



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX IV

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the NDICI Neighbourhood East Region for 2023-2024

Action Document for EU4Culture

MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan/measure in the sense of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title OPSYS Basic Act	EU4Culture Multiannual Indicative Regional Programming Document (MIP) 2021-2027 ¹ OPSYS business reference: ACT-61790 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD 1164572 (for 2023) & JAD 1164581 (for 2024) Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	Yes
EIP Flagship	No
3. Team Europe Initiative	No
4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action	The action shall be carried out for the benefit of the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus ² , Georgia, Republic of Moldova ³ and Ukraine).

¹ C(2021)9370

² In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises. Should there be a change of the context this may be reconsidered. In the meantime, the EU continues to engage with and, where possible, has stepped up support to non-state, local and regional actors, including within the framework of this Action as appropriate.

³ Hereinafter referred to as 'Moldova'

5. Programming document	Multiannual indicative programme for the Eastern neighbourhood 2021-2027 ⁴			
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority area 5: Resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 5: Resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies Specific Objective 1 - civil society, youth, culture and media. DAC Sector (160 - Other Social Infrastructure & Services)			
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 8.9 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 4.7 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all SDG 11.4 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable SDG 16.1 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels			
9. DAC code(s)	16066 – Culture – 50% 15110 - Public sector policy and administrative management – 10% 32130 - Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) development – 15% 32140 – Handcraft – 20% 43040 - Rural Development – 5%			
10. Main Delivery Channel	21000 – International NGO 23 000 – Developing country-based NGO 52000 – Other			
11. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁴ C(2021)9370 final - Multiannual indicative programme for the Eastern neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027

13. Internal markers and Tags

Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES	NO	
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
environment, climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
rule of law, governance and public administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
other			
Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Connectivity</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

14. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2023-14.020111-C1 NEAR Eastern Neighbourhood - EUR 5 000 000,00</p> <p>BGUE-B2024-14.020111-C1 NEAR Eastern Neighbourhood – EUR 5 000 000</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 10,000,000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 10,000,000</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023 and for an amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2024 following the adoption of that budget by the budget authority.</p>
------------------------------	---

MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	<p>Project Modality</p> <p>Indirect management with the pillar assessed entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1.</p>
---	---

1.2. Summary of the Action

The Action will aim at enhancing the role of culture as an engine for growth and social development across the Eastern Partnership region through a comprehensive support to Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) and local cultural markets. This Action will also promote intercultural dialogue and improve governance of the cultural sector at local and national levels. It will focus on cities (excluding capital cities) in the Eastern Partnership region following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture.

This Action will build on the development of the on-going EU4Culture programme which places culture, the creative industries and cultural heritage at its core, and assists cities in the Eastern Partnership region to develop and implement cultural policies, following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture. It will focus on the local, national, and regional levels, strengthening the cooperation between Culture and Creative Industries (CCI), civil society organisations, including women's and youth organisations and relevant local and national authorities. It will support knowledge transfer to the regions, improve the local ecosystem and enhance CCI-related environment in the participating regions. It will enable market access for emerging entrepreneurs in the field of culture. It will support the synergies between culture (including cultural heritage) and sustainable tourism. This action could thus contribute to investment in and the economic growth of the partner countries.

The Action is in line with the 2016 Joint Communication "Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations" which recognizes the role of culture "as an engine for social and economic development and a resource for peaceful inter-community relations". It is also consistent with the 2018 New European Agenda for Culture, which defines social, economic and external objectives for EU cultural policy. Furthermore, culture plays an important role for promoting Human Rights, democracy and gender equality values. The culture sector is crucial in breaking through outdated harmful stereotypes and promoting cultural diversity based on gender equality. Culture, including cultural heritage, contributes to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda, by strengthening innovation in the cultural and creative sectors, digital transformation and the accessibility of culture and cultural heritage in the digital space. The cultural sector can play a crucial enabling role by raising awareness on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development - by motivating women and men, youth boys and girls to contribute personally but also by reducing its own carbon footprint, organizing and promoting low waste events.

In Eastern Partnership countries, place-based cultural strategies and policies are still in their infancy. While national cultural policy is increasingly advanced, most municipalities and regions are yet to develop detailed baseline evidence on culture and, therefore, are not in a position to develop evidence-based cultural strategies. In most EaP region, the approach to cultural policy and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) is still emergent – especially at a local/municipal level. There is a clear need and opportunity to build capacity and expertise in the development and delivery of cultural strategies, to improve local governance, to increase the role of the cultural sector as an engine for economic development democracy, human rights and gender equality and a culture of peace, and to enhance intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across the EaP partner countries. The countries strong interest in the development of cultural policies and strategies can contribute to the development of the economic and social dimensions through leveraging new investments, fostering partnerships, building municipal leadership, thus providing a base for a new mixed economy for culture, grounded in creativity and enterprise.

To address these challenges and achieve its objectives, the Action builds on the development of the on-going EU4Culture programme. It will continue focusing on non-capital cities to revitalise their local economies through culture and the development of cultural and creative industries, stressing the importance of the cultural sector as a crucial enabling role to raise awareness on human rights, gender equality climate and environmental issues and sustainable development; it will facilitate cooperation and participative dialogue between public authorities, artists and cultural professionals; it will stimulate knowledge sharing and networking among cultural professionals and enhancing inter-regional cooperation of participating cities.

1.3. Beneficiaries of the action

The beneficiaries of the action are the countries of the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine).

Final beneficiaries would be public local administrations, artisans, arts and crafts cooperatives, civil society organisations including womens' rights and youth organisations, independent cultural actors and cultural professionals, private businesses/small and medium enterprises related to Cultural and Creative Industry sector and tourism development.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the geopolitical landscape in the Eastern Partnership region. This war, first and foremost, is a war on culture: it is an attack on language, norms, institutions and communities - the fabric of EU values. Against this backdrop, culture plays a crucial role to strengthen the collaboration of the six Eastern Partnership countries with the EU. Culture and international cultural relations are the cornerstones and foundation of recovery, reform, and resilience. Based on shared values and rights, culture contributes to the development of inclusive societies, to the protection of Human Rights, gender equality and fundamental freedoms, to the respect for international law, and to the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law.

Culture has increasingly become a cross-cutting issue mainstreamed in the EU's external cooperation agendas related to socio-economic development and external relations, as confirmed in the 2016 Joint Communication *'Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations'*⁵ and by the *'New European Agenda for Culture'*⁶. These documents place culture at the heart of the EU's external relations strategy and focus on advancing cultural cooperation with partner countries across three main strands: supporting culture as an engine for social and economic development, promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations, and strengthening cooperation on cultural heritage.

On 22 May 2018, the *New European Agenda for Culture* was adopted by the European Commission, which aims to "harness the full potential of culture to help build a more inclusive and fairer Union, supporting innovation, creativity and sustainable jobs and growth". For this, the Agenda has three strategic objectives:

- 1- Social dimension: harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being, including gender equality.
- 2- Economic dimension: supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and for jobs and growth.
- 3- External dimension: strengthening international cultural relations.

The council conclusions of 8 April 2019 on a *European Union (EU) strategic approach to international cultural relations* reaffirm the EU's support to the integration of international cultural relations in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and emphasise the need for a cross-institutional, cross-cutting and inclusive approach to culture abroad. The Conclusions call for a mutual and adequate response from Member States by inviting them to "*strengthen their participation in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of common local cultural strategies and projects in third countries. EUNIC and the cooperation between diplomatic and consular representations could contribute to the achievement of this objective.*"

⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52016JC0029 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ [EUR-Lex - 52018DC0267 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

On 21 June 2021, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted *conclusions on the EU strategic approach to cultural heritage in conflicts and crises*, adding cultural heritage to the EU's foreign policy toolbox and providing a new political and operational framework on cultural heritage for peace. The Conclusions of 21 June also welcomed the EU Concept on cultural heritage in conflicts and crises, elaborated by the EU External Action Service, which provides an important contribution and serves as a milestone to the above-mentioned shifting.

The first meeting devoted to Culture in the history of the G20 was held on in July 2021 in Rome and led to the unanimous adoption of the “Rome Declaration of the G20 Culture Ministers”, a 32-point document which *inserts the cultural sector within the G20 process, also recognizing its economic value*. The G20 also shared the commitment to create special forces to protect cultural heritage at risk in crisis areas.

The *Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026*⁷ adopted by the Council of Culture Ministers of the EU in November 2022 emphasizes the fact that Culture, including cultural heritage, contributes to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda, by strengthening innovation in the cultural and creative sectors, digital transformation and the accessibility of culture and cultural heritage in the digital space. Cultural and creative sectors can contribute to positive shifts of attitudes and practices towards a more economic, socially and environmentally sustainable future both at the individual and the societal level. Moreover, the *EU Workplan for Culture 2023-2026* has as one of the priorities “*culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations*”, including a specific expert group on “*Preserving cultural heritage and empowering local cultural and creative sectors in Ukraine*” which will start its work in 2023.

At the regional level, the past two EU programmes in the Eastern Partnership countries, *EaP Culture I* (2011-2015), *EaP Culture II* (2015-2018), contributed to promoting a revised understanding of culture, embracing contemporary cultural activity as an important contributor to sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and the promotion of peaceful and democratic societies in the framework of international cultural relations.

Building on these achievements, the on-going *EU4Culture* Programme (2021-2024) aims at enhancing the role of the cultural sector as a driver of economic development democracy, human rights and gender quality, promoting intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across the Eastern Partnership countries, and improving local governance in the culture sector through support for regulatory processes and participative policy dialogue. The project places culture, the creative industries and cultural heritage sites at its core and assists cities in the Eastern Partnership region to develop and implement Cultural Strategy, following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture.

The new Action will build on these developments by enhancing the role of culture as an engine for growth and social development across the Eastern Partnership region through a comprehensive support to Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) and local cultural markets, promoting intercultural dialogue across the Eastern Partnership countries and improving governance. It will also emphasize the contribution of Culture to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the *European Green Deal* and the *2030 Agenda*. It will focus on cities (excluding capital cities) in the EaP region following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture. The programme is based on the European Union's commitment to promoting culture in its international relations, based on the *2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, the main legislation in this area.⁸

It is in line with the post 2020 priorities endorsed at the Summit in 2021. The Joint Communication “*Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, reinforcing resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*”, adopted

⁷ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/council-of-ministers-agrees-on-new-eu-work-plan-for-culture-2023-2026>

⁸ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention>

on 18 March 2020, outlined priorities for future cooperation, including in the area of human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. The subsequent Joint Staff Working Document “*Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities*”, published on 2 July 2021, sets out a series of policy and reform targets that aim to strengthen resilience, foster sustainable development, and deliver tangible results for society. It serves as reference for the on-going programming efforts.

Relevance and Credibility of Policies and Strategies in the Eastern Partnership region

In the pre-independence period, **Armenia** was a leader in specialised areas such as computer and software development. Recent policy developments indicates that the government is continuing in this direction, focusing on Creative Industries. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport has developed a **draft Law on Culture and a concept paper on creative industries** – an umbrella framework, spelling out the vision for the sector and leading to required legislative amendments and initiatives, to ensure better regulation of intellectual property and cinema. The **creative and tech sectors show real promise** in Armenia, with a burgeoning digital media sector (especially in Yerevan) and the growth of co-working spaces and technology centres (e.g., Gyumri). However, the strategic connection between the technology sector and culture has not been explored at a strategic level. The EU-funded project “**KATAPULT Creative Accelerator Programme**” (2022-2025), implemented in the framework of the ‘Catalysing creative industries development in Armenia’ programme, will connect local artists with potential investors to **vitalize the Cultural and Creative Industries’ (CCIs) ecosystem** in Armenia with its creative agents and enablers in order to catalyze a booming creative economy. Furthermore, Armenia has an **incredible heritage**, a priority field for the Ministry of Culture, which presents an **opportunity for culture-led development, with heritage settings providing a resource for contemporary cultural activity**.

In **Azerbaijan**, the Ministry of Culture is currently going through reforms, which includes the creation of a **Culture and Creative Industry Development Unit**. New reforms are conducted in accordance with the concept of ‘three Ds’ – decentralization, deregulation, and democratization. The Action Plan for the implementation of the “Strategy of socio-economic development in 2022–2026” approved in 2022 aims at “*Ensuring the dynamic development of Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) and strengthening the export potential in this area*”. The 15 Regional Departments of the Ministry of Culture are now required to **develop a strategic framework linking culture to tourism and economic development**. But individual municipalities have not historically been able to develop cultural strategies of their own.

The Azerbaijan Federation of Creative Industries (AFCI) has been established by the Ministry to coordinate the development of creative industries, manage international and local projects in this field, and coordinate government agencies and business partners with individuals, companies and public organizations working in the field of creativity.

Taking into account the EU Restrictive measures in view of the situation in **Belarus**⁹ and the involvement of Belarus in the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the EU’s support focuses on medium to long term

⁹ In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus’s involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises. Should there be a change of the context this may be

assistance, in order to sustain and strengthen the remaining civil society in Belarus and in exile, and to preserve and develop Belarus's human capital potential – thus laying the foundations for a prosperous future democratic Belarus, in the event of a political transition. The European Union has significantly increased its support to the people and **the cultural sector is strategically important for addressing immediate challenges but also for the long-term development of a democratic Belarus.** The EU funded programme “**ArtPower Belarus: Safeguarding the Belarusian Civic Space Through Culture and Arts**” (2022-2025) will aim at supporting the independent Belarusian culture and art initiatives, especially those addressing consolidation of the Belarusian society inside and outside the country, increasing Belarusian culture professionals' skills and building professional cultural networks.

The **Cultural Strategy 2025** aims to **turn Georgia into a regional hub where innovation and creativity, along cultural diversity** are the fundamental pillars of social wellbeing and sustainable development. The Strategy considers **strong creative industries as a catalyst for the country's economic development.** It also emphasises that **creative industries represent an important source for job creation, economic growth and innovation.** The Strategy prioritises business-oriented and financial development of creative industries, the need to modernise/create appropriate spaces and implement special supportive programmes. Another important aspect of the Strategy is the chapter on the audio-visual sector which emphasises the need to develop services and professions involved in the production, post production and distribution of audio-visual content for the CCIs in partnership with international agencies.

EU4 Smart Economic Development (2022-2027) will contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Georgia. The EU funded programme will support Georgia's private sector to raise productivity levels, including by increasing the role of Georgia's creative economy, and integrate more effectively into global value chains. A component will support Digital Growth through the digitalisation of businesses and the development of creative industries and related clusters.

In the **Republic of Moldova**, the cultural policy model is highly centralised. The Ministry of Culture drives the policy agenda with a primary focus on nurturing a shared cultural identity and values, preserving cultural values under threat, strengthening cultural dialogue, and nurturing a balanced cultural economy. In 2021, the Ministry of Culture laid the foundations of the National Program "Creative Moldova" which will capitalize on the creative potential and drive technological innovation in digital media and creative sectors. The development of creative skills will also be supported through the national centres dedicated to the creative industries "Creative Hub", ARTCOR - Center for Creative Industries of Moldova – targeting creative entrepreneurship, and MEDIACOR - Media Technology Centre - targeting students from the State University of Moldova, educational institutions and companies in the field of creative industries. International campaigns will be launched to attract foreign investors in the sector and to promote Moldova as a creative destination.

Growth in the CCIs is not just confined to the capital city. Regional development is a significant priority for the Moldovan Government, with a programme of regional development strategies undertaken. **Regional cities are showing real potential in CCI development**, boosted by ambitious local initiatives such as fab labs¹⁰ and festivals.

reconsidered. In the meantime, the EU continues to engage with and, where possible, has stepped up support to non-state, local and regional actors, including within the framework of this Action as appropriate.

¹⁰ A fab lab (fabrication laboratory) is a small-scale workshop offering (personal) digital fabrication.

Furthermore, the EU implements a **Confidence-Building Measures Programme related to cultural heritage** (2019-2024) which aims at contributing to the facilitation of the settlement of the unresolved Transnistrian conflict by increasing confidence through joint initiatives involving local authorities, civil society organisations and other stakeholders from both sides of the river. Conflict-sensitivity has been embedded in these measures, ensuring that implementation is driven by the principle of “mirroring” and consensus between authorities of both banks.

Russia’s full-scale invasion of **Ukraine** had a **colossal impact on its cultural sector and CCIs**. The **state budget for culture decreased by 90%**, cultural objects have been destroyed, cultural institutions had to be relocated and grant repurposed for humanitarian aid. The ongoing assistance in the sector has been re-purposed to help its institutions to survive by means of small grants and emergency support. Additional funding of € 2.5 mln has been allocated to support evacuation and safeguarding Ukraine’s cultural heritage. Instead of suspending its activities in Ukraine, “House of Europe”¹¹, the largest cultural programme ever launched by the EU in a country outside the EU, has created an emergency package, including grants for cultural heritage protection and evacuation, for civil society initiatives, and for infrastructure for cultural organisations that are still active in the war zone or have had to leave the war zone. The programme will be extended for two years with € 5mln allocation and special focus at cultural heritage. In 2022, a special call for EUR 5 million was launched under the Creative Europe programme to provide emergency assistance to Ukrainian cultural operators in Ukraine and abroad as well as to prepare the post-war recovery of the Ukrainian cultural and creative sector. The evaluation of the call has been finalised and the grants will be awarded in March 2023.

The **brain drain in the CCI sector has been massive**. Currently, the CCI sector is facing two challenges, first to survive during the war and then to plan for the post-war period but this is hampered by a high level of uncertainty. The reform is halted and even reversed in certain sub-sectors, as the **budgetary allocations to culture have been immensely cut**.

Furthermore, and keeping in mind that Ukraine has **acceded to the status of candidate country to the EU**, its **progressive alignment on the EU’s norms, programmes and actions**, such as the New European Bauhaus or the European Heritage Label, should be envisaged. Finally, in line with local actors’ interests and needs, and considering existing and upcoming Members States’ and EU support measures and programmes for Ukraine, a **synergetic and longer-term view** should also be envisaged to assess ways forward regarding **cultural cooperation with Ukraine** and with a view of **cultural and creative sector’s resilience and its role in a potential peace-building process**.

Complementarity and Synergies

The EU is the most important external partner providing cultural development support for the EaP region in terms of both funding and range of programmes. EU cultural development activities consist of EU programmes and initiatives which are not strictly cultural cooperation programmes but include significant elements in support of culture development or have positive spill-overs in culture-related sectors, like **EU4Business**, **EU4Digital** and the new Action **EU4Innovation**.

¹¹ The programme serves to connect representatives of six professional sectors in Ukraine - culture and creative industries, education, health, social entrepreneurship, media, youth work - with their counterparts in the EU.

In 2021, Georgia and Ukraine¹² signed agreements for the **participation in Creative Europe (2021-2027)**, the European Commission's flagship programme to support the culture and audiovisual sectors, joined by Armenia¹³ in 2022. Azerbaijan joined in presentations of the Programme in February 2022 but has not started the negotiation process afterwards. Moldova decided not to participate to the new programme due to a low participation rate in the previous programme. The Action will be in line with *Creative Europe* objectives: to increase competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors and to develop and promote European cultural diversity, and its priorities which reflect the needs of the cultural sector: strengthening the economic, social and external dimension of Europe's cultural and creative sectors, including innovation and mobility.

The **Culture moves Europe (2022-2025)** mobility scheme provides mobility grants for artists and cultural professionals in all 40 Creative Europe countries covering the sectors of architecture, cultural heritage, design and fashion design, literary translation, music, performing arts and visual arts. Exceptionally, Ukrainian artists and professionals received the possibility to take part in a virtual mobilities if they could not travel.

The **common European data space for cultural heritage** is an initiative of the European Union, funded under its Digital Europe programme. It was announced in Commission Recommendation C(2021)7953 of 10 November 2021. The service contract for the creation and deployment of the data space was awarded to a consortium led by Europeana Foundation. It entered into force as of 20 September 2022. **The Commission recommends Member States to accelerate the digitisation of all cultural heritage monuments and sites, objects and artefacts for future generations, to protect and preserve those at risk, and boost their reuse in domains such as education, sustainable tourism and cultural creative sectors.** The Commission encourages Member States to digitise by 2030 all monuments and sites that are at risk of degradation and half of those highly frequented by tourists. This recommendation will contribute to the objectives of the Digital Decade by fostering a secure and sustainable digital infrastructure, digital skills and uptake of technologies by businesses, in particular SMEs.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Culture defines us. It is our heritage, how we live our lives, express our identities and shape the future. For municipalities, culture is a resource which helps build identity, community and distinctive senses of place. It contributes to wellbeing and quality of life, to social engagement and trust, and to economic activity from the creative industries to sustainable tourism. A dynamic cultural sector can drive impact: to develop social cohesion, enhance wellbeing and health, raising awareness on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development, give confidence, and catalyse innovation across the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated to us all why culture matters and raised the stakes: for municipalities to recognise, celebrate and invest in culture in a structured and strategic way.

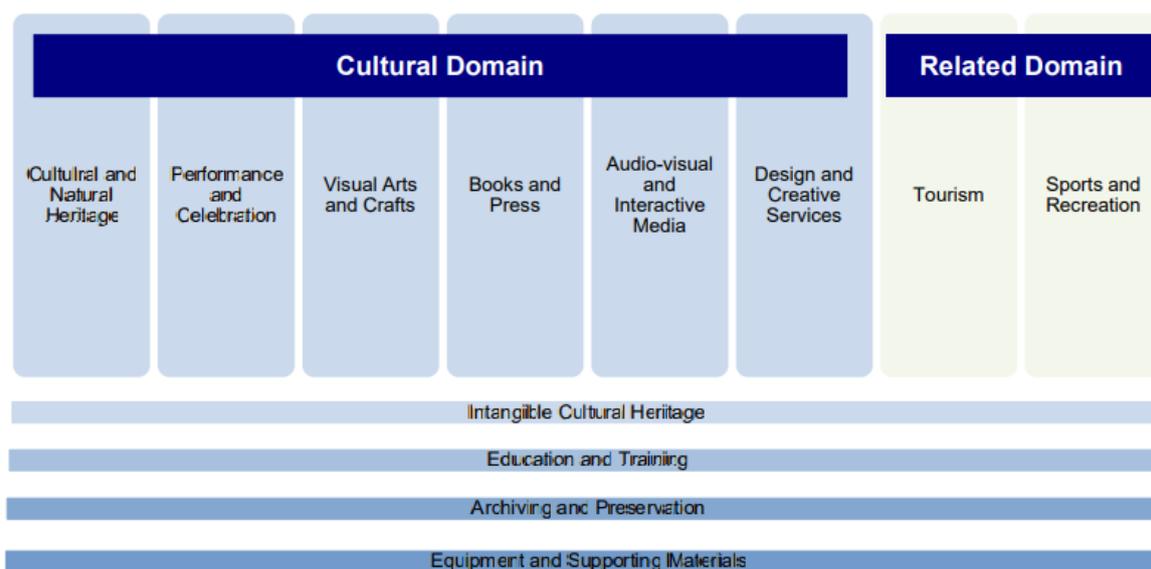
Despite the relevance of gender equality in the cultural sector, there are several gender gaps hampering women's equal participation in this field: gender stereotypes in the cultural sector, segregation in the cultural sector labour market and limited participation of women in decision-making positions. Women are generally not seen as agents of change but rather captives of culture.

Places that establish a sustainable and critical mass of cultural excellence can also gain influence beyond local boundaries and even internationally – such as through events, festivals, and heritage celebrations; and through

¹² Ukraine and Georgia participate in all actions for the “Culture” and “Cross Sectoral” Strands, and the “Fostering European Media Talents and Skills” under the Business Cluster, and the “European Festivals and Festival networks”, and “Audience development and Film education” actions under the Audience cluster (part of the “MEDIA” Strand).

¹³ The Republic of Armenia participates in all actions for the “Culture” strand and in the action supporting the establishment of Programme desks contained in the “Cross Sectoral” Strand.

a dynamic cultural and creative industries sector. This, in turn, can be impactful for inward investment, sustainable tourism, employment and sustainable development. Cultural and creative industries (CCI) comprise the activities referring to output and consumption of creative-artistic and scientific products that enter into the economic circuit, create value, generate public incomes through paid taxes and duties, create new jobs and profit, help with regional and national development, and contribute to the foreign trade of the countries. The sizes, creativity and culture are found again, implicitly and explicitly both in the public sector (cultural and educational institutions partially or integrally subsidised by local or national authorities), and in the private sector (companies or non-profit association created as result of private investments). CCIs include a broad range of activities, including cultural heritage, architecture, music, live performance, publishing, the art and antiques market, music, arts and crafts professions, television and radio, film and video, advertising, design, fashion, video games, and software and IT services. In 2009, UNESCO adopted the following model, which is the most widely used definition of the CCIs as part of a wider creative economy:



In the European Union, many municipalities have sought to maximise the role of culture in their approaches to place, economy, and society. Cultural strategies have proved vital as tools to develop evidence-based, partnership-driven and strategically impactful approaches which elevate the role of culture across the economic and social sphere.

In EaP countries¹⁴, place-based cultural strategies are still in their infancy. While national Cultural Policy is increasingly advanced, most municipalities and regions are yet to develop detailed baseline evidence on culture and, therefore, are **not in a position to develop evidence-based cultural strategies**. In most EaP region, the **approach to cultural policy and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) is still emergent** – especially at a local/municipal level. Few cities have cultural strategies or long-term investment frameworks for culture. Where such frameworks exist, **culture is often defined quite narrowly** which is a legacy of Soviet cultural models, both in terms of organisational and business models. The other main focus areas of cultural investment are on festivals and events, heritage restoration, and itineraries for cultural tourism. Very few cities invest significantly into contemporary cultural activities, and fewer still have a strategic recognition of the

¹⁴ To calibrate the needed scope and scale of interventions, this action is based on a cultural baseline analysis: the 'Baseline Report on Culture and Creativity in Non-Capital Cities and Towns in Eastern Partnership Countries'. The report provides a summary of research on non-capital cities and towns in 5 Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The research was published in February 2022, and it was conducted within the framework of the EU funded programme EU4Culture.

CCIs as a pathway for city development. There main factors which contribute to this emergent cultural policy landscape in non-capital EaP cities are:

- The **missing cultural evidence / baseline**. The long-term absence of data means the role and impact of culture have not been articulated, and, as a consequence, they are not aware of the city's cultural asset base and its potential to play a vital role in future city development.
- **Historical lack of investment**, in part due to the under-development of an evidence base, culture is rarely prioritised for investment. When investments exist, the resources are often benefitted by a few, often excluding women, people with disabilities, youth outside the main cities.
- **Weak partnerships** – e.g., between the public and private sector, which limits opportunities for co-investment in culture.

Other challenges or barriers to culture-led development in cities across the EaP region include:

- **Instability** – political and social, with Covid-19 heightening instability across the region at a time when culture is even more vital for wellbeing, health, and cohesion.
- **Limited critical mass** – as smaller cities, the size (and spending power) of local audiences for culture is limited.
- **Limited connectivity and exchange**. Digital connectivity varies by city, as do levels of digital literacy.
- **Strategic disconnect** – between culture and other key policy areas such as education, community development, economy, health, and environment.
- **Gap between national cultural policy and local development**, even if the EaP countries have made real progress in the development of national cultural policy and the prioritisation at a national level of the cultural and creative industries for all of them.

The SWOT analysis on the profile of the cultural sector in regional cities across five EaP countries¹⁵ highlights:

shared strengths as including:

- ✓ Distinctive heritage – with a portfolio of tangible and intangible assets which can play a major role in the city's cultural renewal.
- ✓ Strategic commitment to re-frame the strategic approach to culture – via new evidence-based cultural strategies.
- ✓ Strong grassroots for everyday culture – e.g., dance, writing, visual arts. This can be the baseline from which to build active audiences and a professional cultural sector.
- ✓ Scale – as smaller cities, they have an intimacy which can facilitate stronger partnership-working. The cities can also be hubs for new types of cultural practice – utilising their scale to become centres of excellence.

shared weaknesses as including:

- ✓ Limited capacity – as smaller cities, but also as cities lacking investment in culture and short of management and entrepreneurial capacity across the cultural sector.
- ✓ Lack of evidence on the role and impact of culture across a range of agendas – which in turn explains the lack of a strategy for culture and the low levels of investment.
- ✓ Where an investment is more available, it tends to focus on heritage preservation, youth, and basic cultural provision, not on establishing a dynamic cultural ecosystem.

¹⁵ Regional cities in Belarus are not part of the analysis.

- ✓ Investment is also too short-term and project-based (rather than programme-based). This limits capacity to develop in a strategic way.

In the EaP region, there is a clear need and opportunity to build capacity and expertise in the development and delivery of cultural policies, to improve local governance, to increase the role of the cultural sector as an engine for economic development, democracy, Human Rights and gender equality and to enhance intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across the EaP partner countries. The countries strong interest in the development of cultural policies and strategies can contribute to the development of the economic and social dimensions through leveraging new investment, fostering partnership, building municipal leadership, thus providing a base for a new mixed economy for culture, grounded in creativity and enterprise.

Main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action.

A country's system of governance for culture cannot only be a matter for the Ministry of Culture alone, but should be the result of interactions between the measures, decisions and activities undertaken at different levels by many stakeholders, including international institutions, regional organisations, countries and governments, local authorities, public institutions and organisations, non-governmental organisations (including youth and women's organisations), professional associations of creators and private sector cultural enterprises. In this framework we differentiate between stakeholders (who have the ability, funds, and power to act) and beneficiaries (target groups, who are affected by the outcomes).

The main **stakeholders** are:

National authorities: The role and mandates of national authorities vary from country to country, but in general, cultural policies and strategies are highly centralised around the Ministries of Culture. They may act as a 'gatekeeper' and view culture as a separate entity from tourism.

- Ministries in charge of Culture, of Regional Development, of Tourism, of Economic Development and other relevant ministries; local authorities; cultural and tourism-related public institutions that are in charge of the development, management and implementation of cultural policy, economic and regional development.

Non-State actors: Apart from culture, creativity and heritage-related non-government and non-profit organisations, other actors include community groups, professional groups, as well as universities and research institutions. At the community level, stakeholders are cultural professionals, artists, craft workers, producers, technicians, art experts, media professionals, women, youth and vulnerable groups.

Private sector: Cultural and Creative enterprises (CCI), local social businesses, investors, media organisations, tour companies and operators.

European and international partners: The European and international partners mainly act as initiators, programme managers, programme administrators. They provide operational support, services for procurement, financial management, reporting, technical support and quality assurance and monitoring support. They combine the know-how and experience necessary to carry out the tasks planned.

- EU Delegations, European cultural institutions and development agencies that are active in the partner countries, Member States embassies, European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC), and international organisations.

Beneficiaries include inter-alia:

Public local administrations; artisans, arts and crafts cooperatives; civil society organisations including womens' rights and youth organisations, independent cultural actors and cultural professionals, professionals

and enterprises related to CCI and tourism development.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The action will **build on the achievements of the two previous regional programmes on culture and the on-going EU4Culture Programme**, while increasing the **focus on the support of Cultural and Creative Industries and sustainable tourism**, and stressing the **importance of the cultural sector as a crucial enabling role to raise awareness on climate and environmental issues, gender equality and Human Rights and sustainable development**. It will facilitate cooperation and participative dialogue between public authorities, artists and cultural professionals. Past and current actions have shown that creating the pre-conditions and a favourable environment for cultural cooperation is critical to strengthen culture's role as an engine of socioeconomic growth. On the latter, backing cultural initiatives and cultural businesses' potential with targeted national policies and regulations is as important as increasing direct funding to the sector. The programmes helped beneficiary countries to develop national cultural indicators, conducted needed research in culture sub-sectors and advised on harnessing local cultural resources in regions and towns. Yet, it also drew attention to the lack of evidence-based information, data and sufficient indicators related to the cultural sector, which often represents a hindrance to successful CCI's development.

Through the **Community-led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns (COMUS)** project, implemented in partnership with the Council of Europe, nine historic towns in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were brought together to work on the rehabilitation and promotion of their urban heritage between 2015 and 2017. Capacity building activities, trainings and fora of dialogue, connecting beneficiaries from different partner countries, contributed to increasing the awareness of local and municipal actors of their potential role in the wider cultural context. The project raised a strong interest from these local actors to participate more actively in the national and regional cultural life. Cultural actors in the region are therefore eager to acquire the tools and means – including through technical advice and access to regional and international networks – to take forward the process of cultural modernisation and development.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** (Impact) of this action is to contribute to making culture as an engine for economic growth, social development and resilience in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The **Specific Objective(s)** (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. Increasing **the role of the cultural and creative industries sector** as a vector **for economic development**.
2. Enhancing **intercultural dialogue, international cultural relations and knowledge exchange in the field of culture** across the EaP partner countries.

The objectives will be pursued at regional and local level. A pre-selection of (non-capital) cities will be established for the five partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) following the approach of the European Capital for Culture. The approach for Belarus will be different as long as the EU restrictive measures and sanctions against Belarus will be active: the Action will not support Belarusian official authorities, but will support Belarusian Civil Society, artists and cultural professionals located in Belarus and outside of Belarus (in Europe).

Furthermore, the action will emphasize the role of culture, including cultural heritage, as contributor to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda.

The **Outputs** to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

Contributing to Specific Objective 1: **Economic development**¹⁶

- 1.1 Cultural strategies implemented in selected non-capital cities and its related regions, taking into consideration Human Rights and gender equality.
- 1.2 Improved local governance with participation of women on cultural policy, on creative industries development and on sustainable tourism in selected non-capital cities, taking into consideration Human Rights, gender equality, preserving cultural heritage, including Jewish heritage.
- 1.3 Improved management capacities of cultural and creative industries in selected non-capital cities, taking into consideration gender equality in the cultural sector labour market.
- 1.4 Increased participation opportunities for local cultural businesses, cultural & creative industries, representative associations, and civil society organisations, including women's rights and youth organisations in the policy discourse and in constructive dialogue with local authorities.
- 1.5 Increased synergies between sustainable tourism and cultural & creative industries in non-capital cities and its related regions.

Contributing to Specific Objective 2: **Intercultural dialogue, international cultural relations and knowledge exchange in the field of culture**

- 2.1 Promoted exposure of local male & female artists / cultural professionals and cultural events with neighbour countries and at international level
- 2.2 Strengthened multicultural and international event management, participation capacity of local cultural operators in multicultural and international event
- 2.3 Increased participation opportunities for local authorities, local artists and cultural professionals in regional networking
- 2.4 Promoted cross-border cooperation with neighbour countries.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Economic development

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Selection of non-capital cities.
- Capacity building for local actors on the development of cultural strategy and its implementation in the selected non-capital cities and its related regions.
- Strategic Impact Assessment focussing on opportunities for cultural sector to contribute to gender equality, Human Rights and environmental and climate objectives.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Capacity building for local authorities on cultural policy management, creative industries development and sustainable tourism with participation of women in decision-making.
- Capacity building activities on the role and opportunities of cultural sector to contribute to environmental and climate objectives promotion of circular economic practices as well as gender equality and Human Rights.
- Technical advice on data analysis and management, and on ways to improve data production and collection for the benefit of the culture sector.
- Support the mapping and digitalisation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including Jewish heritage and the development of digital tools and applications to make them accessible for locals, visitors and tourists with various abilities.

¹⁶ This Objective is not relevant for Belarus as long as the EU restrictive measures and sanctions against Belarus will be active.

Activities related to Output 1.3:

- Capacity building and advisory services for CCI actors taking into consideration gender equality in the cultural sector labour market.
- Supporting cultural and creative industries and related clusters to generate economic activity on local level taking into account the objectives of European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda (promoting energy efficiency and circular economy principle, reuse and recycling).

Activities related to Output 1.4:

- Establishment of peer-to-peer exchange mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of CCI representatives to address institutional regulatory and policy challenges at local level.

Activities related to Output 1.5:

- Launch communication campaigns targeting regional and international markets to attract tourism and investors.
- Support access to regional outreach programmes and projects for sustainable tourism.

Intercultural dialogue

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Mobility grant scheme for local male and female artists and cultural professionals with various abilities for participation in international circuits: to find and meet partners, join networks, participate in residencies, cross-sectoral initiatives, fairs and festivals.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Techniques and skills development for the improvement and diversification of the cultural products and services taking into account gender and Human Rights.
- Supporting skills development for (male and female) youth and young entrepreneurs in collaboration with universities, education platforms, and via MOOC and exchange.
- Support a programme of inter-city festivals, arts competitions and mobility of works of arts, and other cultural events on a rotating basis, if feasible.

Activities related to Output 2.3:

- Support the creation of and participation to civil society and sustainable development platforms for collaboration, exchange, and dialogues among the EaP countries.
- Support networking, knowledge sharing among selected non-capital cities and with the European Capitals of Culture to enhance peer-to-peer learning on the development of CCIs, museum sites, museum quarters, and sustainable tourism.
- Provide specific training to (male/female) local artists, cultural professionals and cultural institutions on cultural activities, festivals, sustainable tourism.

Activities related to Output 2.4:

- Implement cross-border projects in the field of Culture involving neighbour countries.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Culture, including cultural heritage, contributes to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda, by strengthening innovation in the cultural and

creative sectors, digital transformation and the accessibility of culture and cultural heritage in the digital space. The cultural sector can play a crucial enabling role by raising awareness on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development - by motivating people to contribute personally but also by reducing its own carbon footprint, organizing and promoting low waste events.

The action being cross-cutting, it will ensure environmental and climate considerations are mainstreamed into all activities. This will contribute to the sustainability of the action. The mainstreaming will be based on the identification and mitigation of environmental and climate risks as well as the potential inclusion of environment in the scope of the activities.

The Action will offer digital alternative to the beneficiaries when this is considered relevant and possible, to reduce its carbon footprint. However carbon and environmental footprint of digital technologies is not negligible. Therefore, energy efficiency, reuse and recycling of electronic devices, and promoting circular economy principle, are examples of aspects that will be addressed during implementation of the action.

When face-to-face activities are planned, the implementing partner will be instructed to consider opting for eco-friendly suppliers and supplies, as well as using other means of reducing carbon footprint e.g. use of trains instead of planes, no printing, using tap water etc. More specifically, the implementing partner will be instructed to comply with the Green Public Procurement principles understood as a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

Climate change objectives will be promoted through the activities in three sectors : tourism (332); urban development and management (43030); and rural development (43040). With actions aiming to support sustainable tourism, it will foster sustainable development practices that incorporate mitigation and/or adaptation concepts: it will aim to introduce zero-carbon business solutions (e.g. zero-carbon resorts, touristic products etc.); to diversify tourist attractions to encompass areas less prone to the risks and impacts of climate change; and to promote of eco-tourism. As part of the urban development activities the programme aims to support sustainable urban development and tourism. Rural development aims to support sustainable regional development in rural areas, as part of the reach-out part of the CCI development.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

The Action will strive to promote gender equality and to take measures to achieve equal opportunities for male and female in all aspects regarding its implementation. This action will be implemented through an approach that promotes gender equality. This will be achieved by ensuring gender balance and active participation of women and girls into the activities planned under this action.

Gender equality incentives will be incorporated particularly in the activities concerning capacity building. Where possible, the action will provide for sex-disaggregated data. When relevant for a particular intervention due consideration should be given to the multiple discrimination faced by women from vulnerable groups, including minorities.

The implementation of the activities will remain sensitive in ensuring gender balance in the mobilisation of experts sharing their expertise.

A recent research-based report on gender in four of the EaP partner countries showed that CCI's development could contribute pragmatically and significantly to cultural sector's gender issues. While in certain areas of the cultural sector women are often appropriately represented in terms of numbers – on occasions they are even a majority – hierarchical issues remain. Senior positions disproportionately go to men. Given that participation in EU programmes often offers career-enhancement and other opportunities, it is important for this action to proactively monitor gender participation rates and selection criteria.

Human Rights

Due attention will also be given to the respect of human rights and integration of human rights principles within the undertaken interventions. Enforcement of those principles is likewise ensured through specific administrative procedures applied in accordance with the legislation on anti-discrimination. In the implementation of activities under this action, the same principles shall apply, so that participation in the envisaged activities will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, etc.

The region consists of a significant number of country-specific ethnic and religious minority groups as well as various regional diasporas. The development of existing and new transnational cultural routes could be a helpful instrument for intercultural dialogue in the region. The programme will provide a valuable contribution to the promotion of intercultural understanding and strengthening of peaceful societies.

Disability

Disability is a significant objective of this Action which will integrate the inclusion of people with disabilities in its objective. The Action will set standards and will act as a model for contributing to their wider participation in the culture and CCI sectors. The Action should make a meaningful contribution to raising awareness of inclusiveness issues.

Democracy

The support of democracy and democratisation is a relevant objective of this programme. By supporting democratic governance, the programme also supports inclusion, citizen participation, accountability and transparency.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Culture fosters open, democratic, resilient and inclusive societies; and contributes to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Cultural and creative industries, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue as well as cultural heritage awareness and protection are preconditions to durable, inclusive and equal societies. Culture is recognised as a crucial aspect of conflict prevention, peace and resilience. The freedom of artistic expression is an essential element in this respect.

The Action will support intercultural dialogue to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding actions. It will explore the broader context and will mitigate potential negative impact on the social, economic and environment dimension in the region in line with the “do-not-harm” principles. It will also aim to engage with various cultural actors and stakeholders to promote inclusion, human rights, gender equality, and participation, as well as to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Not directly targeted.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

1-to the external environment; 2-to planning, processes and systems; 3-to people and the organisation; 4-to legality and regularity aspects; 5-to communication and information

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures

1 – External environment	Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and geopolitical tensions in the Eastern Partnership region might impede the implementation of the action in certain countries.	High	High	The EU will continue to provide support to the partner countries over the implementation of the action but will ensure that operations are adapted to the evolving situation. Contingency measures will be provided.
1 - External environment	Political and macro-economic instability	Medium	Medium	Promote intercultural dialogue
2 - planning, processes and systems	Insufficient capacities and lack of commitment of authorities and beneficiaries may lead to uneven participation across the region	Medium	Medium	The action will provide tailor-made assistance and capacity building for the participating cities and facilitate networking with EU and international counterparts
3 - people and organisation	Lack of sufficient commitment of national and local institutions in the partner countries may lead to low participation in the activities promoted by this action	Low	Medium	Culture, heritage and tourism in general as well as more recently CCI’s development are high on the agenda of EaP partner countries. Open and effective communication with stakeholders will be a priority.
3 - people and organisation	high staff turnover and/or low integrity of the staff in the national and local institutions in the partner countries	Medium	High	Providing training and education courses to the staff in the national and local institutions involved in the project
4 – Risk to legality and regulatory aspects	Regulatory environment is not in place or not conducive for the development of CCI	Medium	Medium	enhance CCI-related environment in the participating regions by involving local authorities and improving constructive dialog with the authorities.
5 - communication and information	For the development of CCI, horizontal communication and ‘joined-up’ approaches between government and other public authorities might be limited, as	Medium	Medium	Promote the ‘joined-up’ approach and raise awareness on its benefits.

	these entities traditionally work vertically with clearly defined boundaries.			
--	---	--	--	--

External Assumptions

- Political, social and economic stability in all participating countries/regions remains or does not deteriorate.
- The security situation in the region and on certain borders remain stable.
- The security situation in Ukraine improves and the overall political situation of the region does not pose major obstacles to the implementation of the action.
- The situation in Belarus does not prevent to work with non-state stakeholders.
- There are no governmental or official restrictions on receiving of third-party financing.
- Situation with the pandemic allowing travel.
- Beneficiary countries are fully collaborating.

3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that there is a clear need and opportunity to build capacity and expertise in the development and delivery of cultural strategies, to improve local governance, to increase the role of the cultural sector as an engine for sustainable economic development, and to enhance intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across the EaP partner countries. The countries strong interest in the development of cultural policies and strategies can contribute to the development of the economic and social dimensions through leveraging new investment, fostering partnership and network of cities, building municipal leadership, thus providing a base for a new mixed economy for culture, grounded in creativity and enterprise. Furthermore, Culture, including cultural heritage, contributes to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda.

The Action will aim at enhancing the role of culture as an engine for growth and social development across the Eastern Partnership region through a comprehensive support to CCIs and local cultural markets, promoting intercultural dialogue across the Eastern Partnership countries and improving governance. The cultural sector can also play a crucial enabling role by raising awareness on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development - by motivating people to contribute personally but also by reducing its own carbon footprint, organizing and promoting low waste events. The action will focus on cities (excluding capital cities) in the Eastern Partnership region following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture.

This Action will build on the development of the on-going EU4Culture programme which places culture, the creative industries and cultural heritage sites at its core, and assists cities in the Eastern Partnership region to develop and implement Cultural Strategy, following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture.

It will focus on the local, national, and regional levels, strengthening the cooperation between Culture and CCI, civil society organisations and relevant local and national authorities. It will support knowledge transfer to the regions, improve the local ecosystem and enhance CCI-related environment in the participating regions. It will enable market access for emerging entrepreneurs and economic benefit for participating cities and regions and will support the synergies between culture and tourism. This action could thus contribute to investment in and the economic growth of the countries.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix¹⁷

¹⁷ Baselines and targets are needed to assess progress against the expected results (Outputs, Outcomes, Impact(s)). In some cases, there are indicators for which there is no baseline at the design stage, and in such exceptional cases the baseline and target can be defined during the inception phase of implementation. This happens for example when a survey is needed to define the baseline.

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines 2025 (values and years)	Targets 2028 (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	to contribute to making culture as an engine for economic growth, social development and resilience in the Eastern Partnership countries	Number of tourists and participants of cultural events per annum, disaggregated by country and selected cities (disaggregated by gender)	0	1. + 10%	1.Data recovered from cities and national polls	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	SO1: Increasing the role of the cultural and creative industries sector as a vector for economic development.	<p>1.1 percentage of resources for the cultural and creative industries sector in the annual budget of the selected cities</p> <p>1.2 Number of regulatory measures & policies in favor of CCI disaggregated by country and selected cities</p>	<p>1.1. 0</p> <p>1.2. 0</p>	<p>1.1. + 20%</p> <p>1.2. +10</p>	<p>1.1 Annual budget of the selected cities</p> <p>1.2 Draft regulatory measures & policy documents</p>	<p>Safety and Security remains stable in all participating countries/regions. Political situation is favourable and stable.</p> <p>Availability of human and financial resources</p> <p>No governmental or any other official restrictions on receiving third party financing</p> <p>Fundamental cooperation willingness/readiness between representatives of CCI private sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level</p>

<p>Outcome 2</p>	<p>SO2: Enhancing intercultural dialogue, international cultural relations and knowledge exchange in the field of culture across the EaP partner countries.</p>	<p>2.1</p>	<p>2.1</p>	<p>2.1</p>	<p>UNESCO Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue</p>	<p>Political and security situation remains stable in all participating countries/regions.</p> <p>No governmental or other official restrictions on receiving third party funding</p> <p>Enabling environment for intercultural dialogue in place</p> <p>Situation with the pandemic allowing travel and meetings</p>
-------------------------	---	------------	------------	------------	---	---

Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 - Cultural strategies implemented in selected non-capital cities and its related regions.	1.1.1 Number of cultural strategies implemented, disaggregated by country	1.1.1 0	1.1.1 +10	1.1.1 Cultural Strategies documents	<p>Political and security situations remains stable in all participating countries/regions;</p> <p>No governmental or other official restrictions on receiving third party funding</p> <p>Necessary humans and financial resources are mobilized.</p> <p>Fundamental cooperation willingness/readiness between representatives of CCI private sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level</p>
		1.1.2 Number of local cultural experts trained in the elaboration of cultural policies with increased competences (disaggregated by gender)	1.1.2 0	1.1.2 +10	1.1.2 Data of training participants; Post and pre training assessments; Trained participants survey	
		1.1.3 Number of stakeholders (public and private) participating in events organized for supporting cultural policies with improved understanding and knowledge on strategy development (disaggregated by gender when possible)	1.1.3 0	1.1.3 +250	1.1.3 Detailed lists/database of events organized, participants survey	
		1.1.4 - Number of stakeholders (public and private) participating in events organized for supporting cultural policies with improved understanding and knowledge on gender and Human Rights	1.1.4 0	1.1.4 +250	1.1.4 Detailed lists/database of events organized, participants survey	

<p>Output 2 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.2 - Improved local governance on cultural policy, creative industries development and sustainable tourism in selected non-capital cities.</p>	<p>1.2 - Number of trained staff in selected non-capital cities whose capacities on local governance have been improved (disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>1.2.1 - 0</p>	<p>1.2.1 +100</p>	<p>1.2.1 List of agreed sites; Data of training participants Pre and post training assessments Trained participants survey</p>	<p>Political and security situations remains stable in all participating countries/regions; Necessary humans and financial resources are mobilized. Fundamental cooperation willingness/readiness between representatives of CCI private sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level</p>
<p>Output 3 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.3 - Improved management capacities of cultural and creative industries in selected non-capital cities.</p>	<p>1.3 - Number of trained staff of CCI operators whose services delivery capacities are increased, disaggregated by country, cities and gender</p>	<p>1.3.1 - 0</p>	<p>1.3.1 +100</p>	<p>1.3.1 Data of trained participants Pre and post training assessments Trained participants survey</p>	<p>Political and security situations remains stable in all participating countries/regions; Necessary humans and financial resources are mobilized. Fundamental cooperation willingness/readiness of representatives of CCI private sector Situation with the pandemic allowing meeting.</p>

<p>Output 4 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.4 - Increased participation opportunities for local cultural businesses, cultural & creative industries, representative associations, and civil society organisations in the policy discourse and in constructive dialogue with local authorities.</p>	<p>1.4 - Number of consultation platforms and/or events on cultural heritage and creative industry policy, that are accessible for the local cultural businesses, cultural & creative industries, representative associations, and civil society organisations (disaggregated by types of organisations, such as youth, womens rights, etc)</p>	<p>1.4.1 - 0</p>	<p>1.4.1 -15</p>	<p>1.4 - Detailed lists/database of events organized</p>	<p>There are local tourism organisations with respective profiles, capacities and motivation in the selected regions</p> <p>Fundamental cooperation willingness/ readiness between representatives of tourism sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level.</p> <p>Situation with the pandemic allowing meeting.</p>
<p>Output 5 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.5 - Increased synergies between sustainable tourism and cultural & creative industries in the selected cities and its related regions</p>	<p>1.5 – Number of projects developed with synergies between sustainable tourism and cultural & creative industries</p>	<p>1.5 – 0</p>	<p>1.5 +10</p>	<p>1.5 – Database of projects</p>	<p>There are local tourism organisations with respective profiles, capacities and motivation in the selected regions.</p> <p>Fundamental cooperation willingness/ readiness between representatives of tourism sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level.</p>

Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Increased exposure of local artists, cultural professionals and cultural events with neighbor countries and at international level supported by the project	2.1 - Number of local artists, cultural professionals supported by the project for international exposure (disaggregated by country and gender)	2.1.2 0	2.2.2 +200	2.1.2 Detailed data on mobilities organized	There are local artists and cultural professionals with respective profiles, capacities and motivation No governmental or any other official restrictions on receiving third party financing No visa restriction Situation with the pandemic allowing travel.
--------------------------------------	---	---	---------	------------	---	--

<p>Output 2 related to Outcome 2</p>	<p>2.2. Strengthened multicultural and international event management, participation capacity and tools of local cultural operators</p>	<p>2.2.1 - Number of international/regional events organized, disaggregated by country and type of event</p> <p>2.2.2 - Number of artists and culture professionals trained disaggregated by country, gender and selected cities</p>	<p>2.2.1 0</p> <p>2.2.2 0</p>	<p>2.2.1 +20</p> <p>2.2.2 +100</p>	<p>2.2.1 Detailed lists/database of events organized</p> <p>2.2.2 Data of training participants.</p>	<p>There are local tourism organisations with respective profiles, capacities and motivation in non capital regions</p> <p>No governmental or any other official restrictions on receiving third party financing</p> <p>Fundamental cooperation willingness/ readiness between representatives of tourism sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level</p> <p>Situation with the pandemic allowing travel</p>
---	---	--	-------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	--

Output 3 related to Outcome 2	2.3 Increased participation opportunities for local authorities, local artists and cultural professionals / institutions in regional networking	2.3.1 Number of regional networking and participation platforms established/ supported by the project	2.3.1 0	2.3.1 +5	2.3.1 Detailed Data of Regional Network Meetings	There are local tourism organisations with respective profiles, capacities and motivation in non capital regions
		2.3.4 Number of activities planned for ensuring sustainability of regional network	2.3.2 0	2.3.2 - 5		No governmental or any other official restrictions on receiving third party financing Fundamental cooperation willingness/ readiness between representatives of tourism sector and relevant public authorities on regional and national level Situation with the pandemic allowing travel
Output 4 related to Outcome 2	2.4 Reconciliation with neighbor countries promoted	2.4. Number of cross-border projects implemented	2.4 0	2.4 +10	2.4 Data of projects	Political and security situations remains stable in all participating countries/regions

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is **72 months** from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures.¹⁸

4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity¹⁹

This action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, a consortium of pillar assessed entities or several pillar-assessed entities working individually, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- The entity has internationally recognised role and experience in the promotion of cultural heritage, equality of cultures, and has the technical and managerial capacity to develop and implement programmes, platforms and actions with partners in the area of cultural development in the EaP countries.
- The entity has a clear mandate for the implementation of cooperation activities in the area of culture in the EaP countries and is guided by international standards and recognised normative instruments on cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries and intercultural dialogue / international cultural relations, and has a network of technical experts deployed worldwide in these areas, including in the Eastern Partnership region.
- The entity has demonstrated transparency, impartiality, and the absence of conflict of interest, in other cooperation programmes with the EU.
- The entity has technical and managerial capacity in the field of cultural and creative industry

¹⁸ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

¹⁹ The signature of a contribution agreement with the chosen entity is subject to the completion of the necessary pillar assessment.

4.3.2. Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section '4.3.1' cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission or in case no compliant pillar assessed entity can be identified, the modality of implementation by grants under direct management would be used according to the following:

(a) Subject matter of the grant (s):

The objective of the grant is to achieve the two specific objectives (SO1, SO2) of the Action.

(b) Type of applicants targeted:

The type of applicants targeted are cultural operators and associations with operational capacity and proven experience in support of cultural heritage promotion and support to cultural and creative industries and who manage local interventions in the Eastern Partnership countries. Applicants may equally be economic operators with proven experience in relevant cultural sectors.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2023	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2024	Total (amount in EUR)
Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity - cf. section 4.3	5 000 000	5 000 000	10 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Will be covered by another Decision		n/a
Strategic communication and Public diplomacy – cf. section 6	covered under all 3 objectives		n/a
Totals	5 000 000	5 000 000	10 000 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

An oversight mechanism shall be established to ensure coordination and complementarity of the different activity streams within the Action. It will comprise representatives of the European Commissions to ensure strategic guidance of the actions, with DG NEAR as contracting authority and other line DGs, when necessary, for thematic guidance, as well as implementing partners and other stakeholders as appropriate. The steering

committee will meet at least twice a year and additionally on a case-by-case basis if such a necessity arises. Performance monitoring and reporting, including in terms of visibility obligations, of the Action will be undertaken in accordance with the signed agreement.

Overall, the implementing partners will also manage the Action in close cooperation with the main stakeholders, counterpart institutions, national institutions and administrations. They shall closely coordinate with the relevant EU Delegations in consultation with DG NEAR.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality).

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Each of the project activities is related to specific outcomes/outputs and equipped with quantified indicators and deliverables. Throughout the implementation, the achieved results will be checked against original activity plans and project deliverables set as milestones. Indicator-based reporting will be performed based on the logframe. Relevant indicators will have to be disaggregated by country, geographic unit, age group, and gender. Where feasible, data specific for most vulnerable groups should be included.

The implementing partners will be responsible for the day-to-day execution and monitoring of the activities. In case of discrepancies, the project team will propose and introduce corrective measures. The normal procedure for eliminating discrepancies will be (a) recognition of discrepancy, (b) estimation of the level of discrepancy and potential impact (time, quantity and quality wise), (c) definition of reasons (internal and external), (d) preparation of a contingency plan (responsibilities, activities), (e) implementation of a contingency plan and (f) review.

DG NEAR will be regularly updated on progress made and any issues encountered. EU Delegations in beneficiary countries will be systematically consulted and informed of annual project work plans and on the progress of any bilateral activity within the project.

EU Delegations in beneficiary countries will be regularly consulted on thematic issues. They will be invited to participate in steering committee meetings, if necessary.

Regular internal reporting will be established at the onset of the project with all project stakeholders and will contribute to the overall project evaluation reporting. While the monitoring will be a constant process, at the key milestones of the project, internal evaluation will be implemented.

The project will be subject to the internal monitoring procedures of the implementing partners. The project might be object of result-oriented monitoring (ROM) by the European Commission.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that sustainability and continuation of this programme at the beneficiary sites should be ensured.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 3 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination²⁰. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.3. Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions](#) (or any successor document).

²⁰ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

Any actions related to communication and visibility will be coordinated with the strategic communication actions of the EU Delegations, to ensure coherence of narrative and message, as well as horizontal strategic communication.