

Ponta Delgada — Azores 2027

European Capital of Culture
Candidate City

Human Nature

Selection Phase

Ponta Delgada — Azores 2027

European Capital of Culture
Candidate City

Human Nature



Table of Contents

p. 05	01. Introduction
p. 09	02. Contribution to the Long-Term Strategy
p. 19	03. Cultural and Artistic Content
p. 57	04. European Dimension
p. 69	05. Outreach
p. 77	06. Management
p. 95	07. Capacity to Deliver



01.

Introduction

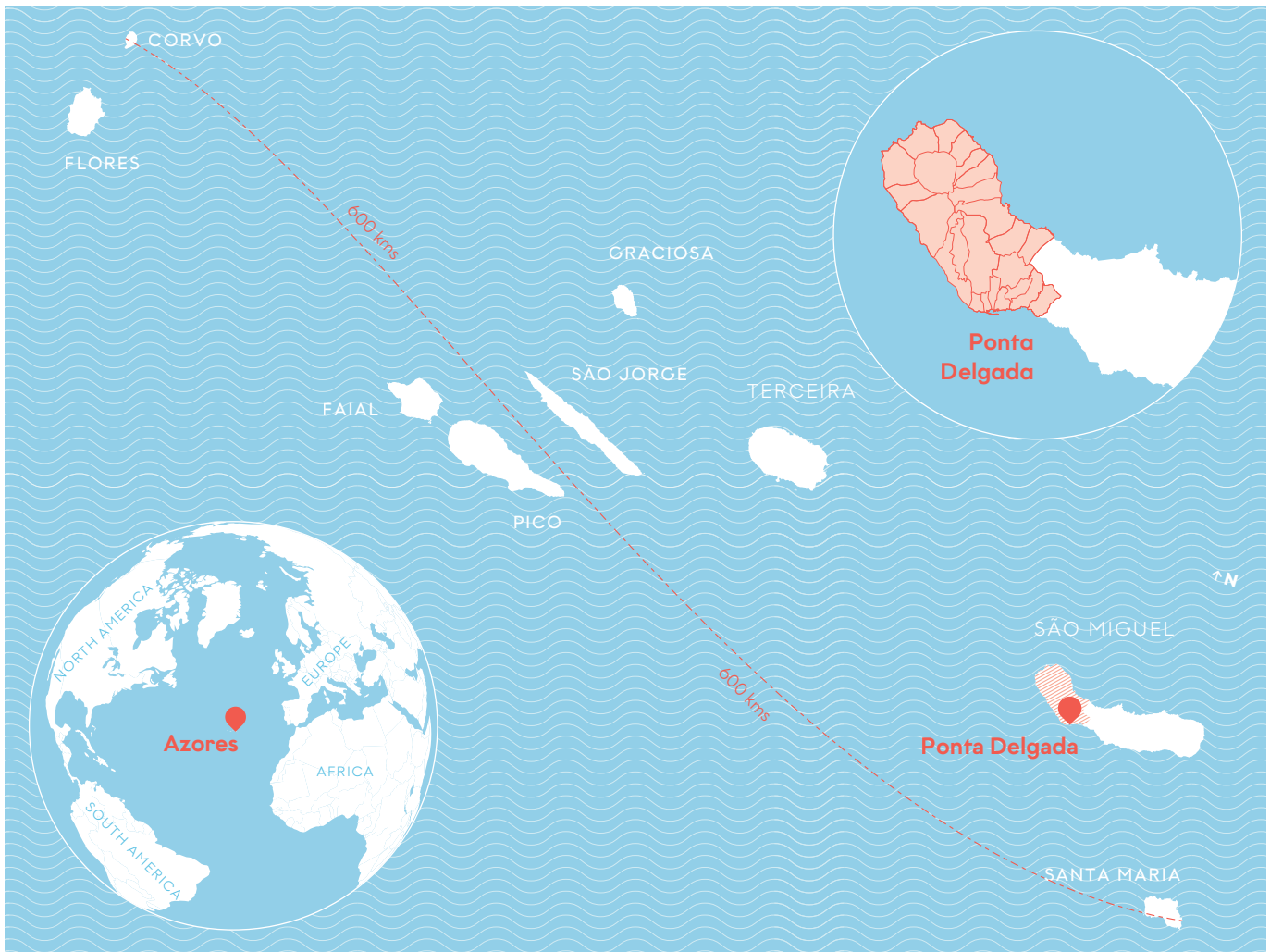
Q1

How has the concept evolved between the pre-selection and the selection stage?

Hello, this is Ponta Delgada – Azores. The Azores anticyclone still defines the weather in Europe. We are still that bridge to the Americas, somewhere between Atlantis and the Atlantic, and where we are allowed to imagine a world where many worlds fit. Worlds in which Europe expands to its most western point in a courageous act of decentralisation and borderlessness. Worlds in which our sense of Humanity and respect for Nature merge as one and where experimentation and innovation give way to a laboratory of tomorrow.

Yes, we still have two hearts, one that stays and one that leaves—and the *viola da terra* is alive and kicking. Yes, all four seasons still run here in one day. And yes, there is an untold story to be spread in Europe about a rural, Atlantic and cosmopolitan group of people living behind a grand landscape and in the middle of a gigantic ocean. In 2027, the Azores turn 600 years of human occupation by the Portuguese. 600 years of being European.

With **Human Nature**, our pre-selection concept, we created a manifesto for a cultural transformation of a city on an island (Ponta Delgada, São Miguel) and its region—the Azores—treasuring the culture of place and setting it in action through archipelagic thinking. We told you of our firm intention to affirm our centrality and become a cultural reference point, the compass of Europe, entailing a movement of going towards the other to hold onto each other and make a transformation happen—and that has not changed.



We saw our claim that **Europe is an Archipelago** as urgent—whose exchanges of ideas, resources and movements from one island to another can only push the enrichment of each singular identity and the mutual understanding of the collective. The metaphor of the archipelago, as an alternative model to global thinking, carries out the urgency of solidarity, genuine connection and a work of convergence and unity against new forms of populism. We are not *islanded*. We are part of an interconnected whole. If the EU flag is a circle of stars, Ponta Delgada – Azores 2027 (hereafter PDL–Azores2027) turns this circle into an archipelago of endless shapes, combinations, and opportunities for exchange in a moving open constellation that creates space for the other and the new. Yet, the world keeps turning around steadily, and we do not know what it will be like in 2027.

In 2022, the cultural and artistic practices have reaffirmed their power and have taken over rooms and the public space bringing people together. Ponta Delgada and the Azores have gone from a place of departures to a place of arrivals with an intensified external interest, as new inhabitants and visitors arrive every day. Moreover, being affected by a longstanding pandemic, climate anxiety rising day after day, and war among Europeans brought us to a state of instability, fear, and suspicion that has taken hold through dehumanisation, uncertainty and new walls.

We have decided that we will not coldly watch at a distance and pretend that the moves and moods of the world have nothing to do with us, because we trust that whoever has

stones to build walls can use the same stones to build bridges. We have also reflected on the importance of defending biodiversity, balancing out humankind and nature, and on the historical resilience of these Atlantic people in inhabiting the landscape despite all cycles and crises.

From the pre-selection phase to the selection stage, **Human Nature** is still our passionate concept for PDL–Azores2027. Human is Culture. Nature is Place. We discussed it intensely, and we are more convinced than ever that exploring the relations between nature and humanity will bring possible answers to our common present and future biggest challenges. Nature and culture do not exist independently of each other; they are mutually linked and feed from each other reciprocally. They co-exist and co-react as forces at the same level and not above one another. In a late instance, they will become one.

Our concept is a love letter to a common future in which we defy isolation, build bridges and value the strings that bind and intertwine us humans and non-humans. In a world without the Other and a preserved environment, there is no space for progress, so we want to intensify our politics of care and expand our culture of place with worldliness. Because culture is the force we reckon with, a promise for a more unforgettable, connected, balanced, innovative and resilient future.

With **Human Nature**, we want to create a new grammar for the human being—humanist and humanitarian—written with an alphabet of pluralism, diversity and inclusion,

where no one is left behind. We will celebrate the intersection of different points of view and the diversity of ideas, bodies and forms, allowing for the emergence of new voices and being mindful of the importance of caring for one another and nature, always nature. After all, this is our opportunity to do something in compromise with our ecosystems, balancing out human-nature dichotomies and engaging in processes of more-than-human awareness, sustainable development and renaturalisation.

STAY HUMAN, GO NATURAL & COME TOGETHER

We have enriched our cultural and artistic programme that builds on the culture of this place to exchange ideas with Europe and the world around us. This programme is our ecosystem of practices to stay human, go natural and come together. It is our contribution to the discussion of what Europe is today, enhancing our civic engagement and sense of belonging to the European Union in a unifying narrative of give and take, teach and learn, talk and listen.

We will let ourselves be guided by **Human Nature** and trust its convergent vision of an artistic and cultural programme made of archipelagos:

Archipelago of Creativity is about cultural and artistic practices and actors at the forefront, breaking borders of geography and disciplines through cross-sectoral synergies with the economy, research and well-being in urban and rural areas;

Archipelago of Participation is about social cohesion through co-creation, inclusion, capacity building and co-responsibility for our cultural democracy;

Archipelago of Europe and the World is about activating our heritage and history of migration, mirroring our continent and connecting it to the future and other cultural latitudes;

Archipelago of Nature is about a shared journey of care and hope, environmental protection and regeneration.

We will connect these four archipelagos and their 43 projects by articulating and expanding them, making them meet and creating new impacts. For us, strength, energy, and competence will come through cultural capacity building and knowledge moving from one generation to the other. We will learn new toolkits from the inside and, of course, from European partners, enhancing our sense of belonging, our international perspective, and, above all, our active citizenship, human power and skills. Capacity will turn into power, and power will turn into happiness, empathy, mutual understanding and ultimately, tenderness.

We will be happier, more empathetic, and more aware of our Europeanness—the day after our European Capital of Culture year ends will be the day we will look back at our achieved objectives:

- strengthen the capacity of the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) and promote the cultural and creative potential of Ponta Delgada and the Azores;
- promote participation, inclusion, cultural democracy, empowerment and intersection of different people through an intense dialogue between artistic practices and social realities;

- create a movement of mutual understanding that encompasses past and future cultural exchanges, starting in the city of Ponta Delgada and extending across the island, the Azores archipelago, Europe and the territories of our diaspora;
- deepen the symbiotic links between nature and human activity through cultural and artistic practices, in line with the sustainable development goals.

The city's long-term Cultural Strategy will be the backbone of the ECoC programme. It will enhance our **Sense of Place**, empower our **Cultural and Creative Sectors** with vigour and competence, practise our exercise of **Cultural Citizenship** and extend the possibilities for cooperation in our **Global Archipelago**. Holding the ECoC title will take us on a path to transformation for a more democratic, sustainable and meaningful future in 2030 and from there onwards. Our vision is one of Ponta Delgada as a transatlantic cultural hub supported by a dialogue between creative production and sustainability, where Cultural and Creative industries find resources and opportunities to work, and where culture is a means of promoting mobility between places, communities and ideas.

A CULTURAL PLAYGROUND, AN ACADEMY & A STAGE

We heard the pre-selection panel and went from Azores 2027 to Ponta Delgada—Azores 2027. We locally strengthened the city's identification with the ECoC dream. Navigating through all nine islands, we reinforced this project as an unprecedented springboard for an archipelago of borderless cultural exchange. We have come back stronger because we saw the needs, heard and exchanged the benefits, and measured the potential impacts with our local and international communities of a European Capital of Culture revolution.

In round one, we told you about several geographical scales, namely: the city of Ponta Delgada, the island of São Miguel, the archipelago of the Azores, mainland Portugal, the continent of Europe—and even brought the Americas into the mix. From that evidence, we understand that we want to put our localness in perspective and toward others. We want to tell our story of scales. We want to lead ourselves towards Europe and the world as the horizon of possibilities that it is. Make no mistake: we are building bridges and weaving relations in a city, an island, an archipelago of people. We are an archipelago of Europe!

We are ready to start this odyssey, and our ground and legs are actually shaking to make this happen. Our ECoC will be a cultural playground, an academy and a stage. The impacts of a first Atlantic ECoC will provoke social quakes, cultural eruptions, economic waves and territorial development's new winds. Thus, by implementing it, we will humbly learn from being closer to Europe and its infinite knowledge, heritage and best cultural practices. Europe will be proud of its new rising cultural centrality emerging in the middle of the ocean. The cultural influence will be ever-lasting. Shall we begin?



Inês, Carolina, Sara and Bea, alongside Xico, who is not pictured here, form the art collective Atelineiras. Their work focuses on activism and interventional art. Like so many other Azoreans, they have left the island to study. The time they are apart, where each grows

individually in different ways, allows for a renovation of how they think collectively. "The departure allows for a constant change, but we return to what matters and makes us who we are", they say.

02. Contribution to the long- -term strategy

Q2

Describe any changes to the cultural strategy since the pre-selection stage, and the role of the ECoC pre-selection in these changes. Indicate specifically which priorities of this strategy the European Capital of Culture action intends to contribute to, and how.

Since the pre-selection phase, we have seen changes in the Cultural Strategy (hereafter CS). The pre-selection of **Human Nature** contributed to redoubling the energy around the strategic value of culture for the future development of Ponta Delgada and channelling it into the deepening of the CS. Specifically, there are three types of changes to be highlighted—institutional, operational and programmatic.

From an **institutional** point of view, there has been a strengthened political commitment to the CS. In November 2021 and December 2021, respectively, the City Council and the Municipal Assembly approved the strategy. In this regard, it is worth noting that between the conclusion and the approval of the CS, there was a political change at the municipal level after the elections, which led to a change in the political leaderships that were directly and intensely involved in its development.

The strengthening of the political commitment to culture as an instrument of territorial development is also visible at the level of the municipal budget for culture. We have seen an increase in the funding for culture in 2022, and the city plans a sustained increase for the coming years as well. Examples of this are: the current value of €2.750.950.78 (representing 5.7% of the municipality's total annual budget) corresponds to an increase of 29% in 2022 compared to 2021, and there is an expected growth of 10% for 2023.

Following the announcement of the four shortlisted cities for ECoC 2027 in Portugal, an additional sign of institutional support for territorial development based on culture was made public by the Azores Legislative Assembly. They have issued a statement with a unanimous vote, reinforcing the need to enhance the financial investment in the project from the Municipality and the Regional Government. The Regional Government's commitment is that the budget reaches the value of €6 million between 2023 and 2028, exclusively invested in the cultural programme of PDL-Azores2027.

At the **operational** level, Ponta Delgada Municipality hired an executive manager to be in charge of the implementation of the CS. She has been working from the very beginning in close articulation with policymakers directly involved in the CS (President and Councillor for Culture) and with the ECoC team. Moreover, the Municipality is currently setting up a team from the culture department to be specifically involved in the CS implementation.

Progress has also taken place on the CS **programme**. In this first year of implementation, the Municipality prioritised the development of initiatives focused mainly on the first two axes of the CS—the **Sense of Place** and the **Cultural and Creative Sectors**. The actions in progress have in common that they are structural for culture development in Ponta Delgada and have the potential to leverage other initiatives and dynamics. Concerning the first axis, the Municipality is currently working on identifying public spaces of different dimensions, uses and states of conservation that might be suitable for cultural and artistic creation and exhibition purposes. Alongside this, the Municipality is designing a regulation for these spaces. Within the scope of the second axis, it is worth mentioning the design of heritage itineraries—urban and rural, as well as the creation of educational and community involvement services in some cultural institutions (Municipal Cultural Centre and Hebrew Museum – Ponta Delgada Synagogue) and the training of mediators. By the end of the year, the Municipality will have defined and approved the CS implementation schedule and budget for 2023.

CONTRIBUTION FROM PDL-AZORES2027 TO THE CULTURAL STRATEGY

The concept of **Human Nature** fully aligns with the CS. The process of listening and mapping the territory—its strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities—coincided in time, shared complicities and knowledge. PDL-Azores2027 embraced the vision defined in the CS, in which Ponta Delgada becomes a transatlantic cultural hub: supported by a dialogue between creative production and sustainability; where cultural and creative industries find resources and opportunities to work; and where culture is a means of promoting mobility between places, communities and ideas.

The ECoC bid is one of the main pillars of the **Global Archipelago**, the CS axis aimed at stimulating regional and international cooperation. With **Human Nature**, we want to make the most of this strong network of affections that connects European cities that have already been, are or aspire to become ECoC to fulfil our contribution to the CS. Despite this specific input, PDL-Azores2027 contributes to all other three axes by:

- aligning with the **Cultural and Creative Sectors axis**, which addresses the urgency of professionalising the CCS and the need to foster the creative force of local stakeholders;
- recognising the relevance of the **Cultural Citizenship axis** throughout the territory by mobilising multiple contexts of cultural production to involve different communities, including people without access to culture or groups at risk of social exclusion;
- embracing the **Sense of Place axis** supporting not only the interpretation of the landscape and heritage, but also the environmental preservation, the enhancement of the creative economy and new models of visiting and inhabiting the place.

We have already launched several initiatives and pilot projects; some will scale up very soon, some have derived from the CS, and others were imagined and designed in the context of **Human Nature**. At this stage, the priority is to lay the foundations of the candidacy and its contribution to the CS. Through **Human Academy (HA!)**, **Hand in Hand, 9x9** or the **Nó** platform, we are mobilising spaces to support artistic creation and exhibition, empowering citizens, increasing capacity building of cultural stakeholders and giving visibility to their projects and artworks. (**O6 – Beyond Time and Space**).

Through our four programme archipelagos, we create convergences between the CS and **Human Nature** and between **Human Nature** and the Specific Objectives (SO) of the ECoC initiative.

ALIGNMENT OF FORCES

ECOC SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (SO) [EUROPEAN COMMISSION]

Cultural sector and its links with other sectors (SO 3)

Access and participation (SO 2)

Permeability, opening, visibility of culture and the city to/in other scales/ cultures (SO 1, 4)

CULTURAL STRATEGY PONTA DELGADA - 2030 AXES

Cultural and Creative Sectors (AXIS 2)

Cultural Citizenship (AXIS 3)

Global Archipelago (AXIS 4)

Sense of Place (AXIS 1)

PDL-AZORES2027 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

01 Strengthen the capacity of the Cultural and Creative Sectors and promote the cultural and creative potential of Ponta Delgada and the Azores

02 Promote participation, inclusion, cultural democracy, empowerment and the intersection of different people through an intense dialogue between artistic practices and social realities

03 Create a movement of mutual understanding that encompasses past and future cultural exchanges, starting in the city of Ponta Delgada and extending across the island, the Azores archipelago, Europe and the territories of our diaspora

04 Deepen the symbiotic links between nature and human activity through artistic and cultural practices, in line with the sustainable development goals

PDL-AZORES2027 PROGRAMME LINES

Archipelago of Creativity



Archipelago of Participation



Archipelago of Europe and The World



Archipelago of Nature





Q3

Have the intentions in terms of the long-term impacts of the European Capital of Culture action on the city changed since pre-selection?

The expected impacts of the European Capital of Culture described in the pre-selection phase remain unchanged—in terms of temporality (long-term) and scope (economic, social, cultural and territorial). However, we redefined the Specific Objectives (SO) of PDL–Azores2027, in line with the ECoC and the CS, and deepened the reflection and systematisation of the long-term impacts we intend to achieve.

The cultural and artistic programme continues to be understood as the privileged context to materialise our vision for Ponta Delgada so that, through culture, we can better know, value, interact, love and transform more. Through our four programme archipelagos, **Human Nature** wants to trigger forces for change through cultural eruptions, social shakes, economic waves and territorial development's new winds. We anticipate that the changes that will occur in Ponta Delgada, and the Azores, as a result of **Human Nature** will produce the following long-term impacts:

Cultural and Creative Sectors are relevant drivers of economic development and innovation, both in urban and rural areas. The city and the region increase their budget for culture. Professionalisation allows more cultural and creative actors to make culture and the arts their full-time job, increasing the contribution of these sectors to the region's wealth. The CCS' capacity

is increased to work internationally and on large-scale projects, bringing more funds to implement ideas. Infrastructures, facilities and improved cooperation practices boost our CCS, developing, retaining and attracting talent. The cross-fertilisation within the CCS and between these and other sectors will trigger innovation (e.g. in tourism, health, ocean preservation and heritage). The creative economy will thrive in the city centre of Ponta Delgada but will also contribute to the development and innovation of rural spaces.

Citizens collectively mobilised become agents of cultural and social change. Culture is at the heart of public spaces with strong ties with society—in urban, rural and maritime neighbourhoods—favouring accessibility, mobility and growing attendance rates. Unexpected cultural events in non-conventional venues and formats attract young people, children and their families, broadening the social understanding of culture. Accessible prices and free cultural events encourage different communities to get involved. More opportunities to engage with and co-create initiatives make culture relevant to more people. Everyone from everywhere matters: new ways of participation and active citizenship empower new voices and strengthen democracy. Increased involvement of minorities and socially disadvantaged groups brings visibility, representation, diversity, equality and more active cultural participation of residents in their municipality, island and archipelago life. Unity in diversity through an archipelagic culture experiment involving different communities. Islands working cooperatively to share and showcase their singularities in decentralised, articulated and supportive ways.

Ponta Delgada and the Azores become a tran-satlantic cultural hub. International cooperation increases, opening up European perspectives. The city and the region raise their international profile and visibility. More effective and regular cultural exchange with Europe and the Azorean diaspora. Nomadic projects stimulate new ways of widening the understanding of heritage, bringing new ideas for the region's development. Azoreans, here and across borders, and citizens from other geographies approach history and resignified heritage, creating present and future intercultural bridges. New cultural and creative dynamics and marketing strategies promote Ponta Delgada and the Azores as a dynamic cultural hub.

Ponta Delgada and the Azores are recognised as relevant territories to imagine, activate and experience sustainable Human-Nature relations. Cultural and creative practices are environmentally respectful and reflect the contemporary challenges of **Human-Nature** relationships. Natural ecosystems inspire new connections between CCS, natural, human and social sciences in the search for new practices for the transition to a green and blue economy. New slow, eco, and creative tourism experiences increase and become a permanent offer. More initiatives to enjoy nature and culture all year are recognised as beneficial for mental and physical health and well-being.

With our action, we are strongly motivated to articulate and cross the forces of nature—waves, quakes, eruptions and winds—to find a new **Human-Nature** balance and generate multiplying effects in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel and the Azores.

However, the cultural and artistic programme is not the only context through which we aim to induce change. Our action also contributes to a change in opening new ways of doing and thinking further at the operational level, in the exchange with the stakeholders, through generated complicities, demands and expectations (learning-by-interacting and collective learning).

We want PDL–Azores2027, which already includes many people and wills, to be joined by many others, contributing to reducing distances and sustainably increasing its gravitational pull and long-term impacts.

Q4

How will the impacts of the title on the city be monitored, evaluated and the results of the evaluation disseminated?

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

The European Capital of Culture is a multidisciplinary cultural initiative with a substantial experimental component, which extends over time (with different intensities), involves a wide range of participants from various territories, and produces impacts in different temporalities and dimensions of territorial development.

Facing an extraordinary, ambitious and complex initiative, PDL–Azores2027 proposes to develop a M&E system that, reflecting its nature, can inform the process (improve management), mobilise participants (deepen and broaden the involvement) and know the results (enhancing impacts). We understand that the quality of the information collected, its analysis, and the knowledge generated and disseminated are essential components for the success of PDL–Azores2027, of the CS, and for enhancing the high quality and prestige of the ECoC initiative.

We envision a complex and robust M&E system. Yet, it will be as agile and organic as possible to track the living organism of PDL–Azores2027. Its main guiding principles are:

- **understanding the whole process and changes:** We know where we want to go, and soon, we will define even more precisely the expected future. We are passionate about understanding what happens in the meantime—so we intend to capture and analyse outputs, the outcomes and the impacts;
- **flexibility and adaptiveness:** We intend to provide input to ongoing iterative decision-making and learning at the project level, developing short cycles of monitoring, evaluating and learning;
- **participatory system:** Following a collaborative logic, our system is a platform where different stakeholders are simultaneously providers and users of data, where we all win with (more than) the sum of the parts;
- **combined data sources:** We will count on new data coming into production and reuse existing data, currently dispersed across multiple sources;
- **the nature of data:** Monitoring and evaluation will be based on quantitative and qualitative data and methods related to goals achieved against the expected results, but also being attentive to unintended effects;
- **enhancing the system through human and technology interaction:** We intend to use technology smartly, enhancing human capacities (individual and collective) to collect and analyse data and communicate knowledge (e.g. open source software platforms for citizen reporting, web scraping, interactive data visualisation software for project intelligence);
- **outputs:** The continuous and systematic monitoring of the dynamics developed within the project will generate information and knowledge that will serve as raw ingredients for creating outputs aimed at different target groups (in close articulation with our Communication and Marketing Coordinator).

TIMEFRAME, OBJECTIVES AND BASELINE STUDIES

The M&E of PDL–Azores2027 involves an ongoing process that accompanies the project's development in its different needs and intensities. We consider three evaluation cycles: 2023–2026 (pre-ECoC event), 2027–2028 (event and immediate results of the ECoC year) and 2029–2030 (assessment of the ECoC legacy and the CS). Each cycle will be associated with a specific action plan.

OBJECTIVES	2023–2026								
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
MILESTONES	2023–2026 <i>Ex-ante</i> evaluation and setting of the stage for the M&E 2027–2028.				2027 Monitor the operationalisation of PDL–Azores 2027 dynamics and outputs, and evaluation of the achievement of its objectives.	2028 Evaluation of compliance with Specific Objectives and immediate results.	2029–2030 Assessment of the long-term impact and legacy of PDL–Azores2027.		
	2023 Recruitment of the M&E Coordinator; Design of the M&E Action Plan 2023–2026; Implementation of the M&E Information System; Establishment of the M&E collaborative networks; M&E Methodology undergoes testing.			2026 Complete M&E team in operation (January); Design of the M&E Action Plan 2027–2028.	2027 PDL–Azores 2027 final conference on results and legacy takes place.	2028 (end of the 1st quarter) PDL–Azores 2027 Impact Survey and other data collection (qualitative, quantitative) was developed.	2029 Impact studies (specific core areas) were carried out.	2030 (1st half) PDL–Azores 2027 Impact Survey and other data collection (qualitative, quantitative) was developed.	
OUTPUTS	2023 (end-year) M&E Action Plan 2023–2026.				2026 (end-year) Action Plan 2027–2028; Policy Briefs (2).	2027 (end-year) Final Conference report; Preliminary evaluation report of the event.	2028 Evaluation reports (4 on the Specific Objectives of PDL–Azores 2027); Cross-cutting evaluations focused on core areas; Ex-post evaluation report; Book; Policy Briefs (2).	2030 (end-year) Legacy reports (4 on the Specific Objectives of PDL–Azores 2027); Cross-cutting evaluations focused on core areas; Legacy report; Policy Briefs (2).	
		2024–2026 Quarterly Monitoring report; Evaluation reports (4 on the Specific Objectives of PDL–Azores2027); Cross-cutting evaluations focused on core areas.				2027–2028 Quarterly Monitoring report.			
BASELINE STUDIES	CS Ponta Delgada 2030 (Cultural Footprint 2021—audience research; Cultural and Creative Sectors—mapping study); IN SITU (Cultural and Creative Sectors—Mapping study 2023); Cultural Footprint 2023; Statistics and regional studies (e.g. Economy, Tourism, Sustainability); CCS—skills study assessment.				Cultural Footprint Study; Statistics and regional studies (e.g. Economy, Tourism, Sustainability); CCS—skills study assessment.		Cultural Footprint Study; Statistics and regional studies (e.g. Economy, Tourism, Sustainability).		
BUDGET	PDL–Azores2027				PDL–Azores2027		CS		

INFORMATION WE WILL TRACK AND MONITOR

The **M&E system** will follow and analyse data to inform the process, communicate the project, and assess project results and impacts. To this end, we will focus on four contexts (objects of study) distinguished by their degree of involvement with the project: **1** the management structure of **Human Nature**; the programming – **2** continuity projects with a high degree of involvement, **3** sporadic actions with a low degree of participation, and **4** constituted by the *non-audiences*.

We will collect quantities and attributes of the people, the activities, and the spaces involved, through interviews,

participant observation, primary (e.g. project evaluation reports, statistics, surveys) and secondary (e.g. studies) documentary sources, among others. We want to know how they evolve over the M&E cycles and what dynamics and changes occur. We will use some of the information collected to interpret to which extent **Human Nature** has contributed to reaching the SO and the long-term impacts. We have already defined a series of expected outcomes and indicators for each of **Human Nature** objectives, following the ECoc guidelines. But we will pay attention to the dynamics generated and their consequences, including the positive or negative ones we did not foresee.

In addition to these approaches, we will organise the learning generated around other questions. We will adopt the six thematic clusters defined by the European Capitals of Culture Policy Group: Cultural Vibrancy and Sustainability; Cultural Access and Participation; Identity, Image and Place; Philosophy and Management of Process; European Dimension; and Economic Impacts—thus allowing for international comparisons. Within the latter's scope, we will give particular importance to the economic dynamics of the tourism sector developed from a cultural and environmental

sustainability perspective. Joining the **CulTourData** network will be relevant in defining specific indicators in this context. As a transversal programme, we will analyse how the action developed in the context of **Human Nature** contributes to accelerating sustainable development processes (in line with the SDG – UN).

In the last cycle, M&E will focus on legacy. We will follow and analyse the changes sustained over time, considering the vision and the objectives that inspired **Human Nature**.

PDL–Azores2027 Specific Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators (potential)
1. Strengthen the capacity of the Cultural and Creative Sectors and promote the cultural and creative potential of Ponta Delgada and the Azores.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased relevance of Ponta Delgada as a dynamic creative hub for Cultural and Creative industries; 2. Increased and sustained % of Cultural and Creative jobs <i>per capita</i>; 3. Increased cultural and creative driven innovation and growth; 4. Enhanced capacity of Ponta Delgada–Azores to provide attractive conditions for attracting and retaining talent. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of cultural and creative events/initiatives using public spaces in the city centre and rural areas of Ponta Delgada as venues; Number of cultural and creative businesses in the city centre of Ponta Delgada; 2. Number of participants in capacity-building programmes; Degree of satisfaction with the capacity-building programmes; Number of international networks participated by CCS of Ponta Delgada–Azores2027; Number of CCS involved in initiatives of European/international circulation; 3. Number of projects involving a collaboration between the CCS and other sectors; Number of new/innovative products/services involving the CCS and other sectors; 4. Number of venues and facilities supporting regular cultural and creative activities; Cultural and creative professionals' perception of facilities, infrastructure and job quality.
2. Promote participation, inclusion, cultural democracy, empowerment and the intersection of different people through an intense dialogue between artistic practices and social realities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater citizens' participation in cultural and artistic activities; 2. Enhanced fluid communication, interaction and collaboration between communities; 3. Increased citizens' capacity for cultural and civic mobilisation and engagement; 4. Greater social and cultural diversity and representativeness in artistic and cultural productions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing and sustained links of CCS' professionals with amateur and community arts and cultural organisations; Percentage of non-residents in Ponta Delgada participating in events in the city centre; 2. Percentage of projects involving participants from different communities (e.g. place of residence, religious community); Degree of satisfaction of individuals participating in projects involving different communities; 3. Number of new cultural/civil initiatives inspired by participation in capacity-building initiatives; 4. Number of cultural and creative artworks and projects representing social and cultural disadvantaged groups; Perception of disadvantaged social and cultural groups about their visibility and representation in artworks.
3. Create a movement of mutual understanding that encompasses past and future cultural exchanges, starting in the city of Ponta Delgada and extending across the island, the Azores archipelago, Europe and the territories of our diaspora.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renewed collaboration contexts enhance empathy and links between the CCS of Ponta Delgada–Azores and Europe and the world; 2. New visions and artistic and cultural expressions about contemporary migrations and mobility; 3. Renewed meanings and audiences for heritage; 4. Ponta Delgada–Azores is internationally recognised as a Cultural and Creative territory. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of European/international co-productions and collaborations; 2. Number of artworks created on contemporary migrations and mobility; 3. Number of new artworks approaching heritage; Number of participants engaged in initiatives related to heritage; Degree of satisfaction of individuals for participating in heritage-related initiatives; 4. Number of European/international CCS stakeholders participating in art residencies and exchanges in Ponta Delgada–Azores; Number of European/international audiences in Ponta Delgada; Number of PDL–Azores2027 presentations in European/international conferences/seminars/events; Reputation of Ponta Delgada–Azores as a cultural and creative territory in international media.
4. Deepen the symbiotic links between nature and human activity through artistic and cultural practices, in line with the sustainable development goals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened presence of nature as artistic content and context for experiencing arts and culture; 2. Increased reflective cultural and artistic practices involving sustainability issues; 3. Sustained integration of art and science to explore and articulate ideas, visions and expressions of marine space; 4. Increased value and volume of tourism in Ponta Delgada–Azores associated with Cultural and Ecotourism offers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of events occurring in natural spaces; Degree of satisfaction with attendance to artistic and cultural events in natural spaces; 2. Number of cultural and creative activities incorporating environmentally-friendly practices; Number of reflexive documents exploring sustainability issues; 3. Number of actions and dissemination documents exploring the intersection of Art and Science related to the ocean; 4. Number of new Cultural and Ecotourism products/services.

M&E SYSTEM AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

We propose to monitor and evaluate PDL–Azores2027 with different voices, developing a lively and coordinated network of individuals and stakeholders. We expect the social actors (e.g. researchers, citizens, policymakers, businesses, third sector organisations) to work together throughout the M&E to align the process and its results with the values, needs and society's expectations about the project.

We designed the **M&E system** as a community of practice consisting of a **central cell** permanently integrated and functioning within the PDL–Azores2027 management structure and **other external cells** that periodically contribute to the system, with varying degrees of regularity.

Human Nature will have a selected coordinator to work solely on the M&E strategy from 2023–2028. This coordinator shall have experience and a research background in M&E cultural projects. The M&E Coordinator will undertake the general management and leadership of a small core team (two project managers) and a set of external partners and providers. Providing information and advice, this coordination team reports directly to the CEO and will work closely with the Communication and Marketing Coordinator.

Working on a very regular basis, we will count on two external cells. The first cell is the **University of the Azores** which will assume mainly two types of functions through a partnership agreement. The first is scientific advice, provided by a Scientific Advisory Board, especially in Human and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Natural Sciences. In addition, the University will also play a significant role in collecting and analysing data and disseminating knowledge on specific issues. For this purpose, a specific research plan will be co-created, for six years, on relevant topics of the ECoC, which aims to involve researchers, professors and students (including Erasmus students). It is also important to mention that there has already been an approach to create synergies (which will expand) to some research projects in progress in areas relevant to the M&E of **Human Nature**. Such is the case of the project **IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas** (Horizon Europe, 2022–2026). The second cell is composed of the **CS team**, and we believe that coordinated efforts need to address specific issues, such as cultural practices. We anticipate that data collected through the CS initiatives **City Card** (with benefits on a network of economic partners, cultural facilities and transport network, and information on cultural practices in return) and the **Cultural Footprint's** study (audience research) will be particularly relevant.

The system also includes other cells that periodically collaborate with the M&E. Some local and regional organisations, public and private, stand out as providers of relevant data and are expected to carry out (or secure funding for) impact studies in specific areas (e.g. economy, tourism sector). Such is the case for the Azores Tourism Association, the Regional Secretariat for the Environment and Climate Change, Ponta Delgada's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Economic and Social Council of the Azores. We also plan to outsource specific analysis to be carried out in 2028, particularly in the area of social impacts, through a competitive tendering process.

Additionally, we consider other contexts of participation in different phases of the M&E process of PDL–Azores2027. For example, the strategy envisages:

- creating a Scientific Advisory Board (composed of eight members from the University) and a Local and Regional Evaluation Council (comprising ten stakeholders involved in the development of specific studies);
- involving a group of experts experienced in similar tasks in the context of other ECoCs for impacts and legacy assessment (2023, 2028);
- organising regular participatory sessions to present preliminary results so that they can be discussed and validated before the final dissemination (2024, 2026, 2028);
- promoting a biannual award for the best research or artwork (reflexive art) based on data produced in the context of the ECoC (2024, 2026, 2028);
- launching international open calls for creating new knowledge based on ECoC data (2026, 2028).

We are strongly motivated to make the most of ICT-based solutions to support participation in monitoring and evaluation. In this regard, methods such as beneficiary feedback mechanisms, crowdsourcing and micro-narratives can open up new communication channels between the project, audiences and the stakeholders.

Although the project's M&E strategy will focus mainly on the municipality and the island, it will follow the dynamics in the archipelago in the context of the ECoC. ICT and PDL–Azores2027's ambassadors spread throughout the islands will be critical resources within this system.

DISSEMINATING SEEDS

Dissemination will be a powerful mechanism to communicate and give back the results and lessons learned to all who will be part of our ECoC or may feel touched by our action. And this *all* will be many people, of many types, and distributed by various geographies—citizens, the general public, direct participants in the programme's actions, politicians, and other stakeholders (cultural and creative, economic, social), of the city and region, but also from other European cities and EU institutions. The dissemination strategy will reflect this diversity, coming through different expressions, languages, formats and delivery channels. The main dissemination activities and outputs are the following:

Activities:

- produce dissemination material;
- organise local events and international conferences (2026–second quarter and 2027–year-end);
- participate in events and workshops organised by other institutions and projects;
- engage actively in international networks;
- publish on the project website, social networks, media and press.

Outputs:

- dissemination material—videos, brochures, flyers and factsheets;
- book—final publication (2028—year-end);
- two series of Policy Briefs—**1** target audience: EU local policymakers; **2** target audience: EU institutions;
- research papers on—Participatory Approaches in Culture and Social Innovation; Cultural and Ecotourism Destinations; CCS in small cities and rural areas; Large cultural events and sustainable development.

The Executive Team and the M&E Coordinator will lead the main tasks and results of dissemination. However, the strategy of PDL–Azores2027 will draw heavily on developing a robust collaborative network for products and their dissemination. In this regard, we highlight the role of the University of the Azores, its professors, researchers and students as relevant stakeholders of the learning community we will create, with particular relevance in producing knowledge about the project's results.

Following the agile M&E approach, the dissemination of PDL–Azores2027 will be done from the early stages of the process, becoming an integral part of the entire workflow developed between 2023–2028 and beyond. We will disseminate our conclusions not only to give back what we built collectively but also to inspire, create bridges, and sow seeds to dream of new cycles.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Success will look like:

- achieving the objectives, outcomes and impacts of PDL–Azores2027, adding to what one might expect many other positive unexpected effects, and, of course, minimising any negative results—the foreseen and the unforeseen;
- reaching multiple layers and contours at different times and for different people, positively impacting people and professionals on their practices and provoking new eruptions, shakes, waves and winds in culture, society, territory and the economy;
- new governance platforms emerging from PDL–Azores2027 to be consolidated and expanded as a practice within the context of public policies;
- defining and materialising new socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable human-nature relationships;
- setting a multi-scale accomplishment for Ponta Delgada, the Azores and Europe;
- staying human, going natural and coming together. Quoting Edward Everett Hale: *Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.* And we want to work together with Europe for success!





Francisco Afonso Lopes is a doctor whose many, many interests keep him away from practising medicine. He dabbles in screen and playwriting, acting, directing and being a cartoonist, a cultural jack-of-all-trades. Nature has no prejudice or shame in being ridiculous, he says. He is therefore attracted to peculiar natural

features like limpets or custard apples. In a way, he is keeping alive the tradition of prominent cultural figures like musician and filmmaker Zeca Medeiros or writer Vítorino Nemésio by acknowledging nature as the main literary character from the Azores.

03. Cultural and artistic content

Q5

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

The vision and artistic strategy of PDL–Azores2027 reflect the idea of **Human Nature**: Human means culture, whilst Nature means place. This programme celebrates our geography, the landscape and the uniqueness of our culture. It is an appeal for understanding and empathy. Between humans and non-humans, all that composes our nature. Our history, traditions and yearnings for contemporaneity come to life through a programme of worldviews. We intend to give them back to those who live on the islands and want to take them to the imagination of all Europeans.

As an outermost region, we want to take our limitations and integrate them to overcome them in our project. We know we are far from the centres of power and decision and far from the main markets. We have a small-scale economy and high exposure to natural disasters. Yet, now is the time to take our geographical position as an asset and change the narrative. Yes, we are isolated, but our insularity is becoming more and more of a centrality. Those who left are coming back. Newcomers arrive every day and take our culture forward. We went from forgotten land to land of well-being and peace, an attractive European refuge between land and sea. We want to become the meeting point between Europe, the Americas and Africa, a laboratory for humanity and biodiversity.

ARTISTIC STRATEGY

We will see people be the protagonists of a cultural and artistic programme. Nature will be our stage and field of thought and wonder. Nature and humans are intertwined, not apart, acting and thinking together in the leading roles. The two together will create an experience of astonishment with all the ingredients to pull the rug out from local and European audiences.

The territory will turn into a playground, an academy and a stage. We will play, learn, think and discover through a programme that unfolds on different scales. We will go from intimate to collective experiences, crossing different geographies and connecting Ponta Delgada to São Miguel Island, the Azores, and of course, Europe and the world. We are already building those bridges!

There will not only be events in the usual places but also where you least expect them, allowing people of different communities and backgrounds to get involved, intersect, and find each other and their own place. After all, we only love what we know.

Yet, we will also go towards the unknown. Fearlessly and taking risks. We will take over the digital world. We will involve and reach out to new audiences and propose new ways of participation. We will present emerging voices and hidden places. We will support artists, producers and citizens of all ages to co-create. Volunteer, spread the word, act out, take the stages and mingle with each other. We will initiate new connections, decentralise and break institutional borders. We will create a cultural movement. That movement will come with new rhymes: challenge will rhyme with tenderness, sustainability with responsibility, regeneration with care, transformation with joy. All Human. All Nature.

On the way to the ECoC year, we have a lot of learning and strengthening in the works to deliver the cultural and artistic programme. The team, the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS), the hospitality professionals, and all that will enter the conversation. Breaking the timeframe and geographical moulds of our cultural and artistic programme, we are going **Beyond Time and Space** to implement toolkits and mechanisms to empower and strengthen the CCS and guarantee national and international participation. The artistic strategy will have the support of a cultural capacity building programme to put our abilities to the test and welcome new skills. We will learn from each other and Europe by knowing how to play in the international arena, engaging in sustainable cultural practices, developing toolkits for community leaders, creating new possible futures for youngsters and much more. We must also remember that we will go digital and take this programme across the archipelago and the world. We need to ensure that our artists and creatives have places to work in the city and the islands, which is why we will activate different platforms connecting resources and available working spaces.

Our vision and artistic strategy come down to four programme lines, and each line is an archipelago— **Creativity, Participation, Europe and the World, and Nature**—in which culture will be the force for true transformation through cooperation. We will reconnect with ourselves

and reconcile with the environment. Heal past and present wounds. Open future windows. This utopia is not just ours. Europe needs it to move forward with hope and imagination.

We see the artistic and cultural programme as a work in progress which will change, expand and be further detailed during our ECoC's run-up years and implementation. What we think is possible often tends to be limited by what we know has already happened before. Hence, we will not be gatekeepers of tomorrow nor colonisers of the future. We will leave room for other perspectives and voices and alternative paths to understanding the world. We will keep encouraging local and European communities to start seeing themselves as active shapers of their futures rather than just passive recipients of someone else's grand vision. We will enable people to realise the power of their imagination and how much the vision should be theirs. Our artistic vision and strategy will evolve continuously and integrate multiple coexisting visions. We trust the future will bring us incredible imaginations about possibilities, other worlds, parallel timelines, and parallel periods.

Each project mentioned below has confirmed and planned national and international partnerships. For each section of **Beyond Time and Space** and each programme archipelago, we present an estimated budget. For each project, we indicate how much of the overall archipelago budget goes to this specific project, showing one of the following:

- € means (€0 – €75.000)
- €€ means (€75.000 – €250.000)
- €€€ means (€250.000 – €500.000)
- €€€€ means (above €500.000).

Q6

What is the structure of the cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities and the main events that will mark the year, including project partners and estimated budget?

The ECoC year will open in January 2027 and close in December 2027. The cultural programme consists of three seasons which will incrementally reveal four archipelago programme lines. All the archipelagos are interconnected and complementary, telling a narrative of Europe, the Atlantic Ocean, the Azores and Ponta Delgada. Together, they converge in endless possibilities and dialogues.

We are taking **PDL–Azores 2027 off-site** by promoting cultural programmes in mainland Portugal and Europe that showcase Azorean arts and culture, crossing paths and cooperating with national and European partners. The cultural programme will start in 2023, with several tools, projects and mechanisms that will transversely support **Human Nature** in our ECoC's build-up years and in 2027.

Beyond Time and Space— we build capacity, connect dots and futures, go digital and fully European

CAPACITY BUILDING

Human Academy (HA!) is our nomadic capacity building programme open to the creative and cultural stakeholders of private and public institutions, social workers, teachers, students, decision-making bodies and others around the region. **HA!** aims to fill up current and future needs in the broad CCS by providing toolkits and knowledge in different formats of workshops, assemblies, or seminars—formal and informal—through four campuses:

People's campus wants to be in between the community and its cultural services, providing tools to work on participation, volunteering, hospitality, inclusion, accessibility, activism, leadership, democracy, co-decision and co-creation, i.a. This campus is open to every member of the civil society;

Matter & Facts campus wants to raise experts on the technical aspects of cultural production calling for anyone that wants to improve their working skills, including lighting/sound design, exhibition set-up, set-design, digital tools, i.a.;

Creative campus supports the CCS by developing skills in communication, audience involvement, cultural management and administration, partnerships, funds, programme design, cultural exchanges, european dimension, i.a.;

More-than-Human campus focuses on the interspecies relationships and chores we must nurture in our daily and professional life. This campus includes eco-conscious planning and programming, eco-creation and production, Zero Waste, regenerative design, i.a. We are calling for decision-making bodies, activists, social and environmental NGOs, creatives, the university, schools, and others.

On every campus, **HA!** will bring together people from different walks of life and professional and geographical backgrounds to teach and transfer knowledge. It will include universities, local museums, NGOs or relevant national institutions such as **Fórum Dança** and **Acesso Cultura**. We will work with transnational partners such as **InterArts (ES)**, **Platoniq Lab (ES)**, **On The Move (EU)**, **Trans Europe Halles (EU)**, **EFA – European Festivals Association (EU)**, and **MitOst – Citizenship in Action (EU)**. We will collaborate, exchange and benefit from several ECoCs experiences in capacity building, such as **Kaunas 2022**, **Tartu 2024**, **Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024**, **Nova Gorica – Gorizia 2025**, **Oulu 2026**, **Budějovice 2028 – Candidate City** and international specialist partners. **HA!** will also strengthen the collective know-how of our ECoC team and benefit from the presence of professionals involved in the artistic projects by engaging them as experts on our campuses. We piloted **HA!** in 2022 with three capacity building opportunities on Art and Community Participation, European Funds, and Sustainability Practices in the Creative and Cultural Sectors. This pilot had partnerships with **Sustain Azores**, **Tartu 2024** and **Oulu 2026**.

Capacity Building Estimated Budget: €400.000

CONNECTING DOTS AND FUTURES

Nó is a digital platform that gathers information about existing and new spaces for artistic creation, presentation, and accommodation. **Nó** aggregates available spaces to host artistic productions, such as theatres, galleries, libraries, and other unconventional spaces. We want this **database** to become an enabler resource for the work of producers and artists before, during and after the ECoC. **Nó** will also act as a catalyst of community involvement, creating multi-connections between artists, their hosts, the spaces, their residents and their creations. **Nó** will challenge property owners and accommodations to join this network. They will even get a customised label—Artist Friendly! The project will begin in 2023, disseminating it in the community, reaching the local authorities and stakeholders, pointing out its objectives and advantages, challenging the public and private sectors to join the initiative, and mapping all the available spaces in the region. We want **Nó** to be in constant expansion, allowing for new information and opportunities such as human and material resources, transportation, food and equipment. We will design a business plan to make sure this platform expands and prevails in time.

Hand in Hand is a programme that supports projects, on a micro-financing basis, to promote the cooperation and collaboration between islands and municipalities, the rapprochement of generations, the inclusion, active participation and empowerment of different communities, the relationship between culture and well-being, nature and sustainability and new ways of telling Azorean narratives to Europe and the World. We have piloted this programme in partnership with **CRESAÇOR – Regional Solidarity Economy Cooperative**, aiming to reach new audiences through new forms of participation that empower, include, produce knowledge and make culture accessible. Through an open call, we challenge citizens (from 16 years old on), informal groups and associations to submit small cultural, social and educational proposals across the Azores. **Hand in Hand** launched in 2021, and a second edition happened in 2022. The first eighteen selected projects took place in all nine islands of the Azores. Some of the proposals selected in 2021 and 2022 include a giant compass with information about neighbouring islands, itinerancy of theatre shows, an exchange of musicians of different musical genres, a collection of stories of women from the Azores, a set of postcards or the construction of a community herbarium. We will continue it every year to reach more artists, communities, cultural stakeholders, and anyone wanting to connect with cultural practices.

Emerge is a funding model to support emerging artists to strengthen their creative careers while obtaining exposure to new and diverse audiences. We aim to invest yearly in nine young creators from different artistic disciplines. This financial support can endow new creations, exchange programmes, training or art residencies, acquiring new materials, and portfolio printings. This fund will be available through an open call to musicians, architects, visual, performative and literary artists under 35. Every year, we will create a platform to exhibit and share the different projects developed. **Emerge** will be launched in 2023, and we expect it to be a ECoC legacy. To that end, we intend to bring other city councils and local economic stakeholders to co-fund this initiative and take social responsibility.

Connecting Dots and Futures Estimated Budget: €370.000

GOING DIGITAL, GOING EUROPEAN

Waves of Culture will be PDL–Azores2027's digital stage and gathering space for the world to experience and participate in our ECoC. The world we are living in has been creating more islands than archipelagos, more distance than closeness. Hence, we are approaching hybrid platforms as opportunities to democratise culture and use content and digital tools as a vehicle to disseminate new ideas, involve audiences and promote real-life gatherings. **Waves of Culture** is a hybrid platform that allows a global audience to experience an inside view of our ECoC. It uses digital tools to think beyond physical borders, activating worldwide partnerships and allowing a global audience to experience **Human Nature** and contribute collectively from their local community. Yes, we will have embassies in our diaspora and throughout Europe, and we will know about their thriving communities from their own storytelling. It will promote new dialogues, co-creations and interaction between numerous partners and communities. We will be broadcasting online some of our ECoC's main shows, and the artistic and cultural programme will expand itself on this platform. We will showcase transmedia content, bridging talent, cultural institutions, brands and audiences. It will connect the onsite and the online and promote connectedness and broader accessibility. This is our innovative way to present untold stories, gather communities beyond physical borders and experiment with the future with uncanny, unimaginable and never-ending artistic possibilities. Luís Fernandes, who has been working across Europe for more than 10 years in innovative formats—TV channels, online platforms and creative events—will be the head of this platform. The project will have strategic partnerships with Telecom Companies, the worldwide network of Houses of the Azores and independent venues and cultural spaces spread across the globe.

9 Bairros [which translates to nine neighbourhoods] is a participative digital platform focused on connecting people. With interviews, profiles of artists, chronicles, podcasts, video performances, recipes, island itineraries, playlists, drawings, state-of-the-world discussions, and a collection of clouds. After two pilot editions in 2021 and 2022, **9 Bairros** had its first printed yearbook edition. An archipelagic magazine now stands in libraries, coffee shops, museums and waiting rooms around the region, reaching more readers in the Azores. We want it to evolve to a rotating newsroom that puts the responsibility of developing editorial content on people of all islands. As 2027 comes closer, **9 Bairros** will become a digital forum and a journalism exchange academy with a strong presence of local and international youth. This project improves the mutual understanding of the singularities and commonalities between islands and *the islands inside the islands*, and it connects us to new faces, new voices and an essential diversity of points of view.

Going Digital, Going European Estimated Budget: €650.000

Our Opening and Closing ceremonies will be more-than-human

OPENING WEEK (JANUARY)

PDL–Azores2027's opening involves all of the Azores: the 600+ km that connects Santa Maria to Corvo and the 600 years of becoming European with the arrival of the Portuguese. Representatives of the various European bodies, the 2027 EU presidency, and Liepāja 2027 will all be our guests. Our opening week will depart from the city to reflect the entire region in an event everyone can relate to. Each municipality will create their own opening celebration. We will progressively set the atmosphere and make a collective call.

Church bells ring, and boats blow their horns. Street light ornaments are on, and we share warm food—comfort and bliss. Yet, humans do not act alone; nature acts with us. Hence, a vision for the future: nature invades our urban and humanised shared spaces. A more oxygenated and greener city appears. We set the path for a sustainable, regenerative and balanced ECoC year. Trees grow in the streets, ivy plants cover walls, and weeds burst from every corner of our urban fabric. People are welcome to exhibit our regional and worldly flora in their windows and balconies. Flowers, cedars, and wooden shavings create geometric patterns decorating our street grounds and exhaling an inebriating perfume. Abandoned green areas are restored, creating magical gardens. Extinguished species come back to life. Everyone and everything gets camouflaged. **Ars Electronica** will help us employ technology, video and lights to cover the facades of our iconic buildings in green, making us dream of the mythical Atlantis we once were or can be again. The sound of nature bursts in waves, whales, winds and birds. We have never seen nor ever been to this place before, but we want it to last.

As the week progresses, a more curated programme involving local and international artists comes to fruition. We slowly focus on the port of Ponta Delgada, our Coliseum, and the opening show. We will broadcast and screen it live, gathering people together in halls and squares across the region: music plays, and we are *all together now*. We promise a beautiful human and natural Opening Week.

Estimated Budget: €€€€

CLOSING CEREMONY (DECEMBER)

We will invite back several European bodies and the cities of France, the Czech Republic and Macedonia that will host the ECoC 2028 in a symbolic handover of the title with various artistic moments. We know there will be music, and we will convey the spirit of culture and Europe. However it is framed, we will leave this as a surprise for the very end of our ECoC year. Yet, we now know one thing. We will want to see the faces, the bodies and the many human stories we have collected and shown throughout the year. Maybe everyone will pause for a minute. We will stop to watch, acknowledge and thank them. On our way home, we will know that after our ECoC, we are many more than we thought we were: a strong, cohesive, diverse, and inclusive collective.

Estimated Budget: €€€€



Our ECoC year will unfold in three seasons, which follow the different cycles of nature, culture and spirituality

Season I: EUROPE COMING TOGETHER

crosses the winter from January until April 2027

The programme will inaugurate a move from cultural isolation to cultural centrality: superhuman cultural togetherness. Let us call it **TogethEurope**. We will experiment with new heights of participation and cultural democracy by reinventing archipelagos of collaboration and our common European identity. We trigger intersections between distinct populations and geographies. Inclusion, tolerance, solidarity, and equality are the values of our city centre, invention parks and playful islands, where kids design imagination with their hands (and everybody's help), and youngsters make the future as they want. Together we will run for climate, social justice and a more sustainable future. Everyone. Because every single person matters.

Season II: EUROPE EXTENDING ITSELF

crosses spring and summer from May until September 2027

The programme will start by slow burning and then explode outwards, electrifying with sensory and immersive experiences in the great magical outdoors. Europe will extend itself to the Atlantic with hope. We call it **EurHope**. *Eurhope is becoming ocean*, roaming between the islands and discovering its *Terra Incógnita*. Industrial abandoned heritage is gaining new lives. Artists in all corners of the archipelago co-create and connect with communities. **Eurhope** is regenerating its future with nature at its most beautiful. Trees burst from fertile soils, walls of hydrangeas and inebriating smells. Divine. Devotional.

Season III: EUROPE BECOMING COMPLETE

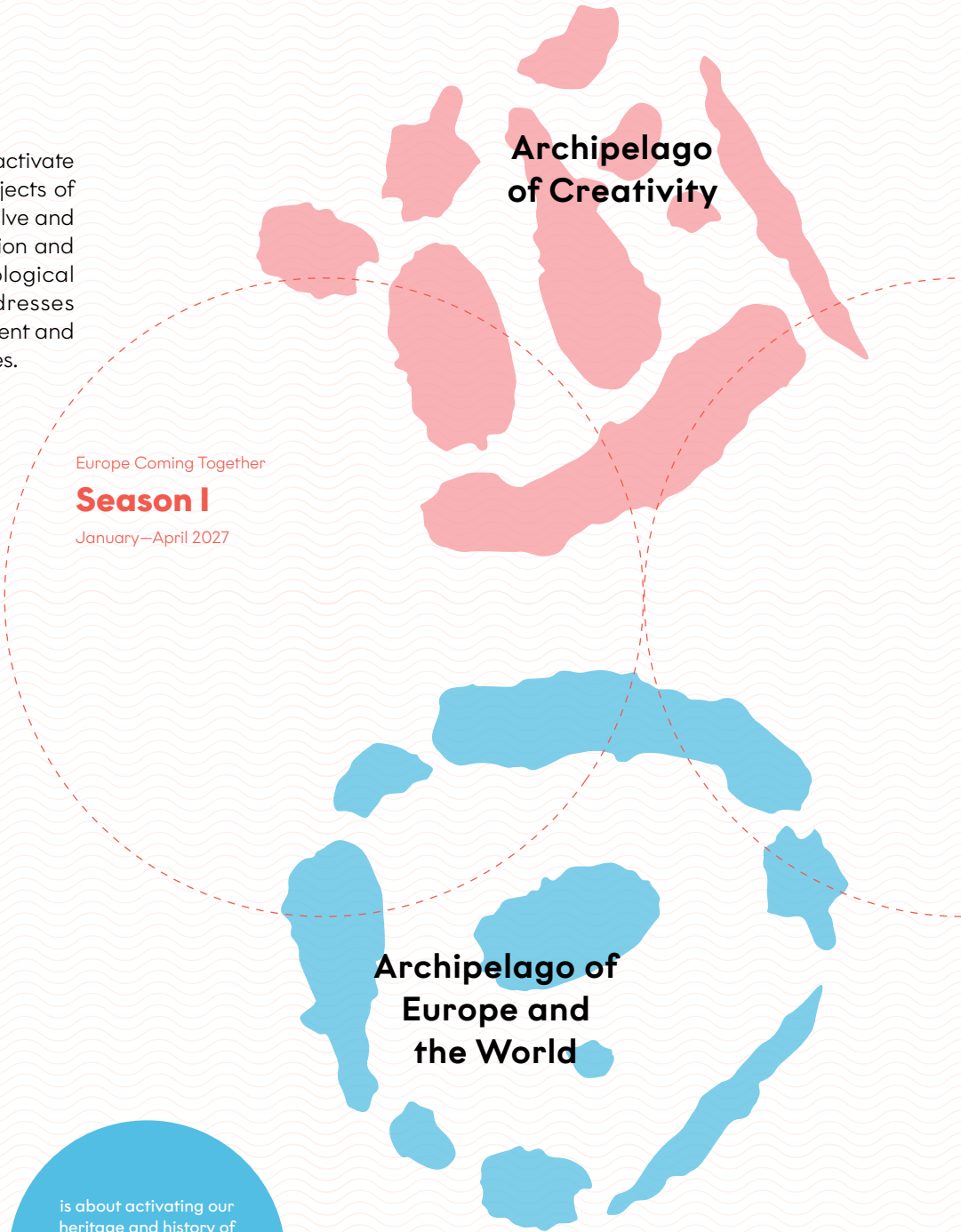
crosses the fall from October until December 2027

The programme will plant new seeds of thought as the European project is a work in progress. Heal past wounds, open new windows of connection and reinvent ourselves in the face of new challenges. The old continent will migrate to the archipelago to better understand its borders and possibilities. There, in the future, at a crossroads with a crisis in our hands and an opportunity to solve it, we will invent new islands, unite two hearts, remix the past with forward thinking and establish conversations to gain new perspectives. Let us call it **CompleEurope**. Dynamic, connected, and full circle.

The cultural and artistic programme consists of four archipelagos of conversation, co-creation and co-existence

Human Nature's four archipelagos activate a series of cultural and artistic projects of different expressions, seeking to involve and include creative forms of participation and activation. It is a human and ecological sustainability narrative that addresses European themes and values in current and future pivotal questions on the Azores.

is about artistic and cultural practices and actors at the forefront, breaking borders of geography and disciplines through cross-sectoral synergies with economy, science and well-being in rural and urban spaces.



Europe Coming Together
Season I
January-April 2027

- 10th ISLAND
- LITOSFERA
- TOP OF THE CHURCH:
SOUND OF THE ORGAN
- UNDERWATER EUROPE
- WE HAVE TWO HEARTS
- AZORES SLAVERY MEMORIAL
- TIPO
- DIVINE PATH:
DEVOTIONAL OBJECTS
BETWEEN THE ISLANDS
- EUROPEAN ARCHIPELAGO
OF CULTURE

is about activating our heritage and history of migration, mirroring our continent and connecting it to the future and other cultural latitudes.

9x9

- ARTAKEOVER
- CREATIVE INSIDE OUT
- THEATRE A-Z
- ALL TOGETHER NOW
- WALK&TALK
- TREMOR
- STATE OF GRACE
- MÚSICA NO COLÉGIO
- EUROPEANHOOD
- REGENERATIVE FUTURE

is about social cohesion through co-creation, inclusion, capacity building and co-responsibility for our cultural democracy.

Archipelago of Participation

- OPEN ISLAND
- ISLAND OF WOMEN
- MEXE-AZORES
- QUANT-TOS QUE-RES, QUANT-TOS QUE-REMS
- WE MATTER
- INVENTION PARKS FOR PLAYFUL ISLANDS
- CIRCUS HOLDING HANDS
- WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME
- PARALELO
- ANONA GAMES
- A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Europe Extending Itself

Season II

May–September 2027

Europe Becoming Complete

Season III

October–December 2027

Archipelago of Nature

is about a shared journey of hope, environmental protection and regeneration.

- BECOME OCEAN
- BODY OF THE LAND
- L(!)EAVING ME SOFTLY
- FLOWS
- FOREST OF FICTION
- TERRA INCÓGNITA
- THE OVERVIEW EFFECT
- MOVING ECOLOGIES
- CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN
- GREEN GARDENS inFEST
- SONA INSULARO

Jesse James is a curator and cultural programmer that lives between Ponta Delgada and Lisbon. He is the co-founder of Anda&Fala Cultural Association, and the co-director of Walk&Talk – Arts Festival and vaga – space for art and knowledge. His favourite places on the island are usually in its edges, because of their expansive quality, energy and movements of intersection. He has been discovering landscapes and places that make him want to explore further other rhythms and sources of knowledge. His projects with Anda&Fala are territory-oriented, tackling ecological, inter-species and decolonial issues.



Archipelago of Creativity



- 9x9
- Art takeover
- Creative Inside Out
- Theatre A-Z
- All Together Now
- Walk&Talk
- Tremor
- State of Grace
- Música No Colégio
- EuropeanHood
- Regenerative Future

Showcases a bold and vibrant cultural and artistic scene, strengthening its cultural capacity while attaining professionalisation and sustainability by engaging in cooperation and inventive and imaginative dialogues with other economic sectors. There will be interactions with research, technology, tourism, business and health places, whilst the creative economy will thrive in the city centre and our rural neighbourhoods. Creativity in this archipelago unifies a culturally fragmented region's singularities and narratives. It juggles scales of cultural intimacy with island-wide collective experiences. Not only is this our contribution to foster, treasure and cross creative borders between the urban and the rural, but also the possibility of creating more work and presentation spaces for the Cultural and Creative Sectors. Hence, we present you with a programme of unison, polyphony, encounters and gathering places, featuring nomadic, mobile and episodic projects. They will run in Ponta Delgada, the Azores and the archipelago of Europe.

ESTIMATED BUDGET: €3.855.000

9X9 – EVERY ARTIST IS AN ISLAND, EVERY ISLAND IS

AN ARTIST is an Artist-in-Residence (A.I.R.) project for artists of all creative disciplines and geographic horizons, happening in the nine islands. This year-round project runs with the **Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre** in partnership with cultural actors, venues, city halls, schools, science centres, and touristic units making artistic practices cross sectors of society and reach all islands. This way, no island will be more peripheral than the other. This programme tackles isolation issues and difficulties in accessing cultural experiences by telling new stories and uniting narratives. A pilot edition in 2021 saw nine artists being hosted in the nine islands to research local narratives from a global perspective. As an example, a Belarusian artist explored the true story of 17 people from Flores Island who sent a letter in 1919 to the US Government proposing the occupation of Flores Island by the Americans. He engaged with the families through photography and storytelling and asked, *What is the island of Flores for them today: is it Europe in America, or is it America in Europe?* **9x9** stems from collaborations with different regional and European partners around various common objectives: take the experience of artistic practices to the streets, places of science, education, business or nature; promote the active participation of communities in creative processes; resurrect abandoned places; tackle important and current European issues like isolation, migration, ageing of the population, restore tangible and intangible heritage and create bridges between traditional and contemporary cultural practices. Because *no artist is an island*, artists can collaborate to discover innovative methods that convey knowledge, promote experimentation and present solutions to challenges faced by all sectors of society. The art residencies will have variable extents: focus on research and creative processes, intersect other PDL–Azores2027 projects and include moments of audience involvement and community outreach, which encourage capacity building and direct participation through talks, workshops, school visits and other formats proposed by the artists. International open calls will invite artists to engage and collaborate with different communities, addressing relevant European issues connected to the programme, plus working as facilitators of artistic experiences that attain local transformation. The programme will also send local and Portuguese artists to European partner institutions and cities, including other ECoCs.

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 and Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre (PT)
Cooperation Partners–National: Different municipalities of the Azores, multiple businesses, schools, science centres, tourism units and cultural venues around the region
International: Station Narva (EE), Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries of Cape Verde (CV), Trans Europe Halles (EU), Res Artis – Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies (INT), On The Move (EU)
ECoCs and candidate cities: Creative Industry Košice – Košice 2013 (SK), Nova Gorica – Gorizia 2025 (SI/IT), Trenčín 2026 (SK), Liepāja 2027 (LV), Clermont-Ferrand – Massif central 2028 – Candidate City (FR) and Skopje 2028 – Candidate City (MK)
Timeframe: 2023–2028 (yearly open calls), 2027 (seasonal open calls)
Estimated Budget: €€€€

ARTAKEOVER celebrates the creative talents of local and transnational artists and makes artistic practices accessible to everyone everywhere. We will flood our city streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces with several initiatives.

Mala [suitcase] is a Euro-American festival designed for kids and adults with shows that fit inside of a suitcase. Why a suitcase? To enable travel and mobility and stimulate creativity. It features theatre, contemporary circus, theatre of objects, music and dance. The festival, selected among the projects in our open call, will take place along the northern coast of São Miguel—a maritime and rural area, with little cultural offer. **The Cine-Teatro Açor** in Capelas, currently under renovation and cultural reactivation, will be the heart of the festival. The shows will appear in unconventional spaces, in a close bond with nature. Open calls and invitations will go out to Azorean, European, American and island artists with the support of international institutions and organisations. The festival offers face-to-face and online workshops with acting techniques, building performance objects from natural and recycled materials, dramaturgy and movement. In addition, there will be a community theatre performance, directed by Claudio Hochman, with the participation and co-creation of local children and young people.

Eye For An Eye is a takeover of public advertising spaces, urban framework, daily newspapers and the digital realm to propose a visual exhibition by **Bruí Gallery**. The project reflects on the complex Portuguese colonisation, human occupation of land and its impact on the landscape, territorial organisation and way of living, drawing parallels with artists and archives from the islands of the Azores, Cape Verde, Canaries, Japan, Timor and Anjediva. An online platform will complement a visual itinerary on São Miguel Island to disseminate the project to different geographies and audiences. The artists will get selected through an open call with the support of international foundations to critically recreate and give new meaning to images from public and private collections.

High Street is a multidisciplinary cycle of performances and installations in several locations on the main shopping street in town: cafés, shops, businesses and social premises. The theatre company **Cães do Mar**'s project explores the other side of the city—the micro and private spaces—bringing the ECoC's programming to those who make the local everyday life. Through traditional and contemporary performative approaches, synergies flow between local and international scenic artists and city life, producing and conveying new narratives and images that connect the past, present and future, reimagining the stories of familiar spaces. The stories and memories of those who have lived, worked or been in touch with the streets are true inspirations for performances and installations. This format called Theatre of Place was introduced in the UK by the theatre company **Talking Birds**, a partner in this project.

Promoted by Carlota Blanc (PT) and Claudio Hochman (AR/PT) – Cine-Teatro Açor, Bruí Art Gallery (PT) and Cães do Mar Theatre Company (PT)
Cooperation Partners–National: Oficinas de São Miguel, Casear Creation, Cooperativa Kairós, Parish Council of Capelas, Norte Crescente, local advertising companies, newspapers, schools and shops
International: Talking Birds (UK), Cascoland (NL), Assitej (HT), Atina (AR), Unima Valencia (ES), Mindspace (HU), Heritage Europe – European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EU) and Everyday Projects (INT)
Timeframe: From 2025 to 2028, with a further increase in 2027
Estimated Budget: €€€

CREATIVE INSIDE OUT is a project that creates space for creativity to thrive in the city centre of Ponta Delgada. As the city is going through an ongoing rehabilitation process, we want it to be a favourable place for retaining and settling creative and cultural talent with a clear impact on its daily life. PDL–Azores2027 will gain by becoming a centre for creative experimentation and display of the artistic production that thrives in the territory, in close articulation with the local commerce, the tech sector and creative economy European partners. The project will drive forward with a **Culture and Creative Industries Factory** through the concession of spaces for young artists, digital nomads, cultural associations and creative companies in a co-working and collaborative format. **The Factory** will be a hub that combines tech, green economy and digital solutions to empower the creative sector through cultural hackathons, tech learning & skill development sessions—an interconnected place of art, tech and business that will remain a legacy. We will run an open call for an artistic director specialising in the creative economy and cross-sectoral collaborations. However, we want to go from Creative Quarter to Creative Downtown. Creativity will take over the city centre and temporarily occupy storefronts, squares with stages and streets with fairs where one can discover the latest products and creations. To conquer Ponta Delgada from the inside out, we remind you that we will also set in motion **Nó**, a digital platform of working spaces, human and material resources. The project will benefit from the growing creative dynamics of O Quarteirão—the artist-run creative quarter located in the heart of the city—which hosts restaurants, galleries, small boutiques, craft shops, hostels and social associations. When hosting the ECoC title, we want O Quarteirão to be the headquarters for pop-up exhibitions, ephemeral street takeovers, open studios and workshops for children and young people about DIY and creative entrepreneurship. The city will become smarter through cultural proposals that foster the occupation of public outdoor spaces and promote socialising in a post-global pandemic era, making it more welcoming for families, children, young people and seniors.

Promoted by Ponta Delgada Municipality and PDL–Azores2027 **Cooperation Partners—National:** Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ponta Delgada, Startup PDL, Nonagon, local artists, galleries, festivals, tourism companies and businesses **International:** Platoniq Lab (ES), MateraHub (IT), Medialab Katowice (PL), Mindspace (HU), EBN – European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EU), European Creative Hubs Network (EU), MitOst – Citizenship in Action (EU) and Climate Designers (INT) **ECoCs:** Creative Industry Košice – Košice 2013 (SK) and Trenčín 2026 **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 and stays as a legacy **Estimated Budget:** €€€€

THEATRE A-Z is a ten-day archipelagic theatre festival that brings contemporary European dramaturgy and performing arts to the centre of the Atlantic. The festival will depart from Ponta Delgada's prime cultural venues, such as Coliseu Micaelense and Teatro Micaelense, and extend to the region through the touring of different performances, bringing a myriad of conventional and unconventional theatre spaces back to life. One of our curators will cover the programming and articulate the several branches of the project.

It will stimulate theatre experiences in amateur groups and schools, revive and value the theatrical repertoire and popular forms in the Azores, support the emergence of new authors, and infuse the sector with capacity building and knowledge. The project stems from multiple conversations with cultural stakeholders, emphasising the need to foster and strengthen the performing arts community that comes from being affected by the difficulties in collective gatherings and physical distance regulations. **Theatre A-Z** will follow after a workshop programme with artistic and technical training in alignment with **HA!**, our cultural capacity programme. Artists and technicians will receive training in lighting, sound, production, acting, directing and dramaturgy. Programme-wise, the project will commission and co-produce new performances of regional and national artists and present contemporary artists envisioning the future of theatre and tackling issues of European relevance. We have already contacted outstanding European artists and got their interest in our Atlantic stages. **Philippe Quesne's Vivarium Studio** uses scenography as an ecosystem of theatrical innovation (and humour). **Miet Warlop** combines widely performative actions and the visual arts, proposing a singular artistic universe that interweaves and merges scenography, costumes, props and characters. **Rimini Protokoll** presents an expanded and cutting-edge theatre involving technology and interaction to shape new perspectives on reality. **Phia Ménard** showcases a multidisciplinary body of work stemming from her personal, social and political commitment to current issues in our society. In addition, we want to tell the phenomenal story of the cargo ship shipwrecked on Faial Island with a bunch of theatre props from Giorgio Strehler's *Harlequin: The Servant of Two Masters* from **Piccolo Teatro di Milano**. This story must come out, and of course, cross Europe!

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 **Artists:** Philippe Quesne/Vivarium Studio (FR), Miet Warlop (BE), Rimini Protokoll (DE), Phia Ménard/Compagnie Non Nova (FR) and Piccolo Teatro di Milano (IT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Performing Arts Service – Serralves, local and regional theatre groups and artists **International:** Kunsten Festival des Arts (BE), New Theatre Institute (LV) and EFA – European Festivals Association (EU) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 and stays as a legacy **Estimated Budget:** €€€€

ALL TOGETHER NOW is a project based on philharmonic bands fostering new compositions, capacity building, experimentation and European exchange. With **102 philharmonic bands**, the Azores are the Portuguese region with the most philharmonic bands, which sustain a tradition that dates back to the 19th century. They also play a cultural and social role of public relevance with their music schools. The island of São Miguel alone has more than 30 philharmonic bands. An expert curator and several representatives from the different islands will take the lead, featuring several bands and initiatives. This project will mark the highlight moments of PDL–Azores2027 because there is no Atlantic celebration without a philharmonic band. The project fosters the training of musicians through a rotating academy with capacity building for band managers, plus new compositions and collaborations with other artistic disciplines and music genres. The project will invite other **European ensembles** to present their traditions and future forms across the Atlantic. It will count on a radio show and a digital platform to map and

connect the different bands and projects, mapping other European partners for future exchanges. **Lira Açoriana**—with young musicians from all nine islands—will tour the archipelago from east to west and visit Latvia to present a Euro-Atlantic repertory. Every month, on the same day and time, all around the archipelago, we invite bands, smaller sections and individual musicians to perform in churches during winter and bandstand squares in the summertime. Finally, we want to gather all the bands of São Miguel Island for the second time in history, honouring a concert from 1946 that gathered hundreds of musicians to celebrate Ponta Delgada's anniversary. Our summer highlight will feature **Tim Steiner** forming a giant travelling philharmonic band procession with the various ensembles of the island. It will take over our Avenida Marginal and finish with a genuine *all together now* by our Portas do Mar Amphitheatre. Steiner worked with professionals, amateurs and beginners, from BBC shows to the 2009 Paralympic Games and Guimarães 2012.

Promoted by PDL—Azores2027 **Curated by** Marco Torre (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Philharmonic Bands of the Azores and the diaspora, Antena 1 Radio Station, Angra's Diocese, A Música Portuguesa a Gostar Dela Própria [cultural association], Regional Directorate for Culture, and the municipalities of the Azores **International:** IIN2 Digital Innovations GmbH (UK/DE) and Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra (NO) **ECOCs:** Bodø 2024 (NO) and Liepāja 2027 (LV) **Timeframe:** 2026–2028 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Contemporary Art Biennial, New Centrality
ISLAND – SEASON II

WALK&TALK is an international contemporary art festival turned biennial inscribing Ponta Delgada and the Azores in the regional, national and international art scene for over a decade. As an absolute cultural landmark, **Walk&Talk** is motivated by creating new objects around the expanded field of the arts, in dialogue with the territory and the involvement of local and migrant communities, intersecting visual arts, performance, music, architecture and design. Since 2011, it has been making waves in the contemporary art world, crossing the archipelago through an Artist-In-Residence programme that has hosted hundreds of artists from multiple geographic and disciplinary backgrounds. The project operates in networks and participates in co-productions with similar structures, promoting a favourable environment for exchange, co-creation and, from this geography, the imagining of new centralities for contemporary artistic production. In 2027, Walk&Talk will last two months and occupy formal and non-formal exhibition and performance spaces on the island, presenting an array of artists whilst involving local, national and international partners. Walk&Talk proposes multiple rhythms, scales, and relationships that intersect in a programme dedicated to new artistic creation, which materialises in the presentation of installation and exhibition projects, permanent public works of art, performances, concerts, excursions and moments of sharing through conversations, lectures and workshops. A pavilion creates a point of articulation of its actions with the public, assuming this space as an artistic and architectural project. The pavilion will challenge a new interaction with the audience and the city, opening doors for exploring the heritage and cultural territory centred around Ponta Delgada to question and rescue spaces in the city and new ways of living it. Conceptually, the festival will start

from the North Atlantic and dedicate itself to new ecologies of knowledge and decolonial issues linked to the fabric of relationships that form a shared cultural experience in a maritime territory. Additionally, in a partnership with the **European Festivals Association**, Walk&Talk will host the 2027 edition of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers to offer various training formats on festival management to young, dynamic and passionate festival makers worldwide.

Promoted by Anda&Fala (PT) **Artistic Direction:** Jesse James (PT), Luís Brum (PT), Sofia Carolina Botelho (PT) + guest curators **Cooperation Partners—National:** Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre, University of the Azores, Teatro Micaelense, Municipal Culture Centre of Ponta Delgada, Biblioteca Municipal Tomaz de Borba [public library], Caloura Cultural Centre, and several publicly accessible spaces (city squares, parks, gardens, natural reserves, beaches, i.a.) **International:** TBA21 – Academy | Ocean Space (IT), Raw Material Company (SN), Fogo Island Arts (CA), and EFA – European Festivals Association (EU) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Music Festival, Unimaginable Artistic Experiences
ISLAND – SEASON I

TREMOR is an international music festival that has been taking place since 2014 in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel Island and beyond. The festival has shaken up Azorean culture by fostering a music experience in the heart of the Atlantic, playing with the unimaginable, unexpected and unforgettable. Whether it be concerts in swimming pools, airports or terraces, artistic explorations in the middle of the wilderness, surprise concerts or full-day cultural immersions on other islands, this festival has no limits. Defined by several national and international publications as groundbreaking, experimental, utterly original and *one of the best festivals in the world*, **Tremor** presents a careful, risky and contemporary multidisciplinary programme of ingeniously curated art and alternative music experiences that merge with the island and its nature. Tremor sees the involvement of the local community as a central element of the festival, not as an add-on, and many hundreds of local citizens are involved in running the event every year. Local citizens want visitors to experience the island through its people. In 2027, the festival will foster the local creative scene, create space for emerging European talents, connect with other island festivals in Cyprus and the Canary Islands, and promote new artists, expressions and exchanges. The festival will also propose an academy dedicated to different aspects of the music business. Picture an excellent artistic programme anchored in music, artistic creation, inclusion, a programme for children and families, community involvement and creative tourism. Add to the mix a storytelling taste for tradition side by side with the disruptive and the foreshadows of the future, and you got it: in one of the weeks of our ECoC year, the local environment is the biggest star. The island itself and its many historic buildings become a stage. Music makes the ground shake and people shiver. In the end, nothing will be as it was before.

Promoted by Plutão Camaleão (PT) **Curated by** Luís Banrezes (PT), Márcio Laranjeira (PT) and Joaquim Durães (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Yuzin, Lovers&Lollypops, Coliseu Micaelense, Teatro Micaelense, Carlos Machado Museum, Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre and many other cultural venues, Ponta Delgada Municipality, Government of the Azores, local artists and businesses, national and international foundations **International:** ETEP – European Talent Exchange Programme/Eurosonic Festival (NL/EU), Fengaros (CY) and Keroxen (Canary Islands, ES) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

STATE OF GRACE is a multidisciplinary project centred around Ponta Delgada farmers' market— **Mercado da Graça** [Grace]—a bustling square, a constantly changing exhibition, a mirror of the Azores in the world and its crossings between nature and culture. Among commercial spaces and stalls, the best products are here—from meat to fish and vegetables, from flowers to cheeses, from fruit to crafts and popular culture. The information, exhibition and participatory space drawn for this project will host social and experimental encounters, namely tasting sessions, workshops and lectures about food, healthy cooking, and waste prevention. A mediation service creates interactions and opportunities with the visual and performing arts, promoting co-creation with nearby institutions for arts events, school workshops, immaterial heritage and slow-tourism services. The month's feature draws on nutritional and historical sessions, recipes, films, performances and arts and crafts intertwined with design. The story of producers and traders gets told through videos, photo exhibits (onsite and online), and talent shows—a barber here is also a *viola da terra* master! We aim to value our products and their protagonists—their history, production techniques, know-how and medicinal properties—by creating product sheets, a website and social media, merchandising, products, and island itineraries of the products sold in the market. Following the natural and cultural cycles, from 2025, the programme will involve events and pop-ups and activate open calls and European partnerships for temporary interventions. In 2027, art residencies will surprise, activate and reinterpret *the novelties*, i.e. the products/harvests of the season, setting off for connections, co-creation and digital encounters with other markets in the region and Europe. Science, economy, art, botany, farming, cuisine, history and even the diaspora come into play: the Azorean Manuel Eduardo Vieira is *the king of sweet potatoes* in the USA. In Season III, widely acclaimed Portuguese choreographer **Madalena Victorino** will create a show made of meat, vegetables, souls and other spices with a multigenerational and eclectic core artistic team and all the human wealth of the market. **State of Grace** invites everyone to meet people, learn, see, smell, eat and be surprised by the cycle of local and world production. After 2027 we will have a structure, content and contagious energy for the future.

Promoted by Maria Emanuel Albergaria (PT), Nuno Marques da Silva (PT), Catarina Ferreira (PT) and Blanca Martín-Calero (ES/PT) **Artists:** Marta Wengorovius (PT), Ana Pêgo (PT), Andrea Santolaya (ES), Madalena Victorino (PT), i.a. through open calls **History Researcher:** Conceição Tavares (PT) **Health Professionals:** Francisco Melo Bento (PT), Marina Couto (PT) and Marta Figueira (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Regional Directorate for Agriculture, Terra Verde Farmer's Association of the Azores, Carlos Machado Museum, University of the Azores (Master in Heritage and Museology), Araucária Publisher, Conservatório Regional of Ponta Delgada [music conservatory], Horta Farmers' Market, Cagarra and Teatro Micaelense **International:** Alliance Old Market Hall (SK), Cascoland (NL), Mindspace (HU) and Heritage Europe – European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EU) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

MÚSICA NO COLÉGIO is an orchestral and choral music festival held in the iconic setting of Largo do Colégio, in Ponta Delgada, since 2012. The five-night artistic programme is a cosmopolitan convergence point of cultures, nationalities and artistic movements, contemplating various themes, cultural promoters and ideas. Such an event in our city makes us feel as if we have just flown to Vienna, gathering a wide variety of spectators to introduce them to new sounds and cultures from all over the world. In 2027, the programme will present a Symphonic Night and an Azorean Night with regional artists from the several Azores islands working on the Azorean songbook. The Gala Night will feature the **Symphonic Choir of Coral de São José**, accompanied by an orchestra, soloists and a guest conductor, with a symphonic choral concert, welding musicals, the repertoire of specific countries and starring composers. In the meantime, new ideas are in store for the future. From a performing arts programme dedicated to the youngest to the inclusion of other artistic disciplines, creating interaction between music and movement, to inviting artists from Europe and Macaronesia, affirming the international dimension of the festival. The city centre will be the stage for the true force of nature that dwells when voices and symphonic music come together!

Promoted by Coral de São José (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Ponta Delgada Municipality, Choirs of Portugal – National Association, Carlos Machado Museum, Quadrvivum – Cultural Association, Government of the Azores, Conservatório Regional of Ponta Delgada [music conservatory], RTP Açores [regional public TV], Parish of São Sebastião and Parish of São José **International:** AC/E – Acción Cultural Española (ES), EFA – European Festivals Association (EU) and EUYO – European Youth Orchestra (EU) **Timeframe:** July 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

EUROPEANHOOD is a fashion and design living laboratory of experimentation and innovation that tells the story of the migration of peoples and the sea that unites us, embodying skills and tales of sustainability. The project, selected in our open call, draws its inspiration from the *capote e capelo*, an Azorean garment that bears witness to our connection with Europe and the World. Today a symbol of Azorean culture, it was a worn-up attire in the Azores until the mid-1930s. Some historians believe this hooded cloak was brought to the archipelago by Flemish settlers at a time when the Azores were known as the Flanders Islands. The *capelo* was the broad head covering supported by whalebone from the whaling activity with historical roots that go back to the 18th century when whaling ships from the US recruited crew in the Azores for their campaigns. The project also allows us to think about the sustainability of this costume. The *capote* would live on as an heirloom, which contrasts with fast fashion, one of the most polluting industries on the planet. We will invite international designers to research cloak and hood costumes used in Europe, looking for influences and techniques used in their design and handling. We will collaborate with the **Flanders District of Creativity** and launch an open call to select a Flemish designer to verify the theory that the cloak and hood were brought here by the Flemish. A programme of workshops, facilitated by international designers, will take place on São Miguel, Terceira and Faial islands, empowering local communities and young people to

create sustainable and creative fashion for everyday life and the archipelago's festivities. The focus will be on female fishing communities, in partnership with **UMAR-Açores**, to explore alternative sources of income to fishing, which is affected by the increase in marine reserves and the scarcity of resources. We are talking about dyeing with algae, a rich resource in the region, home to more than 400 species, and the use of fishing waste, contributing to a circular economy and reflecting on the importance of the ocean. The international designers will also document the sustainable practices and techniques they find on the islands. They will then team up in an artist residency and design the **EuropeanHood** with the support of local dressmakers, resulting in an itinerant exhibition.

Promoted by Joana Ávila – Begs & Bags (PT) **Designers:** Miguel Flor (PT), Charlotte McCurdy (US), Aleksandra Azbel (US) and Nienke Hoogvliet (NL) **Cooperation Partners—National:** SeaExpert – Azores, UMAR-Açores [Women's Union], The Portuguese Marine Bioresources Network – Bluebio Alliance, IADE – Faculty of Design Technology and Communication and the University of the Azores (School of Sciences and Technology) **International:** Cité du Design (FR), Fabric Arts Festival (US), Zeefer (NL) and Flanders District of Creativity (BE) **Timeframe:** 2025-2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Factory Lab, Activating Spaces, Sustainable Development
CITY – SEASON I II III

REGENERATIVE FUTURE is an international platform based in the Azores designed to co-create a future ethically and environmentally responsible, aiming to leave solid foundations for long-term sustainable development. In 2027, we are proposing the temporary occupation of deactivated industrial areas in the border areas of Ponta Delgada city—like the old factories of Santa Clara—to create **Space Base**, a place of knowledge, information, programming and gathering for our ECoC. This factory of ideas will be implemented from 2025 on with a Summer School. Each edition will focus on the future activation of these industrial spaces. There will be conferences,

laboratories, workshops and thematic routes organised with national and international partners such as the **University of Porto, Politecnico di Milano Summer School and Open Design School – Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation**. Together, we will transform these peripheral and expectant places into welcoming places for research, knowledge and encounters. After three editions, a long-term vision of the new possible lives of these spaces will emerge through sharing the results of the several training sessions. In addition, the new Space Base will respond to a need for multipurpose structures that will allow the implementation of independent projects. We will transform ruins into living epicentres to conjure an ecocentric vision in which we identify common problems, inspirational ideas, solutions and best practices in a diversity of disciplines towards an ecological footprint and a sustainable world. This bustling space will present a multidisciplinary programme inviting its participants to travel between the dimensions of territory, architecture, landscaping, design, heritage and handicrafts. **Passa ao Futuro** will organise art residencies with architects, designers, artists and craftworkers to work and develop innovative projects departing from craftwork practices. They will work with local materials, like Santa Maria's clay, the weaving of São Jorge or Terceira's wicker, crossing ancient processes and new techniques based on circular forms, which will become digitally documented and disseminated.

Promoted by Mezzo Atelier (PT/IT) **Artistic Direction:** Joana Oliveira (PT) and Giacomo Mezzadri (IT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Ordem dos Arquitectos [Portuguese Architects Association], REU-PDL – Reinventing the Urban Strategy of Ponta Delgada, Faculty of Architecture – University of Porto (FAUP), Passa ao Futuro [research-based cultural initiative], Colectivo Warehouse [architecture collective], CADA [Crafts and Design Centre of the Azores] and RARA [Craft Residence of the Azores Region] **International:** Politecnico di Milano (IT), RISD – Rhode Island School of Design (US), Space Caviar Studio (IT) and Architects Declare (INT) **ECoCs:** Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation (IT) and Trenčín 2026 (SK) **Timeframe:** 2025-2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€



Founded in 1863, Banda Fundação Brasileira is the second oldest running philharmonic band in São Miguel. Today, it has about 50 members between the ages of 11 and 65, and there is a 'hereditary' side to the band, since several members joined through their fathers. Culturally, being part of a philharmonic band used to be a masculine thing, but mentalities have changed, and there are a lot of girls in the band now. It was founded in the Mosteiros parish by a man who had emigrated to Brazil, where he made a fortune. Upon his arrival, besides the band, he invested in his hometown, on the western tip of Ponta Delgada Municipality, by building a bridge and two schools (one for boys and the other for girls). Banda Fundação Brasileira inaugurated its new headquarters in 2021, where they promote music, stand-up comedy and circus arts.



Archipelago of Participation



- Open Island**
- Island of Women**
- Mexe-Azores**
- Quant'tos Que-res, Quant'tos Que-remos**
- We Matter**
- Invention Parks for Playful Islands**
- Circus Holding Hands**
- We Are Running Out of Time**
- Paralelo**
- Anona Games**
- A Seat at the Table**

Is about the right to access and engage in cultural and artistic practices, placing them at the centre of everything and everyone's lives. This is the archipelago of people. Drawing from affection and solidarity, communities celebrate their culture through collaboration and co-creation. It is our move to overcome physical, economic, social and intellectual obstacles and regenerate Europe's sense of the collective through mutual understanding, social cohesion and cultural democracy. The projects provide a set of tools to involve new audiences, mixing diverse people in cultural projects—from several age groups and disadvantaged communities to people with disabilities—not as mere spectators but as participants and leading protagonists that take the reins of their initiatives, narratives and places of speech. The projects stand for gender equality, diversity, inclusion and trans-generational and social representativeness. We also expect participation to align with capacity building because knowledge is a source of empowerment and our ECoC's main legacy. We will promote the capacity for mobilisation, engagement and leadership in civic causes. From local to European and beyond, we will get to know so many new stories and voices that democracy will expand and vibrate!

ESTIMATED BUDGET: €4.505.000

OPEN ISLAND is a project designed to experience culture in full mode, promoting local and international talent. It is an invitation not only to feel the city by walking, biking and getting cars out of the way to enjoy artistic practices but also to decentralise cultural offerings to our rural neighbourhoods. Here is our plea for a decarbonised city—our own contribution to the 2050 European goal of becoming the first carbon-neutral continent—and for a better valorisation of the cultural potential of rural areas. We will invite local cultural forces and commerce to showcase a city of diversity through a cultural and artistic map with open studios, exhibitions, special sales, fair trade, tastings and parades. There will be soundwalks, guided visits, small concerts in private houses and book launches. Plus, you can count on collective dog walks and *World Cafes* in public spaces on green mobility, sustainability and inclusion in the spirit of the New European Bauhaus. Knowledge is hitting the streets, and we want to invite fellow ECoCs and European partners to come and participate in these discussions. **Open Island** will activate three times a year in winter, summer and fall, focused on bringing everyone together. And speaking of togetherness, we love processions, parades and marches, so count on a **9'Circos' Big Parade**, a **Tim Steiner's Philharmonic band extravaganza**, or a **Marinella Senatore's** performative procession.

This *cultural opening* stretches from the city to the country and sea-side with **Mapas**—a mobile cultural centre showcasing on-the-move local and international projects in rural and coastal neighbourhoods, during off-peak seasons, with photography, video and film exhibitions, performances, concerts, workshops, walks and installations. Through group programming sessions, communities will design their events and choose what they want to see taking place in their neighbourhoods. The programme takes shape with local initiatives, social entrepreneurs and community groups. We launch a participative, sustainable and inclusive vehicle that creates cultural itineraries and strengthens the inclusion of different communities, mapping the humanity and nature of the neighbourhoods and keeping track of people's stories, traditions and sense of place.

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 together with several Municipalities **Artists:** 9'Circos (PT), Marinella Senatore (IT), Tim Steiner (UK), i.a. different music, dance, circus artists and collectives **Cooperation Partners—National:** Azores DMO, Atlantic Bikes, Expolab – Centro de Ciência Viva [science centre], Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ponta Delgada, Parishes of São Miguel Island and Flamingo Imbatível [cultural association] **International:** European Creative Hubs Network (EU), EFA – European Festival Association (EU), MitOst – Citizenship in Action (EU), Ecsite – European Network of Science Centres and Museums (EU), Blind Signal Berlin (DE), Cascoland (NL), Mindspace (HU), MateraHub (IT), Medialab Katowice (PL) and Platoniq Lab (ES) **ECoCs and candidate cities:** Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation (IT), Tartu 2024 (EE) and Clermont-Ferrand – Massif central 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€€

ISLAND OF WOMEN proposes a transdisciplinary programme that presents festivals, capacity building programmes and community projects facing the global challenge of gender equality. The programme stems from the unfavourable social position of women in the region and the highest national numbers of domestic violence.

Firstly, a festival structured in three stages (artistic research and community engagement; a public programme with a performance festival; archive and

dissemination of knowledge), the project produces and presents contemporary and bold artists, raising discrimination issues and the status of women in culture and society. We shake the foundations of patriarchy by creating an intersectional frame to claim women's rights and defy preconceptions of gender. In our society, we build our image according to what people expect of us, which is what the Portuguese philosopher José Gil refers to as the *self-image*. The concept of *self-image* makes women silence their desires and submit to a patriarchal image of feminism. That is why only gender equality can make the world a sustainable place to live and a place where care is important. We can promote women's empowerment, intersectional conviviality, and equal access to resources and opportunities. How? Through active participation, co-creation, protest and awareness: a programme of performances, inspiring assemblies, a feminist digital archive, and toolkits to deal with power and oppression. European artists and activists such as **Raquel André**, **Paloma Calle**, **Leslie Mannès**, **Ana Vujanovic**, **Edit Kaldor** and **Maria Trabulo** i.a., are invited to present and create works on feminist knowledge ecologies. **Maria Emanuel Albergaria's A Big Clothesline in Sete Cidades** evokes the history of the laundresses through a big participative event with cloths and messages extended on a large wire along the shores of Sete Cidades' Blue Lake. This action will raise awareness about the contemporary environment and women's issues.

Other activities include an all-inclusive and accessible five-day invasion of women clowns in **Bolina – International Clown Women Festival**. Because humour belongs to humanity, there will be social and community clowns in hospitals, daycare centres and stigmatised neighbourhoods. Clowns will offer fun training for professionals and everyone and present shows in performance spaces and streets. The women clowns will play contemporary and classic themes, reflecting personal experiences, bringing the individual to the collective to resignify the world and show other ways of looking at reality. Bolina gives space and visibility to remarkable European and international clowns by supporting the creation of new shows and presenting artists such as **Gardi Hutter**, **Pepa Plana**, **Helene Gustin** and **Anna deLirium**.

Imprópria – Gender Equality Film Festival debates these topics in articulation with national and international institutions and associations of social solidarity. *Imprópria* presents film extensions in other islands, feminist workshops and a programme of social and community intervention in neighbourhoods identified in the Strategy Against Poverty and Social Exclusion. For one week, the festival fights prejudice and social stereotypes from an intersectional perspective, promoting access and conversations around gender equality.

ISLAND OF WOMEN Partners | Performance Fest promoted by Catarina Saraiva (PT) **Bolina promoted by** Maria D'Alegria (PT) **Imprópria promoted by** Silêncio Sonoro (PT) **Artists:** Raquel André (PT), Paloma Calle (ES), Leslie Mannès (BE), Maria Trabulo (PT), Ana Vujanovic (RS), Edit Kaldor (HU), Gardi Hutter (CH), Pepa Plana (ES), Helene Gustin (FR), Anna de Lirium (AT), i.a. **Cooperation Partners—National:** Public Library and Regional Archive of Ponta Delgada, UMAR-Açores [Women's Union], Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Festival de Mulheres Palhaças Tem Graça [women clown festival], several venues, schools, archives, museums, youth associations and ecological associations **International:** Walking Theory (RS), International Festival of Contemporary Arts – City of Women (SI), Circ Cric Festival (ES) and Public Libraries 2030 (EU) **ECoCs:** Broumov 2028 – Candidate City (CZ), Budějovice 2028 – Candidate City (CZ), Reims 2028 – Candidate City (FR) and Bastia–Corsica 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2026–2028. **Estimated Budget:** €€€€

MEXE-AZORES is a festival based on the idea that cultural and artistic participation should be transversal to all communities, triggering intersections between distinct populations and geographies. Its programme revolves around community forums with citizens, artists, collectives, curators, associations and institutions, creating formal and informal discussions between all stakeholders. The aim is for local communities to be protagonists in the co-creation processes of the festival's performances, programming, production and communication, creating the means for the autonomous development of projects. The festival, in a complementary approach between the face-to-face and digital formats, proposes art residencies, workshops, a thinking platform, performances, and 360° capacity building in a continuous act of affirmation of the different communities, their diversity and empowerment. The first phase of **Mexe-Azores** (2024–2025) will focus on capacity building with a connection to **HAI**, activating the collaboration with the **Universities of Porto** and **Évora** and international thinkers. The second phase (2026) will focus on the development of the production processes of the festival linked to similar festivals such as the **ICAF – International Community Arts Festival – Rotterdam**, **STPLN Project** or **TePI – Theatre and the Indigenous Peoples** approaching other ways of building and living the community. In 2027, imagine city maintenance workers dancing in uniform with their tools, or forest rangers with their chainsaws sharing stories about their work in nature in dialogue with the **Forklift Danceworks collective**. Imagine children and young people with school underachievement making music to the rhythm of a basketball with **Basket Beat**. Imagine a giant herbarium made up of plants from the about hundred nationalities of migrants of the Azores with **Rastros Diógenes**. Imagine a group of young digital ambassadors from the nine islands, together with computer programmers, building spaces of connection and broadcasting what happens at the festival. Imagine pilgrims transforming their path into a choreography co-created with **Filipa Francisco/Mundo em Reboição** or a group of retired fishermen and fishmongers working side by side with **Marco Canale** in a fishing port. These are some of the pictures we want to bring to life. **Mexe-Azores** will result from a partnership between PDL–Azores2027 and Mexe – International Art and Community Meeting, a platform that develops participative and community artistic practices in close collaboration with cultural operators within the resident communities. The evaluation of this project will focus on the quality of participation in artistic processes that convene communities, including the relationship with their local dynamics, supported by partner universities.

Promoted by Hugo Cruz–Mexe (PT) **Artists & Speakers:** Filipa Francisco / Mundo em Reboição (PT), Caterina Moroni (IT), Forklift Danceworks collective (US), Basket Beat (ES), Rastros de Diógenes (BR), Marco Canale (AR), Félix Dupin-Meynard / Montpellier University (FR); Pascal Gielen / Antwerp University (BE) and Liesbeth Huybrechts (BE) **Cooperation Partners–National:** University of Évora, University of Porto, several performance spaces, schools, NGOs and neighbourhood centres **International:** ICAF – International Community Arts Festival – Rotterdam (NL), Festival de les Arts Comunitàries de Catalunya – Barcelona (ES), TePI – Teatro e os Povos Indígenas (BR) and STPLN Project (SE) **Timeframe:** 2024–2027. **Estimated Budget:** €€

QUANT-TOS QUE-RES, QUANT-TOS QUE-REMOS is a non-formal participative learning project dedicated to the youth of the Azores. We encourage young people to participate in the programming of PDL–Azores2027 by co-creating their own learning programmes. By mapping the existing creative resources on the islands—both human and material infrastructure resources—this initiative fosters relationships between cultural stakeholders, creative communities, and local organisations—such as museums, galleries and theatres—transforming them into learning and training opportunities. In doing so, we will promote long-lasting cultural production as well as young cultural promoters and audiences on the islands. It will impact the young people's lives (both personally and professionally) as they will be given new horizons, with a sense of belonging. The methodology is based on co-curating a training programme with youngsters, offering them the chance to develop their local curriculums. Based on the interests and needs of youth, the project promotes their responsibility and empowerment, fostering the creation of networks of knowledge and practices in creative communities. In 2025–26, the project coordinator recruits and trains local mentors, creates a network of knowledge with human and physical resources, launches an open call for youngsters and starts working with artists in São Miguel and Terceira Islands. We will promote: training sessions with musicians, sound technicians and electricians in partnership with a school, a local theatre and a radio station; talks and workshops with visual artists will lead to the assembly of an exhibition in the public space; or work with tailors and a fashion designer to learn how to sew and upcycle clothes and set up a final pop-up store. Yet, let us leave it to the imagination of our future youngsters to define what they want to do and with whom they want to learn from. The project will be under constant evaluation, adaptation, monitoring and documenting. With the support of mentors, it will provide island exchange residencies, European partnerships, international artists visits and public events for the wider community, designed and conducted by the young participants. The project will come to a close with a two-island **Quant-tos Que-res Festival**, presenting their artistic takeover of projects and ideas for the future of the cultural life in the city and the region.

Promoted by Filipa Sousa (PT) **Artists/Facilitators:** Catarina Botelho (PT), Sofia Magalhães (PT), Thierry Simões (FR/PT), Albo Nascimento (PT), Kathi Stertzig (DE), Pedro Lino (PT), Albino Pinho (PT), Carolina Backlar (PT), Angela Diaz Quintela (ES), i.a. local, national and European visual and performance artists, architects and designers, filmmakers and audiovisual producers, cultural programmers, print artisans, welders and tinsmiths **Cooperation Partners–National:** Regional Directorate for Youth, Regional Directorate of Education, municipalities, cultural institutions (museums, libraries, cultural centres, i.a.) and local businesses **International:** MateraHub (IT), European Creative Hubs Network (EU), European Museum Academy (EU), NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations (EU) and Everyday Projects (INT) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

WE MATTER examines our human potential and several flaws in inclusion and unity by integrating three very dear resident companies in PDL–Azores2027, where everyone matters.

The Inclusiva Dance Company, led by dancer/choreographer **Catarina Medeiros** and **Estúdio 13 – Space for Creative Industries**, creates a professional context for dancers with Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and autism.

Through the DanceAbility method, dancers get technical and artistic skills in dance, therapy, mobility and communication to step on any stage with other dancers with different capacities. The project operates with local partners **APCSM (Cerebral Palsy Association)** and **Santa Casa da Misericórdia**. For our ECoC year, there will be open classes, social inclusion sessions in schools, and a performance programme with invited national and European choreographers.

Vibrate is a capacity building and community performance project led by **ondamarela**—an artist collective founded in Guimarães 2012—to cement a collaboration with the **Deaf Association of São Miguel**, various local and international artists and European deaf communities. As an open music and performing arts laboratory, it develops creative structures to support deaf people, encourage social intersections and exercise active citizenship. It involves different communities and is meant for everyone, nurturing a strong sense of belonging, mutual knowledge and artistic diversity. **ondamarela** works from who and what is in the room, establishing creative relations with guest artists and partner institutions. **Vibrate** provides a set of tools of knowledge and empowerment to work in community-based projects for people from specific communities, folklore groups, philharmonic bands and other social and artistic groups. This way, we will increasingly solidify a local community that can apply these tools and knowledge with autonomy. In addition, we will make sure the deaf community can mentor accessibility. From a process of identifying needs and obstacles, we will critically approach how to implement these changes in cultural and artistic practices and spaces. The project will lead to several workshops, performances in our programme highlights and a tour of Liepāja 2027 and other candidate cities to include more participants.

All the Mermaids Have a Fishtail focuses on the **Music School of Rabo de Peixe**'s ground-breaking social and cultural project of experimental jazz education for kids and teens in the fishing village of Rabo de Peixe. Through workshops and art residencies, they will perform and learn from international artists, take over the neighbourhood and develop music-for-all improvisation practices in the community. The school will appear in our stages in our three seasons whilst undertaking exchanges with other music schools, philharmonic bands, choirs and social workers. The kids will develop skills in improvisation, leadership and teamwork and move audiences with their talent.

Here is our cultural punch to raise public awareness of all social barriers and different abilities!

Promoted by **ondamarela** (PT), The Deaf Association of São Miguel (PT), Music School of Rabo de Peixe (PT), Catarina Medeiros (PT) and Estúdio 13 – Space for Creative Industries (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** APCS – Associação de Paralisia Cerebral de São Miguel [Cerebral Palsy Association], Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Ponta Delgada and Ribeira Grande, 37.25 NAP [Nucleus of Performing Arts], Tremor Festival, Government of the Azores, local schools and municipalities of the Azores **International:** InterArts (ES), European Union of the Deaf (EU) and The Everyday Projects (INT) **Potential Artists:** DV8 (UK), CiM – Dance Company (PT), Paul Griffiths (UK), Pete Letanka (UK) and ZA! (ES) **ECoCs and candidate cities:** Liepāja 2027 (LV), Broumov 2028 – Candidate City (CZ), and Brno 2028 – Candidate City (CZ) **Timeframe:** 2025–2028 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Children Creative Lab, Art Immersion, Community Power
ISLAND – SEASON I II III

INVENTION PARKS FOR PLAYFUL ISLANDS is a collaborative transdisciplinary programme for children to imagine, co-create, and express themselves through artistic, social and scientific experiments. Brazilian artist **Livia Diniz**, a former children's samba-school agitator, devised a playful system

with creative laboratories and immersions to be activated in cultural centres, urban and natural environments. These include the Nature Park of Pinhal da Paz, the Urban Park of Ponta Delgada and the António Borges Garden. The crossing of humans, non-humans, endogenous and reused materials create interactive spaces, fantastic costumes, mechanical creatures, musical instruments, inflatables, images and sounds. Combining low and high-tech knowledge, playful props and spaces will be designed to tell stories. The participants will use these artefacts to reshape ideas and realities and build desirable futures. It is a place to dare, make mistakes, feel free and learn from one another. It will welcome the islands' diversity, creating intersections, training and opportunities for people of all ages. The project entails a network of continuous and reciprocal learning processes that will strengthen pre-existing movements and pave the way for children to assume their roles as protagonists. Their families, artists, scientists, architects, educators, storytellers and the planet will be there to support them. In a collective experience, kids will start creating multilinear narratives to share their speculative worlds, while all participants will research and engage in several challenges to make their inventions come to life. These invention parks foster collective intelligence and set the stage for local and international cooperation. We will mobilise LGBTQI+ communities, seniors, school dropouts, people from rural areas, immigrants, refugees, and people with intellectual or physical disabilities. The right to participate in our parks will be accessible to all. From encounters with art-education and art-community initiatives, we will develop alternative ways of generating resources and actively participating in today's world in transition. New jobs and learning opportunities will be created, especially for teens who will make videos of the labs and produce online content made by children to children. **Invention Parks for Playful Islands** is an aesthetic, synesthetic and inclusive movement. These living laboratories, oneiric immersions and fantastic displays will improve bonds of connection and trust among communities. In 2027, our ECoC will become a playground of the future built by our gigantic little ones with a little magical help from many, many friends.

Promoted and Curated by Livia Diniz (BR/FR) **Artists:** Maria Lynch (PT/BR), Ernesto Neto (BR), hellolearth (DK), Isabelle Arvers (FR), Roger Bernat (ES), Renato Rocha (BR/UK), Clarissa Bauman (BR/FR), Katia Canepa (PE/US), i.e. local artists, educators, and architects **Cooperation Partners—National:** Expolab – Centro de Ciência Viva [science centre], UNICEF Portugal – Child-Friendly Cities Programme and (A) MAR – Açores Pela Diversidade **International:** AA Visiting School (UK), La Bulle Bleue (FR), sapotek (FR) Maraberto Filmes (BR), SDNA (UK), Reevo – alternative education network (AR), European Creative Hubs Network (EU) and Ecsite – European Network of Science Centres and Museums (EU) **ECoCs:** Budějovice 2028 – Candidate City (CZ) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Circus for Social Change, Juggling for Mutual Understanding
ISLAND – SEASON II III

CIRCUS HOLDING HANDS is a programme that shows the power of circus arts as a tool for everyone's participation, social change and human development. We will activate it through an all-inclusive and accessible European celebration of juggling and a social circus fest and lab. For over a decade, **9'Circos** has been developing circus as a personal and community development tool and a vehicle to boost artistic production in the Azores. In Season II, we will have the **European Juggling Convention 2027 (EJC)**, the biggest juggling convention in the world.

EJC is an eight-day event, an incredible opportunity to learn about juggling in a friendly crowd and a safe atmosphere of parity, equality, well-being, joy and community. We have **EJA's (European Juggling Association)** approval to turn PDL–Azores2027 into the European Capital of Juggling. Thousands of jugglers from all over the world will invade the Agriculture Association of São Miguel's complex. It will offer more than 200 workshops, galas, mind-blowing performances in nature, programmes for families and various stage and street performances showcasing extraordinary European artists, including LGBTQI+ and artists with disabilities. In season III, a **Social Circus Fest** will promote inclusion and social intervention. We are supporting a growing international movement of circus as a medium for social justice through alternative pedagogical tools to work with youth at social or personal risk of exclusion. Social circus expands the opportunities of its participants and teaches valuable skills to marginalised youth, seeking to alter the lives of those participating in it. There will be workshops and shows co-created with local youngsters and other European social circus projects. We will create a safe and multidisciplinary space of sharing and exchange, with open dialogues with the contemporary circus, music, dance, visual arts and acrobatic gymnastics. We will nurture a creative environment where young people with disabilities, substance abusers or at risk of social exclusion can access quality arts training, learn how to share these skills in their own community, benefit from social support, and develop their creativity. Not to forget that there will be window circus sessions in retirement centres and artists' visits and performances in Ponta Delgada's Hospital. We will transform our ECoC into a European stage, academy and laboratory of contemporary circus for all. Truly, for all!

Promoted by 9'Circos–Association of Circus Arts of the Azores (PT) **Cooperation Partners–National:** Divino Espírito Santo Hospital, Kairós [Cooperative of Incubation of Solidarity Economy Initiatives], Seara de Trigo Association, Cais do Remar Community Centre, Bolo do Caco Theatre Group, Lagoa Municipality, Ribeira Grande Municipality and Malatitsch **International:** European Juggling Association (EU), Katapult (DE), Zartinka (DE), Tenrock Teatro Circo (IT), Spinish Circus (ES), AVC – Associació Valenciana de Circo (ES), Green Meridien (LV) and Galway Community Circus (IR) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€€€

Manifesto Marathon, Running for Justice
ISLAND – SEASON II

WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME is a visual manifesto marathon that will take place on the island of São Miguel, divided into four courses (42.4 km, 22.4 km, 7 km and 3 km). It will pass through magnificent landscapes, volcano ridges and dirt roads. Anyone can participate—either by running or walking—because one alone cannot fight all injustice. As far back as 490 BC, legend has it that Athenian soldiers left Athens to fight the Persians in the First Medical War. The women waited in anguish for the outcome of the conflict: the Persians had sworn that, after the battle, they would march on Athens, rape all women and kill all children. With this threat in mind, the Greeks asked their wives, not having heard from their husbands for twenty-four hours, to kill all their children and then commit suicide. The Greeks eventually won the battle, but it lasted longer than expected. Worried, the Greek general Miltiades ordered his best runner, the athlete Pheidippides, to run as fast as possible to Athens, which was 40km away from the battleground. Pheidippides ran so fast that, when he arrived, he could only say

we have won, dying immediately afterwards. Inspired by this urgent race where the passing of a message was essential, the **We Are Running Out of Time** project was born. We Are Running Out of Time to fight for gender equality, against homophobia, transphobia and racism, to fight for a more sustainable world and climate justice, and for a world without war, hunger and domestic violence. Each participant's body provides visual support based on their watchwords and causes. After a pilot edition in 2021, the project defends intersectionality as a way of looking at the world, where art, sport and citizenship meet to generate spaces for encounter and dialogue. In the days before, we will paint the route with watchwords using stencil so that the streets can remember the following: A country without culture is a country without voice, Racism is not opinion, Protect the Landscape, My body is my choice, and many more urgent social and ecological reminders. We Are Running Out of Time will go digital through multimedia content conveying storytelling and activism, pivoting on an online platform for different institutions and individuals to share their message and attract participants. In line with the marathon, a meta-festival with concerts and events organised in collaboration with several institutions taking part in the marathon will seek to expand its message to a broader audience, thus creating a space for community and sharing around sport and culture.

Promoted by Anda&Fala (PT) **Concept by** ilhas studio (PT) **Cooperation Partners–National:** Endurance Sports Company, with the participation of several social and activist associations of São Miguel Island: Solidaried'arte Açores, CRESAÇOR, Azores for Diversity, APF [Family Planning Association], Pride Azores, AIPA [Association of Immigrants of the Azores], Kairós [Cooperative of Incubation of Solidarity Economy Initiatives], Novas Rotas School, A Alternativa [Association against Dependencies], Arrisca [Regional Association for Rehabilitation and Sociocultural Integration of the Azores], Novo Dia [Social Inclusion Association], Chima Hiro and many more **Potential Artists–International:** Waaq Waaq Kingdom (JP/DE) and Colin Self (US/DE) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €

Contemporary Dance Festival, Movement Academy, Everyone Dances
ISLAND – SEASON II III

PARALELO is a contemporary dance festival that enriches the sociocultural fabric of Ponta Delgada through an interdisciplinary, participatory and international programme. In 2027, expect high-quality European contemporary dance performances on stage and streets, video dance screenings, exhibitions, parties, jam sessions, special shows for the little ones and a workshop programme. Developed by our **3725 NAP, Paralelo** explores the past and present of this territory through contemporary dance, fostering a reflection on the role of art in the public space. Accessible, affordable and wild fun, the festival will bring dancers, choreographers and movement teachers, whilst audiences will move and circulate between locations. Dance becomes the artistic discipline that brings everything and everyone together, truly whoever moves to the rhythm of a beat. *If you can't dance to it, it's not your revolution.* Hence, people from very different social realities meet and experiment with folk, hip hop and the most diverse dance styles. The individual and collective body presents and celebrates itself with multiple approaches, causing traditional and avant-garde practices to merge and well-being and social dance practices to become interconnected. **Paralelo** will offer a strong *body moving body shaking* workshop programme. We will bring standout European repertoires such as **Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's** detailed relationship of movement and music. Portuguese and European new dance will come to

the fore with national and international partnerships with **Campus – Paulo Cunha e Silva, DDD, Fórum Dança** and **danceWEB**. An authentic dusk to dawn dance marathon with workshops, classes and choreography labs provides opportunities for movers and shakers of all levels. Audiences get invited to develop a relation to movement with their bodies as a whole. Art residencies with guest artists will create new opportunities for artistic creation and invite amateurs to participate and co-create. Open studio sessions will grant access to ongoing choreography research, demystifying creative processes, promoting artistic exchanges and sharing experiences. Before we get to the festival, 37.25 NAP will invite a European choreographer to premiere a new production for the ensemble and set the municipal dance floor with the **24 Centres** initiative. They will undertake performing arts laboratories and workshops with local institutions and communities directed to people with social vulnerability in the 24 neighbourhoods of the Ponta Delgada Municipality. The goal is to overcome social obstacles and prejudices concerning the most disadvantaged, overcoming barriers of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or religion through activities of learning, experimentation, and production of knowledge. The process will lead to the decentralisation of cultural offer, the enhancement of new rural cultural spaces, and new exchanges between neighbourhoods. In the end, a massive community performance will gather all 24 Centres in Paralelo. The festival will make a summer warmup in July and take over the city and its spaces during two weekends in September and October.

Promoted by Paralelo 38 – Cultural Association **Artistic Direction:** 37.25 NAP [Nucleus of Performing Arts] **Cooperation Partners–National:** Teatro Micaelense, Coliseu Micaelense, Estúdio 13 – Space for Creative Industries, Fórum Dança, Moot – Movement Lab, Alpendre Theatre Company, Vo'arte, AJ Aprender a Viver [youth association], and APCSM – Associação de Paralisia Cerebral de São Miguel [Cerebral Palsy Association], DDD – Festival Dias da Dança and CAMPUS – Paulo Cunha e Silva **International:** danceWEB (AT), P.A.R.T.S. – Performing Arts Research and Training Studios (BE) and Rosas (BE) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Outdoor Games, Healthy Community, Cultural Sports
REGION – SEASON I

ANONA GAMES is a celebration of heritage, culture and identity through the practice of outdoor physical activity. We want to remember a time when a handkerchief, locust seeds or even some nails and a hammer were all it took to keep old and young alike entertained for hours. Beyond smartphones and fidget spinners, we are bringing spinning tops back, letting marbles decorate the streets and showing how bobbins paved the way for bowling before it was cool. We also want to honour the manual work of those who built these cities on rock, ploughed the fields, hunted for whales, dragged fishing nets and still milk cows. Inclusive, adaptable, progressive and made for everyone of all ages, the Games will enhance participation, the interaction and empowerment of small communities and promote a healthy lifestyle. **Anona Games** will target practitioners of functional training and urban sports. We want to challenge crossfitters, traceurs and skaters to step out of their comfort zone and explore their athletic abilities amid our green pastures and in our blue lagoons. The project appeals to sustainability principles by being an ecological way of being in nature with a low environmental impact. The construction of platforms, obstacles, vehicles, gear and objects will include designers, set designers and artists and build on the circularity of the local materials. Sport and social sciences researchers from different universities will

participate in the conception and development of games in three phases: map the traditional, laborious and cultural activities, inspired and defined by strength and physical work applied on land and sea; create the physical exercises from a systematised process of development of human capacities based on sports; design the implementation plan of the games, including its local promotion through workshops with schools and physical activity agents. Anona Games will promote pilot events in several municipalities and, in 2027, have its first official large-scale event in Ponta Delgada. We want it to be a project set to happen annually after the ECoC. Its promotion will extend to the Azorean diaspora and Europe to contribute to new cultural and creative offerings in sports and nature tourism.

Promoted by Hugo Pacheco de Melo (PT), Rui Melo (PT) and Luís Magalhães (PT) **Cooperation Partners–National:** CF Açor – Cross Training Açor Clube, Unajovem, Faculty of Human Kinetics – University of Lisbon, University of Madeira and University of the Azores **International:** Highland Games Academy – Scotland (UK) **Timeframe:** 2024–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Gastronomy Feast, Foodlab, Community Kitchen
REGION – SEASON I II III

A SEAT AT THE TABLE puts culture, art and community at the same table, serving gastronomy as the main course. The project brings everyone together to offer unique sensory experiences in unusual spaces. As one of the selected projects from our open call, it will run in co-creation with different food-related sectors, promoting gastronomy as a cultural and intangible heritage. In 2026, we will see the implementation and digital recording of creative gastronomic encounters taking place on four islands—São Miguel, Terceira, Pico and Flores—which will expand in 2027 through three narratives. **Food, the universal language**, will involve those who emigrated and took Azorean dishes to other destinations and those who chose to live here, bringing other flavours and combinations from different geographies. This crossing of worlds will take place in several co-creative and intergenerational public events through the hands of **Chefs Agency, Chef João Rodrigues** with his project **Matéria**, and sister ECoC **Bodø 2024. The Azores Geopark, Azores Essentials** and the research project of the **University of the Azores – TASTE** will bring an experimental dimension to local products and our biodiversity through learning dynamics, such as itineraries, training and workshops. **Women who feed** is about the women who educate, manage and transform through educational and creative events, and international exchanges with inspiring professionals, such as **Chef Helena Loureiro**. The women's current and future role as a force for change will receive recognition in partnership with the **Community Kitchens Movement** led by female entrepreneurship and supported by the global network **Social Gastronomy Movement. Food Culture Stages** tells the story of gastronomic heritage and the paths of the food revolution in partnership with **AHRESP – Açores, the Art of Tasting Portugal** and with the active participation of the public. Regarding the catering sector, we will develop training and cultural exchange actions and launch challenges in local restaurants. We will invite the public to interact with us by holding onsite and online competitions through recipes and discovering authentic narratives.

Promoted by Local Food Culture (PT) and VidAçor (PT) **Chefs and Artists:** Armando Arruda (CA), Alex Atala (BR), Mauro Colagreco (FR), Helena Loureiro (CA) and Patrícia Gabriel (PT) **Cooperation Partners–National:** Chefs Agency, Matéria Project, Azores Geopark, TASTE Project (University of the Azores), Movimento Cozinhas Comunitárias (The Community Kitchen Movement), AHRESP-Açores, the Art of Tasting Portugal and Azores Essentials **International:** Social Gastronomy Movement (INT) **ECoC:** Bodø 2024 (NO) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Sofia Shumailova is a 15-year-old refugee. She was born in Ukraine but has lived in Portugal for three years. Russian Irina Semënova is one of the teachers who helps Sofia grow "both as a pianist and as a person". Sofia studies at the conservatory and has been playing the piano for ten years. The Conservatório Regional of Ponta Delgada [Music Conservatory] is like a second home for them.



Archipelago of Europe and the World



10th Island

Litosfera

Top of the Church:

Sound of the Organ

Underwater Europe

We Have Two Hearts

Azores Slavery Memorial

Tipo

Divine Path: Devotional Objects

Between the Islands

European Archipelago of Culture

Is about our history and heritage of Europe, the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal and the Azores. A history of survival and confrontation with the elements of nature and our multiple community extensions across the world. A history once written in the past, a history yet to be rewritten in the future. As a place of departure, Ponta Delgada – Azores is Europe building bridges to the world. From this Atlantic hub, we present projects that revitalise and update heritage, taking it as a passport for intercultural dialogue, resignification, digital updates and new forms of mediation. We highlight the history of the Azores in the minds of Europeans, from past to current migration flows. As a place of arrivals: we explore our ocean and land as a meeting-point of peace, experimentation and cultural diversity; we refresh the power of our traditions in music, handcrafts and literature pushing them into tomorrow, and we renew exchanges and share resources with other cultural landscapes in our diaspora and Europe. This archipelago is a springboard. The projects will take the city and the Azores out there, whilst Europe and the world will increase their presence and visibility in our now more than ever *arms wide open* archipelago.

ESTIMATED BUDGET: €2.513.000

10TH ISLAND focuses on our communities worldwide and on the experience of those who migrated here. The project updates transatlantic ties with new ways of cooperation of Azorean creativity within new generations and celebrates the cultural diversity in the region. We are a European Maritime Embassy on the way to the Americas and a melting pot of worlds and cultures. Diversity abounds here by the square metre. We will connect the European Union to the American Dream and build bonds of commonality with our global community, attaining borderless and intercultural encounters. The project brings new generations of migrants closer to the Azores, including those in Europe, by proposing several initiatives. We will develop a mentoring programme by Azorean descendants for youngsters at the start of their careers and educational tools on European culture for US schools and the Azorean diaspora. Contemporary visual and performing arts will establish new future bridges through collaborative storytelling. **Fuso Insular**, our four-day video-art festival and A.I.R. programme, presents high-quality national and international works selected by a team of well-known curators. The 2027 edition will commission and showcase stories of arrival (migration) and departure (diaspora) from renowned artists and do an open call for youngsters to work in a Moving Image Lab under the mentorship of experienced filmmakers. Theatre and film collaboration **Far from the Island**, run by theatremaker **Antonio Braga** and filmmaker **Amélia Sarmiento**, will reconnect the Azorean memory with its descendants in Canada through images, stories and traditions of several generations. It proposes a personal and collective interpretation of affective memory through the reenactment of public archives, family videos and photo collections. **A.W.E.** (Artist and Writers Exchange Meeting) is a programme that blends artistic disciplines, the EU, the US and the *glocal*, which will strengthen by a conference programme on Euro-American cultural relations and identity. **We_At Your House** is a multicultural party in several private houses. As a proposal of the foreign community living in the Azores, curated by **Rubén Monfort**, each house organises activities and surprises within the same theme. In 2027, we will have a special edition with 15 houses throughout São Miguel, Terceira and Faial islands. This event celebrates meeting people, knowing different neighbourhoods, and entering new houses to invent a new common tradition. **O Mundo Aqui**, our festival of migrants, will make us learn about cultural adaptation and present the faces, voices and talents of our ever-growing transnational resident community. **10th Island** will unveil a future of different accents, miscegenated cultures and celebration of diversity.

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 **Cooperation Partners–National:** Regional Directorate for the Communities, FLAD – Luso-American Development Foundation, AEAzores [Azorean Emigrants Association], Azorean Museum of Emigration, AIPA [Association of Immigrants of the Azores], and FUSO Lisboa **International:** Ponta Delgada's twin cities, Council of the Azorean Diaspora (INT), Houses of the Azores Network (INT), Portuguese Beyond Borders Institute – California State University, Fresno (US), Fabric Arts Festival (US), Electronic Arts Intermix (US), Portuguese Canadian History Project (CA), Working Women Community Centre (CA), Vie des Hauts Productions (FR) and VideoBrasil (BR) **ECOC:** Bastia–Corsica 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

LITOSFERA is a multidisciplinary project conceptualised by Azorean and Ukrainian artists and curators that explores the consolidation of freedom, equality and solidarity under the theme of parenthood and gender identity from a feminist perspective. The project celebrates not only the power of creation released from the clash between different realities but also the acknowledgement of their common natures. Like tectonic plates, the cultures of Europe's East and West meet in the Azores, where the earth's crust is thin and powerful, and often conflicting forces come together. At their boundaries, friction gives way to an eruption, and islands rise out of the water. **Litosfera** is one of the selected projects in our open call and will be brought to life by a Europe-wide network of creative groundbreakers that will unite geographically distant regions through shared experiences. We should ask ourselves: what does it mean to be a European artist in this time of war and uncertainty, and how can one continuously search for identity amidst parenting and childhood, past and future, birth and death. That is how Ponta Delgada and the Azores will become an inclusive, sustainable and empowered epicentre for the discussion and celebration of European cultures and the strengthening of its values. Here are some of the initiatives: a *synchronous live concert* in Warsaw, Ponta Delgada, Kyiv and Lisbon, with DJs and artists performing in the four cities, broadcasting it across Europe, and reaching out to anyone wanting to join the dance party; a set of *25/24 live performances*, exploring the Freedom Day in Portugal (25 April) and Independence Day of Ukraine (24 August); and *gallery exhibitions* across different islands and significant locations in Eastern Europe. There will also be *children of war gatherings* in virtual and physical storytelling spaces. A young generation will be uplifted and empowered by the memories of parents and grandparents and a collective painting of conflicts and journeys towards peace through intergenerational meetings in real places with real people. All content created will be available digitally as we seek to unite the extreme points of Europe: Ukraine in the east and the Azores at the westernmost point of Europe. We take a culture in destruction and one in consolidation and merge them to make them stronger.

Promoted by Refúgioval Association (PT) **Artists:** Anita Nemet (UA), Olha Varnali (UA), Kateryna Kondratieva (UA), i.e., with local and international artists **Cooperation Partners–National:** vaga – space of art and knowledge, Maré de Agosto Cultural Association, MiratecArts and Planeta Manas **International:** Ukraina TV (UA), Fundacja Teatru Trans-Atlantyck (PL), Eldorado Teatr (INT) and Parade Fest (JA) **Timeframe:** 2023–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

TOP OF THE CHURCH: SOUND OF THE ORGAN proposes a one-month immersive programme of Portuguese, French, German, and Italian organs, revitalising this powerful sound and heritage through various concerts with national and European musicians. Since the 18th century, the organs of the Azores are a testimony to the experience of Azorean society, marked by deep religiosity and artistic capacity. We have over 500 churches and chapels in the Azores, championing an incredible number of 57 organs in eight of the nine Azores islands. This heritage stands out not only for its quantity and diversity but especially for its quality. Many organs have undergone restoration, while others need an intervention or risk falling silent again. The project will showcase different organ schools, reflecting the continued openness of Azorean society through time and granting a new meaning to this powerful sound. **Top of the Church** crosses the canonical and contemporary repertoires through several church concerts. It also activates laboratories, workshops and art residencies for musicians and composers. We want to challenge composers to write new repertoires for our unique organ in Santo André's Convent in Ponta Delgada, which is still in its original state and can play with bellows. We will reactivate the European musical knowledge circuits, promote new dynamics around the organs and bring them closer to the artistic community, together with all regional conservatories and music schools. We will digitise the music, blow the bellows of our diversity of organs, tell organist stories, roam through religious architecture and make sure the programme highlights streams online. The interaction between historical and modern organs, national and international musicians and intergenerational audiences will value this heritage for future generations.

Promoted by Isabel Albergaria Sousa (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Angra's Diocese, Music Conservatories of the Azores, several churches, municipalities and the Government of the Azores **International:** Orgel Festival (NL) and Silbermann Society – Gottfried-Silbermann-Gesellschaft (DE) **ECOCs and candidate cities:** Reims 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

UNDERWATER EUROPE stems from the Azores' Underwater Cultural Heritage, certified by the European Commission and UNESCO, consisting of 30 public dive sites centred on shipwrecks. This heritage, connected to European history and trade from the 16th to the 20th century, crosses the Silver Route to South America, the transatlantic slave trade, military conflicts (American War of Independence and the two World Wars), emigration ships from Europe to America, and exploration expeditions, such as Charles Darwin's the Beagle voyage. Our Underwater Cultural Heritage bears witness to the role of the Azores in European history as the world's bottleneck for transcontinental sailing over the centuries. The Azores' shipwrecks provide material evidence of the expansion of Europeans across oceans and the starting point of globalisation. These shipwrecks are time capsules of European history, symbolic of different times and territories. We want to tell the fascinating stories of the people behind these shipwrecks, from treasure carriers, syphilis spreaders, human traffickers or high society luxury cruises. The project shares the results

of the scientific investigations in these underwater sites through a travelling exhibition with storytelling and immersion experiences at the intersection of arts and sciences. A cycle of ten Augmented Reality (A.R.) experiences will present ten stories through archaeological remains of these trips and connections. Portuguese and European writers will have the opportunity to fictionalise these remainders with historians and archaeologists from existing narratives and evidence. A theatrical dimension will complement the A.R. experiences with actors voicing the narratives developed by the writers. **Underwater Europe** comes to fruition through **Horta Museum** (Faial Island), **Carlos Machado Museum** (in Ponta Delgada) and other museums, taking the work to public eyes, creating spaces for meditation and reenounter between narratives, cultural heritage and those who inhabit and visit the Azores.

Promoted by Centro do Património Móvel, Imaterial e Arqueológico dos Açores [Azores Centre for Intangible and Archaeological Heritage] – Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Instituto de Arqueologia e Paleociências – NOVA University of Lisbon, Horta Museum, Carlos Machado Museum, Cães do Mar Theatre Company, diving companies, writers, historians, archaeologists and touristic guides **International:** Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage – UNESCO (INT) and The ICOMOS International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage (INT) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €

WE HAVE TWO HEARTS is a project dedicated to the *viola da terra*, our very own 12-string two hearts guitar. It is the artistic translation of our isolation and history of migration. Over the last few centuries, hundreds of thousands of people emigrated to North and South America to find a better life or to escape natural disasters. The *viola da terra* tells our story of *saudade*, which means longing for family and friends who have emigrated abroad and nostalgia for the homeland left behind. The sound of a *viola da terra* contains all of our multitude as a people: our experience of separation from the ones we love, our Atlantic condition, our *açorianidade*. Our history of emigration has a musical legacy that captures loss, separation and distance. **We Have Two Hearts** is a full-year programme that takes the *viola da terra* as a motif, from building the instrument to playing it. We will bring string instruments from different islands and mainland Europe. The *ukulele*, from Ponta Delgada's twin county of **Kauai (Hawaii)**, and the *viola*, from our twin city **Praia (Cape Verde)**, will receive special attention as they hold centuries of historical ties with our region and city. And, not forgetting, of course, our diaspora in Brazil, Canada and The United States, who keep the *viola* alive. This project will help promote the exchange of expertise between players from the Atlantic region by showing the instrument in different cultural contexts—from schools to folk groups—activating spaces of architectural value with little accessibility to the general public. We will bear witness to the intersection of the *viola da terra* with electronics and different musical styles, to the sound of her sister's 15-string *viola* from Terceira Island and to the celebration of the *Viola da Terra's* day on 2 October. But that is not all. We will also challenge *viola da terra* luthiers to build new instruments to be later customised by visual artists. We will go full circle with the *viola* going digital through a virtual Open Stage with a series of video episodes. The goal is to digitise and showcase new compositions, stories of *viola* players and luthiers, visiting workshops,

and some of the year's most relevant *viola* events. We Have Two Hearts empowers festivals such as **Cordas**, **Azores Fringe**, and **Violas do Atlântico**, taking the sound of the *viola da terra* to Ponta Delgada, Terceira and Pico islands, and of course, to the eyes and ears of Europe.

Promoted by Viola da Terra Youth Association (PT), MiratecArts (PT), Sons do Terreiro (PT) and PDL-Azores2027 **Artists:** Sofia Vidal (PT), Bruno Bettencourt (PT), Engengroaldenga (PT), Evandro Meneses (PT), i.a. national and international *viola da terra* and string instruments players and musicians **Viola da Terra Luthiers:** Hugo Raposo (PT), Raimundo Leonardes (PT), Nuno Nunes (PT), Serafim Silva (PT), i.a. **Cooperation Partners—National:** Xarabanda **International:** Kauai, Hawaii (US), Praia (CV) and the Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries of Cape Verde (CV) **Timeframe:** 2027 **Estimated Budget:** €

Slavery Exhibition, Blocked History
REGION – SEASON I II III

AZORES SLAVERY MEMORIAL builds a knowledge awareness centre, and a programme to tell a piece of history that is still an open cultural wound that needs discussion in the public space. Amidst the Atlantic routes, the Azores formed an archipelago, which imported the integrity of its resources from the most diverse origins throughout the different eras of occupation. Apart from the Europeans from Portugal or Spain, others, North Europeans, have contributed to the inhabiting of the islands, and it is all well-documented, mainly as far as the elites are concerned. The history of those who came without the will to occupy the islands is a whole different story, which will fully come to light through a technically and scientifically well-documented long-lasting exhibition. North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans and Canary Islanders contributed to the settlement of the Azores in addition to the Donataries—they were private persons (often noblemen) whom the Portuguese Crown bestowed a substantial piece of land to administer—and their helpers. In time, they came together from all the worlds subjected to European expansion. But that was not the whole story. Soon the Azorean coasts began to be devastated by pirates who, before reaching Europe, saw this as the quickest opportunity to seize the treasures of the fleets that came from far away. Of these, the Maghrebis also stood out for conducting occasional raids on land to capture people, who took and sold them as slaves, the so-called captives. Of the many more who left, more than five hundred were rescued, i.e., they were brought back from the 16th to 19th centuries. When this form of capture ceased, overlapping with the end of slavery in Brazil in 1850, the period of clandestine slavery began. Many Azoreans who emigrated to Brazil found themselves in illicit networks of illegal traffic, which continued until the end of the century, becoming known as the *white slavery* period. In addition to the long-term exhibition, the educational service of **Horta Museum** will hold workshops for children and the general public designed to tell the story of Azorean slavery. We can also count on publications, expert lectures, a cultural itinerary of the archipelago and guided tours in the island. In parallel, through smaller temporary exhibitions, the Horta Museum will contribute to the dissemination of the vast historical knowledge that yet does not hold its match in the current identity awareness about the subject.

Promoted by Horta Museum (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Horta Municipality, AIPA [Association of Immigrants of the Azores], Tourism of Portugal and Batoto Yetu Association **International:** NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations (EU) **Potential Cooperation Partners:** Alcácer do Sal Municipality (PT), Lagos Municipality (PT), STARACO project – Université de Nantes (FR) and Mémoire des Esclavages (FR) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Typography Heritage, Letterpress
REGION – SEASON I II III

TIPO pursues the safeguarding and dissemination of the rich typographic heritage of the Azores through a contemporary approach. As one of the projects selected in our open call, it is a transversal and intergenerational celebration of the printed letter, fostering dialogues between the here and now and the world. In a spirit of harmony between design, graphic and visual arts, carpentry, non-formal education, innovation and the digital world, the project promotes the exchange of international knowledge, thought and research. **Tipo** creates new typefaces inspired by Azorean nature and small printing machines using local materials and labour. The project, running on the islands of Santa Maria, Terceira, Faial and São Miguel, will hold its first stage between 2024 and 2026, consisting of training, art residencies, workshops and fieldwork. There will be a series of events actively involving the local community, from children to young people, vocational schools and technology centres, and creating intersections with the academy, artists, and national and international experts. From **Rainer Erich Scheichelbauer**, who developed the New Typo, to workshops for young people by **O Homem do Saco**, to the construction of small printing machines by local turners, locksmiths and carpenters. In this stage, we will map the typographic heritage of the archipelago with the help of the **National Study of Typography of Movable Characters**. In the non-formal education programme for young people and children, the movable characters will help with literacy, creative learning, and manual skills. As for the elderly, it will stimulate concentration, thought and memory. In 2027, **Tipo** will be an international and multidisciplinary typographic meeting holding a conference with keynote speakers such as **Dafi Kühne** and **Sandro Berra**, exhibitions with the developed works and contemporary works of national and international artists, an itinerary, several workshops and a book fair. The content will be accessible online where anyone can download the fonts produced through 3D printing in a happy marriage between low and high tech.

Promoted by CRESAÇOR – Regional Cooperative for Solidarity Economy, CRL **Concept by** Júlia Garcia **Artists:** Rainer Erich Scheichelbauer (NL), Dafi Kühne (CH), Erik Spiekermann (DE) and Sandro Berra (IT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** O Homem do Saco [typography atelier], Edições 50Kg [bookstore], Casa do Povo de Santa Bárbara da Ilha Terceira, CADA [Crafts and Design Centre of the Azores] (PT), Associação Salvaterra de Santa Maria, and multi-university initiative Estudo Nacional de Tipografia de Caracteres Móveis [National Study of Typography of Movable Characters] **International:** Glyphs (AT), Tipoteca Italiana (IT) **Timeframe:** 2024–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €

DIVINE PATH: DEVOTIONAL OBJECTS proposes itineraries and experiences that preserve, treasure, take forward and give access to the religious, social, artistic, historical, and gastronomic experiences of the Divine Holy Ghost festivities. The insular identity of these nine islands comes from the people's relationship with the islands' geography and natural phenomena. The Divine arises as a response to the fears and insecurities, a perpetual search for peace. The secular richness of the Holy Ghost cult, which extends to Azorean communities worldwide, is an expression of collective emotions and experiences. This cultural element is so remarkable that, in 1980, the Regional Legislative Assembly considered Holy Ghost's Monday the most popular holiday throughout the region. The Assembly decreed it as the day of the Autonomous Region of the Azores: *an affirmation of the Azoreans' identity, their philosophy of life, and their regional unity*. This collective devotion has a multitude of manifestations—religious and profane, material and immaterial— it takes place in the summer, differs from island to island and reports to an ancient historical and geographical reality. It is our utmost expression of community power, participation and sense of gift. Traditional arts and crafts play a determinant role. That is why we will make them known by building a route of devotional handicraft, with itineraries and experiences that consider the diversity of manifestations of devotion on each island and the communities in the Diaspora, create new community bonds, and widen the access to these practices to a European and international crowd. This **Divine Path** will materialise in a digital road map, a documentary, a photographic exhibition, and a display of artisanal productions related to the cult. The project will start in Ponta Delgada and travel to other places that connect to this cultural element. In partnership with **RARA**, we will run an international creative residency with European and international partners, bringing together designers and artisans to work on creating, reinterpreting, functionalising, and repositioning handcrafted products. We will keep the arts and crafts of the Cult of the Divine alive in the market. The project will explore crossings with science, art, nature, and education, offer meaningful experiences and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, encouraging innovation and qualification of human resources.

Promoted by CADA [Crafts and Design Centre of the Azores] (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** RARA [Craft Residence of the Azores Region], Confraria Gastrónomos dos Açores [Brotherhood of Gastronomy of the Azores] and Passa ao Futuro [research-based cultural initiative] **International:** Casa dos Açores de Santa Catarina [Santa Catarina's House of the Azores] (BR), Lava Circular [festival] (ES), RISD – Rhode Island School of Design (US), European designers and artists **ECoC:** Clermont–Ferrand – Massif central 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

BETWEEN THE ISLANDS, Building an Aquapelago is a long-term interdisciplinary project (2024–2027) that will create bridges between different islands of Europe, crossing perspectives from social sciences, art practices and environmental issues applied to archipelagos. It will fall under the leadership of **Amaya Sumpsi** (filmmaker and anthropologist), **Glenn Loughran** (course leader on the BA and the MA in Art and Environment, **TU Dublin School**) and **Taru Elfving** (director and co-founder of the **Contemporary Art Archipelago** at Turku archipelago, Finland). Centred on *archipelagic thinking*, it will portray how archipelagos act in concert and permanent reconfiguration. This project will highlight its central, dynamic and fluid nature and refute the idea that islands are static, isolated and peripheral places and that the sea is a *non-place*. This new approach has been applied by scientists and artists not only to insular phenomena but to all kinds of territories, as the world is—in itself—a unique archipelago of regions in permanent transformation. It will build on the concept of *Aquapelago*, a world of nations connected by a sea full of meaning. From 2024–2026 we will work as a laboratory, where the local knowledge will be in dialogue with other European archipelagos, developing different art residencies and thinking seminars with local and foreign artists and key speakers on island topics. **Between the Islands** will take place on several islands and have two dimensions: a public and an educational programme. The public programme will be open to everyone and map the past and current human relationships with the sea, discussing its future use and establishing a permanent dialogue between art and science in the Azores, Europe and the world. The educational programme will be open to local and international students and will serve as a pilot for a nomadic school of arts and environment in the Azores. The digital skills and knowledge of our European partners, who have previous experience implementing art studies in archipelagos, will be essential to the delivery and sustainability of this island-based course. At the end of our programme, we aim to create the first island-based artistic and environmental nomadic course in the Azores. In 2027, all the outputs will launch in Azorean public ferries and harbours—places of shared affections and bonds between world islands and islanders—surprising the travellers, who will become part of the action either as audience or actors. Among the activities, we will have sensory installations, floating conversations, music and sound performances, film projections and subaquatic sculptures that will raise awareness of the value of the sea.

Promoted by Amaya Sumpsi (ES/PT), Glenn Loughran (IR) and Taru Elfving (FI) **Artistic Curator:** Taru Elfving (FI) **Potential Participating Scientists:** Gloria Pungetti (IT), Jonathan Pugh (MT), Alison Neilson (PT) and Godfrey Baldacchino (MT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** NOVA University of Lisbon, CRIA – Portuguese Centre for Research in Anthropology, Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre, Flores Museum, Corvo Ecomuseum, Casa Manuel de Arriaga – Horta Museum, Pico Museum, LPAZ – Association for the Valorisation and Promotion of Santa Maria Airport, FRCT – Regional Fund for Science and Technology, Sonora [cultural association], Atlânticoline S.A and Grupo Bensaúde **International:** TU Dublin School of Creative Arts (IR) and CAA – Contemporary Art Archipelago (FI) **Timeframe:** 2024–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€

EUROPEAN ARCHIPELAGO OF CULTURE (EACH) shifts the centre of all cultural activities from Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, to each of the other eight islands. If we look at the Azores as one city, it consists of *nine neighbourhoods*. Together they form an Atlantic metropolis of cultural diversity. **EACH** makes **Human Nature** cross the Azores and cover our nine singular islands. We want to value our local culture and share our distinctive festivals, traditions, atmospheres, pristine nature and stunning venues with Europe. There are just too many must-sees, people and stories to meet. Hopping on a boat or a plane will lead to unforgettable experiences, and best of all, it will lead to ever-lasting friendships and memories. While respecting the scale and sustainability of each *neighbourhood*, **EACH** challenges local cultural operators and municipalities to activate different sites, venues and practices, addressing the relations between nature and culture, with a European spotlight, through a plethora of art and cultural forms. To entice you with the *nine neighbourhood* hopping foreseen for 2027, crossing all seasons of the programme, we will give you an overview of what to expect at each stop. **Graciosa** will tell of its architecture of water itinerary that demonstrates humans' capacity to store water, its remarkable number of 100 pianos for a 4000 people population, being the island lab for 100% green energy and the preservation of dwarf donkeys.

Terceira will be synonymous with literary routes proposed by the **Arquipélago de Escritores Festival** and a cradle of jazz and contemporary and popular theatre in UNESCO World Heritage sites. **Corvo** is a paradise for bird watching and an Ecomuseum, in which heritage is kept alive in its 385 residents and strong community bonds. **Flores** will resume its fame as the incarnation of paradise, valuing its poetry, architecture, whaling heritage, and Eden-like nature as a stage for music. **Santa Maria's** *archisky* will come out through its history of aviation (as the first main airport of the Azores), its ceramics practices and world-music, folk and blues summer festivals. **Pico** will stand out from the clouds with UNESCO world heritage vineyards and whaling heritage. **Faial** will bring its sea laboratory, the 70-year eruption of the Capelinhos volcano, its worldwide famous marina hosting sailors and scientists from all corners of the world, and its wild **floating music and arts festival—Maravilha**. Finally, **São Jorge**, also known as the *dragon neighbourhood*, will come through a fest of traditions, theatre, music and gastronomy, with its breath-taking *fajãs* for hiking trails and nature events.

Promoted by PDL-Azores2027 **Cooperation Partners—National:** Government of the Azores, Azores Tourism Association, Regional Network of Museums and Libraries of the Azores, Municipalities of the Azores, local artists, festivals, cultural associations and PDL-Azores2027 ambassadors **International:** Twin Cities (INT), Station Narva (EE), European Museum Academy (EU), Europeana Foundation (EU), NEMO - Network of European Museum Organisations (EU), Heritage Europe - European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EU) and The Everyday Projects (INT) **Timeframe:** 2027
Estimated Budget: €€€€



Based on Vila Franca do Campo's marina, the Associação de Classe do Bote Baleeiro [Whaling Boat Association] works to study, preserve, value and promote whaling culture and its maritime heritage. It gathers researchers, and people passionate about sports, the sea and traditional shipbuilding. The association offers rowing and sailing lessons for adults, recreating the whaling boat as a resource that connects the Azoreans to the sea. They intend to recontextualise these traditional structures as living museums now used as social, cultural and touristic development tools.



Archipelago of Nature



Become Ocean
Body of the Land
L(i)earing me Softly
Flows
Forest of Fiction
Terra Incógnita
The Overview Effect
Moving Ecologies
Climb Every Mountain
Green Gardens inFEST
Sona Insularo

Addresses our connection to nature with an island, archipelagic and European vision of environmental awareness and holistic thinking. The nature surrounding us is our greatest asset. It is not separate from us—we belong to it. Here, a transdisciplinary approach draws us to the natural world, bringing back environmental issues and discussions to cultural and artistic practices. Nature becomes context and content, hope and care. This archipelago is blue and green. The projects explore the relationship between science-based actions and culture, and value sustainable and transforming ideas for slow and creative tourism. We will measure the impacts of humans on the ocean and landscapes, and rethink it in light of good practices that value our endogenous materials and promote the circular economy. They address not only climate change and the issue of monocultures but also enhance the urgency to take collective action to preserve and regenerate our ecosystems, whether on land or sea.

ESTIMATED BUDGET: €2.830.000

BECOME OCEAN proposes a summer of ocean-themed events around ecological awareness, art, leisure, gastronomy and education. World-renowned marine biologist Sylvia Earle has classified the Azores as a Hope Spot of marine protected areas, from the sea surface to its depths. We were a whale hunting spot, but today we live on respecting and protecting whales, welcoming people to visit them as fellow citizens of the planet. Yet, our ocean is unique but fragile and constantly threatened. **Become Ocean** is PDL–Azores2027's answer to treasuring our sea, which has shaped our cultural identity and sustained our lives across generations. We must continue protecting marine ecosystems by promoting literacy toward a healthy ocean for now and the future.

Liquid music and underwater love: The season will open with a sea orchestra – a project proposed in our open call by **Quadrivium – Cultural Association and the Ponta Delgada Sinfonietta**. The music will stem from a **European Composition Competition for Symphony Orchestra** inspired by the Atlantic Ocean and our unique Euro-Atlantic maritime identity. Add to that the ocean's depths emerging with an exhibition of underwater photography.

Sports, well-being and taking action: A programme of sports competitions designed with local naval clubs will happen on land and at sea, whilst well-being activities like paddling, floating, yoga, meditation, and whale watching will call us to experience the ocean and our coastlines to the fullest. In addition, cleaning actions, recycling art workshops, and ecological awareness actions will develop together with schools, tourism companies, ocean foundations and ecology activists.

The coast, the whales, the canned and the celebration: Carlos Machado Museum will activate coastal cultural heritage by renovating Casa das Marés (Centre of Knowledge of Coastal Heritage) and alert to the historical importance of whaling culture through sea and land itineraries on whaling boats and whale-watching sites. From 2022 until 2027, the museum will be celebrating the oceans. Through exhibitions, public art interventions and research projects, the museum will activate the legacy of Prince Albert I of Monaco. His passage through the Azores, his discoveries on the Atlantic Ocean and his influence on developing oceanic and meteorological sciences. The museum will also track the traditional relations of the islanders with the sea and bring science to the streets to enhance the importance of oceans. **Francisco Lacerda Museum** will propose a photo exhibition in several islands' factories in ruins, commissioning artists to depict pole-and-line fishing and the fish canning industry history that follows the fluxes of the tuna fish.

Sailing Arts: Iceberg will be our sailboat cultural centre which will sail the nine islands as a surprising, mutable and on-the-move artistic object. After an inaugural Liepāja-Azores voyage, with a stopover in former ECoCs, our floating cultural centre will present shows on board and offer an educational arts programme inspired by the ocean, climate and ecology. The project will organise open calls for artists, supervised by invited curators

in articulation with local partners. It will include the active participation of local communities and schools, taking the ECoC to each island's port to present music, dance, acrobatics, visual and digital arts, cinema and literature. Iceberg is a legacy from the ECoC for the future of the region.

Gastronomy of the Sea: We are one of the largest sea regions in Europe, so you can count on a seafood gastronomy festival, intersecting traditional and experimental cuisine. More and more, we have young local chefs going to Japan and Brazil to acquire skills to apply to existing species in the Atlantic Ocean. From fried mackerel, tuna delights, fish soup, *Azorean sushi* or *ficogastronomy*, the art of preparing and cooking seaweed. Expect the best and the tastiest!

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 **Artists:** Nico Nubiola (ES), Robin Mora (FR), Lia Goulart (PT), Archibald Caramantran (FR), Time Circus (BE), Honky Tonk Boat (FR), Djelali Tricks (FR), Ponta Delgada Sinfonietta (PT), i.a. **Cooperation Partners–National:** Fazendo Cultural Association, Expolab – Centro de Ciência Viva [science centre], Francisco Lacerda Museum, Carlos Machado Museum, Oceano Azul Foundation, Ports of the Azores, Fablab Benfica, Kairós, Azorean naval clubs, sea entrepreneurs, photographers, tourism businesses, restaurants, and cooking schools **International:** Syn Fab Lab (GR), PoliFactory (IT), Ecsite – European Network of Science Centres and Museums (EU), Ocean Foundation (US/INT), AIR Centre – The Atlantic International Research Centre (INT), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Islands Commission (INT), Cultural Heritage Imaging (US), Arctic University (NO), Stefansson Arctic Institute (IS), Whalesafari Andenes (NO) and Húsavík Whale Museum (IS) **ECoC:** Liepāja 2027 (LV) **Timeframe:** 2022–2027. Iceberg is a legacy from the ECoC **Estimated Budget:** €€€€€

BODY OF THE LAND combines art and territory through a series of art residencies, open studios, talks, essays and a 20-hectares international site-specific exhibition. The project fuses with a new and more sustainable forest and farmland embedded in **Pico do Refúgio's** arable soil, natural reserve and historical buildings where the changing seasons offer a different gaze with every visit. For about 400 years, Pico do Refúgio has served many purposes: from pirate lookout post to militia fortress to tea factory; its land has accompanied the island's agricultural cycles, each lasting around 100 years. This monoculture system, highly dependent on external demand, reduced the island's self-sufficiency and posed financial, environmental and social sustainability challenges. By gathering artists and experts from agriculture, architecture, landscape and forest management, this inclusive and transformative project discusses the problems that a monoculture system poses to an island's human and natural landscape. It aims at an inclusive and participatory process to propose alternatives to deal with the land in an international artistic environment. **Body of the Land** aims for local transformation and development while raising our international profile. Art meets nature meets the human in a fully sustainable and historic site-specific Art Park.

Promoted by Pico do Refúgio (PT) **Curated by** Bernardo Brito e Abreu (PT) and Andrea Santalaya (PT/ES) **Artists:** Pedro Vaz (PT), Thiago Rocha Pitta (BR), Marcelo Mascheta (BR/PT), Fernanda Fragateiro (PT), Gabriela Albergaria (PT/BE) i.a. **Cooperation Partners–International:** Inland – art, agriculture & territory (ES), IN CONTEXT – contemporary art and experimental music residency (RO), Cow House Studios (IR) and European Association for Landscape Ecology (EU) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

L(I)EAVING ME SOFTLY offers one hundred cultural and natural immersive itineraries to go through surprising paths in our green sanctuary of Ponta Delgada and the Azores. The project proposes a meeting between creativity and tourism to offer new experiences and create new products. We will work with tourist guides, artists, tech programmers, activists, scientists, writers, historians, inhabitants and nature/culture connectors as storytellers that lead adventurers into surprise-filled routes and new visions of the territory. It proposes tourism as a transformative and responsible experience of expanded time and softness when experiencing the land and its resources. That must-see checklist of tourist attractions will evolve into a complex and rich fabric of designed and personalised experiences that treasures the cultural aspects beyond the surface. Our nature is our culture, and whoever visits us becomes a temporary resident who slows down and undertakes pure cultural exchange. This initiative is a counter-model to mass tourism, with nature-driven travel ethics based on authenticity, culture intertwined with the landscape, and direct contact with the communities. When we lose our connection to nature and our culture of place, we lose our spirit, our humanity, and our sense of belonging. Going through a pandemic, we have just come from being apart. In the coming years, we need to get out there to reconnect, take care and benefit our mental and physical health. We will be mind blown by waterfalls, hot and cold water pools, sleepy volcanoes, islets, black rocky monuments, lava fields, vineyards, tea plantations and pineapple greenhouses. We will cross heritage spaces such as museums, private houses, artists' workshops, and churches whose stories will unfold through fictional and factual storytelling. Listening sessions, bird watching, forest baths, meditation sessions, guided visits, tasting moments, and in-situ performances will give each itinerary a human dimension and shape lasting memories. There will be expedition options for groups, couples, individuals and people with reduced mobility. We will walk, run, bike-ride, engage in blindfold itineraries under the sun or the moonlight, come hell or high water. This network of itineraries will prioritise soft and collective mobility—pedestrian, bicycles, buses, and boats—with a design aligned with the cultural programme seasons. We will digitise these itineraries for those who want to undertake these journeys of immersion and discovery while ensuring inclusive signage, interaction and tracking of the community of users. There will be time to rest, sleep, read, eat GEOfood, see performances, reveal hidden secret spots, learn from history lessons and find balance.

Promoted by PDL–Azores2027 **Cooperation Partners—National:** Azores Geopark, Amigos dos Açores [ecological association], AGITA – Azores Tour Guides Association, Regional Directorate for Tourism, Azores Tourism Association, Carlos Machado Museum, scout associations, wellness and tourism professionals, artists, writers, activists, tech programmers, historians, and local inhabitants **International:** European Association for Landscape Ecology (EU), Heritage Europe – European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EU) and Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Islands Commission (INT) **ECOC:** Reims 2028 – Candidate City (FR) **Timeframe:** 2025–2028 **Estimated Budget:** €€

FLOWS is a series of site-specific media art installations that reflect on how Europe's ecosystems are under increasing pressure. While we face the threats of the geopolitical imbalance of the world and the global consequences of the pandemic, the clock has not stopped ticking on the climate and the biodiversity crisis. As Bruno Latour puts it, art provides a privileged space for a *thought experiment* that could help us cope with the new climate regime. In the outermost landscapes—the mountain forests in the Gerês-Xurés Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve, the volcanic activity of the Azores Geopark, the sea lagoon in the Natural Park of Ria Formosa, the Slavkov forest and the Brazilian rainforest—we can find the data of the flow in all its biodiversity. That is how international artists and researchers will critically explore how we preserve (or not) and interact with our natural ecosystems. Within this programme, we will produce eight artworks between 2025 and 2026. The process will stem from a match between European and international artists, such as **Rosa Menkman, Gil Delindro, Jenna Sutela, Formafantasma, Marco Barotti, Studio Above & Below**, and European research institutions like the **INL – International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory or the Critical Zone Observatories in Mount Lysina, Canton Uri and Koiliaris River**. **Flows** will also include a space for discourse and debate, bringing together artists, researchers, social scientists and politicians to discuss the process and its outputs from a horizontal perspective, covering a wide range of knowledge areas. This art, science and technology co-creation programme sprouts from a collaboration between the Portuguese ECOC 2027 candidate cities of **Braga and Ponta Delgada, the municipality of Faro and the Brazilian city of São Paulo**, joined by other European partners and the **European Media Art Platform (EMAP)**, that will bring their knowledge and experience to the project. All of the works resulting from these collaborations will be presented in a travelling exhibition in the four partner cities in Portugal and Brazil in 2027 and, later on, in **Budějovice 2028 – Candidate City** as part of their **Ars Biologica** flagship project, and in the worldwide **UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts network**.

Promoted by Braga '27 – Candidate City (PT), PDL–Azores2027 (PT), Faro Municipality (PT), Centro Cultural de São Paulo [cultural centre] (BR) **Curated by** Luís Fernandes (PT) **Artists:** Rosa Menkman (NL), Gil Delindro (PT), Jenna Sutela (FI), Formafantasma (IT), Marco Barotti (IT), and Studio Above & Below (UK) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Braga UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts, gnraton, University of Minho (Master in Media Arts), INL – International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory, University of Algarve, Ria Formosa Natural Park, Museu Zero, Peneda-Gerês National Park, Azores Geopark, Anda&Fala and Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre **International:** UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts (INT), EMAP – European Media Art Platform (EU), Jérôme Gaillardet / Paris Globe Institute of Physics (FR) on Critical Zones Observatories in Mount Lysina (CZ), Canton Uri (CH) and Koiliaris River (GR) **ECOC:** Budějovice 2028 – Candidate City (CZ) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Community Forest, Green Library, Reading Haven
CITY – SEASON I II III – LEGACY

FOREST OF FICTION is a community project of art, literature and reforestation in Ponta Delgada. The cattle monoculture has transformed our landscape into a giant green pasture, and while it is still active in producing high-quality milk and meat, the industry has fallen sharply. We want to transform green pastures into forests, gardens, and carbon sinks. **Forest of Fiction** is a reforestation process of a green pasture into a garden. Araucarias, cedars, cryptomerias, pines, maples and endemic plants will shape a garden with a reading area and library. We are building a storytelling and group reading haven, a park for forest baths and contemplation. We will create a public space which is self-sufficient, accessible by smooth mobility and off-the-grid with its own energy and optimal rainwater usage. The reading spaces will be eco-constructions, with endogenous materials built with principles of circular architecture and life cycle design. These spaces will promote moments of pause, not only for meditation and rest but also for fruition, contemplation and inspirational meetings. If a book is like a garden carried in one's pocket, each tree is a source of life and fiction, a story of Europe, a book and a literary destination. This project gathers landscape architects, gardeners, community leaders, environmental activists, artists, sculptors, writers and book publishers to create a new convivial space that transforms monoculture into diversity. It is an opportunity to promote our rich literature and the literature of Europe, translate it, republish it, edit new collections and give the island a forest of books. With the support of booksellers, publishers, and public libraries, we will create a green and blue library with a collection of titles of island and archipelago literature, sea, nature and travel literature in several European languages. In 2027, this forest will be a literature meeting point for reading marathons, book launches, literary debates, performances and screenings. An action titled **Everyone is a tree** will ensure the island gains 10.000 new trees by 2027. Each tree will be cared for by the community and have its own story to tell.

Promoted by Ponta Delgada Municipality and PDL-Azores2027 **Cooperation Partners—National:** Public Library and Regional Archive of Ponta Delgada, Amigos dos Açores [ecological association], Regional Directorate for the Environment and Climate Change, Expolab - Centro de Ciência Viva [science centre], Arquipélago de Escritores [literature festival], writers, publishers, and landscape architects **International:** RISD - Department of Architecture (US), Yale Centre for Ecosystems in Architecture (US), Public Libraries 2030 (EU) and European Association for Landscape Ecology (EU) **ECOCs and candidate cities:** Arcadia/Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018-2028 (NL) and Liberec 2028 - Candidate City (CZ) **Timeframe:** 2024 onwards to stay ever-after **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Music in Nature, Artistic Hiking, Slow Tourism
REGION – SEASON I II III – LEGACY

TERRA INCÓGNITA invites artists of different horizons and music genres to create **a programme of music routes, soundscapes and exclusive in situ performances** on a selection of the 88 certified hiking trails of the Azores. Each trail will have a soundtrack composed by artists to experience while walking, complemented by a live performance/exhibition in nature. This project merges with the Azores islands and their communities. It creates an app with a map of hiking trails and soundtracks that remain forever to be experienced at any time, taking expeditions as a form of knowledge and an allegory of exploration. The project examines the relation

of the cultural and geographical characteristics of the territory with its different communities. The inland connections show nature, our history of commercial exchange, the cycles of water, stories of plane crashes and valuable architectural heritage. It maps the unknown, the imaginary and the remote, organising an entirely new artistic cartography of experiences that connects memory and future, tradition and innovation. In collaboration and exchange with several European and global partners, the project begins in Ponta Delgada and heads to all of the Azores, showcasing the newest musical and visual talents from various styles. It builds a year-long programme of musical co-creation with community projects, multimedia performances, conversations and projects with schools, children and families, setting a sustainable example of taking nature as a stage and encouraging other ECoCs to create a musical EU of hiking trails.

Promoted by Plutão Camaleão (PT) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Azores Geopark, Lovers & Lollypops **International:** Fat Out (UK), LeGuessWho? (NL), Nyege Nyege (UG), KinAct (CD), MaMa Festival (FR) and Monkey Week (ES) **ECOCs and candidate cities:** Bodø 2024 (NO), Bad Ischl - Salzkammergut 2024 (AT) and Broumov 2028 - Candidate City (CZ) **Timeframe:** 2027. The app stays as a legacy **Estimated Budget:** €€€

Art and Science, Immersive Performance, Human Existence
REGION – SEASON I II III – LEGACY

THE OVERVIEW EFFECT is a multinational, interdisciplinary and collaborative art & science action whose aim is to raise transformational literacy on the collective connection to the earth, nature, and the human-human relationship. **The Overview Effect** is a highly exclusive phenomenon experienced in the history of humankind by only 600 astronauts. Spacemen report a sense of community with other people, conveying perspective, a planetary sense of belonging and the feeling of being one. We believe that all humans have the right to experience the identity of the Earthling, even if they did not have the privilege to reach the Cosmos and make macro-connections between its elements with their own eyes. In the overwhelming times of the Anthropocene, we begin to understand our co-responsibility for the future of our planet as we also gain global and cosmic awareness as a collective. The project will run jointly with local authorities, universities, and art and research centres from Portugal, Poland, India and Netherlands. Together in co-creation, the **Instytut B61** collective, with several international artists and scientists from oceanography, astronomy, culture studies and quantum physics, will start site-specific and open projects with the community on the nine islands. We are talking about the idea of connecting people beyond historical, cultural and linguistic differences: artists, scientists, designers, musicians, writers, journalists and, of course, fishermen to co-create art & science narratives about our planet. Each narrative addresses a different global subject from a local perspective - climate change, space exploration, biodiversity loss, pollution, sustainable growth, gentrification, nuclear fusion, the discovery of life in the Universe and social justice. The project consists of nine art residencies resulting in nine socially engaged collaborative projects and four online micro-summits producing four scientific publications. The grand finale will be an immersive performance narrated by Instytut B61 on nine local fishing boats travelling between the islands and becoming actors in a larger-than-life immersive opera.

The immersive performance directed by **Jan Świerkowski (Instytut B61)** and co-curated with **Patrícia Craveiro Lopes (Sonar+D Lisboa)** will have the collaboration of the **Armenian National Opera** – giving representation to a country trapped in a political scuffle between superpowers. The performance explores the four perspectives of human existence: universal, global, local and personal, reaching for the Overview Effect cognitive shift within the participants and the audience. We will also give visibility to the Azorean Microview as a blueprint for many other local voices to be amplified and protected when solving global challenges. That is why the Cosmos will happen in the Azores in 2027!

Promoted by Instytut B61 (PL) **Cooperation Partners—National:** SONAR Lisboa, Research Centre For Communication and Culture (Católica University), Azores Science Centres, several local venues, festivals, individual artists, citizens and communities of each island **International:** Leiden University (NL), The Story Of foundation (IN), Kujawsko-Pomorski Klaster Brewstera (PL), Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet (AM), Ecsite – European Network of Science Centres and Museums (EU) and AIR Centre – The Atlantic International Research Centre (INT) **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€€€

Contemporary Art Exhibitions, Decolonial Issues, Knowledge Programme
CITY – SEASON I II III

MOVING ECOLOGIES is an international exhibition and knowledge programme held at Ponta Delgada's **vaga – space for art and knowledge**. It proposes three collective exhibitions exploring the boundaries between visual arts, science and geopolitics to address new space, knowledge and power ecologies. Weaving in and out of these multiple practices and agencies, it focuses on the environment, identities and emotions. The programme explores new concepts about nature, humanity and the artificial in a world that is sometimes ancestral, sometimes traditional and other times animistic. It will present artists who work around the issues of decoloniality of the Anthropocene and cultural ecologies and the reassessment of values that define our attitude towards a world that urgently needs to be regenerated. **Moving Ecologies** creates a space of investigation within contemporary art, acknowledging the potential of cultural spaces in a peripheral territory in transformation, trailblazing and paving the way for further awareness, discussions and new ways of living. The project mirrors the territory and its idiosyncrasies, by presenting existing works/installations and new commissions to artists and curators through an archipelagic A.I.R. programme. It mirrors the territory and its idiosyncrasies. The knowledge programme will expand these questions through conferences in partnership with the University of the Azores, workshops, curatorship labs, assemblies, guided visits, island tours and activities for younger audiences, promoting the accessibility of these themes to wider audiences.

Promoted by Anda&Fala (PT) **Curators/Programmers:** Mariana Pestana (PT/UK), Liliana Coutinho (PT) **Potential Cooperation Partners—National:** University of the Azores, Culturgest **International:** Cooking Sections (UK) and CA2M – Contemporary Arts Centre (ES) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Mountain Festival, Cultural Ecotourism, Community Climb
REGION – SEASON I

CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN is a one-weekend performance of altitude that will go from the sea level to Portugal's highest point (+2351m), the mountain island of Pico – Azores. It challenges European artists to think beyond the horizon and climb every mountain with their creative minds, inventing a new initiative of cultural ecotourism. Right in January 2027, the mountain will be the trigger to limitless imagination, composing an itinerary of installations of found objects, voice work, dances, sculpted basaltic rocks, knitting and music drawn from the vegetation. Artists will work with various local communities: the fishing community, the fire department, folk dancing groups, philharmonics, knitting ladies, bread-makers, and mountain guides, involving them in the artistic creation of their projects. The mountain can only gain with the presence of the project. The cultural footprint on the mountain will be fleeting, as everything created will go back to nature and stay forever through digital documentation. Artists will get selected to undertake art residencies through open calls with the help of European networks and our ECoC family. Then, from ocean to peak and back, they will share the experience they just did and remind the world of the importance of coming together to preserve our Nature sanctuary and promote slow transformative experiences. We selected **Climb Every Mountain** in our open call for projects, and you can picture why: this climb is unmissable, and, yes, we will make sure the experience is accessible at the different levels of altitude.

Promoted by MiratecArts – Festival Montanha [mountain festival] (PT) **Curated by** Terry Costa (PT/CA) **Cooperation Partners—National:** Pico Nature Park, Casa da Montanha [Mountain's House], AGMA – Association of Azores Mountain Guides, the municipalities of Pico Island, artists, nature guides and several local cultural and social groups **International:** World Fringe (INT), Res Artis – Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies (INT), past and future ECoCs **Timeframe:** 2025–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Garden Festival, Green Diversity, Humanised Landscape
REGION – SEASON I II III

GREEN GARDENS inFEST is a party of senses and an invitation to enter naturalised spaces, usually inaccessible and diverted from the daily circuits. **Green Gardens inFEST** involves twelve owners and caretakers of private and public gardens of four Azores islands—São Miguel, Terceira, Faial and Pico. It is a proposal from our very own **University of the Azores**. Within that group of people arose a will to create a programme around the gardens of the Azores. The intention is to open them up to the community, thus revealing these spaces' secrets and treasures. United in Diversity, the private and public gardens, farms, backyards and parks that will be open to the public constitute a genuine Archipelago of Nature. The project intertwines the more urbanised and leisure-oriented spaces with those of a more rural and productive nature, the big naturalised green spaces with the small and carefully curated, the more ancient and historical and the more modern. The rare plants, the family stories, the peculiar episodes, and the hidden and magical places will all come to light. The project offers a sensory, educational and aesthetic experience and promotes a garden network between public and private entities to treasure this valuable landscaped heritage. **The Portuguese Association of Historic Gardens** and the **Centre for the Humanities of FCSH/NOVA-University of the Azores** are part of this collaborative network. In addition, a new green space

will take over an abandoned building plot next to the university campus in the centre of Ponta Delgada. The urban occupation of this green space will promote artistic formats and discussions around ecological and heritage issues, allowing for crossings between science, art, nature and culture. Above all, it will result, in 2027, in a new space for nature and art right in the heart of the city, open to research, experimentation and training.

Promoted by Isabel Soares de Albergaria / University of the Azores (PT) and Green Gardens-inFEST Organisation Committee (PT) **Gardens and Parks:** Terra Nostra Garden Hotel, José do Canto Botanical Garden, Piquinho Garden, Pitoresco Garden, Sanf'Ana Palace Garden, António Borges Garden, Nature Reserve of Pinhal da Paz, Faial Botanical Garden, Biscoitos Wine Museum Garden, and Duke of Terceira Garden **Cooperation Partners—National:** Portuguese Association of Historic Gardens, University of the Azores, CHAM – Centre for the Humanities FCSH/NOVA-UAc, Portuguese Association of Architects, Sustain Azores, Anda&Fala, Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre, National Arts Plan (PNA) and Pico do Refúgio **International:** GSD – Harvard Graduate School of Design (US) and D-ARCH ETH Zurich (CH) **Timeframe:** Production from 2024 on, implementation in 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€

Sound Art Festival, Weather Art
ISLAND – SEASON I II III

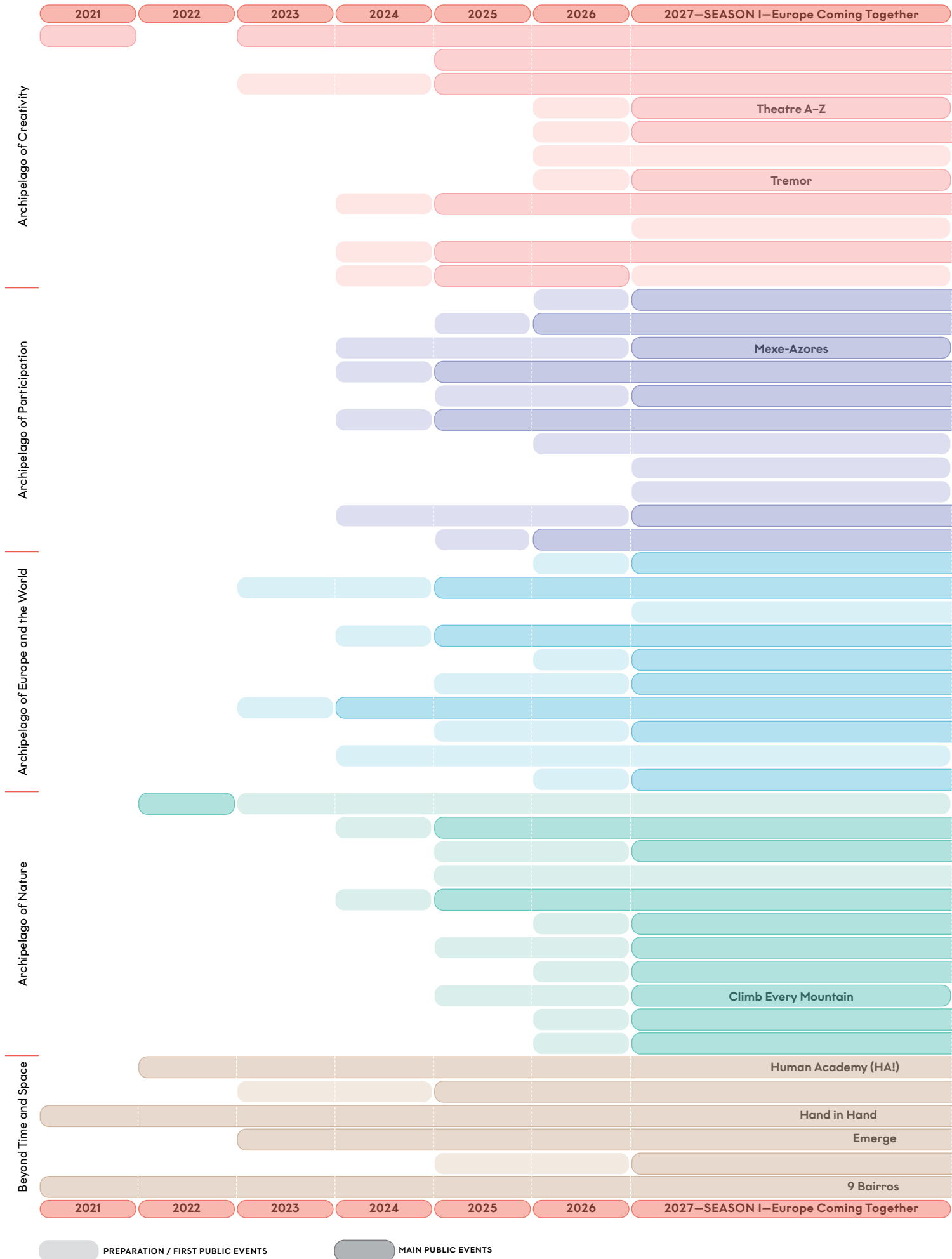
SONA INSULARO presents an environmental sound art exhibition built with endogenous materials and a sound art festival in collaboration with local communities, artists and international institutions. The title stands for Sonorous Archipelago in Esperanto and proposes a utopian sonic place, a time and space for listening, connection and togetherness. Curated by Portuguese sound expert **Raquel Castro**, the project will make us think about islands from the listening perspective and stimulate the creation of public sound artworks. The works will be developed

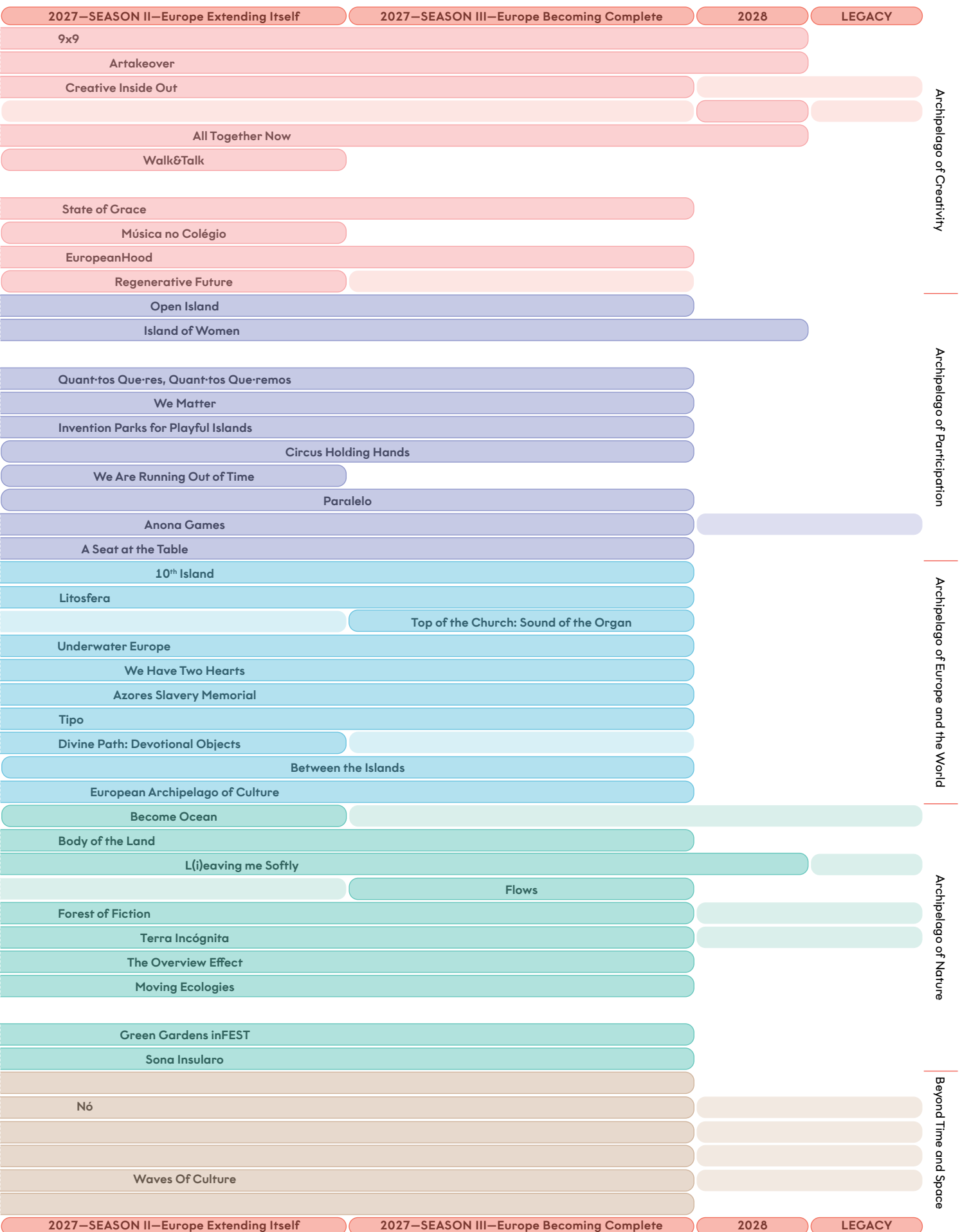
throughout 2026 in participatory and collaborative art residencies with different institutions from European islands (Azores, Denmark, Norway, Italy and Greece). These partners will also collaborate in artistic programming and exchange, creating an archipelagic narrative. All projects will be developed under the premise of collaboration between artists and communities, promoting enriching exchanges. Sound sculptures activated by the wind, the rain or the sun will be non-invasive, and the process will generate dialogue, symbiosis and exchanges. As they are sustainable and organic listening monuments, they will relate to different weather conditions and naturally erode over time. The opening of this natural sound park will happen in 2027's Season I. In September/October, a sound art festival will bring a moment of celebration and sonic delight. Installations, sculptures, performances, walks, music from field recordings and processed instruments, organic elements or scientific data are all converted into sound. Workshops on field recording and audio technology will engage local communities, as international artists and deep listening performances will bring awareness to the environment and place. The project aims to be a case study on the impact of these works on local human and non-human communities. We will create a website to archive sounds, the working processes, and interviews of the participants, host institutions and artists involved.

Promoted by SONORA (PT) **Curated by** Raquel Castro (PT) **Artists:** Fernando Mota (PT), Felix Blume (FR), Kathy Hinde (UK), Filipe Caetano/PMDS (PT), André Laranjinha (PT), i.a. **Cooperation Partners—National:** Schools, people and animals rights structures and municipalities **International:** SPOR festival (DK) and Interzona (IT) **Potential Cooperation Partnerships:** Onassis Foundation (GR) and Ultima Oslo (NO) **Timeframe:** 2026–2027 **Estimated Budget:** €€



HUMAN NATURE—A TIMELINE OF ACTION





Q7

How will the events and activities that will constitute the cultural programme for the year be chosen?

From the very beginning of our bidding process, we set out a common vision: **organise a European Capital of Culture, an inclusive, participative, sustainable and transformative major cultural event with international visibility.**

To accomplish this vision, we have set **four shared objectives** to define our range of action:

- strengthen the capacity of the CCS and promote the cultural and creative potential of Ponta Delgada and the Azores;
- promote participation, inclusion, cultural democracy, empowerment and intersection of different people through an intense dialogue between artistic practices and social realities;
- create a movement of cultural exchange and mutual understanding that starts in Ponta Delgada and extends across the island, the Azores archipelago, Europe and the territories of the diaspora;
- deepen the symbiotic links between nature and human activity through cultural and artistic practices, in line with sustainable development goals.

From these shared objectives, during our bidding process, we launched several discussions and exchanges with cultural organisations and stakeholders, artists, the university, NGOs, associations, and tourism, environment and education experts within the municipality and the region. Through a bottom-up and community-led approach, we engaged in one-on-one conversations and focus-group sessions, in-person and online, resorting to the toolkit of shared imagination centred on problem-solving and project-making. Not only has this allowed us to map *who is doing what, who has just arrived, and who is willing to take responsibility to make our common cultural future*, it has given us the compelling push to get to our concept, our programme of archipelagos and our projects. We ought to keep the conversations open and ongoing. This way, together with local, national and European partners and stakeholders, we will develop ideas further, give inputs, allow more time for project development, and ensure that **Human Nature** is enriched and maintains its connection to the spirit of the times.

Keeping a multilateral conversation: PDL–Azores2027 will continue organising meetings and talks with different organisations, individuals and communities to clarify the objectives of the cultural and artistic programme and the range of possibilities for participation. In the spirit of the pre-selection phase, we will publish our bid book online after handing it in October 2022, making it available to the public. We will also present it online and in-person, seeking to disseminate its principles and ideas broadly so that anyone who wants to participate in the preparation and implementation process may do so by referring to the four-archipelago programme or a particular project. Several rounds of conversation will allow for continuous mapping, stakeholders getting acquainted, identifying challenges, building solutions together and creating strong mutual understanding. Open discussions, focus groups, brainstorming, design-thinking workshops,

devising exercises, and assemblies will be some of the formats applied to continuously enrich our programme, making space for new ideas and co-creation. We believe we can progressively reshape these formats, ensuring that everyone has a say and that different stands—from the local to the regional, from the national to the international—can co-exist and complement each other and keep the project connected to its present and future aspirations.

Staying open to new participants and tackling difficult issues: We will stay awake in the present day and embrace the novelty and the menace, the surprising and the wonderful that will cross our paths in the unknown future to come. We are on our way to developing a historical dimension. We are having conversations with historians to deepen projects that translate blocked history and give back our history to people who do not know it. Going further, we want to include projects that approach wounds generated by dictatorship transitioning to democracy, the impacts of the colonial war or privatisation of land. Storytelling will be the key to unlocking past and present with curiosity, provocation and awe.

Also, perhaps our youngest project promoter or performer is not even born yet! The way to expand our programme and keep it up to date is by leaving room for daring, original, dreamy, deliverable, sustainable, out-of-the-box, naturally human and regenerative new proposals and ideas. The programme aspires to be a manifesto of empowerment, cultural democracy and constant redefinition of what it means to be European. PDL–Azores2027 will do open calls for flourishing new projects in its artistic and cultural programme and several specific projects such as **Become Ocean, 10th Island, 9x9, European Archipelago of Culture**, among others. With this, we will democratically involve more artists and operators locally and transnationally and enrich our programme's cultural and artistic diversity.

Being clear in the project selection criteria: Projects get selected when they fall clearly within one of the four strategic programme archipelagos and the **Human Nature** narrative and when they fit into the PDL–Azores2027 vision and mission. As a point of reference, we will be choosing projects that:

- deepen relations within Europe and with the World—cooperation and the European dimension are key points through inter-island, national and international co-creation and partnerships;
- reveal and strengthen the cultural diversity and the presence of the CCS of Ponta Delgada, the Azores and Portugal in the contemporary European arena;
- boost inclusion, participation and involvement of different communities, transforming our cultural life;
- are accessible and scaled in proportion to the size and capacity of each location in full compliance, environmental sustainability and quality of experience for visitors and locals;
- value and activate our natural heritage and its relevant topics for questioning and experimentation in cultural and artistic practices;
- attract a European and international audience and mobilise new local audiences to the cultural offer of Ponta Delgada and the Azores;

- promote a broad spectrum of different cultural and artistic disciplines and their intersections, including free events, the digital arena and different scales of activities (from small to large, from intimate to collective);
- are activated in the whole region beyond Ponta Delgada, including São Miguel Island and all the other eight islands of the Azores;
- are feasible in the frame of the technical and financial possibilities of PDL–Azores2027 and whose promoters demonstrate the capacity of delivery.

Humanising relationships: The Artistic Director, together with the different teams of curators and promoters, will play a paramount role in selecting the various events and activities. They will be constantly informed with views and inputs by the Advisory Board, local teams of ambassadors, those who carry the knowledge of their culture of place and specific audiences and by a national and European team of consultants. The listening exercise will remain an important tool to involve and understand, leading to the decision-making process and the implementation of ideas. It will be a course of action aimed at building a *quorum* and ensuring we remain human, present and full-heartedly able to intersect the local, national and international CCS and create new multidisciplinary networks of cooperation.

Q8

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

Traditional and new cultural and artistic expressions will merge and co-exist within the interaction of nature and culture. We will create bridges between tradition and contemporary practices until everything meets and matters because people and practices experiment and find themselves together. Our programme will show our traditional manifestations because they are essential to our cultural identity and annual calendar. We will allow visitors to experience their genuine propositions and challenge them to cross other practices, giving rise to new experiences. Yes, as we will be playing with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions, we will, in the very near future, invent new traditions.

ARCHIPELAGO OF CREATIVITY

9x9, a nine-island A.I.R. programme—that unfolds in central and remote communities while promoting experiences with artists based on our rural and maritime stories.

The ARTakeover projects occupy entire streets, advertising spaces, and newspapers, thus coupling roots and pure imagination in wild performative, visual and musical forms that weave their way into everyday life. **High Street**, for instance, connects past, present and future, reimagining the stories of familiar spaces and merging traditional and contemporary performative approaches.

Theatre A–Z revives and values the theatrical repertoire and popular performative forms of the Azores, side by side with contemporary avant-garde European dramaturgy and the support of new theatre authors.

All Together Now supports one of the biggest traditions in the archipelago—that of philharmonic bands—with new compositions, capacity building for artistic and

management knowledge, and upgrading and digitalisation of projects, bands and networks.

Walk&Talk and Tremor mix the new and the old, intersecting times, people and territories without borders or oppositions. The goal, above all, is to tell a story. A story of the place or a story of the world. **Walk&Talk** approaches it through visual arts, handicrafts and performance, mixing designers with artisans, engaging contemporary artists in local and wordly narratives. **Tremor** approaches it through music and performance, making space for unexpected collaborations with local communities and encounters in the landscape.

State of Grace makes our very typical (and wonderful) farmer's market interact with contemporary performing and visual arts, and by offering it a website, social media, beautiful new merchandising, itineraries across São Miguel Island and even a European exchange with other markets.

EuropeanHood departs from the ancestral hooded cloak to create a slow-fashion and design lab of experimentation and innovation, embodying skills and tales of sustainability, and gathering European and international designers with local dressmakers and fisherwomen.

Regenerative Future presents an architecture project that meets art, crafts and design, resurrecting neglected industrial heritage buildings. It showcases innovative projects departing from craftwork practices and local materials crossing with new techniques based on circular forms.

ARCHIPELAGO OF PARTICIPATION

Quant-tos Que-res, Quant-tos Que-remos will see music, performing arts, crafts, visual arts and unknown thresholds be experimented with and devised by our youth. This is synonymous with past informing future knowledge.

Open Island proposes to convert car culture into walking, biking and green mobility. Everything and everyone will come together for an archipelago of no divisions through **MAPAS**, which displaces and values local and wordly artistic and cultural practices in rural and maritime neighbourhoods.

Island of Women empowers women from tradition to the future, claiming a world of parity and equality. The project makes the traditional history of laundresses be pushed forward in **A Big Clothesline in Sete Cidades** to raise awareness about the environment and women's issues.

Mexe-Azores is a platform for everyone who has a story to tell. Religious pilgrims will transform their path into a contemporary dance choreography, whilst fishermen and fishmongers will tell stories of ancestral techniques in new and compelling ways.

Paralelo merges traditional and avant-garde movement forms, from folk to urban dances, to gather people of all ages around a dance revolution.

Anona Games revives traditional games and creates new games based on physical activity and well-being, inspired by the manual work of those who built our cities on black volcanic rock, ploughed the fields, hunted for whales or dragged fishing nets. The game design is the work of artists and set designers with endogenous materials and ancestral techniques.

A Seat at the Table sits together gastronomy, cultural and intangible heritage, proposing a mix of flavours and new combinations between the local and the worldly, the traditional and contemporary cuisine techniques.

ARCHIPELAGO OF EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Top of the Church: Sound of the Organ (reviving this religious heritage instrument) crosses the canonical and contemporary repertoires, historical and modern organs, fostering new compositions, digitising the music, organist stories and religious architecture.

Underwater Europe brings to life the fascinating stories of the people behind historical shipwrecks. Underwater Cultural Heritage transforms into Augmented Reality experiences.

We Have Two Hearts is about our 12-string *viola* crossing with other chord instruments and innovative music forms, stimulating, renewing and shaking up this musical tradition, by taking it to the digital realm and interacting with contemporary artists to customise newly built instruments. In addition, the project proposes the opening to the public of unknown and inaccessible heritage spaces.

Tipo pursues the safeguarding and dissemination of the rich typographic heritage of the Azores through a contemporary approach, creating new typefaces inspired by Azorean nature and small printing machines using local materials and labour. It is a happy marriage between low and high tech, and this manual art will go digital to be broadly accessible.

Divine Path: Devotional Objects creates routes that connect past and future to celebrate the Holy Ghost festivities' diversity of experiences. Innovation will be done digitally but also in gastronomy, handicrafts and architecture, treasuring these products and putting them in a European spotlight.

ARCHIPELAGO OF NATURE

Become Ocean takes the Atlantic for an environmentally conscious, ancestral and avant-garde exploration of our ocean: beautiful, sustainable, together.

Body of the Land breaks the distance and strangeness of contemporary art expressions by bringing them off the walls, making a proposition that resists our *four seasons in one day* climate.

L(i)aving me Softly crosses paths of things we recognise and places we never knew existed, creating itineraries of experience that leave a legacy in the digital world for whoever wants to experience it.

Terra Incógnita experiments with music, technology and performance in the wilderness to take you on an expedition into the unknown in the land of a million years.

The Overview Effect is a science-art project addressing global subjects from a local perspective—climate change, space exploration, biodiversity loss, pollution, sustainable growth, gentrification, nuclear fusion, the discovery of life in the Universe and social justice—that mixes astronomers, fishermen and artists to convey a multidisciplinary experience with no oppositions or hierarchies of knowledge.

One thing we know for sure: **Human Nature** is about finding innovative ways to explore traditional cultural approaches and experiment the future with uncanny, unimaginable and never-ending artistic possibilities.

Q9 / Q10

How has the city involved local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme? Which artists and cultural organisations is the ECoC cooperating with?

First things first: PDL–Azores2027 was born out of a civic movement of **800 people** who called **For a ECoC in the Azores in 2027**, comprising local artists and cultural organisations, trusting this project to be a catalyst for change through culture. This civic movement has been following up and participating actively in the bidding process, guaranteeing continuous political support and ongoing critical conversation on the relevance of this project and its positive impacts. We have continued with an **Advisory Board** composed of museum directors, artists, architects, gallerists, art students and curators, who critically informed our bidding actions, pre-selection bid book and programme development. After the final selection, we plan to continue with an Advisory Board in our governance structure. In 2022, we also doubled our network of ambassadors in each of the nine islands, many of whom are artists and cultural operators who take it upon themselves to support, promote and identify relevant local topics and contributions for the candidacy.

We involved artists, cultural associations, NGOs, new and old residents in the municipality and the region, people living in cities and rural neighbourhoods, and a vast diversity of profiles spanning from carpenters, fisherwomen, children, tourism agencies to taxi drivers, refugees, teachers and many others. We promoted encounters and synergies when many people did not know each other. This time, we brought them closer to four central questions of this bid: What does Ponta Delgada – Azores have to learn with Europe and vice-versa? How can we increase audience participation, create new opportunities for youngsters, the marginalised, and the disadvantaged and deepen a cultural link with schools? What ideas can we implement to unite the traditional and the new?

The answers to these questions, pandemic on/pandemic off, came through in-person and online sessions with different formats of conversation with cultural stakeholders. Spanning from one-on-one meetings and group workshops, we made large-scale sessions in every island and regional municipalities through **9 Islands in Conversation** but also kept it intimate and free to listen to ideas in our office or on the move in **Open Door** sessions. The outcomes of this process include continuous mapping of active cultural stakeholders, identifying programmatic needs and priorities, assessing the financial and European dimension viability of existing projects, and finally bringing new projects to the table.

And speaking of new projects, in 2022, after the pre-selection, we launched **Archipelago of Projects**, an open call for the CCS. The bidding team received 58 proposals and shortlisted seven projects to include in the programme. We paid 350€ to these stakeholders, and together with them, we expanded each project, adding to a solid number of projects promoted by local artists and cultural operators. We also invited the **University of the Azores** and the **Regional Secretariats for Education, Cultural Affairs and Health and Sport**

to make calls for projects in their different departments. Projects such as **Climb Every Mountain, A Seat at the Table, EuropeanHood, Litosfera, Mala, Tipo, Green Gardens inFEST** and the **European Composition Competition for Symphony Orchestra** have now entered this stage of the programme. Based on these contributions, we have deepened our concept and programme.

Yet, not everything was about talking and projecting the future. We did a **photography contest and a city exhibition** in October 2022 developed in partnership with AFAA – Association of Amateur Photographers of the Azores. The call for photographs searched for images depicting the evolving relationships—of fear, respect and care—between human beings and nature and the enhancement of our sense of Humanity and respect for nature as one. We selected 20 photos from 150 submissions. The winner went to Kaunas for three days as an exchange between PDL–Azores2027 and Kaunas 2022 so that two people could experience a European Capital of Culture. Also, in these bid book pages, you can discover Paulo Goulart, a local photographer and portraitist, whom we have challenged to capture the **Human Nature** of our Creative, Cultural and Touristic Sectors.

In these last two years, and more intensively after the Cultural Strategy approval, we piloted new projects with opportunities for artists and cultural stakeholders. These projects have helped us reinforce the potential, relevance and urgency of the ECoC project: **Human Academy** a cultural capacity

building programme for the CCS, social workers and teachers with workshops on sustainability, European funds and participatory community-led art practices; **9x9**, a nine island A.I.R. programme, developed in partnership with Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre and Part’ilha Cultural Association, came from a suggestion of countless stakeholders, creating opportunity for nine artists residing in the Azores and beyond to develop projects of different artistic disciplines with community engagement and outreach; **9 Bairros**, a participative digital and printed publication with its own editorial team, presented interviews, profiles of Azorean artists and chronicles mapping our artistic diversity; **Hand in Hand**, developed in partnership with CRESAÇOR, a microcredit programme to support the development of small projects, has given a push to eighteen projects, empowering the implementation of small scale projects in six different islands—from compasses with information about neighbouring islands to touring of theatre plays, exchange of musicians from classical and folk musical genres, or even a construction of a community herbarium.

As a result of everything we previously described, many artists and cultural organisations in Ponta Delgada and the Azores are keen to make PDL–Azores2027 go forward. We expect a process of cultural renovation that engages new audiences, new artists and new opportunities. The programme builds strongly on Azorean artists and cultural stakeholders, so the further the project goes, we aim to engage many more. Here are some examples.

PROJECT	LOCAL ARTIST/CULTURAL ORGANISATION
Artakeover	Eye for an Eye is promoted and curated by Ponta Delgada’s Bruí Gallery ’s owner Gregory Le Lay. High Street is run by Terceira Island-based Cães do Mar Theatre Company . Mala is a proposal from Cine-Teatro Açor’s new facilitators: theatre director Claudio Hochman and singer and designer Carlota Blanc .
State of Grace	Concept and project developed by anthropologist and cultural educator Maria Emanuel Albergaria in collaboration with philosopher Nuno Marques da Silva , educator and entrepreneur Catarina Ferreira , and writer, publisher and activist Blanca Martín-Calero .
Regenerative Future	Developed by Ponta Delgada architecture duo Mezzo Atelier .
We Matter	Inclusiva is a project promoted by dancer, choreographer and inclusive dance teacher Catarina Medeiros and Estúdio 13 – Space for Creative Industries . All the Mermaids Have a Fish Tail is a project conducted by the Music School of Rabo de Peixe . Vibrate is a project run with and for the Deaf Association of São Miguel .
Circus Holding Hands	Proposed and run by Ponta Delgada-based 9’Circos Company .
We Are Running Out of Time	Conducted and implemented by Anda&Fala Cultural Association , together with mainland design studio Ilhas .
10th Island	Far From the Island is a theatre and film joint proposed by António Braga , a local actor and theatre director.
Top of the Church: Sound of the Organ	Concept developed by Isabel Albergaria Sousa , organist and director of the Conservatório Regional of Ponta Delgada [music conservatory].
Underwater Europe	Proposed and developed by Centro do Património Móvel, Imaterial e Arqueológico dos Açores [Azores Mobile, Intangible and Archaeological Heritage Centre], based on Terceira Island.
We Have Two Hearts	Project’s concept and structure developed by a collaboration of three local and regional organisations, composed of <i>viola da terra</i> players and cultural programmers, dealing with activating this instrument: Viola da Terra Youth Association (São Miguel Island), MiratecArts (Pico Island), and Sons do Terreiro (Terceira Island).
Azores Slavery Memorial	Concept developed by José Luís Neto , director of Horta Museum on Faial Island.
Between The Islands	Concept developed by Azores-based filmmaker and visual anthropologist Amaya Sumpsi from her own research and artistic practice.
Divine Path: Devotional Objects	Concept by CADA [Crafts and Design Centre of the Azores] to include several local designers and artisans.
Become Ocean	Exhibitions proposed by Carlos Machado Museum (Ponta Delgada) and Francisco Lacerda Museum (São Jorge Island). The Ponta Delgada Sinfonietta will play the winning music piece of the European Composition Competition for Symphony Orchestra . Iceberg is a project of Faial Island-based Fazendo–Cultural Association from their experience with their Maravilha Arts Festival.
Body of the Land	Concept developed by Bernardo Brito e Abreu and Andrea Santolaya from Pico do Refúgio , in Ribeira Grande Municipality, São Miguel Island.
Moving Ecologies	Devised by Anda&Fala Cultural Association and departing from vaga – space for art and knowledge in Ponta Delgada.
Terra Incógnita	Developed by Plutão Camaleão Cultural Association after experimental formats developed for the Tremor Festival.
Green Gardens inFEST	Proposed by Isabel Soares de Albergaria , a lecturer and researcher from the University of the Azores .
Sona Insularo	Electronic music artist Filipe Caetano/PMDS will be commissioned to develop a sound monument.



Eleonora Marino Duarte was born in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but she is Azorean by choice and affinity. She is an actress, director, writer, and poet. As an environmental and animal rights enthusiast, Eleonora is an ecologist and a vegetarian. She considers herself a small part of "that sovereign

organism that is Nature" and lives in search of full communion with it. Nature provides her with pleasure, well-being, comfort and health. Observing it and all its continuous process of creativity and transformation gives her encouragement.

04. European dimension

FINDING GUIDANCE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN FRAME OF MIND

On common values and goals: Recognising the role the EU played in developing our social progress, a new generation of Azoreans consider themselves fortunate to have grown up with the European standard. Growing up with the assurance of democracy and human rights, with a tolerant and respectful vision towards humanity and nature, with a protective social and economic umbrella that, despite not covering us from our eternal rains, has paved a sunny path for this ECoC bid (mostly cloudy, honestly, but warm). Being part of a continent where people can circulate freely and where opportunities arise for every country and territory, no matter how peripheral, has allowed us to gain renewed confidence and assurance of our place in the world. Today, looking forward, we cannot, as these values of tolerance, unity and sustainability are being threatened, look solely inwards and away from our universal diversity. PDL – Azores2027, alongside its civic support and engagement, cannot take lightly its job to carry the European banner of ideals, and to raise it through and beyond its programme.

The city of Ponta Delgada, and the Azores as a whole, grateful in their nature and for their nature, remember how, not long ago, our centuries-old isolation and poverty were predominant in our identity. Today, the city of Ponta Delgada, along with the Azores region, is bidding for the ECoC 2027 title as vibrant participants of European cultural exchange. We recognise and seek to explore the untapped potential lost to cultural exclusion and inaccessibility. We entered this odyssey by sharing worldviews and world stances with the European project, which has successfully communicated its core message even to its most unseen places. Thankful for having been shaped by the EU's role in our economic, social and civic development, we are now looking to set ourselves as a stage for broader cultural connectivity, to be a closer part of a larger world.

Grateful for having been rediscovered on the world map in recent years, the city of Ponta Delgada and the Azores cannot, in light of today's climate events, ignore its ideal position to: first, be a leading example in sustainable living and tourism; second, advocate and take action to create structures of cultural access and production; and third, reach out to those most ignored and excluded. Everyone is needed for our Union to tap into the hidden potential, and often lost, within all of its diverse and remote communities—this is how we hope to contribute to the European project.

On the radius of unity – Circular Inclusion: When debating the nature of the EU and our common citizenship, we would immediately think of central Europe as the one point from which the eyes of the world take its measure. And only should you want the full scope, only then would you start drawing a line from that centre outwards. There, on the far Atlantic outskirts of the European territory, you will find us, sometimes idling in contemplation, sometimes shaking with activity, be it cultural or seismic. And there, looking at that line drawn on a map, you will be looking at the radius of the EU, and you will assume you are looking at a way to measure it. We, a peripheral people and region, intend to challenge assumptions and shift perceptions with our ECoC. One cannot measure the radius of being European with lines on a map. One measures it by the state of its communities and diversity of cultures. We know too well about discontinuous territories, isolation and how to make a unifying narrative around it, centring on our diversity of identities. Our land compels us to know and respect this as much as we do, as does our surrounding expanse of ocean, telling us of our story of migration, of our loving goodbyes and of embraces held next to a sea of departures and arrivals. We built our culture on the back of the harshness of our nature, sometimes fearfully, sometimes recklessly, and from now on, respectfully. Much like our Union, we are just as much native of our singular islands as we are of our diverse archipelago. We are just as much Portuguese and European, because above all else: **Our Nature is Human.**

Ponta Delgada and the Azores are one of the possible centres from which we can measure our Europeanness. Yes, geographically, we are at the edge of the EU. But if we embrace the idea that our union is our banner of values and diversity, we can only follow the lead of inclusion. Our union is not of lands, but of its peoples, from the most seen to the most unseen. Even if we are not geographically equidistant from one another, we are all civically equidistant from our common core. At the centre of this proudly extended citizenship, of our all-inclusive circle of humanity, of PDL–Azores2027, stands the binding motto of the EU: **United in Diversity.**

Q11

The scope and quality of the activities regarding:

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

Setting the stage: Our projects are collaborative, decentralised and culturally democratic. The programme promotes tolerant encounters between a diverse, multilingual and intergenerational audience, composed of natives and non-natives, of national, European and worldly visitors. We will be a community connector, bridging peoples and times, reviving forgotten traditions and creating a new for our unemployed and fleeting talent, and for our dwindling and ageing population. We are essentially a maritime and rural region. Jobs and opportunities are scarce. How can we better equip our youth to face tomorrow's challenges? How can a rural environment reshape itself for the better, alongside growing tourism and hospitality sectors? How can culture reinforce the bond between the peoples? How can it be a bridge between people and between people and the environment? We must join Europe in cooperation to answer these questions. To this extent, we are exploring these and other issues with those willing to share their views. We also intend on allying with several past and future ECoCs, and with other national and international partners. We know we are not alone in this, and we think we can achieve greater cultural democracy, through projects like **Mexe-Azores**. We are going **Beyond Time and Space** to build capacity, connect dots and futures, go digital and fully European. With these toolkits, we are promoting nomadic capacity building programmes, creating platforms that link offer and demand, launching funds for cultural and artistic projects, and designing digital media to connect everyone and make our cultural programme reach far and wide.

On stage – opening up to conversation: PDL–Azores2027 is bringing cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding between European citizens to the forefront. We not only want to bring people together through the sustainable occupation of our natural and human-made spaces, but also by establishing ourselves in virtual spaces to then engage with European audiences in a cooperative effort. Using our everyday mobility, we plan to form exchanges between us, Europe, and our diaspora by acknowledging our historical role as a **transatlantic bridge**. We hope that doing so culturally, rather than just strategically, may lead us to connect those who left with those who stayed and those who are just arriving. Our mission is about caring to unite and creating the *at ease* needed for honest stories to find their right to affirm themselves and their existence. The issues of isolation and neglect are dear to Europe, and we find our insularity—our place on the map and within a broader European culture—to be the perfect setting for a laboratory of exchange of different forms of understanding. We hope to be part of a greater understanding with transnational projects like **The Overview Effect**, which, through science and art, works the collective connection to earth, nature, and human relationships, by working with the communities of the nine Azores islands.

We will let **ARTakeover** our streets in a burst of projects developed by local and international artists, by occupying public advertising spaces, urban framework and newspapers to reflect on the heritage of Portuguese colonisation and occupation of the land. We are also adding a **10th Island** to our archipelago, a meeting place for our communities of artists worldwide, and making way for our local artists to share ideas with our partners to update transatlantic ties.

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

Migration – the common denominator of European history:

As the first ECoC in the middle of the Atlantic, our geographic nine-island dispersion represents a rich assortment of different cultures, all as important as they are singular and all bound by a greater identity, a micro-union and a mirror of our larger EU. Our programme explores that diversity, extending itself beyond our small land masses. Just as our sperm whales and birds migrate, our people also have a centennial history of migration. These migrants have gone out to build communities and make homes all over the world. They departed in search of better lives, to escape natural disasters, extreme misery, and, at times, slavery. We are opening those wounds with projects like the **Azores Slavery Memorial**, in hopes of healing them. We want to reconnect those **Far From the Island** back to this place of departures and to turn it more and more into a place of arrivals and permanence. We are home to around 100 nationalities, including 26 EU nationalities. We will promote a more solid interaction and integration between all these people. We will create better dialogues between different communities by establishing places of equality and diversity. Our cultural and artistic programme reflects these European values through projects like **Litosfera**, where Azorean and Ukrainian artists work on concepts of freedom, solidarity and preserving peace in the face of war. We are creating a **EuropeanHood**, where we trace the European history of a *capote e capelo* (hooded cloak), a traditional Azorean garment, using the influence of our connection with the old continent to create new and sustainable ways forward for fashion and design.

Transforming towards Sustainability: Relying on the European cooperation mindset and recognising the challenges just around the corner, we have to rethink on how we stand on our environment. The EU's commitment to sustainability is ours as well. PDL–Azores2027 will play its part by discussing these issues with a larger audience, taking conscious regenerative actions and establishing a clear commitment to preserve our resources. We have a history of transformation, going from whale hunting to whale preservation. It is the decade of the Oceans, and as one of the most significant sea regions in Europe, we will celebrate our heritage and advocate for ocean conservation and ecological preservation on the **Become Ocean** project. We are placing ourselves **Between the Islands** to discuss the human occupation of the sea at the intersection of sciences, thought and artistic practices. We want our cities to be more open, more human, more walkable and liveable. More cultural and natural, more urban and rural, more interconnected—we want an **Open Island**. We want to go from a landscape of flattened green pastures to a reforested green landscape, reshaping our **Body of the Land**

and creating a **Forest of Fiction**. We are committed to going from monoculture to diversity, from destruction to protection, from separation of nature to sustainable integration, and to building a **Regenerative Future**, bringing neglected industrial heritage back to life.

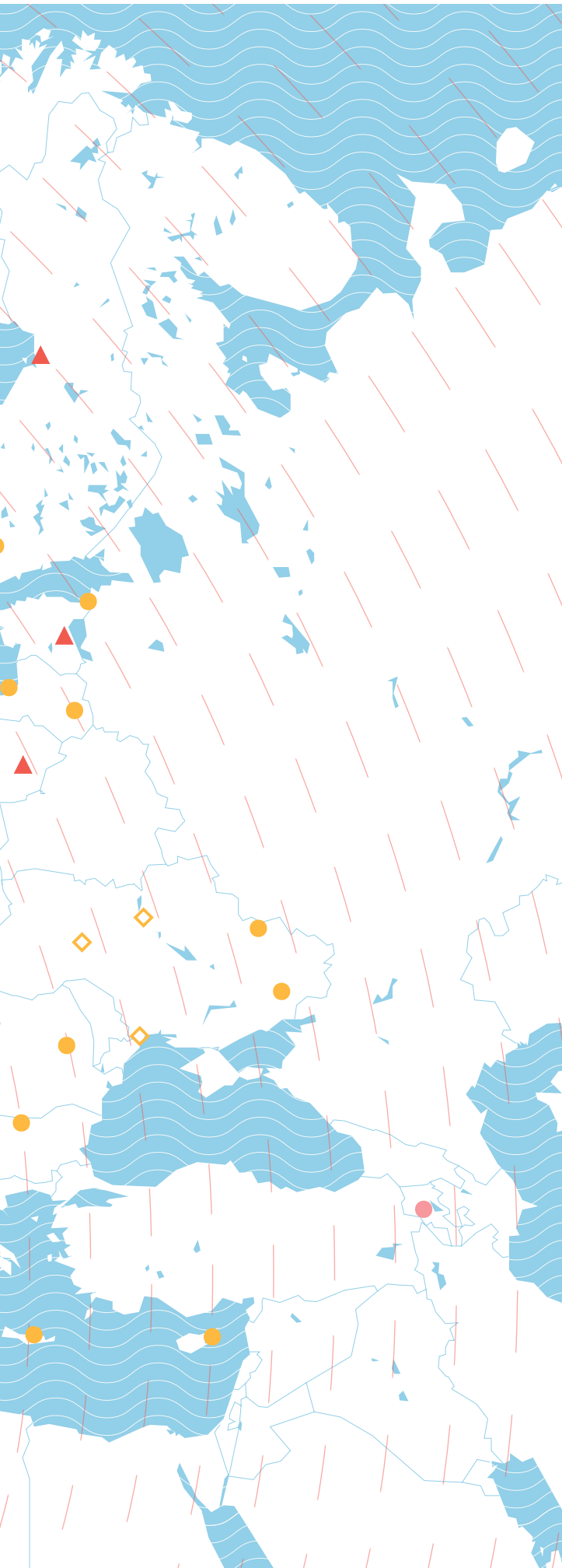
Slowing down and taking it down a notch, or two: Ponta Delgada has a city life like never before. Yet, we still hold remnants of the quietness of our more isolated and impoverished days. We still lounge in cafés and chat for a moment at the corner store. We believe that having one foot back in the past and one foot forward may be the ideal balance between our past and future issues. Today, modern life cannot dissociate itself from identity struggles, climate anxiety and a fast-paced world of expectations. We can offer unique ways to experience our landscape with enough quality time to, hopefully, help others change their pace and find their balance. We are making way for a **European Archipelago of Culture**, where each island offers its own rhythm and culture of place. By **L(i)aving me Softly**, those who visit us get to live a transformative and responsible experience of expanded time and softness, plus we invite you to a **Terra Incógnita**, where nature meets a music soundtrack. Our traditions have often been the most culturally democratic way to reach our youth, as we have seen through the work of our philharmonics, which have kept teaching music, bringing us **All Together Now**. We have dealt with connecting, with coming together and falling apart, with trying again and failing better. Now, as Ponta Delgada, taking the nine islands of the Azores into the European Capital of Culture dream, we hope to articulate our story with that of Europe because **We Have Two Hearts** beating here, and we are inviting others to beat along.

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS, COOPERATION WITH OPERATORS AND CITIES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS THE CITY HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED OR PLANS TO ESTABLISH.

The programme will include internationally recognised artists from all artistic genres to present and create newly commissioned works that meet our programme of archipelagos. Our writers, dancers, bands, visual artists, architects, photographers, artisans and festivals will share stages and collaborate with these artists and learn from them.

We established transnational partnerships with several operators across Europe and the world. We connected with cities, islands, and continents, always striving to make bridges between geographies and the universe at large. We are in touch with several platforms, networks, institutions and universities. Getting the ECoC title, we intend to deepen the existing conversations and extend our network of partners. On the following pages, find a map of our European and International Partnerships and a selection of the artistic and cultural bridges of **Human Nature**.





EUROPE: ◆ ARTISTS | ● PARTNERS

Austria: Anna de Lirium, Rainer Erich Scheichelbauer | **Ars Electronica**, danceWEB, Glyphs **Belgium:** Leslie Mannés, Liesbeth Huybrechts, Miet Warlop, Pascal Gielen (Antwerp University), Time Circus | **Flanders District of Creativity**, Kunsten Festival des Arts, P.A.R.T.S. – Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, Rosas **Bulgaria:** Pleven (Twin City) **Cyprus:** Fengaros Festival **Czech Republic:** Mount Lysina Critical Zone Observatory **Denmark:** helloearth | **SPOR festival** **Estonia:** Station Narva **Finland:** Jenna Sutela, Taru Elfving | **Contemporary Art Archipelago** **France:** Archibald Caramantran, Djelali Tricks, Isabelle Arvers, Felix Blume, Félix Dupin-Meynard (Montpellier University), Helene Gustin, Honky Tonk Boat, Jérôme Gaillardet (Paris Globe Institute of Physics), Mauro Colagreco, Phia Ménard (Compagnie Non Nova), Philippe Quesne (Vivarium Studio), Robin Mora, Thierry Simões | **Cité du Design**, La Bulle Bleue, MaMa Festival, sapotek, The ICOMOS International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage, UNESCO – Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, Vie des Hauts Productions **Germany:** Erik Spiekermann, Kathi Stertzig, Katapult, Rimini Protokoll | **Silbermann Society** (Gottfried-Silbermann-Gesellschaft), Zartinka, Blind Signal Berlin **Greece:** Koiliaris River Critical Zone Observatory, Syn Fab Lab **Iceland:** Húsavík Whale Museum, Stefansson Arctic Institute **Ireland:** Glenn Loughran | **Cow House Studios**, Galway Community Circus, TU Dublin School of Creative Arts **Italy:** Caterina Moroni, Formafantasma, Marco Barotti, Sandro Berra, Marinella Senatore | **Digital Meets Culture**, Interzona, MateraHub, Piccolo Teatro di Milano, PoliFactory, Politecnico di Milano, TBA21 – Academy / Ocean Space, Tenrock Teatro Circo, Tipoteca Italiana, Space Caviar Studio **Hungary:** Edit Kaldor | **Mindspace** **Latvia:** Green Meridien, New Theatre Institute **Norway:** Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra, Arctic University, Whalesafari Andenes **Poland:** Jan Świerkowski | **Instytut Bó1**, Fundacja Teatru Trans-Atlantyki, Medialab Katowice, Kujawsko-Pomorski Klaster Brewstera **Romania:** IN CONTEXT – contemporary art, and experimental music residency **Slovakia:** Alliance Old Market Hall **Spain:** Angela Díaz Quintela, Basket Beat, Nico Nubiola, Paloma Calle, Pepa Plana, Roger Bernat | **AC/E – Acción Cultural Española**, AVC – Asociación Valenciana de Circo, CA2M – Contemporary Arts Centre, Circ Cric Festival, Inland – art, agriculture & territory, InterArts, Keroxen, Festival de les Arts Comunitàries de Catalunya, Lava Circular, Monkey Week, Platoniq Lab, Spinish Circus, Unima Valencia **Switzerland:** Dafi Kühne | **Canton Uri Critical Zone Observatory**, D-ARCH ETH Zurich **Serbia:** Walking Theory **Sweden:** STPLN Project **The Netherlands:** Nienke Hoogvliet, Rosa Menkman | **Cascoland**, ICAF – International Community Arts Festival, Leiden University, LeGuessWho?, Orgel Festival, Zeevier **Ukraine:** Anita Nemet, Kateryna Kondratieva, Olha Varnali | **Parade Fest**, **Ukraine TV** **United Kingdom:** Kathy Hinde, Studio Above & Below, Tim Steiner | **AA Visiting School**, Cooking Sections, Fat Out, Highland Games Academy – Scotland, Talking Birds, SDNA, IN2 Digital Innovations GmbH

INTERNATIONAL: ◆ ARTISTS | ● PARTNERS

Argentina: Claudio Hochman, Marco Canale | **Atina**, Reevo – alternative education network **Armenia:** Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet **Brazil:** Alex Atala, Clarissa Bauman, Ernesto Neto, Lívia Diniz, Marcelo Moscheta, Maria Lynch, Rastros de Diógenes, Renato Rocha, Thiago Rocha Pitta | **Centro Cultural de São Paulo** [cultural centre], Florianópolis (Twin City), Maraberto Filmes, VideoBrasil, TePi – Teatro e os Povos Indígenas (TePi – Theatre and the Indigenous Peoples) **Canada:** Armando Arruda, Helena Loureiro | **Fogo Island Arts**, Portuguese Canadian History Project, Working Women Community Center **Cape Verde:** Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries of Cape Verde, Praia (Twin City) **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** KinAct **Haiti:** Assitej **India:** The Story of Foundation **Peru:** Katia Canepa **São Tomé and Príncipe:** Caué (Twin City) **Senegal:** Raw Material Company **Uganda:** Nyege Nyege **United States of America:** Aleksandra Azbel, Charlotte McCurdy, Forklift Danceworks Collective | **Cultural Heritage Imaging**, Electronic Arts Intermix, Fabric Arts Festival, Fall River (Twin City), GSD – Harvard Graduate School of Design, Kauai (Twin City), Portuguese Beyond Borders Institute – California State University, RISD – Rhode Island School of Design, San Leandro (Twin City), Yale Centre for Ecosystems in Architecture

▲ ECOCs | ▲ CANDIDATE CITIES

Austria: Bad Ischl – Salzammergut 2024 **Estonia:** Tartu 2024 **Finland:** Oulu 2026 **Italy:** Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation **Latvia:** Liepāja 2027 **Lithuania:** Kaunas 2022 **Norway:** Bodø 2024 **Slovakia:** Creative Industry Košice | Košice 2013, Trenčín 2026 **Slovenia/Italy:** Nova Gorica – Gorizia 2025 **The Netherlands:** Arcadia/Leeuwarden–Fryslân 2018–2028 | **Czech Republic:** Broumov 2028, Brno 2028, Budějovice 2028, Liberec 2028 **France:** Bastia–Corsica 2028, Clermont-Ferrand – Massif central 2028, Reims 2028 **Macedonia:** Skopje 2028 **Portugal:** Braga'27

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

European: EBN – European Business and Innovation Centre Network, Ecsite – European Network of Science Centres and Museums, EFA – European Festivals Association, EMAP – European Media Art Platform, Europeana Foundation, European Association for Landscape Ecology, European Creative Hubs Network, European Juggling Association, European Museum Academy, European Union of the Deaf, ETEP – European Talent Exchange Programme/ Eurosonic Festival, EUYO – European Youth Orchestra, Heritage Europe – European Association of Historic Towns and Regions, MitOst – Citizenship in Action, NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations, On The Move, Public Libraries 2030, Trans Europe Halles **International:** AIR Centre – The Atlantic International Research Centre, Architects Declare, Climate Designers, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Islands Commission, Council of the Azorean Diaspora, Eldorado Teatr, Everyday Projects, Houses of the Azores Network (Winnipeg, Montréal, Toronto; Fall River, Hilmar; Bermuda; Uruguay; Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Rio de Janeiro), Ocean Foundation, Res Artis – Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies, Social Gastronomy Movement, UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts, World Fringe.

Plus many more potential artists and partners from all over the world.

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS AND OPERATORS

Renowned artist **Marinella Senatore (IT)** will make everyone parade together on our **Open Island**.

International maestro **Tim Steiner (UK)** will create a gigantic philharmonic band gathering everyone in **All Together Now**.

Worldwide acclaimed contemporary artist **Ernesto Neto (BR)** will be one of the shamans and builders of our **Invention Parks for Playful Islands**, promoted by Brazilian-French artist and curator **Livia Diniz**.

Our **Theatre A-Z** festival will present remarkable contemporary European theatre artists making the future of theatre and tackling issues of European relevance. We name a few of them: **Philippe Quesne (FR)**, **Rimini Protokoll (DE)**, **Miet Warlop (BE)**, **Phia Ménard (FR)** or **Piccolo Teatro di Milano (IT)**. **High Street** will have the contribution of **Talking Birds (UK)** in collaboration with our very own **Cães do Mar Theatre Company (PT)**.

Our community-art festival **MEXE – Azores** will be programmed by **Hugo Cruz (PT)**, with several European partners, including universities and high-profile artists and speakers from Italy, Spain, United States of America, Argentina, Belgium and France. The festival will team up with European and American festivals such as **ICAF – International Community Arts Festival (NL)**, **Festival de les Arts Comunitàries de Catalunya (ES)**, **TePI – Teatro e os Povos Indígenas (BR)**, and **STPLN Project (SE)**.

Together with **Braga '27, Faro Municipality, Centro Cultural de São Paulo (BR)** in **Flows**, we will present multiple new media artists. Examples include **Rosa Menkman (NL)**, **Gil Delindro (PT)**, **Jenna Sutela (FI)**, **Formafantasma (IT)**, **Marco Baroffi (IT)**, and **Studio Above & Below (UK)**. With this project, we will engage a myriad of art and science partners and the worldwide network of **UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts**.

Sona Insularo, curated by **Raquel Castro**, a Portuguese curator working widely in the European arena of sound-related curatorial projects, will present sound monuments of remarkable artists **Felix Blume (FR)**, **Kathy Hinde (UK)**, or our very own **Filipe Caetano/PMDS (PT)**. The project will bring to the conversation some of the most prominent sound festivals and operators in Europe, such as **SPOR festival (DK)**, **Interzona (IT)**, **Onassis Foundation (GR)** and **Ultima Oslo (NO)**.

Our **Island of Women** and **Circus Holding Hands** project will present international and European performance artists, female clowns, and contemporary and social circus artists. **9'Circos**, our local circus company, is the representative of the **European Juggling Association** in Portugal.

Litosfera will create a digital and physical European network of support for a meeting and empowerment of Ukrainian and Azorean Artists with partners **Ukraina TV (UA)**, **Parade Fest (UA)**, **Fundacja Teatru Trans-Atlantyk (PL)** and **Eldorado Teatr (INT)**.

Project **TIPO**, bringing a contemporary approach to typographic heritage and production, will present some of its most important current practitioners, such as **Rainer Erich Scheichelbauer (AT)**, **Glyphs (AT)**, **Dafi Kühne (CH)**, **Erik Spiekermann (DE)**, and **Sandro Berra (IT)**.

CONNECTED BY AND ACROSS THE OCEAN

Become Ocean, through our **Iceberg** arts boat, will host several European sailing contemporary arts companies such as **Time Circus (BE)**, **Honky Tonk Boat (FR)**, and **Djelali Tricks (FR)**. Other operators involved in treasuring our ocean and coastal heritage are **Arctic University (NO)**, **Stefansson Arctic Institute (IS)**, **Whalesafari Andenes (NO)**, and **Húsavík Whale Museum (IS)**.

The Overview Effect, run by **Instytut B61 (PL)**, will gather a myriad of partners from Portugal, Poland, The Netherlands, India and Armenia, including universities, art institutes, festivals and performing arts companies.

Between the Islands will gather institutions, researchers, artists and explorers specialised in islands, namely **Contemporary Art Archipelago (FI)** and **TU Dublin School of Creative Arts (IR)**.

As promised, we will be a connecting bridge to the Americas and Africa, involving 27 countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean: Spain, Netherlands, UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Cyprus, Slovenia, Sweden, Ireland, Greece, Iceland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Denmark (Europe); Republic of Congo, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal (Africa); USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Haiti (Americas). Several of our projects include partners from the other archipelagos that form the Macaronesia region (Madeira, Canary Islands and Cape Verde).

Our **10th Island** will cross the USA to California, passing through Massachusetts, bringing together many partners such as festivals, universities and community centres. It will also include Canada and the Azores diaspora, coming back to Europe through **Vie des Hauts Productions (FR)** and **FUSO Lisboa (PT)**.

We are partnering up with some of the world's most prestigious Universities in projects tackling life cycle design, landscaping and regenerative architecture, namely **RISD – Rhode Island School of Design (US)**, **the Yale Centre for Ecosystems in Architecture (US)** and **GSD – Harvard Graduate School of Design (US)**.

International Gastronomy Chefs and Culinary Artists will cook for **A Seat At the Table**. Their names are **Armando Arruda (CA)**, **Alex Atala (BR)**, and **Helena Loureiro (CA)**.

Terra Incógnita is partnering up with two of the most groundbreaking African music and art festivals: **Nyege Nyege (UG)** and **KinAct (CD)**.

EUROPEAN NETWORKS & GLOBAL PARTNERS

We have approached several EU networks, which have shown great interest in cooperating with our programme. Some of these networks stem from local and regional partners, and others we contacted to expand our programme and the horizon of our European cooperation. Our strategic approach was to partner up on a transversal activation of our programme and to maximise specific projects connected to: the relationships between art and science (**Ecsite—European Network of Science Centres and Museums**); artistic programming (**EFA—European Festivals Association**); capacity building (**Trans Europe Halles**); communication of cultural mobility and artistic opportunities (**On The Move**); innovation and the creative and cultural industries (**European Creative Hubs Network, EBN—European Business and Innovation Centre Network**); art, landscape and new models of sustainability (**European Association for Landscape Ecology, Public Libraries 2030**); active citizenship and participation (**MitOst—Citizenship in Action, European Union of the Deaf**); and heritage and digitalisation (**European Museum Academy, NEMO—Network of European Museum Organisations, Heritage Europe – European Association of Historic Towns and Regions**).

We made bridges with several global and international outlets that operate worldwide, bridging culture to science, design, innovation, digitalisation, research and artistic creation: **Climate Designers (US/INT), The Ocean Foundation (US/INT), Digital Meets Culture (IT), The Everyday Projects (INT), AIR Centre – The Atlantic International Research Centre (INT), Res Artis—Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies (AU/INT)**.

TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS THE CITY HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED OR PLANS TO ESTABLISH

Our **transnational Twin Cities partnerships in Europe, North and South America and Africa** will be renewed and strengthened. **Europe:** Belmonte, Portugal; Pleven, Bulgaria; **North and South America:** San Leandro, California, USA; Fall River, Massachusetts, USA; Newport, Rhode Island, USA; Kauai County, Hawaii, USA; Florianópolis, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil; **Africa:** Caué, São Tomé and Príncipe; Praia, Cape Verde.

Our **16 Casas dos Açores** (Houses of the Azores) network in **three continents** will participate, cooperate and host some of the projects, namely the **10th Island**. Our communities on individual and institutional levels will turn their attention and take part in our ECoC from such locations as Portugal (Lisbon, Porto, Funchal, Faro), **North America** (Canada – Winnipeg, Montréal, Toronto; USA – Fall River, Hilmar); Bermuda; and **South America** (Uruguay; Brazil – Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Rio de Janeiro).

Two of our international professional cultural structures already participate in European networks. **Walk&Talk – Arts Festival** has integrated the **EFA-European Festival Association** or the **Centriphery** network, supported by the Creative Europe programme, with partners in France, Croatia, Austria, Spain, Finland, Romania and Netherlands.

They have ongoing projects with the Canary Islands, Norway and Iceland, and are looking forward to 2027 in cooperation with **TBA21 – Academy | Ocean Space (IT), Raw Material Company (SN), and Fogo Island Arts (CA)**. **Tremor Festival** integrates **ETEP – European Talent Exchange Programme/ Eurosonic Festival (NL)**. **Tremor** is starting **Edge**, a new network with island festivals **Keroxen (Canary Islands, ES)** and **Fengaros Festival (CY)**.

Synergies have already been created with some European research projects so that they integrate the analysis of the dynamics created in the context of PDL-Azores2027. The project **IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas (Horizon Europe, 2022–2026)**, of which the University of the Azores is a partner, is an example. The project will seek to understand the forms, processes, and governance needs of CCIs located in non-urban areas of Europe. The project entails advancing the ability of non-urban CCIs to act as drivers of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability. **IN SITU** interlinks research and practice through place-based **IN SITU Labs**, hubs for networking, capacity building, and monitoring case studies in six non-urban regions, located in Portugal, Ireland, Iceland, Finland, Latvia, and Croatia. It aggregates partners in The Netherlands, France, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria and Germany. Upon an invitation from **MateraHub (IT)**, we have signed a letter of interest to join **CulTourData**: a network that explores how data is collected in ECoCs to stimulate new strategies for ECoC monitoring and impact measurement, starting from the tourism sector. The partnership scheme consists of eight partners. Each partner links to one other previous and future ECoCs.

PDL-Azores2027 participated in the 8th Culture Next Conference in Aveiro (October 2022) to discuss the network mission, objectives and development plan for the coming years. **Culture Next** is an informal network founded in 2017 by ten European cities, current and former candidates for the ECoC title. The network's mission is to support cities implementing culture-led urban development programmes and policies, building on the experiences, participatory processes and collaborations established during the preparation for the ECoC bid. By the end of 2022, we plan to sign a Membership Memorandum for the next two years.



Master Pedro Simão has been building ships for 22 years. He learned it from his godfather, whose shipyard lies next to his own. Pedro speaks proudly of *Ilha de São Miguel*, his most extensive and sophisticated construction and perhaps the second largest in the village of Rabo de Peixe. It takes him two minutes on a new boat to get seasick, and although

he loves to relax by the sea, he does not dare to go in because he does not know how to swim. Master Pedro Simão is passionate about what he does, and it saddens him that it is an endangered art because it is currently difficult for fishermen and shipbuilders. But he will never quit. On his birthday, he taught 42 children how to build a ship from beginning to end.

Q12

What is the strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

We have a **triple-axis strategy** to create an intersected plan for engaging with larger European and international audiences.

Early on in the pre-selection phase, we promised you we would be selling *The next New Zealand; Iceland iceless, but with the views*; or a real emotion-filled experience in a *subtropical destination filled with happy cows and thermal waters where you can experience a volcano in eruption or female-named tempests*. Of course, jokes aside, we understand the need to set the context in the minds of an international public. This territory, whose name lives in the imagination of the Europeans as a crucial stabiliser due to the Azores' anticyclone, is one that most people cannot point to on a map. But we also know that no place is like any other, and that is our main selling point: our pride and involvement derive from our particular self, the Azorean identity of self, and esteem for the Azores.

X-axis—Slow-tourism focused: A pandemic, over-tourism, and climate change have made us rethink how we want to receive others without hurting this place. We need a new tourist profile that looks for a quality experience. Slow, organic, cultural and natural tourism is what we are aiming for. We believe that the modern tourist can and should be captivated by a sustainable, slow and transformative experience of the land. Hence, we have mapped out projects like **L(i)aving me Softly, Terra Incógnita**, and the **We Are Running Out of Time** marathon. We want to increase the quality of tourism, not the quantity, and ensure that our visitors are temporary inhabitants and come all year round, not just during peak season. Our plan will be executed alongside the strategies of Tourism of Portugal and the Azores Tourism Association (ATA) and go beyond it through our multiple axes. We will expand our presence on platforms where ATA and Tourism of Portugal already operate, and tap into the recently gained visibility that Ponta Delgada and the Azores have as the only archipelago certified as a sustainable tourism destination. Our joint work between the Azores and the European Union to turn this peripheral and outermost region into a new Atlantic centre is key to our strategy.

To attract a vast international audience, we propose a new approach to connect to our natural heritage, making it liveable through a transformative cultural programme. We will present an immersive experience through our sea, air, earth, our heartbeats, and the many stories to tell and unite. We will connect the audience to our human dimension, where locals cannot be mere extras on a beautiful movie set. They are the protagonists and storytellers through which you experience the full scope of the Azorean way of life with the respect it naturally earns in people's hearts.

Although *the lost Californias of abundance* are still very much present in the regional *imaginarium*, it was Europe, and the entrance into the European Union, that made the Azorean way

of life so appealing. Going through the nine islands of the Azores, we have learned that this lifestyle is not as distant from the one in the old continent. There is a path of economic and social cohesion that is undeniable. Although there is still so much to do, particularly on a social level, connectivity and mobility have brought us closer. The Azores, one of the outermost regions of Europe, are no further than any other periphery in the mainland, we heard again and again. There is, however, in an archipelagic reality, a parallel to draw with European reality, in which a shared identity does not become weakened by diverse and unique cultural manifestations, but rather strengthened through that difference.

Y-axis—The Human-Nature relation: Our promise to Europe is to scale our ECoC project to our dimension, staying humble and listening to our population's needs and projecting those into the future with attentive respect for the nature that shapes us, and to which we belong. We are not going big just because, but going big enough to unite through dreams, through small but meaningful revolutions. Because this is our opportunity to tell the story of a culture that exists because and in spite of its natural environment.

The PDL-Azores2027 bid and its **Human Nature** concept present projects of international appeal, united by a contemporary narrative that strives to be an illuminating beacon of hope for Europe, focused on tolerance and being respectful of its human and natural diversity. Our action reinforces the European Union project: we ought to be caring for our Nature and Humanity. Also, remember the imaginary and much-needed transatlantic bridge to the Americas? We have long been that bridge! So, picture us as an Atlantic hub, an articulation of worlds—we are Europe as a great connector. With this in mind, we have asked our ambassadors, a cornerstone of our **Human Nature** global strategy, to share their actions. We will extend their effort further into the world by sharing it and by partnering up with the international network of Houses of the Azores—a group of associations that unites the Azorean diaspora worldwide.

Z-axis—Global artistic and audience involvement: This international effort of audience outreach began by engaging with global artists through our successful A.I.R. pilot initiative, **9x9**. Focused on elevating our international presence, we have other projects mapped around artistic exchange, such as the **Mexe-Azores** and **Theatre A-Z**.

We will have billboards in Boston and Brussels, and our immense sea of the internet will be sending unique content to both sides of the world. Our nature will go along with our culture: the tourism flyer, the video and the slogan **Our Nature is Human** will reach the hearts of Europe. We will make sure to fine-tune our communication with the existing means of our tourism associations. For those who cannot travel, we will let them know we have two hearts beating together by taking over the media, social media and online platforms. We are creating **Waves of Culture**, a digital cultural and artistic platform that offers immersive, expanded and engaging experiences and jaw-dropping imagery. This will all happen before, during, and after the ECoC year.



Europe has a beating heart here. After all, we are a young piece of the old continent. Our programme brings up connections and questions that reach broader audiences, niches, the generally interested, the curious, the *I don't care much* folks, the ECoC obsessed and the island dreamers. We will do that by addressing European themes and common issues of the state of the world, like isolation, migration, cultural diversity and its preservation, cooperation and environmental sustainability. We will remain human towards each other, other species and our surrounding environment. **(More on how we will reach international audiences on Q38)**

Q13

What links will be developed between the cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

Listening, reading and talking with past and present ECoCs and current candidate cities has been essential to learn from each other's projects and how to establish collaborations. The value of the process of bidding for ECoC also resides here. In every talk and exchange, we learn more about making it happen, and the outcomes and legacy of such a long-term process of cultural transformation. We attended several video-transmitted conferences and participated in ECoC capacity building and clarification sessions. We had countless conversations with people involved in ECoC teams to find bridges of understanding for partnerships around projects departing from our programme touching on environmental,

social and heritage issues. We have found common themes and opportunities to support each other's visions and initiate a shared endeavour of cultural cooperation. Again, taking this as a work in progress, we established a commitment to follow up with each other to develop stronger future links to continuously learn from their experience and build partnerships. Find below some examples of the collaborations established with teams of former, current and future ECoCs and candidate cities all over Europe.

Košice Creative Industries / Košice 2013: They will join us in our **9x9 A.I.R programme** and bring their knowledge in the Creative Industries to our project **Creative Inside Out**.

Arcadia/Leeuwarden–Fryslân 2018–2028: We will collaborate and learn from their experience in reforestation and greening the city for our project **Forest of Fiction**.

Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation: We will collaborate with their knowledge of design, architecture, and handicrafts on **Regenerative Future** and with artists and changemakers for a greener and smarter city of artistic and cultural practices in **Open Island**.

Kaunas 2022: We will learn with them from their experience on capacity building with **Tempo – Academy of Culture** for our **Human Academy (HA!)**. The **Kaunas Challenge** project will help us empower youngsters through intergenerational city and community problem-solving in our **Living Closets** outreach action.

Bodø 2024: We have agreed on sharing artists and resources on taking nature trails as stages for art experiences and slow tourism, namely on **Terra Incógnita**. On **All Together Now**, we want to create exchanges with our philharmonic bands and their **Arctic Philharmonic**. Also, we want to create gastronomy exchanges between the Arctic and the Atlantic, since we invited **Arctic Food** to have **A Seat at the Table**.

Tartu 2024: Already in 2022, we have invited Tartu to our **HA!** pilot to present guidelines for organising environmentally friendly cultural events. We will imagine together our cities with fewer cars and more bikes and learn from mobility transition, life cycle design and circular economy connecting our **Open Island** and their project **Postmarket Street Festival**.

Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024: We will learn from their implementation of alternatives to hyper-tourism in **HA!**. In **Terra Incógnita**, we will exchange artists to set our hiking trails to music.

Nova Gorica – Gorizia 2025: We want to learn and exchange with them on capacity building and on creating crossborder creation for **HA!**; and exchange and align our **9x9 A.I.R. programme** and their **R.O.R. – Rurally Organised Residencies**.

Oulu 2026: Already in 2022, we invited Oulu to our **HA!** pilot to learn from their sustainable guidelines for cultural events. We also found bridges to dialogue on Cultural Climate Change and bridging **Climate Arena** with the ecological awareness actions of projects under our programme line Archipelago of Nature. In 2027, we want to host their **Peace Machine**.

Trenčín 2026: We will create space to host Slovak artists in our **9x9 A.I.R. programme**; have their input and participation on **Creative Inside Out**; and have specialists and architects meeting to apply the principles of the New European Bauhaus, in our project **Regenerative Future** and their project **Climate Sensing**.

Liepāja 2027: The Baltic Sea (**The Other Sea Festival**) and the Atlantic Ocean (**Become Ocean**) will meet through gastronomy and ecological awareness. Social inclusion and equality will be the ground for exchanges in their project **Everyone is Welcome** and our project **We Matter**. We are partnering in their photo project **A Day in the Life**; exchanging philharmonic bands in **All Together Now**; and creating space to host Latvian artists in our **9x9 A.I.R. programme**. If we become Portugal's ECoC 2027, we look forward to deepening cooperation and assuring that the European Week in May brings Latvian stories to the Atlantic.

2027 & 2028 CANDIDATE CITIES

Braga'27: We have created **Flows**, along with **Braga'27** – Candidate City, **Faro Municipality** and **Centro Cultural São Paulo (BR)**. It is a joint project tackling the climate and biodiversity crises through art, tech and thought. We are connecting the north, south and islands of Portugal with other European and international partners.

Broumov 2028: We see potential collaboration in: Broumov's **Walking Meditations** and our **Terra Incógnita**; a focus on gender equality on **Island of Women** and their project **Be RéflexiF**; and **We Matter > All the Mermaids Have a Fishtail** connects with their project **OnStage**, focusing on group music education for children from socially disadvantaged families. We will also connect through the inter-ECoC initiative **Massive Forum**, promoted by Clermont–Ferrand – Massif central 2028 – Candidate City.

Brno 2028: People and nature, social inclusion and equality will be the ground for exchanges in their project **Balance** and our project **We Matter**.

Budějovice 2028: The themes of humans/landscape and climate change will be the ground for collaboration in their flagship project, **Ars Biologica** and our project **Flows**. We will cross knowledge on cultural capacity building on **HA!**; share approaches focusing on the feminine (**Island of Women**); and devise multidisciplinary actions for and with children through **Invention Parks for Playful Islands**.

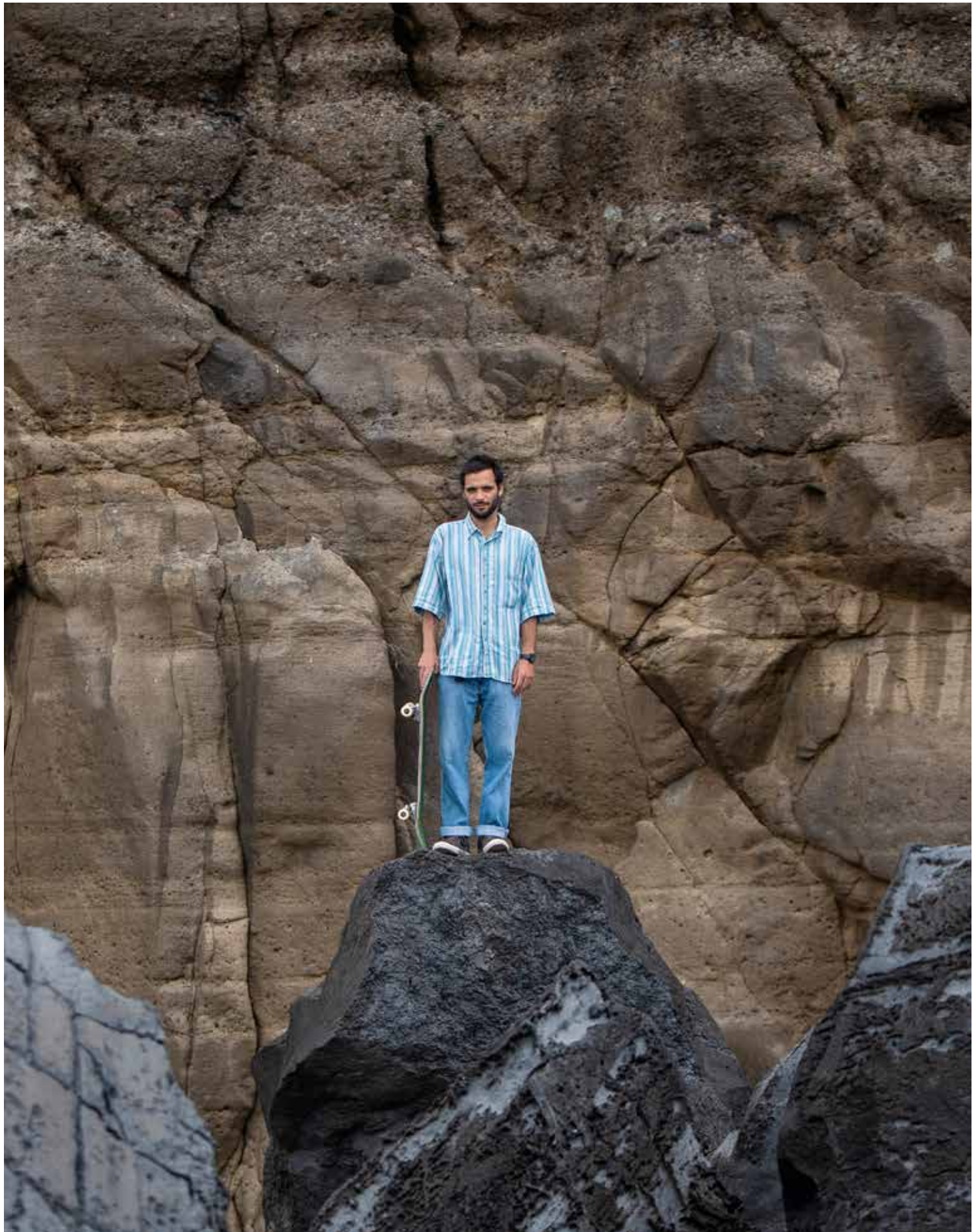
Bastia–Corsica 2028: As a sister island in the Mediterranean with a large Portuguese population, we are connecting in project **10th Island** (exchanges of Azorean and Corsican artists) and **Island of Women** (highlighting female polyphony). This way we will participate in their programme's main topics *Corsican multilingualism* and *Our commonalities: heritages and memories, between migrations and diaspora*.

Clermont–Ferrand – Massif central 2028: We established future exchanges on our A.I.R. projects (**9x9** and **Villa Pascal**) seeking to create opportunities for local and European artists and enhance community involvement. Our **Open Island** and their **Compagnies de Colportage** are ready to exchange in cultural takeovers of both cities. We also agreed on partnering on their **Massive Forum**, an inter-ECoC Candidate City initiative, to reflect on the difficulties accessing culture in rural and enclaved geographies. We will send artists and designers to their **Design Massif XXI** to take European crafts forward and will have their cooperation in **Divine Path: Devotional Objects**.

Liberec 2028: We will jointly focus on the relationship between culture, society and nature and its positive and negative impacts in **Forest of Fiction**. We accepted their invitation to take a PDL–Azores2027 team to participate in their **Games Without Borders** project.

Reims 2028: We will partner up to exchange artists and musicians to bring the sound of Reims and Azores historical organs back to life through **Top of the Church: Sound of the Organ**. Their project **Pop Women Festival** will connect to **Island of Women** to exchange circus vignettes of humour and sorority. We are working jointly to create a new **L'Architrail** in the Mountain of Reims from the acquired experience in our project **L(i)earing me Softly**.

Skopje 2028: We will cooperate through internationalising and setting collaborations between our Cultural and Creative Sectors in the **9x9 A.I.R. programme**.



João Amado is a self-taught visual artist and freelancer. He believes that the environment is part of his identity. His artistic work draws the greatest inspiration from animals, plants and the organic

side of landscape—lines, movements, textures, and layers. In nature, he finds silence and contemplation that grant his work a spiritual dimension, allowing for the encounter with the inner self.

05.

Outreach

Q14 / Q15

**How have the local population and civil society been involved in the preparation of the bid and how will they participate in the implementation of the year?
How will the ECoC create new, sustainable and accessible opportunities for a wide range of citizens?**

Outreach for us means engaging others with empathy. Based on this principle, our outreach strategy aims to be a major sustainable action that nurtures the existing neighbourhood spirit with the European values to scale up what Ponta Delgada and the Azores can achieve culturally. We envision a socio-cultural transformation based on **Interdisciplinary**, **Intergenerational**, and **Interhuman** processes and relationships, enhanced by our artistic vision of fostering a symbiotic relationship between human and non-human living beings.

Interhuman: We recognise that every human is unique as an evolving composition of different characteristics and experiences. We must cross the individualities more than underline the gaps in between people and groups.

Interdisciplinary: We acknowledge the existing civil society structures that work daily for fairer social cohesion and environmental justice. We wish to partner up with them and create bridges between them and the Creative and Cultural Sectors (CCS).

Intergenerational: In a lifespan, we go from learning by imitating to becoming a walking library of experiences. Above all, we trust that we are all learners and contribute to the same territory, regardless of how old we are. That is why we want to get different generations talking and sharing activities.

Here are the values that go hand in hand with our outreach objectives: cultural access (participation, experience, co-creation), sense of belonging, citizen leadership, representativeness and diversity. Activating these values through our cultural and artistic programme, we want to empower our people to co-create a cultural democracy that will make us a stronger Atlantic and European community.

PEOPLE PREPARING THIS BID

As we told you before, PDL-Azores2027 ignited from a civic movement with more than 800 citizens. In honour of this commitment, we take a bottom-up and community-led approach, involving many citizens actively participating in the bidding process, guaranteeing continuous political support.

In this second phase, our core team—António, Diana, Inês, João, Paula and Rita—travelled together in 2022 throughout the nine islands to listen to more than 300 people in our public sessions, putting all **9 Islands in Conversation**. At the office, we kept our physical and digital doors open, allowing us to talk to around 1500 stakeholders from our communities—from the islands to the diaspora. We spoke with curators, carpenters, NGOs, fisherwomen/men, children, tourism agencies, taxi drivers, refugees, artists, teachers, researchers, students, and many, many more.

We also kept an **Advisory Board**, composed of 30 members who contribute to our candidacy in multiple areas and their relationship with culture; and a **Committee of Honour** formed by more than 100 people from diverse geographies who promote the regional, national and international affirmation of our purpose. On each island, we went from one to two **ECoC ambassadors**, who are fundamental sources for spreading our ECoC vision and bringing further insight. These 18 ambassadors—Pedro and Sophie (Faial), Neuza and Rita (Graciosa), Andreia and Gabriela (Flores), Vânia and Rui (Corvo), Inês and Laurinda (Santa Maria), Diana and Terry (Pico), Carlota and Vanessa (Terceira), Joana and Maria João (São Miguel) and Andreia and Ana (São Jorge)—have been reaching out to more people in their daily life contexts and creating several initiatives in their communities, in plazas, park benches, local schools and daycare centres. Our **ambassadors** will be crucial to our ECoC implementation, just as they have been thus far. They are community leaders. They aggregate people. We will increase our ambassador programme in numbers and diversity so that we reach other social circles.

PEOPLE AND THE EFFECTS OF THIS BID

We have been preparing this bid with one intention in mind. Even if we do not get the title, let us use this process to boost the energy of what is already happening here! Besides an ongoing critical conversation on the importance of culture, we have been implementing a series of pilot projects that will keep on running for everyone to experience the positive impacts of a cultural change (**Q9/Q10**). These include **Hand in Hand**—two editions of a microcredit programme to fund cultural, social and educational projects; **9 Bairros**—an ongoing digital and printed participative publication with content from people all around the archipelago and beyond; and **Human Academy (HA!)**—a cultural capacity building programme.

We also promoted the **Archipelago of Projects**, an open call for cultural proposals; and **Our Nature is Human**, a photography contest with our slogan as the driving factor for some of the images that have been communicating our bidding process (already exhibited in Ponta Delgada's downtown in October 2022) that took the winners to Kaunas 2022, so that they could experience a ECoC. We invited the **University of the Azores** to create an internal call for projects and the **Regional Directorates for Sports and Education** to present ideas that would cross local and European cultures. We invited stakeholders and entities to go toward others to create new local and European partnerships and cooperations. All projects summed up, we received 66 proposals and the submission of 150 photographs. These calls and invitations made people get in touch, questioning and imagining projects together, and, indeed, they did it, and it helped take our bid even further.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE IN 2027

The work developed throughout the process of our candidacy created new habits of cultural democracy in Ponta Delgada and the Azores. The already introduced civic participation and bottom-up co-creation methodologies are essential approaches for close dialogue and helpful tools to overcome the challenges identified in our bid book. People want to take part and work together on solutions to host the ECoC title. As we experienced before, this involvement is extremely useful and rich. In this sense, moving forward, we want to expand these civic participation actions to go beyond the dialogue and listening model to open space for new strategies of co-decision. The ECoC will be a large-scale implementation experiment of these innovative systems of civic participation in Ponta Delgada and the Azores. We hope that these dynamics stay as a legacy. To achieve that, we cannot forget our three I's: **Interdisciplinary, Intergenerational, and Interhuman**.

We will keep going towards our communities to further hear, think and co-create with them. We will make open calls and host different public conversations to address urgent matters that come with time. We want our communities as active members of our ECoC, expanding the European cooperation spirit. Additionally, we will promote several initiatives that will run **Beyond Time and Space** through all **Human Nature** preparation and implementation (**Q6**), providing toolkits for **Capacity Building, Connecting Dots and Futures, and Going Digital, Going European**.

When the islanders believe in something, they move everyone and everything to make it happen. The **Holy Ghost Festivities** are living proof of it. Most religious and pagan events get each individual to contribute with whatever one knows or does better to organise a joint event. That is the participation model we want to nurture to get to Europe. By deconstructing the preparation and implementation of each ECoC event in small steps, we will get more people to be involved. We will stimulate the project's promoters to create job opportunities for locals according to their **passions, abilities and life goals**. To deliver this, we need to professionalise the CCS and increase the numbers and knowledge of our creative and cultural stakeholders by expanding the **Human Academy (HA!)**, our capacity building programme running from 2023 onwards.

HA! will seed and foster know-how while mitigating current and future needs in the broad CCS. We will have people from different walks of life and professional and geographical backgrounds teaching these courses around the region. It will host different formats of workshops, assemblies and seminars—both formal and informal—through four campuses:

- **People's campus** is a response to the partnership established between the community and its cultural services—participation, volunteering, hospitality, inclusion, accessibility, activism, leadership, democracy, co-decision and co-creation, i.a.—open to every member of the civil society;
- **Matter & Facts campus** wants to raise experts on the technical aspects of cultural production, including: lighting/sound design, exhibitions set-up, set-design, digital tools, i.a.—calling for anyone that likes to put their hands to work;
- **Creative campus** supports the CCS to go further in their careers by bringing them tools in communication, audience involvement, cultural management and administration, partnerships, funds, programme design, cultural exchanges, european dimension, i.a.;
- **More-than-Human campus** focuses on the interspecies relationships and chores we must nurture in our daily and professional life. This campus includes eco-conscious planning and programming, eco-creation and production, Zero Waste, regenerative design, i.a.—calling for decision-making bodies, activists, social and environmental NGOs, creatives, the university, schools, and others.

HA! will also benefit from the presence of professionals involved in the artistic projects—such as **Mexe-Azores, All Together Now, Island of Women, Theatre A-Z**, i.a.—by engaging them as experts on our campuses and offering training in specific artistic disciplines.

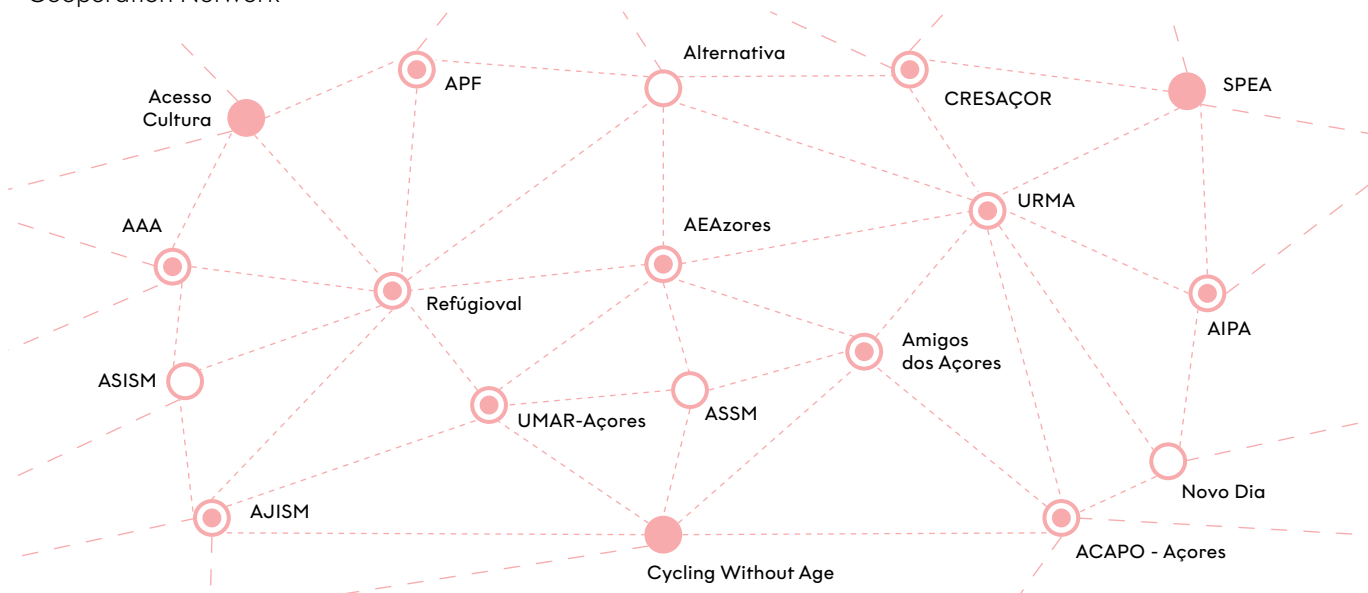
For our outreach strategy to become a **sustainable transformation process**, we must work from what already exists and be innovative in creating new opportunities. In 2022, we strengthened our relationship with the **Ponta Delgada Social Development Department** and with several civil society organisations working on the well-being of the city and the archipelago. Together, we see how the ECoC title can enhance their work, **taking culture as a vehicle to engage with schools and artistic and environmental organisations**.

To raise sustainable opportunities for those in vulnerable situations, we will develop two constellations:

- 1 We will create a **cooperation network** of schools and social and environmental organisations, recognising their superpowers, to facilitate formal and informal connections between them and cultural institutions regionally. This action will boost partnerships, co-productions, co-creations, mentorships and advisory work that will contribute not only to the ECoC but to the social and cultural future of the islands.
- 2 We will create an **Audience Involvement and Capacity Building team** that will work along with the four archipelagos curators.

CONSTELLATION OF NGOs

Cooperation Network



○ São Miguel Island

ASISM [Deafs' Association of São Miguel Island], ASSM [São Miguel Seniors Association], Novo Dia [Association for Social Inclusion], Alternativa [Association against Drug Addiction]

● Regional

ACAPO - Açores [Portuguese Association of the Blind and Partially-sighted People], AIPA [Association of Immigrants in the Azores], AEAzores [Azorean Emigrants Association], AAA [Agricultural Association of the Azores], APF [Family Planning Association], Amigos dos Açores [Ecological Association], CRESAÇOR [Regional Solidarity Economy Cooperative], Refúgioval [refugee cultural association], URMA [Regional Union of Azorean Misericórdias], UMAR-Açores [Women's Union], AJISM - Santa Maria [Youth Association]

● National

Acesso Cultura [Access Culture - National, Organisation for Accessibility and Inclusion], Cycling Without Age, SPEA [Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds]

The close relationship between both constellations will work on raising sustainable opportunities and on what our citizens asked for in several conversations: to **boost** active ageing and citizenship; to **generate** more advocacy, volunteering spirit and curiosity; to **raise** creative and cultural education and to **create** cultural job opportunities. As we have built cross-cutting ECoC projects based on participation, inclusion and intersecting communities—**Mexe-Azores, Circus Holding Hands, Tremor, Island of Women, Anona Games**—we want to be closer to those who live in vulnerable situations. These include the LGBTQI+ community, deportees, women and professions made invisible, farmers, ethnic minorities, and the NEET generation, providing them with new, sustainable and cultural opportunities. Hence, we are here for empowerment through inspiration and happiness and will make it a reality through the following outreach actions:

BORDERLESS ENCOUNTERS is a one-weekend fair programmed by creative foreigners living in the Azores to share the world cultures who live in our archipelago. Running every season of the ECoC, this fair will feature concerts, talks, screenings, performances, workshops, exhibitions and a food corner. In addition, in the build-up years, we will work closely with NGOs engaging with expatriates, refugees, and ethnic minorities by bringing them to the ECoC preparation and implementation, highlighting their interests and skills, such as translating, cooking, guiding, i.a. Some will become mentors of **HA!**, ECoC ambassadors or volunteers, whilst others will appear on stages and be part of PDL–Azores2027 projects, such as **Walk&Talk, Litosfera, 10th Island, Open Island, Mapas, Island of Women, A Seat at the Table, Mexe-Azores, and The Overview Effect**.

GOING BACK TO THE FUTURE is a monthly programme in 2027 that brings together various generations for storytelling and sharing knowledge. Each person will be a learner and a facilitator. This action will bring back traditional activities such as crafting, computing, singing, fishing or planting, engaging with seniors, the marginalised, children, students, researchers, i.a. Several projects will benefit from these encounters and exchanges: **9x9, European Archipelago of Culture, Open Island, Anona Games, Island of Women, Tipo, A Seat at the Table, L(i)aving me Softly, and High Street**. We will also cycle around our fellows that face physical challenges regardless of their age and even take them to the events in a potential partnership with the **Cycling Without Age Movement**.

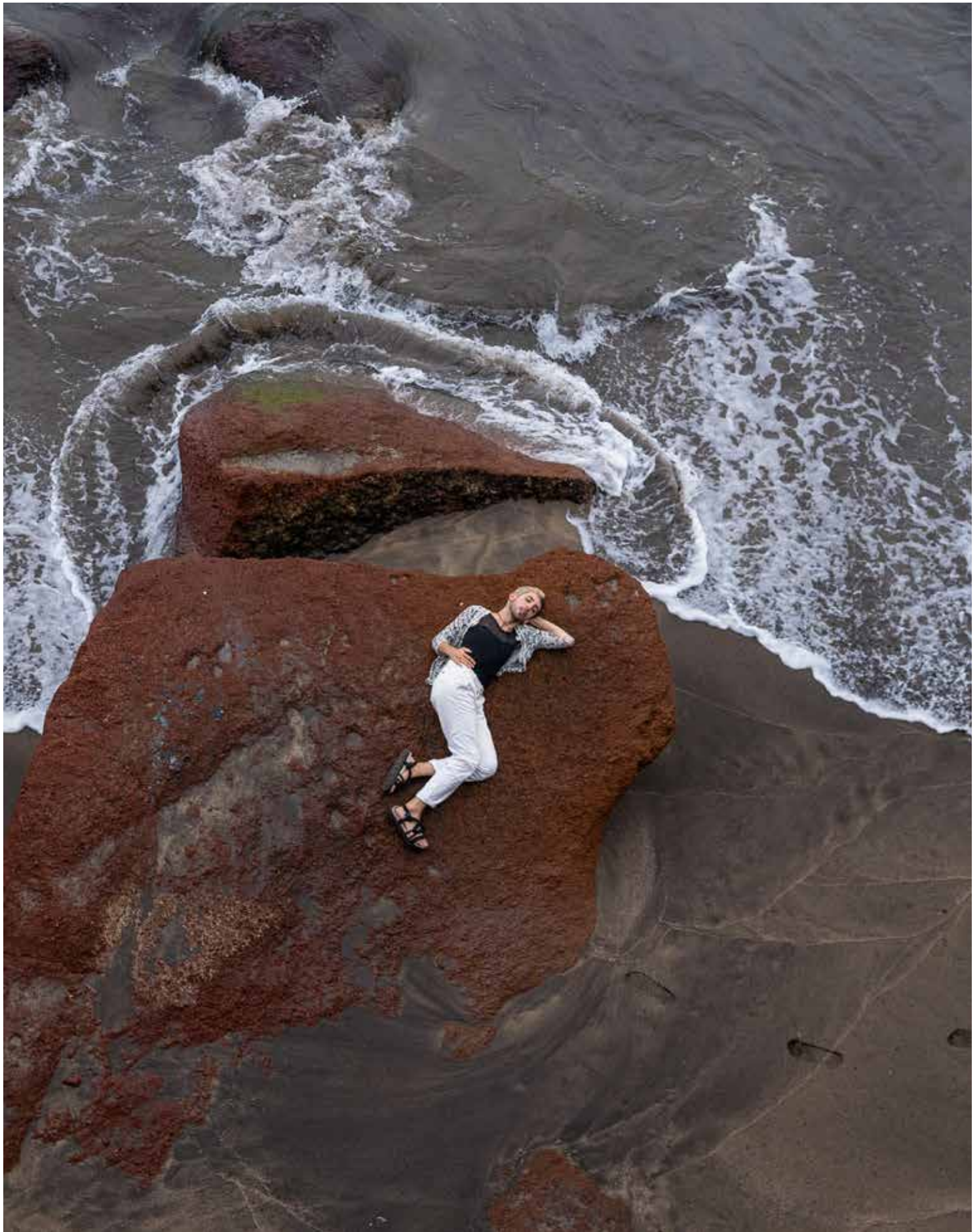
HOW FAR CAN WE GO wants to offer our communities *home delivery* and *take away* cultural practices. Alongside projects **Circus Holding Hands, 9x9** and **Mapas**, we want to invite our **cooperation network** to create games, cultural tours and community gatherings for those that live socially, mentally or geographically isolated. We will also ensure we are digitally present for them through our **Waves of Culture** with online events and live streams throughout the year.

LIVING CLOSETS will prepare barely visited cultural places in Ponta Delgada to become youth-shared labs of experimentation. This action of learning for self-empowerment is structural for project **Quant-tos Que-res, Quant-tos Que-remos** to happen. We will build this preparation with teenagers aged between 12 and 18 who have no free-of-charge occupations offered after school and who quickly lose interest in studying with no chance of getting qualified jobs. This sensitive social fringe needs creative attention as it boosts what they learn at school using innovative solutions. While working on their creativity and volunteering spirit, youngsters foster their sense of belonging, giving them a bigger purpose and solid curriculum to conquer their dreams. This action will start in 2024, and these **Living Closets** will be open for these teens during summer and holidays. Moreover, these spaces will be the creative studios for projects **Island of Women, Invention Parks for Playful Islands, We Are Running Out of Time, and Open Island** crossing different generations and causes. Perhaps, in 2027, these young people will all be ECoC's ambassadors and participate in our open calls!

NO, THANK YOU! arises from humans' with *di(fferent)s(uper)abilities* that want to be independent without having to wait for someone to help them. As an empowering transformation action and a complement to the workshops and performances produced by the **We Matter** project, we will create an annual open call, starting in 2024, dedicated to the physical and mental challenges many people face every day. By calling on creatives to collaborate with several local organisations, this action aims to underline the need to change, adapt and co-create physical and digital solutions to improve access to our cultural venues and events.

Our volunteer programme will be crucial for preparing and implementing our ECoC year and increasing outreach actions. We will start by reaching out to the structures with active volunteers: scouts (more than a hundred groups around the archipelago), parish youth groups, NGOs, students and senior associations. Beginning in 2025, we will give a platform to show how powerful, innovative and creative these people are while fostering social responsibility. There will be time for them to be learners, guides, mentors, decision-makers and leaders. We will ask them about their hobbies and passions to learn more about which initiatives they want to join. As we want to nurture Interhuman and Intergenerational relations, we will seek representativeness in the volunteering and ambassadors groups.

Now that you know how we will create opportunities for every person to be part of our ECoC, we want to remind you of our **HA!** and how it will be central in preparing everyone to give their best. By inviting other ECoC families working with minorities and socio-economic populations, and European institutions that promote sustainable social approaches, we will prepare our humanity for the cultural democracy we all deserve.



Paulle Melle is currently a waiter but hopes to become an actor and visual artist who explores mainly the idea of growth and the dualities of life. On a constant quest for the self, Paulle keeps exploring and constructing it beyond gender, sexual orientation and pronouns. What matters is that people approach Paulle with an open

mind, heart and spirit. Nature's constant change is a true inspiration for how Paulle lives and works, especially roots, growth and transposition. Paulle likes to think of themselves as a big tree they know. That tree, planted by the sea on a busy street next to a cliff, survives and grows despite the adversities it might surface.

Q16

What will be the strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools?

Audience: At contemporary art events, we tend to have only the usual ones—the producers, the creators, the staff and the cultural elite. You do not get the whole community in the theatre or gallery, even if you have an opening with food and music. We need to dismantle this. Another fundamental aspect that drives people away from cultural institutions is their opening hours, which stay open mostly during working hours. Who are they working for? Only a few tourists get to go there and feel very unmotivated as places look, well, lifeless.

Yet, religious and pagan festivities bring everyone together. Every year, the same person takes part in different ways: volunteering, cooking, fishing, playing music, helping to set up, working as a technician, and so on, and they always end up as the audience. It is a good example of active participation. Another good example is children, youth or friends' shows getting families, friends and neighbours to go there to enthusiastically applaud and instil pride, tears and fun. Also, mobile fruit and vegetable vans sell the freshest products in the islands' urban and most remote neighbourhoods. And that, well, sells and works pretty good.

These examples, as told by people we met during this bidding process, clearly show that we must go **from Audience Development to Audience Involvement**—and this adds another **I** to our Interhuman, Interdisciplinary and Intergenerational roadmap for Cultural Democracy. The **I** for **Involvement**.

Involvement: At first, Azoreans will suspect you, but once they get to know you, they will give you their hearts and whatever they have. So we have to work to gain peoples' trust and empathy. It will contribute to community building and affection while raising our audience's curiosity and interest in the ECoC's initiatives. An audience that experiences, participates, co-creates and co-decides. Working with our **Audience Involvement and Capacity Building team**, we will have people dedicated to hospitality, audience experience and well-being.

Here is our **Audience Involvement Plan**:

1 Easy to Get: We will take cultural and artistic practices everywhere and to everyone. We will occupy streets and everyday spaces with our programme reaching Intergenerational and diverse audiences: from **ARTakeover** (newspapers, billboards and shops) to **Mexe-Azores** (neighbourhoods and fishing areas), **Between the Islands** (ports and ferries), **We Are Running Out of Time** (rural landscapes), **Música no Colégio** (plazas), **Anona Games** (parks and the coastline), **Climb Every Mountain** (nature reserve), **State of Grace** (the market), **Circus Holding Hands** (hospitals, daycare centres, streets) **Tremor and Walk&Talk** (literally everywhere and all over the place). We will also sail culture on an island hopping boat—**Iceberg** cultural centre.

2 The Best Hour: We will invite museums and cultural institutions to open from morning to night every month. We will encourage locals to become regular visitors by promoting guided visits,

mediation actions, talks and workshops. This action will open up new possibilities for families, students and working people that will be able to engage with their nearby cultural offerings, promoting healthy routine escapes in articulation with other local events.

3 Cultural Mobility: We will create free public transport routes with regularity to drive people from every corner of São Miguel to PDL–Azores2027 events to attract more people. In some of these vehicles, we will promote ice-breaking actions for people to engage with us and with each other. We will also develop a platform for hitchhiking and car sharing for the least shy ones.

4 Door-to-Door Culture: We will challenge artists and promoters to establish more synergies with locals and their daily activities, such as the fruits and vegetable sellers' vans, the post office or the swimmers at the small docks all around the region. It will easily make our ECoC get into peoples' houses, leisure and workplaces. This strategy connects directly with the outreach action **How Far Can We Go**, as well as with projects such as **Mapas, ARTakeover** (specifically **Eye for an Eye** and **Mala**), and **Mexe-Azores**.

5 Cultural Solidarity: Through ticket offices and communication, we will create **Bring A Friend**. This initiative allows people to buy tickets at reduced prices that they can offer as entrances to the economically disadvantaged, so that more people can also experience ECoC events. When doing so, people can invite someone supported by different organisations or donate it to the cooperation network we mentioned in **Q14/Q15. Bring A Friend** will also encourage bringing someone along with them, someone living far away that does not have a way to reach the city or the events.

6 Intercultural: We will raise awareness of the importance of keeping safe and respectful cultural spaces through Interhuman and Intercultural initiatives. It will, thus, attract diversity and representativeness to our audiences. Our cultural and artistic programme will propose Interdisciplinary programmes to get a broader range of people participating in cultural initiatives and seeking to have their opportunity *onstage*.

7 Accessible Culture: Our commitment is to make our events inclusive and accessible both physically and intellectually. Physically, we will open buildings and gardens that one could not visit any other way in projects **Green Gardens inFEST** and **We Have Two Hearts**. It will also come about through the **No, Thank You!** outreach action and by partnering up with the Municipality's City Card and the Region's Youth Card for discounted access to ECoC events, transport and cultural institutions in 2027. Accessible also refers to the digital presence and getting to people's places, regardless of where they are, through **Waves of Culture** and our projects' multiple online facets. Intellectually accessible means that our events and communication strategy, as presented in **Q38**, will be based on plain language understood by anyone, regardless of their education level. And yet building capacity in our **HA!**, our institutions and community leaders will help us guarantee inclusive access to most, if not all, ECoC events.

8 Cultural Well-Being: We will promote **proactive participation** meaning that we will invite people to engage in ECoC initiatives as long as they have the arena to share their ideas, know-how and interests. If one happily participates—or even co-creates—one will be emotionally involved and attract friends and family to experience and participate in future occasions. It takes time, but time is on our side for healthy and balanced audience involvement growth. Digital cultural offerings will contribute to the **creative involvement** of our virtual audience, whilst Azorean and European serotonin levels will rise with artistic initiatives in nature: **L(i)aving me Softly, Moving Ecologies, Climb Every Mountain, Become Ocean, Green Gardens inFEST, Forest of Fiction or Terra Incógnita**. Bodies will groove, move, shake, run and dance collectively in **Paralelo, Anona Games, We Are Running Out of Time, and We Matter**.

9 Educating (for) Culture: We want to remind our communities that they are culture builders through several initiatives starting in 2023. We will do itineraries of the Holy Ghost in the project **Divine Path: Devotional Objects** and free guided tours to cultural institutions. With a little help from our capacity building programme **HA!**, we want to gather the fundamental concepts that will build our Cultural Democracy and create a public space glossary so that we share more and more common codes and ideas. **HA!** itself will raise audience involvement awareness within our institutions. And, of course, we will work with our educational institutions to empower their cultural learning processes.

Education and schools: After a first assessment of the programme during the pre-selection phase, we have identified the need to expand our conversation with the educational sector. To achieve any social transformation in the city and the region, we must encourage every educational institution to grow from creative practices and cultural participation in educational and learning processes. That means engaging with the University of the Azores and the University of the Third Age, with primary and secondary schools, vocational schools, nursery schools, and after-school programmes. It means working with their Intergenerational and Interhuman communities.

We will focus on two complementary axes to elevate the hearts *willing to learn forever*: **Art Education (AE)**, as Interdisciplinary and *undisciplined* thinking and doing for self-empowerment; and **Cultural Education (CE)**, as sharing and cooperating for tolerance. Apart from the educational institutions, our cultural and artistic programme presents several projects activating **AE** and **CE** along with **outreach actions**. From the first round with schools and cultural organisations and people of the entire archipelago, we understood that we have to **promote more artistic practices in places of education** while engaging creative minds in their activities. In reverse, we must **take the learners out of the classroom** to the cultural and artistic environments—encouraging the art institutions to work with their audiences.

To collectively design regional strategies to build a stronger relationship between educational and cultural sectors, we organised a meeting between schools from the entire archipelago and cultural organisations. It is organically generating a network for exchange and cooperation among the participants.

So we will continue to hold it with regularity aiming for wider representativeness while calling them to **stay human, go natural and come together**.

Alongside, we are articulating PDL–Azores2027 with the current ten-year **National Arts Plan (PNA)**, which is triggering long-lasting educational measures locally and nationally, taking cultural democracy as a motor to transform schools into cultural hubs in connection with partnerships in the territory. **PNA** actions bring together teachers, school staff, mediators, educators, students and artists. Becoming ECoC will boost the following **PNA** actions: **PNA Teachers Academy**—a capacity building programme for teachers, cultural mediators and educators, designed by artists and cultural specialists to explore the possibilities of co-creation and co-learning; **A.I.R. School programme** places artists within school communities to develop a cultural project, to generate more freedom of action, break prejudices, work on emotions and subjects of children and youngsters' interests; **Cultural Backpack** creates a package of itinerary shows and other artistic proposals that travel through schools in the region. In addition, together with **PNA**, we will host the third edition of the **Art and Education Biennial 2027** to present good practices, exhibitions, shows and conversations.

Moreover, we will:

- take **schools, universities and kindergartens as ECoC venues and temporary art studios**—opening these buildings to the community and becoming part of our **Nó** digital platform;
- take students of all ages sharing **strolls in their neighbourhoods**—to work the reality as a common learning field;
- ignite co-creation processes between learners from all generations—through the artistic or educational institution—and the civil society organisations—to **raise empathy and nurture advocacy**;
- **build capacity in the mediation services** of our cultural and artistic institutions—to get them more motivated to find innovative solutions to work with their audiences;
- create the **Government of Children of the Azores**—so that adult decision-makers listen to children's wants and needs while involving them in political and social programmes;
- set a **Summer School** for young people—encouraging continuous lifelong learning and profit from a hefty palette of local and visiting artists. PDL–Azores2027 festivals will have special educational programmes for students, children and families;
- create the **3x3 exchange programme** that will take artistic associations to schools from another neighbourhood—a pilot project that will take place in Terceira Island in 2024–25. We want it to extend to other schools in the region to boost creativity and cultural self-esteem within school communities;
- encourage schools and cultural institutions to enrol in **European exchange programmes** (Erasmus, Erasmus+, Culture Moves Europe), **taking out the Azorean artistic practices**—philharmonics, theatres, folk dance groups, i.a.— through their students, teachers or school professionals and opening up to European fellows and contexts.



His name is João Ferreira Viveiros, but he is widely known as João da Moagem. He is 84 years old and has been working on the mill, grinding corn and wheat, since he was 11. He left school after the 4th grade to start working with his father. At that time, he would mix work and play, but he always loved

working with the tools and handling the corn, the wheat and the flour. That work has allowed him to raise three children and buy a house. Now, he has four grandchildren. He has always worked alongside nature, protecting his crops and preserving the traditional milling craft.

06.

Management

a. Finance

Operating budget for the title year

INCOME TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE:

Q17

What will be the budget for the ECoC year?

Since our pre-selection meeting in March 2022, we have worked extensively with the Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government to improve the financial basis of our project, and you may find what we gathered below. Although we have seen the overall amount from the National Government reduced, the efforts of the Municipality and the Regional Government allowed the budget presented in the first bid book to remain practically intact, with the final amount of €44.650.000.

We have reconsidered European funds. The Ponta Delgada Municipality maintains and intends to strengthen, in 2023, its Office for Structural Funds, reinforcing the support component to the Creative and Cultural Sectors. We are already collaborating with FRCT – Regional Fund for Science and Technology for the best and most appropriate funding opportunities for PDL–Azores2027 projects. We also want to highlight that the city of Ponta Delgada falls under the status of an outermost region, Interreg MAC 2021–2027, where we can obtain several funding opportunities.

We have also reconsidered private sponsoring. As the global economic context remains unpredictable, the inflation, the impact of war or the pandemic recovery are strong reasons to expect private entities to be cautious in their investments.

Therefore, we think it is realistic to maintain the amount previously presented. However, we remain confident that we will be able to increase the attainable amount for the cultural programme for 2027 and the following years. Also, we firmly believe we must not expect significant revenue from ticketing and merchandising. Thus, the estimation of direct income from ticketing and merchandising has to align with the contingency budget. In the wake of the experience shared with previous ECoCs, the years following the hosting of the ECoC title may present financial difficulties due to the shift of institutional attention and investment to other geographies and activities. In addition, we must counter the natural course of action of reducing teams, programmes and activities with a substantial capital base to carry on and maintain quality in cultural action and programming.

TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in €)	€44.650.000
From the public sector (in €)	€42.400.000
From the public sector (in %)	94,96%
From the private sector (in €)	€2.250.000
From the private sector (in %)	5,04%

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR:

Q18

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

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	in euros	%
National Government	€29.000.000	68,4
City	€4.000.000	9,43
Region	€6.000.000	14,15
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	€3.000.000	7,08
Other*	€400.000	0,94
Total	€42.400.000	100

*AMRAA – Association of Municipalities of the Autonomous Region of the Azores

Q19

Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure?

On 7 September 2022, in a meeting of the City Council, the contribution of €4 million was approved by the majority, confirming the municipality's commitment to the general budget of the operational expenditure of PDL–Azores2027.

On 29 September 2022, this position was reinforced by a majority vote at the Municipal Assembly, attended by representatives of all political forces. On 27 September 2022, the Regional Government issued a commitment letter to allocate €6 million to the budget for operational expenditure. Both entities consider that this project will promote a social, economic and cultural transformation of Ponta Delgada and the Azores as an initiative that involves the entire archipelago. It is also worth highlighting the contribution of AMRAA – Association of Municipalities of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, in the amount of €400.000, secured by the intention presented in the first bid book. Regarding national funding, we present a financial contribution of €29 million, based on information received from the Ministry of Culture on 16 September 2022, detailed below:

- The total amount of National Government investment to be given to the ECoC 2027 selected city will be €29 million;
- The global value will be divided into €15 million from national investment, €10 million from the corresponding regional operational programme*, and €4 million from the Tourism of Portugal;
- For the €4 million from the Tourism of Portugal, the city has to apply for the funding mechanism to support communication and marketing;
- The calendar and phasing of operational funds will follow the panel's decision, together with the selected city;
- The funds for the year 2023 will come through the regional operational programme after the approval of the National Budget for 2023, which will take place before the final selection.

*** Additional information to the selection panel:** On 16 September 2022, we received an official information from the National Government saying the following: *The global amount of the National Government investment to be given to the ECoC will be €29 million. The global value will be divided into €15 million from national investment, €10 million from the corresponding regional operational programme, and €4 million from the Tourism of Portugal.* As CEO of PDL–Azores2027 and as President of Ponta Delgada Municipality, I want to express my concern about the proposed division in €15 million from the National Government, and €10 million from the corresponding regional operational programme. As far as I am informed, to this date, this proposal is not agreed between the National Government and the Regional Government. I will try to get a clarification about the details of the National Government's contribution until the beginning of December when the panel visits the city and we present our bid book in Lisbon.

Q20

What is your fund-raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover operating expenditure?

Our strategy will run in two directions: first, the direct financial support to the organisation that runs the ECoC. As we intend to create a Municipal Company of Culture, there is an opportunity to participate in international networks and projects. Building on

Union programmes and funds, we want to apply for and work within the following programmes: Creative Europe (European cooperation projects; European networks; European platforms; Media); Horizon Europe (Cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society; Cluster 5 – Climate, Energy and Mobility); Erasmus+; Interreg MAC 2021–2027; Culture Moves Europe; Music Moves Europe; Circulation of European literary works and literary translations; and other programmes to be launched. The estimated revenue is €3 million.

Second, we will set up a support office for the local Creative and Cultural Sectors (CCS) on European funding opportunities. This team will work from 2023 up to, at least, 2030. Our goal is to achieve an indirect income for the local CCS of about €500.000 between 2023 and 2027.

We are currently starting a partnership with FRCT - Regional Fund for Science and Technology to promote opportunities for capacity building of the regional CCS.

We will provide regular reports and updates on existing and upcoming calls, and share all project information to compare with the ongoing calls and programmes.

We will include experts in application processes in the ECoC team to develop all the possibilities of the ECoC project and support all the partners in deploying their projects. The municipality will also allocate human resources to be part of this larger group (ECoC team, funding team and city council team) to work together in seeking financial support from EU programmes/funds.

The nine islands' contributions to the ECoC also foresee financial support to achieve its regional dimension, envisioning a small scale, which can be crucial for networking. We will draw inspiration from the best practices and institutional partnership models implemented by regional-scaled ECoCs such as Essen–Ruhr 2010 and Marseille–Provence 2013.

The projects we intend to apply for European funds are:

FUND	ECoC PROJECTS	FOCUS
Horizon Europe	9x9 / Between the Islands / Circus Holding Hands / Open Island / Invention Parks For Playful Islands / The Overview Effect / Regenerative Future / Creative Inside Out	Cooperation and exchanges among cultural organisations; Development of guidelines and principles on sustainability; Promotion of good regenerative practices; Innovation in creative industries.
Creative Europe	Art takeover / Theatre A-Z / European Archipelago of Culture / Mexe-Azores / We Matter / Walk&Talk / Paralelo / Sona Insularo	Cooperation and implementation of artistic projects; Promotion of innovation and creativity; Professionalisation of visual and performing arts.
Erasmus +	Quant-tos Que-res, Quant-tos Que-remos / We Are Running Out of Time / Moving Ecologies / 10 th Island / State of Grace / Climb Every Mountain	Mobility for young people; Volunteering programmes; Exchange of artists and creative professionals; Smart, competitive, and inclusive societies.
Culture Moves Europe	Island Of Women / Mexe-Azores / A Seat at the Table / The Overview Effect	Cultural and artistic participation; Mobility for artists and cultural stakeholders; Social inclusion; Intergenerational knowledge transfer; Green and digital economy.
Interreg MAC 2021–2027 / European Regional Development Fund	9x9 / Between the Islands / Art takeover / European Archipelago of Culture / Forest of Fiction / Moving Ecologies / Terra Incógnita / Regenerative Future / A Seat at the Table / Underwater Europe / Divine Path: Devotional Objects / Green Gardens inFEST	Innovative and smart economic transformation; Environmental awareness and climate change literacy; Sustainable and integrated development; Awareness of social barriers and different abilities.
Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)	Island Of Women / We Matter / Mala / We Are Running Out of Time / 10 th Island / Azores Slavery Memorial / EuropeanHood / Litosfera	Social inclusion and gender equality; Promotion of projects on democracy and civil society; Organisations active at the local, regional, national and transnational levels.
Music Moves Europe	All Together Now / Terra Incógnita / Top of The Church: Sound Of The Organ / We Have Two Hearts / Tremor / Música no Colégio	Audience involvement; Community outreach; Musicians' training and capacity building; Strengthening the music sector's assets; Cultural and artistic participation.
Pan-European cultural entities	All Together Now / Música no Colégio	Digital innovation in creative industries; Knowledge exchanges between music players from different regions.
Culture strengths and incorporation	Eye For An Eye / Anona Games	Digital skills development; Lifelong learning; Training and professionalisation.
Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPAs)	L(i)aving me Softly / Underwater Europe / State of Grace / Tipo	Creation and innovation; Creative industries; Capacity building.
MEDIA programme	Flows	Digital experiences; Cultural diversity; Collaboration and innovation in new media creation and production.
Circulation of European literary works and literary translations	Forest of Fiction	Promotion of less widely spoken European languages; Translation projects; Preservation of library archives.

Q21

According to what timetable should the income to cover operating expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

Source of income for operating expenditure	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	ECoC year	2028
EU	-	€100.000	€300.000	€600.000	€750.000	€1.100.000	€150.000
National Government	-	€200.000	€700.000	€2.000.000	€5.000.000	€7.100.000	-
City	€416.000	€334.000	€450.000	€750.000	€650.000	€1.100.000	€300.000
Region	-	€455.000	€395.000	€550.000	€700.000	€3.750.000	€150.000
Tourism of Portugal	-	-	€400.000	€1.000.000	€1.000.000	€1.500.000	€100.000
Regional Operational Programme	-	-	-	-	€4.500.000	€5.500.000	-
Sponsors	-	€20.000	€80.000	€150.000	€650.000	€1.300.000	€50.000
Other (*)	-	-	€50.000	€100.000	€100.000	€150.000	-
TOTAL	€416.000	€1.109.000	€2.375.000	€5.150.000	€13.350.000	€21.500.000	€750.000
%	0,93%	2,48%	5,33%	11,53%	29,90%	48,15%	1,68%

*AMRAA



For 2023 and 2024, we will strengthen the project structure regarding human resources, programming and production, logistics, management, marketing and communication. Since the two years preceding the ECoC represent the thorough preparation of the entire following year, they hold significant weight in the overall budget. We have planned operating expenditure on a progressive investment basis, reinforced as the ECoC year approaches, balancing the expenditure in the year 2026 at approximately 30%, and 2027 at around 48% since the previous year is as vital as the ECoC year. Based on what the Ministry of Culture indicated (Q19), the calendar and phasing of operational funds will follow the panel's decision together with the selected city. We estimate the revenues of the National Government to cover operating expenditure, according to the planned timetable on Q24. We expect to negotiate with the National Government early in 2023 upon the panel's decision. Considering the importance of the continuity and legacy of the project, we draw the necessary attention to 2028, allocating an amount for the cultural programme for that year. To this amount and for further legacy activities, we will add the €1.5 million Melina Mercouri prize.

Q22

How is the private sector supporting this initiative?

The fund-raising strategy has five fundamental pillars to be shared with the private sector: **sustainability, talent, solidarity, tolerance and technology**. We follow the principles set out in the first bid book, which include the ethics of strategic sponsoring and partnerships with brands that engage in clear social, ecological, sustainable, community-driven, and local development responsibility.

Four Levels of Sponsorship: The strategy to seek support from private sponsors is the following:

- 1 **Local sponsorship:** small companies established in the city;
- 2 **Regional sponsorship:** companies that operate in the archipelago in the transport, health, finance and telecommunications sectors;
- 3 **National sponsorship:** companies with a strong presence in the economic and financial Portuguese ecosystem;
- 4 **International sponsorship:** companies already operating in and with Ponta Delgada and the Azores, including enterprises that wish to discover and invest in our city and region.

Approaching the diaspora: We intend to create a global sponsorship campaign for the artistic and cultural programme, along with audience involvement initiatives that bring together young and senior groups. We also plan to create a model for different sponsorship levels: gold, silver, and bronze, depending on each sponsor's financial involvement, so that the diaspora strengthens its active connection to Ponta Delgada and the Azores through shared responsibility, as well as a sense of belonging to our ECoC project.

Networking: It is imperative to regard the values each partner considers relevant and appropriate to achieve their mission. We will divide them into main sponsors—who will closely monitor the whole project; and other partners—who will be crucial for activating specifically targeted projects.

The plan for involving sponsors in the event entails four dimensions:

- 1 **Timeline:** We intend to start a pre-programme involving sponsors as soon as the ECoC title is confirmed. It will begin in 2023 and increase during the following years to pave the way for continuity after 2027;
- 2 **Communication and marketing:** Media partners are crucial to creating and sharing a sense of pride around the ECoC's programme and narrative. These partnerships, along with a digital communication strategy, are pivotal in giving visibility to all sponsors;
- 3 **Team:** PDL-Azores2027 will have a team to develop a private sponsoring strategy, starting in 2023 and increasing in the following years;
- 4 **Actions:**
 - **crowdfunding:** A vital tool in financing the Creative and Cultural Sectors that represents the founding principles of our actions: solidarity and sustainability. The ECoC's digital platforms will have a section solely for this tool to create visibility for the projects and stakeholders that would like to benefit from it;
 - **co-creation and co-production:** Share the encounter between artists and companies to be part of the artistic creations' moments and processes. We believe these are values that the ECoC will present to all European artists and companies and, with that, we will bring to Ponta Delgada and the Azores a significant number of projects willing to share ideas, resources and finances;

- **logistics and in-kind sponsorship:** Small-sized businesses run and managed by people who live in the city support by accommodating all the professionals we will welcome in the coming years. We aim to create a hosting programme where locals provide rooms or a shared house to those directly working in the ECoC—thus taking part in social action and building direct relationships and networking. Another programme is one of shared mobility, in which the island community shares their daily transportation with the artists and ECoC teams;
- **corporate social responsibility:** A large-scale volunteer programme will be part of the ECoC, and we intend to get in touch with all kinds of foundations, social institutions, and NGOs to be the main sponsors of this strategy;
- **operational support:** All kinds of support to the ECoC's artistic and cultural programme implementation, including its run-up years: hotels, restaurants and venues; technical teams and Human Resources; spaces for art residencies and projects; sea, land and air transportation; temporary constructions, materials and equipments; communication platforms and others. The aim is to achieve sustainability for the Cultural and Creative Sectors and to contribute to the future of cultural programmes in Ponta Delgada and the Azores. This operational support will focus on developing strong collaboration networks and long-term commitments;
- **logo partners:** A traditional brand activation strategy centred on financial sponsorship with the economic return based on the projection that companies benefit from being part of the ECoC. We will conduct an open call managed by a team experienced in working with the brands and their relation to the core principles of our project;
- **sponsorship prominence:** The sponsorship policy and strategy will go hand in hand with the marketing and communication plan. We will work towards a programme that will emphasise the companies' and brands' commitment to the ECoC and its several projects, but most importantly, to the people that live in Ponta Delgada and the Azores. We want to bring economic stakeholders closer to the ECoC to drive a lasting social and economic impact through employment, training, and capacity building programmes for the community. We intend to include migrants, people of different religious beliefs, cultural workers, hospitality staff, airport staff, and others. We need a more democratic economic ecosystem. Let us promote it as a target of the ECoC financial programme. We want to foster an environment that endorses a return on investment policy for the companies committed to this inclusive social change.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE:

Q23

What is the breakdown of the operating expenditure?

Programme Expenditure (€)	€29.500.000
Programme Expenditure (%)	66,07%
Promotion and Marketing (€)	€6.000.000
Promotion and Marketing (%)	13,44%
Wages, Overheads and Administration (€)	€6.650.000
Wages, Overheads and Administration (%)	14,89%
Others (€)	€2.500.000
Others (%)	5,60%
Total of the Operating Expenditure	€44.650.000

The sum we allocate to the **Programme Expenditure** is built in perspective, considering direct amounts for the different projects, including the allocation of funds to existing programmes that will join the overall plan in a co-production or partnership format. The sum presented covers programming, production, outreach, communication and logistics costs plus a contingency value for each project. In the **Promotion and Marketing** amount, we estimate that we will have a distinct focus on content and the importance of communication through digital media without ruling out the traditional platforms. The sum also contemplates the occasional hiring of consultants or specialist services. The amount for **Wages, Overheads, and Administration** represents the team's salaries and costs for the logistics and administration of PDL-Azores2027. Lastly, the amount for **Others** addresses the needs for capacity building programmes, monitoring and evaluation, follow-up of the project, and, very importantly, contingencies and risks that may arise.

Q24

Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure:

Timetable for Spending	Programme Expenditure in €	Programme Expenditure in %	Promotion and Marketing in €	Promotion and Marketing in %	Wages, Overheads and Administration in €	Wages, Overheads and Administration in %	Others in €	Others in %
2022	€25.000	0,08	€25.000	0,42	€366.000	5,5	-	-
2023	€200.000	0,68	€205.000	3,42	€624.000	9,38	€80.000	3,2
2024	€925.000	3,14	€500.000	8,33	€800.000	12,03	€150.000	6
2025	€2.800.000	9,49	€800.000	13,33	€1.300.000	19,56	€250.000	10
2026	€10.000.000	33,9	€1.200.000	20	€1.400.000	21,05	€750.000	30
2027 ECOC YEAR	€15.300.000	51,86	€3.150.000	52,5	€1.810.000	27,22	€1.240.000	49,6
2028	€250.000	0,85	€120.000	2	€350.000	5,26	€30.000	1,2
TOTAL	€29.500.000	100	€6.000.000	100	€6.650.000	100	€2.500.000	100

BUDGET FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE:

Q25

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

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	in euros	%
EU	€13.791.898	48,85
City	€11.440.000	40,53
Region	€2.996.773	10,62
TOTAL	€28.228.671	100

To design the city and region we desire for PDL–Azores2027, we devised the infrastructure investment plan (Q43), adopting a rehabilitation, requalification and renovation strategy. We will reconstruct spaces and places within the city's heritage, which will now have the opportunity to be revived by hosting the programme. We will rehabilitate them by providing the existing spaces with better conditions for their continued use and preparing them for sustainability and the challenges of the 21st century. We will requalify by updating the digital infrastructure in a back-office system and promoting access for citizens and temporary inhabitants to content, information and the programme. Lastly, we will renew the public services, reception conditions and accessibility.

The Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government will conduct interventions in predominant spaces to implement the PDL–Azores2027 programme, always bearing in mind the following years and their continued use.

The amounts presented are supported by regional and municipal legislation, with investments in different stages of implementation and design.

The amounts, coming from European Funds, will be managed by the Regional Government, which will go forward with different applications for the projects listed below.

Given the budgetary strategy adopted by the Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government, which annually foresees various investments, the amounts presented may alter with new actions aligned with this strategy.

Q26

Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure?

The public financial authorities demonstrated their support and commitment regarding capital expenditure, namely the Regional Government and Ponta Delgada Municipality, by including it in their annual financial plans and also committing to promote applications for EU funds. All the projects presented here are part of the coming years' investment plans,

some are already approved and moving with the interventions, and others are planned and under application arrangements.

We are in continuous dialogue with the various responsible entities of the Regional Government: the Regional Directorate for Public Works, the Regional Directorate for Tourism, the Regional Secretariat for the Environment and Climate Change, the Environmental Planning and Promotion Office, and the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs. With Ponta Delgada Municipality, we work directly with the Presidency, the Cultural Department, the Public Investments Department and the Financial Department.

Q27

What is the fund-raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

The fund-raising strategy to seek financial support to cover capital expenditure will be carried out by the Regional Government and the Ponta Delgada Municipality, with the Regional Government taking a predominant role. Both will create the conditions to raise funds through regional operational programmes and prepare projects for funding from other European programmes. In addition, we want to maintain the promising results the Outermost Regions (OR) statute has brought us over the years.

The strategy is to develop and submit projects for funding to the upcoming Community Support Framework (2021–2027). These funds improve the citizens' quality of life based on different levels: infrastructure, professional qualification of citizens, fighting poverty, and supporting the economic sector. Therefore, it contemplates the parameters below:

- the strategy is expressed in the Regional Programme of the Azores 2021–2027, which contains in itself all the interventions co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). It was approved in the Council of Ministers Resolution No. 97/2020, establishing the guiding principles and operational structure of the programming period of European funds of the cohesion policy for 2021–2027.
- Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR), which will run until 2026, aims to implement the reforms and investments that will allow the country to resume sustained economic growth, strengthening the aim of convergence with Europe over the next decade. It will receive total funding of €16.6 billion, of which the PRR–Açores will absorb €580 million in grants.
- the European territorial cooperation programme, in which regional promoters, jointly with partners from other regions, may present their applications, namely the INTERREG Madeira – Azores – Canary Islands Cooperation Programme, through the Interreg Atlantic Area 2021–2027.
- other funding programmes such as OP Technical Assistance, ESPON – European Territorial Observatory Network, Atlantic Area, and the Strategic partnership with the Outermost Regions and EU support 2021–2027.

Q28

According to what timetable should the income to cover capital expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

Source of income for capital expenditure							
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	ECOC YEAR	TOTAL
EU	-	-	€8.850.000	€3.650.000	€1.291.898	-	€13.791.898
City	-	-	€5.600.000	€3.240.000	€2.600.000	-	€11.440.000
Region	-	€301.773	€1.955.000	€740.000	-	-	€2.996.773
Total							€28.228.671

Q29

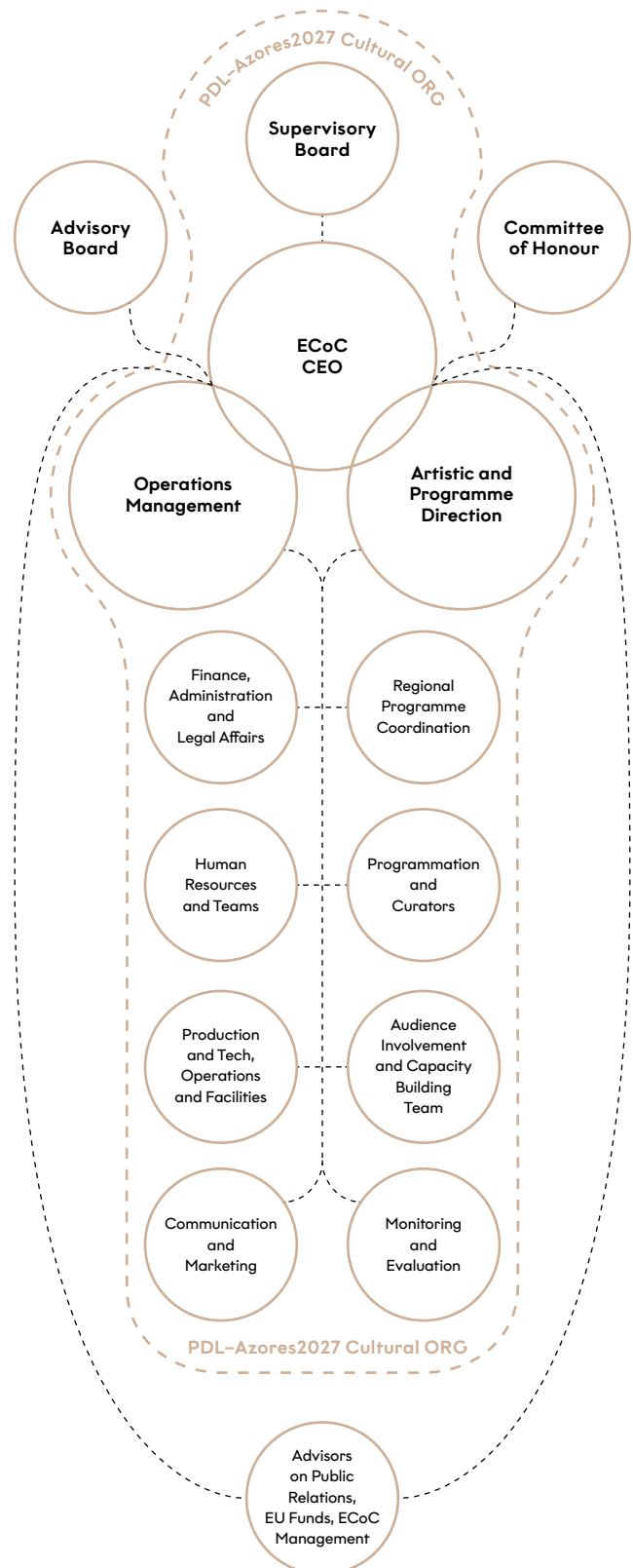
If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for new cultural infrastructure to be used in the framework of the title year.

As mentioned in **Q25**, as of today, the Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government do not envisage the construction of new cultural infrastructure exclusively dedicated to the project. The city has a set of cultural facilities and other spaces of arts, heritage and nature that, supported by a municipal and regional policy of recovery, requalification and renovation, appear as strategic tools. By following sustainability principles of the island's cultural ecosystem, it will provide the entire physical and human territory with conditions for creation, programming, presentation and cultural production. It is our understanding that this is the most appropriate path for the city of Ponta Delgada and its scale, avoiding burdening the future with maintenance costs of new infrastructures, along with careful, continuous and quality future action.

b. Organisational structure

Q30

What kind of governance and delivery structure is envisaged for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year?



Q31

How will this structure be organised at management level? Please make clear who will be the person(s) having the final responsibility for global leadership of the project?

To implement PDL–Azores2027, according to the current Portuguese Law, namely Law 50/2012, an independent organisation will be created with financial, programmatic and operational autonomy. As soon as we receive the title of ECoC PDL–Azores2027, the **Municipal Company of Culture** will establish itself in 2023, supported by the decision voted in the Municipal Assembly meeting held on 29 September 2022.

The option for this management model comes from the guarantee of autonomy at all levels, namely, programming, management and operationalisation of the cultural programme, and from the assurance of quick decisions and processes, complying, in a mandatory way, with the norms of public contracting in all areas of action. It also presents the advantage of benefiting from European funds. The **Municipal Company of Culture** will consist of a **Supervisory Board**, which will delegate executive, programming and implementation powers to a group formed by the **Executive Director (CEO)**, **Artistic and Programme Director (AD)** and **Operations Manager (OM)**. They will have the responsibility of coordinating a core group that will include the main areas of operation of the project, namely the following: **Finance, Administration and Legal Affairs; Human Resources and Teams; Production and Tech, Operations and Facilities; Communication and Marketing; Monitoring and Evaluation; Audience Involvement and Capacity Building; Programming and Curators; Regional Programme Coordination**. This model maintains a close relationship with the most prominent public and political entities, preserving the transparency of its acts through a General Assembly and a Supervisory Board.

The Executive Director (CEO) will articulate with all political parties involved in the ECoC, supervise the development of the works, keep track of monitoring and evaluation of the project, follow up on international partnerships, and coordinate the process of public and private sponsorship. At all levels, the CEO will make final decisions, always in total agreement with the executive and artistic levels. The CEO will be the bridge between this team and the Supervisory Board. Communication and Marketing will be a shared responsibility with the Artistic and Programme Director (AD).

The Artistic and Programme Direction (AD) will be responsible for developing the cultural and artistic programme and coordinating the teams for curatorship, production and technical direction, audience involvement and capacity building. This position entails all artistic matters, including selecting the curators' body and scheduling activities. The Artistic and Programme Director represents PDL–Azores2027 on a regional, national, and international level.

The Operations Manager (OM) will be responsible for the financial and administrative services, the technical implementation and general coordination of the Finance, Administration and Legal Affairs, Human Resources,

Operations and Facilities. This position implies logistic, administrative and operational matters, including logistics and operations of cultural and artistic projects on an international scale.

The **CEO, AD** and **OM** will communicate regularly and directly with city and regional authorities. In addition, their work will benefit from the support of Public Relations, EU Funds specialists, Regional Programme Coordinators, Programme Curators and Portuguese and European consultants. They will communicate regularly and directly with city and regional authorities, the Advisory Board and the Committee of Honour.

The Supervisory Board comprises the highest representatives of Ponta Delgada's Municipality, the Regional Government, the National Government (through the Ministry of Culture), the Tourism of Portugal, the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Ponta Delgada, AMRAA – Association of Municipalities of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, a recognised European personality and a relevant cultural stakeholder. This board is the most important decision-maker, taking and approving financial decisions, jointly ensuring the representation of PDL–Azores2027 by making a good articulation between the various management bodies and following up the work plan. This organisational system will allow for the independent development of the cultural and artistic programme of PDL–Azores2027. At the executive level, each administration will have set technical contact persons to facilitate collaboration.

The Advisory Board consists of representatives of entities and personalities that can contribute to PDL–Azores2027 through arts, tourism, education, architecture, religion, economy and its relationship with culture. These stakeholders contribute actively to the reflection and discussion of the mission of PDL–Azores2027 to support the ongoing process and propose actions that can strengthen the ECoC's project. This board does not take decisions. Instead, they facilitate communication with society and the cultural sector and amplify the work of PDL–Azores2027. Their composition is diverse—children, teenagers, adults, seniors, men and women, natives and non-natives.

The Committee of Honour is a group of individuals who, by their merit and public relevance, contribute to the regional, national and international affirmation of PDL–Azores2027. They add to the success of PDL–Azores2027—they are ambassadors of the project.

Q32

How will you ensure that this structure has the staff with the appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the European Capital of Culture project?

The delivery structure of PDL–Azores2027 will start its operations in 2023. Between 2021 and 2022, the team increased from four to six people on a full-time basis, reinforced by two additional members working part-time with different responsibilities.

Moving forward, the team will see a gradual increase in the staff numbers, aiming for efficient communication, team spirit and optimal use of skills.

The composition of our team will take on the best practices of diversity, intergenerationality, and gender equality, integrating a complementary body of people from local, regional, national and European latitudes. We are confident that Ponta Delgada and the Azores will capture the interest of professionals in the national and international cultural sectors, and we will take the opportunity to strengthen our local cultural power. The team will be designated through public calls searching for specific profiles and duties, incorporating part-time and full-time positions.

There will be a particular focus on creating opportunities for youngsters, offering internships for students and the newly graduated from university, and taking advantage of the work of empowerment, knowledge and cultural capacity building with the local stakeholders of the Creative and Cultural Sectors. On that note, we will benefit from working with staff from local festivals, institutions, NGOs, and tech & production companies with the appropriate capacity to deliver. On a regional level, the local municipalities and the Regional Government support the project's implementation and communication.

After reassessing the whole project and its different activation scales, our plan for staff in terms of numbers goes as follows:

TEAM	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Artistic Team	1	1	2	8	8	8	2
Management and Coordination Team	3	6	6	7	7	9	4
Communication and Marketing Team	1	2	3	3	3	7	1
Operational Teams	3	5	8	11	17	26	3
TOTAL	8	14	19	29	35	50	10
Full-time	75%	65%	70%	80%	90%	90%	75%
Part-time	25%	35%	30%	20%	10%	10%	25%

Q33

How will you make sure that there is an appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and this structure including the artistic team?

Ponta Delgada's decision to bid for the European Capital of Culture derives from the idea that this project takes culture as a catalyst for transformation and development through growing and lasting investment in the cultural, urban, social and tourism sectors. How? By strengthening the cultural identities of the city and the region and improving regional and external cooperation around a shared project.

Since the beginning of the bidding process, the team of PDL-Azores2027 has met weekly with the Municipality executive and regularly with the departments responsible for social, educational, urban, cultural, economic, communication and tourism services, but also with representatives of the nine islands with a seat in the Advisory Board. We have conducted sessions based on the criteria defined by the ECoC bid and the possibilities of the cultural and artistic programme to reach a consensus and which thematic priorities to tackle. Other notable contributions behind this bid are the cultural, sports and educational organisations, which have worked from the bottom up and within the institutions.

The Municipality and the Regional Government have reached the understanding that the autonomy of a European Capital of Culture is crucial when developing the cultural and artistic programme and the management of PDL-Azores2027. The role of political decision-making in the bidding process has been to create the conditions to develop, approve and implement Ponta Delgada's Cultural Strategy 2030 (CS).

To this end, we formed institutional contacts within the region, other municipalities and the National Government to negotiate public funding contributions for the projects and identify essential investments and infrastructures to support the cultural programme.

We have informed the different authorities about the project through newsletters, which will continue to be issued. The municipality's channels have shared and informed the public about the preparation of the project and the open events and opportunities promoted by PDL-Azores2027 to the different scales of authorities, residents and operators, which shall continue.

From bidding to implementation, we aim to build on our previous experience to deepen and improve our modes of cooperation and communication at the different levels of the project. Within the Supervisory Board, the CEO and the Artistic Director will maintain an ongoing exchange with various representatives of society and leaders to establish appropriate cooperation and ensure the project's operation. Production and project management teams will work closely with authorities on the deployment of projects. The communication team will work with the city and region tourism and communication offices. The artistic team will work hand in hand with regional partners and representatives from other municipalities and cultural institutions. In addition, PDL-Azores2027 will continue to work with the Municipality's different departments, monitoring the delivery of the CS and its many activities. First, it will facilitate cooperation across sectors. Second, it will identify priority social groups and areas in the municipality that can benefit from cultural action. Third, it will increase participation within European networks and cooperation with sister cities, and fourth, it will affirm the city as a bustling creative hub.

Q34

How are the general director and the artistic director being chosen?

The **Executive Director/CEO's** position will go through a selection at an international open call. The **CEO** will take up the appointment in 2023. The Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government—acting as co-promoters and constitutive members of the Supervisory Board of PDL–Azores2027—will be responsible for selecting **the CEO**. When on duty, **the CEO** will report to the Supervisory Board.

THE CEO'S PROFILE:

- **management** skills to plan and meet both the project's short and long-term objectives;
- **capacity** to work in an ever-growing large team, a very dynamic and stimulating working environment and represent PDL–Azores2027 and the team on a European level;
- **international experience** in delivering major cultural events and working with large budgets, creating project proposals, grant applications, and business plans;
- **excellent personal and communication skills** and mastery of both Portuguese, English and other European languages;
- **familiarity and love** for the Azorean, Portuguese and European cultural and artistic scene, just as its active stakeholders and networks.

THE CEO'S FIELD OF ACTION COMPRISES:

- **final decision-making** at the executive level and **management** of the team and implementation of a strategy for achieving long-term and short-term objectives of PDL–Azores2027 – European Capital of Culture;
- **responsibility** for the development of the works of the organisational structure and management hiring, including the teams of financial and administrative services, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, international partnerships, and technical implementation;
- **maintenance** of effective working processes between PDL–Azores2027 and the Municipality and the Regional Government, the Ministry of Culture, the European Commission, as well as other key institutions and stakeholders;
- **leadership** of the organisation's budget, cash flow and public and private fundraising strategy for obtaining new resources and securing the long-term sustainability of the organisation and its activities;
- **representing** PDL–Azores2027 on a regional, national, and international level.

The Artistic Director (AD) will be selected through an international open call and take up the post in 2023. The AD's appointment falls under the responsibility of the CEO and the Supervisory Board.

THE AD'S PROFILE:

- **international experience** in the implementation of cultural and artistic projects on a big scale;
- **ability** to work independently and lead large teams through systemic leadership;
- **capacity** to manage large budgets and deadlines;
- **knowledge and love** for the Azorean, Portuguese cultural and artistic scene and know-how for the international and European cultural scene;
- **excellent communication** skills in both Portuguese and English languages and other European languages;
- **knowledge** of the dynamics of ECoC projects and capacity to network in the Cultural and Creative Sectors.

THE AD FIELD OF ACTION COMPRISES:

- **leading** all artistic matters through high-quality artistic direction of PDL–Azores2027 and ECoC objectives, including selecting the curators' body and scheduling activities;
- **managing** the artistic teams and accompanying the production management of the artistic and strategic vision laid down in **Human Nature's** cultural and artistic programme;
- **developing**, on an ongoing basis, the cultural and artistic programme and coordinating the teams for production and technical direction and outreach;
- **coordinating**, strategically, the local and regional programme implementation and the international projects' cooperation together with programme stakeholders and partners;
- **representing** PDL–Azores2027 on a regional, national, and international level.

The Operations Manager (OM) will be selected through an international open call and take up the post in 2023. The CEO and the Supervisory Board shall appoint the **OM**.

THE OM'S PROFILE:

- **management experience** in the logistics and operations of international large-scale cultural and artistic projects;
- **skills** to coordinate large teams through systemic leadership, methodologies and communication systems;
- **expertise** in accompanying administrative processes in the Cultural and Creative field;
- **excellent** skills in planning, coordination and implementation of cultural and artistic projects of different disciplines;
- **knowledge** of the dynamics of ECoC projects and the capacity to network in the CCS;
- **broad** experience in the legal dimension of cultural facilities and creative projects.

c. Contingency planning

Q35 / Q36

Have you carried out/planned a risk assessment exercise? What are your planned mitigating measures?

FINANCES & MANAGEMENT		
Risk		Measure
Challenges in guaranteeing national funds and private financial resources.	<p>Probability: Low</p> <p>Impact: High</p>	Reinforce ties with the Ministry of Culture and other funding entities linked to other departments of the National Government. Engage the Ministry of Culture in the ECoC's Supervisory Board. Strengthen private financial sources by engaging with various cultural institutes, foundations and sponsors. Work with a highly experienced fundraiser. Establish early on good cooperation with businesses and companies. Do substantial work of capacity building in European grantmaking and networking. Ensure that projects have various funding sources, so we can provide the means to deliver a programme of this scale. Develop strategies together with the municipality to attract financial investment. Downsize part of the programme in case of extreme situations.
The staff of PDL–Azores2027 lack the experience to deliver the implementation and production of a European Capital of Culture.	<p>Probability: Low</p> <p>Impact: High</p>	Select management teams through international open calls with high standards of experience and knowledge to deliver large-scale events. Learn from the experiences and reports of previous ECoCs. Define a clear resource management plan. Invest in good Human Resources management.
The renovation of the cultural facilities and the city's infrastructure will not be ready before 2027.	<p>Probability: Medium</p> <p>Impact: Low</p>	Closely monitor and check the development of the renovation and rehabilitation works with the relevant institutions. Identify alternative venues or locations for events.
SUSTAINABILITY AND HOSPITALITY		
Risk		Measure
Low quality of services for visitors and local inhabitants, gentrification, monoculture.	<p>Probability: Medium</p> <p>Impact: High</p>	Increase the quality of hospitality and accessibilities. Work closely with the catering, transport and hospitality sectors to make them aware of the ECoC programme and turn them into whisperers and accomplices. Propose events that encourage longer stays, activate multiple and diverse geographic itineraries and create deeper cultural engagement.
Negative ecological footprint, overuse of resources and non-implementation of sustainable development principles.	<p>Probability: Medium</p> <p>Impact: Medium</p>	Strengthen the implementation of environmental preservation practices and propose projects to slow down (L(i)eaving me Softly) and ecologically engage in nature protection and regeneration (Body of the Land, Forest of Fiction). Set environmental responsibility and care as a vital element in all projects undertaken by PDL–Azores2027. Develop sustainability capacity building programmes for staff, volunteers and community leaders. Choose sustainability in travel, materials, the circular economy & recycling philosophy, and apply travel-free digital working methods.
BAD WEATHER, CRISES AND ON/OFF PANDEMICS		
Risk		Measure
Exposure to unpredictable weather.	<p>Probability: Medium</p> <p>Impact: High</p>	Plan events with different scales of audiences. Assess the potential impacts of bad weather conditions in each project to anticipate alternative solutions promptly. Create projects that can come to fruition, come hell or high water. Use the digital and virtual realm (Waves of Culture) for remote experiences and implement hybrid deployment models. Set plan Bs to adapt projects according to the situation and or different locations (indoor/outdoor).
Several security crises—natural catastrophes, economic recessions, war and intermittent pandemic outbursts.	<p>Probability: High</p> <p>Impact: High</p>	Work closely with the authorities to identify and implement necessary measures. Create comprehensive organisation management to act quickly upon sudden changes. Ensure that projects are not financially dependent on only one source of funding. Strengthen skills to benefit from European financial sources and attract diverse sponsors. Downsize or adapt the programme, ensuring that the philosophy and narrative of Human Nature remains and that the involved stakeholders are financially protected and aligned on delivering it in alternative formats.

POLITICS		
Risk		Measure
Crossing political cycles during our bid. Regional elections in 2024, municipal elections in 2025 and national elections in 2026. The support for the project might change as newly elected executives start their mandates.	Probability: Medium Impact: High	Integrate the ECoC programme into the municipality's newly created cultural and development strategies as a priority project. Intensify our bottom-up strategy to strengthen the support of society, and guarantee a constant and close dialogue with current political forces on a regional and national level.
Disagreement between the city of Ponta Delgada Municipality and the other 18 regional municipalities and the ECoC's partners.	Probability: Low Impact: Medium	Maintain a continuous dialogue with all 18 regional municipalities of the nine islands and the Regional Government. Make sure the cultural programme and the communication strategy get implemented as designed in the city and the region, covering local specificities and involving municipalities in decision-making processes. Carry out archipelagic thinking and actions to reinforce mutual knowledge and a good cooperation environment. Define municipality representatives as local anchors of the ECoC project. Have a staff member to keep keen communication and balance between the municipality and the region.
Political interference in the autonomy of the artistic teams to define the cultural programme.	Probability: Medium Impact: Medium	Set a solid artistic autonomy in the statutes of the structure managing PDL-Azores2027. Engage a relevant representative from the independent CCS in the decision-making process of the Supervisory Board. Keep in touch with the European Commission and the selection and monitoring panel.
EUROPEAN DIMENSION		
Risk		Measure
Weak cooperation with European international partners means that projects are not delivered as planned.	Probability: Medium Impact: High	Preserve a continuous dialogue with European and international cooperation partners. Welcome and visit partners often. Join global networks and encourage cultural stakeholders to join and engage in European cooperation projects. Strengthen international project management skills in the PDL-Azores2027 team and the CCS. Work with maximum anticipation and keep an active radar for opportunities for calls, partnerships and themes of European relevance. Make alternative plans for cases of <i>force majeure</i> or <i>exceptional circumstances</i> . Increase the cooperation and international partnerships team to respond to an increase in European interest in the project.
COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING		
Risk	Pro./ Imp.	Measure
Negative media impact and distrust of public opinion towards the ECoC.	Probability: Low Impact: High	Communicate clearly, transversally and widely the objectives and priorities of the PDL-Azores2027 programme to the public. Call out stakeholders and civil society to act, participate, get involved and contribute actively to the programme. Be transparent, present, accessible and inclusive in the use of language(s) and work in a multi-platform communication strategy.
Communication does not reach local, regional, national, European and international audiences and partners.	Probability: Medium Impact: High	Establish a good communication plan with a solid international outreach and visibility. Target PDL-Azores2027 as a familiar, relatable, attractive and inclusive brand with a fierce and original visual identity. Map communication and marketing platforms visited by potential and targeted audiences in different geographical scales. Work with a highly qualified communications team and continuously improve their skills in the ever-changing digital and physical communication realms.
AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT		
Risk		Measure
Low involvement and engagement of local cultural stakeholders and targeted audiences in the cultural and artistic programme, weak numbers of volunteering.	Probability: Medium Impact: High	Involve local cultural makers to participate continuously in the programming of PDL-Azores2027. Offer new opportunities of funding for new ideas and projects for the programme. Develop community-led artistic projects and communication initiatives in which people are the protagonists. Prioritise the values of equality, diversity and inclusion to increase participation and audience engagement. Include outreach actions in all projects and programme lines. Diversify communication platforms and marketing methods according to targeted audiences.
Too few numbers on young people's participation and low interest in the cultural and artistic programme.	Probability: Low Impact: Medium	Encourage self-organised activities of youngsters and active engagement in volunteering opportunities. Create open calls and opportunities that encourage the development of their initiatives, community empowerment and cultural democracy. Stimulate student assemblies and associations and intergenerational exchange in the planning and implementation of PDL-Azores2027.
Bad accessibility to the events of the cultural and artistic programme.	Probability: Low Impact: High	Improving accessibility in physical and digital spaces is considered a priority in the project's implementation plans with consultancy by accessibility experts. Target specific communities and their accessibility dimensions, such as mobility, communication, architecture, nature, programme and methodology. Offer free access and affordable prices to events. Create hybrid events and remote access to content, opening different pathways for participation through various channels.

d. Marketing and communication

Q37

Could your artistic programme be summed up by a slogan?

Our Nature is Human...

...because *Our Place is Culture*. Our slogan translates the concept of **Human Nature**, which speaks of the bond between culture and the place from which it arises. More than that, it illustrates how much the ever-changing humanity and culture have, in turn, shaped the place. **Our Nature is Human** voices our desire for symbiosis between human and non-human living forms co-existing in a single statement as one.

Furthermore, it is already in everyone's mouths and eyes. It presents our vision for what a European Capital of Culture should be all about: a welcoming and tolerant space that embraces and celebrates uniqueness and diversity. Writing this in 2022 makes it impossible to foresee what the world will look like in 2027. But, coming from a pandemic that has kept us apart from each other and witnessing a war taking place on European soil, we know there is a need to convey a message of resilience, adaptability and care—of love, balance and regeneration.

Our Nature is Human is a slogan that keeps, within its frame, the assumption that ours, like all other places, is as flawed as it is human, that it has as much fierceness and suspicion as it has kindness and capacity for astonishment. We, as a species, are not perfect. We, as a city and an archipelago, are not perfect. We, as Europe, are not perfect. Yet we are standing here, with our bare hands, willing to work through new possible worlds. The future starts now. There should only be room for improvement.

This slogan is present in everything we do—in our cultural and artistic programme, in the strategic vision behind this bid. It is our steering wheel in all our outreach and communication efforts, as they are so often connected since we put humanity—the people behind the landscape—in the centre of our narrative.

Q38 / Q39

What is the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year. How will the media be involved?

The essence of successfully engaging with an audience rests mainly on our ability to reach out far and wide. Perhaps even more importantly, it lies in our ability to create and structure a stage where expressing one's passion with a larger audience feels like a natural and collective experience, much like rainy days do in the Azores. Or, as the Portuguese writer Raul Brandão put it, an archipelago where the sunshine feels like an inadequate ornament.

To this end, our communication and marketing strategy aligns with the outreach vision and the cultural and artistic programme by building on two purposes: **1 – to be engaging and inspiring** and **2 – to be inclusive and accessible**.

A European Capital of Culture is a long journey. It goes way beyond its time of action. That is why we have three different communication phases.

TRAVELLING THROUGH TIME – DESTINATION: 2027

Departure: Our journey to 2027 started in 2021 when we announced the PDL–Azores2027 bid and decided we would let people know what this was all about by inviting them into the process. We have done so by going to the nine islands and keeping an Open Door in our Ponta Delgada office, promoting art residencies on every island and financing micro projects—all with significant results. We are taking the call to adventure every day until 2027, gathering stories along the way that will build our narrative. By doing so, we are assembling a crowd of people to come along: a local, regional, national and international mass driven by engagement and curiosity.

Arrival: In 2027, our events will speak for themselves. They will occupy the public and digital space and get amplified by our channels and traditional media, from here to everywhere. They will show the people who made it from the beginning and the newcomers and then reach out to anyone who wants to come on board.

Future: 2028 is the year we witness the impacts of this adventure, when we collect and share all of the memories and reflect on the legacy of this beautiful journey and how it affected this place, its nature, and its people. From preparation to the actual events, we will be documenting all things ECoC related to have a consistent and cohesive archive to work with. We will leave such a positive trace that Ponta Delgada will figure in important indexes and networks, like Eurocities or the Culture and Creative Cities Monitor.

The **Human Nature** message will travel through different channels:

- **People**
- **Traditional media**
- **Digital communication platforms + Social networks**
- **Partnerships / Networks of cooperation**
- **Events**
- **Onsite**

Humanising communication: People are our target but also the focus of our narrative. Therefore, they are also our best communication channel. We have a regional network of ambassadors that has increased from 9 (1 per island) to 18 (2 per island), and we will keep extending that network.

We plan to have both national and international ambassadors, and, to follow through, we are counting on the support of the 16 Houses of the Azores around the world: three on the Portuguese mainland (Lisbon, North and Algarve), one in Madeira (Funchal), two in the USA (New England and California), three in Canada (Quebec, Ontario and Winnipeg), one in Bermuda, another in Uruguay, and five in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and Baía). The consulates and honorary consuls represented in the Azores are also activating their networks so that we can connect to other countries (USA, Canada, Germany, Latvia, Belgium, Brazil, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Netherlands, France, Slovakia, Spain, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, United Kingdom, Sweden and Turkey).

We are forging closer ties with our regional audience by promoting public meetings: **9 Islands in Conversation**, where we travel to all islands to promote assemblies; **Open Door sessions**, where people can come and talk to the team (onsite or online). These initiatives will run until 2027, and we will also continue to promote conversations and debates about important cultural and social issues.

Alongside our outreach strategy, throughout our ECoC year, we will promote the **Bring A Friend** action. This cultural solidarity initiative allows people to buy tickets at reduced prices that they can offer to the economically disadvantaged so that more people can experience ECoC events. When doing so, people can choose to directly invite someone supported by different organisations or to donate it to the cooperation network we mentioned in **Q14/Q15. Bring A Friend** will also encourage bringing someone along with them, someone living far away that does not have a way to reach the city or the events.

For those who visit us before and during 2027, we will be training taxi drivers, restaurants, accommodation and tourist guides to become our promoters. They will be the first local contact and guide for those who arrive on this year-long journey (even if just for a part of it).

We are creating a PDL–Azores2027 information office in the centre of Ponta Delgada. We will have fixed information stands and a mobile office in other municipalities of São Miguel, as well as on the other islands. We will have itinerant artistic projects that will naturally communicate our **Human Nature** beyond the city centre and the island, such as **Mapas, Mala** and **Iceberg**. Alongside the door-to-door audience involvement action (**Q16**), we will engage with locals by meeting them, engaging in their daily activities and making them a part of this adventure as co-creators and enablers, taking ECoC awareness and news even further.

Digital communication: We will use our website as our digital home, where everyone can find the necessary information about our vision, programme, artists, and venues. The PDL–Azores2027 website will continue to be a significant place to share relevant information and our actions, including the stories of the people that make this ECoC. We will also develop an app that serves as a road map to the ECoC experience, with information about the programme, the artists, the venues and locations, a ticket office, and touristic suggestions.

The focus on people is also present in the digital space, where we have created the **9 Bairros** participative website. We want it to be a digital forum and a journalism exchange academy with a strong presence of local and international youth.

Waves of Culture will broadcast some of our ECoC's main shows online and create a channel that offers transmedia content to enable people to participate in events remotely. By broadening access to our various museums and cultural facilities internationally through virtual visits, we will reach even those who can't visit us. Our digital stage aims to: create experiences between the onsite and the online and to promote wider accessibility. It is a way to take PDL–Azores2027 all over the world.

Within our digital strategy, we will **partner up with On the Move, Digital Meets Culture, and Europeana**, three important European digital platforms to promote the cultural projects, contents and opportunities of our ECoC internationally.

PDL–Azores2027 Off-site: In the run-up to the ECoC and during the year 2027, we want to promote cultural programmes in mainland Portugal and Europe that showcase Azorean arts and culture (music, contemporary dance, architecture, literature, film, visual arts and gastronomy). With an artistic direction led by several local partners, this fusion of art and communication, as a way of amplifying PDL–Azores2027, involves national and international alliances in several destinations, including, of course, upcoming ECoCs and Liepāja 2027.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Local and regional: We will partner with RTP Açores and Antena1 Açores (regional delegations of the public TV and radio stations). The Azores is one of the Portuguese regions with more registered media, and São Miguel, as the largest island of the Azores, is particularly prolific. We will work closely with Açoriano Oriental, a São Miguel-based, Azorean daily newspaper—and the longest-running publication in Portugal—with which we have discussed a partnership to publish a monthly ECoC supplement. We are also looking at other local newspapers and radios from each island, to which we will propose targeted content.

National: We will establish a media partnership with the public television and radio broadcaster, RTP, that has, both on television and on radio, three distinct channels with different vocations (1 is generalist, 2 is culture oriented, and 3 is informational in TV, and alternative in radio). RTP also has RTP Africa and RTP Internacional, which reach international audiences. We will work closely with Lusa, the Portuguese News Agency that distributes news to Portuguese-speaking countries and Portuguese communities elsewhere, and arrange media trips for both national and international media.

International – WWW (Whole Wide World): We will establish partnerships with international TV stations (such as ARTE and Euronews), broadcast channels and press from several foreign and European countries and invite journalists to cover PDL–Azores2027 events. We aim to work closely with the Azores Tourism Association, which has working experience with international media.

We will start organising media trips even before 2027. Journalists will get invited to learn about the reality of these islands and see how transformative the ECoC is. The idea is that media professionals will then engage with the ECoC and come back for other important moments, such as the opening and closing ceremonies, in addition to some highlight points in the programme, like the opening of a season or other projects under development.

Diaspora World: Recognising our diaspora as a very significant link to other countries, we will be looking into publications, namely: East Coast United States press outlets such as SouthCoast Today, The Herald News and The Portuguese American Journal, as well as other newspapers from the Azorean and Portuguese diaspora in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

ECoC & Liepāja World: We will also partner up with ECoC News, the online portal all about ECoCs. We will deepen our connection with Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027 to create a media exchange programme where PDL–Azores2027 news can reach a Latvian audience, and the Portuguese can also get in the loop of what is happening in Liepāja. This content exchange programme will also get extended to a journalists exchange programme.

Marketing: The image of PDL–Azores2027 will be on the region's buses, bus stops, kiosks and buildings. We are reaching all 19 municipalities of the archipelago. But there will be more: we are going beyond our oceanic borders, reaching each margin, with billboards in Brussels and Boston alike.

Ports and airports take on great importance in this region. Each island has an airport, and some have more than one commercial port. As such, we will display posters and distribute programmes in them whilst promoting site-specific communication actions and the participation of artists-in-transit who perform for passengers with projects like **Between the Islands**.

Our nature will be reflected in our mascots: the sperm whale, a cory's shearwater, the Azores cattle dog and Graciosa Island's dwarf donkey, which will be named and designed by school children. The Regional Government, whale watching companies, **SPEA – The Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds**, the **Azores Cattle Dog Club** and the **ACABAIG – Dwarf Donkey Preservation Association** will join in a partnership to create educational and cultural programmes about these animals. That is a way of raising awareness for the preservation of biodiversity.

Q40

How will you mobilise your own citizens as communicators of the year to the outside world?

We could not speak of the role of Azorean citizenship without reminding you of its shapes and how their singularities can be the best communicators of our ECoC dream to the world at large, from the very local to the international fellows of Planet Earth.

People From Here, There and Everywhere: Our citizens are those who live here, in all *nine neighbourhoods*, us and our own diversity of ways and even of accents; us and our quarrels, our animosity towards one another and our understanding of each other. Our citizens are also those who were forced—due to poverty and the past hardships of our living—to leave the islands. Those whose eyes and hearts have never left who, despite being oceans away in the USA, Canada, Brazil, mainland Europe and elsewhere, still hold our ancient traditions in their lives. We can always find in those who had to leave our best reminder of who we were and a reason to be grateful for who we are and where we stand in today's world. But, if we owe our sense of self and place to those born and raised here and those who left, we owe it also to our foreign-born citizens. Those who chose these nine islands as their place for living or either arrived not by choice but by necessity, as they fled wars, natural catastrophes or poverty. Those who have engaged us in broader thought while renewing our traditions and sense of worldly identity. That our people are grateful is, in itself, a key factor to how we approach our audience, but also audiences larger than ourselves. This bid came to be through strategic exposure, the activity and efforts of our broad civic movement, and the imagination and problem-solving of all those who sparked our collective imaginations. Our approach will continue to focus mainly on generating the involvement of a community that is—if only by nature—bound to know of itself and to care and engage with itself.

Bringing People Together: We have travelled through all nine islands, speaking with people from all walks of life. We have promoted **Open Door** sessions and received e-mails and messages through social media, finding a sense of shared gratitude and great curiosity for this project. We have learned from this experience that bringing people together, making them a part of the project and listening to them makes them engaged, and, when they are engaged, they become part of the movement and want to spread the word. It is also a great way to build bridges between people, as they see new cooperation opportunities. The journey continues, as we will keep an open door to listen to people individually, but we will keep promoting meetings, talks and debates, physically and digitally.

People Are the Faces and Voices: The outreach section outlines how we want to continue to reach people. As explained above, **our multiple island ambassadors** play an essential part in exposing and expanding the project and its European dimension. That is why we have promoted and will continue to do so, discussions around what it means to be European and the role that the Azores play in that identity. We are also identifying other *tribe leaders* that can join our movement and make it grow. A *tribe leader* can be either: a politician, a priest, a *mordomo* [the master of ceremonies for the Holy Ghost Festivities], a rising artist, a digital influencer, that dynamic teacher, the maestro of a philharmonic band, the scout's leader, the owner of a tavern, a fisherman or a fisherwoman, a farmer, a senior with a lot of stories to tell and will to make things happen, or a teenager ready to change the world for better. We want people to get involved in communicating this project by giving them a voice. We have already started it with the **9 Bairros** portal, which has also been printed and distributed as a magazine. But we are also opening our social media to new faces and stories.

We have developed a series of photographs and small interviews of artists and members of our Cultural and Creative Sectors, where we can get to know them and their relation to this place. Our ambassadors and other cultural and civic stakeholders will continue to be invited to promote conversations, school visits, outreach and communication actions that will run on our social media and other digital platforms. It is an ongoing process that will not cease but, rather, grow until 2027. Aside from that, through media partnerships and tailored storytelling content, we are creating spaces to tell the story of the local artists and cultural stakeholders alongside those from the great elsewhere that come here to work.

Q41

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

The Azores are in the middle of the Atlantic, at the triple junction between the North American, Eurasian and African plates. From the 18th century onwards, these Atlantic islands served as an *entrepôt* between Europe and North America. From here, hundreds of Azoreans left in search of lost Californias of abundance. For centuries, mainly due to emigration, we felt more American than European. When Portugal joined the European Union in 1986, the Azores began to benefit from funds to develop an autonomous region at the tail end of Europe. Today, the Azores are proud to be one of the outermost regions of the European Union. Thanks to the EU's investments, modern roads, ports and airports have been rebuilt—opening up these islands to the world. Today, we know that Europe begins here.

Representatives of the various European bodies and the governments of Lithuania and Greece—countries that will assume the EU presidency in 2027—will be our guests at the opening and closing ceremonies. All communication and marketing materials will feature the European Union flag. At the closing session of the ECoC 2027, we plan to invite the cities from France, the Czech Republic and Macedonia that will host the ECoC 2028 in a symbolic handover ceremony, with several artistic moments to pass on the spirit of the culture of Europe and the idea of ECoC.

The PDL–Azores2027 programme presents artists from various European countries. Their coming will strengthen the connection to the European project and reinforce the idea that we are all **United in Diversity**. Let us highlight the artistic project **10th Island** focusing on the history of the Azores and our communities worldwide, as well as the history of the EU. As part of this project, and to mark Europe Day, we want to invite historians, cultural stakeholders, environmental activists, politicians, researchers and artists for an international conference on European identity, archipelagic thinking and the relation between nature and culture, sustainability and innovation. The celebrations will also bring Latvian stories to the middle of the Atlantic, creating a bridge to our sister 2027 ECoC. We will also invite the Portuguese Post (CTT) to create a commemorative stamp collection to celebrate the PDL–Azores2027 adventure, partnering with several European artists.





Catarina Alves is a dreamer, believer and entrepreneur. She values the materiality of nature, creating unique pieces in a sustainable way inspired by volcanoes and the landscape. She makes sculptures and handmade jewellery and develops visual art projects with children and people with disabilities. Catarina focuses on the

problem of the excess waste that accumulates and the burden it will have on future generations. She has promoted environmental awareness actions with exhibitions, workshops and collaborative pieces with the community to create a message of hope for a better world.

07. Capacity to Deliver

Q42

How are the political institutions showing their continuous support and commitment?

The decision to bid for ECoC was presented and voted unanimously by the Ponta Delgada Municipality, both in the Council Meeting and in the Municipal Assembly on 5 and 27 May 2021, respectively. The Ponta Delgada Municipality created a working group dedicated to support the executive, administrative and legal team that prepares the PDL–Azores2027 bid. At the same time, this team gained a dedicated workspace with all the conditions for the work to run smoothly.

The Regional Government monitors the process, with periodic meetings in which the President of the Region is directly involved, as well as those responsible for structural areas in the future implementation of the project. A public and written declaration of support guarantees the commitment.

The involvement with the project gained more and more enthusiasm, reinvigorated with the passage to the final phase of the selection process. During the work period that preceded this moment, we witnessed a growing involvement from the decision-makers and teams of the Regional Government and the Ponta Delgada Municipality. This feeling spread throughout the city and region: from the different municipalities of São Miguel Island and the archipelago to Governmental institutions in the areas of Tourism and Education, and entities such as FRCT - Regional Fund for Science and Technology, the Association of Civil Construction and Public Works Contractors of the Azores, the Azores Tourism Association, the Ponta Delgada Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Economic and Social Council of the Azores and the University of the Azores.

Financially, we took note of the National Government's commitment, in a letter dated 16 September 2022 to provide €29 million (€15 million in direct funding, €10 million through the Regional Operational Programme* and €4 million through Tourism of Portugal). The Regional Government has committed €6 million on 27 September 2022, and Ponta Delgada Municipality has decided to allocate €4 million on 7 September 2022 (City Council) with the Municipal Assembly reinforcement on 29 September 2022. It is also worth highlighting the contribution of AMRAA – Association of Municipalities of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, in the amount of €400.000, secured by the intention presented in the first bid book.

*** Additional information to the selection panel:** On 16 September 2022, we received an official information from the National Government saying the following: *The global amount of the National Government investment to be given to the ECoC will be €29 million. The global value will be divided into €15 million from national investment, €10 million from the corresponding regional operational programme, and €4 million from the Tourism of Portugal.* As CEO of PDL-Azores2027 and as President of Ponta Delgada Municipality, I want to express my concern about the proposed division in €15 million from the National Government, and €10 million from the corresponding regional operational programme. As far as I am informed, to this date, this proposal is not agreed between the National Government and the Regional Government. I will try to get a clarification about the details of the National Government's contribution until the beginning of December when the panel visits the city and we present our bid book in Lisbon.

Q43

What is the stage of the foreseen infrastructure projects detailed at the pre-selection stage and how are they connected with the European Capital of Culture project?

As mentioned in **Q25** and **Q29**, we wish to build the PDL-Azores2027 project in harmony with the city and the islands's scales. We believe that we should not burden the island's future with investments in infrastructure that involve subsequent high maintenance and management costs. The idea of constructing a building that symbolises the year 2027 is not in our plans, as we want this *building* to be the inhabitants of the city and the island, strengthening their skills, improving their lives, stimulating their knowledge and leaving a mark on future generations. It is more important to restructure, requalify, remodel and revive the existing spaces, preparing them for 2027 and beyond. The supporting infrastructure plan for the PDL-Azores2027 programme ties in with the city and the region's strategy, where environmental care, ecological sustainability and nature preservation are present at every level, proven by actions where, for instance, we seek daily living spaces without cars. Ponta Delgada Municipality and the Regional Government have other investments planned for the coming years not yet detailed in this document that reflect the continuous attention to cultural activity and actions, allowing to improve the quality of life of the population, and, of course,

the experience of those who visit us or will stay with us during the ECoC's implementation. Initially, we aim to improve the quality of what we have, which allows us to be a reference in several areas. We want to grow in a sustained, qualified and people-oriented manner towards a world where growth and development are concerned with the future. The aim is, therefore, to create a concept of resilience to the uncertainties caused by natural, economic or even social phenomena. An inclusive city in which heritage, culture and traditions are an integral and differentiating aspect of a unique identity. Thus, we must promote an alliance between innovation, economic and tourism development, environmental and urban quality and social and cultural dimensions. We will connect the city of Ponta Delgada to the sea, with the primary aim of enhancing the territory and improving the quality of life of its citizens. Therefore, among others, the premises for the investment are:

- the requalification of the buildings with cultural and heritage features, such as the Conservatory, the Coliseum or the Carlos Machado Museum; we must emphasise that the physical rehabilitation of the built environment and the public space will have positive consequences if combined with a process of dynamisation of the remaining urban functions;
- the adaptation to the digital reality of the existing cultural spaces by creating a digital infrastructure for the different needs of the present time, following the principles that several European programmes urge us to implement;
- the requalification of public space like the creation of pedestrian areas with new walking trails; the requalification of the existing ones and the shared use of these spaces also by the cultural programming, integrating and honouring the existing heritage and the rehabilitation of the support areas;
- the promotion of improved access for audiences—ensuring the well-being of citizens;
- the improvement of citizens' mobility in the city, as well as the welcoming of visitors as temporary inhabitants, of which the requalification of the historic centre is the best example. This will promote an integrated vision of the smart functioning of a city that encourages high standards of environmental and urban quality and a solid economic, social, cultural and touristic dynamism, which projects a cohesive, modern and innovative city;
- the valuing of the physical heritage, the revitalisation, promotion and qualification of local commerce and proximity services through the development and fostering of cultural events and the animation of the public space.

In the following table, we can see the interventions with a direct impact on the programme's operationalisation. In addition, you can find a number of actions that do not contribute directly to the programme but will be crucial in ensuring that Ponta Delgada can host this unique and decisive event.

With a direct impact on the Programme

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE & HERITAGE							
Investment	City	Island	Region	How it will serve the ECoC	Investment	Year	Source
Factory of Culture and Creative Industries (FCIC)	×			Creative Inside Out, 9x9: Art residencies, creative and cultural hub. Concession of spaces to digital nomads, artists and creative stakeholders in a co-working and co-creation regime.	€60.000	2025	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Conservation of Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Centre		×		Tremor, Walk&Talk, Open Island, Flows, Between the Islands, 9x9, and others: Strengthening our contemporary art infrastructure with spaces for artistic creation, fruition, experimentation and outreach.	€300.000	2025	Regional Government
Conservation of Ponta Delgada Public Library and Regional Archive	×			Island of Women, HA!, Mexe-Azores, Forest of Fiction, 10th Island: Improving spaces for better articulation between interior and exterior. It is a central infrastructure that will host events during the ECoC for meetings and workshops.	€440.000	2025	Regional Government
Renovation and Improvement of Casa da Vida Associativa	×			Nó, Emerge, Quant.fos que.res, Quant.fos que.remos, Outreach programme: Improving working spaces for the Creative and Cultural Sectors.	€300.000	2024	Regional Government
Renovation and Technical Re-equipment of Coliseu Micaelense (Coliseum)	×			Theatre A-Z, Paralelo, Tremor, Walk&Talk, We Have Two Hearts, All Together Now, Circus Holding Hands: Preparing the venue for theatre, music and performing arts projects.	€800.000	2026	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Conservation and expansion of Carlos Machado Museum and Installation of the exhibition circuit	×			Become Ocean, EuropeanHood, Underwater Europe: Construction of rooms to preserve the natural, artistic and ethnographic collection. Better accessibility and more exhibition and workshop spaces.	€5.000.000	2024	EU
Renovation and improvement of Conservatório Regional of Ponta Delgada	×			Top of the Church: Sound of the Organs, Tremor, Walk&Talk, Mexe-Azores, Paralelo, All Together Now: Creating better conditions for the school and its public performance spaces for theatre, music and performing arts projects.	€3.500.000	2024	EU
Trinity House – Joint cable station – Communications Nucleus – Horta Museum/ Underwater Museum, Faial Island			×	Underwater Europe: creating a space for Underwater Cultural Heritage - exhibitions, art residencies, and outreach programmes.	€4.000.000	2025	EU
Recovery of the Antero de Quental High School – former Fonte Bela Palace	×			HA!, Quant.fos que.res, Quant.fos que.remos, Outreach programme: Strengthening the availability of venues for cultural activities and audience and school involvement.	€700.000	2024	Regional Government

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment	City	Island	Region	How it will serve the ECoC	Investment	Year	Source
Rehabilitation of the Municipal Market	×			State of Grace: Renovating the space, facilitating space for performances, exhibitions and audience mediation.	€1.500.000	2024	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Requalification of the Historic Centre of Ponta Delgada	×			Opening Ceremony, Circus Holding Hands, Mexe-Azores, Invention Parks for Playful Islands, Creative Inside Out: Preparing an inclusive, green and smart city with more space for performances, exhibitions and audience involvement programmes.	€3.180.000	2025	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Requalification of Santa Clara's oceanfront	×			We Are Running Out of Time, L(i)aving me Softly, Become Ocean: Qualifying the city areas in direct relation with the ocean for the population's fruition.	€350.000	2024	EU
Requalification of the Praia das Milícias area	×			Become Ocean, The Overview Effect: Qualifying the city areas in direct relation with the ocean for the population's fruition.	€4.000.000	2024	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Project for Public areas <i>Habitar o Espaço Público</i>	×	×		Open Island, Circus Holding Hands, ARTakeover, Paralelo: Qualifying the neighbourhood's plazas, gardens and convivial public spaces for performances and exhibitions.	€1.800.000	2026	Ponta Delgada Municipality
São Roque Bicycle Paths Network	×			Open Island, L(i)aving me Softly, Moving Ecologies: Qualifying the everyday life in the city for green mobility.	€200.000	2024	Regional Government

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Investment	City	Island	Region	How it will serve the ECoC	Investment	Year	Source
Forest of Fiction	×			Forest of Fiction: A wooded park strengthens the Urban Park of Ponta Delgada, transforming green pasture areas into a forest with a literary connection.	€100.000	2024	Ponta Delgada Municipality
Improvement of walking trails		×	×	Terra Incógnita, L(i)aving me Softly, Tremor, The Overview Effect, Body of the Land: Strengthening the offer of sites for cultural actions and green tourism.	€301.773	2023	Regional Government
Renovation of the leisure area of Sete Cidades		×		L(i)aving me Softly, Island of Women, Invention Parks for Playful Islands: Strengthening the offer of nature sites for cultural actions and tourism.	€110.610	2026	EU

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment	City	Island	Region	How it will serve the ECoC	Investment	Year	Source
Requalification of the Ferraria and Ginetes observation point and accessibility		×		Become Ocean, Open Island, The Overview Effect: Strengthening the offer of sites for cultural actions and tourism.	€755.000	2024	Regional Government
Ponta da Ferraria Interpretive Centre		×		Become Ocean, L(i)aving me Softly: Public space for performances, exhibitions and cultural itineraries.	€831.288	2026	EU

With an indirect impact on the Programme

Investment	City	Island	Region	How it will serve the ECoC	Investment	Year	Source
Renovation and adaptation of the information desk at the Airport	×			Improvement for welcoming visitors.	€90.000	2023	Regional Government
Renovation of tourist information offices	×	×	×	Improvement for welcoming visitors.	€135.970	2023	Regional Government
Highway to Capelas Village	×	×		Major improvement of urban mobility in the Municipality.	€30.000.000	2025	PRR
Construction of the Information and Communication Technologies Centre		×		Creative and Cultural hub, Digital Nomads, New Media.	€6.600.000	2023	EU
Requalification of Pedestrian and traditional trails in Terceira, São Jorge and Faial islands			×	Strengthening the offer of nature sites for cultural actions and tourism.	€1.036.540	2022-2026	EU
Algar do Carvão Environmental Interpretation Centre, Terceira Island			×	Strengthening the offer of sites for cultural actions and tourism.	€1.828.093	2026	EU
Landscaping intervention in the forest area of Lagoa do Congro		×		Strengthening the offer of sites for cultural and ecological actions and tourism.	€281.640	2026	EU
Renovation of the Pedro Miguel Complex in the Botanical Garden, Faial Island			×	Strengthening the offer of sites for cultural and ecological actions and tourism.	€521.000	2026	EU

Totals

TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WITH A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE PROGRAMME	€28.228.671
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WITH AN INDIRECT IMPACT ON THE PROGRAMME	€40.493.243
TOTAL	€68.721.914

Additional information

Q44

Add any further information which you deem useful in relation with your application.

Navigating through Ponta Delgada, the island of São Miguel and all the nine islands of the Azores, we know that this bid is an unprecedented springboard for an archipelago of borderless cultural exchange. We saw the needs, understood the benefits, and imagined the impacts of a European Capital of Culture revolution with our local and international communities. PDL- Azores2027 is a vision, a movement, and a path to put Ponta Delgada and the Azores in the eyes and minds of Europe. Isolation will be a subject of the past, because we will rewrite it in our most desired future – a tomorrow that reveals and expands our humanity. It is one that invites Europe to get to know it, beyond the magnificence of the landscape and our striking weather and nature. This Atlantic city and archipelago are ready to expand the ECoC concept

by creating a unique and sustainable experience of cultural articulation, conversation, encounter and love. Through this bid book, we have showed and shared a tiny fraction of the stories of some of the people that are already shaping this place, and that have embraced this journey with us. There are so many more to show. Finally, we want to acknowledge the inspiration and imagination brought to this bid from the relational aesthetics developed by writer Édouard Glissant. We are moved by the motto *the Azores are our place in the world*, as told by writer João de Melo in one of our Committee of Honour sessions. Quoting British musician Alabaster Deplume, who we saw performing at our Coliseu Micaelense in 2022, ladies and gentlemen, **we are ready to go forward with the courage of our love. Let us go.**

Credits

Ponta Delgada—Azores 2027 European Capital of Culture Candidate City

Promoted by Ponta Delgada Municipality

Co-promoted by the Government of the Azores

In partnership with the Association of Civil Construction and Public Works Contractors of the Azores, Azores Tourism Association, Ponta Delgada Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Municipalities of Angra do Heroísmo, Calheta, Corvo, Horta, Lagoa, Lajes das Flores, Lajes do Pico, Madalena, Nordeste, Povoação, Praia da Vitória, Ribeira Grande, Santa Cruz da Graciosa, Santa Cruz das Flores, São Roque do Pico, Velas, Vila do Porto, Vila Franca do Campo, the Economic and Social Council of the Azores, and the University of the Azores

PONTA DELGADA—AZORES 2027 SELECTION PHASE TEAM

Executive Coordinator:

Pedro Nascimento Cabral (President of Ponta Delgada Municipality)

Artistic Director:

António Pedro Lopes

Audience Involvement & Outreach Coordinator:

Rita Serra e Silva

Marketing & Communications Coordinator:

Inês Linhares Dias

Project Manager:

Diana Diegues

Project Manager:

João Rebelo Costa

Executive Producer & Financial Manager:

Paula Pavão

COLLABORATORS

Cultural Strategy, Monitoring, Evaluation & Impact:

Patrícia Romeiro

Management & Finances:

Pedro Silva

Graphic Design:

Sérgio Couto

Translation:

Sílvia Tavares

International Partnerships & Cooperation:

Ana Clara Roberti and Rui Monteiro

Executive Coordinator's Assistants:

Joana Filipe and Luís Silva

Legal Affairs:

Pedro Gomes

Pre-selection Phase Team:

Paulo Mendes, Nuno Costa Santos, Gina Ávila Macedo, Nelson Furtado, Carolina Pimentel.

HUMAN NATURE

General Coordination:

António Pedro Lopes

Conceptualization & Texts:

António Pedro Lopes (Q1, Q5–10, Q11, Q13, Q31–Q36), Diana Diegues (Q6), Inês Linhares Dias (Q11–12, Q37–41), João Rebelo Costa (Q6), Patrícia Romeiro (Q2–Q4), Pedro Silva (Q17–Q32, Q42–43) and Rita Serra e Silva (Q14–16)

Translation, Proofreading & Editing:

Sílvia Tavares

Revision:

António Pedro Lopes, Sílvia Tavares, Inês Linhares Dias, Diana Diegues, João Rebelo Costa, Rita Serra e Silva, Pedro Silva and Patrícia Romeiro

Graphic Design:

Sérgio Couto

Critical Accompaniment & Friendship:

Pia Leydolt-Fuchs and Ulrich Fuchs

Photography:

Paulo Goulart

Printing:

Gráfica Maiadouro

Legal Deposit:

506333/22

Our appreciation to everyone involved in creating PDL—Azores2027's bid book. Thank you so much for meeting, speaking, listening, hugging and hearing each other, both in-person and online. It was the generous contribution of your time and ideas that made this bid possible.

www.azores2027.eu

www.facebook.com/pontadelgadaazores2027

www.instagram.com/pontadelgadaazores2027



