a serious problem for both cities. Gorizia and, maybe to a smaller degree, Nova Gorica are “No country for young women and men”: the new generations struggle to realize their professional objectives and life projects, often suffocated by lack of resources and a paternalistic approach.

And the cultural sector is no stranger to these dynamics. As with all over Europe, younger people are more “distant” from the cultural scene. Here cultural operators of both Nova Gorica and Gorizia collaborate regularly with schools, aiming to familiarize children and teens with cultural activities.

However once young people leave the educational system they tend to leave the cultural system too.

During 2019, working with students aged 17-18 from 5 high-school classes, we designed a survey to investigate their cultural habits on either side of the border. The results from around 2,000 responses are quite telling. **About 50% of the participants take part regularly** in cultural activities in the broader sense (i.e. including sports). 35% of the respondents attend a cultural event at least once every month (with cinema being the biggest hit). But **less than 10% play an active role** in the cultural sector (i.e. co-creation of activities, etc.). That made us think, because it's not that young people are not interested. 92% of the respondents say they have a keen

interest towards cultural activities in the broader sense; 69% say they have a keen interest towards cultural and artistic activities (i.e. theatre; cinema; art). **54% say that taking a more active role in the cultural sector** (i.e. co-creation) would encourage their participation in cultural activities.

Youth organisation *Punto Giovani* told us that besides a generalized lack of quality and innovation in the cultural offer of the area, what young people really miss are work experiences and jobs in the sector, along with a cultural market in which young artists could affirm themselves. At the moment, the cultural institutions and operators often appear not sufficiently equipped to provide young people with these opportunities.

In fact, young people are afraid that they will never get the chance to prove themselves. ECoC needs to be the thing that changes that. Here's how.

- Specific workshops during implementation so that children, teenagers and University students can shape the final definition of our artistic programme.
- Organising focus groups with youngsters in different age groups to identify and foster innovative and creative ways to promote cultural events (i.e. new digital platforms, social media, etc.).
- Connecting GO! 2025 guest artists with schools, as well as music/dance/theatre groups, promoting the inclusion of youngsters in several of our projects. Drama pupils can participate in **DESTINYation**, while young musicians will have their GO on stage with **Cantaquartiere** and test their skills in the **Meeting Point** workshops.
- Finding locations in schoolyards and playgrounds for co-creating artistic interventions like **Hopscotch** where young illustrators and muralists will work with top-notch international artists like Manuele Fior.
- Reinforcing the links with universities in the region and involving their students in innovative projects – for example **Cinecittà** – involving students in all aspects of the film industry sector – script writing, animation, shooting. With **ISOLabs**, we will involve students in a wider interdisciplinary debate on the ecological future of the Isonzo/Soča area.
- Promoting the participation of youngsters in the cultural sector through **Go Volunteer**.

In short, deepening the opportunities for young people is a pivotal element for us. Furthermore, GO! 2025 aims to create new cultural training opportunities for young people. This approach has led us to projects like **Hopscotch**. And with projects like **X-Center** and **Super-8** we will fill a key gap by creating innovative spaces in which youngsters can meet and hang out “borderlessly”.

The Borderless Audience

Creating a borderless audience has been an ambition for a long time. Institutions, venues and NGOs have tried hard, but still much has to be done. Events like **Domenica delle scope**, organised by GO! 2025 pushed the door open a little. Here our next steps:

- Implementing Borderless wireless, the GO! 2025 digital platform that will connect citizens, cultural institutions and operators on both sides.
- Driving the implementation of the cross-border cultural strategy in which the fostering of cross-border audiences is identified as a key goal.
- Organising projects that push citizens and visitors to experience the two cities as a common cultural space.

As an example: in October we managed to hold the first cross-border dance festival, the **VISAVI**. The organizers, **Artisti Associati**, in cooperation with all theatres in both cities, hosted dance groups from Italy, Slovenia and abroad. In our opening event, they will wander cross-border From Station to Station, following the steps of the White Duke himself. In the March of friendship, they will experience borderlessness on a local and European scale, walking together with their peers from divided cities. Thanks to Christmas lights, they will end a borderless year by witnessing the set-up of the first cross-border decorations of their history.

The Invisible Audience

For us it is right to finish on possibly our biggest audience challenge. Our other national minorities beyond Slovenia and Italy attend only rarely cultural events aside from sports. Cultural institutions and operators on both sides of the border are hardly aware of this, except for those civil society organisations that deal specifically with these groups. Here is our plan:

- **Continuing and strengthening the dialogue** with NGOs working with other national minorities that we started during the bidding phase in order to better understand their challenges and obstacles.
- Increasing **language accessibility** for our shows, taking into account other languages that are spoken in the area (i.e. Albanian, Romanian, Chinese, Bengali).
- Developing and putting in place projects aimed at tackling this invisibility. With **Language casino** and **Bibliobus** we will explore together the multilingualism that animates today's Goricas. We want our **EPICenter** to be a house of culture open to everybody, in which everybody can feel welcome and heard. With **Invisible women** we will unveil stories of female immigrants in the territory. With **Artists out of residence** we will work with asylum seekers and NGOs to ask some of the questions that are shaking the foundations of today's Europe.
- Involving members of other national minorities as much as possible in GO Volunteer.

A shared solution

We are very aware that many ECoCs are already doing a lot of work to try to find how to develop new audiences. Post covid, this will become even more important as many people furthest away from culture may retreat further away still. We are committed to play a really constructive part in any plans for exploring new ideas with our fellow ECoCs, and especially Chemnitz for Germany in 2025, as part of the EU's ECoC capacity building program.

MANAGEMENT

**Building a new peer for a big ship
in a fully functioning port.**

A. FINANCE

Q17. TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in €)	From the public sector (in €)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in €)	From the private sector (in %)
23,000,000	21,000,000	91	2,000,000	9

The overall operating budget is slightly higher than at preselection. We have lowered the contribution from the state, but raised the contribution from the city and region.

Q18. INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Compared to pre-selection, we lowered the contribution from the state. In 2019 the government voted on a 10 million € contribution and the Ministry for Culture announced at least 5 m € from national cohesion sources. The second part of the contribution has not been confirmed or even discussed in 2020.

As recommended in the pre-selection report, the city of Nova Gorica raised its pre-selection contribution from 1.6 million to 5 million €.

We have also moved the contribution of Gorizia and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region from "other" to "region", where it adds up to the contributions of 13 municipalities in the included area.

Income from public sector to cover the operating expenditure	in €	in %
National government	10,000,000	48
City	5,000,000	24
Region	4,500,000	21
EU (with the exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	1,500,000	7
Total	21,000,000	100

Q19. FINANCIAL COMMITMENT FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE

City: Following the remarks in the pre-selection report we strived to raise the share of the operational budget provided by the city of Nova Gorica. We prepared an Investment Project Identification Document, we presented it to various stakeholders in the economic and political field, gaining informal and formal support. At the end of a thorough process we raised **the amount of city-funding to a total of 5 m €** for the six year period. The municipal council has formally approved the amount and dynamics of financing on 15 October 2020 with a unanimous vote.

Region: Under regional contribution, we gather contributions by the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and the municipalities in the included area. **The president of the Friuli Venezia Giulia**

government has formally reconfirmed the region's contribution in the amount of 3 m €. With the 13 municipalities in the included area we have agreed on specific projects and the amount of contribution of the municipalities to finance these projects. In total the contributions by the included area amount to 1.5 m €.

State: On 12 December 2019, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia voted on the implementation of the project European Capital of Culture 2025 in Slovenia. In amendments to the budget for 2021 and in the 2022–2026 budget, the government plans funds in the amount of 10 m €. In 2020 the Ministry of Culture has reaffirmed this decision without giving additional information.

Q20. EU SUPPORT FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE

We see a strong connection between the five objectives in the new EU framework 2021-2027 and our program. Our GO! Green line brings content, connected to objective 2 (Greener, carbon free Europe), with GO! Share we address objective 3 (Connected Europe), with GO! Europe objective 4 (Social Europe), the EPICenter fits objective 5 (Europe closer to citizens). Objective 1 (Smarter Europe) is reflected in our focus on innovation, artistic thinking and digitalisation.

Interreg Italy-Slovenia

EGTC with GO! 2025 is currently preparing a new strategy for the development of the cross-border area. The planned unique Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) integrates both investments and soft measures, as further explained in Q27.

The pillar 3 of the ITI consists of **soft measures** – pilot projects and innovative models connected to the development of the urban area and sustainable urban mobility. It shall be financially supported by INTERREG CBC Italy – Slovenia (2021 – 2027). With these funds we shall co-finance: The EPICenter, The All man's land, From Station to Station, Moving literature (Hopscotch), Art as a refuge (Basaglia), The March of Europe,

Pixel-X (X-Post Mobility), Go2GreenGo, Sounds of Nature (The Tree Orchestra) and capacity building activities: The Neighbourhood, Cinecittà, Experience Factory.

For the Interreg CBC Italy – Slovenia (2021 - 2027) a Task Force is established, Friuli Venezia Giulia is appointed as managing authority and the rules of procedure are in place. The program is still work in progress, however in the Border Orientation Paper, approved in May 2019, **the GO! 2025 candidacy is already mentioned** as a leverage for the development of a larger cross-border strategy promoting common labelling and identity for tourism and economic development.

Further EU programs

In this phase of the new programming period decision making process we only mark the potential programs to finance specific projects. The table below shows our ambitions and is based on previous experience of both municipalities and our partners (e.g. University of Nova Gorica, Walk of Peace Foundation, Coronnini Foundation, ISIG, IT companies such as Arctur and others).

Program	Currently proposed objectives/topics	Potential GO! 2025 projects
Danube Transnational Programme	Digital infrastructure, innovation, river basin management, sustainable tourism, fight nationalist tendencies with activities on the local and regional level	ISOLABS BORDERLESS WIRELESS EPISCOPE
Creative Europe	Societal resilience and social inclusion through culture and cultural heritage (CULTURE); promoting European audiovisual works and support audience development across Europe and beyond (MEDIA)	CINECITTA ART AS A REFUGE
Community-Led Local Development/ LEADER	Local action groups – small scale projects	REGIONAL PROJECTS
Horizon	Open Innovation Pillar	PIXXEL-X
European Cross-Border Mechanism	Joint urban services	EPICENTRE
REACT-EU	Youth unemployment and relative prosperity	EXPERIENCY FACTORY
Just Transition Fund	Helping businesses create new economic opportunities	FUTURE OF FOOD

Q21. TIMETABLE FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Source of income for operating expenditure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
EU		100,000	300,000	500,000	600,000		1,500,000
National government	250,000	750,000	2.000,000	3.000,000	3.500,000	500,000	10,000,000
City	300,000	400,000	500,000	1.200,000	2.000,000	600,000	5,000,000
Region	300,000	400,000	600,000	800,000	2.000,000	400,000	4,500,000
Sponsors				500,000	1.500,000		2,000,000
Yearly income	850,000	1,650,000	3,400,000	6,000,000	9,600,000	1,500,000	23,000,000

Q22. STRATEGY TO SEEK SUPPORT FROM PRIVATE SPONSORS

The basic premise of success in obtaining private funds for the GO! 2025 project is to establish a long-lasting and firm partnership with the private sector. This is the reason why we launched a series of activities in the selection phase and were seeking close ties to business partners early on. We see these activities as cornerstones of our strategy. And as fundamental steps in a process to establish culture as a catalyser for economic growth (as explained in Q2 and Q3). Here is how we approached sponsors and how we will follow-up on their involvement:

Eye to eye with CEOs

We talked with more than **50 CEOs in the cross-border region** - from leaders of start-up companies to big players. We established partnerships with companies in the region on specific projects (e.g: SENG energy company in our project Soča power charger, Intra Lighting in our Christmas lights project, GOAP smart houses in the Dot Museums project etc.). **In the preparation phase we intend to continue the process of linking companies in the regions to specific GO! 2025 actions.**

World Café workshop

In July 2020 we hosted a Workshop, led by the World Café method to promote art thinking and explore innovative methods of cross-sectoral collaboration. More than 30 CEOs attended along with participants from cultural NGOs, the educational sector and local administration.

In the next period we will encourage workshops, talks and meetings as part of our Pixxel-X, GO! For Lunch, Experience Factory, Neighbourhood and other programs.

Cooperating with cooperations

Throughout 2020 we have presented our bid to various business and trade associations (like Save Goriška or Association of Nova Gorica IT companies) as well as business institutions

(Chamber of Industry and Chamber of Craft in Nova Gorica; Chamber of Commerce, Conferences for Industry, Commerce and Craft in Gorizia, Primorski tehnolški park technological hub etc.), gaining formal letters of support from all of them.

We see business associations and institutions as crucial partners in the build-up years. They will play a vital role in identifying potential partners in the sector, in providing data and analysis and in building our Curriculum of Space (as explained in Q4).

In summary, our strategy to obtain private funding, rests on four pillars:

- 1. The Eye to Eye:** We will continuously offer private stakeholders' collaboration in existing and new GO! 2025 projects, developed by the Program Director and program line managers.
- 2. The Art Thinking:** Through our cultural and capacity building programs we will develop innovative and shared solutions on the fields of food, energy, mobility, urban development etc. in collaboration with economic stakeholders.
- 3. The Mentorship:** We will include companies in art residencies, encouraging them to host and fund young artists and researchers (e.g. Art Thinking Residency, Soča Art).
- 4. The GO! Borderless brand:** We will also develop a more standard approach, offering companies visibility in our media content and in our venues, in exchange for sponsorship or donorship, monetary and in-kind. We will motivate companies, participating in specific projects, to invest a part of their contribution in a general fund rather than in specific projects, which will be allocated at will by the GO! 2025 management.

To secure representation we will include representatives of the private sector in our Supervisory Board (see Q30-Q34).

Q23. BREAK-DOWN OF THE OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Expenditure	€	%
Cultural program	15,432.300,00	67%
Marketing	3,210,000,00	14%
Wages	3,657,700,00	16%
Contingency	700,000,00	3%
Total	23,000,000,00	100%

Q24. TIMETABLE FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Timetable for spending*	Programme expenditure (in €)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing (in €)	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages over-heads and administration (in €)	Wages over-heads and administration (in %)	Contingency (in €)	Contingency (%)
2021	258,000	2%	90,000	3%	395,500	11%	-	-
2022	876,000	5%	240,000	7%	557,000	15%	-	-
2023	2,316,000	15%	420,000	13%	557,000	15%	-	-
2024	4,476,000	29%	810,000	25%	705,000	19%	-	-
2025	6,622,800	43%	1,500,000	47%	871,000	24%	700,000	100%
2026	883,500	6%	150,000	5%	572,200	16%	-	-
SUM	15,432,300	100%	3,210,000	100%	3,657,700	100%	700,000	100%
TOTAL	23,000,000							

Q25. INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Source of income for city expenditure	€	%
EU	13,820,000	71
City Nova Gorica	2,250,000	11
Region FVG	3,485,000	18
TOTAL	19,555,000	100

Funds have been partially spent in 2020, hence the capital expenditure is slightly lower, compared to pre-selection.

Q26. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The table above includes four major infrastructural projects, which are tightly connected to the ECoC year: the EPICenter, the renovation of the villa Laščak and its park, the transformation of Villa Louise into a start-up cultural hub and the renovation of the medieval castle of Gorizia.

EPICENTER

After financing the first phase (architectural call and project ideas) the cities of Gorizia and Nova Gorica have formally decided to create an Integrated Territorial Investment to fund the project and finance it from different cohesion mechanisms. Both municipal councils have formally approved this decision. The Friuli Venezia Giulia Region has formally agreed to include the project in its ERDF National Operational Programme, while the Republic of Slovenia has sent a positive signal from the Ministry for EU Cohesion Policies.

VILLA LAŠČAK

The municipality of Nova Gorica has chosen by a legally binding decision of the council the villa Laščak and park as one of the three projects in which to invest the funds, granted to the city through the Integrated Territorial Investment tool in the former financial perspective. The project is on-going.

VILLA LOUISE

The transformation of the building to a hub for start-ups in culture is included in the structural funds for the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region in the 2014-2020 programming period. The project is on-going.

GORIZIA CASTLE

The funds for the renovation of the castle of Gorizia were approved by the municipality of Gorizia in April 2020.

Q27. EU SUPPORT FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The expected contribution from the EU for capital expenditure is exceptionally high because both cities plan to finance investments with cohesion funds.

Cohesion funds for renovating the Villa Laščak, the Gorizia Castle and the Villa Louise are allocated and partially spent.

The European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC GO) with GO! 2025 is preparing a new strategy for the development of the cross-border urban area with the aim to form a new Integrated Territorial Investment. It will be drafted by updating the previous territorial analysis and through a critical review of the outcomes of the implementation of the current projects. The integrated approach will be unfolded around **three pillars** that shall be aligned with the funding of three different financial instruments:

1) Development of the urban area of the municipalities:
the implementation of a number of actions identified within the **Urban Agenda** of the Municipalities with the aim of renovating

and bringing investments in cross-border brownfields or degraded urban areas. It shall be co-financed by the **ERDF National Operational Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 2021 – 2027**.

2) Sustainable urban mobility (SUMP):

a number of actions that are implementing the SUMP developed by the Municipalities. It shall be financially supported by the ERDF Regional Operational Programme of Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region 2021 – 2027 in Italy;

3) Soft measures:

financially supported by INTERREG CBC Italy - Slovenia 2021 - 2027 (see Q20).

The main actions in the first two pillars are related to the renovation of the Evropa/Transalpina Square, as described in the **EPICenter** project, and the development of the urban border area, as described in the **All Man's Land** project.

Q28. TIMETABLE FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Source of income for city expenditure	2021	2022	2023	2024	ECOC YEAR 2025	2026	TOTAL
EU	750,000	1,770,000	2,050,000	9,250,000			13,820,000
City Nova Gorica	100,000	100,000	200,000	1,850,000			2,250,000
Region FVG	2,050,000	535,000	300,000	300,000	300,000		3,485,000
Yearly income	2,900,000	2,405,000	2,550,000	11,400,000	300,000		19,555,000

Q29. NEW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The only new cultural infrastructure is the EPICenter and the related infrastructural investments in the border area. The new structure is an integral part of the project to renovate

the square and the degraded border area. It will mostly be financed with the Integrated Territorial Investment we describe in Q26 and Q27.

B. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Q30. GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY STRUCTURE

Q31. Q34. MANAGEMENT, CEO AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR

After a thorough assessment process, debating the weaknesses and strength and possible alternatives as well as taking into account the recommendations in the panel report we have reached the conclusion to choose the European Grouping of Territorial Collaboration (EGTC) as our delivery structure – with some very specific legal changes and a dedicated ECoC department with its own CEO and ECoC team to be built up. Our positive experience in the candidacy process, when we have been able, with the help of the EGTC, to finance our activities with public funds from local authorities in both states, has reinforced our trust in the mechanism and its potential. Even more so in phase two, when we successfully organized events, produced video and other digital content, managing the process smoothly, despite the difficult covid situation. We are also driven by the ambition to make our joined candidacy as European as possible and to create a precedence and an example of good practice in combining and merging EU mechanisms and projects.

Evaluation process

Nevertheless, we took the issues, raised in the evaluation report after the pre-selection phase, very seriously. We followed the recommendations of the panel and engaged in a process of thorough evaluation of the benefits and risks, tied to the choice of the EGTC as delivery structure for the ECoC.

Phase one – data collecting

We analysed the legal framework, which defines the functioning of the EGTC mechanism in general and the EGTC GO in particular. We studied delivery structures of past European Capitals of Culture through evaluation reports, bids and media content.

Phase two – evaluation

With the help of international experts, we have created an evaluation chart to help us determine the capacity of the EGTC GO to hold the role of ECoC delivery structure. We evaluated the potentials and limits of the mechanism through 49 proxies,

organized in the following sets of dimensions and indicators:

- Autonomy (political representation, administrative representation, public-private partnership)
- Finance system (financial management, budget management)
- Operational capacity (decision making, administration, supervisory board, top management)
- Cultural management capacity (supporting the right mix of artistic excellence and capacity building)

We have conducted the evaluation process in collaboration with the EGTC GO and external legal experts.

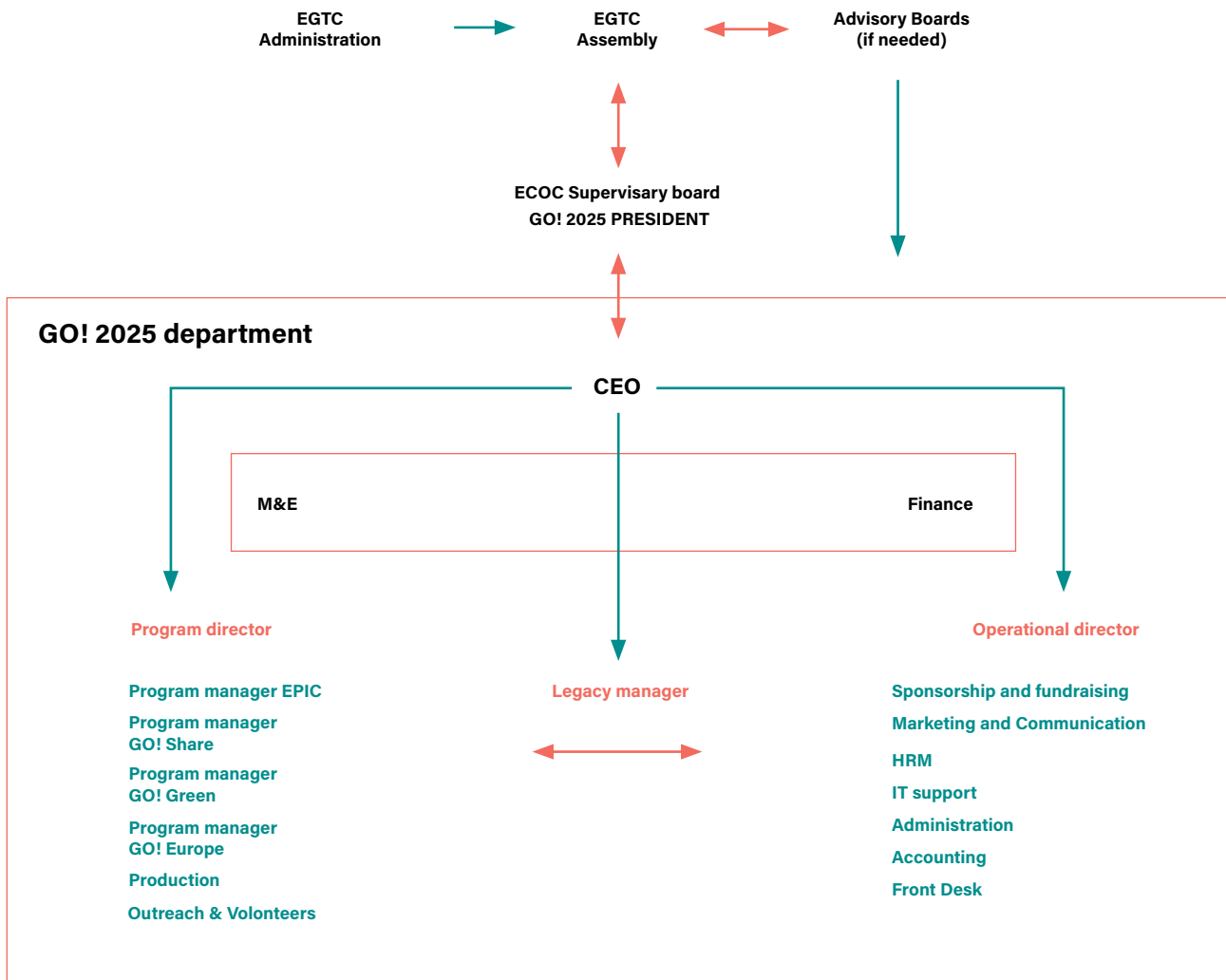
Phase three – defining the measures

At the end of the evaluation we set a series of activities to strengthen the weakest dimensions. We defined the changes and upgrades which have to be made in the EGTC GO to enable these activities.

Phase four – gaining support

In November 2020 the EGTC assembly has voted on a document, explaining comprehensively and thoroughly the role of the entity in the ECoC project. Through previous presentations and talks the assembly as well as representatives of both municipal administrations were made fully aware of the extensive changes in the EGTC's operations should Nova Gorica and Gorizia be awarded the title.

Our managing structure will be an **independent department within the EGTC GO** dedicated exclusively to the delivery of the ECoC. The Department will be included in an updated version of the Internal Regulation (Regolamento per l'organizzazione interna del GECT GO) where all the provisions will be detailed. The document is prepared and a meeting of the assembly is scheduled for the second week of January 2021. Should the title be awarded, the delivery structure will be in place less than a month after the designation.



MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The ECoC department of the EGTC GO will be led by an independent, newly appointed CEO; who will have full operational capacity and the final responsibility for global leadership of the project.

The top management will be recruited through an international open call. The process will be organized by the EGTC administration staff, but an independent panel of experts will be set up to assess the applications using the envisaged selection criteria in a fair and transparent way.

The ECoC department will be required to present a work plan, which will be yearly drafted and formally endorsed by a Supervisory Board, appointed by the EGTC Assembly. The existing Assembly of the EGTC GO is composed by political actors but since its members are nominated by the City Councils (and not by the local government or the Mayor)

they do offer the widest representation possible therefore limiting the political bias of a single view/approach.

The Supervisory Board will include representatives of the entities financing the project, including those of the private sector and it will be led by a president as *primus inter partes*. Once formed, it will have full independence and will follow Rules of Procedure, approved by the Board itself once convened for its first time.

The Assembly has also the power to establish an indefinite number of committees with the role of advisory boards. A limited number of advisory boards will be formed later in the process, in collaboration with the chosen CEO and artistic director with the aim of giving the top management exactly the support they need. The committee system allows to set up even smaller, specific and temporary advisory boards for individual clusters and program lines.

Senior management, CEO and Program Director

The top management, led by the CEO, consists of a **Program Director** and **Operations Director**.

The top management will be chosen through an international open call. The bidding team will be invited to apply. The selection criteria will be prepared in detail by an independent expert selection panel, nominated by the EGTC administration in January 2021. The CEO and the Program Director are expected to take up the appointment no later than March 2021. The Operations Director can be chosen until March 2022 - the same panel will manage the selection process.

The **CEO** will be the overall responsible whom the two directors report to. As well as the directors the CEO also has the finance team, the legacy manager, and the manager for Monitoring and Evaluation directly reporting to him/her. As CEO the open call will favour a person who has some experience in managing large-scale projects with a high budget and international scope, preferably in a culture related field. Being networked within the region and familiar with some of the issues we face will be an advantage for the project also with respect to the political sensitivities in the border area. The work requires someone who is more of a generalist rather than a specialist. The CEO will also have to represent the organisation towards business sponsors as well as politicians and the wider European networks. Candidates with experiences in both the public and private sector will be favoured.

The role of the **Legacy Manager** is meant to ensure that the long-term impact and the connectivity with existing and forming strategies (urban strategy, city brand, tourism strategy etc.) is managed on an operational level in all phases of the project.

The **Operations Director** coordinates all production activities, such as public relations, marketing, IT, administration, accountancy etc.

The role of Legacy Manager and Operations Director can be held by the CEO in the early stages of the build-up period.

The structure of our **Lead Artistic Team** is designed to offer a slightly different structure which will enable us to balance the development and delivery of an outstanding cultural programme, whilst building local capacity and audience. We will appoint a **Program Director** to lead a strong team of four senior programme managers (together with an Outreach and Volunteering Manager), who we want to form a collective approach to artistic decision making, but with the Program Director having the final decision in the case of conflicting views. Program Managers will be responsible for key areas of the program. Some crucial selection criteria for the role of Program Director are an outstanding artistic opus or/and a distinguished career in cultural management and links with the regional, national and international cultural scene. Candidates with creative experiences on projects with topics, linked to the foreseen cultural program will be favoured

Since we are more interested in developing and implementing a program that will have a long-term impact on artistic and cultural creators in the area, builds their capacities, and weaves them into the European and international networks, we need the Program Director to be more of a facilitator rather than a classic artistic director with an own agenda. The Lead Artistic Team will keep an open ear and mind on what the current artistic and social tendencies are. The Program Director with the program managers will find curators and artists all over the world that can be inspirational and capacity building for the local art scene as well as picking up on these current artistic trends. The Program Director's task is also to continue and expand the cooperation and co-creation process with local artists and cultural managers already involved in preparing projects ideas for the bid, and to include further players from Slovenia, Italy, countries and cities all over Europe as well as beyond.

To ensure a smooth transition the members of the bidding team will take different positions in the new organisation to ensure continuity and to guarantee that what has been developed in the bid book will be further developed and sustained.

Finances

The Department within the EGTC will manage funds and financial flows through a separated accounting system and with extra staff hence ensuring the autonomy and clear traceability of all ECoC related costs. The Internal Regulation and the broader legal framework already prevent funds to be transferred between different projects managed by the EGTC, but extra measures are included in the updated version of the Internal Regulation.

The department will have its own bank account and EU VAT number, so revenue can be generated.

The funds from the Urban Agenda and Interreg Italy Slovenia programs will be awarded to the EGTC directly (as was already successfully done with Interreg funds in the previous programming period). We further explain our plans for obtaining these funds in Q20 and Q27. This has a substantial effect on financial autonomy of the project and its capacity of functioning as a truly cross-border action regardless of possible changes in local or national politics and administration.

Mitigating measures

We addressed the possible weaknesses and liabilities of establishing EGTC as delivery structure by:

- establishing a **completely autonomous** department with full operational capacity;
- setting up an **international open call** for selecting the top management with a dedicated ECoC CEO;
- ensuring a **wide and diverse representation** within the advisory and supervisory bodies;
- creating solid basis to obtain a financial flow from all sources (including cohesion funds) independent from daily political decisions;
- obtaining clear political support for the envisaged changes.

We are still aware of the risks involved and we realize we have set ourselves an ambitious goal. But the complexity of the task precedes the choice of the EGTC as delivery structure. It rises from our aspiration to deliver a truly cross-border and deeply European project. Which is why, at the end of a long consideration and armed with a solid set of contingency measures, we decided to stick with the plan. We want to add two important general considerations.

Joining the EGTC and the ECoC is not a large ship coming to a small dock. It is building a new peer for a large ship in an already fully functioning port. The European Capital of Culture will completely transform the EGTC, but the entity has to reinvent itself in any case. All of its activities are linked to projects constructed in the current, ending programming period. For the upcoming period the ECoC will be the far largest project of the EGTC. Like we explain in Q27, we are creating a common Integrated Territory Invest-

ments Plan, joining Urban Agenda and Interreg funds and the EGTC will be the direct recipient of the funds, that will be largely invested in ECoC related projects. We are making our GO! Borderless program the frame of cross-border projects and programs for the upcoming period. And we are seriously committed to execute a part of them, even if the title is not awarded.

Year 2025 will pass, mayors and presidents will change, but the EGTC will still be there. The continuity, as we have learned in both Goricas in past decades, is a crucial part of international cooperation. A permanent, stable professional body, an accumulation of experiences and knowledge will also enhance and secure the ECoC legacy. **As we have integrated past projects and achievements in our bid, the next big ship will carry the precious ECoC cargo into the coming decades.**

Q32. STAFF WITH APPROPRIATE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

We are confident that with an open and dynamic approach we will be able to find skilled and experienced personnel and build a team, which will successfully deliver the cultural program.

Slovenia, the Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Veneto regions are home to a number of highly skilled and experienced individuals, able to hold senior positions. Many experts in the fields of culture, economy, IT technology work in bigger urban centres, like Ljubljana, Milan, Vienna, and some of them are eager to return. With the Come! Home concept in the cultural program we have already expressed our ambition to offer artists the opportunity to share their knowledge and achievements with fellow citizens. We will extend this concept to cultural operators and managers.

Quality of life in our region is very high. Decent infrastructure, vicinity to airports and urban centres, a strategic position between the Adriatic and the Alps, a high level of safety, a pleasant climate, natural and heritage beauties are some of

our assets. At the University of Nova Gorica more than half of the researchers and professors come from abroad. Highly specialised people are willing to move to the region if they have a reason. And GO! 2025 will create many good reasons.

The Nova Gorica University, together with the universities of Trieste and Udine is an excellent source of ambitious, young people, looking for an internship or a first job. Participating in an ECoC project seems to be a perfect start to a successful career in art, humanities or social studies. Students and graduates with their energy and fresh perspective are a perfect match to GO! 2025 ambitions.

We are fully aware of how precious the ECoC network is, also from the point of view of staff exchange. We are counting especially on a staff and experience exchange with neighbouring Croatia (2020), Austria (2024) and Hungary (2023), but also with Finland and Slovakia (2026). And there is of course the relatively fresh Italian experience with Matera.

Outline for staffing arrangements 2021-2026

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Full-time employees	8	12	14	27	31	3
Part-time employees	3	3	5	5	10	2
Secondments	2	2	2	6	6	2
Interns & Volunteers	2	2	5	5	10	1
Total	15	19	26	43	57	8



The Window,
a GO! 2025 project.

Q33. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND GO! 2025

During the bidding process there was a close cooperation between the bidding team and both city administrations on finance, strategy, marketing and communication and accessibility. Building on the experience from the selection process we will use our strengths and address our weaknesses. We will ensure both a system of formal representation and a wide range of communication and exchange platforms and opportunities.

- The Supervisory Board of the GO! 2025 delivery structure will have representation from both city administrations. The EGTC assembly, which represents the widest possible range of local political stakeholders, will have the possibility to name committees with the role of advisory boards for specific topics (e.g. cultural tourism, urban development etc.). The management structure includes a Legacy Manager, a key figure, who will oversee the connection between GO! 2025 and other strategic processes in the region. Working on an operational level and exchanging daily with the CEO and Program Director, the Legacy Manager will:
 - oversee monitoring and evaluation activities and the dissemination of results;
 - ensure a GO! 2025 representation in work groups, panels, expert groups etc., established by the local administrations for specific development goals;
 - hold monthly meetings with appointed contact persons from both municipal administrations, who will also act as door openers to quickly access key representatives of city administrations;
 - hold regular meetings with representatives of political groups in both municipal councils and relevant institutions (Institute for Tourism, Chamber of Commerce etc.).

The communication department will prepare regular bulletins and newsletters, aimed at specific groups (local administration, economic sector, tourism and gastronomy).

We will offer an informational GO! 2025 yearly state-of-affairs presentation in both councils once a year.

C. CONTINGENCY

Q35. RISK ASSESSMENT Q36. MITIGATING MEASURES

	Risk	Mitigating measures
Cultural program	<p>Exclusion of people with limited social, cultural, physical etc. resources</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Low</p>	<p>We have created a clear set of goals to guarantee accessibility and inclusion (as described in the Outreach chapter).</p> <p>We have and will work directly with institutions and NGOs to constantly adjust and improve.</p> <p>We have set a number of low threshold cultural activities: open-air events; events with free admittance; artistic events, connected to sport and gastronomy.</p> <p>We will assure a high level of digital accessibility.</p>
	<p>Capital infrastructure completed after the beginning of the ECoC year</p> <p>Level of effect: Medium Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We have ensured strong political support and have a clear administrative and financial time-line for infrastructure projects.</p> <p>We have shaped the cultural program so that all of the activities will proceed regardless of possible delays and have a plan B for venues.</p> <p>We have a clear alternative plan for our most vulnerable project, the EPICenter. The alternative plan consists in hosting the planned content in existing exhibition spaces and using the square as an open-air venue.</p>
Capacity to deliver	<p>Lack of proper cultural expertise needed for carrying out ECoC tasks</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We will choose the senior staff through international open calls according to predefined criteria to meet the requirements of the positions.</p> <p>We have already established contacts with highly skilled individuals from the region who either work in the region or abroad.</p> <p>We will establish a permanent collaboration with the three universities (Nova Gorica, Trieste, Udine).</p> <p>We have a solid plan of activities in capacity building and art residencies.</p> <p>We will exchange staff with other ECoC cities.</p>
	<p>Lack of management capacities amongst present cultural operators</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We will build on the already established collaboration with organisations with a high level of knowledge and expertise in cultural management (e.g. Gallery Kapelica or the Motovila institute in Ljubljana) to organise targeted capacity building activities.</p> <p>Everything included in our Capacity Building programs aims at mitigating these risks. We will prepare a cultural management learning module with The School of Arts of the University of Nova Gorica.</p> <p>We will encourage exchange of knowledge and best practises between the cultural and economic sector in the X-center hub.</p> <p>We will promote and finance international internships for our cultural operators in other ECoC cities.</p>
Participation and Communication	<p>Lack of engagement of local population/young people and volunteers</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Low</p>	<p>We will maintain the established high involvement of regional institutions, NGOs and artists in the cultural program.</p> <p>We have a high number of participatory events and projects.</p> <p>We have designed a solid audience development plan for youngsters.</p> <p>We will build on digital outreach to create a connected community of social media participants.</p> <p>We are and will be involving bars, restaurants, local shops and local service providers to promote GO!2025 as the main development project for the next 10 years.</p>
	<p>Failure in reaching a European and international audience</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>A continuous work with international partners and a plan to furtherly widen our international network through the build-up phase.</p> <p>International media coverage as an important part of our media plan.</p> <p>Using Hot-spots (Venice, big international events etc.) to attract the attention of an international public.</p> <p>The PERMA.lab method in choosing content to assure and add relevant European themes (in five years the relevance of topics can change and we are ready to adapt).</p>
	<p>Negative publicity</p> <p>Level of effect: Medium Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We will maintain a transparent and constant communication with the public and stakeholders.</p> <p>We will clearly state our objectives and regularly disseminate Monitoring and Evaluation results.</p> <p>We will address the political sensitivities of the border area through projects like the EPIScope or The Neighbourhood, creating platforms for an open, constructive dialogue.</p>
	<p>Negative environmental (and social) impact of ECoC activities on the region</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We will avoid overcrowding by establishing an automatic system for monitoring the number of participants, connected with our front desk office.</p> <p>We will use the TIM (tourism impact model) IT tool (developed by regional IT companies) to measure the impact (positive and negative) of our activities and adjust.</p> <p>We will work with city administrations on green and sustainable solutions in mobility and accommodation.</p>

	Risk	Mitigating measures
Governance and finances	<p>Loss of administrative and political support</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Low</p>	<p>We have formal decisions of support from local authorities, which are legally binding and transcend a potential change in administration.</p> <p>We have high political representation in the delivery structure.</p> <p>We have envisaged the role of Legacy Manager to supervise communication and activities, connected with the short-term and long-term impact of GO! 2025 activities.</p> <p>We have planned a number of processes to exchange content and maintain dialogue with local political authorities.</p>
	<p>Low level of regional engagement / loss of support by other municipalities / loss of support from Gorizia/FVG</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>We have linked the support of other municipalities to specific projects, recognized by municipal administrations as relevant for their own strategic goals.</p> <p>We have a high number of regional partners in the cultural program and we plan to extend all our outreach activities to the included area.</p> <p>We have formal decisions of support from the Gorizia municipality, which are legally binding and transcend a potential change in administration.</p> <p>We have gained clear and permanent support from the Friuli Venezia Giulia region.</p> <p>We are linking GO! 2025 projects to cohesion funds strategies as well as to the crucial local and regional strategies, to include the ECoC project in a wider context of cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>We have established a connection with local representatives on national and European level (members of parliament, EU parliament and representatives in other administrative bodies) to help us promote the project and maintain political support.</p>
	<p>Failureing to provide the planned budget</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Low</p>	<p>We have planned a diverse range of financial sources for our operational budget (state, city, region, EU cohesion funds, other EU funds, private sector).</p> <p>We have ensured the highest possible level of commitment from stakeholders.</p> <p>We will continuously reaffirm that commitment by communicating with decision makers and proving the essential role of GO! 2025 in achieving strategic development goals.</p> <p>We will prepare yearly financial plans and reports.</p> <p>We will implement a clear strategy to seek private funding.</p> <p>We will use IT tools to plan and increase revenue.</p>
	<p>Relapsing to reduced capacity to attract funds for culture after the title year</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Low</p>	<p>We will strengthen the relationship between the cultural sector, the local administrations and the business sector to create new funding mechanisms and cooperation models.</p> <p>We will offer special courses on funding under the capacity building program and thus the professionalisation of cultural workers and artists in this field.</p> <p>All the knowledge gained in the implementation phase will be transferred to a permanent supportive office which will be part of our legacy.</p> <p>We will raise the awareness of politicians about the importance of public funding of arts and culture.</p>
Natural disasters and unknown causes	<p>Cancellation of part of the ECoC program due to social distancing measures</p> <p>Level of effect: High Probability: Medium</p>	<p>An important part of the projects can and will be presented through digital content, accessible via the Borderless Wireless platform.</p> <p>A continuous implementation of new technological solutions will be made possible by collaborating with regional and international IT companies and engaging in creative industry processes.</p> <p>A number of open-air venues are established and new ones will be created through the GONG capacity building program.</p> <p>We have increased the number of all-year events, which are: less vulnerable in case of temporary lock-downs and can be visited individually.</p> <p>Modular working spaces in X-center and Huture will help the delivery team and cultural operators to maintain connectivity.</p>

D. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Q37. SLOGAN

Our main slogan is GO! Borderless. "GO" as in the English verb and as in the Slovenian and (formerly) Italian registration plates in both Goricas. "Borderless" meaning, we encourage visitors to discover, to go beyond the usual cultural and touristic experience.

To move between two countries, as well as between art and technology, between urban and rural, between local and

international, between the past and the future. To discover new tastes, new languages, new people.

Other slogans we will use are All Systems GO! which can also serve as a very cheerful and motivating slogan, as well as variations of GO! create, GO! volunteer, and (if needed) even GO! figure. We might even go very silly with 'Go GO or go home!'

Q38. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Stories. Our stories. Goriška stories. European stories. Stories of our two cities, with two and more languages, with two histories, born from two opposing ideological backgrounds. Now striving to become one shared European cultural, social, economic and urban eco-system. It is an attractive and positive narrative we want to share: If Slovenes and Italians in the Goriška region can go borderless, well, then everybody in Europe can do it. No excuses.

Our marketing and communication strategy is based on the main narrative of this region and its European relevance. We want to bring the cross-border Goriška stories into European awareness, because many of the stories are symptomatic and metaphorical of what makes Europe European. And what other than storytelling is marketing and communication? They are the contemporary tools to share our stories with large numbers of people.

The GO-GO brand with values

GO! Borderless might not be the GO-TO brand in Europe (yet) – but we certainly are the GO-GO brand. If we look at it closely, at the core of our brand 'GO! Borderless' are those values of the European Capital of Culture that initiated this project 35 years ago: intercultural dialogue, greater mutual understanding between European citizens, common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, European integration and current European themes, transnational and international cooperation and partnerships. In 2025 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ECoC and of these values.

They drive our artistic vision and program by translating them into attractive projects. And they drive our marketing and communication strategy by translating them into an attractive narrative. Stories that activate large crowds, filling a city with clowns and showing that a smile and ridiculously large shoes transcend all -isms. Stories that talk through theatre about

the only king buried in Slovenian soil and his futile attempt to escape an epidemic across borders. Stories speaking through high tech fabrics made of apple peels about protecting our environment and our heritage. Stories telling of fruit trees that grow on borders and whose fruit do not care on which side of the border they fall. Stories told through the EPICenter of how history is interpreted differently by different people even if they live practically in the same city and territory.

The narrative driving our marketing and communication is about how our two cities have turned their backs towards each other for years. How they are facing each other currently. And how the time has come to break open this circle and stand shoulder to shoulder to look at what lies ahead of us. We are determined to stop being hostages of the past and start approaching a future as a shared eco-system. We want to liberate our languages from ideology and start becoming (passively) bilingual. After all, every kiss is bilingual, too.

All Systems GO!

People in Nova Gorica say: "My city has no soul" and in Gorizia: "My city has no life". Europe will be invited to watch, share and participate as we throw our soul and our liveliness together and become one cross-border European city which encourages a firmer belief that together we are always better off in Europe – and closed borders are not a solution in regions like ours, not even in a pandemic.

In synch with our artistic vision of we want to create this dynamic vibe of two border cities letting GO of all the limitations of "Borderitis" and start showing off our assets to ourselves and our European neighbours near and far. Great stories, fascinating cultural and artistic projects, enthusiastic citizens who are sailing on a wave of pride and sense of belonging, beautiful nature and new urban eco-systems. In 2025 we invite everyone to join in: aren't we all a bit GO-GO?

Virtual Viral VWorld

It is easy to imagine the world will not be the same after this pandemic. It already isn't now and by the time this is over, we will be much more used to the digital – and perhaps facing the next virtual or physical virus going global. Google Trends claims that people are going to rely even more on digital content in their consumer decisions. Aren't they a master at stating the obvious...

During the first lockdown in spring we adapted our communication to the fact that in times when we cannot come together for events, then social and other digital media are not a "medium" anymore that merely conveys what happens in "reality". Rather, the digital media have become the content themselves. The digital tools are not there for dissemination anymore but for creation. We have seen that our digital formats exploded with followers and participants, whether it was our Virtual Café, the pilot project on bilingualism with Italian and Slovenian online language courses, the many many video contents we generated and the flash-mobs that actually went 'viral' once they went virtual.

We saw that we are senders as well as receivers since we asked our digital community a lot of questions and received a lot of comments and answers back. This in itself was almost like an informal sentiment analysis and a dialogue with our audiences. We plan to continue this kind of approach throughout the preparation years, 2025 and beyond. For now, we have tailored it to our local and regional audience. But we noticed some interest internationally and will push the international outreach beyond any current limits if we are designated. Always updating the channels and adapting to new technology.

Live experience in virtual reality

This first global pandemic hit us a little too early. Virtual Reality is still something that is not available in every household and even less so are holodecks. But VR technology is becoming more accessible and cheaper and so are the computers to drive a high-quality VR experience. Until 2025 VR will be much more wide-spread and will blow our minds with how immersive virtual experiences can be. Whether we talk adventure video games, digital learning environments, virtual mental health programs or experiencing live cultural events. It will be almost like being there in person, with a virtual large crowd around us with which we can even interact. Our plan is definitely to make our ECoC "virtually" and virtually available for large numbers of audiences worldwide. This not only helps our environment with reduced traffic, it also will help our tourism structures cope better with the influx of real-life visitors.

The Borderless Wireless app will be the landing www-location from where all our digital audiences and followers can start their journey through the GO-GO region. User generated content is a standard already and it is predictable that it will gain importance during our preparation years. Having participants who feed our channels and are able to contribute digitally as co-creators to our artistic and cultural content is a part of an audience engagement that will especially appeal to younger people.

Digital residencies and media takeovers where digital media creators, YouTubers, influencers and digital activists take reign of our media channels are further possibilities to involve more people and empower other voices than just the official

narratives. Whoever has ever watched the Chinese influencer Li Ziqi and the 20+ million hits she gets with every new post, will understand that the rural, crafts, preserves and cooking are a mega-trend and utterly mesmerizing to the urban crowds. Making farming and rural life in our region appealing is possibly a digital endeavour of creating our own Li Ziqi in the Goriška region broadcasting and podcasting to the world.

Europeans go GO

Will Europe want to listen to these stories? Well, we already make this experience with our current visitors who say, "why did I never hear of this before?" This is the reason why – also as a measure to secure legacy – we are pushing the municipalities to develop a joint city-brand and tourism strategy from 2021. Since we are an area with a poorly developed but large tourist potential we feel it is paramount linking our marketing strategy to a broader endeavour of attracting visitors to the area. The national and both regional tourism strategies are already pointing in the right directions. The national Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism positions Slovenia as a green destination for guests seeking high-quality experiences on different levels. Whilst the regional strategy on Slovenian side promotes a year-round destination of nature and high-quality gastronomy, the regional tourism strategy on Italian territory communicates Friuli-Venezia Giulia as the confluence of civilizations and a diverse cultural heritage.

Forbes Magazine rated Slovenia as one of the seven countries with the potential to become elite destinations after the covid crisis and Lonely Planet rated the Vipava Valley one of the top 10 European locations to visit in 2018. Our marketing strategy to attract European audiences and visitors will capitalize on these beginnings and on the fact that in the international tourism business Slovenia is seen as a rising star. We will work closely on the strategies for cultural tourism with the Slovene Tourism Organisation. During the bid we already established working ties with the Institute for Tourism Nova Gorica and municipal tourism offices as well as with Promoturismo FVG.

The overall narrative can be connected to some of our strong points in tourism to attract all those visitors who like to experience our stories and projects in combination with:

- **The Green** (amazing nature, outdoor activities, zero waste);
- **The Good** (excellent, healthy food and amazing wine)
- **The Diverse** (from A to A – Alps to Adriatic, anything from skiing to swimming);
- **The Real** (discover some of the real people of Europe – in synch with the local culture);
- **The Inclusive** (something for everyone – from children to seniors, from highbrow to amateur);
- **The Mysterious** (discover the Carst caves or the deep green forests and mountains);

And last but not least – sparing you all the further great ideas we have for marketing and communication – having Venice, one of the top European tourism destinations, less than two hours away, will open up some guerilla opportunities to attract visitors who are tired of getting their feet wet.

Q39. MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

It is all about the stories. And we predict it will be even more so. Our general media strategy is to create, disseminate, tell stories instead of buying pages and minutes.

It is all about the people. And we hope it will be even more so. Which is why we will focus our attention on a permanent and real communication with media content creators on a regional, national and European level.

Field	Established connections	Planned activities
Regional and local media	Regional daily newspapers, digital media, radio and TV stations in Slovene and Italian language have followed GO! 2025 closely through reports, interviews and feature stories and on several occasions dedicated special supplements to the project.	Dedicated GO! 2025 pages and minutes, curated by the delivery team. Regular media breakfasts with local journalists.
National Media	The public networks RAI (IT) and RTV (SLO) followed the candidacy through regional correspondents. Furthermore, members of the bidding team have engaged in more than 15 live TV appearances. GO! 2025 featured in stories and dedicated segments of several national publications, both in printed and digital versions (e.g. Delo, Dnevnik, Sole 24 ore, La Repubblica).	Newsletters and story alerts from the GO! 2025 communication office. The journalist club: an informal coordination, involving local media people, who work for national and international media (a sort of Come! Home for journalists). Video and photo content in high resolution will be prepared and distributed by the GO! 2025 team. A Media Room will be established on the Borderless Wireless platform.
International Media	The closure of the border during the covid crisis and the connected GO! 2025 activities raised the interest of several international media (e.g. Reuters, NPO- Netherlands). We have started a collaboration with The European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages (Midas) with 30 members from 17 countries.	A program to connect our local journalists to their counterparts in other ECoC cities (globalizing the local). Hiring an internationally connected media agency. A residency program for young European journalists. International media campaigns to accompany specific projects (e.g. Twenty Something, March for Europe).
Our Media and Social Media is the New Media	We have reached a high number of journalists through creative and active social media work. The flow between the so-called traditional and social media is a trend to watch. Following the huge come-back of podcasts we also created The Other Radio, a GO!2025 radio in collaboration with European independent stations.	Developing social media as an important part of our overall communication strategy – not just to promote but also to create and distribute content. Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok (and whatever will not be obsolete in 2025) residencies. A variety of content (interviews, podcasts, videos etc.) on the Borderless Wireless platform.

Q40. CITIZENS AS COMMUNICATORS

This area might not be well known in Europe, but its citizens are hugely proud of the Goriška region. Do we take every opportunity to show, tell, sing out and teach anyone who cares to listen how beautiful and culturally rich and diverse and green and good and real and historic and cool and just awesome this area is? Not really. It is not in our Slovene nature to brag.

The strategy to make our proud citizens communicators of GO! 2025 is undoubtedly to teach them to brag. Where do we learn this? From the Italians, of course. LOL.

But jokes aside: some of those who praise GO! borderless most don't necessarily live here. With our COME! home platform in our artistic program we are welcoming those back for artistic interventions who were forced to seek their careers elsewhere. With the same intent we will also call upon the many who left and never came back to "take their GO! 2025 to Europe" as ambassadors.

The GO! Ambassadors

At first, we were calling them the "GO-to people". We started "recruiting" last year, we wanted to have some spokespersons of the candidacy in different fields, sport, business, education. Then, some pretty famous people of the area started showing their support for the bid, and we shot some promotional clips. Gorizia-born football coach Edy Reja, cycling through the hills of Collio/Brda whilst showing off his perfect and absolutely active bilingualism; kayak European Junior Champion Tine Kancler slalomming in the Soča river; Olympic alpine skier Ana Bucik and cinema director Matteo Oleotto showing the intertwined nature of our two cities.

We want our citizens and all those that feel borderless to become our ambassadors, independently of who they are and what they do. And it is easy as pie to join the ambassador force, all the info on the program is on our website. As soon as we start our Calcetto project, we expect quite a squad of celeb active first league football players from teams all over Europe will join in. Attracting also those of our citizens to follow suit, who aren't that much "into culture".

GO! virtual

We might have already mentioned it once or twice ... three times max ... that we are very happy that our local citizens picked up our digital offers on social media so very enthusiastically. This ensured a wide spreading of the information about our candidacy and what it means to become European Capital of Culture. On average 4,000 people per day (!) watched, liked, participated in or shared our content, with peaks of around 19,000 daily views. Our followers more than tripled within a few months from several hundred

to more than 4,100. Some of our content like our documentary Life by the Border was clicked over 40,000 times. That is an enormous number compared to many other cultural platforms and content providers. These are the promising beginnings of a wonderful friendship with the citizens of both Goricas.

Wake me up before you go GO!

Oh, we will make sure to wake everybody up before the GOing gets rough. We are inviting everyone in the region and the two cities to become a supporter and talk, tweet, insta, and snapchat all they can. And show their support through stickers we will produce for bars and restaurants, doormats and roll-ups for hotels and companies, the full range of sustainably produced merchandise and give-aways for anyone to display with pride.

Our program itself invites every citizen to spread the word to the world. Whether it is Cantaquartiere that activates people of all walks of life to talk about what is going on in their neighbourhood and that they are part of it. Whether it is the citizens involved in the table football tournaments in Calcetto or The March of Friendship revival in different border areas in Europe that will trigger a whole storm of #borderless #europe hashtags or the Tree orchestra with the Dresdner Sinfoniker that goes viral on tiktok. For visual projects like Hopscotch and Ecothreads we will call for specific # on instagram including an award for best photo or insta story. A project like The Other Radio which takes place as a web-platform, internet radio and podcast source, citizens from all kinds of minorities become broadcasters of the GO! borderless narrative.

Spread the G-word

The local artists and cultural operators as well as institutions, all our partners and sponsors will be invited to communicate GO! Borderless everywhere. With the business world especially, we have already established support networks and will activate our partners, the Chamber of Industry and the Chamber of Crafts in Slovenia and the Chamber of Commerce and Confederations of Industry, Crafts and Commerce in Italy as communicators to spread the G-word. For the companies and CEOs of regional companies we have worked with so far and those who will join as sponsors and supporters later we will provide material to integrate into their tools, like footers for emails, web-banners and slides to use in their communication when they meet their business partners and customers all over the world.

For our citizens and partners, it will be All Systems GO! or rather: GO! talk, GO! tweet, GO! insta and GO! reach out to anyone who will listen.



Q41. PRESENTING ECOC AS AN ACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

So many times, we have heard how Nova Gorica and Gorizia are really a sample of union, a representation of the great European idea. Two cities, two territories with a history of antagonism, which now play for the same team: team Europe. It is, of course, a bit of a cliché, a phrase which could be repeated for many regions on the continent. But at the same time: the connection of our cross-border territory with the idea and ideal of a European Union is very real. We feel it strongly in our everyday life. Thus, it is an easy task to create an awareness that the European Capital of Culture is an initiative by the same "team" we belong to.

The access of Slovenia into the European Union in 2004, and to the Schengen Treaty in 2007 as well as sharing the same currency with our Italian and Austrian neighbours changed our experience of living on the border radically. This type of closeness in political, economic and cross-border connections is only possible because we belong to a common union.

The memory of what this means is still quite fresh for us. When Slovenia became a member of the European Union the main European event was held just on the square between Nova Gorica and Gorizia with the presence of the then President of the European Commission Romano Prodi. The foreign delegations visiting the two cities are always taken to the common square where the story of the territory and the positive influence of the European Union is presented to them. The covid era further refreshed the memory. The new

"sanitary" border and the divided square made us realise how important it is to keep the awareness of this union and unity with a large part of European countries active in our daily lives. The European Capital of Culture will be a more tangible, more fun opportunity to connect this awareness to events and shared festivities.

We will invite the representatives of EU institutions and representatives of ECoCs before and after 2025 as well as candidate cities to participate in the programme and in the opening event. In addition to this, we created projects and activities designed to raise the awareness of locals and visitors to belong to a wider European cultural community.

The visibility of the programme European Capital of Culture as an initiative of the EU will be ensured by including the EU logo in all fields of communication of the Nova Gorica and Gorizia 2025 programme: social networks, website, printed and media advertising, flags, mobile applications, posters and billboards.

Another opportunity to celebrate the visibility of ECoC as an EU initiative is its 40th anniversary. Melina Mercouri and her European Capital of Culture initiative made a huge impact on the awareness of the European Community (back then) and European Union today. Before the initiative the EC was all about economy and defence. Since 1985 it also includes a strong cultural dimension. Chemnitz 2025 and GO! 2025 - if designated - will be honoured to have this task.

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

A support, growing stronger,
even in times of uncertainty.

Q42. POLITICAL SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT

The support for the ECoC in the region has been reconfirmed and grown stronger during selection phase.

The municipal council of Nova Gorica has unanimously voted on the participation of the city in the bidding process twice. In response to the pre-selection report the city tripled its envisaged financial contribution. This decision alone, taken in a time of economic uncertainty, is an important proof of the level of support and commitment.

The Mayors of Nova Gorica and Gorizia have publicly signed an agreement to collaborate in the bid. Both have been present on all GO! 2025 events, actions and presentations and the municipal administrations supported the bidding team with information and expert knowledge whenever needed.

The Mayors of 13 municipalities in Slovenia, which form the included area, have formally voted on their support of the project twice in the pre-selection period. In the selection phase

they have defined their financial commitment. 27 municipalities in the Gorizia region in Italy signed letters of intent to ensure their support of the bid.

The region Friuli Venezia Giulia has formally and publicly supported GO! 2025 on many occasions and co-financed the bidding process equally.

The bid also has a strong support from economic stakeholders in the wider region.

We do not take this support for granted and, as described in our risk and contingency table, we are fully committed to good communication and expectation management. In this way, we intend to make sure that political and stakeholder support will continue and strengthen.



photo: Mateja Poljkan

Q43. INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

	Project description	Location	Estimated budget (in €)	Implementation period	Connection to GO! 2025 program
New infrastructure for GO! 2025	Trg Evrope/Piazza della Transalpina: Reinvention of the border square and erection of a new landmark building.	Nova Gorica - Gorizia	7.000,000	2022 - 2024	EPICenter, All man's land, venue for events in various projects (Clowncity, Cantaquartieri etc.)
	Villa Laščak: Renovation and revitalization of the villa and the surrounding urban park	Nova Gorica	7.500,000	2022-2024	Tree Orchestra, venue for other events, art residencies, workshops, outreach activities
	Villa Louise: Renovation of the villa and the creation of a cultural start-up hub	Gorizia	1,700,000	2021-2024	Pixxel-X cluster, Experience Factory
	Gorizia castle: Requalification of the castle and the surrounding historical neighbourhood	Gorizia	3.355,000	2021-2023	ECOthreads, Rescuers of Memory and a landmark and must visit for GO! 2025 audience.
Related development in the period 2021-2025	Rihemberk castle: Revitalization and touristic development of the medieval castle in Branik	Nova Gorica - Branik	1.000,000	2019 - 2024	Bat Symphony
	Music school: Reconstruction of Nova Gorica's central music school	Nova Gorica	800,000	2021-2022	Cantaquartieri, capacity building and outreach activities
	Walk of Peace: Various projects to upgrade the walking trail along the former Isonzo front	Nova Gorica	600,000	2021 - 2024	The Walk of Peace
	Park Valletta del Corno: Renovation of Gorizia's main city park and upgrade of outdoor venues	Gorizia	2.100,000	2021-2024	Cantaquartieri, Basaglia's Celebrity Death Match
	Isonzo/Soča: A cross-border park along the Isonzo/Soča river	Nova Gorica - Gorizia	5.000,000	2019 - 2023	The Neighbourhood, The Experience Factory, GO2GreenGO
	Borov gozdiček: A new urban terrace and meeting point in the green area of Nova Gorica city center	Nova Gorica	230,000	2022-2023	GO2GreenGO
	Excenter - hub: Transformation of an old commercial building in a creative industry centre	Nova Gorica	100,000	2020-2021	Pixxel-X, The Experience Factory
	Cycle paths/green mobility	Nova Gorica - Gorizia	750,000	2021-2023	Together with the common bike-sharing system (connected to Borderless Wireless) the backbone of GO! 2025 mobility

