**Annex 2**

**Liepāja 2027 International Cultural Project Co-financing Open Call Regulations**

**GUIDELINES**

1. **Interdisciplinary Contemporary Art Programme “Moving Horizons”**

Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture invites proposals for contemporary art projects involving international artists, centred on the thematic exploration of (un)rest as an aesthetic, creative, and philosophical experience. Projects may span across diverse artistic disciplines or take the form of interdisciplinary expressions.

We are living in an era defined by the sweeping impact of climate change, migration, identity reconstruction, shifting geopolitical borders, technological transformation, and fragmented information ecosystems. Within this context, (un)rest emerges as a force of creative energy—one that encapsulates movement, resilience, paradox, and transformation—mirroring both the spirit of Liepāja and the broader contemporary world. What artistic strategies might respond meaningfully to such an unsettled reality?

Liepāja’s unique identity is shaped by its relationship with the sea—a dynamic symbol of change and connectivity, linking the local with the global. Through this interdisciplinary programme, we invite applicants to develop process-based, site- and time-specific artistic experiences that transcend conventional exhibition frameworks. Projects should actively engage with and expand into unexpected urban and digital environments, forming a living dialogue with the city, the sea, and surrounding contexts. This is a platform for critically engaging with European identity, cultural diversity, and the role of contemporary art in responding to current societal shifts. How can art become a map for navigating today’s rapidly evolving value systems?

**Instructions:**

* Address and reflect upon socio-political and ecological developments, contemporary crises, and cultural transformations;
* Employ a mix of artistic media, dissolving boundaries between installation, sound, digital technologies, performing arts, and the urban fabric;
* Involve the city of Liepāja as a living stage, integrating its history, topography, and the (un)rest energy;
* Engage an international team of artists and curators, fostering dialogue across geopolitical, cultural, and artistic disciplines;
* Experiment with new formats, making use of unconventional locations such as streets, hotels, industrial spaces, beaches, etc.

**Goals:**

* Foster international collaboration;
* Deliver sustainable and thought-provoking contemporary art experiences;
* Provide reflective responses to social, political, and ecological upheavals;
* Expand public access to and engagement with contemporary art.

1. **Photography Programme “World of Images”**

Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture is looking for photography that will change the way we see the world. From raw documentary snapshots to mind-bending visual manipulations, from historic archives to bold visions of the future—this is a chance for photographers, curators, visual culture researchers and creative teams to show the world what you can do.

The rapid development of technology—including artificial intelligence, deepfakes, and algorithmic visuality—has fundamentally challenged our ability to trust what we see and believe to be true. In this evolving visual landscape, photography has become both an archive that preserves memory and a fiction that constructs alternative narratives. It operates as an instrument of power, an emotional device, and an algorithmic tool that simultaneously shapes and distorts reality.

Photography influences how we perceive the past, comprehend the present, and envision the future. With the “World of Images” programme, we invite curators and artists to approach photography as an open, critical medium for investigating and transforming the world. Projects should reflect on historical responsibility, the evolution of visual culture, and the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the image—offering both local and global perspectives.

**Instructions:**

* Examine photography as a mechanism for constructing and interpreting reality: how do images influence our understanding of the world? Can history be rewritten through the image? How does photography contribute to imagining the future? How does it shape memory, identity, sense of belonging, national boundaries, and societal values?
* Explore the image as a mediated representation of reality—where history meets speculation, documentation blends with fiction, and the original merges with AI-generated simulacrum. How can images deceive and create parallel truths?
* Employ a variety of photographic strategies, including archival practice, photojournalism, staged imagery, AI-generated visuals, algorithmic aesthetics, and data visualisation. How does the visual archive determine what is recollected and what is forgotten?
* Engage photography spatially and performatively, redefining traditional image presentation through immersive installations, video projections, interactive media, audio and text compositions;
* Present international perspectives, involving artists from diverse cultural fields, traditions, and genres.
* The Contracting Authority retains the right to determine and, where necessary, amend the location and timing of the supported projects within the framework of the overall Liepāja 2027 programme.

**Goals:**

* Promote international collaboration by involving distinguished photographers, curators, and visual culture researchers;
* Stimulate critical discourse on the societal impact of images—viewing photography as both a communicative language and a tool of influence;
* Deliver a rich, multi-layered photography experience that encourages critical thinking while offering visual and conceptual depth.

1. **Participatory Performing Arts Programme “Karosta – Radosta”**

Karosta, the most iconic and paradoxical neighbourhoods of Liepāja, has undergone a striking transformation from a closed military zone in the 20th century to a magnet for tourists, outdoor enthusiasts, and industrial investment. Its urban identity is marked by contrasts: richly ornamented Art Nouveau buildings sit amidst a scarcity of public amenities and communal gathering spaces. Expansive natural landscapes (sea, lake, forests) are layered with decaying 20th century Soviet-era military infrastructure. Today, Karosta is home to the Latvian National Armed Forces and the National Guard who maintain a strong presence here, while the Liepāja Special Economic Zone is actively attracting manufacturing and processing plant developers. As a result, Karosta's physical and social fabric is gradually evolving. While many are drawn to its powerful historic atmosphere, it is also the neighbourhood with the highest number of children – where Liepāja’s future is taking shape.

We encourage organisations to propose participatory performing arts and/or environmental art projects created for the urban and public spaces of Karosta that would bring internationally recognised artists into creative collaboration with local children and young people. Their joint brainstorming should unearth and interpret local narratives through original artistic formats that empower the community, strengthen a sense of belonging, and foster civic pride. These formats should aim to strengthen the community’s self-confidence and sense of belonging, foster mutual cooperation, and empower young residents to play an active role in shaping their environment and relationships, embracing local weather, light, material textures, and sustainable practices.

Instructions:

* Performing and/or environmental arts projects must involve children and/or young people from Karosta in the creation process. The project proposal should clearly outline the methods of collaboration, ethical principles, and the organisers’ prior experience working with youth.
* Events must be accessible to low-income groups, people with disabilities, and international audiences.
* Participatory performing arts events must take place in public spaces within Karosta – such as courtyards, parks, schools, etc, – according to the artistic concept and in compliance with national and international regulations.
* The project must include international cooperation, involving foreign artists, authors, or organisations;
* The organiser is responsible for the full implementation of the project, including all marketing and post-event environmental clean-up.
* All public activities and publicity campaigns must be scheduled in consultation with the foundation.

Goals of the Participatory Performing Arts Project

* Address themes and challenges relevant to children and young audiences, raising awareness through artistic expression.
* Enable young people to express themselves and boost personal growth, collaborate, and actively participate in culturally significant international events.
* In close cooperation with children and/or youth communities in Karosta, implement 2–4 high-quality productions with multiple performances in the neighbourhood’s public spaces.

Goals of the Environmental Art Project

* Create environmental art projects of high artistic quality that are both engaging and innovative, thoughtfully integrated into Karosta’s urban landscape. These works should enter into dialogue with the area’s architectural heritage, as well as its ecological and social context.
* Foster a stronger sense of connection to the neighbourhood and the city by highlighting elements of local identity and actively involving children and youth from Karosta in reimagining and shaping their living environment.
* In collaboration with the target audience, develop meeting spaces that reflect the multilingual, multicultural character of Karosta’s younger communities.

1. **Literature and Oral Culture Programme “Phantom of the Library”**

As part of Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture, the “Phantom of the Library” programme invites the creation of new interdisciplinary works that reimagine traditional oral culture—fairy tales, legends, myths and old stories—through a contemporary lens.

Latvian and international artists are encouraged to draw on elements of Latvian and global folklore to create original works that explore the enduring power of the word. Words live within us: they shape our thoughts, guide our speech, and echo through our actions. Yet they also endure beyond the individual—in the collective memory of cultures and societies, passed from generation to generation, woven into the stories that survive in books, songs, and oral traditions. These narratives, often dormant, await reawakening—new life through creative interpretation.

This programme encourages collaborations between Latvian and intercontinental authors and artists. Projects should use folklore as inspiration, transforming it into new artistic expressions that resonate with the present moment. The outcome must be interdisciplinary and contemporary, ranging from performing arts and animation to video art, music, or hybrid formats. A central emphasis is placed on accessibility: the final work must be delivered in plain language to ensure wide public engagement.

For guidance on the use of plain language, please refer to: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/vadlinijas> (State Chancellery Guidlines in Latvian)

**Goals:**

* Foster diverse and meaningful international cooperation with artists beyond Europe;
* Highlight the shared human experience by drawing public attention to the similarities and differences within the folklore traditions of the world’s peoples;
* Inspire contemporary interpretations of traditional narratives;
* Ensure the final content is clearly understandable and accessible to all, through the application of plain language principles.

1. **Environmental Installations or Digital Experiences Within the Environmental Awareness Programme “Island of Adventure”**

As part of Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture, the “Island of Adventure” programme invites artists, set designers, game creators, educational specialists, and interdisciplinary teams to develop site-specific projects that blend art, environmental education and play on Zirgu sala (Horse Island).

Despite its proximity to the city, Horse Island remains a largely unexplored and underutilised urban space. As a designated protected natural area, it demands a heightened sensitivity to its delicate ecological balance. The island’s true inhabitants—the ‘protagonists’ of its landscape—are often imperceptible to the naked eye: micro-organisms, insect populations, fungal networks, and intricate root systems. These hidden, slow-moving processes form the unseen foundation of life on the island.

The “Island of Adventure” programme extends an invitation to project developers to engage with this invisible realm—to recognise and respect the subtle, often overlooked systems that sustain biodiversity. This initiative seeks to cultivate a deeper, more respectful relationship with the natural world—one that encourages physical movement, imaginative exploration and cognitive engagement, while fostering awareness of the fragile ecological systems that envelop us.

Project formats may include site-specific environmental trails, interactive games, or artistic installations aimed at engaging children, young people, and curious minds of all ages. Crucially, these works should encourage participants to walk, observe, feel, play, and learn not merely *about* nature, but *with it*. The living beings outside the human sphere take centre stage here, highlighting their abilities, relationships, and essential roles within the larger ecosystem.

The digital component of the experience must also be designed specifically for Horse Island and be suitable for both organised groups (such as school classes) and independent visitors, including families and tourists. International cooperation with artists or organisations outside Latvia is a mandatory requirement for participation.

**Instructions for Environmental Installations:**

* Must be technically and physically feasible within Horse Island’s natural setting;
* Created specifically for the site, responding to its ecological and historical context;
* Encourage sensory exploration, movement, and cognitive engagement;
* Must actively involve children and young people;
* Highlight non-human entities as central characters—fungi, insects, light, wind, etc.;
* Activities must comply with environmental protection regulations governing “Liepājas ezers” lake nature reserve (more information available in Latvian [here](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/253869-dabas-lieguma-liepajas-ezers-individualie-aizsardzibas-un-izmantosanas-noteikumi));
* Designed for outdoor conditions—must withstand local climate and natural elements;
* Ensure multi-accessibility—suitable for different age groups and abilities;
* Use sustainable materials—natural, recyclable, or locally sourced;
* Foster cooperation with the Science and Education Innovation Centre “Nature House” and local communities.

**Instructions for Digital Experiences:**

* Must offer an interactive augmented reality experience, accessible both for school groups (up to 30 students) and individual family visits;
* Content must be available in at least two languages—Latvian and English—to ensure broad accessibility;
* Compatible with a wide range of devices (e.g. tablets, smartphones—iOS, Android, HarmonyOS, etc.). Applicants must specify the supported platforms;  
  Applicants must outline an accessibility policy and specify which disability groups the digital experience is designed for;
* Must include international cooperation with organisations and/or artists outside Latvia;
* While abstract audiovisual elements are allowed, the digital content must not present misleading representations of natural processes. Scientific consultation is encouraged;
* Collaborations with local conservation and education organisations are strongly recommended to ensure long-term accessibility and sustainability;
* The experience must relate meaningfully to the environment—reflecting the ecology, institutions, and conservation frameworks of Horse Island;
* Public presentations of the digital experience are limited to a maximum of 60 people, unless prior approval is obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency.

**Goals:**

* Enhance and diversify international and cross-sector cooperation;
* Create memorable, educational and playful experiences for children, families, foreign tourists and international school groups;
* Engage audiences as active participants—observers and co-creators of the natural story;
* Cultivate awareness, empathy and respect for biodiversity and the living world;
* Transform Horse Island into an interactive nature museum and experimental art-education laboratory.

1. **Visual Theatre Development Programme “Open Theatre Quarter”**

As part of Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture, we invite proposals for the development of an inclusive, international visual theatre programme that explores object theatre, puppet theatre, and other non-verbal or visually driven forms of performance. The initiative seeks to engage diverse audiences and introduce innovative theatrical expressions previously underrepresented in Latvia’s performing arts landscape. A key component of the programme should be the inclusion of masterclasses for professionals as well as targeted workshops to specific audience segments, such as children, seniors, members of ethnic minority communities, and individuals with disabilities.

Visual theatre—a genre that merges the language of objects, imagery, movement, and the symbolic relationship between humans and things—has developed into a rich and expressive format in international performing arts. However, Latvia lacks a dedicated platform for its systematic exploration. This programme seeks to fill that gap by encouraging bold artistic experimentation, fostering new models of collaboration, and expanding the lexicon of contemporary theatre in the region.

Embedded in the wider Liepāja 2027 (un)rest framework, this programme aims to introduce audiences and professionals alike to compelling, multisensory forms of storytelling. Productions may take place in conventional theatre venues or extend into public spaces, with the express intention of engaging casual audiences—passers-by and community members who may not regularly participate in cultural life.

**Goals:**

* An international-scale visual theatre programme;
* Provide a masterclass for professionals and a workshop for a selected target group (e.g., children, seniors, people from ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities);
* Facilitate collaboration between international and local artists;
* Introduce new forms and content of theatre to a wider and more diverse public;
* Expand the accessibility of contemporary performing arts to underrepresented audiences.

1. **World Film Days “Dreaming Cinema”**

As part of Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture, we invite the creation of World Film Days – “Dreaming Cinema”, a celebration of global cinema to be held in the first half of 2027. This programme calls for a cinematic voyage that drifts far from the formulaic lights of mainstream studios, focusing instead on the textured, tender, and tense realities shaped by fiction, documentary, animation, shorts, and films for children—internationally acclaimed visions from the margins, stories from the heart of elsewhere.

The selection should reflect the thematic spectrum of the Liepāja 2027 [artistic vision](https://liepaja2027.lv/en/about-unrest/programme-artistic-vision/) (un)rest — geopolitics and ecological fragility, digital disruption and communal resilience, identity and well-being, fantasy and memory. Here, a child’s tale can carry the weight of revolution, and a quiet documentary can roar louder than fiction.

Films may be grouped by theme, genre, or concept, accompanied by in-depth lectures, targeted discussions, and complementary events that invite audiences to step beyond the screen into dialogue. One essential component of the programme must be a film lecture tailored for students or schoolchildren.

**Goals:**

* Diversify and enrich cinematic landscape through a world film programme;
* Create an educational and enriching cinema experience;
* Raise awareness of global cultural diversity and pressing social, environmental and political realities;
* Engage a wide spectrum of audiences, crossing demographic, social, and cultural boundaries.

1. **Electronic Dance Music Event in the Programme “No More Heavy Metal”**

As part of Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture, the long-silent territory of the former “Liepājas Metalurgs” steel plant will awaken in a bold, symbolic gesture—a public reclamation of space once dominated by the clang of machinery and the rhythms of mass industrial labour. This iconic site, once the heart of 19th and 20th century heavy industry, will open its gates to the public to reflect on the social and environmental legacies of large-scale manufacturing, while pointing to the horizon of sustainable and conscious futures.

In July 2027, during the warm peak of summer, this post-industrial space will be reimagined as a hybrid zone of dance, performance, street art, and contemporary circus. Liepāja 2027 invites proposals for a one-night electronic dance music event that will represent a conceptual farewell to heavy metal—both literally and figuratively. The music should evoke the mechanical repetition and raw intensity of the industrial age, while simultaneously charting a new course toward deliberate modesty, inclusion, and thoughtful celebration. Through pulsing beats and immersive atmospheres, the event will symbolically forge new futures from the sonic remnants of the past, replacing the relentless noise of production with intentional, diverse, and inclusive expression.

**Instructions:**

* Timeframe: July 2027. The exact date and location within the site will be determined in coordination with the Liepāja 2027 Foundation upon approval of the project;
* Venue: The grounds of the former “Liepājas Metalurgs” steel plant. All activities must be planned in coordination with Liepāja 2027 and the Liepāja Special Economic Zone;
* Important note: Many of the existing buildings within the plant area are not structurally safe for public events and must not be considered as venues.

**Goals:**

* Conceptually reflect the transition from heavy, industrial manufacturing to smarter, inclusive forms of economic activity in a high-quality electronic dance music programme, thereby complementing the identity of the Land of (un)rest and interpreting the concept of “Deliberate Modesty” through both contrasting and affirming forms of artistic expression;
* Create a diverse, one-night electronic music event that is conceptually and formally aligned with the unique legacy of the Liepāja Metalurgs site, featuring the participation of international artists.