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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

< Albania >

## Contracting authority

< Municipality of Gjirokaster >

## Country background

< The COVID – 19 crisis has affected all the human activities in every kind of sector. The virus itself has cost many lives, and the lockdowns experienced by many countries have destroyed jobs and businesses. At the time of writing, the social and economic impact of the pandemic in the medium and long term is difficult to foresee and measure. The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) have been among the first sectors to shut their doors, and they will be among the last to reopen. Large parts of the sector depend on human congregation. As a result, venue and site-based activities, such as theatre, live music, festivals, cinemas and museums, have been hit particularly hard. Around the world, the livelihoods of workers in different sectors have been profoundly affected by lockdowns and physical distancing measures. The creative ecosystem, which combines a handful of multinational conglomerates with a multitude of freelance creatives and small and medium-sized enterprises, employs a significant proportion of these workers. Many people around the world depend on the cultural and creative industries for their livelihoods. Yet, the often precarious (or non-contractual) nature of their work has made artists and cultural professionals particularly vulnerable to the economic shocks that the pandemic has triggered. CHERRY project aims at improving policies and local plans addressed to CCI to react to the Pandemic period and to turn the restrictions of that period with the use of innovative communication means, digital technologies and services into an opportunity for further developing this sector, to address new users and, in general, make Culture n.1ally for EU recovery. The project will work with public institutions coming from Italy, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, France, Latvia and Finland to support the resilience of CCI to the COVID19 emergency focusing on:

* CCI and urban transformation
* CCI and entrepreneurship and
* CCI and valorization of natural and cultural heritage assets>

The tremendous impact of COVID – 19 at the CCI can be depicted from the following figures:

* In 2020, the cultural and creative economy lost approximately 31% of its revenues
* The total turnover of CCIs in the EU28 is reduced to €444 billion in 2020, a net drop of €199 billion from 2019. The sharp fall Total turnover generated by CCIs in the EU-28 (in € billion) and music (-76%) are the most impacted; visual arts, architecture, advertising, books, press and AV activities fell by 20% to 40% compared with 2019. The video games industry seems to be the only one to hold up (+9%).
* With a loss of 31% of its turnover, the cultural and creative economy is one of the most affected in Europe, slightly less than air transport but more than the tourism and automotive industries (-27% and -25% respectively).
* The shockwaves of the COVID-19 crisis are felt in all CCIs: performing arts (-90% between 2019 and 2020)
* The crisis has hit Central and Eastern Europe the hardest (from -36% in Lithuania to -44% in Bulgaria and Estonia). COVID19 also increased use of digital technologies by CCI operators.

The addition of CHERRY project is having a positive contribution in the reversal of the negative consequences of the COVID – 19 in the CCI sector and to contribute to the European policies and strategies which have this purpose. More specifically, CHERRY: a) contributes to "a more competitive and smarter Europe" and "a more social and inclusive Europe", because it aims at supporting CCI to recover and enhance their contribution to local growth from one side and enhance the contribution to citizens' well-being and social innovation; b) contributes to C (2021) 4838 final: "EU guidelines for the safe resumption of activities in the cultural and creative sectors - COVID-19", particularly "Actions to support the sustainable recovery of the cultural sectors"; c) contributes to the objective of NEXT GENERATION EU: Europe's moment: Repair and prepare the next Generation SWD(2020) 98 final and to the twin transition: Green deal and Digital transition, among other the New European Bauhaus strategy. It is harmonized with existing EU instruments.

## Current situation in the sector

CHERRY project aims at improving 9 regional and local policies addressed to Cultural and Creative industries with specific reference to the Policy objective n.4-More Social Europe and the specific objective VI-Culture and tourism for economic development, social inclusion and social innovation. CHERRY aims to increase CCI contribute to the local growth, the social inclusion and innovation. In particular, CHERRY will address policies to trigger the resilience of CCI after the COVID-19 health emergency considering the twin transition (green and digital) and with the aims of a) supporting the valorization of natural and cultural heritage assets; b) increasing the local economic growth working on entrepreneurship; c) increasing the contribution of CCI to the urban transformation.

The partnership involves 11 partners from 10 countries (Italia, France, Belgium, Finland, France, Hungary, Romania, Greece, Albania and Bosnia – Herzegovina). The partnership includes local authorities of the first and second level, moreover all the partners have involved in the project a great number of stakeholders that are related to the CCI sector. The Municipality of Gjirokaster and Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (SERDA) are the last two partners that came in the project, and they have the role of the discovery partners.

CHERRY project implementation process has the following approach: the main topic of the project (supporting CCI's recovery after the COVID-19 period) is approached following 3 entries that are in line with the policies' improvement planned by the partners: Entry n.1: CCI and local development, how to support companies from the sector to recover after COVID-19 and how to strengthen their position or support the establishment of new enterprises. Entry n.2: CCI and urban transformation: how CCI can contribute to the urban transformation triggering emerging trends connected with green and digital transition, creativity, e-commerce, etc. Entry n.3: how to support the valorization of cultural and natural heritage assets with the involvement of CCI.

The Municipality of Gjirokaster (the Biggest Municipality of the Region) has an historical centre recognized as UNESCO World Heritage site since 2005. The Gjirokaster as most of the regions severed great loses at the CCI sector during the pandemic period. Now the situation has started to change in a positive way and in order the Municipality of Gjirokaster to contribute to this designed and implemented some initiatives, which were: a) Promoting local cultural tourism: Encouraging residents to explore their own city or region can help boost the local economy and tourism sector. b) Implementation of safety measures: Ensuring that safety protocols are in place to protect visitors and residents to rebuild a feeling of trust in the destination. c) Diversifying tourism offerings: Introducing new cultural attractions, experiences, or events can help attract new target of tourists Marketing campaigns: Launching targeted marketing campaigns to showcase Gjirokaster's attractions (including cultural attractions) and encourage tourists to visit it. It is believed that these initiatives can positively contribute to boost tourism numbers. Additionally, the MoG is trying to create opportunities for the residents to actively participate in cultural experiences can have a significant impact on local growth, because when communities embrace and showcase their unique cultural identities, it can attract tourists, increase economic activity, and foster a sense of pride among residents.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

< N/A >

# OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective of CHERRY project is the improvement of 9 regional and local policies addressed to Cultural and Creative industries with specific reference to the Policy objective n.4-More Social Europe and the specific objective VI-Culture and tourism for economic development, social inclusion and social innovation. CHERRY aims to increase CCI contribute to the local growth, the social inclusion and innovation. In particular, CHERRY will address policies to trigger the resilience of CCI after the COVID-19 health emergency considering the twin transition (green and digital) and with the aims of a) supporting the valorization of natural and cultural heritage assets; b) increasing the local economic growth working on entrepreneurship; c) increasing the contribution of CCI to the urban transformation.

## Specific objective(s)

## The specific objectives and outcomes that will be achieved from CHERRY implementation, in Transnational and Local level, are expected to be the following:

**Exchange Knowledge Phase (Semester 1 – 6)**

**Activities at transnational level:**

* 3 Transnational working groups, one for each of the 3 project entries
* 3 Sets of projects peering activities to exchange knowledge among partners
* 3 Transnational study visits: one for each of the 3 project entries, to raise knowledge about identified good practices and thematic learning sessions
* 2 Pilot Actions:

a) Testing of new PPPs financing tools for the enhancement of cultural activities

b) Developing new narratives and digital services for the CCIs

**Activities at local level:**

* 6 Local Stakeholder meetings to raise knowledge and skills and to increase contribution to the local policy’s implementation process
* 3 Local thematic expert workshops to analyse policies’ background, trends and impacts concerning the contribution the 3 project entries

**Follow-up Phase (Semester 7 & 8)**

**Activities at transnational level:**

* Follow-up event addressed to local actors
* 1 Set of working groups to monitor the impact of the actions undertaken under the 3 entries
* Participation a contribution to the Interreg EUROPE Policy Learning Platform

**Activities at local level:**

* 1 Assessment survey addressed to local users involved in the policy improvement to understand the impacts of policy improvements on CCI
* 2 Local Stakeholders meetings as a follow-up of the pilot action implemented, and to monitor, analyse and elaborate the achievements of the project

**Communication Activities (horizontally over the whole project duration)**

* Communication Events
* Social media
* Elaboration of the Communication Strategy
* Flyers
* Brochures
* Newsletters
* Videos
* Participation to sectoral dissemination events
* Press releases

## Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

The CHERRY project envisions turning the restrictions of the COVID-19 period with the use of innovative communication means, digital technologies and services into an opportunity for further developing in the CCI sector, to address new users and, in general, make ***Culture the n.1 ally for EU recovery***. By means of transnational cooperation involving stakeholders for the CCI sector, the partners of the project will:

Improve 9 regional and local policies addressed to Cultural and Creative industries to enhance the resilience of CCI after the COVID-19 health emergency considering the twin transition (green and digital), in order to:

* Support the valorisation of natural and cultural heritage assets
* Increase the local economic growth working on entrepreneurship
* Increase the contribution of CCI to the urban transformation

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

The main assumptions underlying the project are the following:

* The maturity of the project activities is at satisfactory level. Sufficient capacity of the involved stakeholders and target groups to participate in the project events/activities.
* Previous studies including norms, planning rules, financial and economic incentives, methods of analysis and evaluation of CCI sector in the Glirokaster Region and in country level will be available.
* The proposed strategic road map will be in line with the needs of the stakeholders involved and political support will facilitate the integration of this in the concerned areas.

## Risks

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Weight** | **Probability of occurrence** | **Mitigation measure** |
| Inability to elaborate the necessary communication means as requested in by the Contract. | High | Low | The contractor is requested to have experience in EU projects. |
| Low capacity of the region and the country to implement the proposed measures-activities. | High | Low | Strong political commitment is in place to meet the sustainable development requirements and impose the necessary measures. |
| Convid19 – New lock Down | High | Medium | A risk assessment plan will be developed, and alternative solutions will be proposed (webinars) for the implementation of the project’s workshops. |
| Low capacity of the involved stakeholders and target groups to participate in the project activities / events. | Medium | Medium | The invitation approach / the communication channels and the agenda of the events will be redesigned. New dates will be chosen, if necessary, to address the requirements of most stakeholders. |
| Possible delays in project implementation | Medium | Medium | The project timetable will be re-designed, if necessary. A prolongation request will be submitted in case of major delays. |

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

The scope of the assignment is to provide integrated consulting support to the Contracting Authority for the implementation of the project deliverables listed in section 4.2.

### Geographical area to be covered

Albania, Municipality of Gjirokaster

### Target groups

* Local public authorities
* Regional public authorities
* National public authorities
* General public
* Sectoral agencies
* Higher education & research
* Education/training centre and schools
* Enterprises & SMEs
* Interest Groups, including NGOs.

## Specific work

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Del. Num. | Deliverable Title | Description | Delivery date | Budget with VAT (€) |
| 1 | SWOT analysis | Elaboration of a SWOT analysis on cultural policies respect to culture and local growth and urban transformation; | Within one month from the signing of the contract | 5.000,00€ |
| 2 | Identification of (minimum) one local good practice | The contractor will support the MoG to the identification of the local good practices and their evaluation according to the criteria that has been set by the project’s consortium | Aug 2025 | 5.000,00€ |
| 3 | Exchange of experience – external support | Constant support to the process of the exchange experience reports/studies & support services for the meetings. The contractor is obliged to submit a report, at the end of every semester, with all the provided services during the specific time period | Feb 2027 | 10.000,00€ |
| 4 | Presentation of lesson learnt/strategic roadmap | Support for the elaboration the presentation of lesson learnt / strategic roadmap and during the relevant meeting that will be organized by RAFVG. The contractor will submit a report with all the relevant action that were undertaken for this purpose | Feb 2026 | 3.000,00€ |
| 5 | Organization of the 1st communication event | Support for the organization of the 1st communication event at local level by the provision of indicative services such as: catering, secretarial support and photographic coverage during the event, information material for the participants e.t.c  A report accompanied from the relevant proof material will be submitted by the contractor | Aug 2025 | 1.500,00€ |
| 6 | Organization of the 2nd communication event | Support for the organization of the 2nd communication event at local level by the provision of indicative services such as: catering, secretarial support and photographic coverage during the event, information material for the participants e.t.c  A report accompanied from the relevant proof material will be submitted by the contractor | Feb 2027 | 1.500,00€ |
| 7 | Project management and reporting | The contractor will assist to the overall coordination of the project, the time plan, the submission of the Progress Reports Financial Reports and Policy Reports and the communication with the FLC.  In particular the contractor will:  1. prepare the Progress, Financial and Policy Report within one month from the end of each semester according with the instruction of the LP.  2. coordinate the reporting proccedure in eMS  3. coordinate of the expense’s certification procedure, communicate with the FLC  4. check that the project implementation is performed according to Interreg Europe programme manual  5. support the MoG during the project’s closure phase | May 2027 | 17.500,00€ |

## Project management

### Responsible body

Municipality of Gjirokaster

### Management structure

The Municipality of Gjirokaster as a local public authority is interested in implementing activities and initiatives fostering sustainable economic and social development in its territory. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development is also priority for the Municipality of Gjirokaster and can be achieved though the elaboration and implementation of local strategies policies. Moreover, it has the capacity in networking with all the stakeholders on local, regional, national and international level in order to effectively achieve its goals.

Regarding EU-funded interregional project management, the Mayor of Gjirokaster is given by law the authority to sign contracts, initiate procurements procedures, cooperate with third parties and take key actions on the best interest of the municipality. He can delegate other aspects of the project management to the deputy mayors or other staff members. The Project Management Unit is composed by the Project Manager who has operational responsibility for the implementation of the overall project and will ensure timely commencement of the entire project within the time schedule. The Financial Manager has the responsibility to enable efficient overall financial and budgetary management of the operation. The Communication Manager has the responsibility to communicate internally and externally all-important aspect of the project. The Project Management Team is composed by experienced staff members of the Municipality and reports and informs the mayor periodically throughout the implementation of the project.

The Department "EU Projects and Programmes" will be responsible for the preparation and execution of the project activities.

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

N/A

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Municipality of Gjirokaster, Albania

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is <07.04.2025> and the period of implementation of the contract will be <25> months from this date and including the closure phase. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

Key experts are not required

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

## Office accommodation

: Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in <English> in one original and one copy:

* **Inception Report** of maximum 12 pages to be produced after one month from the start of implementation. In the report the contractor shall describe e.g. initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme and staff travel. The contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the contracting authority sends comments on the inception report.
* **Draft final report** of maximum <20> pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted no later than one month before the end of the period of implementation of tasks.
* **Final report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 15 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the different options to support an informed decision on CCI sector. The detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

< Specific performance measures chosen because they provide valid, useful, practical and comparable measures of progress towards achieving expected results. Can be quantitative: measures of quantity, including statistical statements; or qualitative: judgements and perception derived from subjective analysis. >

## Special requirements

< No special requirements are envisaged.>