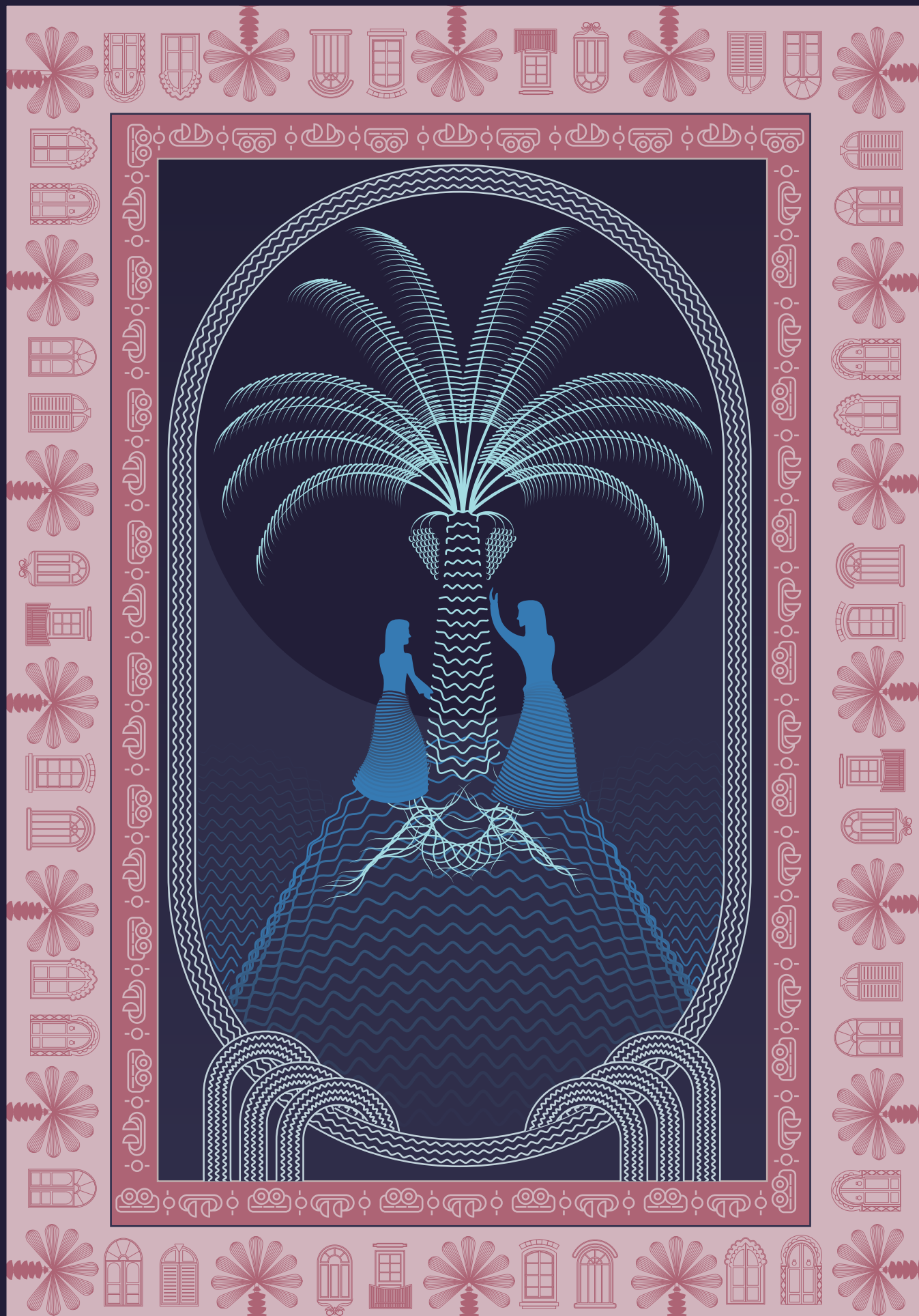




Larnaca
2030

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE CANDIDATE CITY

PRE-SELECTION BID BOOK

INDEX

Introduction		02
Chapter 01	Contribution To The Long-term Strategy	08
Chapter 02	Cultural And Artistic Content	16
Chapter 03	European Dimension	36
Chapter 04	Outreach	40
Chapter 05	Management	44
Chapter 06	Capacity To Deliver	52



Dance performance in the public space,
Common Ground launch event, 12th May 2024



INTRODUCTION

Dance performance in the public space,
Common Ground launch event, 12th May 2024

Q0.1. Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

The bid for the title of European Capital of Culture 2030 finds Larnaka at a historic turning point. «Stuck» between the administrative centre of Nicosia, the economic centre of Limassol and the tourist centre of Ayia Napa and with the sudden increase in population in 1974 with the Turkish

invasion in Cyprus and the subsequent wave of refugees from Famagusta, Larnaka didn't manage to define itself. The identity of the modern city was imposed by external factors and the necessities of the times. Thus, Larnaka ended up being mainly a «service centre» for the whole country, with the airport, the refineries and the refugee settlements defining its identity. An identity made for us without us; an identity of necessity rather than choice. This is why Larnaka did not experience the growth that the other cities on the island did, especially after Cyprus joined the EU, and ended up being referred to among Cypriots as the “poor relative”.

The last ten years, we have decided to take our destiny into our own hands. We have decided to change this reality and make Larnaka the city of our choice. We have demanded a lot and have achieved quite a lot. We have realized the significance of art and culture, as well as the importance of Europe, as motors for radical change and development of the city. That is why we have systematically invested in the cultural resources of our city. Determined to renegotiate our relationship with history and its most traumatic aspects, we have applied for European funding for urban regeneration projects that reconnect the city with the Turkish Cypriot and colonial aspects of its heritage, such as the Skala Turkish Quarter, the Zouhouri Turkish Cypriot complex, the Turkish Cypriot Baths and the former English Club. We have claimed a share in knowledge and achieved the creation of organisations and institutions that are unique in Cyprus, such as the Youth Maker Space, the Larnaka Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth, and the European Centre of Excellence in Marine and Maritime Research, Technology Development and innovation (CMMI). With European funding we have redeveloped squares and large parks, which enhance the greenery in the city and improve our daily life. Thus, for us, bidding for the title of ECoC 2030 is **part of an ongoing systematic effort to redefine the identity of the city. Through the ECoC we seek to restore our self-esteem, to redefine ourselves as a community and to reclaim a place on the international map.**

That's why we have started preparing our bid already since April 2022. All the forces of the city came together in this effort: the City Council unanimously, the business world, the educational community, the artistic world, the civil society. These two and a half years of preparation for the ECoC title have become the largest participatory planning and co-creation exercise that the city has known so far. More than 1300 people have been actively involved in the process of drafting our proposal. From obscurity and cultural mediocrity, Larnaka is now proposing a cultural development model that attracts the attention of the national media. On 20/5/2024 **Phileleftheros**, the newspaper with the highest circulation in Cyprus, featured an article about our activity Common Ground under the title “A group of young people is building the Larnaka of the future. Larnaka 2030 has revitalized the city centre, inviting residents to vote for the kind of city they want”. The article also states: “What can happen when young people are given the opportunity to express their love for their place? The answer is provided by 21 architects, graphic designers and designers who work within the Larnaka 2030 Co-Creators Network towards bringing unseen and injured areas of their city back to life. They lay the foundations for a sustainable, inclusive, non-discriminatory city where everyone has a voice and opportunities. A city that is Europe's common ground...”. **The prospect of the ECoC fills us with enthusiasm, confidence and pride. It has become a tool that enables us to create new relationships, new behaviors, new Common Grounds and a great common goal: to become the European Capital of Culture 2030. Thus, for us, the ECoC is a process of redefining our Community on the grounds of inclusion, participation and cultural democracy.**

However, the need to redefine our Community is not a challenge that only Larnaka faces. It is perhaps one of the most important challenges that Europe on the whole faces today. Contemporary European societies are transforming through migration, the influx of refugees and our relationship with Islam and the Arab world. Islamophobia is fueling modern nationalism, that threatens to push fundamental European values, human rights, equal opportunities and social justice to the margins. At this juncture, we believe we have urgent stories to share with the rest of Europe. Stories that renegotiate the concept of Community, the shape of modern cities and our relationship with the Middle East. Stories about the experience of war, refugeeism and division, but also about life and survivors, which ultimately define the future. Stories about mutual understanding, solidarity and humanity that create new Common Ground.

Thus, for us the ECoC 2030 is a unique opportunity to negotiate the contemporary challenges of our city on an international and not just local level and through this process, to consolidate our collective identity as a caring, democratic city and Gateway of Europe to the Middle East.

Finally, an important reason for bidding for ECoC 2030 is related to the timing. After several years of claims and struggles, Larnaka people have achieved perhaps their most important goal: the removal of the oil refinery and fuel depots from the city's waterfront. This removal has freed about a third of Larnaka's coastal front, which now has a substantial development prospect. At the same time, the city's port and marina are under development, breeding anticipation for increased investment interest. These developments are setting Larnaka in the realm of significant changes that offer opportunities, but also carry dangerous risks of altering the human character of the city, as we have seen happening in other cities in Cyprus and in other islands in the world. Once again, there is a danger that the city's identity will be determined by external factors, in particular the economic forces of development and gentrification. **Thus, for us, bidding for ECoC 2030 is urgent and cannot be postponed. As our inside joke goes: 20:30 is Larnaka's time.**

Larnaka's candidacy for ECoC 2023 includes the entire Larnaka Region. This is an area of 1120.052 sq. km. with a population of 145,000 inhabitants, of which 70,000 live in the city of Larnaka. It comprises five municipalities and 5 communes unions that account for 31 communes; 45% of Larnaka Region is rural areas.

Q0.2. Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area? Explain this choice.

Our choice is based on four substantive reasons. Firstly, because **the city and region of Larnaka form an organic whole**. The communes surrounding Larnaka constitute an active network of shared social, cultural and economic interaction, with people from the region coming to the city for work, recreation and all kinds of services (shopping, public services, education, arts and culture, medical care, etc.). Due to this organic relationship, it is impossible to negotiate a contemporary identity of Larnaka cut off from the region. The diversity of the communities of the region is one of the main challenges we face regarding how small, rural communities can be active cells of the modern European reality, active and conscious European citizens.

Secondly, because **from the very beginning all the Municipalities of the Region have joined the effort of bidding for ECoC 2030**, and they are actively engaged both financially and with respect to participating in Larnaka 2030's Co-Creators Network. Thirdly, because **through the diversity of the communities of the Larnaka Region, we can negotiate the full range of challenges facing our societies today**. In Larnaka Region, 45% of the communities are rural, while a large percentage are tourist areas and areas that are currently being developed mainly as new residential areas. A significant part of the uplands is characterized by the communities co-existence with natural landscape, which nowadays brings them under serious threats from natural disasters such as wildfires. Two communities in our Region, Troulloi and Athienou, are located within the green line, while the only bicommunal village in Cyprus, Pyla, where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots continue to live together, is also located here.

Finally, because we see the ECoC as our unique opportunity to get out of our microcosm and develop a project that impacts not only in our city, but one that has a broad impact for the whole country, for the Mediterranean and for Europe. **It is a tool to foster a culture of interdependence**. It would therefore be inconsistent to leave out our closest communities, those of the Larnaka Region.



Networking visit among GrCypriot and TkCypriot artists and cultural operators in Famagusta, July 2023

Q0.3. Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.

The cradle of human society

Larnaka is one of the 20 oldest cities in the world, inhabited continuously for more than 4,000 years in the same geographical area. Also, Choirokoitia, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, organized settlement in Europe which dates back to 7000 BC and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located in Larnaka Region. Choirokoitia is one of the oldest examples of organised social coexistence in the world, giving an important dimension to Larnaka and its cultural profile as **the preeminent place of community, the shared experience of people coexisting in common space and time.**

City of refugees - City of refuge

One distinctive characteristic of the city's identity since its foundation is that **it has always served as a safe place for displaced people**. According to the myth, the ancient city of Larnaka, Kition was founded by Noah's grandson Kittim, who survived the world's biggest environmental disaster, the Flood. Jesus' close friend Lazarus also fled to Larnaka being under persecution as the living testimony to the miracle of the Resurrection, and became Larnaka's first Bishop and then patron saint. Throughout time, Larnaka has served as destination and home for refugees from the turbulent Syro-Palestinian coast, but also for displaced populations from other regions such as Armenians and currently Ukrainians, as well as many people from sub-Saharan countries. After the Turkish invasion on the island in 1974, Larnaka received the largest number of refugees of working and middle class. Today 53% of the city's adult population has a refugee background. Among them is the Larnaka Mayor himself, who was born and raised in Agioi Anargyroi refugee settlement.

Europe's Gateway to the Middle East

Larnaka is historically and geographically the most Middle Eastern city of the EU. The ancient port of the city is Phoenician, whereas today the headquarters of the Phoenicians' Route in Cyprus are in Larnaka. From its origins until Cyprus' independence in 1960, Larnaka has been a colony of different peoples: the Phoenicians, the Mycenaeans, the Ptolemies, the Romans, then the Byzantines, the Franks, the Venetians, the Ottomans and finally the British. **The elements of recurring subordination and coexistence of many cultures have formed a unique intercultural mosaic.** It is no coincidence that the work of the most famous Cypriot, Larnaka born stoic philosopher Zeno, is based on interculturalism and tolerance. From the Middle Ages until the end of the 19th century, our city was the island's main commercial port and since the 18th century it hosted the European Consulates. It was part of the large network of Mediterranean ports and one of the most important trade centres in the Middle East. Today, 20% of the population of Larnaka Region are of foreign origin, 10% coming from EU/EFTA countries and another 10% coming from non EU Countries. Among the non EU Countries, there are big communities of Lebanese and Syrian people, while a recently emerging community is the digital nomads.

This historical stratigraphy is evident in the monuments, archaeological sites and museums of the city, the most important ones being the archaeological site of Ancient Kition and the Ancient Port, as well as the Archaeological Museum, St. Lazarus Church and its Museum, the Hala Sultan Teke, the Ottoman Aqueduct, the Medieval Castle, the Tuzla Mosque and Bath, Zuhuri Complex and the Buyuk Mosque. There are also two historical archives in the city, while the Pierides Museum depicts Cyprus history from the Neolithic period to the 19th century.

Religious centre for both Christianity and Islam

In Larnaka, different religions coexist harmoniously, practicing at neighbouring places of worship. In the city's historic centre, within a radius of 500 metres, the church of St Lazarus, two mosques and the Jewish synagogue stand together. There are also two Catholic churches, a Maronite church and an Armenian church. Historically, the city has been a prominent religious centre and an important pilgrimage site for both Muslims and Christians, due to Hala Sultan Teke and St. Lazarus Church respectively. Umm Haram (Hala Sultan) was Muhammad's aunt, who followed him as a nurse in his military expeditions. She died and was buried in Larnaka, just like Christ's friend (Saint) Lazarus. It is also notable that the stories of both persons are connected to miracles, **indicating how Larnaka experiences miracle as a source of hope for a suffering humanity.**

Family City

People who survive disasters, as well as those who migrate share this: they are driven by the will to find a better future and by their concern for their family and especially their children. **The culture of caring for children and young people has been prevailing in the city from the 18th century to the present day.** Larnaka was the first place in Cyprus where childcare institutions were founded, such as Nurseries (Health Centres for infants and toddlers) and Paidiki Exohi (summer campus for children in need). The first schools were also founded in Larnaka: the American Academy of Larnaka, the Pancyprrian Commercial Lyceum and the Saint Joseph Lyceum, while public schools, that are still in operation, were founded by private donors and carry their name (Evryviadeio, Kalogera, Zachariadeio). The attention to children and young people's wellbeing remains a prominent feature of the modern city, manifested through the numerous dance schools, music conservatories and art workshops. In addition to these, the Municipal Open School offers extracurricular activities to about 1200 children, while Scouting has a very strong presence in the city. Moreover, the Music High School and Sistema Larnaka Wind and Percussion Orchestra establish robust foundations in music culture among youth. Finally, Larnaka boasts two institutions that are unique of their kind in Cyprus: Larnaka Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth and Larnaka Youth Maker Space which offer unprecedented creative experiences combining arts and technology. Finally, children and young people have a vivid presence in the city's public celebrations, such as the Christmas Parade, the Carnival Parade, the Flower Festival and the Kataklysmos Festival.

Human City

As a city of refugees, Larnaka has a strong culture of **solidarity, empathy, understanding and tolerance**, is manifested in the everyday behaviours of its people. Here, for example, it is natural to say “good morning” to strangers who you come across on the street. This culture is also manifested in the strong presence of civil society organisations. There is a wide variety of NGOs and voluntary groups with impactful activity focusing on disadvantaged social groups, migrants, people with disabilities, the environment, and various other social issues. Finally, Larnaka has hosted the island’s first and only gay bar since the 1980s, indicating the city’s tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

City of Water

Larnaka is defined by two essential natural resources, being located between the sea and the salt lakes. It is interesting to note that while Larnaka has the largest coastal front of all the cities in Cyprus, it has the smallest percentage of tourists and tourist accommodation units compared to the other coastal cities of the island. The large Salt Lake occupies about 1/3 of the city’s perimeter. It is a rich habitat for more than 100 species of flora and 200 species of fauna and every year it hosts hundreds of flamingos, which have become the trademark of the city. The entire Salt Lake is a NATURA protected area and is one of the few significant habitats that are fully integrated into the urban circle and daily life. The pursuit of blue growth is currently supported by the European Centre of Excellence Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI) and the first University Faculty of Marine Research, Technology and Sustainable Development, which is expected to welcome its first students soon.

One of Larnaka’s most prominent cultural festival is the celebration of *Kataklysmos* (the Flood). It derives from the ancient Greek celebrations of Aphrodite and Adonis, which have evolved and have been incorporated in the Christian tradition through the celebration of the Holy Spirit. Both pagan and religious traditions share common elements through a historical unbroken continuity and celebrate the significance of water and the sea in peoples’ life. Among the Kataklysmos Festival artistic programme is the folk poem improvisation competition, “Tsiattista”, which are listed in UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Historically, *Kataklysmos Festival* has been attended by Muslim citizens too, while today festivities attract tens of thousands of people from all over Cyprus.

Larnaka’s Contemporary Cultural Ecosystem

The city’s contemporary cultural ecosystem is defined by the three following characteristics:

● A strong presence of artisans and traditional forms of art

Traditional art and craftsmanship constitute a vibrant aspect of the city’s and region’s cultural life, with many professional ceramists, embroiderers, basket weavers, silversmiths operating in the region. In Livadia one can find the Craft of Caning Museum, while Lefkara is the home of Lefkaritiko embroidery, listed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Traditional artists and craftsmen have a visible role in the city’s cultural life. The statue of Naïve painter Kassialos is prominent in Larnaka city centre, while in Mazotos one can visit the museum of Naïve sculptor Kostas Argyros.

● The Municipality manages the majority of cultural places and events

The Municipality’s Cultural Services run the Municipal Gallery and the Christoforou Collection, the Municipal Theatre and Skala Theatre, the Municipal Library and the two city Archives. They also organise the city’s main cultural events such as the *Larnaka Festival*, the *Classical Music Festival*, the *Jazz Festival*, and *Kataklysmos Festival*.

● Lack of independent institutions and venues despite the large number of independent artists

While there is a large number of independent artists, there is lack of organised independent institutions, as well as independent venues. This is why many of Larnaka’s artists spend most of the year working in other cities on the island. Independent artists’ initiatives and events in the city are sporadic and unsustainable due to lack of adequate infrastructure to host and support events such as theatres, galleries and other cultural venues. This is a reality we seek to change. While several artists have their studios in Larnaka, there are only two independent galleries: **Kypriaki Gonia** and **Evohek Artists Run Space**. Among the strong presences of the independent sector are the **House of Arts and Letters**, which hosts writers and poets, the *Larnaka Biennale* in the field of visual arts and the **Larnaka Film Club**. Also, the two biggest music festivals of the island, *Fengaros* and *Afrobanana*, take place in Larnaka Region. Finally, Larnaka is proud to have **Savvino Live**, the most influential rock music stage on the island for the last four decades.



Q0.4. Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture

The rise of nationalism all over the world, the return of war in the borders of Europe, as well as the abstention rates in recent EU elections make it clear that Europe needs not just a new narrative, but a new paradigm for togetherness. To be able to respond to the future we have collectively adhered to with the New European Bauhaus (beautiful, sustainable, together), we urgently need to work on **what togetherness as everyday praxis involves; we need to actively and practically redefine our Common Ground**. If Larnaka is designated ECoC 2030, this is exactly what we plan to do. Our proposal seeks to turn Larnaka into a living lab for rethinking our neighborhoods, our cities and Europe overall as places where we live and thrive together in diversity; as places of care and empathy; as everybody's Common Ground. At the crossroad of Europe and the Middle East, one of the oldest cities in the world and a place where throughout history, people of different religious and ethnic background manage to become a community, we believe that Larnaka is **an ideal testing Ground to rethink Community and Togetherness**.

What is more, we are convinced that in Europe small and medium-sized cities are drivers of change, due to their human-scale realities. We are convinced that cities like Larnaka are the future European metropolis. Etymologically "metropolis" is a compound word, coming from the Greek words "mother" and "polis"(city); therefore the word "metropolis" means a "mother city". We strongly believe that this is what a European future metropolis would look like. It is going to be a city that functions as mother for all its people. In line with the New European Bauhaus, we envision the future metropolis in Europe to be first and foremost democracies of care; common cities and cities of commons. And we want to use the ECoC 2030 opportunity to develop Larnaka into such a city: into **a new European Metropolis, a city that is Mother for all its inhabitants, a Common city and Democracy of Care**.

Common Ground public intervention in the shop windows of the historic city centre, presenting all cities that have been ECoCs, May – November 2024



Thus, Common Ground is the title and the main theme of our proposal. Common Ground is guided by three core values – Care, Democracy and Interdependence – and evolves through three Central Themes: **We, Larnaka, Europe** that correspond to the People, the Place and the Politics, as the main factors that formulate community and Commons.

In this part of the world, symbols are powerful. They have strong roots in history, and they serve as a Common Language, able to communicate across people of different age, ethnicity and religion. Therefore, we have chosen symbols to communicate our proposal and its messages. The picture in the cover page of our bidbook depicts the whole bidbook and narrates its story. In the centre of the picture there is a palm tree, a symbol that codifies **our Cultural and Artistic Content**, its vision, values and strategy (Chapter 2). The soil on which the palm tree grows corresponds to the **European Dimension** (Chapter 3), since the EU and the ECoC is the ground that allows us to grow the whole project. The female figure depicted in the picture symbolizes the people, that are the farmers of our project. Thus, it symbolizes **Outreach** (Chapter 4). The symbol of water flows that surrounds the central image symbolizes the watering system that allows the tree to grow. In terms of project, the watering system is **Management** (Chapter 5), which is like the water that the tree needs to grow. Then, the inner framework that sustains the whole picture / project is the **Capacity to Deliver** (Chapter 6), that provides the necessary framework for delivering the project. Finally, the external framework with the symbols of buildings together with the palm tree symbolizes the future city we want to create through the ECoC 2030 project and therefore corresponds to the **Contribution to the Long-Term Strategy** (Chapter 1).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Q1.1. Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, including the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?

Q1.2. Describe the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city.

Up to now, the city did not have a single cultural strategy. However, Larnaka was the first city in Cyprus to develop an overall strategy with a 2040 horizon, as early as in 2010. Thus, issues related to the functioning of the field of cultural production were included in this strategy.

Also, until recently, the cultural ecosystem of Larnaka - and perhaps of Cyprus overall - was more in line with the "Monumental city" concept, rather than the "City as Commons" one. The emphasis was placed on institutional art and largely on presenting touring shows from other Cypriot cities and from abroad - mainly from Greece. This approach to the role of culture leaves little space for small and medium size cities to develop their creative powers. In this

approach, small and medium size cities are doomed to imitate the trends of the big centres and to "import" knowledge from the 'enlightened' centres in their "poor" peripheries. We used to be among these "poor relatives". We were watching foreign productions touring the big Cypriot cities and we were feeling good, even proud, in (rare) case they decided to include Larnaka as the tour's last stop. Local artists had a limited role in the decision-making process, a reality that has resulted in a distance between local artists and policy makers.

This reality has changed dramatically in the past two years and Larnaka 2030 has been the catalyst of this change, due to the unprecedented participatory design and co-creation process we have initiated, inviting everybody to shape the city's new cultural strategy, as well as the candidacy programme. With **Co-Creating Larnaka 2030** as motto, we held about 40 meetings with local artists, cultural operators and different communities of the city and the region, through which 16 working groups were formed that worked and are still working on specific thematic areas, generating ideas that then become the city's cultural strategy goals, as well as Larnaka 2030's art projects. The new governance model, that has been introduced through this process, has changed radically the city's cultural ecosystem. The emphasis is now placed in empowering the local ecosystem and connecting it internationally. Thus, we are experiencing the ECoC candidacy as a deeply transformative process; a process of maturing and self-awareness, through which we realise our needs and desires, and co-create our Common Future.

Larnaka's new cultural strategy has emerged through this process. It endorses Agenda 21 for Culture and Agenda 2030 and understands arts and culture as the 4th Pillar of Sustainable Development next to Economy, Society and Environment and interrelated to these sectors. Entitled **Investing in our Talents**, it treats local communities, local artists and cultural operators, our behaviours, our value systems, our daily habits, the natural surrounding as well as the built environment as «talents» the city needs to invest in, in order to grow sustainably. Larnaka's new cultural strategy defines the city as the Ground that is no longer an "impresario", nor its people mere art "consumers". On the contrary, **we become the creators, the farmers of the city as Common Ground**. Further, the Cultural Strategy has been developed on Six Main Lines, that reflect the city's unique characteristics and its contemporary challenges. The Six Main Lines are as follows:

Family Friendly City

The challenge:

Larnaka is a quiet and safe city; a "family city" as we say in Greek. Families with children make up a big part of the city's population. Also, families with children that migrate to Cyprus are more likely to choose Larnaka as their place of residence among other Cypriot cities. While there is considerable offer in cultural education for children and young people (conservatories, dance schools, art workshops, etc.) there is a lack in cultural activities addressing families on the whole. What is more, female presence in the public sphere is not strong: out of twenty-seven members of the city



council only seven are women, meaning a percentage of 25%. Through the “Family Friendly City” Line, we seek to:

- Strengthen female leadership in the city’s cultural life and the public sphere
- Foster a Culture of Care and incorporate concrete Care Policies in the daily operation of the cultural institutions
- Empower children and young people to become cultural leaders and agents of positive change
- Create more opportunities for families to participate in the city’s cultural life

Human City

The challenge:

Larnaka has always been a city where people from different backgrounds and experiences live together. However, people with disabilities and LGBTI communities face accessibility issues. On the one hand, the city’s cultural infrastructure and events are not universally accessible and on the other, there is little space for professional development for artists with disabilities. Through the “Human City” Line we target these weaknesses and seek to:

- Make equality and inclusion the base for the city’s cultural life
- Promote universal access through the integration of concrete accessibility policies and practices in the daily operation of local cultural institutions and cultural events
- Empower artists and culture professionals with disabilities
- Foster a culture of “anthropia”, solidarity, and empathy

Intercultural City

The challenge:

Larnaka has always been a multicultural city. However, it is not that intercultural. Although all diverse communities celebrate their culture in various occasions, there are not many occasions of intercultural events and celebrations, as well as projects created through the cooperation of different communities. Also, different aspects of the city’s multicultural heritage are not equally promoted and celebrated. Through the “Intercultural City” Line we seek to change these realities and to:

- Promote interculturalism by creating opportunities for different communities to create and celebrate together
- Promote intercultural understanding, reconciliation and peace building between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as between different communities of the city that are in conflict
- Develop Larnaka into a Cultural Gateway of Europe to the Middle East by fostering cooperation with cross artists and cultural operators from the Middle East
- Establish the “Museum of the People” as a point of reference for the city’s different communities
- Integrate concrete intercultural policies and practices in the everyday life and operation of the city’s cultural institutions

Let’s Start a Conversation, dance performance in the public space co-created by 16 local dance schools, CARE Festival, November 2024



Creative City

The challenge:

Larnaka, while rich in traditional techniques, natural resources and materials, is lacking in the cultivation of design thinking and the connection between traditional techniques and contemporary design. Through the “Creative City” thematic area we want to change this reality and in particular:

- Strengthen design thinking and the connection between tradition and new technologies and design
- Create the new Design Centre, where handicraft practices and traditional techniques are ‘married’ with contemporary forms of design

Curious and Talented City

The challenge:

The city has a significant artistic potential, as there are many independent artists from all art sectors. However, there is a considerable lack in organised structures and venues that would allow the artists to work on a permanent basis in Larnaka. Moreover, the governance model is somewhat outdated and not able to respond to the needs of the contemporary independent art sector. Through the “Curious and Talented City “ Line we seek to change this reality and in particular to:

- Develop Larnaka into a contemporary cultural centre with a strong international dimension
- Candidate for the ECoC 2030 title
- Adopt a new approach to culture based on the Agenda 21 for Culture and the Agenda 2030
- Adopt a new governance model based on public-private partnership and participatory design
- Strengthen the artistic community through the creation of new structures such as the Arts Centre and AiR Space.
- Strengthen the international character and orientation of the local scene through capacity building programmes, as well as European and international partnerships.

Sustainable City

The challenge:

With its existing natural environment and the large scale urban development projects that are planned, Larnaka has great potential to become a sustainable and greener city. However, the risk of falling in the trap of uncontrolled growth is also present. There is a need to enhance natural resources and adopt new attitudes towards the environment. Through the “Sustainable City” Line we seek to:

- Treat the natural surroundings (both land and sea) as an integral part of our cultural heritage and cultivate new behaviours of care towards nature
- Treat the environment as a living organism with whom we can co-create
- Integrate concrete green policies and practices in the daily operation of cultural institutions

At the heart of the **Investing in our Talents** strategy is the creation and operation of a new cultural complex consisting of three new venues that mark the city’s transition to a new era and the establishment of a new governance model. In terms of building infrastructure, this is a large-scale urban development project that will be built in the Land of Tomorrow area, the area on the city’s waterfront that is being developed from scratch after the removal of the petrol tanks. The whole area is being regenerated based on a new masterplan, realised by the internationally renowned firm Fosters & Partners. This is the largest and most ambitious urban regeneration project Cyprus has ever known, covering an area of 350,000 sqm, and it is expected that it will transform the overall image and daily life of the city. That is why we have chosen this site to build the new cultural complex that we aspire to transform the city’s cultural ecosystem and turn Larnaka into a contemporary cultural centre with an international orientation at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East. The internationally renowned architectural firm Fosters & Partners has undertaken the design of the complex, which is expected to become a new landmark. The complex is made up of the following venues:

The Arts Centre

We are creating the first Arts Centre in Cyprus, like contemporary arts centres we find all over Europe, with multiple rooms designed to host different art forms (music, theatre, visual arts). The building includes two performing rooms, two large exhibition rooms and a few smaller rehearsal rooms / working spaces. The aim of the Arts Centre is to strengthen the local scene by providing spaces for artists to create and present their work. The Arts Centre is designed to become the central meeting point for the independent artists of the city.



The Design Centre

The building includes co-working spaces as well as labs with the necessary equipment to accommodate traditional workshops (woodworking, ceramics, etc.), as well as contemporary design workshops. The Design Centre focuses on three main areas: **Circular and Bio Design, Social Design and Industrial / Product Design**. The aim of the centre is to foster design thinking, connect traditional techniques and products with contemporary design and act as a catalyst for the development of city's creative economy. It will act as an incubator for the development of new applications and products, connecting creative professionals to the business world. To formulate the governance model and action plan, we are already in contact with Matera 2018 and the Open Design School, as well as Kortjik as a UNESCO City of Design to obtain know-how and learn about good management practices.

The Museum of People

The Museum of People introduce a completely new concept for the Museum as we traditionally know it. This is a museum based on the stories of the people and communities of the city, both past and present. Thus, the Museum of People is the place where the different communities of our city meet, exchange and co-create. A new Common Ground for all the communities of Larnaka. In terms of management, the Museum of People is an evolution of the organization "Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides" and is managed by the organisation's Board of Directors. The Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides has already developed partnerships with important counterpart museums or initiatives, such as the L'ETNO Valencian Museum of Ethnology in Valencia, Spain, which received the 'European Museum of the Year' award in 2022, and the Belfast Stories project, a new, large-scale initiative by Belfast City Council, which aims to reinterpret the history and tourism strategy of Belfast through the stories of the city's people. Through these partnerships and the sharing of good practices, the Museum of People has already started to build its business plan.

Finally, there is a fourth infrastructure project, that is not situated in the same plot, but which is equally central for the city's new cultural strategy. This is...

The Artist in Residency (AiR) Space

This venue is in the city centre, at Zouhouri Square, at the same venue with the Larnaka 2030 offices. This space was a guesthouse in the past and has been designed to be a hostel, with 6 ensuite rooms, as well as a shared kitchen and a common dining area. At the present stage, it houses the Larnaka 2030 offices, while two of the rooms are already used as artists' residency spaces. In the next few years, it is planned to relocate the offices of Larnaka 2030 and then the space will be fully operating as an artists' residency space. Larnaka 2030 manages the space, adopting a participatory management model. Thus, the space is shared with different local cultural institutions, giving them the opportunity to develop partnerships with artists and professionals from abroad. By now, during the last 2 years, 16 artists and culture professionals have had a residency here invited by local institutions such as Larnaka 2030, Larnaca Biennale, Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides, The O Gallery and others.

The New Governance Model

An important element of the city's new cultural strategy is the new governance model it introduces. It is a model that involves the creation of independent, flexible governance bodies (municipal enterprises), established by the municipality and funded through a shared scheme of municipal funding, private funding and own income generated mainly through competitive EU and national funds. The Larnaka 2030 organisation is such a case, acting as a pilot for the transition to the new governance model. The organisation acts as an 'umbrella' under which both independent artists and cultural institutions are gathered. The activities realized are decided through a participatory / members-based design processes with local artists and institutions. Then, Larnaka 2030 undertakes the responsibility of securing the funding, the venues, technical equipment for the realisation of the projects. There is a Creative Producers Department operating in the heart of the organisation, which aims to secure funding from European funds and national grants, that are then distributed to all members, i.e. smaller organisations and independent artists. This addresses the problem of the lack of administrative capacity that small organisations and independent artists have in trying to apply for funding from competitive programmes. In short, the central organisation is a network of local artists and cultural institutions and a channel for connecting the local cultural sector with the economic and business sectors. To consolidate this new management model, we are developing partnerships with bodies from other EU countries that operate in a similar way and mainly with Cluj Cultural Centre in Romania, that has been operating based on a similar model during the last decade.

The new complex together with the new governance model are the way to ensure that the energy, knowledge and projects generated by the ECoC 2030, if Larnaka is awarded the title, will continue after 2030. However, we are planning to develop both these built and soft infrastructures, even if Larnaka is not awarded the ECoC 2030 title, because they respond to real and urgent needs of the city and because we firmly believe that these changes will indeed transform our city.

Q1.3. How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?

operates as a pilot for the implementation of this new governance framework. The strategy's 6 Main Lines are reflected in Larnaka 2030's logo and the proposed cultural and artistic programme of Larnaka 2030 bears connections to all strategy's main lines, through specific projects.

Q1.4. If your city were to be awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you believe would be the long-term cultural, social, and economic impact on the city (including urban development)?

The ECoC 2030 project is central to the city's new cultural strategy; it is the catalyst for the city's cultural transformation. The new governance model adopted in the strategy is the one that Larnaka 2030 has initiated and the organisation of Larnaka 2030 itself

Our vision for Larnaka as a European Capital of Culture 2030 is directly aligned with the official key strategy of Larnaka 2030: **a city that is sustainable, family-oriented, human-centered, intercultural, creative, and a place that nurtures curiosity and talent.** Achieving the ECoC title will set the stage for a transformative, long-term cultural, social, and economic impact that extends far beyond 2030.

Culturally, we aim to restore and celebrate Larnaka's rich historical legacy as one of the world's oldest cities, transforming key urban spaces into dynamic centres for creative expression, sustainability, and innovation. **Artists** are at the heart of this transformation. Through the **Co-Creating Larnaka 2030** initiative, we have already held nearly 40 collaborative sessions with local artists and cultural operators, laying a strong foundation for artist-led community engagement and decision-making. Through the ECoC project, we expect that the cultural ecosystem of Larnaka will transform completely; it will shift Larnaka from a city historically reliant on bigger urban centres, into a mother city (new metropolis) in its own right; **independent, thriving, and nurturing its own creativity and innovation.** **In alignment with the New European Bauhaus principles**, Common Ground emphasizes beauty, sustainability, and inclusivity. Our project aims to cultivate new caring behaviours that we expect to change the everyday life of the city both with respect to inclusion and to environmental sustainability.

Academia will play a crucial role in this cultural evolution. Through partnerships with local schools, universities, and research institutions, we will foster creative education and provide learning opportunities in sustainable practices. Artist-in-residence programs, student mentorships, and university-led public workshops will help nurture the next generation of cultural leaders and innovators in Larnaka.

The new Design Centre will connect artists, designers, and the public, creating a space where traditional craftsmanship meets sustainable, modern design practices. Equipped with co-working spaces and labs for woodworking, ceramics, and eco-conscious arts, the Design Centre will foster innovation and environmental stewardship in the creative economy.

With Larnaka's unique position bridging Europe and the Middle East, our vision for ECoC 2030 also includes enhancing intercultural exchanges that enrich our local arts scene and position Larnaka as a hub for sustainable, bio-based cultural initiatives. Programs like **Salt of Life**, focused on our salt lakes, will develop and exhibit works that celebrate our landscape, further embedding environmental consciousness in Larnaka's cultural identity. By leveraging this **heritage**, we will strengthen our cultural ties internationally, further solidifying Larnaka's place on the global map as a **dynamic cultural hub**.

Socially, the long-term impact will be centered on **inclusivity**, as we aim to create a city where all communities, families, minorities, refugees, and young people, actively shape its cultural and social future. Ongoing projects, such as the **Museum of People** and **Mahallart** in the neighbourhoods, have already started to unite diverse voices. With the ECoC title, we will strengthen these efforts by offering more opportunities for citizens to participate in **governance, co-creation, and artistic expression**. Also, we expect the ECoC project to have a strong and long-lasting impact in bringing Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots together, thus creating a Common Ground for conflict resolution. **Economically, the ECoC title will unlock new pathways for sustainable growth, particularly within the creative and cultural industries.** Through the **new governance model** we initiate, we expect a permanent transformation in the way that the cultural sector operates.



Also, through various projects of the ECoC programme we are cultivating a Common Ground between cultural operators and entrepreneurs, as well as between cultural operators and research institutions such as the CMMI. We expect that these practices of collaboration will continue after the ECoC year, having a long lasting impact.

In terms of urban development impact, a significant development will be the **multi-use arts complex**, with two theatre venues, two large exhibition halls, and a central arts hub. This space is envisioned as a key venue for performances, exhibitions, and collaborative projects that will attract both local and international visitors, positioning Larnaka as a major cultural destination bridging Europe and the Middle East. **The Design Centre** will serve as a focal point of Larnaka's creative and sustainable economy. This centre will advance bio-design, circular economy, and social design through labs, co-working spaces, and studios that combine traditional crafts with modern eco-design practices. Connecting artists and professionals with the business sector, the Design Centre will operate as an incubator for sustainable product innovation, offering mentorship and equipping participants with essential tools for eco-friendly practices across industries. This approach, combined with structured support for local enterprises, will ensure that Larnaka's cultural and creative economy generates long-term benefits. By promoting sustainable tourism, creative entrepreneurship, and bio-based initiatives, we aim to make Larnaka a model of eco-conscious, innovation-driven business. In the long term, this integration of economic empowerment, sustainable practices, and participatory governance will position Larnaka as a cultural and economic reference point within Europe, strengthening its network with other European cities and fostering resilience across sectors.

Q1.5. Briefly describe the plans for monitoring and evaluation.

The proposed monitoring and evaluation model for Larnaka's European Capital of Culture (ECoC) bid is designed to be inclusive, data-driven, and aligned with the **Culture Next Framework (CNF)**, which leverages Polyloop, an AI-based tool for data collection and analysis. As one of the cities participating in the Culture Next network, Larnaka will collaborate with other cities using Polyloop to evaluate cultural projects.

This framework is also aligned with the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, ensuring that our evaluation process is comprehensive, sustainable, and consistent with global standards.

Our model will prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that data collection reflects the diversity of Larnaka's communities. Following the participatory model, the monitoring & evaluation processes will be examined and validated by working groups consisting of community member and external experts. Through the Polyloop platform and our collaborative efforts with both local and international academic and industrial partners, we will ensure a robust and continuous evaluation process. Also, once a year we are holding the **Co-Creators' Assembly**. This meeting will operate also a major tool for monitoring and evaluation, gathering input from all those engaged in the project.



Site – specific performance in Mantomahallart Festival, October 2024



Members of the Architecture and Design WG working in the office

Gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic factors will be analysed to assess how cultural initiatives impact various demographic groups. **Polyloop's digital tools** will be instrumental in gathering real-time data from surveys, event participation, stakeholder working groups, and neighbourhood panels, allowing for continuous adaptation based on feedback from citizens reinforcing continuously the participatory approach, and the governance framework adaptation. The evaluation will follow six core hypotheses adapted to the needs of our city, from **the Culture Next Framework (CNF)**:

Economic:

Cultural investment improves economic growth through job creation, tourism, and the expansion of the cultural and creative industries.

Infrastructure:

Building physical cultural spaces, such as the multi-use space (theatre venues, exhibition areas, art centre) and the design centre, delivers better cultural experiences and sustainable development.

Governance:

Effective cultural management builds connections and strengthens partnerships across sectors.

Images:

Cultural activities enhance the city's international image, positioning Larnaka as a vibrant hub between Europe and the Middle East.

Vibrancy:

Increasing cultural activities makes the city more attractive to residents and visitors, enhancing social and economic vitality.

Social:

Participating in culture promotes collective well-being and inclusivity, fostering a cohesive society.

These hypotheses will be assessed through Polyloop, allowing us to benchmark Larnaka's progress against the achievements of other European Capital of Culture (ECoC) cities. The table in the next page outlines specific goals, objectives, and key indicators, enabling us to translate planned activities and initiatives into measurable impact.



Peace Steps, performance in the public space by local high schools, inspired Larnaka 2030's production Princess Zehra, April 2024



Goal	Objective	Indicators	Possible sources of data collection	SDG Alignment
Sustainable	Promote green initiatives and circular economy practices in cultural spaces and urban developments, fostering environmental consciousness across all projects	Number of circular economy projects, reduction of waste, energy savings, use of sustainable materials and promotion of local produce	Environmental impact reports, waste management data, project documentation on sustainability practices	SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)
Family friendly	Create opportunities that enhance family well-being, promote women's empowerment, and encourage gender equality	Number of family-inclusive programs, participation of women in more initiatives, feedback from family-focused initiatives	Event participation records, family and gender-focused surveys, interviews with participants	SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)
Human	Foster inclusivity and strengthen participatory governance, ensuring that marginalized and underrepresented groups actively contribute to shaping Larnaka's future	Number of inclusive governance events, participation of marginalized groups in cultural decision-making, inclusivity perception surveys	Governance records, perception surveys on inclusion, demographic data	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)
Intercultural	Foster intercultural collaboration, ensuring equal representation and participation of refugees, minorities, and third-country nationals in cultural projects Restore memory - Create a "gate" to the Middle East	Number of intercultural collaborations, participation of migrants, third-country nationals, LGBTQ+, NEETs, and minorities in cultural events, community feedback on intercultural projects	Project reports, perception surveys, focus groups with underrepresented communities	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)
Creative	Develop innovative cultural spaces such as the arts centre and design centre, promoting design thinking, sustainable practices, and artistic expression Strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration	Number of design thinking workshops, creative projects developed, feedback from participants in multi-use spaces	Workshop attendance records, new projects initiated, feedback from artists and participants	SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)
Curious & Talented	Develop artistic talent through capacity-building, educational programs, networking and dedicated spaces	Number of educational, capacity-building and networking programs, participation of young creatives, new creative outputs	Training program records, project evaluations, participant feedback	SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT

Q2.1. What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?

The Vision

Our vision emerges in the encounter of two symbolic and real Grounds, **Larnaka and Europe**, and of a Common challenge: the challenge of «Togetherness» as the necessary precondition for sustainability and beauty. Larnaka as both a symbolic and real ground is the most southeastern city of EU, one of the older cities of the world, where for more than 4000 years, people of diverse backgrounds manage to form Commons and the place of probably the first community in Europe, Choroikoitia. Europe on the other hand is the ground that gave birth to democracy and to cultural democracy in the post-war era. With these grounds as raw materials, our programme aspires to create a lab that redefines Togetherness and therefore, the content and meaning of Community, on the basis of **anthropia and cultural democracy**.

The Greek word *anthropia* can hardly be translated accurately in other languages. It signifies our ultimate Common Ground: the human condition, the quality of being human in its own right, deprived of other situational definitions such as nationality, gender, religion, age and so on. It contains the concepts of empathy, care and humanity, not as theoretical frameworks, but as a daily praxis within civil life, meaning as citizenship. The artistic vision seeks to introduce a new approach in the Cypriot ecosystem regarding the role of arts and culture. To address arts and culture not as merely cultural events, but as an important pillar to sustainable development. Thus, the artistic vision is to create an artistic programme that connects arts and culture to all aspects of daily life: to the environment, to the economy and to society.

The Strategy

Yet what does Community mean in practice? What does «Common Ground» practically entail? We have come to realize that it is a complex endeavor. First, it requires **shaping new daily habits and practices**. To achieve that, we need to develop **new networks of people and a set of values that reestablish the sense of belonging on the basis of anthropia**. It also requires having the courage to revisit our past and its more obscure aspects and **re-negotiate our cultural heritage**. It further involves the establishment of **physical and digital spaces** that we create and inhabit together. Finally, it entails **creating common celebrations** – fixed and recurring occasions when we come together and celebrate our community: what unites us, what we have achieved so far and what we want to achieve together in the future. Thus, Common Ground involves a **holistic plan** that encompasses all the above.

And that is our strategy: a comprehensive proposal for organic development, just like any living organism, such as a tree or a human being. We have, therefore, chosen to describe our strategy in the form of a tree and particularly, in the form of a palm tree. There are many reasons for choosing the **palm tree**. First, it is a tree that Larnaka identifies strongly with. The palm tree features in the city's logo. The main promenade of the city is the «Finikoudes» (Palm Tree) avenue; the memories and the everyday life of the city are intrinsically linked with «Finikoudes». Second, the palm tree is common throughout the Levante, an element and symbol all people of the region relate to, regardless of religion, ethnicity and age. It is a diachronic and cross-cultural symbol of abundance, resilience and rebirth. It is also a symbol of endurance, as it grows and blossoms despite the strong heat and the lack of water. Finally, it has a privileged relation to Europe. As its Greek name (phoenix) suggests, the palm tree originates from the land of the Phoenicians, and so does Europe in Greek mythology, who was the daughter of King Phoenix of Phoenicia.

Just as a tree needs a root system to grow, the **Common Ground** grows on an intertwined set of values. The trunk is the body that supports the entire tree, allowing it to grow branches, leaves and fruit. It is the stream through which the root system supplies the entire living organism with the necessary components to stay alive and grow. Similarly, the backbone of our project is the bodies /institutions that support the whole project. They are the channels through which our values are transformed into concrete policies and practices that govern the entire operation of the Common

Ground. Subsequently, the branches form three clusters that correspond to our endeavor's three **Central Themes: We, Larnaka, Europe**. Each branch corresponds to a sub-theme / Programme, while the leaves are the projects that make up each Programme. Finally, the fruits are the harvest. It is the moment when the results of the long development process become food for the whole community. That is why traditionally the time of harvest is the time of public feasts. Likewise, in our programme the moment of gathering the fruits of each Common Ground topic is a reason to come together and celebrate. Thus, we create new rituals, a new civic celebrations calendar that reestablishes the sense of belonging based on the **Common Ground values** in contrast with our normal civic celebrations, that are based on religious, as well as on national celebrations. This **New Civic Calendar** becomes a canvas for developing the artistic programme's narrative during the title year and its milestones.

Finally, we want the symbol of the palm tree to serve as a visual communication tool, enabling everyone to easily understand our programme, as well as the fact that it is a holistic plan for sustainable development driven by arts and culture and not merely a series of artistic and cultural events. Thus, the palm tree serves as a symbol on which we can develop playful, interactive material in order to engage with people of all ages, cultures and geographical locations.

More specifically, our strategy unfolds through the following chapters:

The Branches

Themes

We, Larnaka, Europe are the Common Ground. Our programme is structured around these three Central Themes, corresponding to 3 crowns of the palm tree. Each Theme consists of four Programmes / Branches and each Programme includes a series of projects / Leaves (see Q2.2, 20-31).

The Fruits

New Civic Calendar

Each project and activity, no matter how big or small, is a leaf on a branch of our palm tree, which will reach its full development in 2030; it will provide the fruits that will become the big celebrations of the title year. The 2030 programme unfolds as a narrative through a New Civic Calendar in 6 Chapters / Milestones (see Q2.2. 32-33).

The Trunk

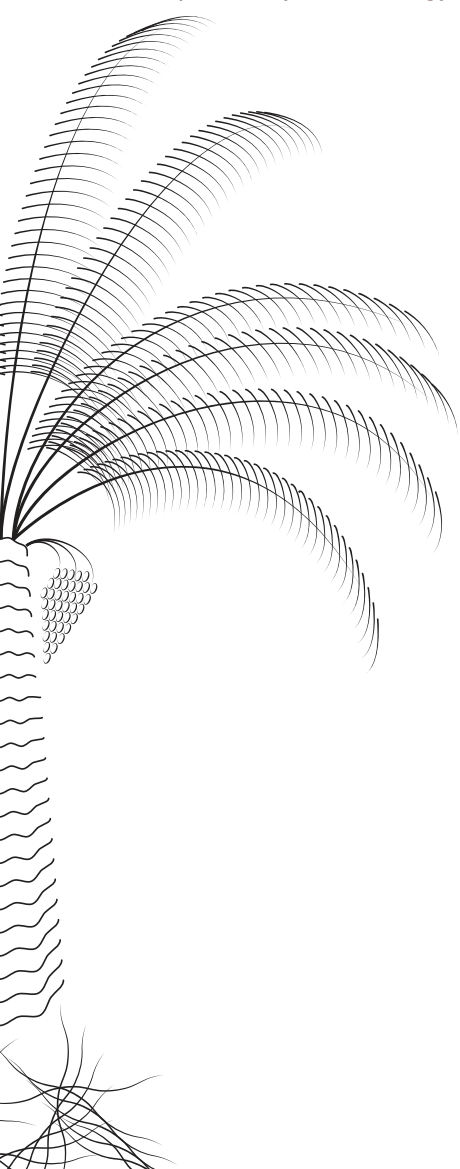
Our Body /ies

The practical application of our values is shaped through the operation of four organisations: **Larnaka 2030, the Museum of People, the Design Centre and the Arts Centre.**

Our Roots

VALUES

The entire programme of "Common Ground" is governed by three core values: **Care, Democracy and Interdependence.**



Care as Rationale and as Praxis

Rationale: Togetherness begins with caring about each other. It requires that we adopt a feminine perspective that celebrates vulnerability over strength. So far, our cultures have been built on the notion of strength. Our language, both as a way of thinking and as expression, is full of expressions that praise strength. For instance, in management we talk about “Strengths” and “Weaknesses” referring to the latter as problems we need to solve, rather than as qualities that make us better.

Common Ground is based on the transition from the culture of strength to the culture of vulnerability. It gives a prominent role to the vulnerable and hitherto invisible: to women, children and families, people with disabilities, the LGBTI community, refugees and migrants – all “poor relatives” – and celebrates vulnerability as the core requirement to build the new Metropolis, the City as a Mother that cares equally for all its people.

Praxis: Care is expressed through the systematization of practices in a **Care Policy**, which regulates the entire operation of Larnaka 2030 and includes: The **Equality and Inclusion Policy**, the **Fair Practices and Fair Remuneration Policy**, the **Women and Family Support Policy**, the **Accessibility Policy** and the **Green Policy**. It is also expressed through the **Women's Council**, a new Advisory Body we create and has a central role in the whole endeavor. It is made up of three intertwined levels: the international Women's Council, with the participation of women from the international cultural scene, the local Women's Council, with the participation of women from different ethnic communities that live in Larnaka and the regional Women's Council, formed by women coming from different towns and villages of the Larnaka Region.

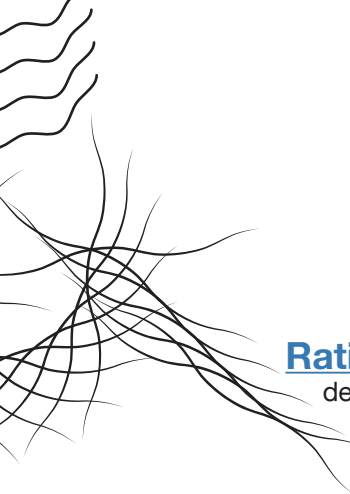
Growing the Ground: In the context of CARE Festival 2024, in collaboration with 16 local dance schools, we have produced and presented the promenade performance *Let's Start a Conversation*, inviting people to get to know each other and start a conversation. Featuring almost 200 young dancers in the public space, the performance has been a strong statement on the role of women in decision making, as well as on reclaiming public space. Finally, the performance has been created on building international connections and co-action, as it was based on **Brugge 2030's** card game *Let's Start a Conversation*. In cooperation with NGOs of people with disabilities, we are reclaiming equal access to public spaces through a wheelchair march on the city's main street. In March 2024 we have presented the first universally accessible theatre performance in Cyprus *Bodies We Fall For*, that deals with the questions of love and sexuality with respect to people with disabilities.

Democracy as Rationale and as Praxis

Rationale: Democracy is the supreme value of modern Western societies. It is a value gained through struggles and blood, a value we take pride in and one inextricably linked to participation in decision-making and therefore to citizenship. But what happens when almost half of the population abstains from elections? What happens in a city where a large proportion of its inhabitants are immigrants and refugees without political rights? What happens when 50% of the city population are internally displaced people, like in the case of Larnaka, who vote for the Famagusta? And what happens in the case of communities in conflict, where national sovereignty is in dispute? How is citizenship perceived and practiced in the absence of civic rights? How can we build a sense of belonging in such situations? Our response to these questions is **through art and culture as daily civil practices. Because there are no borders in Art.** The right to Artistic Citizenship is not subject to institutional restrictions. Thus, **Common Ground is built on universal access to Artistic Citizenship.**

Praxis: Common Ground is built on participatory design and co-creation processes. Our proposal has resulted from the largest participatory design and co-creation process that the city has ever known, with **around 1300 people being actively involved as co-creators so far**, while this community is continuously growing in every new meeting and event we are doing. (see Chapter 4, p. 40 - 43). We are essentially establishing a new culture in the city and region of Larnaka, which we aspire to be consolidated as a new modus operandi.

Growing the Ground: On May 12, our motto **Common Ground** was launched through an event co-created between 21 young local architects and designers, 77 shops of the city centre and 10 dancers. Each shop's window showcased a city that has been a ECoC since 1985, inviting people to explore the ECoC institution and get to know the cities. At the same time, people were invited to a public vote in the shop windows on what they like and what they want to change in Larnaka.



Interdependence as Rationale and as Praxis

Rationale: The value of Interdependence is fundamental in Western societies, being closely linked to democracy and freedom. Yet is also closely connected to privacy, which may lead to individualism. Faced with the burning issues of our time such as climate change, migration and social cohesion, we are in need of tools that enable us to address our existence as part of larger entities. **We need a shift from a mindset of individualism to a mindset of interdependence.**

Praxis: Networking is the tool through which the value of Interdependence becomes a modus operandi and a mindset. The **Common Ground** is a wide web of networks that we are building at local, regional, national and international level. The practice of networking is at the core of the whole process, not only by participating in European and international networks but also by creating new ones. Particularly **at the international level**, the creation of a collaborative network among artists and cultural institutions from various Middle Eastern countries runs horizontally through our entire programme. We are also introducing two new networks: **the Refugee Cities Network** (see Q.2.2. p.23) and **the European Youth Network** (see Q2.2. p.23).

 **Growing the Ground examples:** From the first months of our operation, we became a member of **Culture Next** network. Through this network we communicate and collaborate with other ECoC and candidate cities. Through the network meetings we have visited and got to know Elefsina, Leeuwarden, Oulu, Cluj Napoca and Bielsko Biala. Also, as part of **Culture Next's mobility programme**, we hosted the Gijon and the Matera 2019 team for a week, and we held our own residency in Trencin. Furthermore, three teenage girls from our city participated in the *G29 Summer Campus* in Bielsko Biala, along with members of the international **G29** team from Poland, France and Portugal. With a group of local artists from the performing arts we participated in the Plenary Meeting of the **International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts IETM**, held in Sofia in June 2024.

On a national level, cooperation between the two communities on the island, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, is a core theme running through our programme. At the same time, we are putting together the **Larnaka - Famagusta Network**, which focuses on the cooperation between artists and residents from these two cities and regions. The two regions are closely connected, as in 1974 most of the Greek Cypriots from the Famagusta area settled in Larnaka city and district, whereas most of the Turkish Cypriots from Larnaka settled in Famagusta region. Also, on a national level, cultural cooperation between the two communities is almost exclusively restricted in Nicosia as the predominantly divided city. In contrast, cultural and other kind of cooperation between the two communities in other cities is much more sporadic. With the **Larnaka - Famagusta Network** we want to change this situation and create a new channel of communication and cooperation, parallel to that of Nicosia, focusing on the island's coastal front and regional development.

 **Growing the Ground:** A number of projects have already sprung from the **Larnaka - Famagusta Network**, ranging from a concert in Famagusta old city to working with activists on to raise the issue of unsustainable development in Iskele town and to bringing grandmothers with their grandchildren from the two communities to revive, through common traditions such as bread making, the memory of living together.

On a regional level, we have formed **Larnaka 2030 Regional Network**, which brings together all the municipalities of Larnaka district. Within this framework, the City of Larnaka assumes a coordinating role for the development of cultural strategies that align with Agenda 21 for Culture and Agenda 2030 for Larnaka Region on the whole.

 **Growing the Ground:** Through Larnaka 2030 Regional Network, the *Generation EU* exhibition of the **Museum of People**, which presented testimonies on how Cyprus' EU accession has affected people's lives and careers is travelling to nine schools in the region, spreading the message of the European impact on daily life to young people in Larnaka region.

Q2.2. Give a general overview of the structure of your cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year.

The structure of our programme is developed in two Axis. **Axis A** refers to the three **Central Themes of the Common Ground** (the Palm tree Crowns). Each Central Theme is further developed in four Programmes (the Palm Tree Branches), whereas each Programme unfolds through a series of Projects (the Leaves). **Axis B** refers to the **New Civic Calendar** (the Fruits of Palm tree). The Calendar arranges the Themes, Programmes and Projects of Axis A into a unifying narrative in the title year, consisting of 6 Milestones / Chapters. Thus, the Calendar defines **when and in which order** the Projects and Programmes of each Theme are presented throughout 2030.

Axis A

Central Themes

(Palm tree Crowns)

The creation of a new **Common Ground** requires a transition from the culture of power to a culture of care. This transition begins at a personal level, with each and every one of us all. **We** are the principal agents of change. Following, a **Culture of Care** is further shaped through the way we share responsibility for our immediate environment, our **City**, as a natural and built environment. Finally, Common Ground is achieved through common values, ethics and convictions that create a sense of belonging in larger civic groups, such as Europe. These three Themes, **the people, the place and the politics** – form the three Grounds, **We, Larnaka, Europe**, through which we are building our new Common Ground, sending a direct and clear message:

We are the Common Ground; Larnaka is our Common Ground; Europe is our Common Ground.



Dance performance in the public space, Common Ground launch event, 12th May 2024

A large blue arc curves across the top of the page. Below it, a series of black lines of varying lengths radiate from the left, creating a fan-like or palm frond-like shape.

We

(Central Theme 1) Palm tree Crown 1

In a **Democracy of Care**, vulnerability is not a deficiency that needs to be amended. It is an asset. An asset of fundamental significance for the development of a City that Cares for its people as a Mother cares for her children. Therefore, we begin by placing vulnerable groups in the centre of civic life, at the heart of our new **Common Ground**. We create Grounds for these disempowered voices to become loud and clear. «We» Theme focuses on such voices: female voices, voices of people with disabilities, LGBTQI voices, voices of immigrants and refugees, voices of children and young people. Thus, «We» Theme is further developed through the following four Programmes: «We Female», «We Less Heard Voices», «We Refugees», «We the Future».



We Female

Branch 1.1

Most cities in Europe and the world have a female name. Yet they are mostly run by men. Similarly, history, albeit etymologically female, evolves around his-story. The transition to a Democracy of Care requires that we adopt a female approach and perspective in the way we think and act. It requires that we empower women's presence in the public sphere and renegotiate our history and the contemporary challenges we face as societies through a female perspective. Finally, it requires that we re-imagine our cities as safe Grounds, built to serve the needs of women, mothers and families. The Programme **We Female** creates synergies with women, artists and non-artists alike, as well as women's collectives from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa that promote a culture of caring and renegotiate the past, present and future of our societies through a female perspective. It includes projects such as *CARE Festival*, a festival made collectively by women that reimagines the city as the Common Ground for children and the whole family. Moreover it includes projects such as *Herstories*, which renegotiate significant aspects of our history and modern life such as conflict, nationalism, racism, patriarchy and violence through the works of important women from Europe, the Balkans and the Arab world in theatre, performance and cinema.

Co-Creators' Network: Women WG, Art for Children & Young People WG, Bi-Communal WG

Indicative Partners: Larnaca Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth (CY), Youth Maker Space (CY)

Growing the Ground:  *CARE Festival 2024* focused on refugee children, opening a dialogue with Ukrainian, Palestinian and Lebanese communities of Larnaca with the involvement of international partners such as the Palestinian artist Ahmad Jubeh and *Musicians Without Borders* who live and work in war zones and refugee camps.  In the context of *Herstories*, in February 2024 the play *Cry* was staged, directed by Lena Kitsopoulou, a provocative and influential female artist in Greek theatre, who is rarely invited to present her work in Cyprus due to her provocative attitude. The performance triggered a public dialogue on social media about the need for a theatre that makes us feel uncomfortable rather than a theatre that reassures us.

We Less Heard Voices

Branch 1.2

Just as a mother cares for all her children, taking into account their special needs, a city that is mother must provide for all its inhabitants and citizens on the basis of their needs. However, our cities and dominant culture usually tend merely to the average needs. They cater to an imaginary citizen that could be called the «golden average person». The programme **We Less Heard Voices** amplifies the voices of people with disabilities and accessibility restrictions, as well as people from the LGBTQI community, thus defining the culture of inclusion as our new Common Ground. It includes the project *Ability Campus*, an international summer capacity building programme that offers mentoring to artists with or without disabilities, on how to design universally accessible art works. It also builds capacities for disabled artists to enable them to join the art world as professionals. Through the *Ability Campus* and related activities, the project builds a network of cooperation with institutions from different European countries who work on accessibility in the arts and produces works that are universally accessible, which are then presented as part of the ECoC overall programme.

Co-Creators Network: Accessibility WG, LGBTQ+ WG, Bi-Communal WG

Indicative Partners: Koulou Maka Group (CY), liminal (GR), European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EU), Neophytos (CY), Cyprus Associations of Persons with Disabilities (CY), Hellenic Institute of Sign Language (GR), Dobro Kadry (PL), The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wroclaw (PL), Accept (CY)

Growing the Ground:  in February 2024 we presented the first universally accessible performance in Cyprus *Bodies We Fall For*.  In November 2024 we presented the *European Disability Festival for Art and Culture Dis*, created by groups from Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and Denmark, and organised in collaboration with the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) and the Cypriot organisation of people with disabilities «Neophytos».  We have designed and will launch the project *Count Me In*, which offers guidance and training to cultural organisations enabling them to design accessible projects for people with hearing disabilities. For this project, which is co-funded by Creative Europe, we teamed up with organisations from Poland and Greece.

 In June 2024 we organised an evening on the history of the LGBTQ+ movement in Cyprus in collaboration with Accept Cyprus, in the presence of Alecos Modinos, the man who pursued a case at the International Court of Justice and managed to get the ban on homosexuality repealed in Cyprus. The event was later moved to Lube Bar, the only LGBTQ bar in Cyprus.

We Refugees

Branch 1.3

Larnaka and Turkish Cypriots in Famagusta have been living in a perpetual state of temporariness, waiting to return to their homes. We are aware that we are not the only such case in the wider Southeastern Mediterranean region. In Palestine and Lebanon people have been living in refugee settlements, in a similar state of 'perpetual temporariness' for over seventy years. In Greece, generations have grown up in refugee settlements made to accommodate the Greek people of Asia Minor that were displaced in 1922, whereas after the war in former Yugoslavia modern Balkan nation states were formed following population displacements. What is more, today Larnaka serves as Europe's humanitarian corridor for humanitarian aid to Palestine and as a refuge city for people from Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Ukraine. The **We Refugees** Programme focuses on the city as a refuge and on the realities of refugee life. We are creating the *Refugee Cities Network*, with the participation of institutions and artists from Larnaka, Famagusta, Elefsina, Jenin, Novi Sad in which artists who live in refugee settlements and artists from all over Europe create community-based artworks, such as audio walks, site specific installations and site specific promenade performances in cooperation with the people that live in refugee neighbourhood. With the project *New Chartographies* we focus on the relationship between Larnaka and Famagusta. We create opportunities for displaced Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to reunite and record their testimonies about their past Common life, about the experience of displacement, as well as about the irregular situation we experience as cities that live one within the other at the level of memory and sense of belonging. Based on these testimonies, encounters and the particularities of the urban landscape, both in the refugee settlements

and in the ghost town of Famagusta, we are creating a new map that unites the two cities: a map of stories, memories and desires; a map of coexistence. With the *Book of Refugee* project we perceive the city as a refuge in collaboration with contemporary refugee communities from Ukraine, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and elsewhere.

Growing the Ground:  In June 2023 a group of artists from Larnaka visited independent Turkish Cypriot artists in Famagusta to get to know their working places and ecosystem. The visit resulted in a joint concert that took place in June 2024 at the independent cultural space Passaji in Famagusta.

 In November 2024 we brought together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women who used to live together in Agios Theodoros village to bake together Agios Theodoros bread, just like they used to do decades ago. During the event, we recorded testimonies of how they lived together, about the war, displacement and today's reality.

Co-Creators Network: Bi-Communal WG, Women WG, Youth WG, Regional WG

Partners: Museum of People (CY), New Famagusta Museum (TkCyp), Passaji (TkCyp) busart (GR), Freedom Theatre (PL), Association of Asia Minor Elefsina (GR), Novi Sad 2022 (RS)

We The Future

Branch 1.4

such a generation, bringing together young people from all the communities of Larnaka who are 13-15 years old today and will be 18-20 in 2030. Through regular monthly meetings, these young people are introduced to the New European Bauhaus, evolving to be a European group of young agents of change. To this end we collaborate with similar programmes of other ECoC candidate cities such as *G29 Bielsko - Biala* and the *Molenbeek 2030 youth network*. The European network meets in a different city every summer and comes up with a series of joint actions and projects. **We the Future** also includes actions that empower young people from less privileged backgrounds, such as *Sistema Larnaka*. In 2030 we plan to host a large-scale meeting of Sistema Europe that will be attended by 200 young people from all over Europe. It also includes activities such as *Follow the Music*, a series of secret concerts featuring young artists from all music genres.

Growing the Ground:  *Sistema Larnaka Wind and Percussion Orchestra* had a significant role in the official launch of Larnaka 2030 in April 2023, as we wanted to make it clear from the beginning that the young people, inclusion and interculturalism are fundamental for Larnaka 2030 project overall.  In July 2024, three teenage girls from the Youth WG participated in the *G29 summer campus* in Bielsko Biala. Through *Follow the Music* we have already introduced 12 new bands from different communities that live in Larnaka and Famagusta.

Co-Creators Network: Co-Creators WG, Larnaka's Music Ecosystem WG, Regional WGs

Partners: Larnaka Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth (CY), Youth Makerspace (CY), Allos pos (CY), Sistema, Bielsko Biala 2029 (PL), Molenbeek 2030 (BE), Ghent 2030 (BE), Larnaka music bands, Savino Live (CY).

Larnaka

(Central Theme 2) – Palm tree Crown 2

Common Ground presupposes the Ground. The place is an integral part of the community's identity. The way in which a community shares responsibility for its place, both natural and built environment, shapes the identity of the community itself. Thus, in the second Central Theme we focus on **Larnaka as a testing Ground for addressing the major challenge of environmental sustainability, that is Common across Europe and the whole world.** Under the programmes «Land», «Water», «Our Neighbourhoods» and «Creative Larnaka», we are creating new Common Grounds that redefine our relationship with the environment, raise awareness and cultivate caring behaviours.

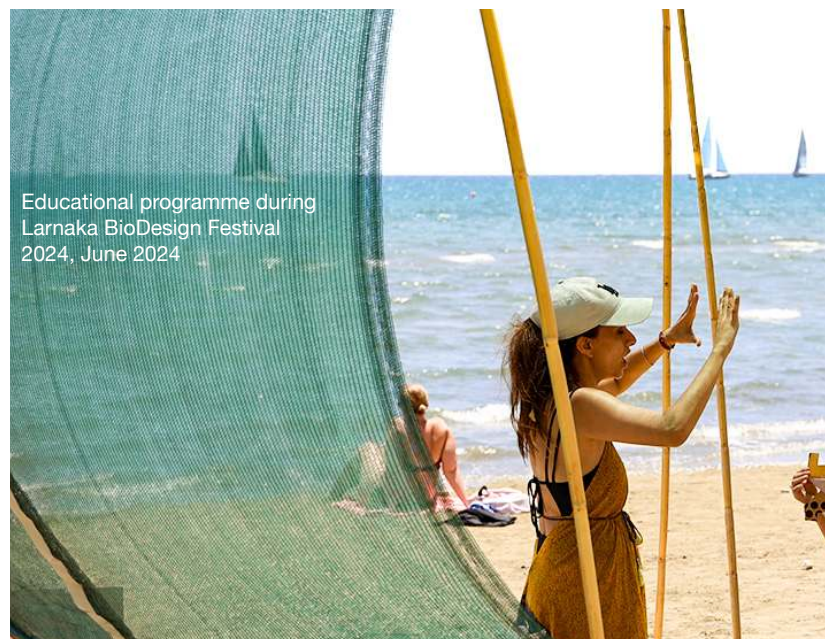
Land Branch 2.1

The **Land** programme is based on a series of projects that address our relationship with our natural environment, cultivating everyday practices and attitudes of care towards Mother Earth. In *Green Larnaka* project we are «greening» the city through the creation of community gardens in urban voids, as well as in urban amenity sites, in collaboration with American University's Department of Landscape Architecture and Budweis 2028. In collaboration with Arcadia 2028, which is Leeuwarden 2018 legacy organisation, we are adopting the *Walking Forest* and invite the city's residents not merely to imagine, but also to experience the forest in urban space. In *The Earth's Wounds* project we endeavour to restore natural landscapes in Larnaka region that were destroyed by mining. Human intervention has caused a severe landscape distortion and radical alteration of the biodiversity of the ecosystems. Areas such as Sia, Kornos, Psevdas, Troulloi, Kalavassos have associated their name with mining, but also with the poor living conditions of people attributed to the destruction of the natural landscape. We invite land artists who, in collaboration with the Cyprus Environmental Foundation, geologists and agronomists, will create healing projects for the earth's skin both on a physical level and in the consciences of the local inhabitants. Finally, with the *BeeLarnaka* project we turn to the bee society. The vitality of the bee for the global ecosystem has been defined very clearly by the UN, which recognizes the insect as one of the most important forms of life on the planet with regards to the food chain. The overconsumption of pesticides, the alteration of seasonal cycles and the temperature rise, in combination with the wildfires in Larnaka region, have caused enormous damage to the largest beekeeping community on the island. The damage has not only been limited to honey production but also to fruit production, due to the reduction of natural pollination. Following a local community's initiative, the **Bee Museum** was created in Kato Drys. Moreover, a **Queen bee Nursing and Artificial Insemination Centre** was established in the centre of the Bee Villages Valley, with the support of Rotary Club. This Centre has played a critical role in the restoration of the natural environment and the economy of the region. Today, communities from the Middle East and Europe facing similar problems turn to this Centre for advice and guidance on the restoration of biodiversity and natural chain. In cooperation with the above-mentioned organisations, and with the contribution of UNESCO National Committee and Larnaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we will invite scientists and artists to work together in the Bee Villages giving voice to the bee community.

Co-Creators Network: Architecture and Design WG, Regional Larnaka WGs, Higher Education WG

Indicative Partners: Arcadia (NL), Bee Museum (CY), Queen Bee Nursing and Artificial Insemination Centre (CY), American University of Cyprus (CY), UNESCO National Committee (CY), Budweis 2028 (CZ)

Growing the Ground: In the context of Larnaka BioDesign Festival in June 2024 the project *Coming from the Soil* was developed in collaboration with American University MA in Landscape Architecture and the well-known ceramist Vassos Demetriou. The project outcome was the garden at Zouhouri Square, consisting of flora from Larnaka district, blended in the local landscape. The garden was created through a workshop with the participation of residents of all ages.





Concert of the new band that came out of Ttavas Residency, bringing together youngGrCypriot, TkCypriot musicians with musicians from the Middle East, at Fengaros Festival, August 2024

Water

Branch 2.2

Water is perhaps the most essential element for life. Life on the planet started in water, from water organisms, and then moved to land. Re-establishing our relationship with nature inevitably passes through substantial understanding of the sea, wetlands and the necessity of the transition to blue growth. For there is no green without blue. In the **Water** Programme, Larnaka, a city defined by water, becomes the **Common Ground** to redefine our connection with the natural environment of the sea and water in general. In the *Underwater Europe* project, we are exploiting cutting-edge technology for the protection of the marine environment, that CMMI has developed, and we invite artists from all over Europe and other European Capitals of Culture to co-create an extensive European underwater marine life park that inhibits the erosion of the coastal front. Artists from all over Europe will create pieces of art that symbolize their city, which CMMI will turn into reefs through 3D printers. The reefs will then be placed in the marine area around Larnaka to boost marine life and deter coastal erosion. At the same time, all the reefs together shall form an underwater mini-Europe, an underwater park in one of the most popular diving tourism destinations, Larnaka. In collaboration with CMMI we are also creating *Blue School*, an international marine literacy project for all ages, that includes an international summer camp and a series of educational programmes for schools.

Growing the Ground: In collaboration with Roberto Cimetta Fund and Living we have brought together a group of 14 young artists and cultural managers from the Mediterranean. Through on site and online meetings over the course of a year we have issued a guide on the challenges of sustainable mobility in the Mediterranean.

In October 2023, in collaboration with *Larnaka Biennale* and the Pleasure Collective from Italy, we held a performance-meal in *Alyki*, for which food was prepared with natural fermentation methods using salt without any form of heat treatment.

In *Insulate Europe* project we focus on insularity, bringing in historical, sociological and environmental aspects and perspectives of the topic. We bring together historians, social scientists and artists from the largest Mediterranean islands (Cyprus, Malta, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Mallorca) to co-create projects that manifest the relationship of these communities with the sea, while digging into the current challenges in the struggle between touristic vs sustainable development, and the struggle between green mobility vs social justice. Finally, the *Salt of Life* project focuses on the salt lakes of Larnaka and Famagusta and invites artists to co-create works with, about and for the salt lakes' natural environment.

Co-Creators Network: Sustainability WGs, Higher Education WG, Art for Children and Young People WG

Indicative Partners: Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute - CMMI (CY), Roberto Cimetta Fund (FR), Living (IT)



Our Neighbourhoods

Branch 2.3

we focus on the neighbourhoods of the city and the region. *MahallArt* project features a series of neighbourhood festivals, community art works and interventions in public space. Through art works and cultural activities that are the outcome of co-creation with the city's diverse communities, we illuminate unseen aspects of everyday life and cultivate the ground for a city of Commons. We also shed light on a new «neighbourhood», which is not defined spatially but is constantly expanding: the «neighbourhood» of Digital Nomads. In *Walk with Me* project, people of all ages and backgrounds work together with historians, architects and urban planners to create walks based on how they experience the city. This way we develop a colourful network of local «tour guides» who reveal different aspects, experiences and «secrets» of the city. With *Playful City* project we focus on public space as a Shared Experience. Through urban games, temporary and permanent interventions in public space we address the problems of visual pollution, accessibility and public space aesthetics. On the occasion of the large-scale redevelopment of the city's waterfront (Land of Tomorrow), in *Imagine a City* project, we launch a public debate on the contemporary image of waterfronts in the cities of Cyprus – in free and occupied territories – and in the Middle East. We focus on historical and modern urban planning as a defining factor for the urban social and economic organisation and development, highlighting similarities and differences in the way European and Middle Eastern cities evolved and operate.

Co-Creators Network: Reclaiming Public Space WG, Digital Nomads WG, Entrepreneurs WG, Architecture and Design WG

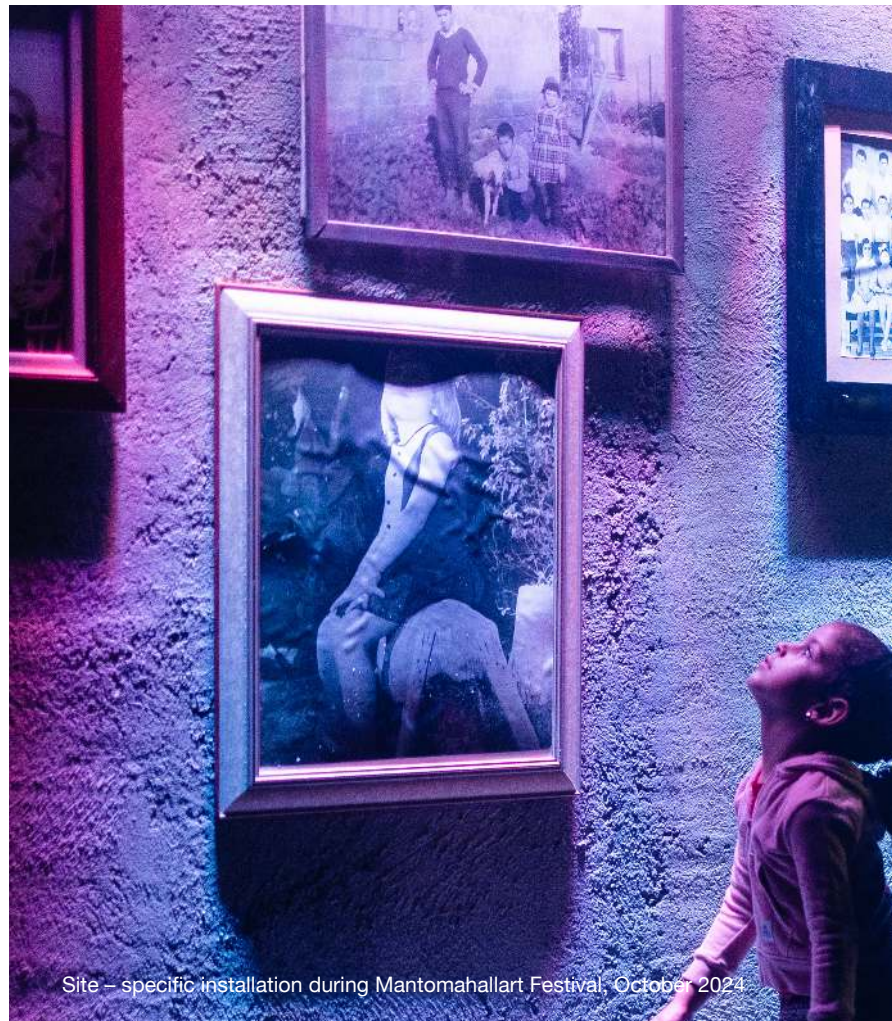
Indicative Partners: Urbees (CY), Urban Gorillas (CY), Foster & Partners (UK), Spyra (CY)

The neighbourhood is one of the primary social spaces. It is a web of social relations and habits, through which citizens' identities and behaviours are shaped. It is the basis of the city as Commons. With **Our Neighbourhoods** Programme

Growing the Ground: *MahallArt* project was launched in September 2023 in Skala Turkish Quarter (Tourkomahallas) with *Princess Zehra* site – specific promenade performance. In October 2024, the project moved on to Agios Ioannis, one of the city's most neglected neighbourhoods, coining *MantomahallArt Festival*. On the launch of our motto Common Ground in May 2024, we invited local people to express their opinion about the city through an urban polling game on shop windows in the historic centre. In collaboration with local artists, we organised a series of events (dance performances, shows and art workshops for children) on the busiest streets of the city centre, interrupting traffic and giving residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy the city centre as a fully accessible and car-free area.



Bodies We Fall For, the first universally accessible performance in Cyprus, March 2024



Site – specific installation during MantomahallArt Festival, October 2024

Creative Larnaka

Branch 2.4

opening a dialogue between agriculture, crafts and design. *Larnaka BioDesign Festival* is our new annual festival that fosters a culture of sustainable development and co-creation with nature. *Festival Flavours* project connects several small festivals in Larnaka region with Budweis 2028 and its Flavours and Roots project. In Larnaka region there are various small festivals that celebrate local production, such as Potato, Honey, Artichoke Festivals, etc. Through our collaboration with Budweis 2028 we focus on the history and origins of food. We invite writers and designers to create books for children and toys that tell stories of seed and food migration, highlighting the «nutritional» dimension of migration, both on a personal and on social level. At the same time, we are putting together a collection of ancient and traditional recipes from the different parts of the food journey inviting chefs from these places (Middle East, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia) to cook public meals at our village festivals, in collaboration with local communities. The Small Museums Network project connects all the small museums of Larnaka region into a single network, thus enhancing

Growing the Ground: In *Larnaka BioDesign Festival (LBF) 2023* we constructed the first mycelium pavilion ever built in the Mediterranean, with mushrooms grown locally by a well-known mushroom company. At *LBF 2024* we built a mobile exhibition unit made of reeds, in collaboration with local reed weaving artisans. This exhibition unit moves around the region hosting different exhibitions. *Lefkart* is an educational programme that brings to students the history and technique of Lefkara embroidery. It involves about 500 students each year and results in a large exhibition of the students' artworks.

their capacities and creating a programme of joint tours, visits, educational projects, communication and promotion of their activities. *Crafting Worlds* project, in collaboration with the Michelangelo Foundation, invites craftspeople from the greater Levant region and from the countries of origin of the different communities living in Larnaka to a common fair that forms a large intercultural village in the city. Finally, the *Crafting Community* project focuses on traditional art techniques of Larnaka which have been practiced by both communities on the island, such as Lefkara embroidery. We put together educational programs that bring these traditional techniques to younger learners, linking them to contemporary design, and inviting young apprentices to create new projects and objects that have traditional techniques as a reference. At the same time, we invite designers and artists to work in local communities with local craftsmen and ordinary residents, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, to construct large-scale works/installations based on traditional techniques which will become the new landmarks of the city and the region.

Co-Creators Network: Bi-Communal WG, Architecture and Design WG, Entrepreneurs WG, Regional Larnaka WGs, Women WG, Art for Children and Young People WG, Young Co-Creators WG

Indicative partners: Budweis 2028 (CZ), Michelangelo Foundation, UNFICYP, Women's Association of the Countryside, Larnaka Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth, Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides, Cyprus Handicraft Service, Larnaka Ceramists' Association..., Lefkara Handicraft Centre



Educational programme during Mantomahallart Festival, October 2024

Europe

(Central Theme 3)

Palm Tree Crown 3

Common Ground is created by people, place and a sense of belonging. The latter is about sharing common convictions and beliefs, and it is shaped by memory. For us, Europe creates this sense of belonging; but Europe as perceived and experienced from our standpoint, at its southeastern corner; at the crossroad with the Middle East, the Arab world and the world of Islam. In this crossroad, Europe stands first and foremost for democracy and human rights. Thus, under the title **Cultural Democracy Europe**, the first Programme of this third Theme, focuses on Europe as the birthplace of cultural democracy. Secondly, from our perspective, Europe has its roots in today's Middle East. Under the title **Europe Daughter of Phoenix** we focus on the historic as well as the contemporary complex relations between Europe and the Middle East. Also, this part of the world has been shaped by colonialism. Thus, the third Programme **Colonial Europe** deals with this quite contested aspect of our heritage. Finally, in this corner, Europe is in conflict. Cyprus is in frozen conflict for the last fifty years. In the Middle East, war and conflict has never really ceased, whereas Larnaka has been a place for refuge for a large population of Ukrainians since the beginning of the war between Ukraine and Russia. So, under the title **Europe in War**, the last Programme of this Theme focuses on current conflict situations in the borders of Europe.

Cultural Democracy Europe

Branch 3.1

This development was destined to radically and irreversibly change the cultural ecosystem in Europe, as well as the development of many European cities, differentiating Europe from the rest of the world. Through the currents of cultural democratisation initially and cultural democracy subsequently, as well as through policies of cultural decentralisation and subsequent development of important festivals and arts centres in small regional towns, through European cultural networks and institutions such as the *European Capital of Culture*, a new Common Ground, has been shaped, governed more or less in all EU countries by the same values, principles and practices. However, it is not clear to what extent even we artists and cultural professionals in Europe are aware of the historical and ideological context that has defined and defines the way we operate in our daily life. Important moments of this historic evolution, as well as the importance of this evolution in itself has not been adequately narrated and celebrated. With the *New European Mythologies* project we are creating a platform to mythologise this history. Through works such as children's books and games, videos, short stories and everyday products (posters, cards, notebooks, bags, etc.) we illuminate the protagonists of this story, their struggles and their achievements in a way that is accessible to people of all ages and social backgrounds. In collaboration with European networks such as Culture Action Europe, the European Festivals Association, A Soul for Europe, Culture Next and organisations such as Maison Jean Vilar, we are organising in 2030 a large-scale exhibition telling the story of cultural democracy in Europe. At the same time, we are establishing an annual international meeting on cultural democracy, the *Cultural Democracy Meeting*, and we actively engage in the discussion to make Cultural Democracy the 18th SGD.

Co-Creators Network: Higher Education WG, Accessibility WG, Youth WG, Women WG, Bi-Communal WG, Regional WG, Art for Children and Young People WG

Indicative Partners: Culture Action Europe, European Festivals Association, A Soul for Europe, Culture Next, IETM, On the Move, Maison Jean Vilar

The idea that arts and culture are public goods was born in post war Europe, as a response to propaganda and its effects, as experienced during the Nazi regime.

Growing the Ground: From May to October 2024, we organised an urban game in the windows of the shops of the historic centre, inviting everybody to learn about the history of the ECoC institution and all the cities that have received the ECoC title so far. As members of the Culture Next network, we have actively engaged in the debate on the future of ECoCs, as well as in the debate on making Culture and/or Cultural Democracy the 18th SDG. On the occasion of Europe Day and the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Cyprus' accession to the EU, we launched the *Generation EU* project, interviewing people who were young in 2004 and for whom the EU accession played a key role in their personal and professional development.

Europe Daughter of Phoenix

Branch 1.2

we tend to think that the origins of European culture(s) lie in ancient Greek and Roman times. However, this is only one side of the story, as many elements of ancient Greek civilisation have their roots in Phoenician civilisation. In this project we shed light on Europe's historic ties to the Phoenicians, as well as its ties Europe bears to the Middle East throughout the centuries. In collaboration with the Pierides Museum, the Archaeological Museum and the Council of Europe Phoenician Route, we are creating an exhibition and many parallel events on the Phoenician trading spirit as the foundation of a culture based on exchange, interculturalism and peace that characterises the region throughout time. In collaboration with Fengaros Festival, the biggest music festival in Cyprus, we are creating *Ttavas Residency*, a platform for collaboration between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot musicians with musicians from the Middle East. The ways in which the Arab world has shaped the habits and lifestyles of the Western world manifests itself in several small, every day and often unsuspected habits, such as the drinks we consume. Tom Standage's book *The History of the World in 6 Glasses* demonstrates that almost all the drinks we consume today in the Western World are inventions of the Arabs: beer, wine, alcohol, coffee and tea. In the *1000 + 1 drinks* project, we are creating a series of multilingual small-scale events in bars and cafes in the city and region that combine stories from the Arab Epic Poem *1000 + 1 Nights* with documentaries, short stories, small photography exhibitions and spoken word events that tell stories about contemporary life and the daily habits of people and cities in the Arab world.

Growing the Ground: In collaboration with Fengaros Festival we launched the *Ttavas Residency* in the summer of 2024, bringing together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists along with an artist from Saudi Arabia in a joint residency, through which a new music band was created and subsequently performed at the festival.

Co-Creators Network: Young Co-Creators WG, Women WG, Regional WGs, Larnaka's Music Ecosystem WG, Bi-Communal WG

Indicative Partners: Pierides Museum, Archaeological Museum of Larnaka, Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides, Phoenician Route, Fengaros Festival

Public voting in the empty shop windows, part of the Common Ground launch event, May – June 2024

Πόσο συμπεριληπτική είναι η Λάρνακα;
How inclusive is Larnaka?

προσβασιμότητα
accessibility

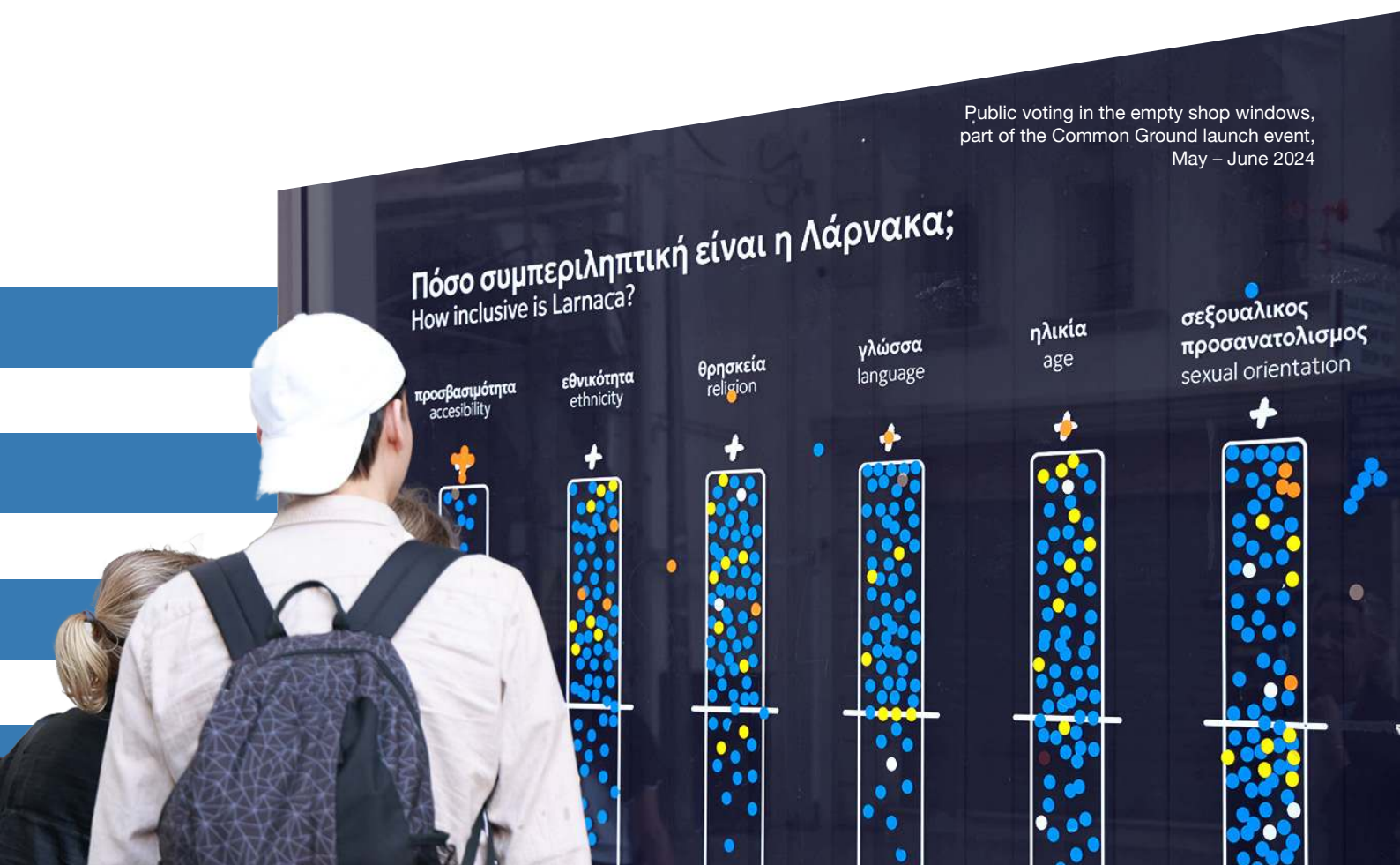
εθνικότητα
ethnicity

θρησκεία
religion

γλώσσα
language

ηλικία
age

σεξουαλικός
προσανατολισμός
sexual orientation



Colonial Europe

Branch 3.3

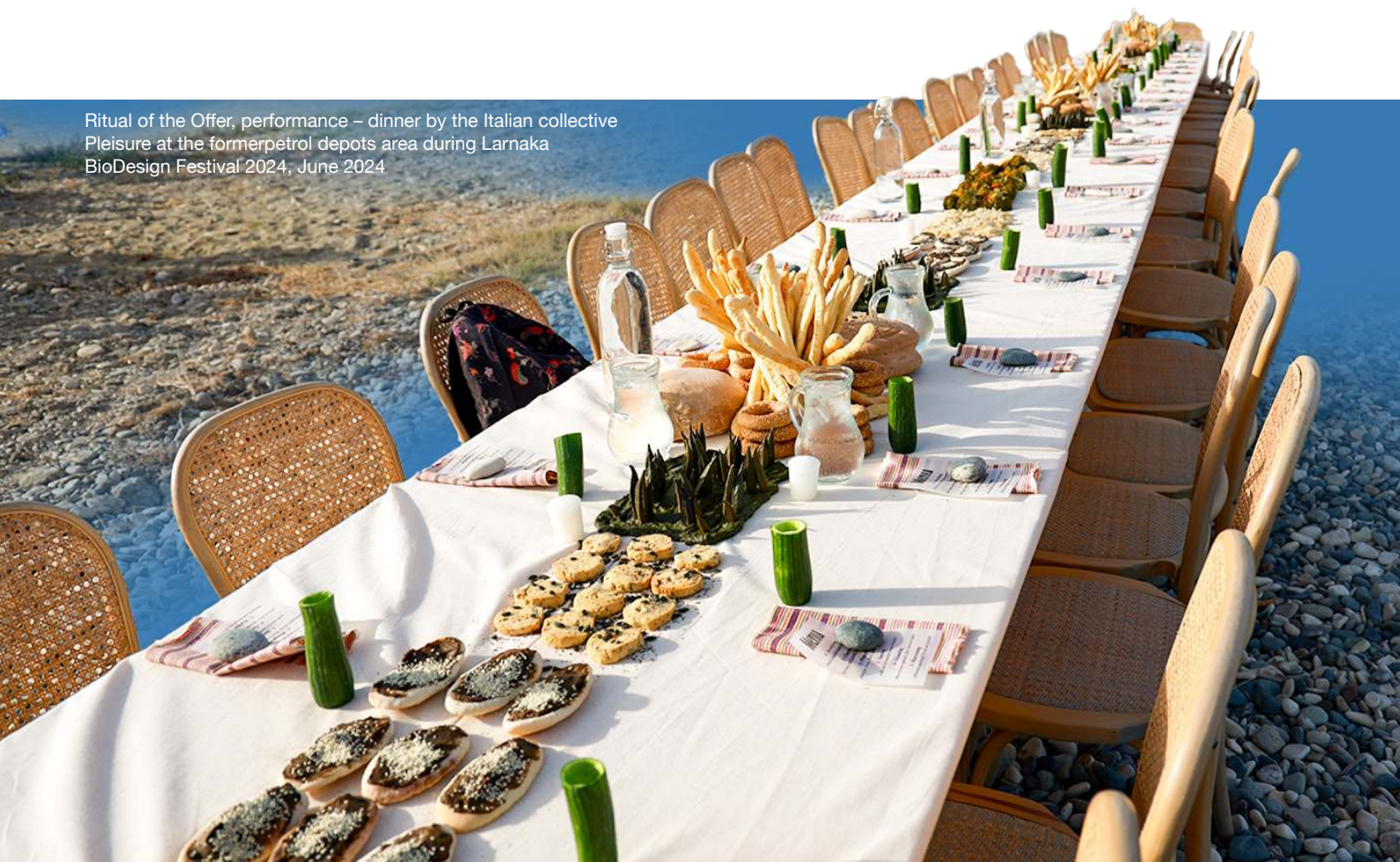
To create Common Ground means to be willing to renegotiating history and memory, especially its most controversial and dark aspects, such as that of colonialism. In Cyprus, as in the wider Levant region, modern history and the transition to nation-state building, conflict and displacement are inextricably linked to colonialism. With the project *Contested Desires Constructive Dialogues* we are building a platform for meaningful dialogue and creative collaboration between institutions dealing with memory and heritage such as museums and archives and contemporary visual artists from both countries that used to be colonels and colonies. Through two consecutive residencies in a country with a history of colonialism and a country that was a former colony, the artists create works that illuminate aspects of colonial history and its impact on local communities. At the end of the project, all the works will be presented at the *Xarkis Festival* in Larnaka. The project is already underway, co-funded by Creative Europe Programme and will be completed by the end of 2026. Based on the material that will be generated through the project, namely the artworks, the stories and themes that will emerge through the collaboration between artists and memory organisations, the collaboration between artists and local communities as well as the networks of people and institutions, we will continue with the creation with a second cycle with a horizon to 2030 and beyond.

Co-Creators Network: Bi-Communal WG, Youth WG, Regional WG, Women WG

Indicative Partners: European Centre for Cultural Organization and Management (IT), PRO PROGRESSIONE (HU), Museo Egizio (IT), La Bonne (ES), H401 (NL), Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), D6:Culture in Transit (UK/CY), Casa Árabe (ES), Research Centre for Museums and Galleries in Leicester (UK), Nubuke Foundation (GH), Xarkis Festival (CY), Museum of Memory & Human Rights (CL)

Growing the Ground: The artists who will participate in the *Contested Desires Constructive Dialogues* project were selected through an open call and the first residencies have already started. In January 2025, the artists Sithabile Mlotshwa from Zimbabwe and Mohamed Ben Salma from Tunisia will hold their first residency of one month in Larnaka, to start working on their art works in collaboration with the Larnaka Archives Phivos Stavrides and the local communities.

Ritual of the Offer, performance – dinner by the Italian collective Pleasure at the former petrol depots area during Larnaka BioDesign Festival 2024, June 2024



Europe In War

Branch 3.4

and Lebanon. The **Europe in War** Programme focuses on these realities, seeking ways to promote empathy and reconciliation. The *Artists at Risk* project is an Artists in Residency programme, which aims to offer safe space for refugee artists to live and work. In *The Pyla Project* we focus on Pyla, the only bicomunal community in the country, as an example of peaceful coexistence. We bring together social anthropologists and artists who, through interviews with Pyla local people, document and study habits and behaviors of everyday life that make this coexistence possible. (Habits such as whether GkCypriots attend socio-religious events of their TkCypriot neighbours such as weddings and funerals and vice versa. Or, in case that a GkCypriot housewife runs out of sugar, will she go and ask her TkCypriot neighbour for it and vice versa.) Based on the resulting material, we want to create a series of activities and art works that will become “a guide to peaceful coexistence”. In the *Learning from the Future* project, we intend to work in a

Growing the Ground: In cooperation with UNFICYP, we hosted a daily workshop for GkCypriots and TkCypriots on memory politics with Orli Friedman, an academic and trained facilitator for groups in conflict, who has worked with groups from Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and the successor states of the former Yugoslavia.

We have signed and actively support “Peace Resolution” (Apofasi Irinis), a female initiative launched in May 2024 aiming to the resolution of conflict in Cyprus conflict and the re-unification of the two communities.

similar way with children and young people in the schools of Larnaka. In Larnaka schools, children from Lebanon, Palestine and Israel are classmates, as well as children from Ukraine and Russia. Through this project we intend to learn from them, by recording their habits of co-existence. Further, in cooperation with Trecin 2026 and organizations from Ukraine such as Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives we focus on military installations as part of the everyday life of a city or community. Finally, in cooperation with UNFICYP, academics and activists from the former Yugoslavia, Israel and Palestine, we focus on memory politics, highlighting women’s initiatives that aim at reconciliation through the mutual restoration of memory and we actively support the Peace Resolution (Apofasi Irinis), an initiative to restart negotiations for a Cyprus solution based on women and civil society.

Working Groups: Bi-Communal WG, Women WG, Young Co-Creators WG, Regional WG

Indicative Partners: Trecin 2026 (SK), Izolyatsia (UA), UNFICYP(CY), Museum of People (CY), Ukrainian Cultural Centre in Larnaka (UA)

Finally, the Artistic Programme includes an **overarching 13th Programme**, that is not depicted in the Palm Tree; this is the **Capacity Building Programme**. It involves the development of various capacity building activities and projects, such as training programmes, residencies in other ECoCs and mobility schemes to enhance the international cooperation capacities of our local scene. The **Capacity Building Programme** focuses on building the capacities of the local sector to work internationally to design and produce international cooperation projects.



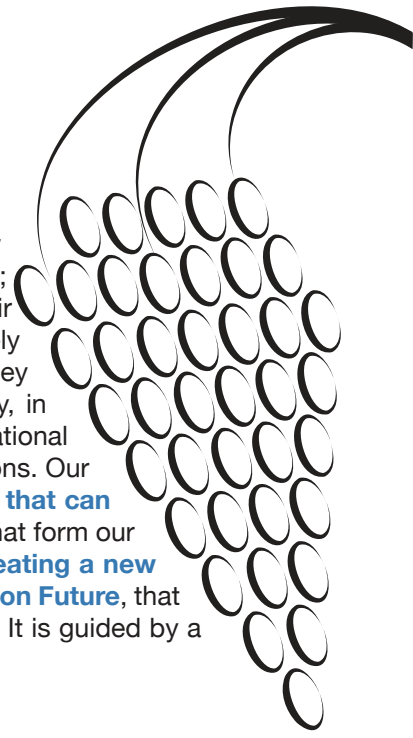
Dis-Displaced, performance by Eisa Baddour, June 2024

Axis B

The New Civic Calendar

(The Fruits/Harvest)

In Axis A, we have described how three main elements, people, place and politics create new Common Ground. However, there is a fourth essential element for the creation of community; and this is **Rituals**. Communities come together through common rituals. They manifest their identity, beliefs and habits through celebrations. In modern societies these celebrations rely either on religion or on historic moments that relate to the creation of the national state. They correspond to public holidays, creating in this way a country's **Civic Calendar**. Similarly, in Axis B, we create a **New Civic Calendar**. But, our calendar is not based on religious or national occasions, that unite people under different – and therefore conflicting – nations and religions. Our **New Civic Calendar rises above nation and religion, to rely on values and occasions that can be shared by everybody regardless of religion or ethnicity**. It relies on the core values that form our proposal for the ECoC 2030 title, as well as on common challenges. This way, **we are creating a new narrative for our city, for Europe and for humanity**. A narrative that celebrates our **Common Future**, that is utterly female. This narrative unfolds in 6 Chapters / Milestones, that mark the title year. It is guided by a female figure, Europe, and unfolds different aspects of her in each Chapter



The **New Civil Calendar** unfolds in the following six chapters:

Chapter 1

(She) Genesis

Opening

Chapter 1 corresponds to the **ECoC Opening** that is in January and is entitled **(She) Genesis**. From ancient civilizations to contemporary times, January is the month of birth. It is not by accident that the birth of gods (from Zeus to Christ) and the beginning of the year is celebrated around January. Therefore, in the Opening Ceremony we celebrate the birth of our community, the birth of Europe. The Opening Ceremony starts with a site specific event at dawn – at the beginning of the day, at the beginning of time - at the archaeological site of Choroikoitia, the first (or definitely one of the first) European community. It continues in the evening with a large-scale art in public space parade performance, co-created with many different groups of local people, in the city centre of Larnaka. The parade will conclude in Europe Square, the central square of Larnaka. Thematically, the event focuses the story of Europe, coming from the sea – from Phoenicia - on the back of the bull (Zeus) and goes on to different historic moments of Europe, through the lenses of Larnaka, a city that has been continuously inhabited and colonized by different populations of Europe and the Middle East.

Apart from the Opening Ceremony, Chapter 1 also marks a period of the title year, running from January to the beginning of March, when Chapter 2 starts. In accordance with the narrative of Chapter 1, the projects of **Europe Daughter of Phoenix** and **Colonial Europe Programmes** will be mainly presented during this period in 2030.

Chapter 2

(She) Meetra

Women's Day (March)

Meetra (μήτρα) is the greek work for “womb”; etymologically it is the root of the word “mother”. In the antiquity March was the month that female goddesses such as Aphrodite and Isis were celebrated, because March signals the beginning of spring, therefore the beginning of new life. The Conception of Mother Mary is also celebrated in March and it is not by accident that in modern times the celebration of **Women's Day** is on March 8th. Thus, **March and Women's Day** marks the second milestone of our programme, when Europe takes the form of every woman as the generative power of life. It includes a large scale public event that celebrates women through the figures and stories of ancient goddesses of different religions, such as Aphrodite, Isis, Kyveli to Hala Sultan and Mother Mary next to modern women from Europe and the Middle East. During this period in 2030, the projects of **We Female** Programme are being presented.

Chapter 3

(She) Democracy

Europe's Day (May)

In Chapter 3 Europe takes the form of Democracy, as the best system of organizing ourselves into communities. Europe as democracy is then connected to the celebration of **Europe's Day** on May 9th. Thus, this period of the title year focuses on projects of the **Cultural Democracy Europe** Programme, including the international **Cultural Democracy Meeting**.

Chapter 4

(She) Nature

Kataklysmos (June)

In Chapter 4, the female figure of Europe takes the form of Nature. We are linking the **European Marine Days** with **Kataklysmos**, the largest public feast in Larnaka, one that used to be common for all coastal cities in Levante and whose roots date back to antiquity. Kataklysmos celebrates life after the biggest natural catastrophe ever experienced. The myth is common to different eras and civilizations of antiquity in Levante. We find references to the myth of Kataklysmos in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first poem in the history of human civilization. It is the same myth known to us today as the story of "Noah's Ark". Etymologically the Greek word "Kataklysmos" means "The Flood" and it refers to this ancient story. Thus, in this period of the year in 2030, we are presenting the projects of **Land, Water** and **Creative Larnaka** Programmes, that focus on cultivating caring behaviours towards Mother Nature.

Chapter 5

Herstory

European Heritage Days (September)

In Chapter 5, Europe as a female figure takes the form of Heritage. We are linking the **European Heritage Days** with the values of interculturalism and inclusion, as elements that have defined both Larnaka and Europe throughout time. Thus, during this period we are presenting the projects of **Our Neighbourhoods** and **We Less Heard Voices** Programmes.

Chapter 6

(She) Peace

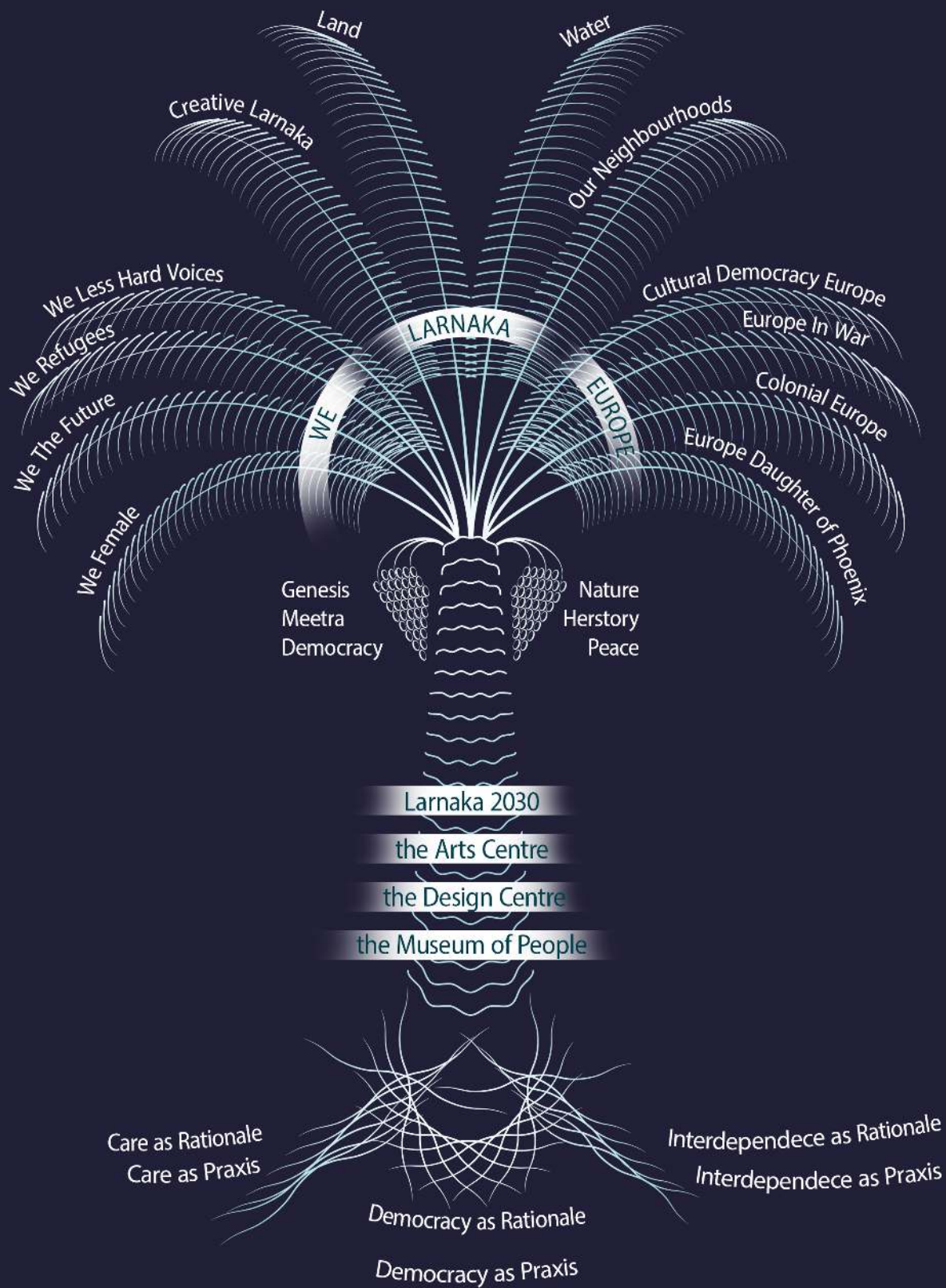
Closing

(November/December)

In Chapter 6, Europe takes the form of Peace and Reconciliation, as the last step to establish new Common Ground. To mark this celebration, we turn to an important moment of recent European history that we believe carries high symbolic meaning as the moment of reconciliation, as a moment of bringing opposing parts together again. That moment is the **Fall of the Berlin Wall** that is celebrated on November 9th. Although, the Fall of the Berlin Wall has no immediate connection with either Larnaka or Cyprus, we believe it is a historic moment that has impacted the whole world and one that could be used as a universal symbol of reconciliation, togetherness and peace. So, November 9th marks the start of the Closing of our 2030 Programme that concludes on December 10th, the **International Human Rights Day**. During this period we are presenting the projects of **We Refugees** and **Europe in War** Programmes. Finally, the closing includes another project called *House of Peace*, an installation in public space created by GkCypriots and TkCypriots together.



Concert by Sistema Larnaka Wind and Percussion Orchestra at the Larnaka 2030 launch event, April 2023



Q 2.3. Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?

Revisiting the past and our heritage through a contemporary perspective and expressions is an integral part of our programme. It is a main tool in cultivating **Common Ground**. Therefore, there are many ways in which we combine cultural heritage – both local and European – and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural experiences. Thus, we hereafter present some examples on how we combine heritage with contemporary artists and expressions. Important archaeological sites, such as Choirokoitia become venues for contemporary performances, whereas ancient feast such as *Kataklysmos* open a dialogue with the current need to develop caring behaviours towards nature. In **Water** Programme we used cutting edge technology to reconnect with a very important part of our heritage, the sea, and create a new underwater park. In the same Programme, we invite contemporary artists and designers to develop projects that relate to another important aspect of our natural heritage, the Salt Lake. In The Earth's Wounds project we invite landscape artists to intervene in another important aspect of our nature heritage, the mines landscape. Through *Larnaka BioDesign Festival*, the **Design Centre** and projects such as a *Crafting Community* we bring together traditional craftsmen and techniques with contemporary design. In **Cultural Democracy Europe** Programme we employ contemporary expressions such as games, design objects and children books to tell the story of cultural democracy in **Europe**, whereas in *1000+1 Drinks* project we combine stories from the Arab Epic *1000+1 Nights* with contemporary literature and visual arts events in cafes and bars. Finally, the **New Civic Calendar** overall, meaning the narrative we are creating for the title year, is based in a combination of important heritage elements with contemporary challenges and contemporary artists.

Q2.4. How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?

Participatory design and co-creation are the ways in which we are creating **Common Ground**. The programme and the cultural strategy result from an extensive participatory design and co-creation process we are conducting with the local community overall. Artists, cultural organisations but also people that don't relate to the cultural sector participate in this process and become actual co-creators of the events and processes of the cultural programme. The overall process is presented at Chapter 4 of the bidbook.



The Mycelium Pavilion, created by Stijn Dries and Ivana Mik for Larnaka BioDesign Festival 2023, November 2023

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Q3.1. Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:

Q3.1. (a) Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;

Coexistence in cultural diversity is at the core of Larnaka's artistic programme. The city cultivates common ground by introducing new beliefs and new rituals that are relevant to all, acting as a miniature of Europe. The city's communities – Ukrainians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, Israelis, French, Italians, digital nomads and others – are actively involved in a process of co-creation and definition of Larnaka's new identity.

Larnaka highlights and strengthens Europe's relationship with the Middle East and the Arab world through a fruitful intercultural dialogue and cultural exchange, currently more necessary than ever, serving as a protective wall against Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism. The programme **Europe Daughter of Phoenix** aims to highlight Europe's connection to the Middle – East and promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. The programme **Colonial Europe** aims to create a platform for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding within Europe and beyond, among communities that have been colonisers and communities that have been colonised. In addition, the narrative we are building during the title year in the form of a **New Civic Calendar** aims to generate intercultural dialogue on the Europe we want, as well as a better understanding of what Europe and the EU stand for.

In addition, the aim of the proposed programme is to inspire Larnaka artists with the idea that they are an organic part of the European artistic scene, through co-creating relationships with communities of artists in Europe. The significant geographical distance from continental Europe, combined with the fact that Cyprus is an island, breeds a mental distance for the local population and a sense of being cut off from the centre, which inevitably undermines European cohesion itself. Through our programme, we are building networks that connect the local with the European scene on the one hand, and the European scene with the cultural ecosystem of the Middle East on the other. These networks are not limited to artists and cultural operators, but extend further to engage with local communities in different parts of Europe and the Middle East. Projects such as the *Refugee Cities Network* and *G29/G30* serve this purpose.

Q3.1. (b) Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;

the European area with our culturally unique region. The myth establishes Europe as a single cultural area deriving from the Middle East. This aspect leads the path to creative coexistence in an era of introversion, reservation, and xenophobia towards the Middle East and its constituent peoples. The **Opening Ceremony**, as well as the **Europe Daughter of Phoenix** Programme highlight this aspect of European heritage and history. Further, same as above, the Programme **Colonial Europe** highlights the colonial aspect of European history.

The artistic programme poses and responds to a crucial question: how can we build solid communities with elements beyond national landmarks and religious beliefs? The answer is concrete and entirely feasible.

The programme highlights the mythical origins of Europe, Phoenix's daughter who was abducted by Zeus from the Middle East and taken westwards. This is a powerful symbolism that links



Communities can be built on our shared values: humanity, care and justice, looking primarily to the future and its promise, yet without overlooking the past. To this end, we have created the **New Civic Calendar**, that links our core values with important European celebrations, such as the **Europe Day**, the **European Marine Days**, the **European Heritage Days** and the **Fall of the Berlin Wall**.

The **Common Ground** methodology is consistent with and promotes the vision of European integration, which is based on a strong commitment to human rights and democracy. We are all equal and co-responsible in the process of shaping Europe as we want it and of handing it onto future generations. This commitment is inextricably linked to cultural democracy, which is both a core value of our programme and the theme of our **Cultural Democracy Europe** Programme.

Regarding current European themes, the artistic programme is deeply rooted in the New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable, together as a tool to consolidate European integration, based on major issues such as environmental responsibility, sustainability and inclusion. Through the Programmes **Land, Water, Our Neighbourhoods** and **Creative Larnaka** we address different aspects of contemporary environmental challenges. Further, inclusion, equality and accessibility are major current challenges for Europe overall. We are addressing them through the Programmes **We Female** and **We Less Heard Voices**.

Finally, our programme focuses a lot on the current theme of war and displacement and the challenge of reconciliation, through the Programmes **Europe in War** and **We Refugees**, as well as through the **Closing** of the overall programme in the title year. Another element highlighted in the programme is war, one of the shattering current challenges that Europe faces, both in the North-East with the Ukraine-Russia war, and in the South-East with the war in the Middle East and the fifty-year ceasefire in Cyprus.

Q3.1. (c) Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.

Throughout our programme we consistently involve artists from Cyprus, Europe and the Middle East. Networking is one of the core values and guiding

principles of our programme on the whole. That is why since the beginning of our operation we have joined European networks such as **Culture Next**, where we have been member since 2022. Through our involvement in Culture Next, we have gotten to know many past, current and candidate ECoCs. We have visited some of them (Leeuwarden, Oulu, Cluj, Bielsko Biala, Belfast, Elefsina) and have planned collaborations between us. We have also joined the **International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts IETM** and we plan to host the first meeting in the network's history in Cyprus in 2027. Moreover, we are planning collaboration projects with **Cultural Action Europe, On the Move, European Festivals Association**, as well as **Art in Rural European Areas (AREA) Network**. We have also developed cooperation with institutions such as **ETNO Museum** in Valencia, **Cluj Cultural Centre, Roberto Cimetta Fund, European Centre for Cultural Organization and Management** in Rome, **PRO PROGRESSIONE** in Budapest, **Museo Egizio** in Turin, the feminist cultural organisation **la Bonne** in Barcelona, **H401 Arts Centre** in Amsterdam, the **Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM)**, **D6:Culture in Transit** in Newcastle upon Tyne, **Casa Árabe** in Madrid, **Research Centre for Museums and Galleries** in Leicester, **Nubuke Foundation** in Accra, **European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design** in Wroclaw, and the **Hellenic Institute of Sign Language** in Athens. The **Artists in Residency** programme at Larnaka 2030 premises is also noteworthy. Since the launch of the programme in 2023 we have hosted 16 artists from Europe and the Middle East. In the context of **CARE Festival**, we have already collaborated with **Fabienne van Eck from Musicians Without Borders**,

2030 ECoC
Candidates
Meeting in
Larnaka,
May 2024

Palestinian artist Ahmad Jubeh and Ukrainian artist Zoya Kernasovska. *Larnaka BioDesign Festival* has already developed collaborations with artists **Stijn Dries** and **Ivana Mik** from the Netherlands, who created the mycelium pavilion, **Pleisure Collective** from Italy, MIT researcher and lecturer **Latifa Alkhayat** from Bahrain and her students, curators and visual artists **Meera Badran** from the United Arab Emirates and **Maees Hadi** from Iran, visual artist and designer **Eisa Baddour** from Syria.

We outline these names and collaborations as indicative of our approach which is firmly based on developing partnerships with artists and institutions from both Europe and the Middle East. The **Common Ground** we are developing is a meeting place for artists and professionals from both communities in Cyprus, Europe and the Middle East. Finally, our commitment to building a collaboration framework between local artists and cultural professionals from Europe and the Middle East is evident by the establishment of the **International Women's Council**, which has a central role in the programme overall, while ensuring our interconnection with the cultural ecosystems of different regions of Europe and the Middle East.

Q3.2. Can you explain your overall strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

Our programme is based on a wide range of contemporary European issues, such as inclusion, accessibility, sustainability, environmental responsibility, cultural democracy, empowering the female perspective, war, refugees and Europe's relationship with the Arab world. We believe that this range of topics creates the right conditions that connect us with a wide audience of different ages,

backgrounds and trends from all over Europe. Furthermore, through our cooperation with European and international networks, as well as with other ECoC's, we intend to reach out and actively engage a wide range of professionals and ordinary people involved in ECoC programmes from all over Europe.

Our programme has been shaped through participatory design processes that have actively involved the various ethnic groups of the city, ordinary people and professionals from different countries living in Larnaka. All of them act as ambassadors and serve as communication channels for our programme in their respective countries.

In addition, we have intentionally chosen the image of the palm tree as our main symbol, so that we can address a wide international audience in a direct and comprehensible way. We intend to use this eloquent visual methodology in the design of games, competitions and participatory activities that enhance the dissemination of the programme to a wide audience.

Finally, to reach a wider international audience, we intend to capitalise on the tourist resources of our city and our country. We are already working with **Larnaka Tourism Board**, the **Hotel Owners' Association**, bars and restaurants, which act as ambassadors of the programme to foreign visitors enhancing visibility to Larnaka's goal of becoming European Capital of Culture 2030.

The pinnacle of this effort is our partnership with **Larnaka International Airport**, the main gateway to Cyprus which serves around 8 million people from all over the world annually. Larnaka 2030 is featuring in informative videos in the airport's premises and has also established an installation inside the airport, that serves as an info point for our projects.

Q3.3 To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

Close cooperation with other ECoC's is a *modus operandi* for us. As mentioned above, we were the first city in Cyprus to join the Cultural Next network. Through our participation in the network, we have developed partnerships with a number of other candidate, current, future and past ECoCs on a number of different areas. Firstly, we have engaged on the discussions on the future of ECoC. Secondly, we participate in a pilot project that aims to development a common platform for monitoring and evaluating ECoC programmes and their contribution to the promotion of the



SDGs. Thirdly, we participate in Culture Next mobility scheme, which involves sharing expertise through residencies of staff members. Through this mobility project we are exchanging staff members with **Trencin 2026** and **Matera 2019**. Finally, we participate in a working group that aims to develop a common European network for youth participation in ECoC programmes. As far as the latter is concerned, three young women from Larnaka have already visited Bielsko Biala 2029 in the framework of the G29/G30 project. We also intend to adopt the *Walking Forest* of **Arcadia 2028**, **Leeuwarden 2018** legacy organisation, and we are working together with **Matera 2019** to develop our own Design Centre. We are cooperating with **Eleusis 2023** on the *Refugee Cities Network*, with **Trencin 2026** on *Europe in War* programme, with **Budweis 2028** on *Land* and *Creative Larnaka* Programmes, while we intend to gradually expand our network of cooperation with other ECoC's in the coming years, regardless of whether Larnaka is awarded the 2030 title or not.

Moving on to our cooperation with the other 2030 Candidate Cities, in cooperation with **Molenbeek 2030**, in May 2024 we took the initiative and invited all the candidate cities from Belgium, Cyprus and third countries to a joint meeting in Larnaka to get to know each other. Through one-to-one meetings, we had the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of each other's programme and to discuss concrete ways of cooperation between our programmes. The meeting was attended by all the candidate cities from Belgium (**Brugge 2030**, **Ghent 2030**, **Kortrijk 2030**, **Leuven 2030**, **Molenbeek 2030**, **Namur 2030**), four candidate cities from Cyprus (**Kourion 2030**, **Larnaka 2030**, **Lemesos 2030**, **Nicosia 2030**), and **Niksic 2030** from Montenegro.

Through the meeting and our ongoing contact with the candidate cities in Belgium, we have identified the following areas of cooperation:

With **Brugge 2030** we share a common enthusiasm for active community engagement through participatory design and co-creation processes, which we intend to foster further. Brugge 2030 has already translated the card game *Let's Start a Conversation* into Greek and we are using it in our activities with the city's communities, as well as in a major event we organised in November 2024 with the participation of 16 local dance schools as part of the *CARE Festival*.

With **Ghent 2030** we also share a commitment to participatory design and co-creation processes with our communities. In this context, we intend to link the Ghent 2030 working groups with their Larnaka 2030 counterparts to jointly generate ideas for projects and actions, starting with the youth working group.

We will work closely with **Kortrijk 2030** in the development of the **Design Centre** and in the context of the *Larnaka BioDesign Festival*.

With **Leuven 2030** we share the same belief in the values of democracy and cultural democracy, and we intend to develop a multi-level cooperation between their *European House of Democracy* and our **Cultural Democracy Europe**.

With **Molenbeek 2030**, our paths cross through many trails. First, we both focus on Europe's relationship with the Arab world. We are also both investing in a broad process of participatory design and co-creation with our local communities, through which we want to give voice to Europe's less visible citizens. In March 2024 we participated in the *Spring Assembly* of Molenbeek 2030 and had the opportunity to get to know both the process and local cultural operators. In this context, we have already identified specific projects that we can link, such as our **Museum of the People** with the *This is Us. This is Brussels* project of Molenbeek 2030, as well as our youth networks.

With **Namur 2030** we share the same passion for women's and disabled people empowerment. Thus, we intend to develop a collaboration between our *CARE Festival*, the *Herstories* project and the *Ability Campus* with similar actions of Namur 2030. We have also identified an area of cooperation in the field of tradition and crafts, by linking Namur 2030 projects focusing on traditional arts with *Kataklysmos Festival*, Cyprus' biggest celebration of traditional culture.

With **Niksic 2030** from Montenegro we overlap in many areas, thus planning to cooperate on many different projects. Their *Re-open* pillar is linked to Larnaka 2030's **Cultural Democracy Europe**, their *Re-inherit* to the **Museum of the People** and their *Re-connect* to *Larnaka BioDesign Festival* and our *Blue School*.

Finally, it is important to highlight that for us cooperation with other ECoC's is not just part of the bidding process, but it is one of the main reasons why we have embarked on the ECoC journey. We are seeking to become the European Capital of Culture in 2030 precisely because this means that our city, our local cultural scene and our communities will be able to interconnect with other cities and communities in Europe. Through these connections we aim to consolidate the attitude that regional does not mean provincial. The attitude that being regional means being at the centre of Europe and that the so-called "centre" is largely inhabited by its margins.



OUTREACH

Q4.1. Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year.

steps: it starts with the Co-Creators Meetings. Through the meetings, participants form the **Co-Creators Thematic Working Groups**, focusing on different areas of the programme. Then, the Working Groups come up with concrete ideas for projects and activities that become part of the overall programme. Through this methodology, we are growing **Common Ground** as a cultural programme.

So far, we estimate that the Co-Creators account for more than 1300 people. But this is a number that grows continuously, with every new meeting, every new working group and every new event that takes place. Up to now, the following **Thematic Working Groups (WG)** have been created and came up with ideas and projects for our programme:

Bi-communal WG of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots

This WG was established in collaboration with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and aims to bring together Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, enhancing peacebuilding efforts, strengthening human connections and cultivating lasting bonds. Through this WG, we have established the **Larnaka - Famagusta Network**, creating a bridge between the two cities and giving the opportunity to TkCypriot artists and people to equally become co-creators of our programme. This WG meets virtually and physically in both cities and until now it collaborates with other WGs to implement a considerable number of activities, ranging from a **study visit to Iskele**, to a **street party** in the old city of Famagusta and from workshops on memory and reconciliation to bread baking in Ayios Theodoros, a mixed village prior to 1974, bringing GrCypriot and TkCypriot women with their grandchildren to **bake together** in their common village prior to 1974, cherishing memories of the past.

Equality and Inclusion WG

In the beginning, this WG has been created to address issues of equality and inclusion, with respect to diverse communities and vulnerable population groups. Through the course of the meetings, new WGs, that focus on specific aspects of equality and inclusion, have been formed and operate under the general “Equality and Inclusion WG”. These sub-groups are the following:

Women WG

Women from different ethnic backgrounds and age groups formed this WG to explore what it means for Larnaka to become a city of care. They work towards the empowerment of the female leadership both in the cultural ecosystem and the public sphere and focus on issues of equality and social justice. The International Womens’ Club of Cyprus, organized the **Meraki Fair**, celebrating global diversity in Larnaka while showcasing traditional art and crafts.

LGBTQIA WG

This group addresses issues such as liquid identities and the rights of everyone to express themselves freely in our Common Ground. Along with **ACCEPT Cyprus**, a public discussion was added in the launching event of Common Ground, bringing back memories of how Larnaka has been a gay friendly city throughout the years, as the city with the first gay club in Cyprus.

Accessibility WG

The aim of this working group is to ensure the accessibility of all citizens in the cultural and social life of Larnaka, by incorporating accessibility practices into every aspect of our programme. Individuals and local organizations shared expertise, and along with an organization specializing on these issues, **Liminal**, they collectively shaped our **accessibility strategy**. Also, with more than 50 volunteers and the organization **Ena Emeis**, we mapped the accessibility needs of the city centre, presented the results of this mapping to the Mayor and the City Council and asked for specific action



to be taken, in order for the city to become accessible for disabled people. Among the ideas and projects this WG has initiated is the performance **Bodies we fall for**, the first universally accessible theatre performance in Cyprus as well as the **European Disability Festival for Art and Culture Dis**.

Digital Nomads WG

Digital Nomads are a new “tribe”; they are people that enjoy a special privilege: they can work from wherever they wish. This is a new and expanding reality that we need to take into consideration when we discuss city development and not only with respect to Larnaka. Throughout history, cities have developed because of the intersection of place of work to the place of residency. Increasingly and for the first time in human history, the place of work and the place of residency become disentangled. This given, what are the criteria according to which these people choose their place of residency? And what are the implications of this new reality for the future of cities? In Larnaka, we have a growing number of digital nomads. Together with them, we are exploring these questions and invite everybody to experience the city through their lenses.

Children & Youth WG

Children and young people, the future citizens of Larnaka and Europe, have been a major focus in the cultural strategy and programme building process since the very beginning. Similarly, as in the “Equality and Inclusion WG”, sub – groups have evolved in the course of the process. These sub-groups are the following:

Young Co-Creators WG

This WG is made up of teenagers of 13 to 15 years old, who will be 18 to 20 in 2030. In cooperation with other candidate, former and future ECoCs we are building a European network of future change makers through this group. Through monthly meetings we are exploring different aspects of a caring city and connect this WG with all the others, as well as with local cultural organisations and initiatives. Once every two months there is an online meeting between this WG from Larnaka and the similar WG that operate in different European cities. Finally, once a year representative from all national WG meet in a summer campus that takes place in different city every time. In summer 2024, the campus took place in Bielsko Biala in Poland, hosted by Bielsko Biala 2029.

Art for Children and Young People WG

This WG brings together art educators, schoolteachers and parents. It is the main WG that connects Larnaka 2030 to primary and secondary education, as well as to local arts education institutions. Thus, a number of initiatives have sprung out of this WG. A major initiative is the so-called **CARE Festival** that has become a new institution for the local cultural life. In **CARE Festival 2024**, together with 16 local dance schools we have created the public promenade performance **Let's start a conversation**, featuring about 200 young female dancers in the public space, as a response to a world that is governed by aged, nationalist men that lead us to war, catastrophe and death. The Festival had also a focus on the situation of children refugees of war, organising discussion with the Ukrainian, Lebanese and Palestinian communities of Larnaka and inviting artists from Palestine such as the Musicians Without Borders and the National Theatre of Palestine. Moreover, through this WG games such as the **Green Snake and Ladders** – a game we have created to promote caring behaviours for the environment – has visited a big number of primary schools. Also, through **Love Letters** project, children were encouraged to write love letters about their city. In addition, inspired by Larnaka 2030's promenade performance in Skala Turkish Neighbourhood **Princess Zehra**, the Lyceum of Agiou Georgiou and the Music School of Larnaka, created and presented in the city centre the promenade performance **Peace Steps**.

Higher Education WG

This WG is formed by Higher Education Institutes of the city, namely the University of Central Lancsair (UCLan), the American University of Cyprus and the Alexander College that focuses on Arts and Design, providing courses in Graphic Design, Interior Design, Photography and Fashion Design. With the MA in Landscape Architecture of the American University of Cyprus we cooperate in Larnaka **BioDesign Festival** as well as in the **Land** Programme. With Alexander College we cooperate on many different projects that relate to design within the framework of the Design Centre. Finally, with UCLan we have a multi level cooperation. They participate in our BoD and they are our main Academic Sponsor. One of the projects we are building together is **Larnakarts**, an online platform and directory into the cultural ecosystem of Larnaka.

Regional Larnaka WG

There are four working groups, one for each municipality of the region: **Dromolaxia- Meneou WG**, **Aradippou WG**, **Athienou WG** and **Lefkara WG**. Locals from various disciplines work together to build the cultural strategy of their municipality, following the participatory design process of Larnaka 2030. Through this process, we are creating a platform for cooperation between the region and the various WGs of Larnaka 2030. This way, the overall programme intertwines with the region in two ways. On the one hand, projects and ideas that are being formed within the city's WGs are then extended into the region (for example, the activities of **CARE Festival 2024** have extended to towns of the region, such as Aradippou, Pervolia, Kiti and Meneou, whereas activities of **Larnaka BioDesign Festival 2024** have taken place in Athienou) and projects and ideas generated in the Regional WGs become part of the overall programme, inviting the city in the region. Such an example is the **Pathkia-Pathkia** walking tour that took place in Dromolaxia-Meneou Municipality, organised by the local youth organisation Allospos. The tour has been an invitation to citizens and local authorities to re-imagined their towns as inclusive and sustainable common grounds.

Sustainability WG

This WG was originally created to address issues of both environmental and economic sustainability. Through the participatory design process, it has further developed into the following three sub-groups:

Reclaiming public space WG

This working group aims to move art outside of the theatres/gallery spaces, making the whole city, our Common Ground, a stage. The participants in this WG, both artists and non artists, focus on ideas and projects that invite people to creatively re-inhabit the public space, as well as to rethink and reconnect with the city's neighbourhoods, with a special focus on the most deprived ones. Through this WG, projects such as **MahallArt** and **MandomahallArt**, a festival in the neighbourhood of Ais Giannis, as well as the **Princess Zehra** promenade performance in the Skala Turkish Neighbourhood, have come to life.

Architecture and Design WG

The built infrastructure and the public space of the city are the focus of this WG, addressing issues of accessibility, sustainability and green mobility. It also aims to introduce design thinking as a tool for many different problems. The launch event of **Common Ground** on May 12th has been designed, curated and realised by this WG. The project involved the creation of a promenade in the historic shopping centre on the history of the ECoC, presenting all cities that have been awarded the title on the shop windows. It also included a voting game on the empty shop windows, inviting citizens to tell their opinion about the city. The project has been created in cooperation with the Historic Centre Shopkeepers Association, aiming to revitalise the historic shopping centre. Also, this WG is very much involved in projects related to the Design Centre, including the **Larnaka BioDesign Festival**.

Entrepreneurs WG

This WG fosters links between culture and economy. It consists of individual entrepreneurs, companies, as well as Associations such as the Historic Shopping Centre Shopkeepers Association. In this context, the Historic Centre Shopkeepers Association has joined forces with the Architecture and Design Working Group to co-create projects such as the **Common Ground Passport**, that promotes the historic centre as a shopping destination. Through this WG, we are developing Larnaka 2030's private sponsors scheme.

It is important to note that the Co-Creators Network came out and is being developed based on an organic process. What Larnaka 2030 does in this process is mainly setting the ground and inviting people to meet, discuss, interact and finally, create together. Therefore, in reality both the process and the WG are more liquid than in the description. The same people participate in more than one WG, there is interaction between the WGs and there are also initiatives that don't exactly "fit" in any of the categories described above. Such is the case of the a big number of local musicians who participate in the Co-Creators Network and have formed the:

Larnaka's Music Ecosystem WG

Musicians from different music genres and backgrounds joined forces to empower the music scene of Larnaka, map the available venues/music stages of the city, and promote local music production. **Follow the Music** emerged as a new project that runs throughout the year. It introduces young local musicians of different music genres to the broader public, inviting the audience to unpredictable spaces/venues in the city and the region. Additionally, the **Needle Residency and Festival** has fostered the creation of original works inspired by the city's cultural heritage, while the **Ttavas Residency** aims to foster connections among musicians from Larnaka, Famagusta, and the Middle East.

Finally, there are three big projects that support and give visibility to the Co-Creators Network and the whole Larnaka 2030 co-creating process. These are the following:





Performance during CARE Festival 2023, October 2023

Aarnakarts

The visibility of artists, venues and in general the cultural profile of the city was a pressing need that has been addressed in many different WGs. To respond to this need, we are developing Aarnakarts (www.larnakarts.cy), an online bilingual (gr/en) platform that serves as a directory for all the artists, venues and cultural organizations of the city and the region. In the future, we aim to add all cultural events that take place in Larnaka, thus developing the Aarnakarts into an online cultural guide of the city and the region, that is accessible to both locals and visitors.

Annual Co-Creators Assembly

Once per year, we organize a big event, gathering participants from all different WGs to present what they have done during the last year and inform everybody on future plans. This meeting also feeds our monitoring and evaluation process.

Common Ground Gallery

This is a venue, operated by Larnaka 2030 and used for the meetings of the different Co-Creators WGs. It is in a central position within the historic city centre and operates on a daily basis. It also serves as an info point for Larnaka 2030 and it also transforms into a gallery space in order to host different activities initiated by the Co-Creators Network.

Q4.2. Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Q4.3. Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

Creating Common Ground means that nobody is marginalised or disadvantaged. The very idea of our programme Common Ground sprung from a desire to create a paradigm for equality and inclusion. Through our programme we aim to give central stage and role to the “traditionally” marginalised and disadvantaged

groups, making them the protagonists of our new Common Ground. This is why, one of the three Central Themes of our programme, the Theme **WE** is all about the “traditionally” marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Similarly, with respect to our audience development strategy, the main approach is that we don’t approach anybody as audience. On the contrary, **we address everybody, regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnicity or other categorizations, as a creator, as a farmer of our new Common Ground.** Regarding our links with education and the participation of schools, one Programme in the **WE** Theme, the **WE the Future** focuses on projects generated by children and young people. Within the Co-Creators Network there is the big Children & Youth WG with 3 sub WGs that foster links with the education community, primary, secondary and higher education. Finally, there is a dedicated Department for Educational Programmes within the Artistic Directorate, as we want to have an educational component in all the projects of our programme.

MANAGEMENT

Q5.A. Finance

Q5.A.1. City budget for culture:

What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present European Capital of Culture application)?

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Annual budget for culture in the city (in euros)	813,000	816,000	849,092	996,000	996,000
Annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city)	3,54%	3,47%	3,44%	3,63%	3,82%

Important note:

The above-mentioned budgets do not include expenses/budget related to built infrastructure cultural projects.

Q5.A.2 In case the city is planning to use funds from its annual budget for culture to finance the European Capital of Culture project, please indicate this amount starting from the year of submission of the bid until the European Capital of Culture year.

Q5.A.3 Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

The city is planning to use a small part of its existing annual budget for culture to finance the ECoC project; the main city funding for the ECoC project will come as a specially allocated budget. This way, the ECoC budget is in effect a considerable raise to the city's spending for culture, that we intend to maintain after 2030. Therefore, we expect that after 2030 the annual budget for culture in Larnaka will be around 2 m euros, accounting for about %7 of the city's overall annual budget. It should also be considered that with the enlargement of the Larnaka Municipality that took place in July 2024, the overall annual budget of the city - and consequently the annual cultural budget as well - will be considerably higher from 2025 onwards. The expected changes are presented in the following tables.

Amount from the city's annual cultural budget used for the ECoC project							
Year	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Amount in euros	0	0	200.000	300.000	300.000	500.000	500.000
% of the annual cultural budget	0%	0%	13%	19%	19%	32%	32%

Amount of the overall city budget that the city intends to spend in culture from 2031 onwards	
In Euros	2.700.000
% of the overall city budget	7%

Q5.A.4. Operating budget for the title year:

Income to cover operating expenditure:

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

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (in %)
30.000.000	26.000.000	87%	4.000.000	13%

Q5.A.5. Income from the public sector:

What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	National Government	City	Region (Municipalities of Larnaka Region)	EU (with the exception of Melina Merkouri Prize)	Total
In Euros	15.000.000	7.500.000	1.500.000	2.000.000	26.000.000
In %	58%	29%	6%	7%	100%

Q5.A.6. Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

national authorities to raise it to 15m euros. We expect the national government to respond positively to our request, therefore we have calculated 15m euros as the national government's contribution to the ECoC 2030 project. The city of Larnaka, as well as the other municipalities of the region (Aradippou, Athienou, Dromolaxia – Meneou and Lefkara) have already voted a budget for the candidacy preselection phase and they are already financially supporting Larnaka 2030; However, due to the restructuring of municipalities all over Cyprus that took place in July 2024, it was impossible for the municipal authorities to make any kind of long term decisions and commitments. Therefore, it is agreed and foreseen that both the City of Larnaka and the municipalities of the region will make an official decision and commitment in 2025, provided of course that Larnaka 2030 makes it to the final selection for ECoC 2030.

The Ministry of Culture has up to voted for a 6,5m euros contribution; however, collectively all Cypriot candidate cities, we consider this amount to be very low and have therefore requested from the

**Q5.A.7. Income from the private sector:
What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?**

Larnaka 2030 has a concrete sponsors strategy and pack for the candidacy phase, through which sixteen local companies support our candidacy as sponsors as follows: one Strategic Partner, six Golden Sponsors, five Silver Sponsors and four

specialised partners (Legal Consultants, Main Academic Partner, Advertising/PR Partner, Digital Partner). Should Larnaka be designated ECoC 2030, this strategy and sponsors packs will be adjusted to fit the scale of the project and to have a national and not just local outreach. This envisaged fund – raising strategy evolves includes three main pillars. The first pillar involves sponsors that contribute financially to the project. The second pillar involves sponsorship in services and it addresses enterprises such as the airport, airlines and hotels. The third pillar involves a micro-financing scheme that addresses bars, restaurants, shops and generally speaking small and medium local enterprises.

**Q5.A.8. Operating expenditure:
Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below.**

Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion & Marketing (in euros)	Promotion & Marketing (in %)	Wages, overheads & administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads & administration (in %)	Total of the operating expenditure
18.000.000	%60	5.500.000	%18	6.500.000	%22	30.000.000

**Q5.A.9. Budget for capital expenditure:
What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year? Please fill in the table below:**

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	National Government	City	EU (with the exception of Melina Merkouri Prize)	Total
In Euros	149.200.000	34.400.000	34.300.000	217.900.000
In %	%68	%16	%16	%100

Q5.A.10. Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

Out of the 217.9m for capital projects, the **148.5m are already secured** and involve projects that are already being developed and are scheduled to be completed by 2027. The rest 69.4m refer to projects that are currently in the architectural competition phase and are planned to be completed by 2030. For these projects we have estimated that 60m will be covered by national funds and 9.4m from city funds. When the competition phase will be completed, the national government and the city authorities are expected to undertake specific commitments. We expect these decisions to be made in late 2025 to early 2026. Meanwhile, all ECoC candidate cities we have made a common claim to the national government to already commit to fund with 50m euros the city that will be designated ECoC2030 and we are expecting a response soon. In this case, we will be able to have %72 of the remaining budget for capital expenditure and 198.5) %91m euros) of the overall budget for capital expenditure secured already during the competition phase.



Meeting of Co-Creators Network in Kiti (Dromolaxia-Meneou WG), September 2024

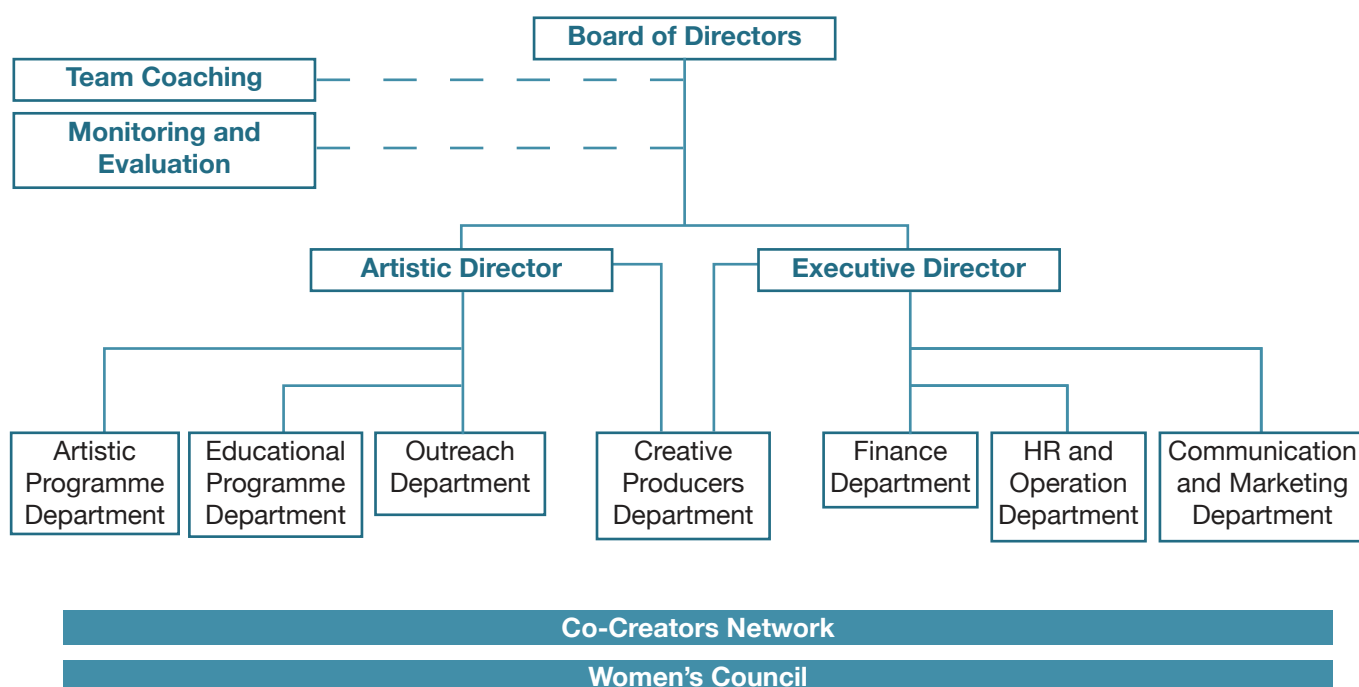
Q5.A.11. What is your fund-raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

The fund-raising strategy to seek financial support from EU funds to cover capital expenditure involves two main lines. First, we target the Structural Funds through the national support framework projects. To this end, we have already included many of the envisaged capital projects in the current framework that goes up to 2027. In parallel, we are maturing projects for the next framework programme that starts in 2028. Secondly, we also seek funds through competitive EU funds such as URBACT, LEADER etc. The Larnaka Development Company is a company established by all municipalities of Larnaka Region with its main mission to apply for funding in various EU funding schemes for projects that the municipalities want to realise. The ECoC capital projects are within the highest priorities of the Lanaka Development Company.

Q5.B. Organisational structure

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

The organisational structure we envisage for the delivery structure can be depicted in the following organigram. The company is headed by the Board of Directors, that is appointed by the Municipal Council. Then the team is headed by the Artistic Director and the Executive Director, who are at the same hierarchical level and they both report to the BoD. The Artistic Director is responsible for the Artistic Programme, the Outreach and the Educational Programmes Departments. The Executive Director is responsible for the Finance, the HR and Operations and the Communication and Marketing Departments. There are external associates for the Monitoring and Evaluation Process, as well as for Team Coaching. Finally, the Co-Creators Network through the working groups play an important role in the development of the project and the Womens' Council acts as an advisor to secure that the values become concrete strategies that are then integrated in every aspect of the delivery of the project.



Q5.C. Contingency planning

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

STRENGTH

HOW WE CAPITALISE THE STRENGTH

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

We propose a new governance model that is woven into the city's new cultural strategy.

We will act as the pilot organisation – the city's first example - for the adoption of the new governance model in the city and region, acting as an “umbrella” body where independent artists and institutions can obtain support and guidance to implement their cultural projects, including financial support, administrative capacity, production etc.

CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT

We have created a network of co-creators that includes almost all cultural and social bodies of the city – cultural

institutions, independent artists, cultural workers & social workers, civil society, other organizations.

Create a cultural ecosystem in the city and the region in which arts and culture intertwine with other sectors such as the economy, social issues such as equality and inclusion, education and research, environment and sustainability.

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

European networking has been a top priority since the beginning of our operations; we have been participating in major in European networks and forged affiliations

with European bodies, associations, and organisations, as well as independent artists from Europe and the Middle East. We are also participating in EU funded programmes.

Our connection with Europe and the Middle East gives us the opportunity to tackle a variety of contemporary issues and concepts related to these two areas and establish long-term collaborations with artists and professionals in the cultural field that will last beyond 2030, achieving a strong European Dimension embedded in our programme.

OUTREACH

We have established a large network of local artists,

communities, cultural operators, and citizens of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds, with whom we have co-created the artistic programme and Larnaka's long-term cultural strategy.

The involvement of various groups and communities echoes the programme's richness, diversity, and inclusion. We aim to continue growing this network both until the title year and beyond, always ensuring the application of participatory designing processes and methodologies.

We have also secured the social and political commitment at a regional level: all the municipalities of the Larnaka region have endorsed the candidacy effort by participating at the level of financial support as well as at the level of organizing events and cultural projects centred around their regions.

We will keep working closely with all four municipalities in the region, through the working groups that have been established, using participatory design methodologies to generate common projects and ideas and co-cocreate the cultural strategy of each municipality.

There is also a strong desire, enthusiasm, and commitment by the public concerning Larnaka's candidacy.

Maintain local enthusiasm by investing in projects that give voice to everyday people and problems, as well as projects that reinforce people's sense of belonging, civic pride and self – confidence.

MANAGEMENT

Larnaka has already secured a considerable

budget for scheduled cultural, urban, and tourism infrastructure that are linked to the ECoC 2030 projects and are expected to be completed before or during the title year.

The city infrastructure plans are an ambitious initiative that will transform the city, as they will be landmarks for both the city centre and region, including the new cultural complex. We aim to actively engage the local community in the design and operation of it, thus using the preparation years to build an audience for the new complex.

We have a small but strong and dedicated delivery team, that has a deep understanding of the project's vision, strategy and content overall.

Maintain the same dedication, vision, values and understanding in the delivery team during all phases and as it will be growing bigger.

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

There is a strong and wide political commitment formed around Larnaka's candidacy. The people consisting of the Board of Directors come from the political, social, and cultural spheres, the business world, the educational community, as well as the tourism sector – who all strongly support the candidacy through their active participation and involvement.

The continuous support from the civil society and the city's major decision-makers ensures the successful and effective implementation of the programme.

Following the Municipal Elections in the city and region, Larnaka has a stable political structure as the Municipal Authorities will remain unchanged from 2024 to 2029.

The fact that no major political changes are expected before 2029 that could dramatically affect the bidding process provides a sense of stability for the course of the candidacy and the implementation of the programme.

WEAKNESSES / RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK AREA

Contingency Plan / Actions

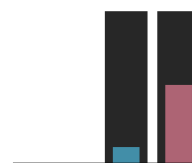
Probability IMPACT

Low Low
Medium Medium
High High

CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT

Limited in-depth understanding by the different population groups concerning the strategy and the content of the project overall.

We are already working on a specific plan to communicate the project among the general population through actions like urban games, public installations, and optimization techniques.



MANAGEMENT

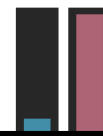
Arising conflicts and/or internal tendencies among the delivery team. Discrepancies in the depth of understanding concerning the concept and objectives of the artistic programme.

Recruit an external coach with whom we will work consistently to «transform» our values into specific policies and rules of internal operation, in order to improve the functioning and cooperation of the team, avoid or/and mitigate conflicts and burnout.



Inability to secure the economic resources to implement the artistic programme.

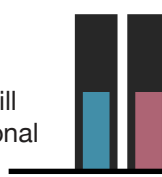
We are working from now to secure at least %70 of the total budget by the end of the selection round, through public funding and sponsorship. Also, we are already developing a strong structure for applying for competitive EU funds.



CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Lack of experience of the local cultural sector in planning, managing and delivering large-scale international cultural projects and events

Implement a systematic and long-term capacity building programme for cultural operators, which will include training sessions, residencies, and educational programmes to train and prepare them adequately.



Inability of the planned infrastructure projects to be delivered by 2030.

Develop a “plan b” for hosting artistic projects and events in pop up venues and existing infrastructure, indoor and outdoor spaces - including public spaces and other private areas.



OTHER AREAS

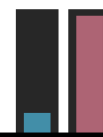
The occurrence of natural disasters and catastrophes that hinders the successful implementation of the artistic programme

Adjust or consolidate the artistic programme in view of unforeseen occurrences. Inject a level of flexibility in the artistic programme that would allow rescheduling.



Occurrence of wars / armed conflict

Devise a plan b, by capitalise on the experiences of fellow artists in war zones, such as Ukraine, Palestine, and Syria, who continue their work despite the circumstances.



Q5.D. Marketing and communication

Q5.D.1. Please provide with an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.

The Message In the current era of fragmentation, enclosure and isolation, Europe needs a new narrative, the narrative of common ground. It needs to weave the new narratives that unite people, with anthropia and care as its compass, inviting all people to co-create the European Union as our Common Ground. After all, from its very conception and foundation, the EU has been a work in progress. An ongoing effort of coexistence, rather than a closed and given system of governance. Larnaka is becoming the living laboratory for creating common grounds between its constituent communities, and we want to communicate this example with maximum effectiveness. The central slogan of our candidacy sums up this conscious choice. **We choose to walk together towards tomorrow and we want this choice to become an example for our entire European family.**

Our motto is branched out into three levels: **We are our Common Ground** (we women, the less heard voices, refugees, children and young people); **Larnaka is our Common Ground** (the land, the water, the neighbourhoods, the city's creativity); **Europe is our Common Ground** (cultural democracy, our relationship with the Arab world, the difficult aspects of our cultural heritage such as colonialism, which we must renegotiate in view of our common present and future, as well as the Europe of peace, reconciliation and human rights in the face of conflict and war). All in all, it is a vision of co-creation and co-existence that begins in people's immediate surroundings - the land, the streets and the neighbourhoods - and then spreads to the city, the country and finally to the whole continent. **Larnaka wishes to pass this message to all our fellow Europeans, inviting them to share it and employ it, so that Europe becomes the Common Ground for all of us.**

In terms of marketing and communication, the choice of the motto «Common Ground» allows us to compose messages that promote the values and essence of our programme, such as: **Care is our Common Ground, Democracy is our Common Ground, Disability is our Common Ground, Europe is our Common Ground, Inclusion is our Common Ground, the Future is our Common Ground, Cultural Democracy is our Common Ground, Earth is our Common Ground, Water is our Common Ground, Creativity is our Common Ground** and so on. Finally, another central element that we believe strengthens our communication strategy is the use of **multilingualism**. As stated on the cover of our bid book, we intend to communicate our messages in different languages, so that they can be understood by the different communities in our city, but also more broadly by all the citizens of Europe. An example of such an application was the Common Ground intervention on the shop windows of the historic centre of Larnaka. Next to the infographic of each different ECoC was the word «Common Ground» in the local language or dialect of the city concerned.

Image and Interaction The **symbol of the palm tree** plays a central role in our narrative. Our entire programme, the principles behind it, the processes of co-creation by all the communities in the city, the projects and the results are illustrated by a very familiar and accessible symbol, which makes the message understandable and comprehensible to a wide and diverse audience. The audiences we are interested in are of course all the communities of our city, our fellow citizens at the centre and on the margins of social life, all ethnic groups in Larnaka, our compatriots as a whole, our fellow Europeans, our fellow citizens around the world. **As a city we have weaved a narrative and a message with universal value, which we want to communicate with enthusiasm and clarity.**

To this end, a large part of our marketing strategy involves the **creation of games, competitions, products and general applications which allow the audience to interact with our programme and its content**. One such example is the creation of the *Common Ground Passport*, a «game» that invited residents and visitors to learn about the Common Ground visual intervention on the shop windows, and thus familiarize themselves with the history of ECoC and the cities that have become ECoC's to date, while winning prizes from the city's stores. Another such example was the voting on the empty shop windows inviting residents and visitors to express their views on the city.



Common Ground Passport game, May – October 2024

Media

Communication

In terms of ways of communicating with our target audiences, from the very beginning of our activity we have had a systematic presence in the local and national media with regular articles, features and interviews on almost all our activities. There are frequent thematic interventions - long articles - by members of the group in the press where we are given the opportunity to set out our vision of co-creating a different Larnaka from the one we are used to. We all talk about a city that is culturally open, internationally connected, sustainable, inclusive, a city that cultivates common grounds by re-inventing the fundamental principles of care and democracy. The co-creators of our programme frequently participate in podcasts. These are opportunities to share their experience of engaging and contributing to such an important goal for our city. All this activity will continue and expand with collaborations with international press, both European and Arabic, should Larnaka be designated ECoC 2030.

Networking and Co-Creation

Networking and co-creation is another key pillar of the marketing and communication strategy. Through our programme, we build networks at European, as well as national, regional and local level, which enable us to communicate our message. Collaboration and co-creation of projects with different sectors, such as the shops of our commercial centre, Larnaka International Airport, Larnaka Tourism Development Company are central to our strategy. This is a practice that we intend to constantly expand, building such partnerships with bars and restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, in order to achieve the broadest possible dissemination of our project at both the national and international level.

Digital

Communication

Social Media is a dynamic pillar of our marketing strategy with daily posts of our project's activities and news. We have created a community of people amounting to thousands of followers from Larnaka, other cities in Cyprus and internationally, who are systematically kept informed about our activities and the development of Larnaka's candidacy. So far, we operate accounts on facebook, Instagram and YouTube, while we plan to expand to TikTok. Our website, which we intend to upgrade soon, is also a central channel of our digital communication, especially in combination with the [Aarnakarts](#) platform, which is planned to evolve into a cultural guide of the city and the region of Larnaka. Finally, digital communication is supported by the frequent and systematic distribution of electronic newsletters which summarize our activities.

Q5.D.2. How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

An important part of our core message directly refers to Europe: **Europe is our Common Ground**. We are highlighting the fact that the major issues we are raising for our city are issues for the whole of Europe, which is our home. Within the framework of our programme, a meaningful debate therefore emerges regarding the

European Union we want: **an inclusive and sustainable EU, based on empathy, democracy and care.**

In addition, Larnaka's programme of Larnaka, highlights an important aspect that differentiates Europe and the EU with respect to the rest of the world. We refer to **cultural democracy, to the fundamental principle that culture is a public good**. Through the democratization of arts and culture that Europe has witnessed post-World War II, a new Common Ground, the field of contemporary European cultural production, has emerged. As a city we intend to tell this fascinating story in various ways, such as children's books and games, videos, short stories and everyday products (posters, cards, notebooks, bags, etc.), so that we can all develop a deeper understanding of this European reality. Also, **the New Civic Calendar we are introducing links important European days such as Europe Day, European Heritage Days and European Maritime Days to milestones in our programme, while the central figure of the Calendar is Europe in various forms as genesis, as a woman, as democracy, as nature, as history and as peace and coexistence.**

Since the early days of the Larnaka 2030 organization, the celebration of Europe Day has been part of our annual programme of activities. In 2023 we celebrated Europe Day by emphasising democracy and care, with an event inviting people to an open discussion with the mayor about the city's cultural strategy and its candidacy for ECoC. The event ended with a concert with lullabies from many different EU countries, as we wanted to highlight this tender aspect of Europe, Europe as a mother. In 2024 **we chose the celebration of Europe Day**, which for Larnaka was set by the central government to be on May 12, for **the official presentation of our motto «Common Ground»**. The presentation/celebration included a public intervention on the shop windows of the historic centre, through which we introduced to the public the ECoC institution and all the cities that have been designated ECoCs from 1985 until today. It also included a dance performance in the public space and a big party in the city centre, as well as the exhibition *Generation EU*, with the personal stories of Greek and Turkish Cypriots regarding how Cyprus' accession to the EU changed their lives.

Finally, if Larnaka is designated ECoC for 2030 the **EU logo** will be displayed in all our activities and all our communication material.

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Q6.1 Please confirm and supply evidence that you have broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national public authorities.

2022, the Municipality of Larnaka decided to bid for the title of ECoC 2030. In October 2022 the City established an independent company responsible for managing the ECoC bid under the name «Larnaka 2030». The Board of Directors of the company brings together all the local forces: the municipal authority, the business world, the educational community, the tourism sector and the local civil society. The President of the company is the well-known Larnaka-based businessman Dinos Lefkaritis, who is also the President of the Larnaka Tourism Development Company. Vice President is the Mayor of Larnaka Andreas Vyras, while the members include the President of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a representative of the largest university in Larnaka, UCLan. The Municipality of Larnaka is the main funder of the company, funding 50% of its budget.

At the regional level:

All the Municipalities of the Larnaka Region participate in the candidacy; the respective Municipal Councils have validated this decision. These are the Municipalities of Aradippou, Athienou, Dromolaxia – Meneou, Lefkara and the Pyla Village Council. These municipalities are financing 25% of the Larnaka 2030 budget.

At the national level:

The Deputy Ministry of Culture is the managing authority responsible for the organisation of the European Capital of Culture 2030 in Cyprus. So far, the Deputy Ministry of Culture has committed to grant the amount of 6.5m euros to the city that will be designated ECoC 2030, an amount that all the candidate cities of Cyprus consider insufficient. This is the reason we have jointly expressed our concerns and have asked for a common meeting with the Ministry of Culture. In this meeting, all candidate cities asked for a contribution of 15m euros for the operational expenses, as well as 50m euros for capital expenses from the national authorities.

Q6.2 Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title. To do that, please answer the following questions:

Q6.2(a) Explain briefly how the European Capital of Culture will make use of and develop the city's cultural infrastructure.

Sultan Tekke Mosque, as well as natural spots, the sea, the coastline, the salt-lakes, the mountainous region and the forest Larnaka Region. Through events that take place in these places, we intend to highlight the importance of these monuments. Furthermore, the existing cultural infrastructure shall be fully used, including theatres, Museums, public spaces and libraries, while the ECoC 2030 project foresees the development of a brand new cultural complex, that includes an Arts Centre, a Design Centre and the Museum of People. The following table summarizes some of the most prominent examples of the existing cultural infrastructure that our programme makes use of.

Larnaka's candidacy for ECoC is widely supported by local, regional and national authorities, as well as the citizens of Larnaka.

At the local level:

By a unanimous decision in April of

The ECoC programme we are proposing makes wide use of the city's infrastructure, urban, natural and cultural. Firstly, we are planning to use the city's and region's rich archaeological and historic infrastructure. These include archaeological landmarks, like the prehistoric settlement of Chirokitia, the Medieval Castle, the Hala



Cultural Infrastructure	Type	Location	Capacity
Municipal Theatre "G. Lykourgos"	Indoor Theatre	Larnaka	400
Skala Municipal Theatre	Indoor Theatre	Larnaka	400
Municipal Theatre of Pervolia	Indoor Theatre	Pervolia	340
Municipal Theatre of Oroklini	Indoor Theatre	Oroklini	200
Pattichion Amphitheatre	Open - Air Theatre	Larnaka	2000
Municipal Amphitheatre of Dromoloxia-Meneou	Open - Air Theatre	Dromolaxia-Meneou	400
Pieridis Museum	Museum	Larnaka	
Archeaological Museum	Museum	Larnaka	
Museum of Christian Art	Museum	Aradippou	
Toy Museum	Museum	Aradippou	
Craft of Caning Museum	Museum	Livadia	
Bee and Embroidery Museum	Museum	Kato Dris	
Museum of Folk Art	Museum	Kiti	
Costas Argyrou Museum	Museum	Mazotos	
Community Museum of Kalavassos	Museum	Kalavassos	
Basketry Museum	Museum	Chirokitia	
Historical and Folklore Museum of Agios Theodoros	Museum	Agios Theodoros	
Museum of Traditional Embroidery and Silversmithing	Museum	Lefkara	
Kallinikio Municipal Museum	Museum	Athienou	
Common Ground	Gallery	Larnaka	
Apothiki79	Gallery	Larnaka	
Municipal Gallery of Larnaka	Gallery	Larnaka	
Kypriaki Gonia	Gallery	Larnaka	
Municipal Library of Larnaka	Library	Larnaka	
Municipal Library of Oroklini	Library	Oroklini	
American University of Cyprus	Conference Hall	Larnaka	115
Larnaca Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth	Conference Hall	Larnaka	200
Petrolina Group Headquarters	Conference Hall	Larnaka	150
University UCLan Cyprus	Conference Hall	Pyla	300
Lefkara Conference Centre	Conference Hall	Lefkara	500
Kiti Conference Centre	Conference Hall	Dromolaxia-Meneou	180
Environmental Information Centre of the Mountainous Region	Conference Hall	Skarinou	100
Europe Square	Public Space	Larnaka	
Salina Park	Public Space	Larnaka	
Zouhourri Square	Public Space	Larnaka	
"Mesogios" Artists' Park	Public Space	Larnaka	
European History Park	Public Space	Aradippou	
Tassos Mitsopoulos Park	Public Space	Livadia	
Kamiros Park	Public Space	Dromolaxia-Meneou	
Municipal Park of Saints Martha and Maria	Public Space	Dromolaxia-Meneou	
Pavlos Liassidis Park	Public Space	Dromolaxia-Meneou	
Petraion Sculpture Park	Public Space	Mazotos	
Municipal Park of Agios Theodoros	Public Space	Agios Theodoros	
Artists In Residency Larnaka 2030	Residency Space	Larnaka	

Q6.2(b) What are the city's assets in terms of accessibility (regional, national and international transport)?

The geographical location of Larnaka in the middle of the southern coastline of Cyprus, combined with the island's position at the crossroads of three continents, gives the city particular advantages in terms of international, national and regional connectivity.

International connectivity

Being an island, Cyprus is accessible only by sea and air. This gives Larnaka an advantage over other cities due to its infrastructure. Larnaka is home to the largest airport in the country, the Glafkos Clerides International Airport, which is only 5 kilometres from the city centre. It also has a commercial and passenger port within the boundaries of the commercial centre and the first Marina of Cyprus in the heart of the city.

The new airport was completed at the end of 2009 and is a modern facility bustling with travellers, especially during the summer months, serving 8 million passengers per year. Expansion of the airport's capacity to 9.0 million passengers per year is expected to be implemented over the next five years. The city's port and marina were completed several years ago but have since undergone significant upgrades and expansion. The central government has very recently committed to the complete renovation of the marina and the expansion and deepening of the port so as to meet modern requirements. Larnaka International Airport is the southernmost and easternmost airport in the European Union, while the city's port is the easternmost port in the EU. This combination makes Larnaka the gateway to and from the EU to and from Asia and Africa. The Urban Sustainable Strategic Plan Larnaka 2040 completed in 2014 identifies "Gateway City" as one of the four pillars of the city's development. The city's ferry connection is mainly conducted by ships and cruise ships from Israel and Greece, while there is also a ferry connection with eastern touristic regions.

National connectivity

Cyprus has no railway network or other means of transport other than motor vehicles for private and public use. Larnaka is in the centre of an excellent national road network connecting the city with the other major cities of the republic, Limassol, Nicosia and Agia Napa. The cumulative distance of Larnaka from the other main urban centres of Cyprus is much shorter than that of the other cities. Furthermore, the existing Intercity Public Transport system, which is constantly being modernised with new modern buses and electronic systems, makes travel between the cities easy and pleasant for locals and visitors alike.

Regional and local connectivity

Larnaka and its broader region have a modern and safe road network in terms of primary and secondary roads and an adequate network of local roads that are constantly being upgraded. The condition of the road system combined with the number of motor vehicles means that traffic congestion is limited compared to other cities in Cyprus. The city has an ever-expanding network of cycling routes while various projects have been completed in the urban centre, aiming to provide access for people with disabilities. Projects that started in September 2024 will render a large part of the city centre fully accessible to people with disabilities, while reducing vehicle traffic and increasing space for pedestrians and cyclists. The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) of the wider Larnaka area was completed in 2021 and the implementation of the first phase of the plan, which involves the creation of cycle paths and bus lanes on the main roads of the metropolitan area, is expected to begin by the end of 2024. The first phase of the project also includes the creation of a park-and-ride option at the city's northbound and westbound exits. The implementation of the SUMP will make regional and local travel easy and enjoyable. The Public Urban Transport system has been upgraded in recent years with new urban buses that meet the needs of locals and visitors alike. Modern bus stops with electronic information have started to be installed, while minibuses serve routes in the narrow streets of the urban centre. The gentle topography of the city, with minimal differences in altitude, make Larnaka an ideal place for pedestrians and cyclists who can easily enjoy the natural beauties of the city, such as the coastline, the salt lakes and the picturesque historic centre.

Q6.2(c) What is the city's absorption capacity in terms of tourists' accommodation?

Based on the most recent statistics, the current tourist capacity of the entire Larnaka Region consists of:

- 5,817 licensed accommodation beds
- 100 licensed lodgings (including hotels, organised apartments, tourist villages and traditional buildings)
- As of April 2024, 1,000 Airbnb lodgings with a total capacity of 3,706 beds were registered. We estimate that the number of available beds has increased since then.

It is important to note that, around 38% of hotel beds are in Larnaka's city centre.



Q6.3 In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plans to carry out in connection with the European Capital of Culture action between now and the year of the title?

The following table lists the main projects currently being carried out and scheduled to begin in the coming years which are linked to the ECoC 2030 project.

No.	Title of project	Cost	Estimated Completion Date
1	Creation of an open space for events in Tsiakkilero Refugee Settlement	2,3€ m.	2025
2	Redevelopment of the area of the Pattiochio Park	6,7€ m.	2025
3	Redevelopment of streets and the access of disabled persons in the centre of Larnaka	8,7€ m.	2026
4	Redevelopment of Acropolis and Alkis squares	4,6€ m.	2026
5	Redevelopment of the neighbourhood of Agios Ioannis	8,5€ m.	2028
6	Construction of the Salk Lakes Environmental Centre	3,5€ m.	2027
7	Redevelopment of the historic centre in Livadia	3€ m.	2025
8	Revitalization of the old neighbourhood of Oroklini	4€ m.	2026
9	Coastal walkway in Oroklini	4,5€ m.	2026
10	Construction of an open amphitheatre and redevelopment of Europa Park in Oroklini	4€ m.	2029
11	Consolidation of the archaeological sites of ancient Kition	3,5€ m.	2029
12	Improvement of the streets around the "Mesogios" Artists' Park	2€ m.	2027
13	Structural and qualitative upgrade of Skala Theatre	3,5€ m.	2027
14	Improvement of the organized beaches of Larnaca and Oroklini	1,5€ m.	2027
15	Qualitative upgrade of the streets in the commercial centre, securing access for disabled individuals	8€ m.	2029
16	Qualitative upgrade of the Laiki Gitonia (traditional neighbourhood in the city centre)	2,5€ m.	2028
17	Restoration of the historic REX cinema, will be used as a Cinema Centre	4,5€ m.	2028
18	Improvements of the Mackenzie waterfront	2€ m.	2027
19	Construction of an open coastal sports centre	1,5€ m.	2027
20	King Paul Square - Post Office	6,0€ m.	2029
21	Structural and qualitative upgrade of the Municipal Theatre	2,5€ m.	2028
22	Maintenance works of the former Ottoman Bank (Larnaca Archives, CMMI)	€ 400,000	2026
23	Completion of the Lyceum of Greek Women, creation of a -220seat theatre	€ 500,000	2027
24	Construction of an Environmental Park in Livadia	5€ m.	2029
25	Extension of the Craft of Caning Museum in Livadia, inclusion of a Folklore Museum on Silk and Cotton	2,5€ m.	2028
26	New Cultural Complex (Arts Centre, Design Centre, Museum of People)	35€ m.	2029
27	Redevelopment of the Marina area and construction of a Yacht Club	30€ m.	2030
28	School of Marine Science and Technology and Sustainable Development	15€ m.	2030
29	Centre of Excellence - CMMI	4,0€ m.	2030
30	Centre for Marine Archaeology	15€ m.	2030
31	Central Transfer Station	1,5€ m.	2027
32	Park and Ride construction	3,7€ m.	2027
33	Improvement of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan axes	18€ m.	2026

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