

The Crossroads of our Imaginations





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Introduction ²

Contribution to long-term strategy ⁶

Cultural and artistic content ²⁶

European dimension ⁵⁰

Outreach ⁶⁶

Management ⁷⁸

Capacity to deliver ⁹⁴

The Montpellier 2028 bid would not exist without the vision, design, nurturing, discussions, enhancements, work, advice, implementation, fine tuning, and projections of everyone who has participated in this exciting and unprecedented adventure.

Each and every contributor has enabled us to build this communal project. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who have been involved since the bid's earliest moments and throughout the entire process.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to all the residents and various stakeholders from the cultural, educational, social, and economic sectors, as well as to the different associations, private partners, patrons, cultural operators, institutions, teams from local authorities within the M28 area, and members of our association's Board of Directors who have contributed to this collective endeavour.

Montpellier 2028 is proud to stand at the crossroads of their imaginations.

The M28 team (past and present): Vanessa Avila, Délia Bordeau, Sixtine Capodanno, Thomas Corolleur, Anaïs Danon, Nicolas Dubourg, Lisa Fraïsse, Nathalie Gandreau, Sophie Léron, Aurélie Noailly, Alice Robert, Juliana Stoppa.

With contributions from Grégory Bozonnet, Fabrice Manuel, Olivier Nys, Régis Penalva, Stéphanie Portier, Aurélie Pothon, Clément Prunières, the teams of all partner communities, and CEPÉL (Centre for Political and Social Studies).



Introduction

general considerations

1 Has the capital year programme concept described during the pre-selection phase changed in the final selection phase? If yes, please describe the new concept and explain the reasons for the change.

We decided to amend the general concept of the bid for the final selection phase. Initially, our concept had been "Our collective imagination". We changed that to "The Crossroads of our Imaginations".

The idea of imaginations – with an emphasis on the plural – is still central to our concept since it seems best able to allow us to address today's environmental and societal challenges through the prism of culture.

The Crossroads of our Imaginations

The creative frameworks shaping the programme have also shifted, in line with the general concept. They are now: **Living Trails** 🌿, **Time Machine** ⌚, and **Trans!** ⚡. **Living Trails** covers the issue of life in a broad sense, referring also to the water currents that are such a vital part of our region's makeup and identity. The idea behind **Time Machine** is that of a historical crossroads. **Trans!** reflects the identity of our bid, referring both to movement and change (see Q5).

The pillars of our programme – **CONNECT - ACT - CELEBRATE** – remain unchanged.

Why did we make this choice? Primarily to ***clarify what might have been implied but not explicitly stated in our initial proposal***. In other words, our intention was also to establish a ***stronger connection between our programming and Montpellier's history and local heritage***.

After all, Montpellier isn't the most ancient town in France. It's not entirely new either; it was established not even a thousand years ago. Strictly speaking, Montpellier lacks a "Gallic foundation". This might explain why its residents seem to have a distinctive perspective on their origins, ***displaying a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to their identity***. In good times and bad, they have adopted ***creative ways of forging connections***.

Even before it emerged as a city or was given its name, Montpellier became a pivotal intersection along the *Via Domitia*. It stood at the crossroads between Barcelona to the west and Genoa to the east, where the salt route intersected with the paths leading to Compostela. It functioned as a gateway both to the Mediterranean and Middle East.

While not all roads lead to Montpellier, it is in this city where **major European routes have been destined to converge**. From its beginnings, it has served as **a thoroughfare, a laboratory of cultural blending, and a centre of hospitality**. The impact of this history is profoundly ingrained in the local culture.

A UNIQUE BLEND OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Montpellier has embraced a cosmopolitan identity dating back to the thirteenth century. The city's culture evolved through the lived experiences of its residents, who bore witness to the establishment of one of the world's earliest medical universities. Fuelled by the expertise both of Jewish physicians escaping Almohad Spain and Arab doctors, this university rapidly gained prominence as a bastion of knowledge in its era. Yet, our shared identity, developed at the local level, is not part of any larger narrative.

In our contemporary world, where society grapples with significant **social and environmental challenges**, it is imperative that we not only draw upon our history but also embrace the **values of hospitality** it embodies. For an ECoC in Montpellier, we commit to a dynamic interpretation of this legacy with its power to provide better answers for the future. Most importantly, we will celebrate these commitments by situating them within a broader **European context**.

A PLACE OF EXPERIMENTATION AND INVENTION

so fertile; and throughout our history, chaos has consistently served as a wellspring of ingenuity.

Montpellier, known for its creative spirit, avant-garde culture, and innovation, has cultivated this identity over the course of its occasionally tumultuous past. It stands as a region where political and social experimentations have thrived. For instance, from 1204 to 1789, Montpellier was free of a central control and administered by a town government—a rarity in France. Even in **the face of the most formidable historical trials, the bond connecting the residents and communities comprising this territory has remained unbroken**.

However, we are aware that in the coming decades, **these capacities for resilience will be put to the test** due to climate change and the crisis affecting all forms of life. Our urban spaces will have to be redesigned to remain liveable; in rural areas, new crops will have to replace old ones; and some of our coastal regions are directly threatened by rising sea levels. Montpellier was once dubbed "the gifted" city. In tomorrow's world, being a gifted student will not be enough. We will have to be **bold and inventive**.

CONFRONTING CHALLENGE THROUGH CULTURE

Whether we are trying to invent **new imaginary** worlds or breathe new life into old ones, we are convinced of one thing: **monoculture inevitably makes cultures arid and barren**.

While we do not deny the perils that lie ahead, we approach this phase of our history with a degree of optimism. Because we understand that the **democratic and ecological challenges** that may emerge will never entirely erode the ties that **unite us**. This belief is rooted not only in our past history but, most importantly, **in our unique connection with culture**. Hybridisation, overcoming imaginary or material boundaries—whether among various cultural realms, artistic disciplines, or the intersection of nature and culture—and daily dialogue will empower us to confront these challenges once more.

To address the numerous challenges we face today, we need new visions and occasions to share our imaginations. In this respect, the City of Montpellier and the affiliated regions involved in the proposal have gathered **a significant amount of expertise that we are ready to widely disseminate and share as well as further develop through cooperative initiatives**.

Our key message: culture helps us to develop the motivation and competences for sharing.

To address the numerous challenges we face today, we need new visions and occasions to share our imaginations.



Contribution to long-term strategy

As a crossroads, the M28 region is by definition plural. That is a strength. But it is crucial to establish a clear and collective strategy to prevent the composite nature of the region from causing fragmentation among participants and a chaotic proliferation of collective imaginations.

2 Describe any changes made to the cultural strategy since the pre-qualification phase, and if applicable, the role of the pre-qualification phase in these changes. Clarify the specific priorities within this strategy that the "European Capital of Culture" initiative can support and how.

the City Council on July 18th, 2023, this document emerged as a true manifesto for the M28 area at the conclusion of the pre-selection process. In 2023, the relevance of our proposal was affirmed, allowing us to share it with all the collaborators engaged in this endeavour. During discussions with the municipalities, commitments and visions were deliberated, uncovering numerous areas of agreement and shared aspirations, particularly regarding youth, heritage preservation, and hosting artists.

Montpellier's cultural strategy projects the region into the next two decades. Outlined in the initial bid document and unanimously endorsed by both the Metropolitan Council on July 11th and

At the same time, the *Hérault Department* and the *Occitanie Region* have both adopted cultural strategies for 2028, aimed at making culture accessible to all and aligning with us on key issues.



M28: A DRIVER OF REGIONAL COOPERATION AND COHESION

Collaborating, adopting a more inclusive approach, taking the variety of our regions into account, aligning our initiatives with the daily experiences of local communities, and appreciating the diversity of cultures represented while maintaining our *tradition of hospitality* towards newcomers—these principles are at the core of M28's commitment. They mirror our aspiration to invent new forms of regional collaboration.

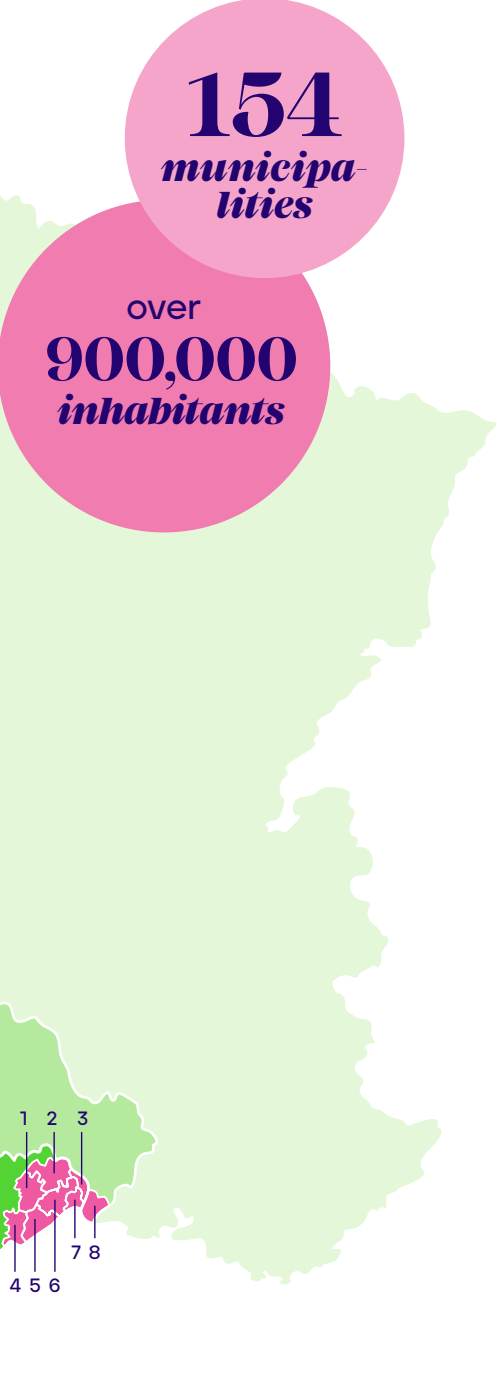
Since the pre-selection phase, the bid area has welcomed two additional inter-municipalities, showcasing its vitality: the federations of municipalities of **Terre de Camargue** and **Pays de l'Or**. 154 municipalities and over 900,000 inhabitants are involved in our initiative to create a regional programme that integrates and facilitates various projects. Montpellier, Sète, and the six other local communities that are now partners in the M28 bid (see map) have explored different levels of cooperation:

- At the inter-municipal level**, a partnership agreement process is underway to share the challenges of our respective areas, paving the way for new work practices;
- At the regional level**, thanks to a partnership agreement with the Occitanie Region;
- At the level of the M28 area**, the emergence of the RECIPRO-CITY project, an exchange and cooperation platform that was trialled and then activated in May 2023 (see Q3), in response to a proposal from the cultural figures who worked on the Call for Projects, aligns with our desire to build better, more meaningful programming;

- Intercommunities
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Vallée de l'Hérault | 5 Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée |
| 2 Grand Pic Saint-Loup | 6 Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole |
| 3 Pays de Lunel | 7 Pays de l'Or |
| 4 Hérault Méditerranée | 8 Terre de Camargue |

At the European level, our candidacy has expanded our horizons, facilitated contact with our neighbours, and already established new norms of collaboration. With assistance from the Montpellier 2028 Association, cultural actors in our region have been able to turn to other countries, drawing valuable insights from their interactions. Consequently, the projects presented within the framework of the bid have gained strength, and enduring partnerships are already taking shape. This approach resonates with our longstanding identity as a welcoming crossroads city, and it will imbue all our cultural strategies, especially in the realm of artistic creation, with a welcoming policy for **artists in residence** that is open to the global community, throughout the bid area (Maison Bazille, Tuilerie de Massane, Château Laurens, Villa Salis).

In our ongoing engagement with the African continent (see Q11), we hosted the inaugural Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier in October 2023. Building upon the connections established in 2021 during the organisation of the New Africa-France Summit, this event will explore new areas of collaboration, notably between artists and scientists. M28 will provide this well-established event with a fresh international outlook, serving as a prominent showcase of **Europe's commitment to its ties with Africa**. This initiative aims to reaffirm our region as a crossroads for the exchange of ideas.



FOCUSING ON AUDIENCE DIVERSITY

The application process has prompted us to view the public in a broader context, recognising their diverse backgrounds as well as the common threads that unite them across various regions. This novel approach to **engaging with audiences** is what we will now put into practice.

Through a **trans-sectoral** approach, the universal enthusiasm generated by M28 will serve as a valuable resource for promoting dialogue among stakeholders working in traditionally disparate fields, such as social development, economy, urban planning, inclusion, and education. This idea was first put to the test in the renovation project for the Mosson district, a showcase for the transformation of the city through culture, where collaboration with local players and residents, all stakeholders in the project, was set as a priority and a key factor in the success of urban renewal.

The very idea of a European Capital of Culture is a powerful **generator for imaginations** and an essential resource for thinking about the future. Through a **trans-generational approach**, our "child-friendly city" strategy seeks to examine urban development and the progression of our cultural policies through the lens of children (refer to the **Mille Formes** project in Q3). This approach ensures that public spaces are tailored to the needs of all vulnerable demographics, including senior citizens. The result: a lasting impact on the way we think about the city of tomorrow, and **the inclusion** of all segments of society.

The conservation, revitalisation, and repurposing of existing sites will be hallmarks of M28.

CULTURE IN OUR DAILY ENVIRONMENT

Our region is rich in **urban innovation**. We have long been concerned about the question of our habitat, from La Grande-Motte (which has been labelled an example of "Twentieth-Century Heritage", and whose iconic style transcends the ages) to the Antigone district of Montpellier, and from the Chais of Sète to the natural spaces of the Camargue. Central to these contemplative spaces **is the convergence** of artists with educational, economic, and social stakeholders, the embrace of all communities, and a novel perspective on urban transformation that integrates **environmental considerations**. The conservation, revitalisation, and repurposing of existing sites will be hallmarks of M28. Our M28 bid has also set the challenge of getting locals and visitors to circulate throughout the region.

We firmly believe that culture and the preservation and enhancement of our heritage, encompassing urban, architectural, and natural landscapes, can contribute significantly to achieving these goals by **reshaping our cities and environments**. Many initiatives within M28 are guided by that belief, representing different outlets for imagining interconnections and environmentally sensitive discoveries.

In Sète, for example, **former wine** cellars will be transformed into an expansive 10,000 square-meter cultural hub. This complex will encompass an expanded International Museum of Modest Arts areas designated for creative and cultural industries, co-working spaces, training facilities, as well as residential and dining areas, along with dedicated spaces for live performances.

In Le Grau-du-Roi, **the Sana** (a former sanatorium) is set to undergo a transformation into a collaborative workspace for participants in the cultural, economic, and research (CNRS) sectors. This space will be dedicated to addressing the challenges posed by ecological and digital transitions, as well as emerging economic and social dynamics.

In **Aniane**, a rural area facing significant economic revitalisation challenges, the refurbishment of an abbey will pave the way for the establishment of an arts and crafts village. At **Montferrand Castle**, which has been earmarked as a future observation point for the landscape, environment, and urban planning.

In **Valergues**, where the municipality is undertaking an extensive project on an unoccupied complex adjacent to the eleventh-century Sainte-Agathe church, for the rehabilitation and extension of the multimedia library and the restructuring of the adjoining area.

In Agde, the renovated **Château Laurens** and the rejuvenated Parc Belle-Isle linked to the town centre via a footbridge spanning the Hérault River, are poised to attract an annual influx of up to 90,000 visitors, fundamentally altering the town's mobility landscape.

In Montpellier, the **"Permisd'Imaginer"** initiative underscores our commitment to expanding experimental zones aimed at fostering community engagement and facilitating transformation, with the goal of enhancing the appeal of neighbourhoods that have been viewed as less desirable. The inaugural project for this initiative took place in 2023 within the Mosson district, centred around the Assas Tower, originally earmarked for demolition. The **LUNES** ¹³ project was conceived as part of the ANRU (*Agence Nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine* [national urban renewal agency]) project in Mosson.

The presence of **art in our shared spaces**, whether urban or natural, plays a major role in the development of our imaginations. Building on our region's rich tradition, we will sustain this momentum by introducing a fifth tramway line in Montpellier in 2025, featuring the artistic vision of Barthélémy Toguo. Additionally, we will establish an art park within Sète's business improvement district. A 20-metre-high statue by the artist from Sète Robert Combas will offer the public a panoramic view of the entire bid area. At the same time, both Montpellier and Sète have established Arts Steering Committees tasked with inviting, offering guidance to, and advising property developers on their selection of art installations. Montpellier is also developing a programme to temporarily allocate its vacant commercial spaces to artists, providing them with creative venues and enhancing their visibility within the city centre for local residents to appreciate.

Another significant project that embodies this vision is the creation of a pedestrian and cycling path along the waterfront, stretching across the 10 kilometres of **the Lunel Canal banks**. This initiative will offer visitors a new arts journey adorned with art installations, cultural venues, and events—a cultural and ecological environment that serves as a platform for exploring natural heritage and promoting awareness of environmental issues.

This project aligns with the **overall sustainable development strategy** embraced by the M28 partner communities, echoing the region's tourism growth plan and our commitment to encourage **environmentally friendly modes of transportation**. These routes will be expanded across the bid region, actively promoted, and integrated into the **Les Grandes Traversées** ⁰¹ project framework.

RETHINKING THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF DECENTRALISATION

Montpellier has been a pioneer in cultural decentralisation, implementing an ambitious policy aimed at revitalising the cultural landscape. While our region features a rich array of cultural institutions across various fields, M28 presents an opportunity to reevaluate these institutions, their collaborative efforts, methods of production, and their impact on the European stage. This re-evaluation should encompass considerations of **ecological sustainability and democratic engagement**.

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This aspiration to serve as a **testing ground** for the development of innovative creative models will be reflected in the launch of major redesign projects across diverse cultural fields, including theatre (ENSAD / Le Théâtre des 13 vents [a national theatre]), dance (ICI-CCN / Montpellier Danse [national centre for choreography]), and contemporary art (Mo.Co / FRAC [Regional Fond for Contemporary Art]). To exemplify this vision, Domaine d'O European Centre for Theatre will be inaugurated in 2024. Set in an extraordinary natural space, it will include a summer festival (Le Printemps des Comédiens) and a theatre season encapsulated in a single institution possessing robust production capabilities.

While the bid process has offered an ideal framework for **experimenting** with these commitments, achieving the status of a European Capital of Culture will enable us to translate them into tangible initiatives, establish a sustainable foundation for the efforts undertaken, and **transform** our vision into a multitude of practical implementations.

THE M28 LAB

The outdoor and indoor spaces freed up in 2025 in the heart of Montpellier's city centre as part of the Pagézy-Antigone development project will become The M28 Lab.

Lab of Possibilities:

in the spaces themselves, through *in situ* reflection on the future uses of the Salle Pagézy and other spaces where nothing has yet been planned;

M28 Lab:

to host initiatives in the run-up to 2028; location of the Europe Task Force; work by the Design for Change teams, an immersive space for previewing major M28 projects across the M28 bid area;

Lab of the Real:

a shared, open space, a factory, for artists, craftspeople, locals, and "makers";

Lab of the Future:

location for the annual **Academy of the Future** ¹⁵ meetings, Hackathons, and other water-related events at the Icareward Unesco centre, as well as a focal point for collective reflection.

13 LUNES

LUNES will span the next five years (2024-2028), encompassing the five circus arts disciplines: aerial acts, acrobatics, balance feats, clowning, and juggling. These five areas of focus will hybridise across various regions, beginning in the Mosson district and extending to encompass several of the fourteen municipalities along the Mosson River. Hybridisation will occur not only within various disciplines but also in collaboration with diverse economic sectors. This collaborative effort will involve stakeholders from the healthcare and caregiving sectors, as well as sports associations. Water will be central to the project—swimming pools, rivers, the seaside, or a lake. We will organise annual international conventions related to different fields, extending invitations to European companies to participate in residencies, as we prepare for a spectacular 2028!

Producers: Créature.s Créatrice.s
Artist Partners: Circa, La Verrerie, Toulouse-Occitanie Ésacto/Lido school of circus arts, Montpellier Institut du Sein, CHU, Razel Bec, University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm, Cirkus Cirkör, ESAC, Les Halles de Schaerbeek (BE), Festival Up!, Circus centrum, Festival Mira Miro, Acapa Fontys, Festival Circolo, MHSC, Maison des Jonglages de la Courneuve,

Atlas Paillade, Dynamo (Workspace for circus and performing arts) - Odense/Denmark, Circus Village - Hvitsten/Norway, école du Samovar (clown school), Cirko Vertigo, Mirabilia - Serralunga d'Alba/Italy, Budweis 2028
Where: Mosson district and the 14 municipalities linked to the Mosson River
When: year-round
Budget: €600K





3

Have your intentions regarding the long-term impact of the "European Capital of Culture on the City" programme changed since you were shortlisted? If so, please describe the changes or additional outcomes anticipated.

The new phase underway has allowed us to gain better clarity on the bid's specific concerns and its impact on different key points. This includes environmental concerns, transportation, our capacity to build a child-friendly city, and further empowering local stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

CLARIFYING THE CHALLENGES

The bid process has been an opportunity to reach out to professionals, the public, and the community and clarify the *distinctive environmental traits* of the region and the challenges related to addressing environmental crises, adapting to the current climate warming trend, and *preserving biodiversity*. To accomplish this, M28 will strengthen local collaborations between cultural stakeholders and those engaged in the ecological transition (such as through tools developed by the *Climate Fresk* and the New Narratives Collage), as well as through skill development and training programmes in partnership with national and international organisations (such as AFDAS, Les Augures, IETM's Green School, etc.).

MODELLING CHANGE AND MOBILISING IMAGINATIONS FOR TRANSITION

Focusing on the key theme of preserving water resources in the region, M28's ambition is to cultivate a *vision of transition* and greater awareness of The Living world and biodiversity in the region and beyond. The inclusion of ecological issues in arts proposals will be actively pursued, alongside the adoption of model practices within the team, guided by an *eco-responsibility charter*.

A COMPREHENSIVE, STRUCTURALLY INTEGRATED APPROACH TOWARDS "CARBON NEUTRALITY"

A primary aim is to make Montpellier 2028 into a model of ecological excellence. But beyond that, M28's broader objective is to integrate the multi-sector policies of our regions in a way that will lead to a new operational paradigm centred around "carbon neutrality".

With this objective in mind, M28 has signed a letter of intent with EDF (French power company) to leverage their expertise and explore a collaboration with their relevant subsidiaries engaged in renewable energies and decarbonisation initiatives. This support has two objectives:

- **Defining and implementing a method:**
EDF will provide the expertise needed to set up the methodological foundation for decarbonising our region for the world of tomorrow.
- **Defining solutions:**
EDF will study concrete decarbonisation initiatives (renewable energies, energy performance of buildings, etc.) adapted to the ECoC event, while planning them for the long term. Initiatives will cover both permanent infrastructure and pop-up events.

M28 COMMITMENTS

| | |
|---|--|
| SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION FOR AUDIENCES, ARTISTS, AND CULTURAL OPERATORS | WASTE REDUCTION |
| PRESERVATION OF WATER RESOURCES | ECO-PRODUCTION: CIRCULAR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT |
| COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION OF WORKS AND TEAMS | TECHNICAL SOBRIETY: RESOURCE SHARING |
| ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION | RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL SOBRIETY |
| SUSTAINABLE DINING | FRUGAL AND BIOCLIMATIC ARCHITECTURE |

M28 × Électricité de France (EDF): France's leading electricity producer and supplier

AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY ALIGNED WITH THE REGION'S OVERARCHING COMMITMENTS, INCLUDING THE FUTURE CARBON COOPERATION INITIATIVE

Three areas of action:

— **Massive reduction in direct and indirect CO2 emissions.** Montpellier is already among the few signatories of the "Global Compact", a United Nations initiative founded on principles of social and environmental responsibility. This commitment serves as a powerful message to suppliers of services and goods to the Montpellier Metropole, emphasising the necessity for them to prioritise social and environmental virtues. The region also functions as a natural

ecosystem for renewable energies, capable of providing decarbonisation solutions for programme initiatives.

— **Strengthening carbon sequestration capacities:** the bid area is both extensive and diverse. The expanse of rural areas plays a pivotal role in identifying opportunities for carbon sequestration and even carbon offsetting. The initiative to plant 50,000 trees in the Montpellier metropolitan area by 2026 will undoubtedly make a significant contribution.

— **Backing decarbonisation projects beyond the region, ensuring the complete elimination of remaining emissions from the area, and establishing a carbon offset system:** Oklima, a subsidiary of EDF, has access to a catalogue of accredited and certified projects aimed at compensating for any remaining emissions, including those not offset locally.

CREATING MOBILITY
SOLUTIONS ON THE M28 SCALE

PRICING

Montpellier’s initiative to offer *free transportation* to its residents starting from 21 December 2023, underscores the city’s commitment to encouraging the use of public transportation. In the same spirit, the Occitanie Region’s continued dedication to providing *tickets on regional trains (TER)* at a cost of €1 for all the key moments of the programme will serve as a compelling incentive.

SYNCHRONISATION OF CULTURAL
AND TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULES

Whenever possible, the bid will include *adjustments to the schedule* to facilitate the utilisation of transportation services, especially the High Service Level bus network, which is designed to cover areas not currently served by trains. Conversely, the bid will provide an opportunity to promote and enhance this network, as well as improve the *interconnection between the various towns within the project*.

EXPLORATORY INITIATIVES
AND RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS
ON MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

We will conduct trials for a *maritime shuttle service* between Agde and Le Grau-du-Roi during events, following the successful model already established on the Etang de Thau during an eponymous festival, as well as for all festivals in Sète. These trials will be conducted during daytime hours to alleviate traffic congestion along the coast and take advantage of the most favourable visibility conditions during the off-season. These shuttle services can be coordinated with informational events to promote awareness of the coastal ecosystem, including beaches, lagoons, and other features.

ENCOURAGING THE USE OF BICYCLES
AND ELECTRIC BIKES

The Eurovélo 8 route linking Athens to Cádiz passes through the bid area between the towns of Agde and Aigues-Mortes. For us, it represents an opportunity to offer artistic and cultural journeys and initiatives aimed at promoting the use of this transportation route, especially during the cooler months from September to June. This bid will allow us to finalise the cycle route in Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone and *improve intermodal transportation*, with a focus on train and bicycle connectivity. A collaboration has been established with the Cyclinks Association, which advocates for social and intergenerational connections through bicycle use.

BUILDING A
CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY

Youth are still at the heart of the Montpellier 2028 bid.

CHILDREN:
AGENTS OF CHANGE

In 2022, Montpellier became the first French city to become part of the *international network of City of Children*. Comprising more than 200 cities across 15 countries globally, this network is inspired by the philosophy and ideas of Francesco Tonucci. His initiative advocates for a re-evaluation of urban environments and their development from the point of view of children.

One of the first steps in this process was to devise and experiment with approaches for *engaging with children in consultations*. The Children’s Municipal Council was immediately recognized as a viable method for accomplishing this goal. Another method was quickly tested through a consultation involving students from the Miro School (left bank business improvement district). This initiative took place during extracurricular hours, facilitated by school activity leaders, with the aim of collecting kids’ perspectives and suggestions for the enhancement of their school’s atrium.

Another feasible method could involve conducting consultations with children in the regions undergoing transformation as part of the bid. These consultations could be scheduled during school hours and conducted by volunteer teachers, with the assistance of guest speakers in their classrooms, such as architects, landscape architects, and other experts.

M28 COMMITMENT
ESTABLISH A DESIGNATION
FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES WITHIN
THE M28 PROGRAM,
ENSURING IT ENDURES AS A LASTING
LEGACY FOR ALL CULTURAL
INSTITUTIONS BEYOND
THE CAPITAL YEAR.

NEW ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES
FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

The *Mille Formes* project, a collaboration with the Centre Pompidou, serves as an art initiation centre for children ages 0-6 and is a significant feature of the Montpellier 2028 bid. It also represents our commitment to implementing tools and systems that are specially designed for children and families.

The Cinema Nestor Burma, situated in the heart of a metropolitan policy district, serves as a municipal cinema showcasing an art-house film program. To enhance its impact, an expansion is scheduled by 2028, which will include the addition of a second screen exclusively devoted to programming for young audiences. This project further underscores its social and regional significance, transforming it into a hub for local associations and community members. It also maintains its active engagement in Montpellier’s prominent arts and culture events and will collaborate as a partner in projects like *Magic in the Moonlight* ²² and *A European Conversation* ⁴⁶ organized by Cinemed and La Comédie du Livre.

M28 x Société nationale
des chemins de fer français (SNCF),
one of Europe’s leading transportation
and logistics groups

The SNCF Group and its different subsidiaries support our bid. **SNCF Gares & Connexions** is dedicated to exploring the potential for showcasing M28’s arts projects within the cultural spaces of French railway stations, as well as, similar to what we are implementing in 2023, in selected TER stations across the region (Frontignan, Lunel, Sète, Vic-la-Gardiole, etc.). These initiatives will be crafted to bolster the momentum of regional cooperation, facilitate mobility enhancements throughout the greater community space, and ensure equitable access to cultural experiences.

To fully embrace the European aspect of M28, **SNCF Gares & Connexions** is dedicated to examining all proposals that involve creating **novel station experiences** that extend beyond our national borders. This includes envisioning collaborative programming with multiple stations across Europe. At the same time, **SNCF Immobilier** commits to exploring the potential of offering unused land (either land or buildings) that is presently unneeded for railway operations to support the development of projects associated with or leading up to the M28 programme. Indeed, within its **transitional**

urban planning strategy, SNCF Immobilier aims to streamline the conversion of railway assets into fresh destinations that possess regional, national, and even global appeal. The Ancienne Gare project in Lunel serves as a prime illustration of this approach and could serve as a catalyst for similar initiatives in other regions. In addition, the initiatives put forth by SNCF Immobilier to maximize the potential of railway properties, strategically situated in close proximity to stations, align with the previously mentioned concerns related to mobility and station revitalisation as addressed by Gares & Connexions.

SUPPORTING
THE ARTS AND CULTURE
IN OUR REGION

The *growth and organisation of the Cultural and Creative Industries ecosystem remain pivotal objectives for our candidacy*. Our region is home to nationally and globally recognised educational institutions, studios, and production companies specializing in the creative and digital sectors. Local authorities, for their part, support this sector through ambitious initiatives. These include encouraging corporate presence and growth, backing educational programmes for visual media, promoting festivals, providing locations for film productions, and facilitating professional gatherings (such as the ICONIC festival). For the second consecutive year, Montpellier is implementing a *fund to foster creativity* in this industry. In 2022, the inaugural edition of this initiative backed 32 projects in the visual media sector, encompassing both emerging and established entities, with an annual allocation of 720,000 euros.

Cultural and Creative Industry organisations are thus a major lever for economic development in the bid area. In Montpellier, the newly developed *Cité Créative* district has been envisioned as a hub for creative organisations. Ultimately, this district will encompass all the elements of a thriving ecosystem, including leading educational institutions, incubators, and businesses. At the centre of this district, the temporary urban development initiative known as *La Halle Tropisme* will emerge as a cultural third place, providing an extensive and diverse programme. It will accommodate over 200 entrepreneurs from the Cultural and Creative Industries and more than 60 artists.

Since the pre-selection phase, eight projects in the region have garnered success in the national call for projects titled "La Grande Fabrique de l'image", which is aimed at positioning France as a global leader in film and digital productions under the France 2030 funding initiative. These eight projects are distributed across Montpellier, Sète, and Pic Saint-Loup. This accomplishment further strengthens *plans to develop and structure the Cultural and Creative Industries within the Occitanie Region*, with a dedicated focus on addressing the training and employment requirements in this sector for the upcoming decade. In recent months, Montpellier has also consolidated a consortium of public and private players with a view to responding to the call for expressions of interest for the "Cultural and Creative Industries Resource Branch".

At the same time, the Occitanie Region is expanding its efforts through the implementation of the "Occitanie, ça tourne!" plan. This comprehensive initiative, with a budget of 80 million euros and extending until 2028, seeks to establish Occitanie Region as a prominent *European hub for Cultural and Creative Industries*. The overarching ambition is to generate 5,000 job opportunities within this sector by 2028.

Drawing inspiration from the support already provided to local stakeholders regarding environmental issues and the European dimension of projects (as discussed in Europe Task Force — see Q11), and with the aim of *enhancing assistance for cultural operators facing significant challenges*, M28 will launch a training programme under the guidance of its production and inclusion divisions. And consistent with our strategy of fostering connections (between culture and sports, culture and healthcare, culture, and science, etc.), we will establish a lasting *cross sector network*.

In the meantime, and as a way of formalising our capacity for collaborative learning and *developing prototypes that can be shared* on a European and global level, we established the RECIPRO-CITY platform in 2023.

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR
A NEW FORM OF LOCAL AND EUROPEAN
COOPERATION:

RECIPRO-CITY

The pre-selection phase affirmed our commitment to fostering a *new culture of collaboration*. Bid workshops, led by Les Sismo design team, involved local cultural, social, and institutional participants, private partners, associations, and artists. What they uncovered was a compartmentalised approach to work and a certain deficiency in mutual comprehension. The challenge of comprehending each other's areas of operation and instinctively collaborating was quickly recognised as one of the shortcomings in our project. In response, we have established forums for dialogue and collaborative brainstorming (as detailed in Q14), which provided a platform for the successful participants in the 2022 and 2023 Calls for Projects to explicitly express their need for a networking tool to streamline interactions. The result is the RECIPRO-CITY online collaborative platform.

In 2023, RECIPRO-CITY has initially been designed as a networking platform for all the developers of awarded projects, who are included in a common directory. Beyond that, it serves as a collaborative platform for sharing and exchanging resources, requests, needs, and ideas. The topics covered encompass a wide spectrum, including legal and administrative matters as well as communicating calls for projects and European networks.

Over the period 2024 to 2028, its features will be expanded, allowing it to grow and establish connections with *European and international partners*. In this way, it will become a virtual space for the *exchange of prototypes*.

BUILDING
INTER-REGIONAL
URBAN GOVERNANCE

From the very beginning, our application has aimed to advance a regional perspective founded on *the actual greater community space*, rather than strict administrative delineations, aligning with the EU's pilot project for *Functional Zones*.

Its objectives are twofold: to establish the metropolis as an inclusive hub for all cultures, and to foster a fresh regional outlook grounded in tangible territorial patterns and dynamics, revolving around flows, networks of exchange, and the use of space.

The aim is to develop *a new, inclusive territorial pact* that closely involves elected officials and community members, and, more broadly, to reevaluate methods of collaboration and alignment at a regional level. Some observers have begun to recognize the innovative nature of this commitment. They see that, on our scale, culture is being employed as "a platform for localised political representation", effectively making our project a step towards constructing inter-territorial urban governance. The result will undoubtedly serve as a defining and pivotal factor for M28's success.



4 Outline your strategies for overseeing and assessing the effects of holding the title on your city, as well as your approach to sharing evaluation outcomes with the public. The following questions could be examined in particular:

4.1 Who will carry out the evaluation?

gether researchers in political science and sociology.

For more than three decades, the CEPEL has been generating groundbreaking, **advanced research** in the field of sociology on cultural practices and public policy. It has also established collaborations with various research networks, public institutions, and professional associations in France and Europe. These partnerships include universities such as Barcelona, Porto, Bergen, London, Belgrade, Budapest, Bologna, and Coimbra. Currently, the CEPEL is actively participating in the H2020 "Uncharted" project, which delves into the diversity of values conveyed by cultural practices and policies across Europe.

The team has cultivated specialised proficiency in assessing the economic and social impacts of cultural institutions, and it possesses substantial experience in surveying both cultural audiences and stakeholders. The team is also deeply familiar with M28's partner regions, including their unique cultural concerns, along with their **economic, political, and social makeups**.

The consortium also includes university laboratories and specialist organisations in the fields of **culture, decarbonisation, and economics**. The RIRRA21 laboratory at Paul-Valéry University, tasked with executing the **MIRANDA project** (Montpellier Institute for Research/Creation on Art, Culture, and Heritage in a New Digital Age), recently awarded the 'Excellence in All Its Forms' call for projects under the France 2030 plan, spanning from 2024 to 2034, will take on the responsibility of analysing economic benefits and questions of welfare.

In addition, EDF will be responsible for assessing carbon emissions and formulating a carbon-neutral action plan and roadmap (as detailed in Q3). They will be in contact with the community of assessors in the various ECoCs.

4.2 What are the objectives and key milestones outlined in your evaluation strategy, spanning from the time of designation to the year in which the title is conferred?

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the objectives of the bid have been achieved over the long term. They echo the general and specific objectives defined by the European Commission in its ECoC evaluation guide:

The evaluation will be entrusted to a **multidisciplinary team** of university researchers. Coordination within the consortium will be led by the Centre d'Études Politiques et Sociales (CEPEL, UMR5112), a joint research unit of the CNRS and the University of Montpellier, bringing to-

Connect

Stimulate cross-sector cooperation between the world of culture and other sectors.

Connect local and international levels by encouraging transnational cooperation.

Develop local cooperation in all public policies.

ECOC OBJECTIVES

Foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities (GO2)

Promote the breadth, diversity, and European dimension of urban cultural offerings, including through international cooperation (SO1)

Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its connections with other sectors (SO3)

ECOC OBJECTIVES

Safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlighting their common features, developing citizens' sense of belonging to a common space (GO1)

Expand access to and participation in culture (SO2)

Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors (SO3)

Act

Build a cohesive vision of the region and the challenges faced by the 900,000 people who live here.

Involve citizens and professionals in addressing future challenges.

Experiment with cultural players.

Celebrate

Craft the city through artistic excellence.

Expand cultural accessibility in all areas and advocate for public diversity and inclusion.

Prepare imaginations for ecological change.

ECOC OBJECTIVES

Foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities (GO2)

Expand access to and participation in culture (SO2)

Raise the international profile of cities through culture (SO4)



4.3 Which reference studies or surveys do you intend to use?

The evaluation will be based on both existing data and new surveys. The project’s approach is to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods and data.

LIST OF EXISTING DATA THAT CAN BE USED FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

QUANTITATIVE DATA

| Designation | Use |
|---|--|
| Socio-economic data from official statistics | Economic impact study |
| Data on attendance and economic outcomes from cultural, economic, and tourism entities (Flux Vision tool) | Economic impact/audience studies/measuring the appeal of the area |
| Administrative documents (partnership agreements, framework agreements, etc.) | Measuring the evolution of public and international partnerships |
| CEPEL audience surveys, surveys of French cultural practices, socioeconomic surveys of cultural players (CEPEL) | Comparative study of audiences and cultural players |
| Analysis of media coverage and open data from social media | Analysis of audiences, promotion, and reception of M28 initiatives |

QUALITATIVE DATA

| Designation | Use |
|--|--|
| Interview surveys (CEPEL) | Study of forms of cooperation/study of audiences |
| Analysis of strategic documents and M28 partnerships | Mapping of partners and cultural initiatives |
| Information from workshops and meetings during the analysis phase | Preparation of surveys after a year, including adjustments, expansions, and consideration of observed limitations. |
| RECIPRO-CITY platform (see Q3) and thematic analysis of textual data | Monitoring changes in the nature of interactions among the different stakeholders involved |

Within this evaluation framework, we will conduct 4 original surveys:

- The first one with a **representative sample of the population** in the M28 region. The HAB M28, conducted in survey format, intends to investigate cultural engagement patterns, awareness of key bid topics (especially ecological transformation), the sense of attachment to the M28 region, and affiliation with the European Union, among other factors. It will be presented in **5 local sessions targeting the general public, with one specifically designed for children** during the initial two phases. This approach aims to engage the community in defining and deliberating on the cultural, environmental, and local aspects highlighted by M28.
- The second survey (PUB M28) will involve audience interviews with a **curated group** of cultural professionals representing six fields: cinema & audiovisual, music, performing arts, literature, visual arts, and heritage.
- The third survey (CULT M28) will consist of a questionnaire aimed at cultural entities (see above), encompassing a **panel of 100 organisations** to be surveyed three times.
- The fourth survey (TER M28), conducted through interviews, will involve a **panel of 30 individuals** chosen to represent the diverse locations and local areas associated with the M28 project.

M28 COMMITMENT

SURVEYS CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MOST UP-TO-DATE FRENCH AND EUROPEAN ETHICAL STANDARDS AND DATA PROTECTION RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.4 What type of information will you monitor and control?

See the evaluation grid below.

CONNECT

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| OBJECTIVES Expected results and impacts | CROSS-SECTOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT | DEVELOPING A NEW CULTURE OF CROSS-SECTOR COOPERATION | M28 CREATES JOBS | INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS | BROADENING THE SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TOPICS | DEVELOPING A NEW CULTURE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONAL PLAYERS (local authorities and the national government) IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE AND OTHER SECTORS | BUILDING INTER-TERRITORIAL URBAN GOVERNANCE AT THE SCALE OF OUR GREATER COMMUNITY | REESTABLISH CONNECTIONS WITH EQUITABLE MUNICIPALITIES AND PROMOTE BETTER INTEGRATION OF RURAL INSTITUTIONS |
| INDICATORS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Many projects involving cooperation between cultural players and players from other sectors; nature, purpose, duration of cooperationGrowth in the share of cross-sector cooperative ventures in the volume of cooperative ventures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Perception of cultural and non-cultural playersIdentification of the main obstacles and strategies for overcoming them | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number and type of jobs created in the cultural sector and in other sectors of economic activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Quantity of transnational cooperation between cultural and non-cultural actorsPerspectives of the stakeholders involvedIdentification of the main obstacles and strategies for overcoming them | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identity of international partnersShare of European Union and AfricaBreakdown of cooperation themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Perception of cultural and non-cultural playersIdentification of the main obstacles and strategies for overcoming them | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number and nature of agreements, types of projectsShare of agreements in the cultural sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Creation of an urban agencyPerspectives of the stakeholders involvedIdentification of constraints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identities of participants in partnerships; percentage of rural-area participants.Perspectives of the stakeholders involvedIdentification of constraints |
| DATA | CULT M28 · M28 Programme | CULT M28 · TER M28 | Official statistics data · CULT M28 · TER M28 | CULT M28 · TER M28 · Administrative documents gathered from stakeholders · M28 Programme | CULT M28 · TER M28 · Administrative documents gathered from stakeholders | CULT M28 · TER M28 | TER M28 · Administrative documents | CULT M28 · TER M28 · M28 Strategic documents | HAB M28 · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 · M28 Programme |

ACT

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| OBJECTIVES Expected results and impacts | IMPROVING THE VISIBILITY OF CULTURAL OFFERINGS TO THE PUBLIC | M28 PROMOTES THE DEVELOPMENT OF AND ACCESS TO CULTURAL OFFERINGS IN ALL AREAS | DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ACHIEVING A NEW LOCAL EQUILIBRIUM | M28 FOSTERS THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SENSE OF REGIONAL BELONGING THAT TRANSCENDS ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES | M28 STRENGTHENS THE DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATION OF CULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (CCI) SECTOR | M28 ENGAGES MANY VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION | M28 FORMALISES THE INTEGRATION OF ART INTO MAJOR URBAN INITIATIVES | M28 PROMOTES CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES BETWEEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND OPENNESS TO OTHER CULTURES |
| INDICATORS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">M28 will generate a comprehensive map of infrastructure and events by the end of 2027Number of visitors to the RECIPRO-CITY platformIncreased familiarity of offering | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number and nature of cultural projects in rural areasShare of rural residents among the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cultural venues and institutions are taking steps to enhance accessibility for a broader range of participantsNNumber and types of accessibility initiatives implemented by cultural sites and institutionsCultural players' expertise in the field of accessibility is growing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the awareness of local residents about the rich diversity of local and European culturesIncreased sense of belonging to the region and to EuropeNumber and quality of multicultural arts projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Perception of cultural players on opportunities and challenges presented by M28Development of innovative models for the training and skill enhancement of cultural professionalsCreation of new business modelsAmount and share of cultural spending in the areaShare of expenditure devoted to Cultural and Creative Industries | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of projects using volunteersNumber of volunteers mobilised on M28Number and types of initiatives encouraging public participationNumber and identity of intermediary bodies working with public authorities, number of meetings, purpose, forms of partnershipsSurvey and analysis of challenges associated with the execution of these initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use of new or abandoned spacesRenovation of cultural facilities and venues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">More collaborative projects between art, technology, and scienceNumber and profile of participants on these projectsNumber of international scientific partnershipsNumber of international students in the region |
| DATA | Data from the RECIPRO-CITY platform · HAB M28 · PUB M28 · Data collected from cultural sites and institutions | M28 Programme · HAB M28 · PUB M28 | CULT M28 · TER M28 | HAB M28 · PUB M28 · Data from the RECIPRO-CITY platform · Data collected on social media sites · M28 Programme | M28 Programme · CULT M28 · TER M28 | M28 Programme · CULT M28 · TER M28 · Administrative documents | M28 Programme · CULT M28 · TER M28 | M28 Programme · HAB M28 · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 |

CELEBRATE

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| OBJECTIVES Expected results and impacts | M28 ADVOCATES FOR REGIONAL DECARBONISATION | M28 RAISES AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES | M28 PROMOTES PUBLIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | M28 FOSTERS COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SECTORS | M28 ENHANCES THE APPEAL OF THE REGION | M28'S REPUTATION AS A CULTURAL DESTINATION CONTINUES TO GROW | M28 HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WELL-BEING OF LOCAL RESIDENTS |
| INDICATORS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Massive reduction in CO2 emissionsStrengthening carbon sequestration capacitiesIncreased support for decarbonisation projectsUse of local, lower carbon-emission materials for construction and renovation projectsNumber and types of environmental measures implemented by cultural playersSurvey and analysis of challenges associated with the execution of these initiatives by cultural players | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number and type of environmental projects for the general publicIncreased interest and awareness of environmental issues among local residentsIncreased use of sustainable transportation methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of projects promoting multilingualismAudience profiles in terms of gender, age, socio-economic class, and cultural backgroundQuantity, nature, and duration of collaborative initiatives involving cultural and educational entities and associationsBarriers to audience participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number and nature of arts and cultural educational projectsNumber and nature of collaborations between schools and cultural playersNumber of schools and pupils involved in M28 projects, profiles of pupils concernedExpertise of participants engaged in collaborations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of touristsRevenue from hotels, cafes, and restaurantsNumber of studentsChanges in population makeup, demographic trends | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Local, national, and international players' perception of the region's cultural dimensionMedia coverage and reception of M28 activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Local residents exhibit increased trust in institutions at the interpersonal levelGreater optimism about the future |
| DATA | M28 Programme · CULT M28 · TER M28 · EDF partnership on Carbon Footprints, monitoring, and support for cultural players | M28 Programme · HAB M28 · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 | M28 Programme · HAB M28 · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 | INSEE data · M28 Programme · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 | INSEE data · Cultural and Creative Industries data · Tourism Bureaus · University administration data | HAB M28 · PUB M28 · CULT M28 · TER M28 · Media analysis | HAB M28 · PUB M28 |



The success of M28 will be gauged:

On the *changes and transformations* that becoming an ECoC will mean for governance, the role of culture, our local and European identity, and the *collective imagination*.

On our ability to exemplify how the *European Green Deal* can be implemented in the field of culture.

On our capacity to *diversify* and *include new audiences*, a crucial factor for success, as well as the strength of new collaborations established at the *European* level and in our relations with the *African continent*.

Attaining our *21 objectives* cannot be solely evaluated in quantitative terms. Together, we will consider a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Mindful of the constraints and challenges in achieving our objectives, we will also embark on a broader reflection on the conditions for doing so.

An evaluation of the bid’s results and impacts will occur in three phases over an extended period, spanning from 2024 to 2032:

Phase 1
2024-2026: Establish an initial database that will serve as a reference point for comparison with data from the year 2028.

Phase 2
2026-2028: Measure the direct impact of projects.

Phase 3
2029-2032: Continue long-term surveys to measure the long-term impact of the Capital Year.

A final report will be submitted in 2032.

The table below summarises the main stages and milestones of monitoring and evaluation:

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------|------|--|
| Planning Workshops | Preparation of the 2024-2025 surveys | | Preparation of the 2028 surveys | | Preparation of the 2028 surveys | | Preparation of the 2031 surveys | | | |
| Follow-Up Workshops | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surveys and Evaluation | Phase 1 Evaluation | | | Phase 2 Evaluation | | | Phase 3 Evaluation | | | |
| | CULT M28 + TER M28 PH.1 | HAB M28 + PUB M28 PH.1 | | HAB + PUB + CULT + TER PH.2 | | | HAB + PUB + CULT + TER PH.3 | | | |
| | Diagnosis, evaluation, and carbon action strategy | | | Further refinement of carbon footprint | | Post-28 carbon footprint and sustainability plan | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Return and sharing of findings | Return of 2024-2025 data | | Return of 2028 data and progress report | | Return of 2031 data and final report | | | | | |
| | Sharing (conferences, public workshops, European seminars) | | | | | | | | | |

Our research approach is centred on *sharing and engaging in discussions* to disseminate knowledge across diverse audiences, spanning local, national, and international spheres. The research results will be continuously disseminated throughout the evaluation process by M28 and the research consortium.

The M28 website will enable us to disseminate our results to local, national, and international audiences. These results will also be shared and discussed on the RECIPRO-CITY platform. Additionally, we will arrange public debates and lectures across the region during each reporting period, engaging cultural stakeholders and local residents.

We will also be eager to share our findings with the academic community. We also believe in the necessity of advancing *open science and promoting data sharing*. Some of our results and survey materials are also available online on request.

Finally, our results will be communicated through the various progress reports and the final report in 2032. On that occasion, marking the culmination of two intermediate seminars planned for 2025 and 2030, we will host a major *international seminar* focused on the topic of ECoC impacts and their evaluation. The issue of economic impact is a subject of vigorous discussion within the scholarly community, encompassing debates about the methodologies employed, the choice of indicators, and the political significance attributed to them. We suggest employing two types of tools: one for estimating the impact on the activities of cultural operators and audience behaviour, and the other for examining the discernible impact on local employment and attractiveness. This seminar will be devoted to delving into this debate. It will feature international experts and representatives from past and upcoming ECoCs, to produce a fresh look at how to approach the economic benefits of culture.

M28 COMMITMENT
1% OF TOTAL BID BUDGET ALLOCATED TO EVALUATION



Cultural and artistic content

5 Provide a detailed description of the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme planned for the year, highlighting any modifications made since the pre-selection stage.

Tomorrow is a long time...

In a 2009 essay, philosopher Mark Fisher explores the impact of post-modernity on our shared incapacity to imagine and *desire the future*. While describing the roots of

this loss of meaning, he reminds us of the *strength of groups and cooperation*, which protect individuals and give them the capacity to imagine meaningful and *desirable alternatives*.

Yes, there are alternatives!

This stands in contrast to post-modern thought, and we anticipate Montpellier becoming a crossroads for the imagination, where the creations, concepts, and approaches of this alternative intersect, flow, and come full circle.

Thinking the crossroads.

Our region has not become a crossroads, it *is* one.

The unique geographical location of our region has made it a place of constant motion and flow where permanent settlement remains elusive.

A crossroads creates a dynamic in which appropriation is contradicted by use.

We want to transform the distinctive physical features of our region into a valuable asset for residents and translate it into action within our bid.

CONNECT, ACT, AND CELEBRATE, much like rhythm in poetry, establish the cadence through which we aspire to raise awareness about a natural phenomenon that has shaped our region for centuries and continues to foster interactions even today.

Living at the crossroads.

To accomplish this, our bid is *built on a common ground*, where we exchange inquiries and resources, and collectively devise solutions rooted in the varied circumstances of individuals, all in the pursuit of envisioning ways to thrive in the world of tomorrow.

Which crossroads do we start from? Where do we converge?

To address the challenges of the future, we know human beings need to reestablish their connection with the natural world. We understand that a comprehensive understanding of history is essential for shaping new narratives. We acknowledge that collective prosperity relies on the contributions of each individual, as the common good cannot be realised without them.

6 Describe the structure of the cultural programme, including the scope and diversity of activities and major events that will mark the year.

*Living
TrailsTime
Machine
Trans!*



Living Trails 🌱 offers a series of encounters between humans and their environment. This approach, influenced by recent advancements in scientific research on the interaction between humans and living beings, aims to adopt a more comprehensive perspective on the subject of The Living, with a special emphasis on water, which is such an important feature of our region. In this programme, artists are encouraged to contemplate the region, where changes are rapidly unfolding, as a crossroads for living beings.

Time Machine ⌚ serves as a nexus for the contributions of history, cultural heritage, and scientific legacies, and their integration into new conceptions of the future. It is designed as a temporal crossroads, a collaborative space where tradition intersects with contemporary creation, and where scientists collaborate with artists.

Finally, **Trans!** ⚡ represents a strong affirmation of our bid's intrinsic identity, which embodies the values of encounters, cross-pollination, and mutual enrichment. Montpellier 2028 serves as a crossroads for diverse cultures, where every individual, whatever their culture or gender, every artistic or scientific field, and every profession is acknowledged for their uniqueness and their potential contributions to the greater good.

Please provide information on project partners and estimated budget

Please refer to the notes in each project description. Budgets are divided into three categories: projects with budgets under €250K 🟢 €250K, projects with budgets ranging from €250K to €600K 🟡 €250K - €600K, and projects with estimated budgets exceeding €600K 🔴 €600K.

Opening The crossroads of our imaginations



48 km is the range of human vision at a height of 50 metres. 48 km is the circumference of M28 area from the Promenade du Peyrou. Sharing our vision. What if we took this idea at its word? Our project brings together a large area united for Europe and Culture. For the opening of the year 2028, our ambition is to establish a visual connection that unites our community, making the core values of our project tangible and collectively embraced by our residents.

Audiences from all over the area will come together to partake in a unified visual experience. On the highest point of Montpellier, an observation tower will be constructed, offering panoramic views of our region,

stretching from the sea to the mountains. This tower will be linked to seven other towers situated in the seven partner inter-municipalities. Starting from this vantage point, visitors will embark on a journey through the city, experiencing a comprehensive scenography featuring contributions from local and European artists spanning various arts disciplines. Guided by the M28 Arts Directorate, this project will be overseen by the architects' collective Encore Heureux, and it will adhere to a threefold methodology: frugal, collective, and narrative. It will unfold across key sites, including the Promenade du Peyrou, the M28 Lab, and the banks of the Lez, all anchored in its conceptual pillars:

CONNECT, ACT, CELEBRATE; and in its temporality: the opening weekend, the year 2028, and the 100-year duration. The event's conceptualisation will be the result of a collaborative approach, with local, national, and international participants integral to the creative process from the outset. The observation tower will be part of the **Outlook Towers** 11 project. Finally, the experience will culminate at Place de la Comédie for the grand opera **We Are Europe** 31, uniting thousands of amateurs. **Producers:** M28 - Encore Heureux Architectes **Where:** Peyrou, Place de l'Europe, M28 Lab **Budget:** 🟢 €600K

Thinking
our region and
its accelerating
transformations
as a crossroads
for living beings.

Living Trails

#FLAGSHIP 01

Les Grandes Traversées

A thousand years of history have shaped the uniqueness of this region at the crossroads of Mediterranean cultures. *Les Grandes Traversées* invites 100 artists to create installations that contemplate this movement. In the form of 28 itineraries mapped out across the bid area, they offer audiences a new experience in the form of leisurely walks, inviting them to celebrate the cultural connections that bind the local community, encompassing historical and natural locations. Guest artists, designers, architects, landscape architects, and curators from both European and African backgrounds will receive invitations to create temporary installations within public spaces, closely linked to emblematic historical and natural heritage sites located within the bid area. These artistic contributions highlight the major historical, identity, and natural crossroads that have forged the community life of these spaces. One of these experiences will trace Montpellier's first waterway, from the Château de Montferrand to the Promenade du Peyrou, following the underground and aerial path of the old Aqueduct, which will be revitalized by 2028. The development of this programme will begin in 2024, starting with consultations with local authorities to designate the specific locations. Collaboration with organisations and operators specialising in sustainable transportation will follow in 2025. From 2026 onwards, creative residencies across the region will facilitate ongoing connections between local residents and the artworks through regular meetings and events. During the Capital Year, 12 unifying events will be organised for the public.

Producer: Numa Hambursin, Mo.Co and Salvador Garcia, City of Sète
Associated partners: Musée Fabre, Musée Henri Prades - Lattara archaeological site, Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain (Sète), MIAM (Sète), KLive festival (Sète), Château Laurens (Agde), Paul-Valéry University (MIRANDA project)

Where: throughout the bid area
When: throughout the 2028 year
Budget: €600K

#FLAGSHIP 02

The Maják Camp

A nomadic camp embracing diversity, featuring tents, communal tables, poetic machines, and unique delights, all anchored by a lighthouse (maják in Czech). It serves as a beacon to the nearby community, inviting them to come together, share thoughts, and revel in the company of a European ensemble of artists spanning the realms of circus arts, the fairground, music, and poetry. Live performances, visual installations, expeditions by bike and other pedal-powered contraptions, culinary adventures, and poetic experiments—all orchestrated to showcase alternative approaches to dwelling in our world, coexisting harmoniously, along the water, on bike, and beneath the tents. Invented for Montpellier 2028, the Maják nomadic camp will be collaboratively produced with several European organisations on whose territories it will also be installed: Antwerp, Prague, Copenhagen, Marseille. In the lead-up to the Capital Year, the programme will progressively extend beyond Montpellier's neighbourhoods, initially to the nearby metropolitan area and subsequently to the municipalities within the M28 area. After Mosson in 2024 and a municipality within the metropole area in 2025, the ZAT Festival of Arts will take place in the Hérault Valley and the Pays de Lunel in 2026 and 2027.

Producers: ZAT - City of Montpellier
Partners: cyclinks, Conservatoire du littoral, MAD festival & cie Time Circus & Ief Gilis in Antwerp (BE), Arena festival and The Forman Brothers, Prague (CZ), Public spaces in Marseille, Metropolis in Copenhagen (DK) (in progress)
ECoC: Budweis 2028

Where: Frontignan, Mosson, Pont du diable, Berges de Lunel
When: May 2028
Budget: €600K

#FLAGSHIP 03

Staying alive

Often seen in opposition to live performance, visual arts have always focused on the question of life, both in their depictions and through the methods and materials they employ. The objective of this exhibition is to chart the presence of life throughout the history of art across different periods, drawing on the collections of the Musée Fabre (featuring works by Houdon, Barye, Otto Marseus van Schrieck, Germaine Richier, etc.), the esteemed historical botanical collection at the University of Montpellier, the contributions of Francis Hallé, along with treasures from European museums such as the Gallen-Kallala Museum in Finland. Through this endeavour, we aim to foster and enact our shared commitment to ecological responsibility. Designed in celebration of the Musée Fabre's bicentennial, this exhibition serves as a *manifesto*, presenting a fresh curatorial perspective and delivering a distinctive visitor experience, with a significant focus on the concept of *augmented* experiences (including sound effects, smartphone *add-on* visual enhancements, and more) as well as promoting inclusivity during visits. The exhibition will showcase the various connections between artworks and nature throughout the centuries, illustrating how they both reflect and actively contribute to the contemporary global consciousness of the natural world. This will feature artists such as Michel Blazy, Hubert Duprat, Eva Jospin, Hicham Berrada, Benoît Maire, Mimosa Echard, and more. In 2025, a European curatorial conference will be convened to build this exhibition, accompanied by public meetings intended to foster a re-evaluation of our perspectives and relationships with living beings.

Producer: Musée Fabre, Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
Partners: Paul-Valéry University research laboratories, University of Montpellier, European University Collections, Gallen-Kallala Museum (FI)

Where: Musée Fabre
When: January - May 2028
Budget: €600K

04 European Ports of Call

Shipbuilding, music and songs from the sea and rivers, maritime cuisine, preservation of our maritime natural heritage, camaraderie among sailors, the transmission and continued vibrancy of our maritime legacy, as well as the history and future of maritime activities. Building on the international success of the maritime festival Escale à Sète, *European Ports of Call* brings together major cultural events in the region, all with a focus on maritime themes.

Producer: Escale à Sète
Partners: UNESCO, along with the Embassies of Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Romania, Croatia, Poland, Italy, and Spain, the French National Maritime Museum, Maritime Museums in Barcelona, Rotterdam, Genoa, and Cesenatico, the French Navy Headquarters, the Maritime Prefecture of the Mediterranean, the Universities of Gdynia and Madrid, foreign naval forces, and European partner municipalities
Where: Sète
When: March-April 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

05 *The Earth is Architecture*

An exploration programme of our environments aimed at assessing the terrestrial changes within the three fundamental ecologies of the Montpellier region: the lagoon, the plains, and the foothills. We will examine their impact on these ecologies and the strategies employed by living beings to adapt to these changes. Seasonality will be a central focus of our programming. Starting in 2024, an initial survey to engage with stakeholders in these regions will facilitate discussions on the tools and data required to establish new representations of the Earth. A residency initiative for scientists and artists will facilitate the development of seasonal measurement protocols. The aim is to share these protocols with other areas with similar ecologies, as well as with the general public.

Producer: TVK
Partners: ENSAM – The National Superior School of Architecture of Montpellier, Lille 2004 / Utopia, Villa Medicis, Villa Albertine
Where: The M28 Lab, Mille Formes
When: March, June, September, December 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

06 *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*

Many European cultures have deep-rooted connections to viticulture. Mountains, plains, shores: winegrowing has shaped our land and expertise. For thousands of years, it has played a part in exchanges and symbolized the relationship that people have with the land. "I Heard It Through the Grapevine", presents outdoor concerts that connect music with vineyards in the bid area, as well as on a European scale leading up to and following 2028. Designed in collaboration with the Iter Vitis network, these gatherings aim to trace a European vineyard geography while addressing the significant challenges of adapting this crop in the context of global warming.

Producer: Cité des Arts de Montpellier – Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, Iter Vitis
Partners: Institut supérieur du Vin Montpellier (ISV), Institut des hautes études de la vigne et du vin (IHEV), Budapest Wine Festival (HU), Verbier International Alpine Wine Festival (CH)
Where: throughout the bid area
When: September 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

07 *Common Waters*

Confronted with water impacted by human activities, artists and local residents are dedicated to crafting a fresh narrative. Together, they invent rituals to examine their connection to life-giving waters. The narrative unfolds across 9 episodes in public spaces and an additional 10 episodes in virtual spaces, including installations, augmented reality, video games, interactive films, and more. Local programming committees have been established for the three hydrological scenes: the Lez watershed, the lagoons, and the coast. Three European territories and artists have been connected and invited to present their way of celebrating water. By 2026, audiences will engage in the rituals and narratives that connect them. In 2028, The Great Overflow will celebrate water in partner municipalities.

Producers: BI-Polar, Théâtre Jean Vilar – City of Montpellier
Partners: Office Français de la Biodiversité, Paul-Valéry University / MIRANDA, ESMA, ArtFX
ECoC: Timisoara 2023, Tartu 2024, Bodo 2024, Oulu 2026, Budva 2028, Budweis 2028
Where: throughout the bid area
When: throughout the 2028 year
Budget: ☉ €600K

08 *The Parliament of Living Beings*

The Parliament of Living Beings is a collaborative project led by TMS in partnership with director Michel André, writer Fabrice Melquiot, Portuguese company Formica Atomica, and Bulgarian theatre company Panic Button. Three groups, each consisting of approximately 20 young people from middle and high schools in France, Bulgaria, and Portugal, will collaborate to create a parliament of things to represent living beings and advocate for their voices to be heard. They will imagine oceans, forests, wetlands, land, coral, wind, and humanity, and they will challenge member states to come up with concrete measures to reduce their CO2 emissions and protect ecosystems. Their creative journey will span over three years, from September 2025 to June 2028, culminating in the production of a multilingual performance presented at the Théâtre Molière de Sète, as well as in the municipalities of the bid area and the two partner countries.

Producer: TMS – Théâtre Molière de Sète
Partners: Rectorat de Montpellier, Théâtre de la Cité and Biennale des écritures du réel Marseille, Cosmogama, Théâtre de Liège (BE)
ECoC: Budweis 2028
Where: TMS
When: May-June 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

09 *Gardeno Paradizo*

(See Q22)

10 *Barges*

Barges, iconic boats on the Etang de Thau, will be transformed into micro-exhibition spaces. As genuine laboratories of creativity, sharing, innovation, and cultural experimentation, they will serve as the physical embodiment of encounters among three crucial actors: artists, patrons, and community organisations. They will reinforce the sense of belonging to a common cultural space and promote transnational collaboration. Their journey will commence in Sète and extend towards the Maghreb, Southern Europe (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, Italy) on one route, and Eastern Europe, reaching as far as Malta (Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Greece, Malta) on the other. To enhance the international dimension of our cultural programme, we will facilitate cross-residencies between the nations where the barges are stationed. This initiative will additionally expand cultural access and engagement, even in regions that may be geographically distant from cultural offerings.

Producers: Epicure
Partners: City of Sète, City of Agde, City of Balaruc-les-Bains, City of Marseillan, City of Bouzigues, Mécènes du Sud, Jazz in Sète, TMS – Théâtre Molière de Sète, Girona Municipal Theatre (ES), The Opera Theater of Tunis (TU)
Where: Sète
When: June-August 2028
Budget: Sponsorship

11 *Outlook Towers*

The impact of global warming on our area necessitates a re-evaluation of our economic frameworks, regional development strategies, and even our lifestyles. Montpellier's natural, architectural, and human heritage remains exceptional. The same goes for adaptability to urban and climatic changes. The challenge is to turn environmental limitations into creative elements. ENSAM will present distinctive constructions, designed to be mobile yet anchored in specific locations across an extensive area spanning from Sète, Maguelone, and Montpellier to the Thau and Or lakes, the Pic Saint-Loup region, and the Lez and Hérault Valleys. The constructions, resembling stations, would act as observatories for examining the suburban condition in light of the inexorable passage of time. The novel outlook towers would serve as vantage points for conducting multi-le-

vel analyses of the landscapes spread out beneath them. What is more, these towers, crafted using eco-friendly and locally sourced materials in ENSAM's workshops, could serve as venues for educational programs, arts installations, dialogues, and exhibitions, in addition to their scientific function.

Producer: ENSAM – The National Superior School of Architecture of Montpellier
Prospective architects: Marina Tabassum (BD), Francis Kéré (DE), Edric Choo Poo Liang (MY), Nicholas Plewman (ZA), Ibuku Architects, Elora Hardy (ID), Toshiko Mori (US), Murat Tabanlıoğlu (TR), David García and Aina Tugores (ES), Nzinga B. Mboup (SN), LAB Réunion, Cédric Delahaye, Driss Kettani (MA), Layla Skali (MA)
Partners: MAOM, Cyclinks, Finn Geipel (DE), Anupama Kundoo (IN)
Where: Sète, Maguelone, Etang de Thau, Pic Saint-Loup, Lez and Hérault Valleys
When: June-August 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

12 *Water Machines*

Hydraulic, landscape, technical, and sensory installations that tap into an existing water network, guiding it through the structure before returning it to its source. Grafting onto the existing network rather than being isolated from it, means being included in a common system to more effectively expose vulnerabilities. The aim of these water machines is to make the pathways of water comprehensible and conspicuous, enabling civil society to grasp them and, to some degree, assume control over their management. This is where the notion of the common good becomes particularly salient. Water can be seen as a resource, leisure space, subject of political concern requiring purification, matter to be transformed, or a consumable beverage.

Producers: M28 – Feda Wardak
Partners: ICIREWARD
Where: Montpellier
When: June-September 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

13 *LUNES*

(See Q2)



A collaborative workspace that stands at the crossroads of time, where tradition meets contemporary art and where scientists and artists co-create.

Time Machine

#FLAGSHIP 14

Future Folk Fiction

FFF takes the form of a choreographic and musical parade featuring a large group of both amateur and professional dancers and musicians. The production has been conceptualised and will be overseen by choreographer Christian Rizzo. A dialogue between contemporary dance and creation on one hand, and folk dance and traditional knowledge on the other, driven by the question of "how can we make common ground?". Study, collect, and produce traditional dances, music, objects, and costumes from the M28 communities and Montpellier's twin towns. The project aims to hybridise the legacies of these varied traditions and regions, transforming them into contemporary dance expressions for the Montpellier 2028 area. The project will begin in 2024 with a comprehensive European survey of folk heritage. It will be spearheaded by an arts committee comprising choreographers, dancers, musicians, and amateurs, in collaboration with a scholarly committee composed of humanities and social sciences researchers. In 2025, the production of prototypes will begin to give form to the project, which will be finalised in 2026. The year 2027 will be dedicated to training and passing on these choreographies to a large community of amateurs.

Producer: ICI-CCN
Partners: Montpellier Danse, Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier, Festival des Fanfares, École des Beaux-Arts Sète-Montpellier, Bourreio del Clapas, L'Atelline, Occitanie en scène, Cité des Arts, FRAC OM, CRAC, TMS- Théâtre Molière de Sète, Festival Arabesque, Biennale des Arts en Méditerranée, Maison de la Danse Lyon, TorinoDanza (IT), the Institut Français, Teatro Municipal do Porto - Rivoli (PT), Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (PT), Van Cleef & Arpels, Life Long Burning (BE), Mercat de les Flors (ESP), Grec Festival (ESP), La Garriga, Onassis Foundation (GR)

ECoC: Budweis 2028, Budva 2028
Where: public squares in the bid cities (Lunel, Sète, Mauguio, Montpellier, Pézenas, Gignac, Aigues-Mortes)
When: March-November 2028
Budget: €600 K

#FLAGSHIP 15

Academy of the Future

The future exists only in our imaginations; it is built in the present by our ability to implement a shared desire imbued with meaning. The *Academy of the Future*, comprising children between the ages of 6 and 18, along with artists, educators, and journalists, presents a range of innovative works (theatre, dance, music, comics, visual arts, film, etc.) that explore the future of youth. Our child-friendly, inclusive approach means that we do not come with predetermined questions. The process of formulating these questions will be one of our initial projects in 2025. To illustrate avenues for reflection, these questions will cover European, societal, and environmental issues, fostering ongoing discussions in a dedicated forum. Each subject will be approached with a historical perspective while remaining flexible so as to address the most pressing questions posed by youth who, between 2024 and 2028, may encounter new and unforeseen developments during the writing of this project. It involves a research/creation process that fosters continuous interactions between science and artistic expression. This process will be documented through a production of podcasts, radio broadcasts, livestreams, and will culminate in an annual European youth forum. The inaugural forum in 2025 will establish the three main questions that will subsequently be explored in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Producer: Montpellier 2028
Partners: Rectorat de Montpellier, CDN 13 vents, Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier, Scène Nationale de Sète, France TV, France Bleu Hérault, COPEAM, Heidelberg (DE), Bodo 2024, Oulu 2026
ECoC: Budweis 2028

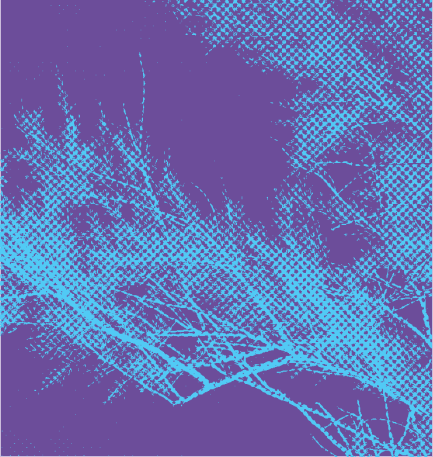
Where: throughout the bid area
When: February-June 2028
Budget: €600K

16 Delacroix and Beyond

As part of the Musée Fabre's bicentennial celebrations, this exhibition provides a new perspective on one of the leading artists in the Montpellier collections (including a rendition of *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*), and also highlights a significant artist on the European art scene. Renowned as a key figure in the Romantic movement, Delacroix engaged with the pressing concerns of his era, advocating for the cause of independence (most notably in Greece, as illustrated by his masterpiece *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi*, as well as in France with *Liberty Leading the People*). He also offered a novel perspective on the Middle East, undertaking travels to Morocco during the early 1830s. The exhibition's objective is to highlight the enduring influence of the painter, who paved the way for modern art (with comparisons to the works of Cézanne, Redon, Signac, Picasso, and Matisse). It also aims to juxtapose his art with the occasionally

critical perspectives of contemporary artists (including Souhila Bel Bahar, Dalila Dalléas Bouzar, Christian Milovanoff, and Lalla Essaydi).

Producer: Musée Fabre, Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
Partners: French museums (Musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musée des Augustins Toulouse, Musées des Beaux-Arts de Tours, Rouen, Bordeaux), European museums (Rijkmuseum Amsterdam, Städel Frankfurt, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid, the FRAME network).
Where: Musée Fabre
When: June-September 2028
Budget: €600K



17 Our Living Shelters

As part of an interdisciplinary approach, four works of art will be designed and built as shelters for living beings, in close dialogue with the four coastal inter-municipalities. Shelters can take many forms: lean-tos, huts, perches, and more. Shelters in this programme can be used for an hour, an afternoon, or a night. The goal is to initiate and explore new ways of supporting creativity. We also seek to foster fresh interactions among artists, scholars, students, and the broader community, all in pursuit of innovative narratives aligned with the major challenges we face today. The artworks will explore the vernacular tradition of natural earth materials and their connection to modern design and artistic expression, dialogues between different species, and the creative aspects of mapping flows and imaginary landscapes.

Producer: L'Atelline
Partners: Musée Henri Prades - Lattara archaeological site, ENSAM, LIFAM, MSH SUD, Scopie, Ademass, ICI-CCN, La Palanquée In-Situ European Platform, Rami-Med (Mediterranean platform) co-sponsored by Shams (LB) and Transversité (FR), Architecture for Humans (XK), Draft.Inn - Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Castilla y León (ES), ETICity (IT) (In Progress): Métropolis (DK), La Strada Graz (AT), MEDS Meeting of European Design Students
ECoC: Timisoara 2023, Bodo 2024, Oulu 2026
Where: Lattara archaeological site, Espiguette lighthouse, Frontignan, Château Laurens, Hôtel de la Poste
When: throughout the 2028 year
Budget: €600K

18 Desire to Desire

Born from a collaboration between 28 European contemporary art colleges, *Desire to Desire* is a major exhibition bringing together artists and students, following four years of dialogue and exchange. By examining the major challenges facing arts education on a European scale, and how they relate to the cultural, ecological, and geopolitical issues of the day, this project will be built on exchanges set to commence in 2025. Each year, a European artist will be invited to partake in a residency, developing a series of seminars, workshops, and public events that will be broadcast online.

Producer: ESBAMA-Mo.co and FRAC OM
Partners: ICOM, Valmagne Sainte-Maria's Abbey, Villeveyrac, European art schools, On the Move, E-FLUX, News Tank
Where: FRAC OM, Mo.Co, Villa Salis, Château de Montferrand, Mosson, M28 Lab
When: April-July 2028
Budget: €600K

19 *Procession of Processions*

What is the difference between a procession, a march, a demonstration, and a parade? Is a procession inherently religious, or is it more connected to a form of belief and hope that can transcend religious boundaries? Why have emancipation movements, such as LGBTQIA+ groups, adopted the concept of marches in their protests? The idea is to invite six European artists to work on site with local communities, associations, social/cultural centres, and any other local organisations. Together, they will envision and create unique artistic expressions that blend elements of traditional and popular cultures with contemporary creativity. This may encompass interactions with *Gitan* communities on the Camargue border, participation in votive festivals within the hinterland, or engagement in local neighbourhood events within urban centres. Potential artists: Francis Aļys (BE), Monster Chetwynd (UK), Laure Prouvost (FR) or Jeremy Del-ler (UK), Patrick van Caekenbergh (BE), Stalker (IT), Zimmer Frei (AT), or Pauline Curnier Jardin (FR).

Producer: FRAC OM
Partners: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and its modern art centre CAM, Lisbon (PT) Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (IT), on the move, ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts), La Cambre (BE), Geneva University of Art And Design (HEAD) (CH)
Where: Montpellier, Sète, Lunel-Viel, Mauguio, Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, Aigues-Mortes
When: calendar of festivals, pride, etc.
Budget: €600K

20 *Play Music*

Immersion in a video game is greatly enhanced by a compelling and inspirational musical score. Our bid area features a myriad of digital creation studios and is internationally renowned in the video game sector, with companies such as UBISOFT and Plug In Digital, among others. *Play Music* is a music creation contest for orchestras and video games. After workshops and composition classes, the music will be performed both live and online, in the form of gaming concerts and cinema concerts accessible to all.

Producer: Cité des Arts de Montpellier - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
Partners: ArtFX, International Masters InMICS (International Master in Composition for Screen), Founding partners Higher arts education CNSMD in Lyon - coordinator Conservatorio di Musica G.B. Martini Bologna (IT), School of Arts / KASK & Conservatorium in Ghent (BE), Université de Montréal Faculty of Music (CA), Festival International du Film d'Aubagne (FR), Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna (IT), Film Fest Gent (BE), Permission Inc, Montréal (CA)
ECoC: Skopje 2028
When: February 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

21 *Design for Change*

To foster change and actively support this transition, the Design for Change Association aims to bring together a community of emerging creatives from Europe and beyond. Their goal is to assist in addressing the questions and requirements expressed by local stakeholders, including cultural and nonprofit organisations, educational and research institutions, local governments, and entrepreneurs. To this end, we will initiate an international contest targeting design, architecture, and landscape schools. The competition's primary focus will be on designing and implementing the new practices integral to Montpellier 2028. Contest submissions will encompass questions regarding infrastructure at various scales, such as the need for sustainable transportation solutions to connect smaller towns, as well as scenarios of use that can be applied to the region and beyond. For instance, exploring the concept of a hospital service area.

Producer: Design for Change
Partners: Paul-Valéry University, Montpellier Department of Political Science, ENSAM, ESBA-Mo.Co, World Design Organisation (CAN)
ECoC: Skopje 2028
Where: M28 Lab
When: January-March 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

22 *Magic in the Moonlight*

In a village square, in a park, on a beach, *Magic in the Moonlight* aims to make the year 2028 a great cinema festival, celebrating the vast treasure of European cinematic heritage. Free outdoor screenings of films from Europe's cinematic heritage for local communities. ADEMASS, a Montpellier-based association dedicated to fostering artistic and social diversity and solidarity, will collaborate with local residents to prearrange communal banquets. These artistic and interactive banquets, encompassing various activities such as game workshops, discussions, and theatre, contemplate the traditional banquet format as an integral part of Europe's cultural heritage. The process, with the assistance of researchers specialising in anthropology and sociology, aligns with a cultural rights perspective.

Producers: Cinemed - ADEMASS
Partners: Ateliers ludosophiques, Paul-Valéry University, Filmoteca (ES), Cinecitta (IT), The German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DE), Cinematek (BE)
ECoC: Budva 2028
Where: le Sana, Villa Laurens, Gignac, la Mosson, Mèze, La Grande-Motte
When: June-September 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

23 *Folk Spirits*

The Languedoc region is notable for the varied symbolic resources embraced by its local communities, reflecting a unique connection with the natural world and its elements. An interaction between time and matter, between bodies and the natural world, flourishes through a multitude of rituals in which Occitan, the historical language of the region, conveys its distinctive sensibility, which UNESCO is championing as part of the Indigenous Languages Decade from 2022 to 2032. With Montpellier: *Folk Spirits*, an exploration of this vibrant heritage in Languedoc contemplates the dynamics within a living ecosystem. It serves as a catalyst for imaginative worlds, whose contemporary expressions thrive on their continual reinvention. From the Day of the Dead to lively carnivals, and from the melodious tunes of fishermen to the bonfires of Midsummer, a rich tapestry of traditions emerges. These traditions encapsulate the essence of an Occitan identity that has evolved through a fusion of continental and eastern influences.

Producer: Cirdoc
Partners: Réseau des Ethnopôles by the French Ministry of Culture (FR), Fédération des acteurs et actrices des musiques et danses traditionnelles (FR), Município de Barcelos (PT), AECT Rio Minho (PT/ES), Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara (RO), Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (NO)
ECoC: Bodo 2024
Where: Parc Montcalm Montpellier
When: June 2028
Budget: €250K



24 *Future Landscapes*

Our project centres on an ambitious and distinctive travelling program, firmly oriented towards the global stage. We will leverage third places within the bid's boundaries, which serve as authentic crossroads for various activities, to promote the establishment of a mobile transient village in each of these areas. These villages will include features such as positive-energy tents, mobile cafes, and mobile fab labs, creating spaces for sharing, promoting, and interaction, in collaboration with local stakeholders from various sectors (economic, social, etc.). By adopting this approach, we aim to engage with the public, share knowledge, collaboratively develop, and spread innovative practices in the locations we visit, leading up to a mobile *apex* event on Pic Saint-Loup in 2028. Every site will undergo a comprehensive planning process, developed in collaboration with a European third place (such as European makers' residency or knowledge exchange). Expanding the intersections and interactions between various audiences, this initiative will serve as a platform for gathering, transmitting, and enhancing the site's narrative. Going well beyond a simple presentation of a work of art, it invites us to move away from a relationship of consumption and enter into a creative process of participation. Working together. Inhabiting and transforming the territory. Our aim is to explore fresh horizons, foster intercultural conversations, and spark a sense of desire—the desire to invent the future together.

Producers: Bouillon cube, La Lisière, La Palanquée
Partners: Third places french network and its international referents, MakerTourMéla festival, Oslo (NO), Festival Imatériau, Evora (PT), Association Mozaic, Burgas (BG), European In Situ network
ECoC: Chemnitz 2025
Where: Pic Saint-Loup
When: May 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

25 *M28 Mostra*

Creation of a festival in the form of a *Mostra*, exhibiting the first audiovisual creations of students, professionals engaged in the Cultural and Creative Industries, and self-taught talents from Montpellier and its neighbouring areas. We will also be adding works sourced from European partners such as CO-PEAM. The festival will closely collaborate with educational institutions like ArtFX, ESMA, Objectif 3D, Travelling, and the various companies constituting Montpellier's Cultural & Creative Industries sector. It will provide a platform for showcasing selected projects (short films, fiction, animation, documentaries, and more) to the diverse audience visiting Montpellier throughout 2028. The event will offer free entry to screenings across the region, on big screens, in exceptional settings and with the utmost respect for the environment. The screenings will be followed by post-show gatherings, uniting emerging artists and special guests to foster interactions, networking, and the birth of fresh creative endeavours.

Producer: France Télévisions
Partners: ArtFX, ESMA, Paul-Valéry University, Escuela de Cine Bande à Part (ES), Fondazione Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (IT), INSAS (BE), Prague Film Institute (CZ), The National Film School of Denmark (DK)
Where: throughout the bid area
When: May 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

26 *Early Music Heritage*

For four decades, Les Muses en Dialogue has been dedicated to the promotion of early music and cultural heritage across the Montpellier metropolitan area (Maguelone Music Heritage Festival), the Grand Pic Saint-Loup, and the Gorges de l'Hérault. The ambition of M28 is to expand its initiatives within the region, fostering national and transnational collaborations to advocate for and preserve our musical, architectural, and viticultural heritage. The initial phase will concentrate on initiatives to nurture emerging talent at both local and transnational levels, fostering European partnerships and promoting inclusive arts programming spanning different generations. The second phase will see the emergence of European co-productions and collaborative endeavours, fostering intercultural dialogue through initiatives like the Orpheus 21 project led by Jordi Savall and the European Early Music Days, while also providing assistance to emerging national talents.

Producer: Les Muses en Dialogue
Partners: Cité des Arts de Montpellier, Conservatoire à rayonnement intercommunal de Sète, Centre Culturel de Rencontre d'Ambronay, Centre International de Musiques Médiévales de Montpellier, Emerging + (Europe Creative), Metrex (The Network of European Metropolitan Regions), Rema (European Early Music Network), the Institut français of Riga (EST), Orpheus 21, European Music Conservatories (Paris, Lyon, Brussels, Basel, Barcelona)
Where: Pic Saint-Loup, Hérault Valley, Aniane Abbey, Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert
When: April-May 2028
Budget: €600K



27 *Rootstop – Printemps des Comédiens*

Transforming urban life means first and foremost rethinking the use of these spaces and freeing them from their initial uses. Imagine an urban terrace, a community garden, an inclusive area accessible to the community as a vibrant living environment. To kick-start this exploration with Romeo Castellucci, *Rootstop* will invite him to imagine and design a Performance Museum in the Saint-Roch station parking lot. This space will be accessible throughout the day, providing visitors with the freedom to transition between different environments and artistic experiences without constraints on time. The programme will encompass installations, live performances, and music, delving into the intricate dynamics between public and private spaces, as well as the connections between the self and the world.

Backer: Printemps des Comédiens
Partners: Nowy Teatr Warsaw (PL), Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles (BE), Thalia Theater Hamburg (DE), Théâtre Vidy Lausanne (CH), Festival d'Avignon, Wiener Festwochen (AU), Napoli Teatro (IT), Athens Epidaurus Festival (GR), Santiago AMI (CL), Grec Festival of Barcelona (ES), Ruhrtriennale (DE), Holland Festival (NL), Temporada Alta Gérone (ES), Manchester International Festival (UK), Festival TransAmériques, Montréal (CA), MIT - São Paulo (BR), FIBA - Buenos Aires (AR)
Where: rooftop of the Saint-Roch station parking lot
When: Spring-Autumn 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

28 *Sounds of Tomorrow*

In the face of climate change and the new ways in which we will occupy space and circulate, our sound environment is poised for a rapid and profound transformation. Over a four-year period, we will be examining and collecting our perceptions of sound environments, with a special focus on the visually impaired. This will serve as material for arts creations that will help us to foster connections, increase awareness, and capture attention for our environment. Encounters to expand horizons: engaging with the visually impaired to challenge our auditory and perceptual understanding of landscapes; collaborating with local residents for community-based arts projects; partnering with scientific research institutions for art/science collaborations; involving young composers from music conservatories. 2028 will see the creation of an immersive, sensory exhibition on our perceptions of sound. A fun transmedia exhibition that traverses the region.

Producer: Braquage sonore & cie
Partners: Department of Art and Culture University of Montpellier, Fédération des Aveugles et Amblyopes de France - LR, Association Accès Culture (accompanying visually impaired people to live performances), Comité Valentin Haüy de l'Hérault (blind and visually impaired people) I.R.D. (Development Research Institute), Phonurgia Nova, CirQueon (CZ), Mini Art Fest (BG)
ECoC: Skopje 2028, Budweis 2028
Where: M28 Lab and then travelling
When: October-December 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

29 *The Palaver Tree*

(See Q11.1)



30 *CORE (Composition for European Network Orchestras)*

The Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier will initiate a project featuring 10 musical commissions for ensembles (symphonic and chamber music) in collaboration with its European Broadcasting Union partners, exploring the theme of "Hybridisations and Identities". This project will be led by emerging composers (under 30). The compositions will have their world premieres during the opening of 10 concerts of the 2028 edition, and they will be performed by the guest musical ensembles. The concept of co-commissioning will facilitate the dissemination of these works beyond their initial creation. The call for applications will be distributed among EBU - European Broadcasting Union member countries and engage the ECoC 2023-2027 capitals. Developed with an eco-responsible approach from composition to performance, this project will resonate with the Intervalles professional meetings in Montpellier, in collaboration with European universities. The project will be supported by Radio France and the EBU.

Producer: Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier
Partners: Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, European Broadcasting Union, BBC (UK), WDR (DE), RAI (IT), NPO (NL), NRK (NO), HRT (HR), ERT (GR), YLE (FI)
Where: Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier
When: July 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

Embracing
diversity, blending,
and mutual
enrichment—
a cultural
crossroads where
every individual
is valued for
their unique and
rich contributions
to the community.

Trans!

#FLAGSHIP 31

We Are Europe

This large-scale project brings together professionals and over 2,000 amateurs from Montpellier and beyond.

This extraordinary journey in collaborative creation will culminate in a massive, joyous performance whose poetry and anthropological essence will tell a tale of nature and humanity, serving as a reminder that our origins are shared, and our destinies intertwined. Each season, workshops will be held for different groups, including amateur adult and children's choirs, women in situations of prostitution, inmates, and families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These workshops will be led by renowned artists such as Marta Gornicka (a Polish choral assembly specialist based in Berlin), Dimitri Chamblas (a choreographer from Montpellier with ties to Los Angeles), Diana Syrse (a Mexican composer residing between France and Germany), and Elayce Ismail (a British director based in Porto). These workshops will bring together hundreds of participants, forming an extraordinary community of performers, leading up to a showcase performance in 2028.

In 2025, the arts team will be brought together to design the overall concept. Starting in 2026, hands-on arts workshops involving local residents will be initiated. These workshops will lead to frequent public gatherings with the goal of creating a large lyrical community (see Q14).

Producer: Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier
Partners: Opera Europa network: Irish National Opera (IRL), Royal Danish Opera (DK), Baltic Opera Gdansk (PL), Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf (DE), Staatstheater Hannover (DE), Opera Birmingham (UK), hrvatsko narodno kazalište u zagrebu (HR), Teatro Nacional de São Carlos (PT)

ECoC: Bodo 2024, Liepaja 2027
Where: Place de la Comédie, Montpellier
When: January 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier

The Biennial is divided into two parts: a cultural programme for the general public, including an array of French national and international events to promote existing and future cooperation between Montpellier and the African continent, and to transform the public's perception of contemporary African culture, particularly in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries. A development and innovation component aimed at promoting African entrepreneurship and cooperation between local authorities, scientists, and civil society, through the holding of a multi-stakeholder international summit on water resource management issues and a campus of young, innovative African entrepreneurs to transfer skills and experience. The Biennial's programming aims to cover all artistic fields, ranging from cinema and literature to visual arts and performing arts. In each edition, a specific artistic discipline will take centre stage with the appointment of an international curator. This curator will focus on promoting innovative forms of expression and fostering dialogue among artists, particularly in the realm of transdisciplinary art.

In 2028, choreography will play a central role in this dialogue through "A Dance Journey Through Africa and Europe". This initiative will involve the sharing of works from both African and European contemporary dance repertoires and the establishment of connections among dance training centres in Europe and Africa. Between 2025 and 2028, 10 works from the contemporary choreographic repertoire will be transmitted by 5 African choreographers (Germaine Acogny, Robin Orlyn, Taoufiq Izzediou, Hafiz Daou, Gregory Maqom) and 5 European choreographers (Maguy Marin, Boris Charmatz, Mathilde Monnier, Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, Mourad Merzouki) to 5 schools in Africa and 5 schools in Europe.

Producer: Halle Tropisme, Montpellier 2028
Partners: Icieward UNESCO, PARTS Brussels, CDC La Termitière Ouagadougou (BF), Jeune Ballet de Tunis (TN), Ecole des Sables (SN), Ecole des arts chorégraphiques de Marrakech (MA), CDC de Brazzaville (CG), National School of Dance in Maputo (MZ), Don Sen Folo in Bamako (ML), The Fondation Zinsou (BJ), The Dakar Biennale (SN), Les ateliers de la pensée,

Université de Saint-Louis (SN), University of Kigali (RW), Café littéraire de Missy (CD), Centre Culturel Kôré in Ségou (ML)
Where: M28 area
When: November 2028
Budget: €600K

In the Food for Love

Located in a newly established and influential third place within the city of Sète, the project seeks to connect our everyday experiences, principles, and core values with those of our European neighbours. Going beyond the borders and generations that usually separate us, we set off in search of common denominators. What better means than gastronomy to celebrate our cultural differences, fostering a sense of unity and connection? Employing a transgenerational and transmedia approach, we envision a European culinary journey that will invoke, transmit, and hybridise the expertise of our forbearers. Food as a catalyst for interactions among individuals of diverse languages and cultural backgrounds. Gathering around the European table to engage in discussions about love, life, society, and our perspectives on the world.

Producers: Unanime, Chais des Moulins, Halle Tropisme
Partners: Petits frères des pauvres, Grandmas project, ARTE, the Institut Français, Croix-Rouge, Aimer/Manger Laura Lafon, Festival Casse-Croûte, Festival Voix Vives de méditerranée en méditerranée
ECoC: Budva 2028, Budweis 2028

Where: Sète, Les Chais
When: July 2028
Budget: €600K



34 Wide Shot (Mediterranean Biennial)

Launched by the Théâtre des 13 vents and crafted by approximately twenty cultural collaborators in the Montpellier region, the Biennial unites artists from diverse Mediterranean regions. It will produce and present an extensive programme of productions that blend theatre, dance, music, circus, and contemporary literature. Annual meetings of artists will be organised and led by researchers from Euro-Mediterranean universities to examine the conditions of artistic creation in the Mediterranean. An intergenerational temporary school will invite global audiences and students to fully engage with the programme, while a touring initiative, in collaboration with the Cinemed festival, will showcase a play produced by an international team, designed for versatile venues across the bid area.

Producers: Le Théâtre des 13 vents
Partners: Opéra Orchestre national de Montpellier, TMS - Théâtre Molière de Sète, ICI Centre Chorégraphique National de Montpellier, Théâtre La Vignette, La Bulle Bleue, Théâtre Jean Vilar Montpellier, La Baignoire, L'Atelline - public space for art and engagement, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art Dramatique de Montpellier, Théâtre du Hangar, La Verrerie - Pôle National Cirque Occitanie Alès, Uni'Sons, Domaine d'O, Le Chai du Terral (St Jean de Vedas), Le Kiasma (Castelnau-le-Lez), Festival Cinémed, Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (ES), Onassis Foundation (GR), Association des rencontres de la danse AR2D (MA), Zoukak Theatre Company (LB)
Where: partner locations
When: November 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

35 The Inclusive Lab

(See Q11.4)

36 Gitan Symphonic Journeys

Gitan music, which holds an important place in the European intangible cultural heritage of the Roma and Sinti families, irrigates our territory from west to east. With strong roots in Agde, Sète, and Montpellier, it is finally finding its place in our music schools. In collaboration with organisations like Cap Gély, the conservatories of Agde (Barthélemy Rigal), Sète (Manitas de Plata), and Montpellier (Cité des Arts) offer a *Gitan* symphony journey from local neighbourhoods to major theatres and opera houses, encompassing workshops and symphonic concerts. During the Capital Year, concerts combining classical and *gitan* music will be held throughout the bid area.

Producers: Cité des Arts - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, Conservatoire de Sète Agglopolie Méditerranée, Ecole Municipale de Musique d'Agde
Partners: DoKumentation und kultur centrum sinti un roma Heidelberg (DE)
ECoC: Timisoara 2023, Bodo 2024
Where: Aniane Abbey, Sète wine cellars, Cité des Arts
When: June 28
Budget: €250K €600K

37 Bilingui

How do you tell the story of Africa's relationship with graphic arts? How can we explore this field of cultural studies within a rich and uninterrupted transcontinental discourse? MIAM, the International Museum of Modest Arts in Sète, known for its innovative approach to art, and La Fenêtre, a Montpellier-based company specialising in applied arts, are excited to reunite after the *Modestes & Appliqués* exhibition. This time, they aim to delve into popular imagery, comic strips, the art of signage, posters, textile design, typographic and pictographic systems, and other elements that contribute to a shared visual culture and semiology spanning both European and African continents. The major multi-site exhibition in 2028 will be the culmination of a multi-year programme combining lectures, meetings, artist residencies and amateur workshops. This initiative is bolstered by international networks and led by a knowledgeable, interdisciplinary curatorial team. This team comprises artists, graphic designers, academics, art historians, and sociologists.

Producer: La Fenêtre / MIAM
Partners: the Institut Français, Institut des mondes africains [African worlds institute]
Where: Carré Sainte-Anne, MIAM, La Fenêtre
When: January-March 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

38 Glossigne

(See Q15)

39 Euromed Music

Unisons is developing the Arabesques festival, which has been bringing together world music artists from the shores of the Mediterranean for 18 years. As we approach 2028, the association envisions establishing an international production network to support artists featured in the 2028 event and enabling them to tour within the network starting in 2029. Starting in 2024, the programme will include the creation of a *Euromed Music* label dedicated to advocating for artists' social rights and promoting eco-friendly touring conditions. Based in the Mosson district, the association will provide workshops for local residents to promote cross-cultural interactions rooted in the musical traditions highlighted in the arts programme.

Producer: Unisons
Partners: Fiesta Sète, Festival de Thau, Festival Al-Andalus, Institut du monde arabe, Le Moussem (BE), la Casa Arabe (ES), Oslo World (NO), Beirut & Beyond (LB), Fez Festival of World Sacred Music (MA), Centre of Arab and Mediterranean Music (TN), Tlemcen Conservatory (DZ)
Where: Domaine d'O European Centre of Theatre
When: September 2028
Budget: €250K €600K

40 Modest Arts on the Move

Modest Art is a current of images, objects, forms, and thoughts initiated by Hervé Di Rosa in the late 1980s. A humble approach to art, modest art is an inclusive form of expression, encompassing a diverse array of subjects and creations situated on the periphery of conventional artistic traditions and art history. The project entails deploying seven modest trailers, each designed and curated by Hervé Di Rosa, capable of easy mobility and engagement with the general public. These spaces will be trailers/containers/boxes dedicated to Modest Arts, containing selections from the MIAM (International Museum of Modest Arts) collections. The project is intended to cover the entire Occitanie Region, and will be extended throughout Europe (Portugal, Belgium, Spain, etc.). The traveling exhibitions will visit towns, city centres, working-class neighbourhoods, and public squares, as well as villages and other places farther away from urban centres.

Producer: MIAM
Partners: MAAT (PT), The Dakar Biennale (SN), BPS22 Charleroi (BE), Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou (BJ)
Where: throughout the bid area
When: throughout the 2028 year (one week per month)
Budget: €250K €600K





41 Social Circus

The social aspect of circus creation is strikingly underrepresented in French practices, unlike neighbouring countries like Spain or in Africa, where circus arts have played a significant role in improving the lives of many young people facing precarious situations. Exploring the potential social role of contemporary circus, drawing inspiration from the successful models of Moroccan, Spanish, and Guinean teams, allows us to shift the power dynamics between the North and South and engage with disadvantaged neighbourhoods in our region. The ambition of this project is to use circus as a tool for social transformation. Parent/child workshops and hands-on workshops for young people and teenagers will be led by teams from Spain, Morocco, and Guinea. Over the course of three years (2026/27/28), hands-on workshops, meetings, and collaborative projects will facilitate shared creative experiences between professionals and amateurs. In 2028, these opportunities for sharing practices and knowledge transfer will coincide with the hosting of a large circus tent performance scheduled by TMS in the same venue.

Producer: TMS- Théâtre Molière de Sète
Partners: Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée, City of Frontignan, CDAC Balthazar, Domaine d'O European Centre of Theatre, Festival utoPistes, Lyon and École de cirque de Lyon, L'Ateneu Nou Barris, Barcelona (ES), National School Circus Shems'y (MA), Terya Circus Conakry (GN)
Where: Sète
When: April 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

42 GraphiMs

Graphic design festival co-produced by La Fenêtre, an art centre dedicated to the applied arts, and the Montpellier network of multimedia libraries, the Réseau des médiathèques et de la culture scientifique. Its programming responds to the demands of the national creative community, while giving pride of place to the graphic designers and audiences of Occitanie Region. Every year, a series of exhibitions and a diverse cultural agenda are organised around a specific theme (e.g., cartography in 2023, falsehoods in 2024, etc.). The goal is to delve into the aesthetic and semantic possibilities of graphic design while addressing matters related to media and information literacy, enhancing public spaces, and engaging in political and civic communication. The initiative is part of the Graphisme en France national distribution and promotion network, managed by the Centre national des arts plastiques, in collaboration with Le Signe, the national centre for graphic arts. Its aspiration is to become a part of the IMAGE network, which focuses on graphic design events across Europe.

Producers: Réseau des Médiathèques de Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, La Fenêtre
Partners: Le Signe, Centre national du graphisme, IMAGE - International Meetings about Graphic Events (NL), INTL (UK), Graphic Matters (NL), Graphic Days (IT), Weltformat (CH)
Where: Montpellier multimedia library network, La Fenêtre, SNCF stations (Lunel, Frontignan, Agde), le Sana
When: October-December 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

43 Printival

Song is an international genre by excellence. Often the result of a folk tradition, it continues to evolve over time. From Neapolitan melodies to *fado*, from rap to Irish folk, Europe's musical heritage is a tapestry of rich diversity. To build a crossroads between tradition and the present, the *Printival* festival offers a programme that brings together emerging international and European artists to combine their repertoires and create a show together, under the guidance of professionals. The project's objective is to foster cultural exchanges, enhance participants' abilities, break out of their creative seclusion, explore diverse cultures, and promote European song through performances in partner countries and initiatives targeting various audiences. In the spring of 2028, the show will tour the country and then European countries from autumn onwards.

Producer: Printival
Where: Pézenas
When: April 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

44 Bodies in Motion: Crossing Borders Through Dance

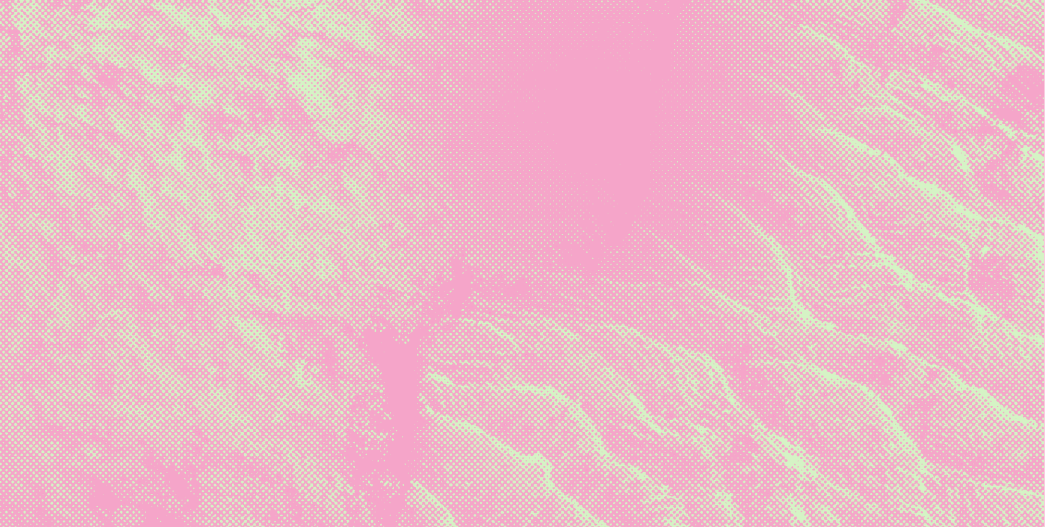
Bodies in Motion: Crossing Borders Through Dance is a participatory production that tours cities and villages, presented by Salia Sanou and the Mouvements Perpétuels Company, with the involvement of residents from the 154 municipalities within the bid area. Uniting artists from Europe and Africa, the performance draws inspiration from the unique characteristics of each region it visits. *Bodies in Motion: Crossing Borders Through Dance* is envisioned as a global dialogue, intertwining the diverse expressions of European and African cultures to celebrate the region's core principles of unity, hospitality, creativity, and diversity.

Producers: Mouvements perpétuels
Partners: Festival Montpellier Danse, ICI-CCN, CDC La Termitière Ouagadougou (BF)
Where: Arènes de Lunel, Gignac, Saint-Mathieu de Trévières, Place de la Comédie, Château de Castries, Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone Abbey, Aigues-Mortes
When: throughout the 2028 year
Budget: ☉ €600K

45 Sète-Europe, A Cultural Stage

SLA [Sète's contemporary art festival] supports culture in all its forms: visual arts, literature, music, video, gastronomy, and theatre. SLA defends the role of artists in our society, at local and international levels. Expanding upon this expertise, the initiative will be constructed with a European perspective, collaborating with regional festivals to leverage knowledge and expertise. This will allow for collective, cross-European artistic experimentation over the next four years. In 2028, a major international stage will bring together all the artists and cultural contributors who have left their imprint on the region in past events, paying homage to European culture.

Producer: SLA
Partners: Fiesta Sète, Festival de Thau, Unaenime Collective, K-Live, TMS - Théâtre Molière de Sète, MeNo (IT), Institut français (IT/PT), Show Gallery (US), La Junqueira (PT), Zé dos Bois Gallery (PT), Casa da cerca (PT), French Embassy (Lisbon)
Where: Sète
When: September-October 2028
Budget: ☉ €600 K



46 A European Conversation

European literature is a space where multilingual expression challenges the concept of belonging to a common culture. However, the surge in translation, the growth of author mobility, and the connection between literature and research have helped solidify this notion. We aspire to embrace the concept of a dynamic literary Europe in action. Building on the expertise of the Comédie du Livre, the 2028 event will give special focus to literary creations in "regional or minority languages" and "non-territorial languages", which are now protected by the dedicated European charter. This focus will extend beyond the languages of the countries that have endorsed the charter. This exploration of the rich linguistic and literary diversity of our continent will follow two primary paths: In the 2028 edition, ten authors, each representing one of these languages, will be invited by the festival to take part in its programming – spanning from Welsh to Low Frisian, Romansh to Istro-Romanian, Galician to Friulian, and more. Prior to this, six European artists will spend two months in residence at the Maison Bazille.

Producer: La Comédie du Livre - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
Partners: Maison Bazille residence, Maison de Heidelberg, ProHelvetica (CH), Institut Ramon Llull (ES), Brussels Book Fair (BE), Folio - Óbidos International Literary Festival (PT), Heidelberg Book Fair (DE), Crossing Border Festival (NL)
ECoC: Liepāja 2027
Where: Montpellier
When: May 2028
Budget: ☉ €250 K

47 A European Banquet – Agora des Savoirs

Since its inception, the *Agora des Savoirs*, a gathering place for intellectual discourse and knowledge sharing in Montpellier, has hosted hundreds of researchers, scientists, and intellectuals at the Centre Rabelais. In October 2028, the *Agora des Savoirs* will host a four-day programme of debates, meetings, and lectures on the following theme: Inventing Europe, Again. Two dozen intellectuals, writers, and scientists from all over Europe will be invited.

Producers: Agora des Savoirs - City of Montpellier
Where: Montpellier
When: October 2028
Budget: ☉ €250K

48 Focus Futures

Fostering a diversity of perspectives and sensibilities by showcasing the viewpoints and contributions of contemporary photographers and collectives. Each year, a call for projects launched in Europe and Africa will enable us to select proposals that reflect the different ways in which transitions are taking place, contemplate the realm of possibilities, and envision a desirable future. In 2028, a major showcase of their work will be featured at the Pavillon Populaire and across the bid area, uniting everyone dedicated to advancing the art of photography.

Producer: M28 - Ville de Montpellier
Partners: the Institut Français, Goethe-Institut, Fondation Zinsou (BJ), Fonds de dotation Agnès b.
Where: Pavillon Populaire
When: May-July 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

49 DIO (Do It Ourselves)

The Crossroads of our Imaginations



Since initiating our bid, M28 has been enthusiastic about assisting local participants in their engagement with the European process. With the help of our Production and Europe Task Forces, cultural, social, sports, and community organisations are encouraged to submit projects that address the key objectives of our programming: regional collaboration, cross-sector connections, and the European dimension. All of the projects that are chosen must align with M28's editorial principles. A panel consisting of the M28 team and individuals from the association's Board of Directors evaluates and chooses the projects.

Producer: M28
Where: M28 Lab and throughout the bid area
When: 2024-2028
Budget: ☉ €600 K



7 How will the events and activities that make up the year's cultural programme be chosen?

The programming for 2028 has been developed through continuous dialogue between local cultural organisations and the M28 team, under the artistic direction of Nicolas Dubourg. The artistic concept centres around crossroads, and its three pillars were formulated following extensive discussions with diverse local stakeholders, including artists, audiences, elected officials, representatives from sports, health, education, science, and more. After being clearly defined and aligned with the overall strategy, this concept was introduced and discussed during multiple meetings, led by the M28 Arts Directorate and General Management, involving all the stakeholders within the region (refer to Q14). We have established an oversight system for each project, which will be expanded and sustained starting in 2024.

The challenge of this programming was twofold.

On the one hand, our approach involved creating a **coherent artistic vision** that could be accessible to a wide audience and adapt over a four-year period. Simultaneously, we implemented a **curatorial approach** that fosters inclusive exchanges and encourages curatorial partners in the bid to creatively engage with artistic themes. In addition to this, we have introduced two new modes of participation to align with our goal of creating a programme with a robust European dimension. More than 85% of our projects involve partnerships, co-productions, and initiatives that celebrate the diversity and cultural wealth of Europe.

As a result, the programme encompasses initiatives spearheaded by entities with substantial European engagement as of 2023, as well as a Call for Projects aimed at local participants (individuals, associations, companies) who will receive guidance and assistance from our Europe Task Force.

To ensure overall coherence and cooperation among creative directors affiliated with M28, an **Arts Council** will be established in 2024, led by an Artistic Director. The Arts Council, consisting of 10 experts (including artists, architects, curators in visual arts, European continent specialists, academics, and audiovisual producers), will have the responsibility of offering insights for programming and maintaining continuous communication during the execution of each programme (through discussions, workshops, publication of articles, etc.).

In collaboration with the Paul-Valéry University and its MIRANDA project, we will establish a dedicated **research/creation** programme that combines science and art to explore artistic matters such as formal research and dramaturgy. This programme will involve residencies, workshops, and public events.

The Call for Projects has undergone an extensive pilot programme since 2022.

Its initial goal was to engage individuals and organisations not typically associated with major cultural institutions, creating a platform for dialogue and consultation. Renewed in 2023, it has been aligned with the concept's three pillars and augmented with predefined criteria. It enabled us to pinpoint the *capacity-building* needs of the involved stakeholders, including networking, the European dimension, and cross-sector collaboration. This Call for Projects will be extended for the 2024-2028 period as part of the **DIO – Do It Ourselves project** ⁴⁹, with the aim of enhancing the overall programming and sustaining the dynamic of widespread participation that is already under way. It will receive a funding allocation of €2 million, resulting in a total arts budget of €3.4 million earmarked for these Calls for Projects from 2022 to 2028.

8 How does the cultural programme combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with innovative and experimental modes of cultural expression?

The idea of a crossroads is at the heart of our creative project. Montpellier's multi-cultural character is well established, spanning nearly 1,000 years, as it has historically served as a crossroads for diverse languages, religions, and cultures from all over the world. Our concept, **crossroads of imaginations**, takes into account geography, history, and nature. Our human, tangible, and intangible heritage is rich, and our inclusive approach aims to place all living beings on an equal footing. This approach, surpassing the mere concept of showcasing our region, seeks to foster mutual comprehension and, perhaps even more significantly, the creation of novel imaginative realms that prompt a fresh perspective and perception of our historical and natural sur-

Cultural traditions rooted in know-how (such as winemaking and culinary arts) or social and cultural customs (bullfighting traditions, festivals, and carnivals), diverse linguistic expressions, both international (Arabic, Spanish, Italian) and regional (Occitan and Catalan), as well as sporting traditions (tambourine and jousting) will be the focal point of several programmes that will bring together practitioners of these traditions, contemporary artists, and scholars.

For instance, the **Living Trails project** ⁰⁶ will explore, on a European level, the tradition of winemaking in the face of contemporary challenges posed by global warming and water scarcity. To kickstart our year in 2028, a major international exhibition, **Staying Alive** ⁰³, will explore the concept of "shaping perspectives" on nature and delve into the connection between landscape, aesthetics, and life. This exploration will span from the earliest traditions of pictorial representation to modern expressions of contemporary art. "Doing things together" is at the heart of our approach to these programmes, which combine cross-disciplinarity and inclusive practices. **Procession of Processions** ¹⁹, **Academy of the Future** ¹⁵, and **Folk Spirits** ²³ delve into the multifaceted aspects of these linguistic, folk, scientific, and economic heritages. The same applies to the banquets organised within **Magic in the Moonlight** ²² or the traditional meals crafted as part of the **In the Food for Love** ³³ project. This theme will also consistently be explored through the perspective of a European and/or African dialogue, as exemplified by initiatives like **Gitan Symphonic Journeys** ³⁶ and **Bililingui** ³⁷.

Envisioning the future also involves harnessing the wisdom of ancient history and indigenous knowledge to find solutions that can be applied to the present. The **Our Living Shelters** ¹⁷ project will unite archaeologists and architects from countries experiencing extreme heat, experts in unfired or dry-earth construction (Sahel, Sub-Saharan Africa), and community members. They will collaborate to create hospitable spaces tailored to address the challenges of climate change.

In each of these projects, the goal is to *facilitate the meeting between history and tradition*, reinvigorating them through *contemporary creative expressions*. From a strategic perspective, it also involves breaking down the barriers between those engaged in heritage preservation and contemporary creation. The M28 Arts Directorate meticulously crafted the programme by consistently uniting all stakeholders, thereby merging expertise, perspectives, and audiences.

This artistic vision, which is also evident in the 49-**DIO** ⁴⁹ project, serves as a tangible embodiment of the concept of the crossroads of imaginations. Ultimately, M28 seeks to strengthen the region's cultural strategy by solidifying the connections established during the Capital Year and transforming them into enduring projects beyond 2028. To this end, the Production and Europe Task Forces, as well as capacity-building programmes, will be used to create and consolidate professional cultural networks.

9 How has the city involved local artists and cultural organisations in the design and implementation of the cultural programme?

From the outset, our approach was based on artistic collaboration. The meetings and workshops were collaboratively developed by General Management, the Arts Directorate, and a team of professional designers who specialise in *design with care*, a creative design approach that prioritises user needs and considers individual, societal, and environmental perspectives.

To design the project, the M28 team arranged workshops and meetings with a large number of local stakeholders. From well-established international institutions to grassroots associations and artists pioneering local initiatives, these meetings serve as a bridge, fostering **CONNECTION** and mutual understanding of each other's endeavours and contemplating collaborative opportunities rooted in shared exchange. Themes such as our connection with the natural world, heritage preservation, inclusion of individuals with disabilities or facing socio-economic challenges, mobility, production, and collaborative creation were extensively discussed during these dialogues. Furthermore, the M28 team successfully increased the bid's visibility through participation in talks and gatherings organised by Cultural and Creative Industries, third places, and disability advocacy groups.

Meanwhile, both the Call for Projects and the development of the 2028 programme have fostered **ACTION** through the establishment of collaborative initiatives involving organisations of varying sizes across the entire region. Examples include partnerships between a neighbourhood association and an international festival, as well as collaborations between a disability-focused organisation and a national drama centre, among others. This collaboration will be expanded and enhanced throughout the process, leveraging the specialised

tools and approaches we have already put in place, such as the cooperative curatorial method, the Europe Task Force, RECIPRO-CITY, and more. Right from the beginning, the creative execution of the project has involved the active participation of diverse local stakeholders from various disciplines. In 2022, a Call for Projects with a budget of €700,000 supported 50 projects, with an average grant of €14,000 each. Renewed in 2023 for the same amount, but with more clearly defined participation criteria, the Call for Projects has enabled the **DIO** ⁴⁹ project to be tested in practice, and to measure needs in terms of support and training for local stakeholders, particularly with regard to the European dimension. From 2024, the M28 Lab is designed to host all co-creation, network development, and training activities. 2028 will provide the opportunity for us to **CELEBRATE** this new working method, which values inclusive relations between local players of all sizes.



10 Please provide concrete examples and names of local artists and cultural organisations with whom the city plans to collaborate, specifying the type of interaction concerned.

Cooperation between the region's cultural players forms the cornerstone of our project. Our approach is to encourage discussions between players from all the towns and villages in our area, and also between players of very different sizes (the La Fenêtre art centre with the network of media libraries, ADEMASS with the Cinemed Festival, etc.). We are also thinking with a long-term focus, so that these cooperative ventures represent a new way of conceptualising cultural policies, emphasising the complementarity of know-how and the inclusive nature of the working structure.

A programme over **80%** of which is designed with and by the players themselves.

With a large number of cultural players in our region, we have decided to offer a programme over 80% of which is designed with and by the players themselves.

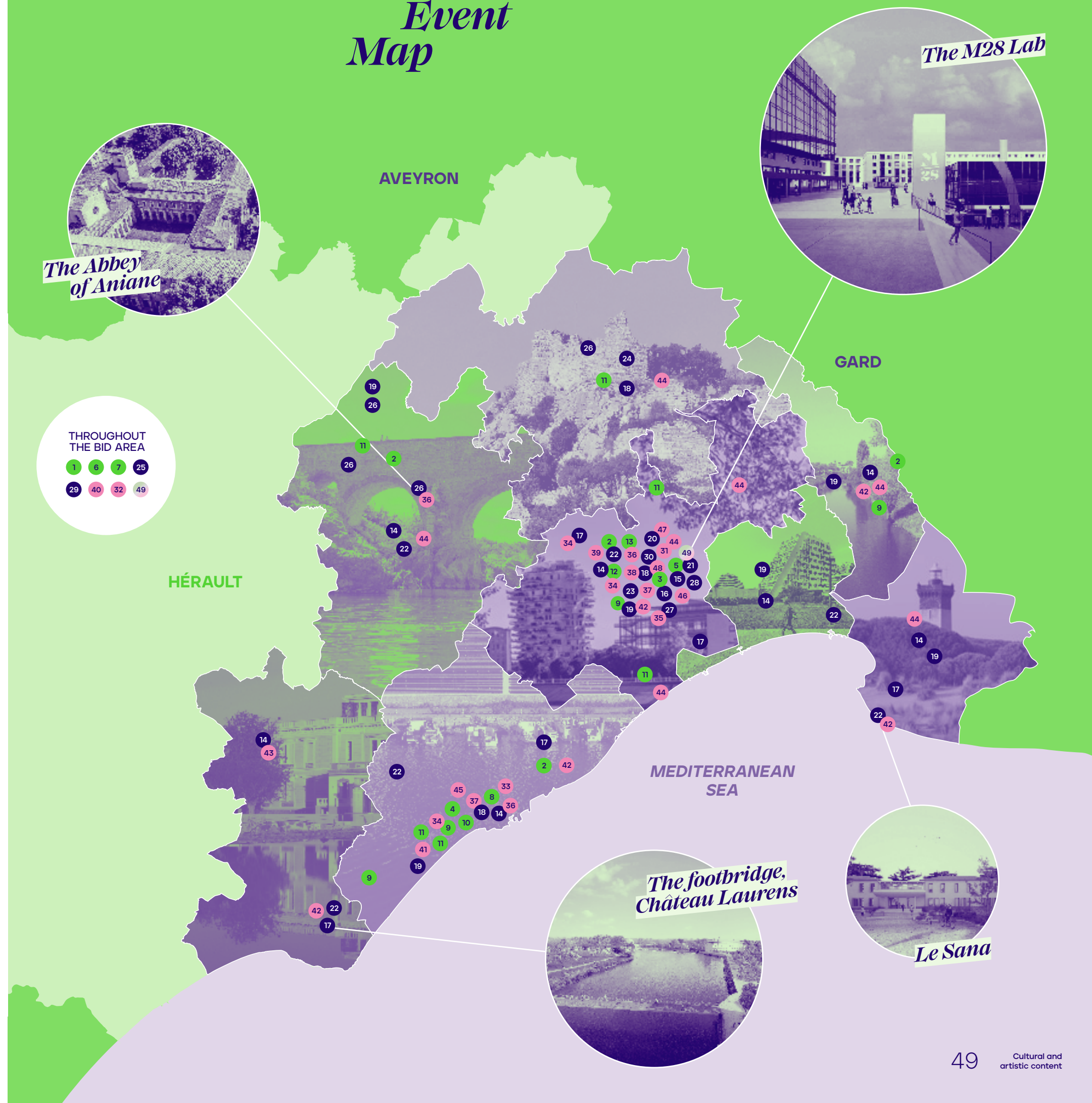
The **DIO** ⁴⁹ programme has already been launched. Over 80 projects have been funded in a wide variety of art fields. While this operation does not set out an exhaustive list, it does offer insight into the depth and breadth of these proposals.

Art Transfabrik has offered a series of choreographic encounters around **Yann Lheureux**, resulting in a performance by Meg Stuart and Mark Tomkins. As part of the MAGDALENA European network of female artists, Director **Marion Coutarel** is proposing cooperation between local and international artists and local residents to create, experiment with, and experience a shared artistic process at a pop-up venue. In the Camargue region, between land and sea, the theatre company **Les Rasants** has designed a theatrical tour of the cultural heritage of Les Sauniers. The **Cap Gély Figuerolles** association has organised a day devoted to *gitan* culture: Les Gitans (The Romani), a European culture and cultural heritage. The **Transit** photography collective has offered imaginary mapping, exhibiting photographs in public spaces and the opportunity to listen to sound capsules. The duo **Kristoff K. Roll** and **Carole Rieussec** have compiled a sound library of dream stories from around the world.

The **En Traits Libres** collective of cartoonists and comic strip authors have held a Comic Strip Festival featuring exhibitions, DJ sets and debates. The **EN.VIE.S** project, proposed by the **Créature-s Créatrice-s** group offers cultural walks in natural environments, bringing together cultural players, caregivers and specialists in The Living along a route with several poetic and sensory stops for the whole family in a natural environment that reflects Montpellier's living heritage. **Borna Jordana**, an association promoting Occitan culture, has organised the first ever Hérault Festival of Totemic Animals over a long weekend. Finally, the **Wanda** group, led by **Valentine Carette**, **Laurie Bellanca**, **Babx** and **Benjamin Chaval**, offered a weekend devoted to music and new dramatic writing at the Hôtel d'Aures, the headquarters of the M28 association.

Generally, local artists will have extensive involvement in the various programmes for 2028. Most projects, such as **Wide Shot** 34, **Rootstop** 27, and **Les Grandes Traversées** 01, are conceived as crossroads where European, African and M28 artists converge underpinned by an inclusive, mutually-supportive approach.

Event Map



European dimension

The crossroads symbol that shapes Montpellier's history and geography represents the tangible outcome of a cosmopolitical ideal. A breeding ground, fuelling new, shared imaginations, a remedy against isolationism, and scaled-down projection of the initial European momentum.

11

Explain the scope and calibre of the activities intended to:

11.1

promote cultural diversity in Europe, intercultural dialogue, and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;

The programme as a whole is designed to showcase the diversity of cultures in Europe, and to echo major European issues, such as environmental and climate issues, our European identity, a celebration of the communities comprising it, the issue of living

together, and guaranteeing the principle of free movement of goods and people within the European area.

A CULTURAL CROSSROADS

Montpellier 2028 is a shared project. Intercultural dialogue is therefore a fundamental aspect of the bid, with a strong focus on the *challenge of artists' mobility*.

Mobility within the region, in Europe and beyond, in particular through strong partnerships with African countries. Discussions were quickly initiated with key players on these topics, including via the *On the Move* Network and *Culture Moves Europe*, one of the European Commission's Creative Europe programmes. Montpellier 2028 is committed to these issues with strength and determination, as demonstrated by the round table discussion on "The Challenges of artists mobility" held during the 2023 Festival d'Avignon, which brought together artists, institutions (the Institut Français) and European Commission officials. This genuine plea for the circulation of artists will be championed for the duration of the Montpellier 2028 programme, encouraging intercultural mixing and stimulating rich, complex imaginations in the process.

The development of *residences* as part of Montpellier 2028 will also be a powerful lever for promoting the movement and meeting of artists. A number of residences will be available to host European and international artists, including the Villa Bazille, Villa Salis and the Aigues-Mortes abattoir renovation project. We have also forged partnerships with residences abroad, with a view to opening up and adding an international dimension to our artists and local cultural players. Such is the case with Villa Karo, a Finnish-Beninese residence in Grand Popo, Benin. As is the Art Farm in Budweis. Our involvement in networks such as Res Artis also enables us to draw on international contacts and exchanges.

Montpellier 2028 will also be able to use *RIZOMA*, a network of African and European cities that promotes an interconnected approach to the movement of people and cultural diversity supported by cities. It includes recognition and acknowledgement of the historical legacies of colonialism and the inequalities that these legacies continue to produce. As part of the *Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier* ³² in autumn 2023, a new Charter of Shared Commitment has been signed between the network's member cities.

AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPE AND AFRICA

MOVING TOWARDS NEW ARTISTIC, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL COOPERATION

Montpellier is fully involved in the drive to redefine French national and European ties (EU-AU summit) with the African continent. In the Mediterranean basin, the project to create an Institute for the History of France and Algeria is the result

of a vast effort to reconcile memories, serving a cultural, historical, and memorial purpose. Its creation is based on the existence of heritage collections built up by Montpellier and currently housed at the Mucem in Marseille.

In 2021, Montpellier hosted the New Africa-France Summit, an event designed to reinvent ties between the African continent and France. A summit featuring African and European civil societies, artists, entrepreneurs, researchers, and academics, with the aim of rethinking the way we collaborate and build solutions together to the challenges we collectively face.

The high point of this new approach and a landmark in the M28 Programme, the ***Biennale Euro-Africa in Montpellier***³², whose first edition was held in October 2023, will provide a unique space for dialogue and cooperation between the two continents until 2028 and beyond. Whether we're addressing the topic of water or the importance of changing the way we view the African continent, for one week we'll be creating a framework that lends itself to innovation, the search for concrete solutions and a celebration of our cultural heritage, with two strands in line with M28:

A cultural programme for the general public,

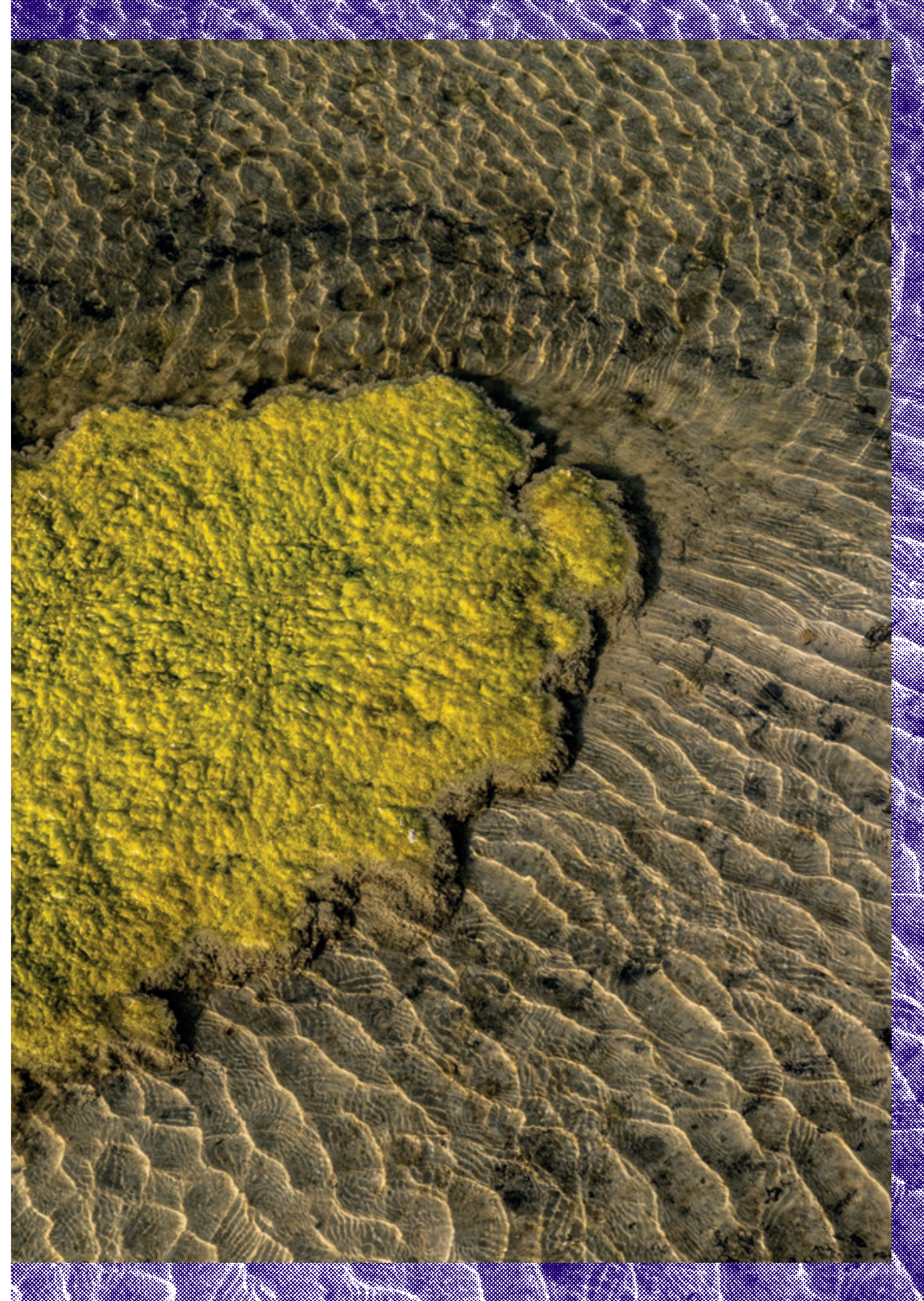
including an array of French national and international events to promote existing and future cooperation between Montpellier and the African continent, and to transform the public's perception of contemporary African culture, particularly in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). From 2023 onwards, this will include proposals put forward by Montpellier's african diaspora, who are stakeholders in this new spotlight event.

A development and innovation component aimed at promoting African entrepreneurship and cooperation between local authorities, scientists, and civil society, by holding a multi-stakeholder international summit on water resource management issues and a campus of young, innovative African entrepreneurs to transfer skills and experience.

29 ***The Palaver Tree***

The Palaver Tree with its universal and plural ethos, offers a series of travelling public conversations in towns in the bid area and in African cities, with the aim of stimulating discussions, exchange and innovation, fostering a better understanding of others and the environment, and sharing knowledge at work in the twenty-first century. These interdisciplinary workshops present dynamic conversations reflecting multiple points of view with eminent academics, researchers, and artists from Europe, the African continent, and its diaspora. From 2024 to 2028, a themed discussion is to be held on contemporary schools of thought, such as Memory, Freedom, the Anthropocene, Work, Time... Each workshop invites four personalities from the fields of art, sport, medicine, economics, philosophy, anthropology, astrophysics, ecology, religion, and other spheres.

Producers: Mouvements Perpétuels Company
Partners: The Institut Français, Goethe-Institut, Institut Free Afrique and the Nazi Boni University (BF), Les Ateliers de la Pensée, Gaston Berger University (SN), University of Kigali (RW), Fondation Zinsou (BJ), Café Littéraire de Missy (CD), the Kôre Ségou Cultural Centre (ML)
Where: Territoire 2028
When: February May/October-December
Budget: €250K © 600K



AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPEAN VALUES AND IDEALS

The resounding return of war to Europe's doorstep has shaken us all to the core, forcing us to reaffirm more than ever the values of peace and democracy that form the European project basis. With cultural sites such as the Mariupol theatre obliterated and artists forced into exile, culture is always on the front line when it comes to erasing, preventing, and humiliating populations and re-visiting their histories.

In the face of such emergencies, it is essential that cities and regions commit to becoming "havens", offering persecuted artists a place of safety and protection. They send out a powerful message of solidarity and humanity. They prove that art transcends borders, and that freedom of expression is a fundamental right that cannot be flouted by violence and repression, as the Mo.Co "Museums in Exile" exhibition reiterated in 2023.

To this end, Montpellier 2028 has joined forces with networks and initiatives—**CEC ARTSLINK**, **Artists at Risk**—that help, relocate and finance artists in danger of persecution or oppression, fleeing war or terror, as has unfortunately been the case in Ukraine for nearly two years.

Montpellier can also count on the **Mayors for Peace** network, of which the city is Vice-President, engaging in genuine dialogue with over 8,000 local authorities worldwide, to promote this culture of peace in the public arena. In conjunction with Evora 2027, debates and workshops will be held for young local people to develop and share these values of tolerance and cooperation.

In addition, the programming for 2028 includes a crossover between the "Peace Machine" initiative supported by Oulu 2026, and our 15-**Academy of the Future** ¹⁵ project. Once completed, their system will be presented in Montpellier in 2028.

Drawing in particular on the findings of the recent **"Culture & Democracy"** report, M28 strives to strengthen citizen participation in its arts and cultural activities, increase civic engagement, social unity and a democratic way of life (see Q15). We will also be drawing on the expertise and lessons learned from the Culture & Democracy workshops that Chemnitz intends to hold between now and 2025.

AT THE CROSSROADS OF TRANSITIONS AND LIFE

While heritage traditions and legacies are an integral part of European identity, it is also, and above all, in action that we break new common ground.

As we all know, the climate issue is the major challenge of the coming century. This is all the more true for Montpellier and the Mediterranean basin, a true hotspot that will be profoundly affected by climate change. The arts programme bears witness to this: Ecological transition and relations with The Living are key concerns for the region, echoing the major strategic directions taken by the European Union, through, for example, the **Green Deal** and the **New European Bauhaus** initiative.

As bearers of hope for the future, young people will be particularly involved in this dynamic. **The Parliament of Living Beings** ⁰⁸ will unite young schoolchildren, students, researchers, and players in civil society to form a great parliament of living beings, collectively questioning contemporary issues in the light of climate change and problems related to biodiversity.

The ecological transition and our relationship with The Living lie at the heart of our concerns, echoing key initiatives promoted by the European Union, including the Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus.

Biodiversity and natural spaces have been under threat for several years now, due to significant demographic pressure on the area and the proliferation of property development and architectural projects to accommodate the influx of new residents. The dynamics of Montpellier 2028 provide an opportunity to take an innovative look at new ways of building the city, following the principles of the **New European Bauhaus**. **Project House** (see Q42) will provide a forum to reflect on these issues. **Design for Change** ²¹, which transforms our cities through design, as evidenced by the **Gardeno Paradizo** ⁰⁹ project, will develop objects and services that are aesthetically-plea-

sing, sustainable and inclusive. With **Outlook Towers** ¹¹, **The Earth is Architecture** ⁰⁵ and **Our Living Shelters** ¹⁷, our relationship with construction and the habitability of our world will be questioned in constant conversation, and the production of new imaginations projecting us into these new environmental conditions. Generally speaking, the region's cultural, arts and urban planning players will be encouraged to take part in discussions within the **New European Bauhaus** community, with a view to collaboratively addressing best practices, providing inspiration and hybridising expertise.

Montpellier 2028 will also be taking part in the conversation on a broader level, with the holding of the **Montpellier Water Days**, the first edition of which will take place alongside the **Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier** ³² 2023. The aim of this congress, co-organised by the UNESCO ICIREWARD centre, is to bring together stakeholders in the water sector in the Mediterranean basin and on the African continent, in search of concrete solutions to the challenges of water management in African and Mediterranean megacities, and to help identify the necessary and useful pathways amid the complexity of existing and future situations.

AT THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

A land of the avant-garde, the bid area also features a remarkable cultural heritage forged over centuries, which Montpellier 2028 will

highlight throughout its programme.

Safeguarding and upholding these legacies require us to face up to imaginations and issues of the times. With 23-*Folk Spirits* ²³, the *CIRDOC - Institut de Culture Occitane* revisits the region's intangible heritage in dialogue with other European local events. The language of the troubadours since the twelfth century, Occitan is a perfect vehicle for exchanges with the whole of Europe, which is concerned by the preservation of its native languages and traditions. Together with Oulu and Bodø, we will be entering into dialogue with the Sámi culture, which also strives, through its parliament, to keep its vernacular language and traditions alive and well.

Over the centuries, Montpellier and its surrounding region have been a place of refuge for displaced and persecuted populations, enabling them to uphold their traditions and innate characteristics. This is the case of *Gitan* music, which infuses the Montpellier 2028 region from east to west. The conservatories of Sète, Agde, and Montpellier are developing *Gitan* music courses in schools, with performances planned for 2028, drawing on the aesthetics of symphony orchestras. A European tradition par excellence, *Gitan* music from the Hérault region builds bridges with the *Sinti and Roma* groups of our European neighbours. It also provides an opportunity to make connections with Heidelberg and its Sinti and Roma documentation centre, as well as the ERIAC centre in Berlin.

An age-old marker of European identity, gastronomy transcends borders and cultural differences while retaining a strong local and unique identity. With its Mediterranean culture, the Montpellier 2028 region is obviously rich in this intangible heritage. *In the Food for Love* ³³ draws on the city's varied gastronomic heritage to bring out the sensitive links we have with our roots, while looking to the future with the aim of passing on this heritage to younger generations. An opportunity to forge links with the whole of Europe, beyond the Mediterranean tropism, with projects identified with Budweis (Roots and Flavors) and Budva (The Restaurant).

Over the centuries,
Montpellier and its region
have come to embody a
sanctuary for displaced
populations

11.3 Showcasing European artists; collaborating with participants and cities from different countries and transnational partnerships.

The European and international dimension of Montpellier 2028 is clear and assertive, with a strong commitment: **85% of projects in the programme involve transnational partnerships.**

M28 and the region's cultural players have been able to capitalise on long-established synergies with partners, and they have also taken advantage of the bid's momentum to

forge new collaborations with a large number of artists, cultural structures, universities, and European and international networks. Whether it's *Living Trails* ²⁴, *Time Machine* ²⁵, or *Trans!* ²⁶, each of our arts projects reflects the dynamism fuelling our partnerships and the openness of our programme.

Fondazione
Cirko Vertigo, Festival Miramiro,
Circus centrum, Grizedale Arts, Layla Skali,
German Embassy, Gdynia Maritime University, Dynamo, Villa
Medicis, Anupama Kundoo, Lungomare, Budapest Wine Festival,
Circus Village, David García and Aina Tugores, Driss Kettani, Swedish Embassy,
Girona Municipal Theatre, Edric Choo Poo Liang, Elora Hardy, Festival Arena, Toshiko
Mori, Cirkus Cirkör, Ibuku Architects, Galata Museo del Mare, Gallen Kallela Museum, The
Mothership, Festival Circolo, Théâtre de Liège, Embassy of Italy, Les Halles de Schaerbeek, Embassy
of Romania, Marina Tabassum, Murat Tabanlıoglu, Tranzit.ro, Polish Embassy, Rotterdam Maritime
Museum, Mirabilia, Spanish Embassy, Barcelona Maritime Museum, Acapa Fontys, Croatian Embassy,
Nzinga B. Mboup, Cesenatico Maritime Museum, Nicholas Plewman, Netherlands Embassy, Royal Conservatory
of Brussels, Finn Geipel, Verbier International Alpine Wine Festival, La Cambre, Metropolis, Cosmogama, UNESCO,
University of Dance and Circus, UP Festival, the Institut Français, KASK & Conservatorium, University of Kigali, The Opera
Theater of Tunis, AECT Rio Minho, Aernout Mik, Villa Albertine, NRK, Prague Film Institute, Association Mozaic, MAD
festival, Bande À Part, BBC, FRAME (French American Museum Exchange), Café littéraire de Missy, Universitatea de Vest
din Timișoara, Festival TransAmériques, FIBA, Film Fest Gent, Filmoteca Española, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,
CINEMATEK - Royal Film Archive of Belgium, Thalia Theater, ETICity, Conservatorio di Musica G.B. Martini, The German Film and Television
Academy Berlin, Architecture for Humans, ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts), World Design Organisation, WDR,
Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles, Théâtre Vidy Lausanne, Université de Montréal Faculty of Music, Festival Imaterial, Poka Yio, Trans
Europe Halles, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Neue Pinakothek, ABAPA Palermo, The Art Academy of Latvia, Wiener
Festwochen, CIRQUEON - Centre for contemporary circus, Free Afrik, Grec Festival, Geneva University of Art And Design (HEAD), Holland
Festival, HRT, In Situ, InMICS (International Master in Composition for Screen), La Garriga, Portikus, INSAS, La Strada Graz, Centre
Culturel Kôré, Life Long Burning, Fondazione Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, Manchester International Festival, MEDS, Cineteca
di Bologna, Méla festival, Mercat de les Flors, Mini Art Fest, MITSP - Mostra Internacional de Teatro de São Paulo, Município de Barcelos,
Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge, Napoli Teatro, Permission Inc., NPO, Cinecitta, On the Move, Orpheus 21, Städel Museum, Athens Epidaurus
Festival, Draft.Inn - Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Castilla y León, Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu, RAI, Rijkmuseum,
Ruhrtriennale, Goethe Institut, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, ProHelvetia, Teatro Municipal do Porto - Rivoli, The National Film School
of Denmark, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Birmingham Opera Company, TorinoDanza, Uniarts, ERT, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Onassis
Foundation, Université de Saint-Louis, Theatre Thikwa, Musik Akademie, Galeria Zé dos Bois, YLE, Baltic Opera House, Fondation
Zinsou, The Dakar Biennale, Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Ateneu Popular Nou Barris, BPS22, MAAT Museum, Opera Europa,
Folio - Óbidos International Literary Festival, CDC de Brazzaville, French Embassy, Casa da cerca, Don Sen Folo, Institut
du monde arabe, La Termitière, École des Sables, Brussels Book Fair, DoKumentation und kultur centrum
sinti un roma Heidelberg, École des arts chorégraphiques de Marrakech, Nowy Teatr, The National Circus School
Shems'y, National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique, Weltformat Graphic Design
Festival, The Fez festival of world sacred music, Zoukak Theatre Company, Conservatoire de
Tlemcen, Grandmas project, Centre for Arabic and Mediterranean Music, Show Gallery, Graphic Days
Festival, Graphic Matters, Heidelberg Literature Festival, HNK Zagreb, IMAF - Institut des mondes
Africains, Lodz Institute of Tolerance, Irish National Opera, The Royal Danish
Opera, Jeune Ballet de Tunis, Beirut & Beyond, PARTS - contemporary dance school,
Crossing Border Festival, La Casa Arabe, Oslo World, Staatstheater
Hannover, Association des rencontres de la danse AR2D, Teatro
Nacional de São Carlos, Terya Circus, La Junqueira Artists
Residency, Institut Ramon Llull, Le Moussem,
Les ateliers de la pensée

11.4 List the European and international cities, cultural operators, and artists with whom a partnership is envisaged, and specify the type of interfacing envisaged. List the transnational partnerships your city has already established or is considering establishing.

M28 can count on the many transnational networks and partnerships that the City of Montpellier, its Metropolis, the City of Sète, and the other municipalities in the bid have developed over the years and continue to actively densify with a view towards growing

internationalisation. The bid is also in line with Montpellier’s international policy roadmap, one of the city’s strategic priorities.

A dense and active network of *twinned towns*, such as Palermo, Kos, and Barcelona, enables us to forge strong bilateral relations that are taken up by cultural players, such as Sète’s SLA association, which worked closely with Sicily’s main town for its Sète-Palermo Festival in 2022. Since 1961, Montpellier and Heidelberg have built up a unique and strategic twinning arrangement addressing a wide range of issues, from health and transport to economic development. In September 2023, an exhibition entitled “45 Years of Defending the Civil Rights of German Sinti and Roma” was presented in Montpellier, in partnership with the Heidelberg Sinti and Roma Centre. The two cities also share a major academic capital, with numerous student exchanges.

With Montpellier joining the *Eurocities* network in 2022, M28 can also draw on a major network of 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million European Union citizens. In June 2023, in Brussels, the Metropolis signed the Europe-wide “*Call to Action for a less carbon-intensive and more inclusive culture*”. Constructive discussions were also held with Eurocities representatives with a view to organising the Network’s annual Culture Forum in Montpellier by 2028.

An integral part of Montpellier for 30 years, the *fight against discrimination* provides another opportunity to forge strong links with organisations committed to freedom and diversity. In May 2013, Montpellier celebrated the first “marriage for all” in France. Ten years later, Montpellier reaffirmed its commitment to tolerance and hospitality through the hosting of the 30th Pride parade, welcoming international Pride representatives, in particular from Ukraine and Turkey. Alongside them, the display of the slogan “Montpellier t’aime” (Montpellier loves you) affirmed a full commitment to those prevented from walking and living freely and safely because of their gender identity or sexual orientation elsewhere in the world. It has also provided the opportunity for the City of Montpellier to formalise its membership to the *Rainbow Cities* network, which links cities around the world that share the values of openness and tolerance, and work alongside them to guarantee equal access to rights for people from the LGBTQIA+ community. In 2028, in collaboration with the *Fierté Montpellier Pride association*, M28 will be inviting 27 DJs from each EU country to take part in an electronic music parade.

As Montpellier is a member of *UCLG* (United Cities and Local Governments) via Cités Unies France, the bid team took an interest in the “*Agenda 21 for Culture*” initiative and their “Culture 21: Actions toolkit” for cities and cultural operators to analyse existing cultural policies and map out paths for improvement. For the next version of this toolbox, scheduled for 2024, M28 has volunteered to take part in their pilot programme. Montpellier also supports the initiatives of UCLG’s regional branches, in particular UCLG Africa’s initiative to create *African Capitals of Culture*. In line with its Africa component, Montpellier is committed to providing expertise and resources to help implement this great idea, should it come to fruition.

In addition to institutions, the region’s cultural operators have developed first-rate international networks and partnerships. In May 2023, Montpellier hosted the “*Third Places for Europe*” meeting, the first of its kind on the continent, supported by one of the region’s leading cultural venues, La Halle Tropisme. Three days of meetings, exchanges, and workshops between third places, fablabs, and creative hubs to unite, interact on, and sketch out common trajectories, at French national and European levels, in the presence of European players such as the municipality of Fundão in Portugal, which encourages the development of third places in the region, and Rog Factory, Ljubljana’s new cultural hub. In Helsinki, Montpellier 2028 has sketched out collaborative projects with Kaapeli, a former cable factory that in 30 years has become Finland’s largest third-place venue and cultural centre.

Another unique initiative: the meetings held by La Bulle Bleue in June 2023, focusing on the themes of *diversity and inclusion* on a European scale. Bringing together over 50 participants from the four corners of the continent, La Bulle Bleue has positioned itself as a European leader for the professional inclusion of people with disabilities in the live performance sector. These meetings are a precursor to the structuring of a leading European consortium around the *The Inclusive Lab* ³⁵ project, which will include Theater Babel in Rotterdam, Theatre Stap in Turnhout, Belgium, RambaZamba Theatre in Berlin, and Danza Mobile in Sevilla, Spain.

35 *The Inclusive Lab*

Promoting the professional inclusion of people with disabilities in the field of arts and culture, to build an inclusive city.

Against a backdrop of change and questions about diversity, particularly in the performing arts sector, and the need to think about new forms of professional inclusion, La Bulle Bleue is offering a series of initiatives, at the crossroads of research, training, and production, to enable the full inclusion of professionals with disabilities in 2028.

La Bulle Bleue is responsible for defining and managing an inclusive hub with a network of local, French national, and European operators in the fields of art, culture, disability, and popular education. To this end, it will be submitting a new European project in March 2024, involving partners from Germany, Belgium, and Poland.

Producer: La Bulle Bleue
Partners: ADPEP34, ADAGES, ARESAT, Centre National de la Création Adaptée (CNCA), FAIRE ESS, Futur immoral, Vaste Entreprise, Joli Mai, Laboratoire Praxiling, Occitanie en Scène, Onda - Office National de Diffusion Artistique, On the Move, Nowy Teatr (PL), Printemps des

Comédiens, Théâtre des 13 Vents / CDN de Montpellier, Théâtre national Wallonie-Bruxelles (BE), Theater Thikwa (DE), University of Montpellier
ECoC: Budweis 2028
Where: Montpellier
When: September 2028
Budget: €250K ☉ €600K

Over the past few months, the Montpellier team has had the opportunity to hold meetings in Brussels with representatives of European cultural networks. With *IETM*, the international network for contemporary performing arts, representing over 500 organisations, and *Culture Action Europe*, this has provided the opportunity to lay the foundations for future collaboration between local cultural operators and other European players, by taking part in meetings, webinars and workshops held throughout the year. These networks are also great resources and monitoring tools for the themes and areas of work promoted by the European Commission, to be shared in the field, so that local and regional initiatives are aligned with the *European global agenda*.

The M28 Europe Task Force, serving local stakeholders

The Montpellier 2028 bid provides an excellent opportunity to build an ambitious, innovative European strategy for the region. Over the past few months, we have taken stock of the situation and mapped out the initiatives and players who approach their activities from a European and international perspective. And the region is abundant in this domain! Whether it's the region itself, the metropolis, certain rural municipalities, cultural associations, artists, or other entities, there are numerous initiatives that support Montpellier's drive for openness and international expansion. But these actions are too often isolated, disconnected from one another, thus lacking in efficiency and impact. Paradoxically, the results obtained in the region in terms of European projects and funding still seem underwhelming.

The M28 Europe Task Force is a structural solution to the European and international strategy, seizing the opportunity created by the bid.

Its mission will be to facilitate the sharing of information between local stakeholders, working on a daily basis to promote the European dynamic, such as the Maison des Relations Internationales, Europe Direct Montpellier Occitanie, and the Occitanie Europe association. The latter, based in Brussels, became involved during our travels and exchanges with members of the European Commission and Parliament. We can also count on Occitanie en Scène, which supports the region's cultural players through its European and international projects cooperative.

Capitalising on expertise. The M28 Europe Task Force will also be able to draw on Montpellier's university network, which has developed a tradition and considerable expertise in European and international partnerships, insufficiently leveraged by cultural and artistic players. Leveraging networks (Coimbra Group, Charm-EU) and weaving multi-disciplinary collaborations involving the arts, social sciences, architecture, and fundamental research. Drawing on their experience in European engineering and project consortia. We can count on the support of a National Contact Point for the Horizon Europe programme—Cluster 2: "Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society", based at Paul-Valéry University.

Monitor and mediate between global trajectories and local initiatives. The Europe Task Force will be an essential link in the gathering and sharing of information with the Relais Culture Europe. We will be able to draw on the connections we have developed with the main European networks and players, such as IETM, Culture Action Europe, PEARLE, On the Move, and others. Understanding and drawing inspiration from the European Union's guidelines and rolling out our work with local players (Culture and Health, Culture and Democracy, Culture and Climate Transition, etc.).

Tools created and deployed to support the region's European and international goals. The fluidity and efficiency of exchanges will be supported by new tools designed by Montpellier 2028. The RECIPRO-CITY platform is already helping to intensify interactions and raise the profile of local initiatives. In a second phase, this platform will take on a European dimension, ensuring capacity for dialogue and work opportunities with partners across the continent. The Europe Task Force can also help project leaders navigate the Occitanie Region's European funding platforms.

Facilitating and enhancing peer-to-peer capacity building.

The lack of knowledge and training on European programmes among local cultural players is a major obstacle to lending initiatives an international dimension and obtaining funding. However, the Europe Task Force has identified resource persons with relevant expertise and experience in European projects, who themselves have benefited from support programmes run by the Relais Culture Europe. This is particularly true of the Uni'Sons teams, members of the Creative Agora consortium, which promotes the European dimension in non-formal, participatory arts education for adults from Europe's disadvantaged and diverse communities. The task force will create the conditions for passing down and sharing knowledge with all the region's cultural and arts players, while organising conferences, symposia, and workshops on a European scale at the M28 Lab in a hybrid format (face-to-face/remote).



12 Can you explain in detail your strategy for attracting the interest of a wide European and international audience?

Leading events such as Montpellier Danse, Jazz in Sète, the Festival Radio France, and La Comédie du Livre – 10 jours en mai, have placed Montpellier and its surrounding region on the French national and international cultural scene for many years now. It is also an area whose history, geographical position, and natural and cultural heritage are already well known to a European and international public.

This is a strength we intend to draw on—not rest on—as we build an ambitious strategy for these audiences. This strategy is based on two fundamental pillars: *a creative and innovative approach* to rouse the interest of the international public and maintain contact with visitors from Europe and elsewhere, and a *precise targeting of certain categories* within the international public.

Provide foreign viewers, for example, the opportunity to participate in programming remotely, as will be the case with *CORE* 30, broadcast on Radio France and international radio stations belonging to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Emphasis will also be placed on welcoming and interacting with the international public through the Ask Mona system, which will enable us to answer foreign visitors’ questions in real time ahead of their visit, and to enrich them interactively and dynamically once they are on site.

We will also be inviting international visitors to venture off the beaten path and discover more than the most popular sites, while ensuring that audiences are spread throughout the bid area, particularly in outlying and rural areas, thanks to the mobility policy implemented by Montpellier and its metropolitan area. Projects such as *In the Food for Love* 33, which focus on gastronomic culture, and *Early Music Heritage* 26, which link musical, architectural, and wine-growing heritages will specifically be brought on board for this purpose.

On the second point, we will be targeting cultural players—in the broadest sense of the word—from the four corners of the globe: filmmakers, musicians, researchers, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs. The M28 programme features symposia, workshops, and multidisciplinary professional meetings. With *M28 Mostra* 25 and *Euromed Music* 39 as examples, we are hoping to interest film and world music professionals in exchanging ideas and co-constructing the future of their respective disciplines. Similarly, European and African academics and researchers will meet at times dedicated to our assessment processes, and at the Euro-Africa Montpellier Water Days led by the Icireward Centre.

Another audience we will be focusing on is young people and international students. They will have the opportunity to meet, with the focus placed on *Desire to Desire* 18, a major event on the future of arts education in Europe, and to consider the *Play Music* 20 project, an international musical creation competition for orchestra and video games. With the *Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier* 32, innovative entrepreneurs from the African continent are also invited to Montpellier, for a stay that enables them to consolidate their projects, in the fields of technology, healthcare, the cultural and creative industries, and sport.

to venture off the beaten path and discover more than the most popular sites

13 Describe the connections developed, or to be developed between your cultural programme and that of other cities holding the "European Capital of Culture" title.

Since the pre-selection phase, the Montpellier 2028 team has paid particular attention to exchanges and discussions with past, present, and future ECoCs. Favouring on-site visits whenever possible (Esch 2022, Elefsina 2023, Timisoara 2023, Tartu 2024, Oulu 2026, Budweis 2028), these exchanges have been fruitful in understanding the ECoC system in general and in building the European dimension in particular. In instances where we were unable to visit the site, we took the time to talk to the various teams from other ECoCs (Bodo 2024, Chemnitz 2025, Skopje 2028, etc.). These many rich encounters have enabled us to sketch out strategic collaborations between the M28 projects and other ECoCs, from 2024 to 2028 and beyond. The following table reflects the outcome of these exchanges and bilateral agreements on our shared projects with the ECoC family.

| | PROJECTS - ECOC | PROJECTS - MONTPELLIER 2028 |
|----------------|---|--|
| TIMISOARA 2023 | Vertical Garden Invisible/visible City Celebration | <i>Our Living Shelters</i> 17 <i>Gitan Symphonic Journeys</i> 36 <i>Common Waters</i> 07 |
| BODO 2024 | European Cabins of Culture Sami Museum Arts of Democracy Via Querinissima Querini Opera | <i>Our Living Shelters</i> 17 <i>Gitan Symphonic Journeys</i> 36 <i>Folk Spirits</i> 23 <i>Academy of the Future</i> 15 <i>Common Waters</i> 07 <i>We Are Europe</i> 31 |
| TARTU 2024 | Reclaiming River Emajõgi and Great Lakes | <i>Common Waters</i> 07 |
| CHEMNITZ 2025 | European Workshop for Culture and Democracy Makers, Business and Art (MBA)s Soft Skills Academy | <i>The M28 Lab</i> <i>Future Landscapes</i> 24 <i>LUNES</i> 13 / <i>Euromed Music</i> 39 |
| OULU 2026 | Peace Machine Smart Hospital Delta Life | <i>Academy of the Future</i> 15 <i>Art on Prescription</i> <i>Our Living Shelters</i> 17 / <i>Common Waters</i> 07 |
| LIEPĀJA 2027 | Agora of Values Europe Sings in Liepaja Into the Future | <i>Agora des Savoirs</i> 47 <i>We Are Europe</i> 31 <i>Play Music</i> 20 |
| SKOPJE 2028 | International Games Developers Conference Creating Commons Soundscape Workshops Railways of Illusion | <i>Play Music</i> 20 <i>Gardeno Paradizo</i> 09 <i>Sounds of Tomorrow</i> 28 <i>Design for Change</i> 21 |
| BUDWEIS 2028 | Confluence Kroj Pride Roots and Flavors Open Season Bridges Inspire | <i>Common Waters</i> 07 <i>Future Folk Fiction</i> 14 / <i>Majak Camp</i> 02 <i>In the Food for Love</i> 33 <i>The Inclusive Lab</i> 35 <i>Sounds of tomorrow</i> 28 <i>LUNES</i> 13 <i>Academy of the Future</i> 15 <i>The Parliament of Living Beings</i> 08 |

Drawing inspiration from the Kultuurikompass of Tartu 2024 and Kaunas 2022, we will connect our peers and other ECoCs, adopting a collaborative, reflective approach to the challenges and transformational actions related to our programme.

Twin Cities

Barcelona, Spain
Bethlehem, West Bank
Chengdu, China
Fez, Morocco
Heidelberg, Germany
Kos, Greece
Louisville, United States
Palermo, Italy
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Sherbrooke, Canada
Tiberias, Israel
Tlemcen, Algeria

RIZOMA

Athens, Greece
Bergamo, Italy
Braga, Portugal
Dusseldorf, Germany
Mannheim, Germany
Marseille, France
Palermo, Italy
Reggio Calabria, Italy
Tirana, Albania

Eurocities
Call to Action

Amsterdam, Netherlands
Arezzo, Italy
Bologna, Italy
Bourges, France
Braga, Portugal
Brussels, Belgium
Chemnitz, Germany
Clermont Ferrand, France
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Colombes, France
Dresden, Germany
Espoo, Finland
Florence, Italy
Ghent, Belgium
Glasgow, Scotland
Guimaraes, Portugal
Kharkiv, Ukraine
Leipzig, Germany
Lille, France
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Manchester, England
Nantes, France
Odunpazari, Turkey
Oulu, Finland
Reims, France
Rennes, France
Rouen, France
Saint-Denis, France
Tallinn, Estonia
Tampere, Finland
Varna, Bulgaria
Vienna, Austria

Rainbow
Cities

Aarhus, Denmark
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Barcelona, Spain
Bergen, Norway
Berlin, Germany
Brussels, Belgium
Cologne, Germany
Copenhagen, Denmark
Frankfurt, Germany
Ghent, Belgium
Geneva, Switzerland
Hamburg, Germany
Hanover, Germany
Heidelberg, Germany
Helsinki, Finland
Lausanne, Switzerland
Lille, France
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Leuven, Belgium
Mannheim, Germany
Montreal, Canada
Oslo, Norway
Rotterdam, Netherlands
Vienna, Austria

City of
Children
international
network

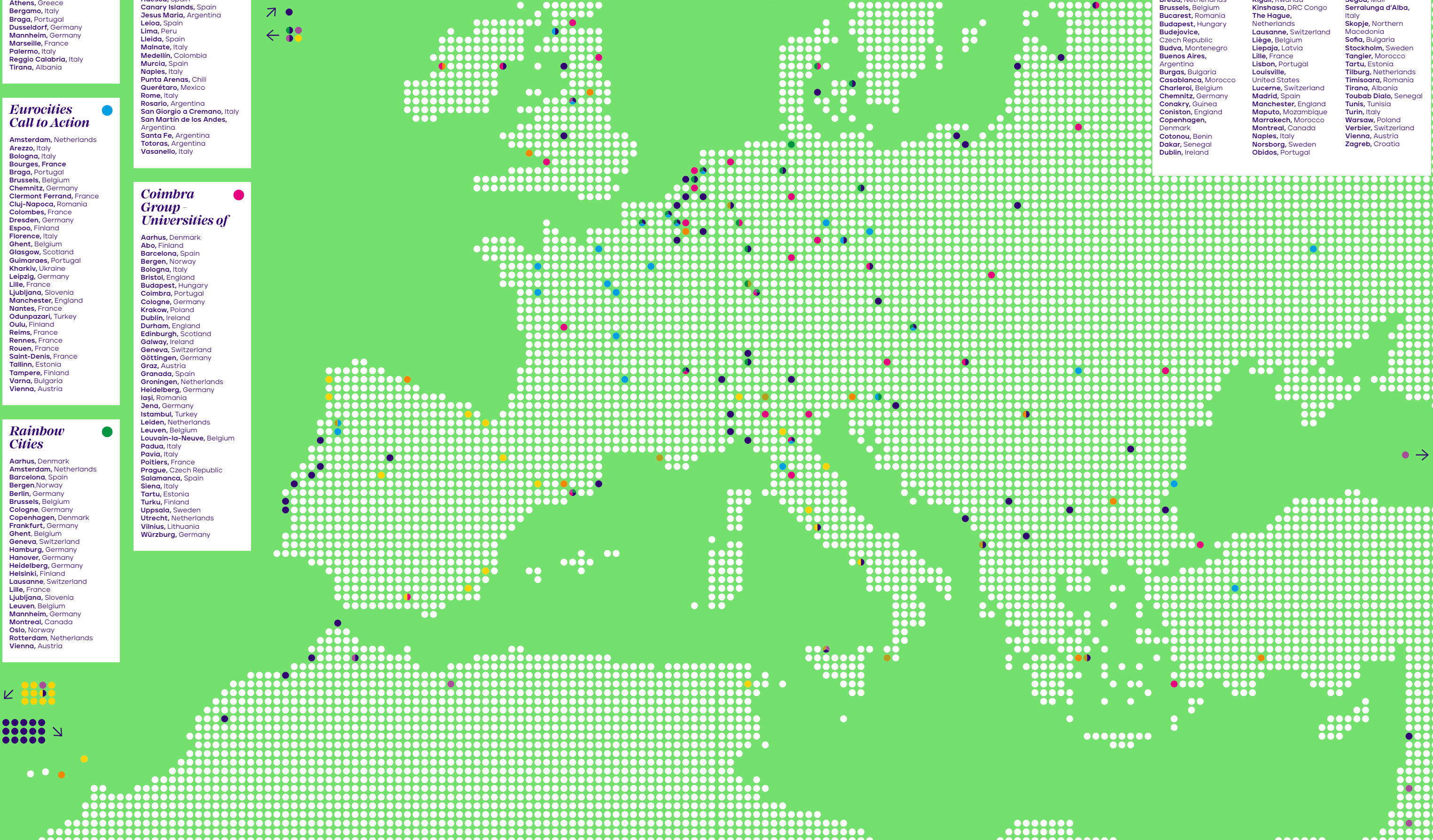
A Guarda, Spain
Almoradi, Spain
Arroyito, Argentina
Bilbao, Spain
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Carbajosa de la Sagrada, Spain
Carpi, Italy
Catoira, Spain
Ermua, Spain
Fano, Italy
Girardot, Venezuela
Granada, Spain
Huesca, Spain
Canary Islands, Spain
Jesus Maria, Argentina
Leioa, Spain
Lima, Peru
Lleida, Spain
Malnate, Italy
Medellin, Colombia
Murcia, Spain
Naples, Italy
Punta Arenas, Chili
Querétaro, Mexico
Rome, Italy
Rosario, Argentina
San Giorgio a Cremano, Italy
San Martín de los Andes, Argentina
Santa Fe, Argentina
Totoras, Argentina
Vasanello, Italy

Coimbra
Group –
Universities of

Aarhus, Denmark
Abo, Finland
Barcelona, Spain
Bergen, Norway
Bologna, Italy
Bristol, England
Budapest, Hungary
Coimbra, Portugal
Cologne, Germany
Krakow, Poland
Dublin, Ireland
Durham, England
Edinburgh, Scotland
Galway, Ireland
Geneva, Switzerland
Göttingen, Germany
Graz, Austria
Granada, Spain
Groningen, Netherlands
Heidelberg, Germany
Iasi, Romania
Jena, Germany
Istambul, Turkey
Leiden, Netherlands
Leuven, Belgium
Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Padua, Italy
Pavia, Italy
Poitiers, France
Prague, Czech Republic
Salamanca, Spain
Siena, Italy
Tartu, Estonia
Turku, Finland
Uppsala, Sweden
Utrecht, Netherlands
Vilnius, Lithuania
Würzburg, Germany

UCLG
Agenda 21 –
Pilot Cities

Eleusis, Greece
Gabrovo, Bulgaria
Galway, Ireland
Gijon, Spain
Konya, Turkey
Leeds, England
Namur, Belgium
Nova Gorica, Slovenia
Swansea, Wales
Tenerife, Spain
Terrassa, Spain
Timisoara, Romania



14 Explain in detail how the local population and civil society have been involved in preparing for the bid and how they will be involved in staging the event.

A STRONG CANDIDACY FOR COMMONALITY

The story we have collectively built emanates from a markedly humanistic and optimistic vision. Convinced that this can only be achieved through the long-term commitment of as many people as possible, we have placed the local population and civil society at the heart of our approach. We have deployed several complementary arenas of involvement in the bid, such as:

- **The organisation of a series of co-construction workshops** to involve all of the region's driving forces right from the start of our bid. We have drawn on their in-depth knowledge of the area and their contributions to design our project.
- **Themed work and exchange meetings.** Throughout the preparation of our bid, we worked together with targeted local players specialised in terms of the major challenges we face. As part of an approach favouring inclusive cooperation, we were keen to bring them together on a regular basis with a view to creating a new, lasting link and new synergies between them, and thus forge, right from the selection phase, the legacy of the title in the M28 region.
- **Building on existing democratic foundations.** The local population's representation at specialised citizens' assemblies, and the regular discussion with members of society that this enables, is a valuable contribution. The findings enrich our project, while ensuring that everyone is represented:

Development Councils (CODEV):

These breeding grounds of ideas and citizen proposals contribute to officials' consideration of projects in their region. All of the assemblies of the M28 area have not only supported the bid, but also initiated an unprecedented process of cooperation between them.

The Regional Economic, Social, and Environmental Council:

This consultative assembly to the Occitanie Region includes members from socio-professional organisations representing civil society. With a shared vision of the region's interests, CESER Occitanie has drawn up a Bid contribution and support document (see Q47).

The Children's Municipal Council:

Taking into account the ideas of these young citizens elected by their peers in CM2 (10-year-old students) is an imperative for our project and the definition of a child-friendly culture.

The Council of Foreigners:

The council works to ensure that foreigners in general, and exiles in particular, are more welcome in the area, by giving them a voice and involving them in local life as a whole. It is also intended to promote access to rights and citizen participation, with the expectation that they will also obtain it on a French national scale.

The members of the "Influence and Attractiveness" and "Culture, Education, Sport, Living Together, and Intercultural Relations" Commissions were asked to focus their work on the challenges of the bid.

Outreach

Culture is not a fixed common heritage that we inherit: It is a vital collective process, essential to evolving our imaginations. This belief prevents us from adopting a top-down approach. On the contrary, our approach has been, and will continue to be, built on a participative basis at every stage.

- **The organisation of various participative events, free and open to all, has led to discussions with the public on major challenges facing Europe in the future:**

→ The challenges of the Green Deal were addressed in an educational and collaborative way through the holding of a Climate Fresk, as well as a New Narratives Fresk on Europe Day.

→ The topic of urban transformation through arts creation and cultural urbanism was addressed in 2022 and 2023 by the winning project "Demain l'espace public" (Tomorrow's public space), led by the Maison de l'Architecture Occitanie Méditerranée. Once a month, throughout the M28 area, it offers time to reflect on the challenges of a viable public space (that is sustainable and hospitable) as well as more lively (animated and democratic) and vibrant (desirable and inspiring). These talks, aimed at the general public, were attended by almost 1,000 people, in particular those who contemplate and develop cities in the region (students of art, architecture, political science, urban planning, etc.).

AN EVEN WIDER OPENING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

To involve as many people as possible in the preparation of the bid, we have deployed various initiatives, such as:

- **Setting up open debates related to the issues at stake in the bid.** Among the key topics of discussion:
 - "Is there such a thing as European literature?" as part of La Comédie du Livre – 10 jours en mai 2023 with European women authors (from Sweden, Netherlands, Macedonia).
 - "The international situation of LGBTQIA+ members: somewhere in between advancement in rights and the persistence of hatred and discrimination", in partnership with the Montpellier Discrimination Observatory and with Pride representatives from Europe and North America (Kyiv, Sherbrooke, Heidelberg, Manchester).
 - "The Challenges of Artist Mobility" (see Q11.1).
- **Participation in a number of public events in the region to reach out to new audiences.** For example, thanks to its entry point for urban cultures, M28 has played an active role in Montpellier's major sporting events (International Festival of Extreme Sports and Temporary Sports Events Zone).
- **Setting up a large-scale participatory workshop: "Montpellier in three words".** In addition to our online survey, which was widely distributed, we invited everyone to express their three most evocative words for Montpellier at key events, in a fun way, using post-it notes. We then implemented this principle among regional stakeholders at themed workgroup meetings. This raw material was a key element in our semantic evolution, enabling us to better understand the aspirations of local residents and key players.
- **Finally, and most strategically, the use of Calls for Projects as levers for the active participation of the local population.** Several participative arts creations have been financed by M28, including shows, exhibitions, art banquets, travel journal workshops, and more.



ENHANCED PARTICIPATION THROUGH M28 PROGRAMMING DESIGNED WITH PARTICIPATION IN MIND

Many of our projects are designed around the principle of co-construction and participation.

Co-constructing an art project such as **Procession of Processions**¹⁹ means rolling out a dramatic composition in which the writing process, debates held to encourage everyone's free expression, theoretical inputs, and traditional knowledge are all considered collaboratively, in an inclusive way.

The same philosophy can be found in **Our Living Shelters**¹⁷ and **Design for Change**²¹, where consideration of habitat combines tangible practices, theoretical inputs, and professional practice.

For **We Are Europe**³¹, the challenge will be to involve several thousand people, of all generations and social/cultural backgrounds, who will not only be able to take part in a performance but will also be involved in amateur arts practices in the long term.

This quest to work together will be an important legacy of the Capital Year.

2022-2024

Creating the conditions for a joint bid



150
cultural
managers
meeting regularly

350
business
leaders
brought together
by the CCI

2 CALLS FOR
PROJECTS

1.4
million
euros budget

85
projects
supported

**Tomorrow's
public space**

Maison
de l'Architecture
Occitanie
Méditerranée

ZAT

9
meetings

1,000
participants

800

cultural, community, social,
and educational,
players
brought on board for
the launch of M28

5
Five themed
co-construction
workshops
to build the bid

EUROPEAN
CHALLENGES

LIVING
TOGETHER

HOSPITALITY

CHILDHOOD
AND YOUTH

CULTURAL
URBANISM

M28
Inclusion
Charter

INCLUSION
DIVERSITY

30
organisations
gathered

for 2 meetings focusing
on the inclusion of artists
with disabilities



IMAGINATION

2024-2028

Encouraging everyone to participate

**Capital
Neighbourhoods!**

ADEMASS

600
residents

4
banquets
by 2028



Constitution
of the
Processions
Assembly

FRAC

Procession
of Processions

INVOLVEMENT
OF EUROPEAN ART
SCHOOLS AND
UNIVERSITIES

FROM 2028

Beyond the event to create new ways of working together

3

LOCATIONS
RESIDENTS

committees

focusing on three major
hydrological landscapes:
the Lez watershed,
the Lunar ponds and
the coastline

**LIVING BEINGS,
new narratives
in public spaces**

L'Atelline



DEBATE

CO-BUILD

DISCUSS

European
Youth
Forum

**Academy of
the Future - M28**

Montpellier 2028
Association

We Are Europe

Opéra
Orchestre National
Montpellier

Over
1,200
hours of workshops

for a variety of groups:
adult amateurs, children,
women in prostitution, prisoners,
families in priority
neighbourhoods, etc.

**Accreditation
for cultural
activities
aimed at young
audiences**

2,000
participants

**Gardeno
Paradizo**

Mécènes du Sud

Leading
French City

Child-
Friendly
City

30
contributions
from the

MUNICIPAL
CHILDREN'S
COUNCIL

5

local development
committees
involved

SKILLS
ENHANCEMENT
WORKSHOPS

TRANSFER
OF KNOW-HOW

LISTEN



15 How will the title create new and sustainable opportunities in your city that will enable the greatest number of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, especially young people, volunteers, and marginalised and disadvantaged people, including minority groups? Please also provide details on the accessibility of these activities for disabled and elderly people. Specify the relevant parts of the programme for these different groups.

CULTURE FOR ALL AND UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

Our aim is to ensure that all residents of the M28 area benefit fully and sustainably from its arts, cultural, and heritage offerings. This makes our programme demanding in terms of both *inclusion and accessibility*: Our approach is based on responding to specific needs, adapting to each person’s abilities, and taking all aspects of diversity into account.



REMOVING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO EQUAL PARTICIPATION

In response to those who are unable to attend or participate in activities due to financial difficulties, we are maintaining our policy of offering free access to the majority of our programming. At certain events, a “*smart ticketing system*” will enable everyone to select their own price. Numerous events will be scheduled between noon and two o’clock or in the afternoon, to address the constraints of evening travel, to create an array of available experiences, and to overcome any apprehension on the part of independent senior members of the public who are more comfortable with adapted schedules.

At the same time, our partnership with Ask Mona and the digital experience of permanent mediation in public spaces will generate new possibilities for inclusion (see Q16): Based on generative artificial intelligence, the system will respond to the two potential digital blocking points—access and use—thanks to *in situ* support provided by the association’s volunteers.

INCLUSION AS A SOCIAL, SUSTAINABLE PROCESS

Since the pre-selection phase, and mindful of improving the inclusion of marginalised and underprivileged people, we have been consolidating our “outreach” approach, particularly within what we have identified as the “City’s Priority Districts” (on the basis of per capita income). To achieve this, we are strengthening our partnership networks through awareness-raising and public outreach initiatives, meetings and participative projects built with a network of local players: Maisons pour Tous, multimedia libraries, cultural facilities, and other entities. In the same vein, the two Calls for Projects we initiated have opened up new opportunities for inclusion through culture, as illustrated by the award-winning “Say it with a Book” project.



The City of Montpellier is committed to fighting discrimination, which runs counter to the fundamental principles of the European Union and undermines our social cohesion. This is why it has joined the *European Coalition of Cities against Racism*. Our programme will illustrate this, with projects designed to bring out the cultures present across our region, and to celebrate minority groups.

A city of unity and solidarity, Montpellier is also committed to *welcoming migrants and refugees* fleeing warring regimes, persecution, poverty, and the effects of climate change. As a member of the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA), Montpellier’s policy of solidarity and inclusion is reflected in its cultural offerings (for example, part of the proceeds from the Mo.Co “Musées en Exil” exhibition was donated to an association supporting artists from war-torn countries), as well as in the projects carried out by M28, for example: “What about the weather”, a committed work that invites us to consider immigration from a human perspective.

Our region is a beacon of diversity, particularly for the *LGBTQIA+ community*, through numerous initiatives (see Q11.4). As a result, all Capital Year events will be true *safe spaces*, with risk prevention stands, trained staff, and appropriate communication materials to ensure that everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully in the experience, without discrimination of any kind.

M28 AS A LABORATORY FOR INNOVATIVE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS

mechanisms (e.g., Handi’Culture annual programme) and adapted cultural facilities (e.g., Cité des Arts—Conservatoire sensory room), our programme takes into account all the limitations and restrictions that arise due to disabilities, offering inclusive projects for audiences with special needs. This is the case for the innovative **Glossigne** ³⁸ (see insert), which will be made available on our RECIPRO-CITY platform for local project developers, before being distributed more widely to European and international partners.

In addition to the above-mentioned Charter, for the Capital Year we will be implementing **accreditation for accessible activities, accommodation, and places** to eat and socialise, based on the model of the inventory already carried out by the Thau Archipelago Tourism Bureau.

Drawing on the expertise of specialist players in the region (e.g., Liaison and Coordination Committee of Associations for People with Disabilities), and existing

38 Glossigne

The **Glossigne** project developed by the Singulier Pluriel company is an innovative bilingual—French and sign language (LSF)—visual teaching tool based on the fundamentals of dance. Starting not with the word but with danced movement, academics, dancers, and experts are working on the creation of an online platform featuring subtitled videos describing this specific vocabulary. Underpinned by a translinguistic and transcultural approach, **Glossigne** offers all audiences the opportunity to

discover an aesthetic borne of the combination of deaf and hearing cultures. From 2024, a training programme will be set up in partnership with the Conservatory, specialised institutes, and the region’s local educational network, with a view to opening up to the European area via exchange programmes from 2025.

Producer: Singulier Pluriel Company
Partners: Cité des Arts - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, Lodz Institute of Tolerance (PL), Taka Culture (BJ), IRTS Montpellier, CND.
Where: Cité des Arts, Maison pour Tous
When: throughout the 2028 year
Budget: €250K

GET INVOLVED AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

Young people play a central role in the region’s cultural and heritage strategy (see Q3). Whether actor or spectator, amateur or professional, they will also have a special place in our arts programme. We will be working with existing academic, educational, and leisure facilities to convey the message.

Beyond that, we intend to leverage volunteering as a means to encourage the involvement of young residents. From 2024 onwards, we will be reaching out to this target audience at events, via our facilitation organisations and online tools (see Q39) to inspire them to get involved in this unique adventure. A special scheme will be offered to ERASMUS students through multilingual volunteer initiatives.

Volunteering will also be open to seniors, thus playing a valuable role in combatting social isolation and age marginalisation.

Projects designed to involve M28 volunteers:

- European Ports of Call ⁰⁴ /
- Wide Shot ³⁴ /
- We Are Europe ³¹ /
- Future Landscapes ²⁴

Combating Age Marginalisation and Isolation:
We Are Europe ³¹ /
In the Food for Love ³³ /
Procession of Processions ¹⁹ /
The Pass’Age des Arts, etc.

With a view to Montpellier’s bid for the WHO “**Age-Friendly City**” accreditation, in July 2023 the city unveiled its “Ageing Well” plan for a city adapted to their needs. In line with the M28 project, three cultural arenas have been identified: facilitating access to culture for senior citizens; increasing the number of initiatives that reach out to isolated senior citizens, in precarious situations or with mobility problems; and developing partnerships between cultural and community health players to promote access to what are referred to as “hindered” audiences. The **Pass’Age des Arts** is a flagship project to reach that goal: The first cultural and intergenerational “third place” to be set up in a residential facility for dependent elderly people (EHPAD) in France, this prototype aims to bring different generations together in an unprecedented way, transforming these medically-equipped structures for dependent elderly people into dynamic living spaces with cultural richness.

CULTURAL HEALTH

Since the early nineteenth century, scientific research has demonstrated the beneficial effects of the arts on health and well-being, fundamental pillars of prosperous societies (*CultureForHealth* 2022 report). In her State of the Union address last year, the EU President warned of the levels of psychosocial distress in our society. This is also a reality shared by all of our counterparts in Europe. Younger generations are going through a unique period: post-COVID anxiety, eco-anxiety, concern for the future, etc. In response, our bid supports grassroots initiatives aimed at inviting residents to take part in creative activities that lead to a sense of well-being, led by several associations, artist collectives, and operators, such as the pilot project **Art on Prescription** led by Mo.Co (see insert).

ART ON PRESCRIPTION

A NEW PROGRAMME IN FRANCE

Since 2022, Mo.Co and the Department of Psychiatric Emergencies and Post Emergencies (DUPUP) at Montpellier University Hospital have been working on a project based on the belief that art can play a valuable role in mental health. **Art on Prescription** offers patients with depressive episodes a comprehensive programme combining encounters with works of art and artists, exhibition visits, and hands-on art workshops. The aim is now twofold: that it can be extended to other patients

suffering from any type of listed depression, and that it can be reproduced elsewhere. M28 supports the development of these objectives by encouraging the uptake of the project by other cultural facilities in the M28 region, by bringing in new partners, exporting the prototype to other European and international experimental areas (Brussels, Montreal, etc.), and combining it with the programmes of other ECoCs, such as the **SmART Hospital** run by Oulu 2026.

All the programmes and tools envisaged are designed to respond to an immediate problem: that of everyone’s inclusion in the M28 programme, while at the same time giving rise to model mechanisms that will have a lasting impact in the region and can be taken up and adopted by others.

Developing imaginary worlds helps to raise awareness and educate citizens. These imaginary worlds are built from the earliest stages of life and throughout the rest of our lives. It is with this in mind that we are deploying an ambitious policy for the general public and young people in particular (from infancy to young adulthood). In addition to the inclusion and accessibility measures mentioned above, recapturing audiences who have lost interest in culture is one of our key concerns. This forms an integral part of our objectives (see Q4).

Against a backdrop of numerous crises, and in a world plagued by continual over-solicitation, turning to culture is not, or no longer, necessarily a natural response for many citizens. That's why we've chosen to bring culture into public spaces and everyday life (see Q2), with the aim of piquing the interest of local residents and offering as many access and coordination facilities as possible: This is the main role of our project with *Ask Mona*.

Ask Mona × M28, Generative Artificial Intelligence for the benefit of all

A threefold online experience to support visitors and leverage media to deliver their experience: **enhancing, encouraging discovery, and providing information.**

Enhancing: deploying an online media system at defined points of interest.
QR codes added to our artworks in the public space and the architectural elements of M28 will enable residents to access unique media content based on a conversational experience accessible directly from their phone.

- Before: Make the bid visible and initiate public involvement through a gradual roll-out at various points of interest in the city.
- During: Offer an educational experience accessible to all, in several languages, at any time, to raise awareness and spread knowledge.
- After: Continue the experience to develop a lasting link between the works and the public.

A MORE
IN-DEPTH
UNDERSTANDING OF
VISITOR ROUTES
BACKED BY
USAGE DATA

Encouraging discovery:
The richness of our programming, through highlights and accredited events, goes hand in hand with an abundance of proposals over a vast territory in a limited timeframe. To attract audiences, Ask Mona will offer a personalised recommendation service, tailored to the needs and constraints of each individual.

A
PERSONALISED
CURATOR

A personalised curator based on generative AI will be able to provide individualised recommendations. This assistant will analyse message requests sent by users to help them plan their visit. This will see M28 offer an improved service, increasing user engagement and, at the same time, making it possible to gather valuable data on audience preferences and behaviours, for better visiting conditions and to aid strategic decision-making.

Providing information:
For events such as ECoC, deficient responsiveness, particularly in terms of the ability to provide timely responses, can deter potential visitors. Answering questions from numerous visitors, in several languages, can also create heavy workloads for teams.

A CHATBOT TO
ANSWER QUESTIONS
FROM THE PUBLIC
24/7 IN SEVERAL
DIFFERENT
LANGUAGES

Available on our website, and accessible from mobile, tablet, and computer, the chatbot will be able to respond in 7 languages and understand messages in around 20 languages.
For us, conversational data will be an invaluable source of information for better understanding of the issues faced by our audiences.

STIMULATING YOUNG CHILDREN THROUGH CULTURE

A child's first 1,000 days are crucial to his or her development. Sparking encounters with art for all children during this period is one of the objectives championed in the M28 bid. To this end, over the past few months we have strengthened our *partnerships with early childhood professionals*.

For the first time in 2023, Montpellier's Early Childhood Branch took part in the European Night of Museums in partnership with the Musée Fabre and Mo.Co. Four of the city's early childhood establishments welcomed a painter in residence, and two municipal nurseries were candidates in the French national *Giraffe Awards* competition, trophies for creativity among early childhood professionals. The *2023 Festival de l'éveil des tout-petits (Early Learning Festival for Toddlers) Event* is more ambitious than ever, and now runs over a full month in close partnership with the multimedia library network. One facility also hosts the Créatectura programme, which creates art and sensory installations that enable children to experience their environment in a different way. Our festivals are now enhanced by venues and schedules specifically adapted to suit young audiences: *youth weekend* during the Comédie du Livre – 10 jours en mai, and *Mini-Zat* during the ZAT Festival of Arts in the public space.

New synergies are emerging in the M28 region. For example, those in charge of the *Mille Formes* project (see Q42) took part in the professional meetings held as part of our 2023 winning project: the *Festival Clapotis*. Our participation in this arts and cultural event for families and early childhood professionals, with its three days dedicated to the very young public (0–6 years) in the Hérault Valley,

A 2030 PROJECT FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

On 4 April 2023, the Montpellier City Council adopted a "Plan Écoles 2030" (2030 School Plan), which follows on from the "Montpellier École 2030" decidedly forward-looking approach launched in September 2021 in conjunction with the French Ministry of Education. The aim was to boost Montpellier's schools, and education in general, in terms of ecological, democratic, and social transformation. The consultation was preceded by work done with children (Municipal Children's Council and Leisure Centre) and then opened up to the entire educational community, via a consolidation platform open to residents and themed participatory workshops focusing on three specific areas: a hosting school, a school at the heart of the neighbourhood, and a school of transformation.

In addition to an array of initiatives designed to help all pupils succeed, and a substantial €400 million investment plan for the City's public schools, the "Plan Écoles 2030" is backed by a strong commitment towards giving Montpellier's youngest children access to culture (Musée Fabre's "One class—One work" project, a Culture Passport initiative to promote access to culture at school and at home, etc.).

The *Academy of the Future* ¹⁵ echoes this: As a flagship project underscoring our relationship with the world of education, it illustrates our desire to pursue the participation of school audiences on a wider, regional scale. The choice of classes will cover a generation of children ages 6 to 20, from diverse towns encompassed in our bid (Lunel, Grau-du-Roi, Gignac, Agde, Montpellier, Sète), a diversity of living environments (rural villages, disadvantaged neighbourhoods, city centres), and learning tracks (vocational, technical, general high schools).

Financial aspects

Operating budget
for the Capital Year

17 Revenue required to cover operating costs :

17.1 Please confirm or update the budget figures using the tables below. Explain any discrepancies with the prepopulated figures.

17.2 Total operating budget (i.e., funds specifically earmarked to cover operating expenses)

| | |
|--|------------|
| Total revenue required to cover operational costs (in euros) | 67,000,000 |
| Income from the public sector (in euros) | 60,000,000 |
| Income from the public sector (as a %) | 90 |
| Income from the private sector (in euros) | 7,000,000 |
| Income from the private sector (as a %) | 10 |

The overall budget for the bid has been maintained at the initial level for the period 2022-2028, with an additional year after the Capital Year. The breakdown between public and private sector revenues has been updated, without upsetting the overall balance. The estimated subsidy from the French government has been significantly re-evaluated to come closer to its commitment to Marseille Provence 2013, while remaining prudent. Estimates for ticket sales have been secured, with the vast majority of events remaining free of charge, and voluntary participation assessed at its minimum level, with the strong probability that it will *ultimately* be higher.

All in all, the financial sustainability of the project is assured as it stands, in line with our schedule.

PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUES:

18 How is revenue from the public sector used to cover operating costs? Please complete the table below.

| REVENUE FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER OPERATING COSTS | (euros) | % of total revenue |
|--|------------|--------------------|
| State | 10,500,000 | 16 |
| City and Metropolis of Montpellier | 25,250,000 | 38 |
| Occitanie Region | 7,000,000 | 10 |
| EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri International Prize) | 1,300,000 | 2 |
| Other member communities: Sète, Grand Pic Saint-Loup, Pays de Lunel, Hérault Méditerranée, the Hérault Valley, Pays de l'Or, Terre de Camargue, and the Hérault Department | 14,450,000 | 22 |
| Melina Mercouri International Prize | 1,500,000 | 2 |
| Total | 60,000,000 | 90 |

19 Have the public financial authorities (municipalities, regions, states) already voted or made financial commitments to cover operating costs? If not, when is this envisaged?

All of the public financial authorities partnering the bid have voted on their financial commitment to cover operating costs for the 2022 and 2023 financial years.



| Community | Act and date | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| City of Montpellier | Deliberation of 28/07/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 04/04/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Montpellier Méditerranée Metropole | Deliberation of 26/07/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 30/03/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| City of Sète | Deliberation of 21/11/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 13/07/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée | Deliberation of 13/10/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 06/04/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Occitanie Region | Deliberation of 16/12/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 21/04/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Hérault Department | Deliberation of 27/06/2022 | Membership of the association and allocation of the 2022 grant |
| | Deliberation of 16/10/2022 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Grand Pic Saint-Loup Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 24/05/2022 | Membership of the association and allocation of the 2022 grant |
| | Deliberations of 13/12/2022 and 13/06/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Hérault Méditerranée Agglomeration Community | Deliberation of 20/06/2022 | Membership of the association and allocation of the 2022 grant |
| | Deliberation of 18/09/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Pays de Lunel Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 10/11/2022 | Grant allocation 2022 |
| | Deliberation of 23/05/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Hérault Valley Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 11/07/2022 | Membership of the association and allocation of the 2022 grant |
| | Deliberation of 22/05/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Terre de Camargue Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 11/05/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Pays de l'Or Agglomeration Community | Deliberation of 28/09/2023 | Grant allocation 2023 |
| Montpellier 2028 Association | Deliberation of 08/06/2022 | Adoption of the 2022 budget |
| | Deliberations of 14/10/2022, 29/03/23 and 29/06/2023 (amending resolutions) | Adoption of the 2023 budget and adjustments related to the association's expanded scope |

Looking beyond past years, the Occitanie Region and the Cities and Metropolises of Montpellier and Sète have already unanimously adopted the community’s action strategy and their *financial commitments for the entire 2022-2028 period*:

| Community | Act and date | Purpose |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| City of Montpellier | Deliberation of 18/07/2023 | Action strategy for the second round and vote on the overall bid budget Culture and Heritage Strategy |
| Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole | Deliberation of 11/07/2023 | Action strategy for the second round and vote on the overall bid budget Culture and Heritage Strategy |
| City of Sète | Deliberation of 25/09/2023 | Action strategy for the second round and vote on the overall bid budget |
| Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée | Deliberation of 21/09/2023 | Action strategy for the second round and vote on the overall bid budget |
| Occitanie Region | Deliberation of 20/10/2023 | Action strategy for the second round and vote on the overall bid budget |

20 What is your fundraising strategy for obtaining financial support from EU programmes and funds to cover operating costs?

The Montpellier 2028 bid acts as an accelerator and catalyst of European desires and the potential seen in the region’s artists and cultural players. It also helps to break down barriers and encourages a cross-disciplinary approach to projects, combining the arts, science, and technology. European projects and their associated funding will be greatly facilitated in the coming years by the creation of the Europe Task Force (see Q11.3), with more coordinated information sharing and more efficient project engineering processes.

Montpellier can rely on its strong cultural players to develop and implement ambitious European projects. Through *Performhand*, a learning mobility project under the *Erasmus+* programme, La Bulle Bleue was able to lay the foundations for a future multi-country, multi-stakeholder project – *The Inclusive Lab* ³⁵ – focused on the inclusion of people with disabilities, whether on stage or as part of the companies’ technical support functions. This innovative initiative in the fields of art, culture, and social work will be the subject of an application under the *Europe Creative Programme*.

Europe Creative’s Media sub-programme is also relevant to the Montpellier area, which boasts a particularly rich and growing ecosystem of cultural and creative industries, especially in the fields of animation and video games. In fact, no fewer than eight prize-winners took part in the France 2030 plan’s “Grande Fabrique de l’Image” in May 2023. A glass ceiling until now, *Europe Creative Media’s* sub-programme is now within the reach of local players, who of course need to be supported by teams from the City, the Metropolis, and the Europe Task Force.

As far as the *Horizon Europe programme* is concerned, we can benefit from the presence of experts in the bid area, such as the national contact point for Cluster 2, who is also a researcher at Montpellier’s Paul-Valéry University. This is the same university that recently developed the *Puppet Plays project* – a repertoire for puppet theatres – funded by Horizon Europe. Programming paths that hybridise science, the arts, and technology will be particularly targeted for these major Calls for Projects, in particular through the *ETT Culture & Creativity* programme, whose recent creation we have followed with interest.

With coordinated efforts alongside our African partners, we will specifically monitor the activities, programmes, and calls from the European Commission’s International Partnerships General Directorate.

Mobility and intercultural dynamics form the cornerstone of our ethos and programming. The *Erasmus+ programme* will of course be leveraged, as will funds for individual mobility and residencies under the European Commission’s *Culture Moves Europe* programme. We will also draw on the *European Solidarity Corps* to promote the mobility of young Europeans in our region, encouraging them to build a fairer, more inclusive society while developing a sense of belonging to the European ideal. Similarly, the *Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values* programme will be able to address our projects *Academy of the Future* ¹⁵ and *We Are Europe* ³¹, while the *Europe in the World programme*, which promotes intercultural dialogue and international cooperation on cultural heritage, could be leveraged as part of the *Biennale Euro-Africa Montpellier* ³².

CIRDOC, with its *FolkSpirits* ²³ project, celebrating and upholding Occitan culture, will position itself in an *INTERREG POCTEFA* programme, integrating its partners in a cross-border consortium on both sides of the Pyrenees.

21 What are the timeframes for revenue to cover operating costs to be collected by the City and/ or the organisation responsible for the preparation and implementation of the European Capital of Culture project if the city is designated as a European Capital of Culture?

| SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR OPERATING COSTS | EU - excluding the Melina Mercouri International Prize | State | City | Region | Sponsors | Other: other member communities, ticketing and merchandising, the Melina Mercouri International Prize |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 2023 | | | 450,000 | 70,000 | 900,000 | 500,000 |
| 2024 | 40,000 | 800,000 | 2,500,000 | 200,000 | 900,000 | 1,090,000 |
| 2025 | 80,000 | 1,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 500,000 | 900,000 | 1,495,000 |
| 2026 | 80,000 | 1,500,000 | 3,800,000 | 1,000,000 | 900,000 | 1,680,000 |
| 2027 | 250,000 | 2,000,000 | 4,000,000 | 1,850,000 | 900,000 | 2,920,000 |
| European Capital of Culture Capital Year 2028 | 750,000 | 4,400,000 | 9,050,000 | 2,800,000 | 1,100,000 | 7,640,000 |

PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUE:

22 What strategy will you deploy to raise funds from private-sector sponsors? What role do you plan to give to sponsors in the organisation of events?

The strategy proposed in the initial application has been implemented and is already proving effective. Of the six million euros of private funding expected, **18% has already been raised** in the first two years of the bid by the 38 patrons committed to working with us, exceeding our budget forecasts.

This mobilisation bears witness **to the commitment of the region’s driving forces**. The sectors represented reflect the local business fabric: Med Vallée, healthcare, cultural and creative industries, property development, construction, engineering, banks, and liberal professions, among others. Montpellier 2028 also relies on business federations, particularly in the property and construction sectors, to benefit from the lever effect of these networks.

Several types of support are available:

- **Financial sponsorship** through patron circles: Founder patrons, who have supported the bid since the launch of Montpellier 2028; Premium patrons, who contribute towards funding the bid as a whole; and Ambassador patrons, who support the implementation of bid projects. In return, sponsors are invited to take part in the bid highlights and in local cultural events, as well as in the annual review of activities.
- **Sponsorship with** institutional skills: Complementing its financial commitment, the City of Montpellier is assigning an employee to the association, providing printing services, etc.
- **Participatory funding:** Subscriptions will be offered to the public to enable everyone to participate according to their means and interests. Montpellier 2028 will be able to draw on the Metropolis’s experience, which has already led several public applications for the acquisition of works of art.
- **French national partners:** Major partners have already been on-boarded to assist us, such as EDF on the issues of assessing our carbon impact and evolution (see Q3), France Télévisions and Radio France (see Q38), both on **CORE** programming projects, as well as commitments to promote and share bid-related content, in addition to the SNCF Group on various levels: passengers, property development projects, station scheduling, etc. Letters of intent have been signed to this effect as early as the bid stage.

The private sector’s involvement is not limited to financial support or skills input: Some companies have made a deeper commitment to the bid process, adhering to the project’s values and initiating forums for genuine collective reflection on the future of their professions through a prism forged from the M28 project’s arenas, with a long-term objective in mind. Under the impetus of ALTEMED, a number of players in the property development and construction sectors have participated in a series of work seminars focusing on issues related to the idea of water as a means of connection, and the presence of art in people’s daily lives, with a view to building an action plan for the years to come. In this way, M28 will have a long-term impact on the act of building in the bid area.

Sponsors directly involved in the design and production of the event, such as the “Réservoir” art galleries and two other projects:

The **Gardeno Paradizo** project has been initiated by the Montpellier-Sète Mécènes du Sud network, a collective of 44 companies that will not only contribute to 50% of the budget, but will also provide their skills and areas of influence (from expertise in contemporary art to the hiring of young workers to execute the project).

With **Barges**, the entire programme is funded by locally based private sponsors, building on existing structures and partnerships with local, European, and African institutions.

M28 COMMITMENT

ALL SUPPORTERS OF THE BID HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A SPONSORSHIP ETHIC THAT SECURES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTIES (CHARTER DRAWN UP BY ADMICAL).

23 Breakdown of operating costs: 23.1 Please break down your operating costs in the table below.

| | | |
|---|---------|------------|
| Expenses related to the programme | (euros) | 42,900,000 |
| | (%) | 64 |
| Promotion and marketing | (euros) | 10,700,000 |
| | (%) | 16 |
| Salaries, general expenses and administration | (euros) | 10,050,000 |
| | (%) | 15 |
| Other (contingencies and emergency plan) | (euros) | 3,350,000 |
| | (%) | 5 |
| Total operating costs | (euros) | 67,000,000 |

09 Gardeno Paradizo

Gardeno Paradizo is a cultural, educational, and landscaping project. Centred on three core activities – workshops, space revitalisation, and festive events – **Gardeno Paradizo** is a participatory initiative that offers visibility and engagement opportunities for individuals in marginalised circumstances. Every year from 2024 to 2028, an evolving artistic/horticultural team will work with participants from a social institution to foster connections, transmit expertise, and enhance existing skills. Their aim is to collaboratively reimagine the spaces utilised by partner organisations, using art, design, and horticulture to convert them into socially and ecologically vibrant areas, repurposing them for physical activities and community building. The result will be a collection of enduring, functional artworks that connect diverse communities within the M28 area, reimagining the role of art in our society and the possibilities for artists to envision uses, spaces, and relationships in new ways.

Producers: Mécènes du Sud
Partners: Habitat Jeunes in Sète, Gammes in Montpellier, Fondespierre in Lunel, Les Glénants in Marseillan, and other local partners. Tranzit in Bucharest (RO), The Mothership in Tangiers (MA), Lungomare in Bolzane (IT), Grizedale Arts Coniston (UK)
ECoC: Skopje 2028
Where: Sète, Marseillan, Lunel, Ehpad Montpellier
When: Spring-Autumn 2028
Budget: €250K



23.2 Timetable for the incurring of operating costs:

| SCHEDULE OF COSTS* | Expenses related to the programme | | Promotion and marketing | | Salaries, general expenses and administration | | Other (contingencies and emergency plan) | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|---|-----|--|-----|
| | (euros) | (%) | (euros) | (%) | (euros) | (%) | (euros) | (%) |
| 2023 | 1,230,000 | 64 | 310,000 | 16 | 295,000 | 15 | 85,000 | 5 |
| 2024 | 3,500,000 | 63 | 900,000 | 16 | 850,000 | 15 | 280,000 | 6 |
| 2025 | 4,400,000 | 63 | 1,125,000 | 16 | 1 100,000 | 16 | 350,000 | 5 |
| 2026 | 5,700,000 | 64 | 1,450,000 | 16 | 1 350,000 | 15 | 460,000 | 5 |
| 2027 | 7,515,000 | 63 | 1,950,000 | 16 | 1 800,000 | 15 | 655,000 | 6 |
| 2028 | 16,500,000 | 64 | 4,100,000 | 16 | 3,800,000 | 15 | 1,340,000 | 5 |
| 2029 | 3,200,000 | 64 | 800,000 | 16 | 830,000 | 17 | 170,000 | 3 |

Budget for infrastructure expenditure

24 What is the planned distribution of public-sector revenue to cover infrastructure costs related to European Capital of Culture status? Please complete the table below.

| REVENUE FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURE | (euros) | (%) |
|---|-------------|-----|
| State | 12,920,000 | 10 |
| City | 50,340,000 | 40 |
| Region | 13,200,000 | 11 |
| EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri International Prize): | 12,900,000 | 10 |
| Other member communities: Sète, Grand Pic Saint-Loup, Pays de Lunel, Hérault Méditerranée, the Hérault Valley, Terre de Camargue, and other organisations | 35,440,000 | 29 |
| Total | 124,800,000 | 100 |

25 Have the public financial authorities (municipalities, regions, states) already voted or made financial commitments to cover operating costs? If not, when is this envisaged?

The funding of infrastructure has already been concretised through various commitments made on the part of public authorities

| MULTI-YEAR MEDIUM-TERM INVESTMENT PROGRAMME: | PROGRAMME PERMISSIONS: | PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS REGIONAL LEVELS FOR THE RUNNING OF JOINT PROJECTS: | |
|---|--|---|---|
| formally adopted by municipal and community councils (see Montpellier, Sète). | These budgetary decisions are adopted by the City and Metropolis of Montpellier when major projects are launched and represent a financial commitment by the local authority to see the programme through to completion. | → Contract for recovery and ecological transformation: signed on 27/12/2021 → State-Region planning contract: signed on 11/12/2022 | → Occitanie Regional Contract: submitted to the Metropolitan Council on 3 October 2023 and to the Region's Standing Committee on 20 October 2023. → State-Region-Metropolis Metropolitan Contract submitted to the Metropolitan Council on 5 December 2023 and to the Region's Standing Committee on 1 December 2023 |

26 QWhat is your strategy in terms of obtaining financial support from EU programmes and funds to cover infrastructure expenditure?

The strategy for raising European financial support is based on the rich and diverse experience of the areas involved in the bid.

Over the previous period, European funds enabled the development of some twenty projects that remain the focus of the region's challenges, in particular: *water*, with flood control (European Regional Development Fund - ERDF) and sustainable resource management through the production of recycled water (LIFE ReWa project), *youth* (React-EU concerning a digital plan in all public schools), *innovation* (European Social Fund - ESF support for innovative companies at the Business & Innovation Centre), and *urban development* (ERDF for the renovation of an aquatic centre in the heart of the popular Mosson district).

For the 2021-2027 period, Montpellier's application to the call for expressions of interest on the integrated territorial approach, as part of the ERDF 2021-2027 programme, has been selected on the basis of two major guidelines: "Heading for *ecological transition*: a Metropolis to serve the interests of its municipalities and residents" and "Economic growth and territorial cohesion: building a productive, *sustainable economy* and fostering *social cohesion*". The agreement has now been signed and will enable us to fund projects that are key to our bid (extension of the Musée Fabre, Lattara Conservation and Study Centre, Mille Formes Art Education Centre). Other projects in the region should also benefit from *ERDF* funding, such as the Château Laurens in Agde.

Beyond the urban boundaries, the *LEADER* programme will be on-boarded for projects in rural areas. Applications for funding are either under consideration or in progress, whether for the Château de Montferrand in Saint-Mathieu-de-Trévièrs, the canal banks project in Lunel, or Le Sana in Aigues-Mortes, which has already received notification of a favourable decision concerning the submission of the Sana municipality's application to the *GAL* programme under which it falls.

In addition, new initiatives in sustainable tourism and rural cultural heritage should be included in the call for proposals for innovative actions under the European Urban Initiative (EUI), financed by the ERDF. On the same theme, the *InterregSUDOE* programme could be called upon for a second phase of the *NODES* project, supported by Medcities and the metropolitan areas and universities of Barcelona and Lisbon, as well as the Pays du Béarn, after a first phase focused on water management.

All in all, Montpellier 2028 intends to take full advantage of the opportunity represented by the *NextGenerationEU* plan, mainly through the "research and innovation", "cohesion and values", "environment and climate action", and "neighbourhood and world" domains.

27 What are the timeframes for revenue to cover infrastructure expenses to be collected by the City and/or the organisation responsible for the preparation and implementation of the Capital Project if the city is designated as a European Capital of Culture? Please complete the table below.

| SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURE | UE | State | City | Region | Other |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 2023 | 814,000 | 395,000 | 3,420,000 | 377,000 | 1,380,000 |
| 2024 | 2,044,000 | 1,330,000 | 7,660,000 | 1,413,000 | 6,482,000 |
| 2025 | 2,435,000 | 2,302,000 | 10,340,000 | 2,357,000 | 8,282,000 |
| 2026 | 3,442,000 | 3,618,000 | 12,555,000 | 3,810,000 | 6,960,000 |
| 2027 | 2,760,000 | 3,155,000 | 8,935,000 | 3,123,000 | 7,325,000 |
| 2028 | 1,405,000 | 2,120,000 | 7,430,000 | 2,120,000 | 5,011,000 |

28 If applicable, please insert a table here specifying the amounts that will be allocated to funding new cultural infrastructure for use in the Capital Year.

See Q42

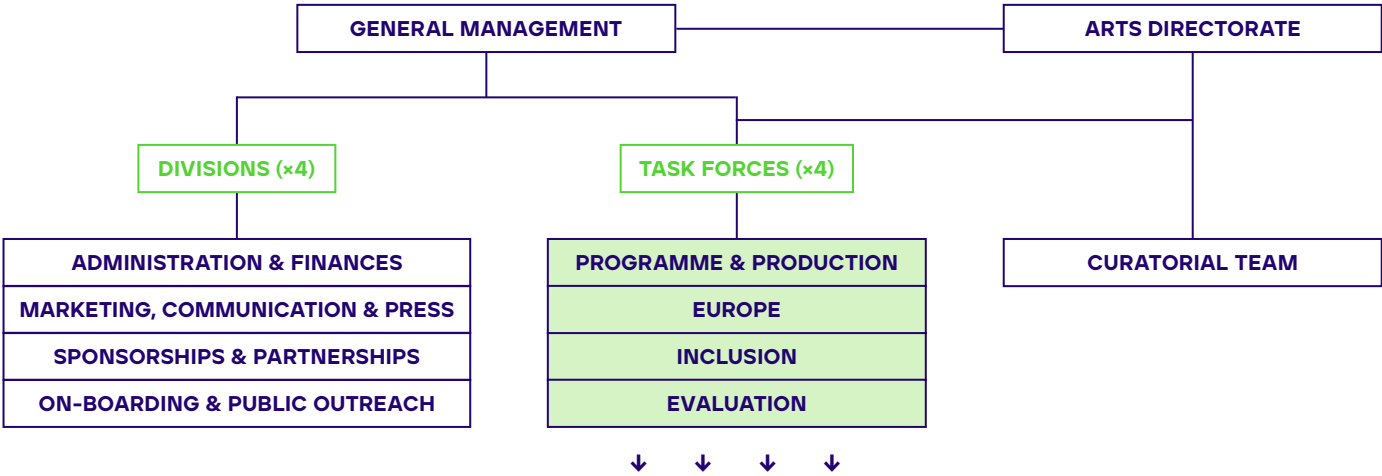
Organisational structure

29 What type of governance and implementation structure is envisaged for the "European Capital of Culture" event?

In the early stages of the bid, we opted for a governance structure with the adoption of an "Association Loi 1901" approach. In our view, this structure offers two major advantages: Firstly, it ensures a sense of unity between all the founding members (the local partner authorities) who, through their elected representatives, are collectively involved in decisions relating to M28, and secondly, the same sense of unity between the associate members (Local Education Authorities, Universities, CCI, Patrons) who represent the diversity of the stakeholders involved in the bid. On the other hand, the fact that it is a not-for-profit organisation confirms that the *project is in the general interest* of the area covered by the bid.

Having successfully experimented with this approach for almost two years, both in the preparation of our bid and in the implementation of our two Calls for Projects, we have decided to uphold the principle of this specific, shared structure. In our view, its political and project-based governance is the most appropriate way of liaising with all our partner local authorities, who meet regularly in deliberative bodies (General Meeting and Board of Directors) to prepare for the Capital Year and beyond.

To make our actions more effective, we have simplified the general presentation of the Montpellier 2028 association, summarised in the following diagram:



The Arts Directorate will coordinate a curatorial team comprised of French national and international members who will feed the main strategic focus areas of our project and 2028 scheduling. We have thus decided to strengthen the association's management body to ensure that the principles set out in our dossier are respected, and that the event goes ahead.

30 How will this structure be organised at management level? Please specify the person(s) ultimately responsible for the overall direction of the project.

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

The association has a threefold mission: to guarantee the cohesiveness of the Title Year, to ensure compliance with the general Montpellier 2028 project as set out in the bid, and to ensure the independence and artistic freedom of the Artistic Director and that of their curatorial team. General management and art direction structures remain in ongoing direct communication. General management is responsible for the project's operational management, and it is ultimately responsible for its overall direction.

To implement the project and work on its legacy, four Divisions and four Task Forces will be set up, corresponding to the needs and major challenges identified:

- **The Divisions** are responsible for the operational and administrative structuring that concern the project's implementation and legacy: general administration, technical and logistics, marketing and communications, sponsorship and partnerships, the garnering of audiences and public outreach.
- In terms of **the Task Forces**, they interact more with other external ecosystems, with the existing M28 area, to add input to very specific areas of Montpellier 2028, in particular programme management and in-house production, the European and international dimensions, as well as the notion of inclusion and the evaluation of the impact of the title.

By gaining the involvement of **volunteers**, we intend to restore confidence, during this period of declining citizen involvement in cultural policies, in those who are striving to keep culture alive in every region (see Q15). We will also benefit from clearly identified **skills sponsorship**, and we will be able to call on the services of staff who have already been trained.

For the implementation and monitoring of arts programming, we felt it would be useful to keep the programme and production in-house. Firstly, to carry out the few projects directly led by M28, but also to ensure a constant link with the dedicated teams of partner operators. The bid's strong commitment to the Europe Task Force (see Q11.3) is also reflected in our priorities. In addition, in 2024, one full-time employee will be directly involved in relations with ECoCs, and in particular with the other 2028 ECoCs cities of Budweis and Skopje. The team will be specifically staffed with an ecological transition point of contact. Our evaluation programme, starting with data collection in 2024, and the experience of many ECoCs who regret not having sufficiently anticipated this issue, has led us to choose to recruit starting in 2024.

The table below sets out the ramp-up schedule. In budgetary terms (see Q23), we have factored into our forecasts inflation equivalent to 3% in 2024, and thereafter 2.5% for the years 2025 to 2029.

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Arts Directorate and General Management | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Administration / Finances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Programme / Production | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 + intern | 5 + intern | 2 |
| Technical and logistics | - | 0,5 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Marketing / communication | 1 + intern | 2 + intern | 3 + intern | 3 + intern | 5 + intern | 3 + intern |
| Sponsorships / partnerships | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| On-Boarding / Public Outreach | 1 + intern | 1 + intern | 2 + intern | 2 + intern | 4 + intern | 1 |
| Europe / international | 2 + intern | 2 + intern | 3 + intern | 3 + intern | 5 + intern | 3 + intern |
| Inclusion | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Evaluation | 1 | 1 | 1,5 | 1,5 | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL (excluding interns) | 12 | 15.5 | 22.5 | 29.5 | 40 | 20 |

To ensure that the association's employees have all the *suitable skills and experience*, general management has implemented a recruitment and human resources management process based on the identification of needs in terms of resources and skills, on the previously defined general organisation chart and on expectations in terms of changes in professions and skills. To this end, clear, detailed job descriptions will be drawn up by general management. All vacancies will be published on dedicated websites — generalist and specialist — for the cultural sector, and a transparent recruitment process will be detailed. Inclusive in nature, it will also be open to people with disabilities, in accordance with the joint Inclusion and Accessibility Charter signed by all Montpellier 2028 partners (see Q15). Similarly, we will ensure that the parity of employees is respected. Our remuneration policy will also be strictly egalitarian.

Individual annual performance reviews will be carried out. Based on a grid of specific objectives, these exchanges will provide the opportunity to identify successes and areas for improvement in the planning, management, and execution of the Capital Year schedule, thus ensuring the advancement of the tasks undertaken by each of the association's employees within a positive, evolving environment.

32 How do you intend to ensure that cooperation between local authorities and this structure, including the arts team, runs smoothly?

During the two years we spent preparing our bid, we exchanged ideas with teams from other European Capitals of Culture, both past (Marseille 2013, Esch 2022, Eleusis 2023, etc.) and future (Tartu 2024, Oulu 2026). Their experience of cooperation between local authorities and the bid team, including arts cooperation, has helped to fuel our own. We also analysed final evaluation reports from other ECoCs. An in-depth study of the mechanisms that worked and the difficulties encountered (inherent to this type of event) for each of these ECoCs, gave us a better understanding of a number of elements and issues that had already been tried and tested.

Above all, we were able to experience the effectiveness of cooperation between the member communities, the project team, and the M28 Arts Directorate through our 2022 and 2023 Calls for Projects, coordinated by the bid team. The selection criteria established by the Creative Director according to the major challenges of Montpellier 2028 — during the two distinct phases of pre-selection and selection — were perfectly integrated and rigorously respected by the members of the Board of Directors and General Meeting who made up the selection panel. The 85 projects they selected reflect, in addition to the issues at stake, the three arts arenas and the three cornerstones of our bid's arts project, attesting to the genuine cooperation already in play between all parties.

As members of the association, local authorities are already involved in determining the key points of the bid via their designated representatives.

33 On what criteria and according to what procedures have the General Manager and Creative Director been, or will they be, selected? What are, or will be, their respective profiles? When will they take up their duties? What will be their respective fields of action?

The General Manager and Creative Director are already working for the Montpellier 2028 association. They were initially chosen on the basis of their respective experience by the Montpellier Metropolis authorities, together with other local authorities involved in the bid. Since then, the association has been the structure behind the bid, and they are now its employees.



Director of the Vignette Theater, Paul-Valéry University's publicly funded theatre of French national interest since 2014, and previously Director of several cultural entities since 2001. **Nicolas Dubourg** has also taken part in several public policy assessment projects in the cultural field, and has been a lecturer at the University and professional training centres. Since January 2020, he has also served as Chair of SYNDEAC, the French National Syndicate of Artistic and Cultural Companies.

| | |
|---|---|
| A specialist in culture and the media, Sophie Léron has held a number of institutional positions, including adviser to the Chair of the French National Assembly's Committee on Cultural Affairs and Education, and head of the Culture and Media Division in the Prime Minister's Office. She was also appointed by the French Minister of Culture to lead a task force on better consideration of photography within the Ministry. | She has acquired in-depth knowledge of how institutions work, how public policies are formulated, and how they are financed by both public and private players. Since then, the company has supported the emergence of innovative projects (endowment funds, incubators) and territories of collective value, such as La Preuve par 7, an experimental approach to urban planning, architecture, and landscaping. |
|---|---|

In the next phase, they will be surrounded by experts on a board of French and international personalities.

To ensure the project's continuity, and in keeping with their contribution to its initial construction, they will remain in their respective roles. In the event of either of them stepping down during the four years of the Capital Year, a call for candidates will be launched. In this case, particular attention will be paid in the recruitment process to ensuring a good match between the expectations of the M28 application, the project philosophy, an understanding of local issues and, of course, the specific skills required to manage a project of this scale. Based on the same principle, a director will be appointed in 2024.

Emergency Planning

34 Have you carried out or planned a risk assessment exercise?

35 What preventative measures have been provided for?

The types of major risks that Montpellier and its region could face are well known: storms, droughts and heatwaves, floods, health risks, cyber-attacks, and terrorist attacks. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the proliferation of extreme climatic phenomena: The last few years have shown that we now have to contend with "black swan" events. In other words, while we know the nature of the risks facing our region in 2028, their level of intensity is far more uncertain.

With this in mind, our approach to risk management is to *develop collective, long term adaptive* capacities to give cities and regions a high degree of resilience.

Our bid is based on Montpellier's infrastructure and expertise in risk prevention and management. In 2022, the City of Montpellier was awarded "Résilience France Collectivités" accreditation by the French High Committee for National Resilience: recognition of the city's high level of preparedness for major risks. The town has a Plan Communal de Sauvegarde (local emergency response plan), which is tested through simulation exercises at the City Hall, not only to train staff but also to develop a risk management culture.

Another key element of the risk management system is the local civil protection reserve. Since 2021, it has been recruiting around 50 volunteers each year, who actively contribute to preventative actions at major gatherings as well as in crisis situations. It should have 300 members by 2028.

Emphasis will also be placed on communication with local residents. The city has a remote alert system that can be subscribed to directly on the montpellier2028.eu website.

On the more specific question of water resource management, the city currently has twenty public water points accessible to all. We plan to significantly increase their number by 2028 and share their locations with visitors.

Transport networks will be equipped with dedicated agents to ensure the safety of residents and visitors during major events. Finally, we are working on a major risk assessment scheme for the entire host region (Sète, Pays de Lunel, Grand Pic Saint-Loup, etc.).

With regard to the *risks directly related to ECoC*, we consider that we have anticipated these as they relate to financing by having voluntarily minimised the French State's share of revenue and resources via our voluntary and participative ticketing system (see Q15). Most of our infrastructure will be delivered well in advance of the event. For the remainder, we will be looking at alternative solutions. A substantial portion (5%) of our project's operating costs is devoted to anticipating and managing contingencies.

Finally, to offset any recruitment difficulties and attract people with the required professional skills, at a time when cultural professions in short supply are becoming less attractive, we will ensure that working conditions and remuneration levels are commensurate with the commitment required.

Marketing and Communication

36 Can your arts programme be summed up in a slogan?

"A crossroads and grounds for imaginations"

The programme has one target goal: to meet the collective challenges facing us by outlining alternatives that will put an end to monoculture and to paths that lead nowhere. Whether we are reviving past imaginations or seeking to invent new ones, our method—fuelled by the history of our territory—is based on mixing, blending, and hybridising.

37 What is the city's marketing and communications strategy for the year in which the title is awarded, particularly in terms of media coverage and to encourage the general public to get involved?

| Objectives | Actions |
|---|--|
| WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH LOCAL AND EUROPEAN PLAYERS | Monthly meetings; Strategy linked to the development of European audiences + RECI PRO-CI TY (see Q3); Visibility at local events and venues; Partnerships & representatives (e.g., Yoot) |
| | Initiatives with journalists and influencers (see Q38) |
| | Initiatives with Tourism Offices for target customer groups (local and new): turnkey stays, Welcome Pack for business tourists, etc. |
| SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT M28 TO ALL AUDIENCES | All physical and digital media; Billboard and media plan (see Q38) |
| GARNERING INTEREST AND SUPPORT FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC | Strong, effective visual identity (e.g., M28 pictogram collection) |
| | Creation of M28 posters, monthly bilingual fanzines, and Instagram content by local and European artists through arts commissions |
| ENHANCING THE REGION'S INFLUENCE AND APPEAL | Videos; New writing |
| | Collaboration with the region's major operators and the audiovisual media (e.g., Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier) |
| COMMUNICATING IN AN INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIBLE, AND EXEMPLARY WAY | Large-scale event for the opening, 8 flagships, and closing of M28 |
| | Inclusive signage through a Call for Projects from European artists (see Q15) |
| GAINING THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC (SEE Q39) | Eco-communication; Accessible digital media (RGAA, The M28 Lab); Inclusion Charter (see Q15) |
| | Appealing information; Relaying citizen initiatives |
| | Communication in English and French; Ask Mona, Chatbot 24/7 in seven languages (see Q16) |
| CREATE AN ACTIVE, ENGAGED COMMUNITY (SEE Q39) | M28-specific linguistic support for Tourism Bureaus and cultural facilities (training and equipment for staff and volunteers) |
| | Specific actions: goodies offered to business tourists in the Welcome Pack; "Imagine your 2028!" giant colouring pages for children; exhibitions in SNCF stations; etc. |
| | Website (SEO optimised) and dedicated M28 mobile application; Web campaigns; Evaluation (see Q4.3) |
| | Social media <i>sponsoring</i> (100,000 subscribers by 2028); targeted monthly newsletters |
| | |

M28 × France Télévisions, France's leading public service broadcasting group

France Télévisions is committed to establishing an editorial project for our arts programming. By 2028, the Group will have put in place a range of programmes and channels to enable audiences

nationwide to experience all the highlights of the year. At the same time, France Télévisions will be offering special programmes on Culturebox, its cultural channel.

38 Please describe any partnerships planned or established with the media to ensure wide coverage of the event.

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

We will manage the involvement of:

Region-wide:

- Partner local media (e.g., *En commun*, Montpellier Metropolis, 220,000 copies, 500,000 residents);
- All major media: Midi Libre, France 3 Occitanie, Vià Occitanie, France Bleu Hérault (a weekly programme already tells the "Story of The Montpellier 2028 Bid");
- Community radio stations: Campus, Divergence FM, Clapas, Radio Aviva, L'Eko des Garrigues, FM Plus, Radio Lengad'oc and RCF Maguelone (magazines, chronicles, vox pops to highlight the contributions of the CEC label, the voice of citizens, European artists, etc.).

Beginning this year, they have selected 48 European artists working in the region who, through the diversity of their disciplinary practices, talk of their work, their attachment to their country and the region in which they have chosen to work: Montpellier or Sète.

On a French national and international scale:

- France Télévisions, Radio France, Le Monde, Téléràma, Arte, and Euronews.

39 How are you going to gain the involvement of your residents as communicators of the event to the outside world?

We consider each individual not only in their own uniqueness, but also in terms of their contribution to the community. As a member of local society or a community, each individual is also

at the crossroads of social circles and interpersonal relationships, where imaginary worlds are shared. Through these direct, local connections, we intend to make citizen involvement one of the key levers for raising awareness among members of the public, and engaging them. To this end, the On-boarding and Public Outreach division will operate three main levers:

- 1 — Continue and expand *the educational and awareness-raising activities* surrounding the Capital Year, so that everyone progressively feels involved in the project (see Q15).

PRESS

Starting in 2024, we'll be calling on a press relations agency with a European dimension to ensure broad media coverage by targeting influencers and journalists in major European media such as The Guardian, Forbes, El País, RFI, France 24 and Culture, Travel and Lifestyle media, as well as those committed to M28 values such as inclusion, health, and the environment (via directory and media monitoring software, such as Meltwater and Klear).

We aim to reach our specialist travel contacts by collaborating with Tourism Offices, participating in tourism trade shows (e.g., TravMedia's International Media Marketplace), by purchasing advertising in the newsletters of Atouts France agencies and on websites dedicated to tourism, and by holding tailor-made conferences and press trips.

- 2 — *Involve local representatives* by building on existing public and private networks. For example, the Club Hôtelier du Grand Montpellier, a Federation of 73 independent and chain hotels and hotel residences (see Q41), will be offering to transport its deliveries and customers: through one or more face photo frames, to jointly develop proposals for the region's entire accommodation offering.

- 3 — Create two levels of *resident representatives*, in direct connection with M28:

→ Volunteers dedicated to relaying information to the public. By 2028, they will be communicating more directly about their contribution towards the standard of hospitality at major events, in particular by providing information to visitors. Working collaboratively with the various Tourism Offices throughout the M28 region, visitors and local residents who speak the same language will be grouped together for unique, individualised tours (see Q15).

→ The ambassadors' network, which will be launched in Europe and worldwide in 2024, and which, in addition to the M28 area's residents, and those with links to Montpellier, will include representatives from the cultural, sporting, and associative sectors, as well as our sponsors, who will be called on to share M28-related news and events with their networks. This leveraging will be national, with ambassadors from all over the country: Our European Capital of Culture is also that of the whole of France and of all of our fellow citizens.

Convinced that personal experiences published online, shown, or related are just as powerful as institutional communications, these citizen representatives are helping us to significantly boost our impact. We will be continuing to spread our hashtag on social media: #montpellier2028 not only provides direct access to all M28-related content online, but also connects people when they share. For example, we will be stepping up certain promotional operations aimed at a wider public, such as photo competitions: By 2028, we are aiming for our "Europe within train range" operation to reach 200 free Interrail passes to explore Europe. This will also involve other activities in public spaces or at major events (see Q14), such as personalised photos taken in front of our photocalls or with our playful selfie frames, so that they can be shared on our social media pages.

40 How does the municipality plan to emphasise the fact that this is a Union initiative?

Becoming an ECoC provides a fantastic opportunity to reaffirm the role and *values of the European Union* in the lives of our fellow citizens.

This can take place first and foremost with the *M28 passport*, which will be distributed to all elementary school pupils in the area, enabling them to prepare for their M28 programme, as well as learning about the history and foundations of the European Union. We will be setting up a *"Europa Experience" area*, which we discovered in activation during our visit to the Oodi Library in Helsinki. Located within the M28 Lab, this space will be a key driver of the M28 force. Others could be set up in the region's "Europa squares". We will also be continuing our emblematic communication initiatives, as in the case of one of Montpellier's tramways, decked out in European colours and embodying the region's mobility challenges. Official buildings will also benefit from special paving incorporating the European flag.

Beyond visibility, Europe needs to be embodied, on the move, and represented by its fellow citizens. We will be able to take advantage of Montpellier's extensive university network to identify "ambassadors" among European students able to promote the Montpellier 2028 programme locally and in their home countries. A Europe in action, too, with an invitation to European Commission bodies to meet during their work meetings in Montpellier. Similarly, we will be taking advantage of the Euro-Africa biennials and the many links we have with our neighbours on the African continent to deepen the European Union's initiatives in the cultural, scientific, and educational fields.

Capacity to deliver

41 Please provide evidence of ongoing political support and commitment from the relevant authorities.

All the partner local authorities and public establishments for intermunicipal cooperation voted unanimously, in their respective deliberative bodies, to join the Montpellier 2028 association, officially confirming their full commitment and support for our regional project. These commitments are confirmed each year by a vote on their financial commitment (see Q19).

| Community | Act and date | Purpose |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| City of Montpellier | Deliberation of 29/03/2022 | Approval of association creation and membership Appointment of representatives |
| Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole | Deliberation of 22/03/2022 | Approval of association creation and membership Appointment of representatives |
| City of Sète | Deliberation of 21/03/2022 | Approval of association creation, membership, and appointment of representatives |
| Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée | Deliberation of 24/03/2022 | Approval of association creation, membership, and appointment of representatives |
| Occitanie Region | Deliberation of 15/04/2022 | Membership approval |
| Hérault Department | Deliberation of 27/06/2022 | Membership approval |
| Grand Pic Saint-Loup Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 24/05/2022 | Approval of membership and appointment of representatives |
| Hérault Méditerranée Agglomeration Community | Deliberation of 20/06/2022 | Approval of membership and appointment of representatives |
| Pays de Lunel Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 01/07/2022 | Approval of membership and appointment of representatives |
| Hérault Valley Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 11/07/2022 | Approval of membership and appointment of representatives allocation of the grant 2022 |
| Terre de Camargue Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of 03/11/2022 | Approval of membership and appointment of representatives |
| Pays de l'Or Agglomeration Community | Deliberation of 28/09/2023 | Association membership |

In addition to the founding members, associate members (academic, educational and economic partners, etc.) have expressed their support in various ways, and have confirmed their commitment by joining the association: The Hérault Chamber of Commerce and Industry adopted the appointment of its representatives, transmitted by letter from its Chairman André Deljarry, while the Paul-Valéry University affirmed its support for our project in a letter of support signed by its Vice-Chairpersons Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, specifying both the avenues of collaboration and the suitability of the objectives of the application to the university's scholarly commitments, which include working to develop dialogue between Science and Society, particularly in the field of ecological humanities.

In addition, to mark the political will to cooperate and create new synergies between regions, the Montpellier Méditerranée Metropole has signed several reciprocity contracts with intermunicipalities in the M28 region as well as neighbouring areas: Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée, Agglomération Hérault Méditerranée, the Federation of Municipalities of the Hérault Valley, Pays Cœur d'Hérault and the Federation of Municipalities of Gorges Causse Cévennes. These partnership projects are structured around very precise topics specific to their respective challenges. For example, after extensive consultation with local stakeholders, an agreement on the management of the Golfe d'Aigues-Mortes was signed in April 2023 between Montpellier and the Terre de Camargue, Pays de l'Or and Sète Agglopôle Méditerranée intermunicipalities. These communities, which share 60 km of coastline, have agreed to set up a new regional governance structure.

Last but not least, our application has received additional support from local authorities, public establishments, and French national bodies, as summarised in the table below:

| Structure | Purpose | Title | Date |
|---|---|---|------------|
| Hérault Mayors' Association | Statement by Chairperson Frédéric Roig | Chairman's statement of support at the Regional Hérault Mayors Exhibition | 29/09/2022 |
| Lodévois Larzac Federation of Municipalities | Deliberation of the Community Council | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 20/10/2022 |
| Montpellier Development Council | Letter from Co-Chairpersons Pauline Chatin and Christophe Carniel | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 11/10/2022 |
| Pays Cœur d'Hérault Development Council | Letter from Co-Chairpersons Sophie Giraud and Laurent Castanier | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 06/10/2022 |
| Grand Pic Saint-Loup Development Council | Letter from the Chair of the Federation of Municipalities of Grand Pic Saint-Loup | Dev. Co. in the process of being structured, brought before the Federation of Municipalities of Grand Pic Saint-Loup Chair for support as soon as it is officially constituted | 11/10/2022 |
| Sète Development Council | Letter from the Chair Bruno Arbouet | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 14/11/2022 |
| Pays de l'Or Development Council | Letter from Chairperson Colette Certoux | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 01/12/2022 |
| The Club Hôtelier du Grand Montpellier | Support contribution | "The Club Hôtelier du Grand Montpellier, active supporter of Montpellier's bid to become European Capital of Culture 2028: Action and Communication Plan". | 16/07/2023 |
| Musée National de la Marine - Escale à Sète | Letter from General Manager Wolfgang Idiri | Letter of support from the LNM for the City of Montpellier's bid | 12/04/2023 |
| CESER (Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council) Occitanie / Pyrénées Méditerranée | Support contribution | "For an Exemplary Metropolis in an Exceptional Region!" by Elodie Nourrigat, architect and CESER member, Philippe Augé, Chairman of the University of Montpellier, and Philippe Domy, former Director General of Montpellier University Hospital and member of CESER's Prospective Section, under the leadership of Jean-Louis Chauzy, Chairman of CESER Occitanie / Pyrénées-Méditerranée, and Gisèle Desmonts, Chairman of the Health - Culture - Sport - Social Cohesion Commission. | 28/11/2022 |
| Pont du Gard Cultural Centre | Letter from Chair Patrick Malavielle | Support for the Montpellier 2028 - European Capital of Culture bid | 14/10/2022 |

42 Please provide details of the status of the infrastructure projects planned at the pre-selection stage, including the planned construction schedule. Please specify any links with the "European Capital of Culture" project.



| | PROJECT | BUDGET | PROGRESS REPORT | ECOC LINK (excluding DIO) |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Extension of the Musée Fabre | Excavation, for the museum's bicentenary, of an underground exhibition space under the Buren forecourt (an additional 1,000m² of exhibition space), redevelopment of part of the first-floor interior spaces, restoration of the Chapelle de la Miséricorde, renovation of premises to accommodate offices in order to free up exhibition space within the Musée Fabre | 29.5 million euros – Phase 1 | Scheduled work nearing completion for phase 1. Start of archaeological excavations in 2023. Foundation stone: 4th quarter 2025. Delivery: 3rd quarter 2027. | <i>Living Presence</i> ⁰³ <i>Delacroix and Beyond</i> ¹⁶ |
| Conservation and Study Centre and Archaeology Site, Lattara – Musée Henri-Prades | Creation of a conservation and study center and development of the archaeological excavation site for public access. | 15.3 million euros | Scheduling complete. Selection of four potential prime contractors, with final selection scheduled for December 2023. Delivery: 4th quarter 2026. | <i>Our Living Shelters</i> ¹⁷ |
| Château de Montferrand | Conservation and enhancement of the castle, covering the 7,000 m2 of the monument and its entry points. The spirit of the natural space is maintained, accessible only to visitors by hiking. The monument's archaeological findings are on display, and the natural environment of the Pic Saint-Loup massif is showcased. | 1.3 million euros | First stage underway (2023–2026): development and securing of the site for construction and the public; archaeology and restoration of the Comtal building at the top of the site, restoration of the historic path to accommodate a forest service vehicle. | <i>Desire to Desire</i> ¹⁸ <i>Future Landscapes</i> ²⁴ <i>Outlook Towers</i> ¹¹ |
| Abbey of Aniane | Restoration and enhancement of the former abbey site. On the site of the former abbey founded by Saint Benoît d'Aniane, which later became a cotton mill and a prison for adults and children, the Hérault Valley Federation of Municipalities is carrying out a project integrated into the cultural, tourist and social development of the region. | 3 phases: 2.7 million euros 0.5 million euros 1.2 million euros Total: 4.4 million euros | 2024–2025: Restoration of the former penitentiary chapel and development of a cultural centre. Construction 2024, opening 1st half of 2025. 2024–2028: Design, restoration, and installation of a craft village in partnership with Ville et Métiers d'Art. 2025–2026: Restoration of the cloister's exterior spaces and creation of a heritage public outreach area. Opening for the 2026 tourist season. 2028–2029: Creation of an archaeological repository and study centre. | <i>Gitan Symphonic Journeys</i> ³⁶ <i>Desire to Desire</i> ¹⁸ <i>M28 Mostra</i> ²⁵ <i>Living Trails</i> ⁰⁶ |
| Maison Bazille – Domaine de Méric | Restoration of an eighteenth-century estate to host an arts residency programme open to European artists and researchers, combined with an interpretation centre on the history of botany in Montpellier through the life of Gaston Bazille, eliciting the work of painter Frédéric Bazille. The future site will accommodate up to six artists and researchers from all disciplines, with specially adapted working spaces. | 6.1 million euros for landscaping 7.8 million euros to restore and equip the building Total: 13.9 million euros | The programme is currently being finalised. Delivery scheduled for 2027. | <i>A European conversation</i> ⁴⁶ <i>CORE</i> ³⁰ <i>Wide Shot</i> ³⁴ <i>Procession of Processions</i> ¹⁹ |
| Hôtel d'Aurès – Cultural Centre and Former Episcopal Palace | In two restored buildings, an eighteenth-century mansion and an early twentieth-century neoclassical building, opening of a mixed-use facility comprising office space dedicated to cultural engineering, workspaces for artists in residence, and spaces for broadcasting and meetings with the public. | 3 million euros | The buildings have been invested for an initial experimental phase in 2023: installation of the M28 association and teams from the Culture and Heritage Branch, hosting residencies in dance, theatre and sound creation, and scheduling of exhibitions and events open to the general public. These initial uses will enable us to define needs and adapt the building's future scheduling, and to run a schedule open to the general public throughout 2028. | <i>Academy of the Future</i> ¹⁵ <i>GraphiMs</i> ⁴² |
| Hôtel des Postes – L'Atelline | Renovation of a former Hôtel des Postes, the premises of the association dedicated to the development of Street Arts - which will receive Conventional Scenes of French National Interest (SCIN) accreditation in 2023 - to create a modular space that can accommodate artists in residence (writing, production, rehearsal, crafting, etc.) or schedules open to the public (exhibitions, readings, workshops, performances, etc.). | 1.5 million euros | Since June 2023. Start of construction: September 2024. Completion of works: summer 2025. | <i>Our Living Shelters</i> ¹⁷ |
| Carré Sainte-Anne | Restoration of a former church transformed into a contemporary art centre, closed since 2014 owing to structural problems. Reopening planned for 2025 with a redesigned museography project: 600m² dedicated to contemporary art exhibitions. | 5.5 million euros | Structural work nearing completion, start of interior fit-out scheduled for 1st half of 2024. Public opening: January 2025. | <i>Desire to Desire</i> ¹⁸ |

| | PROJECT | BUDGET | PROGRESS REPORT | ECOC LINK (excluding DIO) |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Villa Salis | Restoration of a former mansion that will become a major arts residency site on Mont Saint-Clair, in Sète. | 4.5 million euros | Currently in the preliminary project design phase. Opening in 2027. | <i>Procession of Processions</i> ¹⁹ |
| Project House | A place dedicated to promoting and understanding the construction of a contemporary city (exhibitions, conferences, meetings, resource centre, models, etc.) focusing on architecture and urban and landscape planning. A place for debate and resident workshop. | 1.5 million euros | Phase 1 work is underway, and the site will be occupied for two years in a temporary, experimental form to herald future uses from autumn 2024, before a second phase of work and a definitive reopening in 2027. | <i>Design for Change</i> ²¹ |
| Mille Formes | Creation of a 1,000m² art initiation centre for 0–6 year old in a former media library, in partnership with the Centre Pompidou. | 2 million euros | Ongoing programming workshops underway involving local cultural players and Montpellier schoolchildren. Choice of planner in progress. Delivery in June 2025. | <i>The Earth is architecture</i> ⁰⁵ |
| Bofill Montpellier Joint Development Zone | Development of the former Town Hall site (Pagézy area) to create an expansive pedestrian area providing an aesthetic connection between the Triangle-Place Francis Ponge area and the Antigone district. | 3.8 million euros | Studies to begin in 2023. First delivery in 2025. | <i>The M28 Lab</i> <i>The Earth is Architecture</i> ⁰⁵ <i>Outlook Towers</i> ¹¹ |
| Sète East Joint Development Zone | Four former wine cellars where an ambitious cultural complex will be developed, including the installation and expansion of the new International Museum of Modest Arts (MIAM). The other part of the buildings will be used for a cultural project featuring entrepreneurial spaces dedicated to the creative and cultural industries, co-working spaces, workspaces, training, and events, with room for one or two concert halls/performing arts venues and a catering area. | New International Museum of Modest Arts: 12 million euros ISIS statue: 10 million euros Total: 22 million euros | Delivery of a new MIAM: 2028. Contemporary music venue (400 to 1,200 seats), cultural co-working spaces, bar, and restaurant: 2028. ISIS statue by Robert Combas with panoramic view: 2027. Radio studios and training facilities: delivery in 2028. Artists' studios and installation of artworks in the Joint Development Zone: 2028. | <i>In the Food for Love</i> ³³ <i>Gitan Symphonic Journeys</i> ³⁶ <i>Sète-Europe, A Cultural Stage</i> ⁴⁵ |
| Arts renovation of the Public Baths | As part of the town of Sète's goal to create an urban environment marked by art and culture, the current Public Baths building will be designed by Jean-Michel Othoniel. His project aims to install a participatory work of art designed more to be experienced than admired: a work like a grotto of blue bricks traversed by his paintings coming from the square's forecourt, a matrix work able to welcome all the populations to inhabit the square. | 2.5 million euros | Public baths: Completion of works: summer 2026. Exhibition programme launch: September 2026. | <i>Les Grandes Traversees</i> ⁰¹ |
| Works in public spaces | Plan to install 20 works in public spaces in Sète's urban areas. | 2 million euros Total: 4.5 million euros | Works installation plan: deployment from 2024 to 2028. | |
| Château Laurens | Completely restored Art Nouveau villa offering a programme focusing on the crossroads between art and nature, and highlighting arts and crafts. It will be linked to the centre of Agde by a footbridge. | 10 million euros | Footbridge and river facilities. — 2024 to 2027 three phases of work linking the Château to the river: — the soft mobility footbridge (connecting the historic town centre). — creation of a landing stage at the foot of the château (château/Méditerranée link). | <i>Desire to Desire</i> ¹⁸ <i>M28 Mostra</i> ²⁵ <i>Outlook Towers</i> ¹¹ |
| Lunel Canal | Development of the banks of the canal and creation of an arts trail offering cultural activities, entertainment, and environmental awareness. | 1.2 million euros | 2023: Creation of the first arts work along the route (monumental street art fresco). 2024–2027: Progressive installation of works (two works per year). 2027: course completed. | <i>Common Waters</i> ⁰⁷ <i>The Majak Camp</i> ⁰² <i>Outlook Towers</i> ¹¹ |
| Le Sana | Reconversion of a former sanatorium, a landmark of Grau-du-Roi and the Mediterranean coast, into a hybrid living space in the heart of a natural area on the seafront. A locally driven project involving the public. | 0.9 million euros | Start of construction end 2023. Opening in 2025. | <i>Magic in the Moonlight</i> ²² <i>Desire to Desire</i> ¹⁸ <i>GraphiMs</i> ⁴² <i>M28 Mostra</i> ²⁵ <i>Outlook Towers</i> ¹¹ |
| TOTAL | | 124.8 million euros | | |

Further information

48 Add any other information you feel would be useful in connection with your bid.

We seek to build a **collaborative bid** that brings together the different facets of our region to address local challenges that have broader European and global implications, including **ecological transition** and **democracy issues**. Montpellier and all the regions that support it have the means to achieve this goal. We approach every step of the process with professionalism, commitment, and drive.

We have a clear vision of what Montpellier's designation as European Capital of Culture would bring to the city and the region as a whole; we have an equally clear vision of what the M28 bid decision could mean on a European scale.

The first point concerns the **environmental, economic, and political challenges** facing the M28 area in the decades ahead. Of course, these are not exclusive to us: They concern humanity as a whole. Here, however, they take on a special meaning. Our status as a historical crossroads, in a context of rising ecological, democratic, and social tensions, where the risks of fragmentation are real, must be leveraged to unite, in our region and beyond. It is vital for us to build lasting links on a European and international scale, particularly with the African continent. We believe that this link is created and maintained through concrete, ambitious, and innovative projects, which, taken together, help to build a shared vision. This is the spirit in which we have approached the M28 bid, which has already brought together players and stakeholders who could not have imagined this collaboration possible just a few years ago. The title of European Capital of Culture would enable the region to take this dynamic to a whole new level.

On the second point — that of the significance of M28's selection as European Capital of Culture — our bid is based above all on a belief: Culture is more than a shared heritage that we inherit, it is a vital driving force that must enable us to **project ourselves into the future together**. At a time when France, Europe, and the world are facing real risks of fragmentation, Montpellier has an essential message to convey: **a plea for culture on a European scale**.

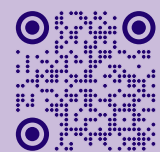
Our approach involves a certain degree of complexity: It is the duty of culture to bring clarity to debates and make the intricacies of the world within everyone's reach.

We form a collective that is committed to carrying out a collaborative programme for the Montpellier 2028 region and for Europe. Our project is built on a spirit of openness, mutual exchange, and understanding of major contemporary challenges.

In line with our identity and values, our bid has been printed by a local company based in the Occitanie Region: **Art & Caractère**. They are the first private-sector printing company in the area to have undergone a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) evaluation and have received CSR certification — the Engagé RSE label. The paper used is certified FSC Recycled and European Ecolabel. It is 100% made from post-consumer recycled fibres.

The atmosphere of the bid is also reflected in the aesthetic created by photographers Gilles Coulon and Patrick Tourneboeuf (from the **Tendance Floue** Collective) through the images commissioned for our bid book.

For an even more immersive experience, we invite you to explore the **playlist** specifically curated by and for Montpellier 2028 at the following address: [deezer.page.link/dQMjNySe7gY7aR7s5](https://www.deezer.page.link/dQMjNySe7gY7aR7s5)



You can find all our projects and updates on our **website** montpellier2028.eu or on our various **social media** platforms at **@montpellier2028**.

