

(un)rest

Liepāja – European
Capital of Culture 2027
Strategic Framework for
Goal Implementation
2024–2028

Revised 2025

Liepāja
2027

European Capital of Culture

Official partners:

Kuldīga Region
South Kurzeme Region

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Introduction

The Liepāja 2027 Strategic Framework has been developed to guide the implementation of the Liepāja 2027 Programme – a portfolio of cultural projects and initiatives originally outlined in Liepāja’s successful bid for the title of European Capital of Culture 2027. This strategy was revised in January 2025 to reflect evolving priorities and operational insights.

The application for the European Capital of Culture title was prepared between 2020 and 9 May 2022, culminating in its presentation to the European Commission jury. The full application is available [here](#) in both Latvian and English. Throughout this document, the term Liepāja 2027 Programme refers to the set of projects and initiatives described in the original bid.

The programme is being delivered by a regional partnership comprising three municipalities: the City of Liepāja, South Kurzeme Municipality, and Kuldīga Municipality. These partners have jointly committed to five conceptual objectives:

1. Learning to Collaborate – From the Periphery to Europe => International cooperation
2. Co-Creating the Living Environment => Civic involvement and co-creation
3. Shaping a Smart Future – From Human to Digital and Back => Engagement with digital transformation
4. Preserving Identity – With Love from Latvia and the Land of (un)rest => Transmission of cultural values and heritage
5. Transforming Mindsets – From Inertia to Purposeful Action => Active participation.

Following the jury’s [report](#), the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia officially designated Liepāja as the European Capital of Culture 2027 in June 2022. In line with this designation, the three core partners are responsible for delivering the programme over a four-year period, in accordance with the commitments outlined in the original application.

Strategy development timeline

To achieve the programme’s objectives, the Liepāja 2027 Foundation – the executive body overseeing implementation – developed this strategic framework and action plan in 2023. The development process included the following stages:

1. Formation of a core team comprising thematic leads responsible for shaping strategic visions and tactical approaches within their respective domains
2. Formalisation of cooperation with key regional partners – South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities (collectively referred to as the Region)
3. Definition of programme development stages, including communication, public engagement, monitoring, and capacity-building
4. Establishment of a technical framework detailing project clusters, potential sub-projects, timelines, indicative budgets, and funding sources
5. Planning of implementation team for the Liepāja 2027 Programme
6. Scheduled strategy reviews in 2025, 2026, and 2027, with adjustments made as needed.

Strategy Implementation

2023

Strategy
Initiating Programme
Delivery

2024

National Level
Capacity Building
Programme Delivery
Baseline study

2025

Liepāja 400
Capacity Building
Programme Delivery

2026

International Level
Technical Preparation
Programme Delivery

2027

Programme Delivery
Final Study

2028

Evaluation
Continuity

1. Strategic References

1.1. Local and Kurzeme Regional Development Planning Documents

The implementation of the European Capital of Culture initiative is embedded within the strategic development frameworks of Liepāja City, South Kurzeme Municipality, and Kuldīga Municipality.

The Liepāja City and South Kurzeme Development Programmes for 2022–2027 include specific tasks and associated investment projects that support the delivery of the Liepāja 2027 Programme:

1. Strategic Direction RV4 – Management and Service Systems; Task 4.5 – Enhancing the image of Liepāja and South Kurzeme as attractive locations for business, living, recreation, and tourism
 - Activity D_4.5.2 – Recruitment of sector specialists to support the implementation of the European Capital of Culture programme
2. Strategic Direction RV4 – Management and Service Systems; Task 4.1 – Advancing digital governance and e-service development
 - Project JPr_75 – Digital solutions for inclusive event organisation, with a focus on accessibility for people with special needs
3. Strategic Direction RV6 – Cultural Environment, Tourism and Sport; Task 6.3 – Developing accessible, engagement-driven cultural and tourism services to foster a creative and sustainable society in Liepāja and South Kurzeme, while strengthening conditions for emerging talent, creative professionals, and international competitiveness
 - Project JPr_170 – Regional cooperation with South Kurzeme Region for the implementation of local and international cultural events
 - Project JPr_156 – CreArt 3.0 #stringing_together
 - Project JPr_203 – Harvesting The Power of Culture. Cross-border collaboration between European Capitals of Culture in Estonia and Latvia
 - Project JPr_228 – Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme “Culture”
 - Project JPr_261 – Maximising the impact of the European Capitals of Culture beyond the spotlight year.

The composition of these projects may be adjusted in response to socio-economic developments and funding availability, including support from external sources. The list was last updated in January 2025.

The medium-term cultural objectives for Kuldīga Municipality are outlined in the Kuldīga Cultural Development Programme 2022–2027:

1. Strategic Direction 2 – Diversity and Distinctiveness of Cultural and Artistic Offerings; Task U.2.3 – Delivery of international cultural events and festivals grounded in European cultural values
 - Activity P.2.3.1 – Development and implementation of European Capital of Culture-related programmes and initiatives

The Kurzeme Planning Region Development Programme 2021–2027 also includes strategic priorities that reinforce the cultural dimension of the Liepāja 2027 Programme:

1. Priority P7 – Cultural Potential
 - Action RV 7.4 – Strengthening the diversity of cultural spaces
 - Action R.7.4.3 – Promoting public awareness of cultural diversity through international cooperation projects, including activities of European Capital of Culture.

1.2. Resolutions of Liepāja City Council

Decision on Preparation of the Application

On 15 October 2020, Liepāja City Council adopted Decision No. 505/14 "On the preparation of Liepāja's application for the preliminary selection for the European Capital of Culture title for 2027". The decision outlined the following strategic objectives:

- To promote the economic development of Liepāja
- To enhance the city's visibility among local and international audiences
- To foster civic education and shared responsibility among residents, encourage cross-sectoral collaboration, and support diverse creative processes and cultural participation
- To ensure the delivery of high-quality cultural, artistic, and interdisciplinary events
- To develop cultural and recreational infrastructure and promote the preservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage sites

On the Implementation of the Liepāja 2027 Programme

On 17 March 2022, Liepāja City Council adopted Decision No. 81/5 "On the submission of Liepāja's application for the second selection round for the European Capital of Culture 2027 title", confirming its commitment to submit the final bid to the Ministry of Culture. The application presented the cultural programme titled "(ne)miers" (English title – "(un)rest"), with a total budget of EUR 23,430,000, including EUR 7,500,000 in municipal funding.

Decisions on the Establishment of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation

Following the European Commission jury's report (registered with the Ministry of Culture on 13 June 2022, No. 2.4-1/2838) and the Minister of Culture's Order No. 2.5-1-85 of 21 June 2022 "On the awarding of the title of European Capital of Culture for 2027", which confirmed Liepāja's selection in the Latvian national process, a dedicated organisation – the Liepāja 2027 Foundation – was established in spring 2023 to oversee programme implementation.

Sequence of Council Decisions:

- On 13 October 2022, Liepāja City Council approved budget allocations to ensure continuity of the Liepāja 2027 process (Binding Regulations No. 20: Amendments to Binding Regulations No. 25 of 16 December 2021 "On the Liepāja City Council Budget for 2022")
- On 10 November 2022, Decision No. 389/15 "On the implementation of the Liepāja State City Council's European Capital of Culture project" was adopted
- On 22 December 2022, Binding Regulations No. 24 "On the Liepāja State City Municipality Budget for 2023" were adopted, providing funding for continued programme development
- On 26 January 2023, following the enactment of the new Local Government Law, Decision No. 6/1 "On the Establishment of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation" was adopted; the foundation's statutes were approved and open calls for board member positions were announced
- On 23 March 2023, Decision No. 107/3 "On the Approval of the Board of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation" was adopted, authorising board members to sign and submit the foundation's registration documents to the Register of Enterprises
- On 9 May 2023, confirmation was received from the Register of Enterprises regarding the legal registration of the foundation "Nodibinājums Liepāja 2027" (Liepāja 2027 Foundation).

1.3. Kuldīga and South Kurzeme Municipalities

On 24 February 2022, the municipal councils of Kuldīga (KN) and South Kurzeme (DKN) unanimously resolved to participate in the Liepāja-led initiative “Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027”. Both municipalities formally joined as cooperation partners in support of the Liepāja 2027 application and its conceptual programme, “(un)rest”. Each municipality pledged financial support of EUR 500,000 – totalling EUR 1 million – contingent upon Liepāja’s successful selection.

Within the framework of the Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027 project, the region has articulated the following strategic objectives:

- To create and host high-quality cultural events for professionals in the cultural, tourism, and entertainment sectors, as well as for residents and visitors
- To highlight and reinforce the region’s authentic cultural values within a European context
- To position the region as a recognised cultural destination and site of cultural experience at an international level, supporting the growth of cultural tourism
- To enhance civic and social engagement among residents
- To increase the economic turnover of the regional tourism sector
- To facilitate experience exchange and strengthen international cooperation capacity among cultural and tourism professionals
- To foster a sense of belonging and active participation among diverse social groups
- To contribute to the international marketing campaign for the European Capital of Culture.

1.4. Letter of Intent from Key Partners

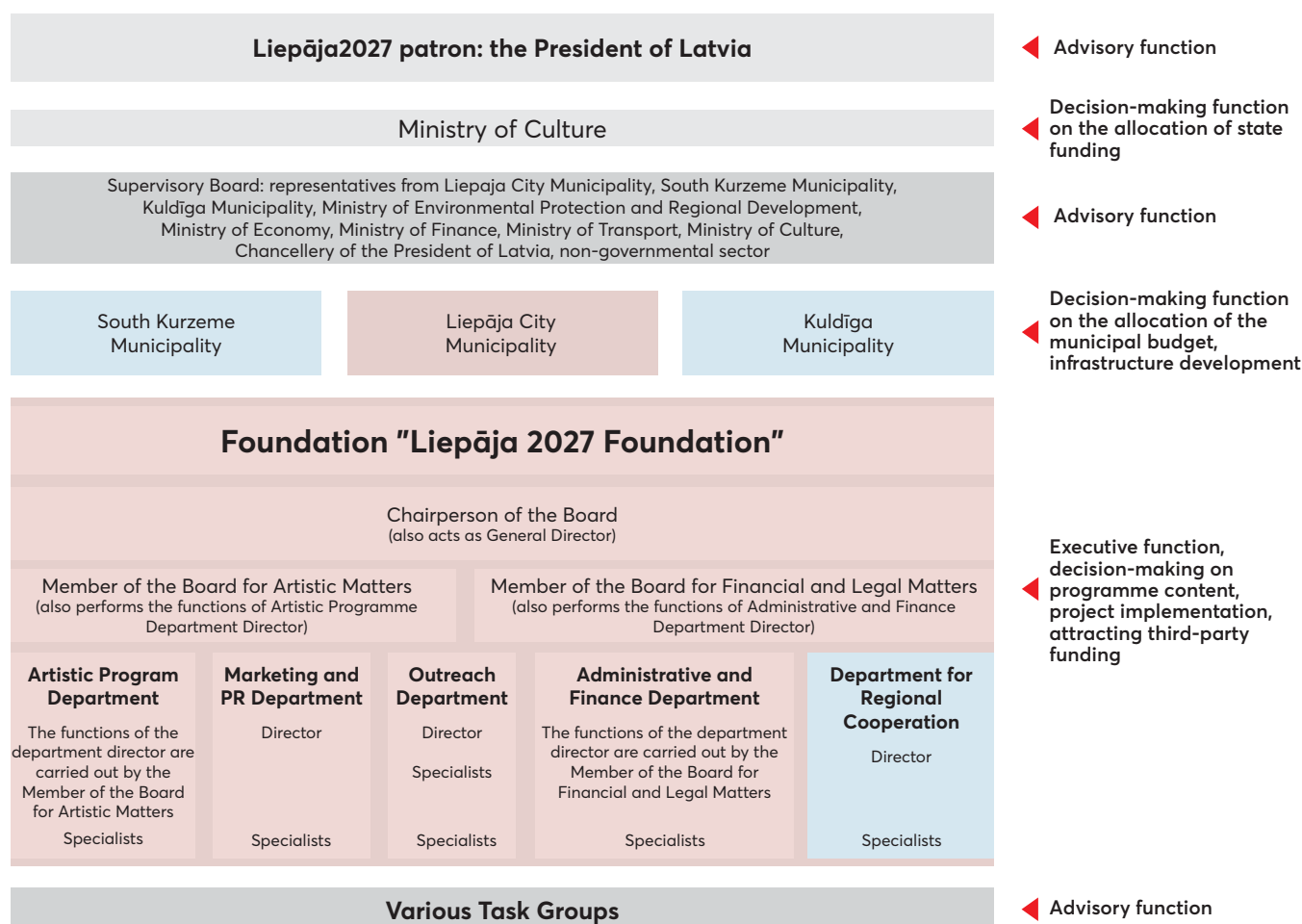
On 1 December 2022, the core partners signed the Letter of Intent confirming their commitment to the joint implementation of the Liepāja 2027 Programme. The agreement outlines the following principles:

- Each partner will carry out the activities defined in the project and described in the European Capital of Culture application, in accordance with their institutional competencies and with appropriate allocation of staff and resources
- A dedicated institution, organisation, or council will be established to oversee the programme’s implementation
- Partners will share expertise and knowledge to strengthen the capacity of cultural organisations, creative industries, and non-governmental organisations, broaden audience reach, and foster public engagement
- A coordinated communication campaign will be launched to enhance national and international visibility of the city and region
- The parties will promote inter-municipal cooperation among the local government institutions of Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga involved in programme delivery, and will provide consultations and recommendations within their respective areas of competence.

2. Governance and Organisational Structure

To deliver the Liepāja 2027 Programme – a coordinated set of cultural projects involving local, national, and international partners – a clearly defined organisational structure is essential. This structure must support the achievement of strategic objectives and ensure effective collaboration across all levels of implementation. As the European Capital of Culture is a European Commission initiative, its delivery also encompasses national-level responsibilities and public image development. Accordingly, the organisational framework must reflect the involvement of relevant ministries and institutions and acknowledge the symbolic and strategic role of the President of Latvia, who serves as the official patron of Liepāja 2027.

2.1. Programme Delivery Structure



Roles within the organisational scheme:

- President of Latvia Serves as the official patron of Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027, providing symbolic and advisory support
- Ministry of Culture Holds decision-making authority regarding the allocation of national funding and acts as the coordinating body between the European Commission and the designated city
- Liepāja 2027 Council Functions in an advisory capacity, comprising representatives from relevant ministries, non-governmental organisations, and cultural professionals. The council is convened by the Minister of Culture
- Liepāja City Council Responsible for municipal budget allocations and serves as the founding institution of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation. The council convenes the foundation's founders' meeting and maintains regular communication with the foundation's board and executive leadership. Various municipal departments – including tourism, public engagement, infrastructure, and education – contribute to programme delivery

- South Kurzeme Municipality Responsible for budgetary decisions related to project implementation within its territory. Acts as a contractual partner of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation
- Kuldīga Municipality Responsible for budgetary decisions related to project implementation within its territory. Acts as a contractual partner of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation.

Throughout the implementation period, thematic working groups are established as needed to address specific issues, facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, and ensure responsiveness to emerging challenges.

2.2. Liepāja 2027 Foundation

The Liepāja 2027 Foundation serves as the executive organisation responsible for the full implementation of the Liepāja 2027 Programme and the coordination of the Liepāja 400 celebrations in 2025. The foundation was established by Liepāja City Council as its sole founder, with formal cooperation agreements reinforcing its partnerships with South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities.

The foundation's objectives are defined in its statutes, stating: *"Delivery of the Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027 Programme and the Liepāja 400 celebrations, Organisation of interdisciplinary cultural events, Contribution to the city's socio-economic development, Attraction of international attention and increased tourist flows, Development of the creative industries sector, Implementation of cooperation projects across public, private, and non-governmental sectors, Mobilisation of financial resources from diverse sources, including European Union funds and private sector investment".*

The statutes also regulate matters such as property transfer, financial procedures, operational duration, liquidation and reorganisation processes, the role of the founder and auditor, procedures for appointing and dismissing board members, and representation rights. In accordance with legal requirements, the foundation is governed by a three-member board, which also fulfils executive functions:

- Chair of the Board, who serves as Executive Director
- Board Member for Artistic Affairs, who leads the artistic team
- Board Member for Financial and Legal Affairs, who heads the financial and administrative team

Certain decisions require unanimous consent from all three board members, while most operational matters may be approved by a minimum of two.

2.3. Foundation Team

The initial structure of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation team was established in accordance with the scheme outlined in the Liepāja 2027 application, covering the period from 2023 to 2028. This included five core teams: artistic, community engagement, marketing and public relations, finance and administration, and regional engagement. However, in response to evolving work dynamics, project implementation needs, and changes in funding availability, the team structure will be reconfigured in 2025. The revised model will operate through four integrated teams, with public engagement no longer treated as a separate function but embedded across all areas of activity.

Team formation has been guided by key principles: professionalism, goal-oriented performance, and adaptability to the specific conditions of the cultural sector and regional labour market. The time-limited and intensive nature of the programme requires a flexible and resilient workforce. Geographical location, additional professional commitments, or personal circumstances are not considered barriers. Core values include transparency, responsiveness, punctuality, high-quality delivery, and results-driven collaboration.

Board Structure Three board members: Chair of the Board, also Executive Director Member of the Board responsible for artistic affairs, also Head of the Artistic Team Board member for financial and legal affairs, also Head of the Financial and Administrative Team			
Programme Team	Marketing and Public Relations Team	Regional Engagement Team (serving as a one-stop agency for regional cooperation)	Finance and Administration Team
Artistic Programme Development and Technical Production 1. Collaboration with core, regional, and international partners 2. Content development for Liepāja 2027 events 3. Organisation of open calls and competitions 4. Strengthening public participation 5. Capacity-building and cultural education initiatives 6. Volunteer programme coordination	Communication 1. Public relations at local, national, and international levels 2. Press relations 3. Social media and website management 4. International relations 5. Protocol coordination Marketing 1. Development of souvenir lines 2. Ticketing strategy 3. Advertising campaigns 4. Engagement with the private sector 5. Sponsorship and partnership development	One-stop agency function for cooperation with Kuldīga and South Kurzeme municipalities: 1. Implementation of partnership agreements 2. Development of new regional collaborations 3. Coordination of regional participation in open project competitions 4. Management of information flow between the foundation and municipal departments 5. Oversight of municipal financial contributions to programme delivery	Finance: 1. Budget planning 2. Accounting 3. Strategic financial planning Administrative matters: 1. Legal coordination 2. Public procurement procedures 3. Human resources Technical support: 1. IT 2. Technical issues Financial attraction: 1. Acquisition of public funding 2. Access to European Union financial instruments 3. Monitoring and evaluation of programme outcomes

Foundation Team Establishment

To ensure effective involvement of partner municipalities in programme implementation, financing, and strategic goal achievement, a dedicated Regional Engagement Team has been established alongside the foundation's core teams. This structure supports efficient communication and operational integration.

- The team will operate from 2023 to 2027, with staffing adjusted according to programme needs: • In 2023, one part-time employee representing both municipalities • In 2024 and 2025, two part-time employees, each representing their respective municipality • In 2026 and 2027, additional assistants may be appointed based on workload.
- Regional representatives will be selected by the executive boards of South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities
- Team members will facilitate information exchange between local government, cultural and tourism stakeholders, NGOs, and the foundation, ensuring alignment with programme objectives
- Staff will be familiar with all aspects of programme implementation in the region, including projects led by the foundation or its partners
- From 2024 to 2027, regional events will be organised to build capacity for creative, technical, and international projects, provide mentoring, and support experience exchange initiatives.

The Foundation Principles

The foundation's approach to staffing and collaboration is guided by transparency, flexibility, and professional integrity:

- Employees engaged under employment contracts are selected through public recruitment processes. Vacancies are publicly announced, shortlisted candidates are invited for interviews, and contracts are concluded following formal decisions. Subject to management approval, employment may be combined with duties at other organisations
- Specialists may also be engaged under service contracts for specific task
- Authors will be commissioned to develop content for designated projects
- Regional representatives will be selected in consultation with South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities
- Work arrangements may include remote and hybrid formats, supported by digital platforms
- Internal operations are governed by a document entitled "Work Regulations".

2.4. Institutional Link: Foundation and the City of Liepāja

As the sole founder of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation, Liepāja City Municipality plays a central role in ensuring the programme's strategic alignment, operational continuity, and institutional integration. Effective communication between the foundation and the city's executive leadership, administrative departments, and municipal institutions is essential for the successful delivery of the Liepāja 2027 Programme.

Key mechanisms of coordination include:

- Regular founders' meetings to approve strategic documents, budgets, and progress reports
- Monthly reporting by the foundation's board to the Executive Director of Liepāja City Council
- Quarterly reporting to the Education, Culture and Sports Committee of the City Council
- In accordance with the foundation's statutes, contracts exceeding EUR 42,000 require formal approval by Liepāja City Council
- Annual submission of financial requests by October for the following year's budget
- Presentation and defence of draft decisions related to EU-funded projects to the project commission, council committees, and the full council
- Quarterly working groups convened by the foundation for municipal specialists from Liepāja and regional municipalities to coordinate programme implementation
- Organisation of the Liepāja 2027 Council, with meetings held biannually
- Establishment of a municipal working group in the second half of 2024, involving specialists from various departments of Liepāja City.

In addition to its core responsibilities, the foundation is preparing a dedicated programme for Liepāja's 400th anniversary celebrations in 2025. This initiative involves ongoing coordination with cultural organisations and potential contributors, supported by a designated working group. Further details are provided in Section 5.6.

2.5. Regional Collaboration Framework

Given the geographical scope, cultural and historical significance, and active involvement of South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities in the development of the Liepāja 2027 application, their role within the organisational structure is of equal importance to that of Liepāja City. Although Liepāja is the sole founder of the executive organisation, the participation of the municipalities is integral to the programme's success. This collaborative approach is reflected in the conceptual framework of the "Creative (un)rest Land".

Municipal Representation

- South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Municipalities hold advisory roles within the Liepāja 2027 Council, alongside Liepāja City and other stakeholders

- Each municipality has signed a cooperation agreement with the foundation, outlining financial commitments and expected outcomes. Agreements may be annual or cover the full programme period:
 - The regional contribution to the implementation of the “(un)rest” programme includes a planned EUR 500,000 from each municipality
 - An additional EUR 500,000 per municipality is anticipated from the national budget to support regional programme activities
 - The foundation's Regional Engagement Team prepares annual funding requests for inclusion in municipal budgets and reports on expenditure and outcomes – Budget planning and oversight are managed by the foundation's board member responsible for administrative and legal affairs.
 - A dedicated Regional Engagement Team has been established within the foundation, with regional representatives involved in staff selection
 - Executive-level representatives from regional municipalities – including directors and heads of culture, tourism, marketing, and development – participate in key decision-making processes. Major project activities are discussed and agreed in consultation with these stakeholders

Principles of Cooperation with Region

- The foundation and regional political leadership maintain regular dialogue and ensure transparent communication on project progress and outcomes. The Regional Engagement Team leads this process, with board-level involvement as required
- Regional political leaders are actively engaged in marketing initiatives and experience exchange visits to strengthen their commitment and promote the programme within their communities
- Feedback mechanisms with local government leaders are guided by the principle: *“What will residents of each municipality gain from participating in Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027?”*, with an emphasis on measurable impact
- Quarterly working groups are convened at executive director level, involving specialists from relevant departments and administrations to coordinate programme implementation.

2.6. Advisory Council

The final application for Liepāja 2027 proposed the establishment of a dedicated advisory council comprising experts to support the resolution of specific thematic and operational issues. While the principle of expert consultation remains central, the foundation has opted for a flexible approach to avoid unnecessary bureaucratisation.

Rather than forming a single standing body, the foundation maintains regular dialogue with individual experts as needed. This targeted engagement ensures timely access to specialised knowledge while preserving agility in decision-making and programme delivery.

2.7. Timeline for Organisational Development

- April 2023 – Approval of the foundation's board
- May 2023 – Legal registration of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation
- 2023 – Formation of the core team, including department heads (artistic, public engagement, communications, finance and administration) and administrative support staff (accountant, office administrator)
- Summer 2023 – Patronage of Liepāja 2027 formally entrusted to the President of Latvia
- 2023 – Signing of cooperation agreements with key partners: Kuldīga Municipality and South Kurzeme Municipality
- First quarter of 2024 – Establishment of the Liepāja 2027 Council, convened by the Ministry of Culture
- 2024–2027 – Gradual expansion of the foundation team in line with programme needs and planned activities.

	Board	Artistic team	Communications team	Public engagement team	Regional team	Financial and Administrative Team
2023	3 Board members	- Head of the artistic team	- Head of the communications team	- Head of the Public Engagement Team (P) - Monitoring and capacity manager (P)	- Regional project coordinator (only in 2023) (P)	- Office administrator (P) - External Funding Specialist (S) - Accountant (1/3)
2024		- Project Director (Chief Project Manager) - Project Manager - International Project Coordinator	- Digital Communications Specialist	- Youth programme implementation (procurement) - Volunteer programme manager (P)	- South Kurzeme Municipality Project Manager (P) - Kuldīga Municipality Project Manager (P)	- Procurement Specialist (S) - Accountant (1/3=>P)
2025		- Partner Project Coordinator (S) - Project Manager (S) - Technical Director (P) - Artistic Council (?contracts)	- Marketing Specialist for Sponsor Outreach (S) - International relations specialist (S) - Communications Project Specialist (S)	- Community Project Manager (P)		- Finance officer - Accountant (P) - External funding specialist (S)
2026		- Key Event Project Managers (depending on project scope) (S, contracts) - Assistant Technical Director (S)	- Marketing specialist for advertising campaigns - Communications specialist for programme projects	- Volunteer programme manager (P=>S) - Community Project Manager (P>S)	- South Kurzeme Assistant Project Manager? - Assistant project manager for Kuldīga Municipality?	- Lawyer (S) - Clerk (S)
2027		- Assistant Project managers (S, contracts)	- Marketing specialist - International relations specialist - Digital project specialist			
*P-part-time S-full-time	3	10-15	10	4	2	8

3. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The Liepāja 2027 application identifies five strategic challenges that underpin the objectives set out in the statutes of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation. These objectives are designed to generate measurable impact across key areas of urban development, including culture, the economy (with a focus on creative industries and tourism), education, and civic engagement. To assess progress and outcomes, a monitoring and evaluation matrix has been developed. This framework defines the programme's goals and objectives and sets out guiding questions to be addressed through two baseline studies: the first in 2024 and the second in 2027.

3.1. Strategic Challenges, Objectives and Tasks

Challenge				
1. Learning to Collaborate – From the Periphery to Europe	2. Co-Creating the Living Environment	3. Shaping a Smart Future – From Human to Digital and Back	4. Preserving Identity – With Love from Latvia and the Land of (un)rest	5. Transforming Mindsets – From Inertia to Purposeful Action
Goal				
To diversify and strengthen international and local cooperation	To increase social participation in shaping the environment	To improve residents' quality of life through digital services	To recognise and develop the Land of (un)rest as a space of cultural identity	To promote residents' understanding of co-participation in social processes
Tasks				
- Establishing international networks and participating in global developments within relevant sectors* - Creating new tourism products, including hospitality services, to increase visitor numbers and improve transport connectivity - Expanding the range of international services* - Attracting intellectual capacity, including professionals and educators, to contribute to programme development* - Enhancing cooperation skills* - Developing underrepresented art forms such as dance and cinema in Liepāja	- Reviewing the accessibility of participating organisations* - Applying eco-design principles to event organisation and service delivery* - Increase renovated buildings - Encouraging residents to engage with environmental issues - Enhancing the urban environment through public art and greenery	Expanding and improving digital services in culture, tourism, education, and creative industries*	- Compiling cultural heritage values of (un)rest Land - Creating a catalogue of commercial products and services that reflect regional identity - Strengthening the joint brand of the Land of (un)rest (Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga regions)	- Researching, expanding, and diversifying active audiences* - Increasing civil society activity - Promoting cross-sectoral cooperation through projects, events, products, and services* - Establishing a volunteer programme* - Creating mechanisms to strengthen NGOs*

Impact on areas				
• Culture • Economy (creative industries, tourism) • Education • Social engagement (NGOs)	• Culture • Education • Economy (creative industries, tourism) • Civic engagement • Ecology	• Culture • Education • Community involvement • Economy (creative industries, tourism)	• Culture • Economy (creative industries, tourism) • Education • Community involvement	• Culture • Community involvement • Economy (creative industries, tourism) • Education • Civic engagement
Cooperation	Involvement (doing)	(Direct) involvement	Inheritance of values	Participation (decision-making)

* Tasks marked with an asterisk apply specifically to organisations involved in the Liepāja 2027 Foundation.

The central concept underpinning all five strategic goals of the Liepāja 2027 Programme is **involvement** – expressed through cooperation, participation, and the exchange of knowledge and experience, whether in person or via digital platforms.

Forms of involvement:

Public involvement is characterised by the following actions:	Organisational and sectoral involvement includes:
Recognising or being aware of the programme	Recognising or being aware of the programme
Attending events	Attending events
Expressing opinion	Providing expertise
Recommending to others	Recommending to others
Participating in content creation	Creating content, products, services, and infrastructure in support of programme goals

3.2. Engagement Index

The main measurement for the period from 2024 to 2027 is the engagement index – LIKE (Liepāja Involvement in C(K)ulture Effectiveness) index.

The measurements that make up the engagement index are included in the baseline study.

Challenges	1. Learning to Collaborate – From the Periphery to Europe	2. Co-Creating the Living Environment	3. Shaping a Smart Future – From Human to Digital and Back	4. Preserving Identity – With Love from Latvia and the Land of (un)rest	5. Transforming Mindsets – From Inertia to Purposeful Action
Goal	To diversify and strengthen international and local cooperation	To increase social participation in shaping the environment	To improve residents' quality of life through digital services	To recognise and develop the Land of (un)rest as a space of cultural identity	To promote residents' understanding of co-participation in social processes
Project impact	Growth: increase (in visits, partnerships, participants, lecturers, students, etc.)	Growth: increase – (1) number of cultural organisations accessible to everyone, (2) number of proposals for environmental improvement, (3) number of projects implemented	Growth: original content and audience reach and growth (programme participants, educational programmes and initiatives)	Growth and knowledge: unifying knowledge that brings people together and that we want to pass on, broadening the view of Liepāja in the European context; number of studies on local cultural heritage	Growth: increase (NGO involvement projects, volunteers, forms of cooperation)
→ CULTURE	- What is the current number (cultural organisations, creative industries) and scope (financial or time) of cooperation with foreign organisations? - How many projects with foreign funding? - How many Liepāja organisations and professionals - are members of a European association, society, organisation or cooperation network? - How many cultural events are accessible to foreigners (language)?	- How accessible is the cultural infrastructure to all community, including in terms of affordability and access for people with functional disabilities? - How are eco-design principles applied in organising cultural events? - How are the principles of the New European Bauhaus reflected in urban planning and project implementation (e.g., in restored buildings)? - How actively do people participate in cultural events and visit cultural sites, including families with children and people with functional impairments?	- What makes Liepāja's digital cultural infrastructure? How do cultural organisations inform about various events? - What original content do cultural organisations currently offer in the digital environment? - How much of the digital content of cultural organisations - is now accessible to people with functional impairments?	- What are the identifying narratives (for individuals and organisations)? - What are the identifying cultural phenomena? - What is the current recognised cultural heritage?	- How many cultural events are organised by NGOs and resident initiative groups? - What are the current audiences for cultural events? - What forms of inter-sectoral cooperation currently exist in the cultural sector? - What interdisciplinary cooperation projects are taking place in the cultural sector?

→ ECONOMY	• What is the current tourism load? What is the seasonality of tourism visits? • How many of them choose Liepāja to visit cultural events? • Which events attract the largest number of foreign tourists? • What is the cooperation between creative industries and international partners?	• How accessible is the tourism sector? • How environmentally friendly and accessible is the tourism sector? • How environmentally friendly and accessible are the creative industries?	• What digital infrastructure is currently used by the tourism sector? • How large is the volume of digital services in the creative industries?	• What local cultural and identity values are being commercialised for local and foreign tourists? How does this happen?	• Which tourism products involve public participation, and how does society contribute to tourism promotion? • What forms of cross-sectoral cooperation currently exist in creative industry and tourism? • How is cross-sectoral cooperation developed in creative entrepreneurship and tourism? • How has employment in the creative industries grown?
→ EDUCATION	• How many cultural education programmes are being studied by different audiences (including from abroad) in educational institutions? • How many cultural education professionals are currently participating in international exchanges or international projects? • How many guest lecturers, foreign teachers and instructors are currently employed in educational institutions?	• How many cultural education events on ecology and accessibility have been organised for different audience groups?	• How many educational programmes (including lifelong learning) related to digitalisation? How many participants are there? How many of them are available digitally?	• What research has already been carried out (2021–2024) on local heritage and identity in the education sector in Liepāja and (un)rest Land (students, teaching staff)?	• How many educational events have been organised for different audience groups on public participation?

→ SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT	• What events have been held on European topics and values? What has been the attendance rate? • How many and what kind of events on European dimensions have been proposed by the public and NGOs? • How many joint initiatives and collaborations have there been with local partners?	• Where and in what form can residents now express their suggestions for improving the environment? • How many proposals have been made and implemented? • How actively do local residents and regional communities participate in improving their environment?	• What are the opportunities for digital participation?	• How recognisable is the (un)rest Land of Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga? • By which indicators is Liepāja recognised? • What defines Liepāja's identity? • How is Liepāja's identity perceived within Latvia? • Which elements of this identity should be preserved, which left behind, and which newly developed or learned? • What do Liepāja's residents already know, and what do they still need to learn?	• Which NGOs are currently active, how large are they, and what projects are they implementing? • How willing are residents to participate in creating "Liepāja 2027" including through volunteering? • What youth initiative programmes are currently in place, and what is their level of participation?
Recommended type of research (proposal to be submitted by the contractor)	Sector review + case analysis	Infrastructure review + case analysis	Digital infrastructure review + case study	• Review of research conducted 1. In-depth interviews with Liepāja residents 2. Resident survey (CAWI)	• Sector review • Resident survey
Conductors	Research group or institution	Research group or institution	Research group or institution	Research group or institution	• Research group or institution

LIKE index calculation

Challenges	1. Learning to Collaborate – From the Periphery to Europe	2. Co-Creating the Living Environment	3. Shaping a Smart Future – From Human to Digital and Back	4. Preserving Identity – With Love from Latvia and the Liepāja	5. Transforming Mindsets – From Inertia to Purposeful Action
LIKE INDEX	20 points	20 points	20 points	20 points	20 points
	100 points				

The researcher conducting the baseline study for each section (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) provides their assessment on a 20-point scale, taking into account the research questions set for each area. The assessment proposed in the baseline study will form the basis for future studies, and the method cannot be changed.

3.3. Development Timeline for Monitoring and Evaluation

- November 2023 – Preparation of the procurement process for the evaluation study of the project “Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027”
- December 2023 – Official announcement of the procurement
- January 2024 – Evaluation of procurement submissions and conclusion of contract with the selected provider 2024 – Implementation of the baseline study, with final submission due by 1 April 2025
- 2025 and 2026 – Ongoing process monitoring to assess progress and inform adjustments
- 2027 – Final evaluation study, with submission due by 1 August 2028

4. Target Audiences

To achieve the objectives of the Liepāja 2027 Programme, clearly defined target audiences have been identified for projects, events, and marketing activities. These audiences are essential to ensuring the programme's relevance, impact, and long-term sustainability.

4.1. Audience Segmentation

The target audience has been segmented into three distinct categories: key, strategic, and niche audiences. Each group is addressed through tailored engagement strategies designed to maximise participation, visibility, and impact. The key and strategic audiences are prioritised for active involvement in programme events and activities – both as attendees and co-creators. For niche audiences, the primary objective is to raise awareness of the diverse opportunities available in Liepāja and the region, with the aim of encouraging participation in at least one programme activity.

The key audience is a primary target, that must be reached with a wide range of events in order to achieve its action. Programme activities must be carefully aligned with their values, needs, and motivations.

The strategic audience is the secondary audience that must be reached through inclusive programming and integrated engagement elements such as free events, accessible transport, tailored accessibility measures, and the involvement of recognisable public figures.

The niche audience consists of groups with untapped potential, who may be engaged through targeted messaging and bespoke activities. This includes young people, minority groups, people with disabilities, and various community-based constituencies.

The key audience comprises individuals who are already civically and socially active. These individuals have the greatest potential to act as community leaders and motivators, making them central to public engagement efforts. Among potential visitors, this group includes professionals, former residents of Liepāja, culture enthusiasts, and tourists – an audience with high social and economic value.

The strategic audience includes individuals who have been less publicly active but have demonstrated intermittent interest in cultural and civic developments in Liepāja and the surrounding region. Those are “quiet doers”.

Key and strategic target audiences:

- Residents of the city of Liepāja;
- Residents of Kuldīga and the South Kurzeme region;
- Residents of Latvia;
- Foreign visitors, tourists;
- Cooperation partners in programme development (local, national, international);
- support organisations in the implementation of various marketing and communication projects.

Niche audience:

- Representatives of minority groups;
- people with disabilities;
- young people;
- various communities.

4.2. Audience Profiles

The segmentation of target audiences for the Liepāja 2027 Programme was informed by both quantitative and qualitative research. This included data from the Liepāja City Marketing Communication Plan for 2022–2027, public opinion polling, and expert consultations through interviews and brainstorming sessions across diverse sectors.

To define audience sub-segments, describe them with greater precision, and develop tailored marketing strategies, a typological segmentation model was applied. This model is based on the following criteria:

- Geographical – including place of residence, patterns of movement, and temporary stays
- Socio-economic – encompassing generational identity, financial status, and family life cycle
- Psychographic – reflecting lifestyle choices, personal attitudes, and core values
- Behavioural – based on event attendance, use of city services, and level of engagement in civic and cultural life

Residents of Liepāja and the Region

Activists in Liepāja	• Age range: 25–65 years • Occupations: public sector employees, NGO representatives, entrepreneurs, and professionals in the information technology and creative industries • Place of residence: Vecliepāja, Dienvidrietumu residential district, Ezerkrasts • Income level: average to high • Well informed about city developments via platforms such as the Liepāja Facebook page and the municipal website • Actively use municipal services and participate in city life • 68% believe that life in Liepāja is better than in Latvia overall • Identify as Liepāja patriots, actively contributing to civic initiatives and inspiring others to participate • Encourage friends and acquaintances from Latvia and abroad to visit Liepāja.
Activists in the Region	• Age range: 25–65 years • Occupation: public sector employees, entrepreneurs, representatives of creative industries, representatives of NGOs. • Place of residence: South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region. • Income level: average to high • Encourage friends and acquaintances from Latvia and abroad to visit the Region.
Quiet does in Liepāja	• Age range: 25–65 years • Occupations: public sector employees, entrepreneurs, professionals in IT and creative industries, factory workers, and technical specialists • Place of residence: Vecliepāja, Jaunliepāja, Dienvidrietumu district, Karosta, Zaļā birze, Tosmare, Jaunā pasaule, Ezerkrasts, Northern Suburb • Well informed about developments in the city and region via municipal websites and social media channels • Use city and regional services sporadically • Express satisfaction with life in Liepāja and the surrounding region, identifying as local patriots • Encourage friends and acquaintances from Latvia and abroad to visit Liepāja and the region • Participate in shaping their environment, though their involvement tends to be irregular and not consistently collaborative

Quiet doers in the Region	• Age range: 25–65 years • Occupations: public sector employees, entrepreneurs, and representatives of the creative industries • Place of residence: South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region • Encourage friends and acquaintances from Latvia and abroad to visit the region.
Young people in Liepāja	• Age range: 16–25 years • Occupations: school pupils, students, part-time employees • 58% view employment opportunities in Liepāja positively • Either raised in Liepāja and the region or relocated for educational purposes; often view their time in Liepāja as transitional, with future plans centred on Rīga or abroad • Place of residence: Jaunliepāja, Dienvidrietumu district, Karosta, Zaļā birze, Tosmare, Jaunā pasaule, Ezerkrasts, Northern Suburb • Actively use cultural, entertainment, and sports services • Not sufficiently informed about current events in the city due to limited use of Liepāja's digital communication channels • Possess ideas and potential, but may lack awareness of available support from municipal institutions and NGOs, particularly in culture and entrepreneurship
Young people in the Region	• Age range: 16–25 years • Occupations: school students, students, part-time workers • Place of residence: South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region.
Representatives of minority groups in Liepāja	• Age: 25+ • Limited awareness of city developments due to living in separate information environments • 71% express pessimism regarding employment opportunities in Liepāja • Passive involvement in neighbourhood development • Passive attendance at cultural and entertainment events; perceive a lack of offerings aligned with their interests • Place of residence: Jaunliepāja, Dienvidrietumu district, Karosta, Zaļā birze, Tosmare, Jaunā pasaule, Ezerkrasts, Northern Suburbs
Representatives of minority groups in the Region	• Age: 25+. • Place of residence: South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region.
People living in residential districts Pre-retirement and retirement age people in Liepāja	• Age: 55+ • Occupations: public sector employees, specialists, pensioners • Income level: low to medium • Place of residence: Jaunliepāja, Dienvidrietumu district, Karosta, Zaļā birze, Tosmare, Jaunā pasaule, Ezerkrasts, Northern Suburbs • 65% view employment opportunities negatively • 50% assess recent healthcare developments positively • Generally pessimistic about the city's current situation and dissatisfied with local government performance • Passive users of cultural and entertainment offerings; value free events but feel existing programmes do not reflect their interests • Healthcare is a key concern • Difficult to reach via digital channels; nostalgic about Liepāja

Pre-retirement and retirement age people living in the Region	• Age: 55+ • Occupations: public sector employees, private entrepreneurs, specialists, pensioners • Income level: low to medium • Place of residence: South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region
People with disabilities	• Age range: 0–55+ • Place of residence: Liepāja, South Kurzeme region, Kuldīga region, Latvia, and other European countries • Occupations: various • Income level: average to below average • Sporadic users of cultural and entertainment offerings; value free and accessible events and activities tailored to their needs

Potential guests, tourists

Young professionals	• Age range: 30–45 years • With children • Occupations: public sector employees, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, IT and creative industry specialists, remote workers, engineers, manufacturing and logistics professionals • Current place of residence: Rīga, Pierīga • Income level: average to high • Having partially realised their professional ambitions, many seek relief from burnout and are drawn to environments offering not only financial stability but also family-friendly conditions, personal growth, meaningful relationships, and a break from urban stress • Liepāja is valued for its proximity to nature, sense of harmony, ease of mobility, diverse educational opportunities for children, cultural richness, and sports infrastructure • In the regions, the appeal lies in tranquillity and closeness to nature.
Culture lovers	• Age range: 18–55+ • With children • Occupations: public sector employees, cultural professionals, entrepreneurs, IT and creative industry representatives, self-employed individuals • Current place of residence: Rīga, Pierīga, European countries • Income level: average to high • These individuals are seasoned participants in cultural life, with refined tastes and a desire for new, stimulating experiences. They seek opportunities for growth, connection, and respite from professional pressures • In Liepāja, they appreciate the city's natural surroundings, harmonious atmosphere, ease of movement, and rich cultural offerings • In the regions, the appeal lies in tranquillity and closeness to nature

Former residents of Liepāja	• Age range: 30–45 years • With children • Occupations: public sector employees, entrepreneurs, IT and creative industry professionals, remote workers, industrial company employees • Current place of residence: Rīga, Pierīga, abroad • Income level: average to high • Grew up in Liepāja but relocated for education or employment • Maintain strong emotional ties to Liepāja and close connections with family and friends • May be considering a return, encouraged by loved ones
Former residents of Kurzeme	• Age range: 30–45 years • With children • Occupations: public sector employees, entrepreneurs, IT and creative industry professionals, remote workers • Current place of residence: Rīga, Pierīga, abroad • Income level: average to high • Grew up in the Kurzeme region but left for study or work • Hold sentimental memories of the region and maintain strong personal ties • May be considering a return, encouraged by loved ones
Seekers of education	• Age range: 16–25 years • Students from the region who relocate to Liepāja for secondary or vocational education • Students pursuing higher education in Liepāja institutions such as RTU Liepāja Academy, Maritime College, airBaltic Pilot Academy, and RTU branch
Digital nomads	• Age range: 25–35 years • Occupations: self-employed professionals, IT specialists, creatives, finance and marketing experts • Place of residence: European countries • Mobile global citizens who relocate frequently, staying in one place for several months before moving on • Seek environments with cultural diversity, appealing climate, and stimulating surroundings • Prioritise affordable living costs, fast internet, and access to co-working spaces when choosing temporary residences.
Pre-retirement and retirement age people	• Age: 55+ • Occupations: professionals, pensioners • Income level: average to high • Place of residence: abroad or other Latvian cities • Potential users of cultural and entertainment offerings • Prioritise healthcare and well-being • Nostalgic about Liepāja and the Kurzeme region

Tourists	• Age range: 15–55+ • Primary target markets: Latvia, Lithuania • Secondary target markets: Estonia, Germany, Poland, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain • Niche markets: Denmark, Norway, USA • Income level: average-high to high • Culture enthusiasts seeking national heritage experiences and new perspectives • Interested in gastronomy tourism, authentic cultural events, and historical heritage
Cities that have been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture	• Age range: 18–55+ • Includes teams from current and former European Capitals of Culture, cultural experts, and culture journalists • Culture experts • Journalists on Culture topics • Income level: average to high • Place of residence: European countries • Actively follow cultural developments and events across Europe

In Brief: Summary of Audience Dimensions

Age:

- Children (pre-school/primary school) (1–15);
- young people (secondary school/university) (16–25);
- adults (26–59);
- seniors (60+).

Geographical aspects:

- Liepāja residents (broken down by residential districts: Vecliepāja, Jaunliepāja, Dienvidrietumu district, Ezerkrasts, Karosta, Zaļā birze, Tosmare);
- South Kurzeme region;
- Kuldīga region;
- residents of other regions (the rest of Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme, Latgale);
- Residents of Rīga.

Interests:

- Culture lovers (people who actively seek new cultural experiences, attend events, exhibitions and concerts around the world);
- people for whom culture is secondary (attend irregularly);
- Those who are not interested in culture at all, but who can be attracted by other activities (culinary arts, outdoor activities, attractive programmes).

Social aspects:

- Families with children (including both culturally engaged families and those for whom culture is secondary)
- People with physical and mental disabilities
- Minority groups (individuals of diverse nationalities with distinct cultural traditions and interests)

Foreign tourists:

- Culture lovers (attendees of international events seeking high-quality and distinctive cultural experiences)
- Tourists for whom culture is secondary (travelling in style or small groups, families with children, seniors)
- Casual tourists (those visiting Liepāja as part of a broader itinerary, drawn by engaging programmes or events)
- European Capital of Culture representatives and partners
- Embassy representatives and diplomatic partners (strategic visitors and facilitators of international relations)

Professional aspects:

- Culture and arts professionals (artists, musicians, cultural organisers)
- Entrepreneurs and businesspeople (interested in business opportunities, ranging from art connoisseurs to mass culture enthusiasts)
- Representatives of educational institutions (teachers, students, university staff seeking educational programmes and collaborations)

Lifestyle aspects:

- Active lifestyle enthusiasts (interested in health-oriented activities such as cultural walks and leisure pursuits)
- Digital nomads and remote workers (seeking culturally vibrant cities with flexible working conditions)
- Young families (including those with children)

Specific interests:

- Music enthusiasts (drawn to concerts, festivals, and music-related events)
- Technology and new media experts (interested in innovation, tech festivals, and interactive exhibitions)
- History and cultural heritage enthusiasts (focused on architecture, historical narratives, and traditional events).

Socio-economic aspects:

- People with lower incomes (for whom free or low-cost events are essential)
- Students and interns (young individuals seeking skill development and experience in cultural projects)
- Enthusiasts of informal and alternative art (interested in independent, avant-garde, or experimental cultural expressions)

Additional foreign audiences:

- Foreign students and exchange participants (seeking cultural integration and local engagement)
- Experts and delegations (visiting for conferences or working groups, with interest in cultural programming)
- Travellers with special interests (visiting Liepāja for hobbies such as photography, sports, or art)

5. Programme Delivery

The Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027 programme is composed of a curated set of projects originally outlined in the official application submitted to the European Commission jury. These projects were initiated by local cultural organisations and cooperation partners, and through a process of creative dialogue, were consolidated under the artistic leadership of the programme's director.

The programme comprises 28 project clusters, each encompassing a series of sub-projects. In total, it is anticipated that Liepāja 2027 will deliver more than 500 distinct events. Detailed information on the structure and content of these clusters is provided in Section 8, "Technical Framework."

In reviewing and developing the programme, the following criteria from the application are used to assess each project's relevance and potential:

- Alignment with the artistic programme and the overarching narrative of (un)rest
- Inclusion of a European dimension and opportunities for public engagement
- Adherence to quality and excellence standards
- Responsiveness to the expectations and interests of international audiences
- Representation of a wide range of cultural genres, including music, cinema, dance, new media art, and theatre
- Capacity to engage audiences not currently active in Liepāja's cultural life, including international visitors, culture enthusiasts, local residents, and people with disabilities
- Geographic reach, with events taking place not only in Liepāja but also in Rucava, Priekule, Pāvilosta, Kuldīga, Alsunga, and other locations
- Accessibility for foreign guests
- Promotion of European cultural diversity
- Provision of free events for broad public access
- Compliance with accessibility and eco-design principles in event planning and delivery
- Engagement of local, national, and international arts and creative sectors
- A balanced mix of artistically ambitious and democratically inclusive events
- Inclusion of public participation as a core component of project design and implementation

5.1. Conceptual Framework: (un)rest

(un)rest

Liepāja 2027 – European Capital of Culture

They say – the wind that was born in Liepāja, blows across the world and brings boats back home to Kurzeme. With the wind comes peace and unrest. It is the wind of change. For some, there is a little too much rest, for others, too much unrest. The wholesome concept of (un)rest refers to a dynamic process where rest is stirred into action, and unrest is soothed into something more peaceful and approachable.

(un)rest is just like the perpetuum mobile energy that propels us toward our dreams, setting sail for the **European dream** and welcoming guests from around the globe to uncover the **paradoxes** of our beloved port city.

We embark on a journey of rediscovery, seeing ourselves, our neighbours, and our surroundings through the **"new eyes"** lenses. We learn to nurture our environment along the Baltic Sea while embracing a lifestyle of **deliberate modesty**. With **creative foresight**, we gaze beyond the horizon, igniting a youthful curiosity and building a future rooted in innovation. The spirit of (un)rest will empower our communities and surroundings, reinforcing European values in an era of shifting democracies.

As a navigational tool, (un)rest illuminates the challenges of our world. Together, we will tackle the anxiety induced by rapid technological advancements, an unending stream of information, and the constant rush of modern life. This framework responds to contemporary societal challenges by promoting a balanced approach to work and rest, with particular attention to mental health and well-being, and the pursuit of smart, sustainable solutions. Cultural events within the programme are designed to unite people in creative communities, fostering new relationships and collaborative practices. They will stimulate inquiry, support artistic excellence, and encourage audiences to engage with culture not as a separate domain, but as an essential part of everyday life. Culture becomes a catalyst for participation, a compass for action, and a toolkit for imagining and shaping a better future – in Latvia and beyond. This is a new, expanded vision of culture is articulated through five thematic (un)rest programme lines.

	Project	Project description
1	"Blow Ye Wind!" Opening Event "Pūt, vējiņi!"	The series of opening events will be a cultural odyssey – a journey through song that explores and celebrates the shared roots and differences of Europe's peoples. Travellers will meet fellow travellers, exchange stories, and immerse themselves in the rich cultural heritage of the continent. At the official opening of the European Capital of Culture 2027, we will unite symbolically and musically by singing traditional songs from across Europe, with performers gathering along the canal to mark the beginning of our journey of (un)rest. This celebration will extend beyond Liepāja, resonating throughout the Kurzeme region. A multitude of smaller events will unfold across the city and its surroundings, with cafés, squares, parks, cultural venues – and the streets themselves – inviting everyone to discover, connect, and be transformed. Series of opening events – weekend at the end of January or beginning of February 2027: - Concerts at the Great Amber Concert Hall - Exhibitions, performances and shows from other programme projects - Opening event and related activities

The five thematic programme lines

Port Paradox

Liepāja is a city of paradoxes. The brisk northerly winds and sun-warmed beaches. Metal and lace. The secluded Karosta with its military history and the freewheeling rock music. Industry and leisure. These opposites intertwine to create the distinctive character of our city. The spirit of (un)rest has shaped Liepāja's urban identity and cultural landscape over the years. In a world increasingly dominated by standardisation and globalisation, how do we retain our authenticity? Through this thematic line, we will discover the paradoxes that define Liepāja, exploring our rich heritage and sharing our unique story with the world.

	Project	Project description
1	"Locus Mundi" Art Exhibitions	A series of large-scale international art exhibitions will unfold across the Liepāja Museum, the station, and the "Kursa" territory – originally envisioned for the former steel plant "Liepājas metalurģis" site. The museum will showcase artists with roots in Liepāja, while international creators connected to the city or Latvia will develop new works within the grounds of the former metallurgical plant, hosted by Liepāja's research residence. The project reimagines Liepāja through a contemporary lens, positioning it as a historically rich and globally relevant waypoint in Europe's cultural landscape. World-renowned artists may be among the participants. LOCUS MUNDI includes the revitalisation of the old factory hangar, the launch of international residencies, and the active involvement of regional artists. Works will also appear in small-format exhibitions across unconventional urban spaces – from supermarket windows to art galleries.

2	"Karosta – Radosta" Creation of a new creative quarter	An international project competition will transform the site of former military barracks into a vibrant creative quarter, curated and animated through interdisciplinary cultural events. The initiative will build on existing cultural activities in Karosta, offering support to the Karosta Festival and the artist residency in the iconic water tower, where local and international artists will collaborate with community members. The cultural space "The Awakening Garden" will also be part of this revitalisation, fostering dialogue and artistic experimentation.
3	"Phantom of the Library" 250th anniversary of the library	A programme marking the 250th anniversary of the Liepāja Central Scientific Library will include a catalogue of historic prints, enriched with scholarly articles on the library's evolution, publishing history, and Liepāja's literary heritage. The celebration will feature a seminar on book preservation, a conference, and residencies for writers and literary figures – including creatives with functional disabilities. A youth writers' camp and a gathering of authors from Liepāja, Latvia, and abroad will round out the programme.
4	"Land of (Un)rest, Tell Us Stories!" Stories in the public and digital space	This two-part cultural-historical study will trace the development of Liepāja's cultural identity from the late 19th century to the early 21st century, published in Latvian and English. The project will include digital walks, audio guides, augmented reality experiences, and a catalogue of local legends. An augmented reality game will explore military heritage, while competitions will invite participants to create walking routes through historic manors, architectural landmarks, and sites linked to notable figures – all enriched with performances and storytelling.
5	"Pavējā – pretvējā" or Upwind indswept Tribute to the Wind	As part of Liepāja's wind-themed celebrations, "Atmospheric Waves" will feature wind-powered sound installations created during an international symposium and residency. These works will be exhibited throughout the city. In 2025, the environmental object "Pavējā – pretvējā" will be installed in Liepāja's urban landscape, offering a poetic tribute to the city's elemental character.
6	"Rock the Rock" Music Festival	The 2027 edition of the Summer Sound Festival will honour Liepāja's rock music legacy, which played a pivotal role in Latvia's independence movement. The festival will also build connections with European cities that share similar cultural histories. Concerts featuring internationally acclaimed rock artists will be complemented by open stages for emerging talent, collaborative performances, and experimental showcases. Exhibitions, discussions, and exchanges with international partners will explore subculture and alternative music as engines of free expression.

The European Dream

We know what the "American Dream" is, but do we know what the European Dream is? What is our dream of the good life? What unites us in Europe and what divides us? How do Liepāja and Kurzeme fit into the broader European community, being an integral part of it? Do we hear the echoes of European history in this part of Latvia and what they are? Are solidarity, diversity and respectful coexistence yet again values for which we must fight again in today's Europe? What does Europe represent today, and what kind of future do we want to create? Let's shift perspectives and explore the values that bind our societies locally and globally. Together with visionaries, thinkers, and creators from cities, regions, and beyond, we will seek answers to these pressing questions. Rooted in the belief that European coexistence is worth reflecting on and nurturing, this programme recognizes that our shared ideals are constantly evolving, needing to be redefined and refined in response to changing times.

	Project	Project description
1	"Stars in Amber" Concert Series	Throughout the year, the Great Amber Concert Hall will host performances by Latvia's musical luminaries and world-renowned artists. The Liepāja Symphony Orchestra will premiere and promote two new Latvian operas with powerful contemporary themes. A gala concert will be held at the open-air venue "Pūt, vējiņi!", reviving Liepāja's rich traditions in opera and rock music while fostering new artistic collaborations.
2	"Nordic Solstice" International Traditional Culture Festival	Solstice celebrations will take place across South Kurzeme, Kuldīga, and Alsunga, blending Latvian midsummer traditions with those of neighbouring countries. In partnership with local cultural enthusiasts, new interpretations of solstice rituals will be created. The Baltic Sea coast will host an international sauna festival, and amateur art groups from the Baltic and Nordic regions will join in a parade of solstice traditions and performances at the Midsummer moment – on Līgo Day and Jāņu Day.
3	"Europe Sings in Liepāja" International choir music festival	Thousands of singers from across Europe will gather in Liepāja for the Europa Cantat festival, organised by the European Choral Association. The programme will include anniversary concerts for Ēriks Ešenvalds in Priekule and Pēteris Vasks in Aizpute, celebrating Latvia's contribution to European choral music.
4	"Kino Sapnis/Film Days" European Film Days	The RIGA IFF festival programme will open in Liepāja with screenings, a grand opening ceremony, and appearances by international filmmakers and actors. The selection will feature standout films from Europe and beyond, including Nordic cinema, children's films, and the latest European releases. Events will include filmmaker meetings, a professional symposium, and a special retrospective dedicated to Eduards Tisē – man whose cinematic expertise as director of photography deserves to be credited. Born in Liepāja, he shot some of his films here, thus we will be highlighting them as well. Guided tours of local film locations will complement the screenings.
5	"Territory of the Dream" Artworks in public spaces	An international sculpture exhibition will animate Liepāja's urban landscape, developed in collaboration with local communities and supported by artist residencies, public programmes, talks, and masterclasses. The International Cast Iron Art Symposium (DKN) will explore the creative and technological possibilities of cast iron, featuring live demonstrations, cultural events, and a closing show.
6	"Agora of Values"	A series of five discursive events will explore pressing ethical and societal questions through conferences, seminars, and debates. Topics include artificial intelligence and democracy, big data and freedom, genetic engineering and equality, social media and privacy, life and death, human suffering and euthanasia, and media literacy in democratic societies.
7.	"Future of Amber" / Experiments with the Baltic Gemstone	An international exhibition at the Liepāja Museum will trace the cultural journey of Baltic amber, complemented by an audiovisual installation from the New Media Art Research Laboratory exploring amber's electromagnetic properties. The programme includes a symposium on cultural geology, artist residencies, creative workshops, and a dedicated amber research residency in Pāvilosta.

New Eyes!

With a diverse line-up of events of this program, we all together will embark on a journey through the land of (un)rest – Liepāja, Kuldīga, and South Kurzeme – seeing them through “new eyes.” Together, we’ll dive deep into the heart of this (un)rest land, unveiling its rich identities and the colourful kaleidoscope of its communities. Let’s set sail on a rediscovery of who we are and how our stories intertwine: from neighbour to neighbour, colleague to colleague, townspeople to countryside, young adult to senior citizen, and fisher to dressmaker, poet to doctor. This is a quest to explore the profound joy and collective responsibility of creating together in our towns, rural havens, and municipalities. With open hearts and curious minds, we’ll explore how to live harmoniously within our communities, ignite creative brainstorming, and celebrate the simple joys of life right here, where we call home.

	Project	Project description
1	“Open Theatre Quarter” Theatre project platform	Developed by Liepāja Theatre, this platform will host international workshops and residencies for guest directors and playwrights, culminating in a new collaborative production titled “European Dream”. The programme includes an international theatre festival and masterclasses for professionals. In Kuldīga, the “Mobile Defile” will bring together European street theatre troupes and an inclusive theatre festival, engaging local communities, people with special needs, amateur actors, and the wider public.
2	“Neighbourliness” Community Project	A multifaceted initiative to activate community engagement through cultural heritage. Highlights include the Seeburg living history festival in Grobiņa, exploring town’s historical heritage, the Alsunga ethno-festival featuring Latvian and European ethno-musicians, and a cooperation project linking the cultural spaces of the Suiti, Livonians, Ķoniņi, and Rucava locals. The aim of the project is to activate communities to work with cultural heritage, drawing strength and inspiration from partners who have consolidated the values of their cultural spaces in international or local Intangible Culture Heritage lists. Activities will include Cultural Space Days, exchange trips, training, and institutional partnerships. Artist residencies in Kuldīga and South Kurzeme, restoration days, and workshops will deepen local involvement. An open call will support resident-led events in Liepāja and surrounding areas, including concerts, markets, exhibitions, and gatherings in unconventional venues. Culinary heritage projects will be supported through a separate competition. On 27 July 2027, “One Day of Life Day” will document everyday life through a public photo campaign, open-air event, masterclasses, exhibition and a call to the public to submit, select and archive historical photographs of Liepāja.
3	“Illuminated Liepāja” Art of Light	The Festival of Light, a gift to Liepāja on its birthday, will take place on 18 March. We will illuminate not only the facades of houses, streets, courtyards and beautiful shapes, but also their inner content – hidden or uncomfortable, or problematic social issues. We will encourage Liepāja’s professionals and residents to illuminate their homes, courtyards, streets and neighbourhoods from a different perspective – looking at it all with “new eyes”; the event will take place in both 2025 and 2027.
4	“Return of the Towers” Sacred architecture and music	Concerts by acclaimed Latvian and European musicians will be held in places of worship across Liepāja and the region. Audiences will experience sacred architecture in a new light, with illuminated buildings and exceptional music creating a contemplative and inspiring atmosphere.
5	“World of Images”	An international photography competition will foster collaboration between artists, supported by residencies and exhibitions. The project includes partnerships with Japanese institutions, offering a cross-cultural exchange of visual storytelling.

Deliberate Modesty

Embraced by the Baltic Sea, forests, pastures, and lakes, Latvia is a haven of natural beauty and strength. Yet, we face a stark reality: the relentless depletion of our resources, both locally and globally, has escalated into an acute natural crisis. This disregard for our environment has taken its toll, not only on nature but also on our bodies and minds, entangling us in a chaotic cycle of consumption that disrupts our physical and mental balance. Through this thematic line, we embark on a quest to find harmony between our human needs and the health of our environment. Our mission is to cultivate a synergy between nature and humanity. We will forge connections between science, innovative technologies, green entrepreneurship, and the arts, actively involving our communities in the (un)rest land to drive meaningful change. Through exchanges, artistic, and educational activities, we aim to restore equilibrium among our body, mind, and surroundings. Together, we'll embrace the philosophy of deliberate modesty as a sustainable way of life.

	Project	Project description
1	"No More Heavy Metal" Circus, contemporary art, avant-garde, alternative music, street art	In July 2027, the former steel plant "Liepājas metalurģs" will be transformed into a vibrant cultural arena. Site-specific artworks and installations will invite visitors to explore the industrial heritage of the territory through a contemporary lens. The Sound Forest festival – reminiscent of White Night – will showcase experimental music, sound art, circus, and street performances in collaboration with international partners. An open call invites global artists to propose large-scale interventions. "Arsenic and Green Lace," a fashion show staged in an unconventional setting, will highlight sustainable materials, developed in partnership with students from the LMMD Art, Music and Design High School and international fashion experts.
2	"Face to Face with the Natural" Green mindset and sustainability	This interdisciplinary programme will engage the public and experts in cultural projects that promote ecological awareness, biodiversity, and sustainable living. Events will offer practical tools for changing everyday habits and nurturing environmental empathy. Competitions such as "Appealing Environmental Empathy Projects" and "Silent Glow" will encourage nature-based relaxation through healing walks in Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga. "Salmon Protection Nights" in Kuldīga will feature summer workshops and creative camps with composers, visual artists, biologists, and youth. A series of autumn concerts will raise awareness about salmon conservation and the fight against illegal fishing.
3	"The Other Sea Festival" Understanding the sea	In 2027, the "The Other Sea Festival" will be a week of events dedicated to educating the public about the critical situation in the Baltic Sea, offering various cultural activities, such as a creative camp for young people, where a musical composition will be created and performed. In collaboration with Baltic Sea researchers and scientists, amateur theatres in Liepāja and the region (Liepāja, Aizpute, Grobiņa, Kuldīga, etc.) will be involved in preparing the performance, using community theatre methodology. The programme will also promote Baltic Sea-friendly recipes, encouraging shifts in culinary habits to support marine sustainability.
4	"Island of Adventure" STEAM	The "Nature House" Science and Education Innovation Centre on Horse Island (Zirgu Sala) will host a range of STEAM and environmental education activities, including workshops, creative days, and interactive programmes. Enabled by technology, these experiences will be accessible to children and youth across Latvia. A sustainable walking trail will be developed to spark imagination, creativity, and playful exploration in nature.

Creative Foresight

The extraordinary shifts triggered by rapid technological advancements, climate change, and global upheavals highlight the urgent need for us to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. Innovation, fuelled by engaged and creative communities, serves as a sustainable engine for progress – not just in bustling metropolises but also in the heart of rural areas. This thematic line aims to bridge the gap between online and offline domains, uniting diverse generations and sectors to uncover the needs and opportunities of the future. Through imaginative probability games in art, design, and educational projects, we will ignite our collective creativity and spark conversations about the legacy we wish to leave behind not only for Kurzeme but for the world at large.

	Project	Project description
1	"Into the Future" Liepāja Animation Days	This series of events will celebrate animation in all its forms – from cinema and audiovisual art to augmented reality. Audiences will discover the latest animated films and immersive AR experiences, while artists and professionals expand their international networks. A travelling exhibition of animation and illustration will bring the visual storytelling journey to wider audiences.
2	"Youth Forum" Creativity week and closing symposium	A three-year youth training programme will feature international lecturers, team-building activities, and the opportunity for participants to organise their own event as part of Liepāja 2027's finale. The Youth Club will serve as a hub for mentorship and continued engagement, empowering young people to stay active, connected, and involved in shaping the closing festival.
3	"Liepāja Art Forum" Contemporary art and technology	This contemporary art festival will explore the intersection of technology and humanity, envisioning future possibilities through socially engaged artistic practices. Topics will include gender equality, environmental challenges, digital and green transitions, and global complexity. A highlight will be the live coding rave, where international artists will generate mind-blowing algorithmic soundscapes and noise music through code.
4	"Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!"	Cultural education and lifelong learning programme. A dynamic co-working space will become a playground for innovation, offering mentoring, digital creation labs, and classes for seniors. Activities will support the development of the centre as a key educational hub in Liepāja. The programme includes an invention and science fair, a "Skills Exchange" for hands-on learning, and capacity-building initiatives for cultural workers, alongside industry conferences and seminars. Capacity building and skills development programme for cultural workers in Liepāja and the Region.
5	"Update" New Media Art Week	New Media Art Week. Held annually, this festival will feature an educational programme with creative workshops, masterclasses, family days, and artist-led sessions. Each edition will include exhibitions, conferences, and audiovisual performance concerts. Led by local and international experts, "Update" will spotlight emerging media and technology, engaging diverse audiences in the evolving landscape of new media art.

5.2. Flagship Events

The Liepāja 2027 programme is structured around five thematic lines, each anchored by flagship events that embody the spirit of (un)rest and serve as cultural headliners for the European Capital of Culture year.

1. Thematic Line "Port Paradox" – Locus Mundi and Karosta – Radosta

In **Locus Mundi**, a collective of international artists will explore the historical layers of Liepāja, revealing stories that have endured through time. The exhibition will feature renowned figures from the global art scene, drawing international attention to the city's cultural narrative. **Karosta – Radosta** will reimagine the former closed military town as a vibrant cultural quarter. Through artistic interventions and community engagement, Karosta will be transformed into a place of joy and inspiration, celebrating its unique history and future potential.

2. Thematic line: "European Dream" – Stars in Amber, Europe Sings in Liepāja, and Nordic Solstice

"Stars in Amber" will bring musical excellence to the Great Amber Concert Hall, featuring Latvian and international performers. The experience will be extended to wider audiences through public screenings, outdoor chamber concerts, and artist-led masterclasses.

"Europe Sings in Liepāja" will unite around 4,000 singers from across the globe in a week-long celebration of choral music, fostering a powerful sense of community. With a rich programme of concerts, masterclasses and singing events throughout the week, this celebration of singing and friendship will unite people of different ages, countries and walks of life in a tremendous sense of community.

"Nordic Solstice" will be a year-round celebration of living traditions, rooted in the seasonal rhythms and cultural heritage of Latvia and its northern neighbours. Events will take place across South Kurzeme, Kuldīga, and Alsunga, weaving together Latvian solstice customs with those of the Baltic and Nordic regions. The programme will include seminars on living traditions and reinterpretations of solstice rituals, created in collaboration with local cultural practitioners. The festival will highlight the enduring vitality of Curonian traditions – both tangible and intangible – that have survived into the 21st century. From the symbolic pulling of the log at the winter solstice, to the awakening of life in spring, the erotically charged summer solstice celebrations, and the generous autumn feasts, each season will be marked by rituals that affirm the cultural richness of a land of (un)rest. The festival will be curated and led by the true keepers of tradition in Kuldīga and South Kurzeme, ensuring authenticity, depth, and a contemporary resonance that invites participation and reflection.

3. Thematic line "New Eyes!" – Open Theatre Quarter

The "Open Theatre Quarter" will become a dynamic hub for performing arts, centred around a new international production that confronts the crisis of European democracy. Addressing themes of political polarisation and civic disengagement, the production will run for multiple seasons at Liepāja Theatre, offering a sustained platform for reflection and dialogue.

4. Thematic line "Deliberate Modesty" – No More Heavy Metal

"No More Heavy Metal" will reclaim the former "Liepāja Metalurgs" steel plant as a site of cultural reinvention. This industrial space will host a bold programme of artistic, educational, and exploratory events, developed in collaboration with leading curators and artists. The project will remain responsive to global shifts, adapting its highlights to reflect evolving cultural and societal concerns.

5. Thematic line "Creative Foresight" – Into the Future

"Into the Future" will feature Animation Days "Sound.Story.Image", which will consist of a diverse series of events dedicated to animation and its various formats – cinema, audiovisual art and storytelling. The programme will include events for people of all ages. In an entertaining and educational way, the audience will be introduced to the broad international and local dimensions of Latvian animation, as well as its close connection with other cultural genres. Viewers will have the opportunity to discover and enjoy animated film programmes, exciting creative workshops for children and young people, as well as meetings with renowned Latvian and European animators. The centrepiece exhibition, Latvian Animation in the European Dimension, will showcase landmark works and collaborations, positioning Latvian animation within the broader European context and celebrating its artistic evolution.

5.3. Collaborative Models for Programme Delivery

Key partners

Key partners are legal entities or independent structural units of legal entities authorised to enter into contractual agreements. These partners are the originators of project ideas approved in the official application "Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027" (<https://liepaja2027.lv/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Liepaja-EKG-pieteikums-ENG.pdf>), which serves as the foundation for the programme and will be implemented across the designated territories until 31 December 2027.

Cooperation model with key partners:

- a. **Stage 1 (2023/2024)** Partners are invited to submit a formal description of their project idea via the application portal (*pieteikumi.liepaja.lv*), confirming their intent to develop the project as outlined in the Liepāja 2027 programme. Submissions must retain or enhance the original content, scope, and financial framework in line with current sectoral developments. The Liepāja 2027 Foundation will provide feedback and engage in direct consultations to refine proposals.
- b. **Stage 2 (2025)** Supported project ideas advance to a limited selection competition, where applicants must submit detailed project documentation, including a comprehensive budget and completed questionnaire (*via pieteikumi.liepaja.lv*). Proposals are evaluated by an independent commission in accordance with established regulations and quality criteria.
- c. **Stage 3.** Upon approval, the Foundation and the selected partner enter into a three-year cooperation agreement, which includes a project development roadmap and financing plan. This ensures accountability, continuity, and alignment with the strategic objectives of the European Capital of Culture programme.

Organisation of open competitions

To maintain programme relevance and foster innovation, open calls for project proposals will be launched in 2024, 2025, and 2026. These calls will invite contributions from local, national, and international stakeholders, encouraging diverse participation and cross-sectoral collaboration. The initial phase of programme development included a review of the core partner group, assessment of institutional capacity, and the formulation of a strategic plan for open calls.

When work on the programme began, the core group of partners was reviewed, ideas and capacity were clarified, and a plan was drawn up for organising open calls in 2024, 2025 and 2026.

Timeframe for Open Calls for Proposals:

2024 – Launch of the first open call for project ideas from diverse partners. Selection, negotiation, and contract signing will follow. Priority projects include "Neighbourliness" (Creat micro-grants for community-selected initiatives), "Rock the Rock" (co-financing for cultural venues), "Locus Mundi" (urban visual object design competition), "Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!" (co-financing for cultural organisations to deliver masterclasses).

2025 – Open call for large-scale international projects to be implemented in 2027. These will be integrated into various project clusters and include stage and visual art works developed through international collaboration, contributing to artistic renewal and global visibility.

2026 – Open calls for individual project clusters, inviting proposals from local, national, and international partners for implementation in 2027. Selection, negotiation, and contracting will be carried out.

2027 – Final open call for small-scale local initiatives to be implemented within the same year. Selection and contracting will be expedited to support grassroots engagement and last-mile activation.

Events produced by "Liepāja 2027"

While all projects will be overseen by the Liepāja 2027 team, several flagship and strategic initiatives will be directly produced by the Foundation to ensure coherence, quality, and alignment with programme objectives. These include:

- Individual Liepāja 400 projects in accordance with the funding approved and allocated by the local government (see Annex No. 2);
- Liepāja 2027 opening event;
- "Nordic Solstice" (programme line "European Dream");
- "Pavējā – pretvējā", "Karosta – Radosta", "Locus Mundi" (programme line "Port Paradox");
- "Agora of Values" (programme line "European Dream");
- "No More Heavy Metal", "Face to Face with the Natural" (programme line "Deliberate Modesty");
- "Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!", "Youth Forum" (programme line "Creative Foresight").

All project development, partner selection, and competition evaluation processes will be guided by measurable socio-economic impact indicators, including:

- Return on investment: each euro invested should yield €3–5 in economic return
- Tourism growth: minimum 15% increase in overnight stays (20% including short-term rentals)
- Improved connectivity: expanded transport links with Rīga, and nearest Lithuanian cities of Klaipėda, and Palanga
- Accommodation capacity: increase from 3,827 to at least 5,000 beds post-2027
- Marketing reach: five major advertising campaigns at national and international levels
- Regional tourism: 15% increase in total visitor numbers
- Audience engagement: reach at least 1.3 million people in Latvia
- Audience engagement: reach at least 30 million internationally
- Cultural participation: 20% increase in cultural event attendance in Region
- 15% rise in public involvement across the Region

5.4. Regional Project Implementation

The implementation of the Liepāja 2027 programme is designed to integrate regional participation as a core element, rather than as a separate or peripheral component. The artistic programme (un)rest is delivered across Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga Regions through four strategic directions:

1. highlighting the region's authentic cultural values in a contemporary context;
2. actively involving regional cultural professionals, events, and venues;
3. strengthening the capacity of the region's cultural, tourism, and entertainment sectors;
4. and expanding the region's international cultural experience.

The (un)rest artistic content in the Region is structured around two main categories.

- Basic programme projects are large-scale initiatives developed by local governments, NGOs, and public or private organisations whose ideas formed the foundation of the original Liepāja 2027 application. These are selected through a limited competition process.
- Open competition projects are developed in response to calls announced by the Liepāja 2027 Foundation, following specific guidelines and regulations.

To ensure fair representation and alignment with programme objectives, all project competitions involving regional participation include representatives from the region's local governments and the Regional Cooperation Department of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation. These representatives participate in the evaluation process with equal voting rights alongside other commission members.

5.5. European Dimension

The European dimension is a cornerstone of the European Capital of Culture initiative and is embedded throughout the Liepāja 2027 programme. To ensure its full integration, the programme has defined a set of objectives that guide project development and implementation.

These objectives include:

- engaging European and international audiences,
- ensuring content accessibility for non-local visitors,
- introducing the local community to European cultural themes,
- strengthening regional identity while promoting cultural diversity,
- building a broad network of international contacts,
- increasing the participation of European artists in residencies,
- contributing to the New European Bauhaus initiative by participation,
- promoting the adoption of international best practices in everyday life,
- allocating additional resources to support new cultural exchange projects.

These European dimension objectives apply to all projects within the Liepāja 2027 programme, whether implemented by core partners, open competition participants, or the Liepāja 2027 Foundation itself. This ensures that the programme remains aligned with EU cultural policy priorities and contributes meaningfully to Europe-wide cultural dialogue.

5.6. Timeline: Development Milestones for "Liepāja 2027" and "Liepāja 400"

Liepāja 2027 Programme

Taking into account the scale of the programme, the number of partners involved, and the diversity of projects, the following development milestones have been established:

2023:

- The programme content was revised in line with the recommendations of the European Commission jury, as outlined in its final report on the European Capital of Culture 2027 competition. The responses were compiled in the "Liepāja 2027" reference document submitted during the first monitoring phase.
- Three cooperation models for programme implementation were defined:
 - Group 1: projects implemented with core partners – organisations that initiated ideas for the Liepāja 2027 application. Specific regulations were developed for this group.
 - Group 2: projects implemented with partners awarded co-financing through open competition.
 - Group 3: projects implemented directly by the Liepāja 2027 Foundation.
- Integration of "Creative (Un)rest Land" – full involvement of all Liepāja 2027 partners (Liepāja city, South Kurzeme municipality, and Kuldīga municipality), removing event boundaries between the city and Region to ensure broad territorial coverage;
- Invitation extended to core partners to submit project proposals as outlined in the Liepāja 2027 application.

2024:

- Programme review: detailed content (curatorial input), target audiences, economic impact, genre representation (including local organisations), research matrix, timeline, financial framework, capacity and human resources, European dimension, and international relevance;
- Implementation of open competitions;
- Expansion of the international partner network and development of new initiatives, including external funding acquisition;
- Creative concept development for key project groups ("Agora of Values", "Karosta – Radosta", "Nordic Solstice", "Zenta Mauriņa Summer School", "Island of Adventure", etc.)
- Review of core partner submissions, dialogue on implementation, and launch of second call for proposals.

2025:

- Selection competition for core partners for the (un)rest programme; signing of three-year agreements (see Annex 3);
- Content development for specific projects.
- Formalisation of cooperation through memoranda of understanding and agreements;
- Progress and implementation of individual projects;
- Execution of projects marking Liepāja's 400th anniversary (see Annex No. 2);
- Identification of technical requirements for implementation;
- Organisation of international open competitions and procurement procedures;
- Continued efforts to secure external resources and co-financing.

2026:

- Development of project content, production, and management;
- Creation, writing, and submission of new works;
- Implementation of artist residencies;
- Execution of individual projects;
- Clarification of technical specifications, procurement, and competitions;
- Technical preparation of first projects;
- Open tenders for some of the initiatives;
- Ongoing work to attract external resources and co-financing.

2027:

- Final preparation, implementation and delivery of the programme;
- Cooperation with partners;
- Technical execution and continued procurement processes;
- Small-scale open tenders for final project initiatives;
- Submission of reports and documentation.

The Liepāja 400 Programme

The "Liepāja 400" programme, developed by the Foundation, follows these steps:

2023:

- Concept and programme draft developed by the Foundation, incorporating input from cultural, sports, education, and business stakeholders.
- Presentation of the concept and programme to the Liepāja City Council.

2024:

- Upon City Council approval, the Foundation prepares a detailed work plan for the anniversary celebrations.
- City Council confirms the scope and budget for the implementation and production of anniversary events.

2025:

- Execution of planned events in accordance with the approved programme and available budget.

6. Communication

The marketing and communication work of “Liepāja 2027” is based on the Marketing and Communication Strategy in place until 2028, which is available [here](#).

6.1. Marketing Communication Objectives and Key Messages

The marketing and communication objectives for Liepāja as the European Capital of Culture 2027 outline the tangible results the project aims to achieve by 2028. These objectives extend beyond traditional communication activities to encompass broader marketing efforts, including service development, fostering partner engagement, encouraging shifts in public habits, implementing innovative projects, and participating in collaborative initiatives. Collectively, these activities will lay the groundwork for establishing a unified and robust marketing and communication agency. This entity will continue to build on the successes of Liepāja 2027, ensuring sustained momentum and reinforcing the partnerships forged during the project.

The specific objectives for marketing communication encompass a wide range of activities, such as:

- “Liepāja 2027” daily communication;
- Advertising campaigns;
- Graphic identity and design;
- Engagement with the local population and cooperation partners;
- Content communication that highlights the artistic programme;
- Specialized communication and marketing projects, etc.

Ultimately, the overall objectives of the European Capital of Culture 2027 will be driven primarily by the rich and diverse content of its artistic programme.

The key communication objectives are:

- Strengthening Liepāja’s image as a remarkable and unique destination with deep-rooted traditions and a forward-looking, modern vision, celebrated both nationally and internationally;
- Fostering a shared sense of belonging across Liepāja, Kuldīga, and South Kurzeme regions as a unified cultural space, emphasizing the values of the region, Latvia, and Europe as a whole;
- Broadening the public’s perception of culture to encompass its economic, environmental, and social dimensions, inspiring a holistic understanding of its societal importance;
- Positioning Liepāja as a city of paradoxes, where contrasting elements harmoniously coexist, with the concept of (un)rest serving as a central theme in communications;
- Encouraging behavioural change by inspiring the public to participate in civic life, adopt sustainable practices, and reimagine their daily habits;
- Enhancing European partnerships and dialogue, fostering feedback and collaboration with audiences across different European countries;
- Cultivating pride in place, empowering residents to celebrate their local identity and contribute to the overall development of Liepāja and its surrounding regions.

The target audience for communication is described in Section 4.

6.2. Key Messaging

1. The core aim of Liepāja as a Capital of Culture 2027 is to spark a transformation in public behaviour – from passive spectatorship to active participation – through the dynamic and impactful content of its five artistic programme lines, generating long-term value and growth for the city.
2. The Liepāja 2027 programme extends beyond cultural events, integrating activities across sectors such as IT, education, business, and environmental sustainability, thereby strengthening the region's foundations for the future.
3. Liepāja thrives as a city of paradoxes, offering a platform for extraordinary interdisciplinary projects during the European Capital of Culture year, such as contemporary art installations in former metal industry locations, street art in sports stadiums, and cinematic experiences in children's playgrounds.
4. Everyone is welcome to join – not only to bring their ideas and projects to life but also to play a role in transforming and improving life in Liepāja, the Region, and Latvia in general.
5. The European Capital of Culture 2027 initiative is a unique opportunity that empowers individuals and communities both in Liepāja and the Region to expand their capacities and realize their potential.

6.3. Tactical Approach and Communication Blocks

Creative (un)rest tactics

The narrative of (un)rest is designed to be universally accessible, rooted in five thematic programme lines and a diverse calendar of events that place people at the heart of the experience. The programme's themes, artistic content, and event schedule are communicated in a straightforward and engaging manner, ensuring clarity and resonance across varied audiences.

A precise and recognisable visual identity supports the communication strategy, using clear messaging, bold contrasts, and culturally intelligible paradoxes that translate effectively across European contexts – including Poland, Sweden, France, Lithuania, and beyond.

All communication activities are guided by the Liepāja 2027 marketing and communication strategy, which ensures consistency, strategic alignment, and adaptability.

Day-to-day communication is conducted primarily in Latvian and English, with future plans to enable automatic translation into all major world languages via the official website.

6.4. Communication Block Structure:

- Artistic programme;
- Public participation programme;
- Overall project highlights;
- Cooperation with partners (sponsorship strategy* – to be developed following finalisation of the detailed artistic programme and schedule);
- International cooperation projects.

6.5. Channel Strategy

Communication and marketing harness the full spectrum of marketing communication opportunities, but a variety of information channels are used to achieve the objectives in Liepāja, Latvia and Europe – from digital to physical and vice versa:

- Digital Communication Tools (a website and app with a digital event platform, monthly newsletters, and social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and others that resonate at the particular period of the momentum). Partnerships with Latvian and European news and culture portals, simultaneous translation for events, and more.
- Environmental Advertising (urban environments in Liepāja, neighbouring municipalities, other Latvian cities like Rīga, and high-traffic areas such as public transport hubs and airports). Advertisements extend to twin European Capital of Culture cities.
- Direct Engagement (through regional events, collaborations with twin cities, Latvian embassies, and tourism fairs, an open office in Liepāja's city centre, etc.) Partnerships with regional and national media, politicians, influencers, and opinion leaders.
- Print Media (flyers, leaflets, programme guides, and newspapers, etc.)
- Travel Industry Partnerships with airlines and tour operators.
- Local residents ("*liepājnieki*" as commonly addressed), regional residents, and the cooperation partners.
- Media partner projects, TV and radio campaigns (both national and international).
- Innovative Collaborative Projects with sponsors and supporters.

An essential pillar of the Liepāja 2027 communication strategy is sustainability – not only in environmental terms, but also in how messages foster long-term thinking and responsible action. Through strategic storytelling, the programme will demonstrate how its activities contribute to sustainable development goals at the city, regional, and national levels, encouraging audiences to reflect and engage with lasting impact.

All communication and marketing materials – including photography, video, and design – are produced to the highest professional standards. This commitment to quality serves both aesthetic and educational purposes, reinforcing the value of excellence in cultural production and public service.

The tone of communication will remain light, engaging, inclusive, and friendly, while also being informative and purposeful. It will invite participation and foster a sense of belonging across diverse audiences.

Communication will be continuous until the end of 2028, when the full scope of results, indicators, and achievements will be shared. During the preparatory phase (until 2025), each digital channel will feature at least one post per day. From 2025 onward, the frequency will increase in line with programme activity. Media outreach will be conducted quarterly, complemented by informal face-to-face meetings between journalists and the Foundation team. Monthly newsletters and tailored messages will be distributed across various channels to maintain consistent engagement.

Content will include event announcements, thought leadership on cultural and socio-economic themes, partner initiatives, and participation in external events. The digital strategy ensures that every activity is documented and shared – whether live-streamed, posted online, or presented through video and photo reviews. This approach will allow millions of viewers worldwide to experience Liepāja 2027, transcending the limitations of physical attendance.

Above all, the communication strategy will model openness, mutual respect, and meaningful connection – values that underpin the entire European Capital of Culture programme.

6.6. Digital Communication: Strategic Alignment

Strengthening Liepāja's image at the national and international level:

- Creating and maintaining a modern, user-friendly website that presents Liepāja 2027, its events, and cultural activities.
- Active and consistent use of social media platforms to share stories, visuals, and updates about Liepāja 2027, highlighting the region's traditions and future vision.
- Building partnerships with influential digital content creators to enhance brand recognition and reach.
- Engaging with international tourism and cultural platforms to position Liepāja as a leading cultural destination.

Promoting residents' sense of belonging to Liepāja, Kuldīga and South Kurzeme a.k.a. "(un)rest Land" as a unified cultural space of Latvia and Europe:

- Offering interactive online activities that invite residents to participate in Liepāja 2027 events
- Sharing cultural narratives, historical insights, and personal stories from the region to foster pride and connection.
- Developing collaborative projects with local businesses and cultural institutions to reinforce shared values and community identity.

Raising public awareness of the importance of the cultural sector:

- Using digital channels to communicate the cultural sector's impact on the economy, environment, and society.
- Hosting online discussions and debates on key cultural topics, including sustainability and participation.
- Partnering with educational institutions to integrate cultural themes into curricula and promote early engagement.

Strengthening Liepāja's image as a city of paradoxes:

- Using digital platforms to highlight Liepāja's contrasts – its (un)rest and constant opposites, traditions and innovations.
- Organising thematic campaigns that invite reflection on the city's unique character.
- Encouraging dialogue through personal stories and social media discussions that explore Liepāja's paradoxical identity.

Encouraging the public to change their thinking and attitudes:

- Launching digital activities and competitions that promote sustainable habits and environmental awareness.
- Sharing inspiring examples of change linked to Liepāja 2027 initiatives.
- Collaborating with environmental organisations to promote education and active participation in sustainability efforts.

Establishing feedback and mutual dialogue with partners in Europe:

- Creating digital platforms for collaboration and discussion with European partners.
- Engaging with other European Capitals of Culture to share experiences and results of Liepāja 2027 project.
- Inviting European citizens to contribute feedback and participate in cultural dialogue and identity related to Liepāja 2027.
- Publishing personal stories and achievements on social platforms to build pride and visibility.
- Organising online events that showcase Liepāja's cultural potential, achievements and innovation.

Effective social media planning begins with a thoughtful analysis of previous posts – understanding what resonated, what fell flat, and why. Digital communication should never be left to chance; it must be crafted with intent, guided by strategy, creativity, and the principles of professional, high-quality storytelling.

Content creation. Each publication on digital channels is created with a specific goal in mind, a result we want to achieve – to promote brand awareness, inform about the event programme, educate about the most important goals of Liepāja as the European Capital of Culture 2027, sell tickets to events, etc. By identifying the purpose of a post, it is easier to understand whether it is necessary to attract paid advertising. The content of partners and other organisations is not "retweeted", but separate materials are created. The aim of digital communication is to facilitate the use of Liepāja 2027 digital content as much as possible, providing links to events/activities or projects; contact information; respond promptly to messages received, providing answers or comments on the same platform.

Authentic or self-created content. In line with the popularity of short videos on specific digital platforms – self-created content. With this type of content, followers perceive the authenticity and originality of the brand; creating content in this way makes it more engaging for users. To achieve this, use "moving" content rather than static content – videos, "moving" images, short videos, etc.

Hashtags. Their use increases the engagement of the potential audience – using this symbol correctly strengthens the brand and increases the effectiveness of its advertising. Hashtags have no punctuation marks or soft signs, and each word in the phrase is written with a capital letter, for example, #PieLainesGalda, #KarostaRadosta.

Cooperation with digital content creators. The creation of digital content will involve not only well-known professionals in Latvia, but also the most influential digital content creators from European partner cities and countries. A detailed agreement on the terms of cooperation (How many posts? How many videos? Can information about competitors' products/services remain in the content if it was there before? Agreement on the mechanism for involving followers in the competition, on discounts for followers. Costs – for posts, organising the competition, etc.).

In order to reach the widest possible audience and also address the citizens of European countries, the physical environment will be combined with digital tools, and events (events, conferences, discussions, etc.) will be broadcast online on digital platforms. In cooperation with major telecommunications and technology companies, we will provide the opportunity to watch the events on large screens in various locations around the city, as well as in places where people with physical disabilities are located.

6.7. Graphic Identity

The graphic identity of "Liepāja 2027" is defined by the official graphic standard, which is publicly available [here](#). Drawing upon the established visual identity of the city of Liepāja – including its official colours, typography, and design principles – the visual image of Liepāja 2027 has been purposefully and thoughtfully developed to ensure coherence, recognisability, and long-term impact.

Given that the Liepāja City Municipality has secured broad public support for the existing city brand, and recognising that the European Capital of Culture programme is intrinsically linked to the cultural and civic life of the city and region, the visual and design communication of Liepāja 2027 is implemented in parallel with, and in full alignment with, the graphic standards already defined in the marketing strategies of Liepāja and the wider region. This strategic alignment reinforces the programme's visibility and strengthens its legacy.

All communication materials bearing the Liepāja 2027 symbol are developed in coordination with the Public Relations and Marketing Department of the Liepāja 2027 Foundation, ensuring consistency, quality, and compliance with brand guidelines.

The Liepāja 2027 brand was officially registered with the Patent Board in early 2023 as a protected trademark owned by the Liepāja City Municipality. Exclusive rights to use the mark have been granted to the Liepāja 2027

Foundation until 2028, thereby prohibiting unauthorised use of identical or similar trademarks in connection with goods and/or services. This legal protection enhances the competitiveness of the Liepāja 2027 brand and safeguards the intellectual property rights of the trademark owner.

The use of the Liepāja 2027 brand for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. In cases where the Foundation acts as a financial or informational supporter or cooperation partner of an event, the symbols of Liepāja as the European Capital of Culture 2027 may only be used with the prior written consent of the Head of the Public Relations and Marketing Department.

6.8. Presentation Materials

The residents of Liepāja and the wider Kurzeme region are deeply patriotic and take pride in associating themselves with significant cultural milestones. Notably, 87% of Liepāja's inhabitants express a positive view of the city's image, including its symbols, which they readily incorporate into their everyday attire. Building on this strong sense of identity and the existing presentation material standards developed by the city, a dedicated "Liepāja 2027" souvenir line has been created and integrated into the official Liepāja city presentation catalogue. These are intended for use as diplomatic and ceremonial gifts, particularly for cooperation partners and during official receptions. They will also be made available for public purchase at the Liepāja Region Tourist Information Office, as well as at the Kuldīga and South Kurzeme Regional Tourist Information Centres. To ensure global accessibility, an e-commerce platform will be launched, enabling interested individuals from around the world to acquire Liepāja 2027 presentation items and thereby extend the reach of the brand.

6.9. Media Partnerships

Relations with the Strategic partnerships with media outlets are a key component of the Liepāja 2027 communication strategy. Media engagement will be expanded through curated experiences, including thematic events such as guided excursions through the Liepāja fortification tunnels as part of the "Karosta – Radosta" project, and immersive participation in the revival of seasonal traditions within the "Nordic Solstice" programme. Virtual tours will be offered to remote audiences, and media representatives will be invited to forums presenting current developments in Liepāja and the region. To reach targeted audiences, niche media channels will be utilised, focusing on culture, travel, adventure, art, cinema, and nature.

The principal national media partners will be Latvian Radio and Latvian Television, entrusted with broadcasting the most significant events of the European Capital of Culture year.

Local media

Liepāja and its neighbouring municipalities maintain strong and effective relationships with regional media outlets, including Kurzemes Vārds, Liepājas Vēstules, Grobiņas Vēstules, Kuldīgas Vēstules, liepajniekiem.lv, irliepaja.lv, Kurzemnieks, TV Kurzeme, Radio Skonto, Kurzemes radio, Radio SWH), national and commercial media (Diena, Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, LTV1, LR1, LR2, LR3, LR4, Delfi.lv, TVnet.lv, TV3, magazines Klubs, Santa, Kas jauns), the national news agency LETA and niche media (satori.lv, arterritory.com, fotokvartals.lv). These relationships will be further strengthened through long-term cooperation agreements with the top ten media outlets in Latvia across radio, television, print, and digital formats.

International media

We plan to focus more attention on communication with international audiences. We plan to develop existing relationships and seek new cooperation partners in order to purposefully communicate about creative (un)rest, including:

- continuing cooperation with partners in the Baltic media who are already familiar with Liepāja and the region – Estonia's Postimees, Lithuania's Lietuvos Rytas, Delfi group, etc.;
- cooperating with the media in countries whose artists are included in our programme – Finland, Portugal, France, etc. – in order to reach Europeans and tell the story of Liepāja.
- continuing already ongoing cooperation with the National Electronic Media Council – this organisation will serve as a bridge to the *European Broadcasting Union* (EBU), the *European Federation of Journalists* and the *International Federation of Journalists*, which will help to tell the story of (un)rest to the whole of Europe in a more targeted way;

- organise one- or multi-day visits for foreign journalists, bloggers, tourism professionals, ambassadors, culture enthusiasts and others throughout the (un)rest Land, providing a personal and paradoxical story;
- organise visits for journalists in cooperation with the LIAA Tourism Department.

6.10. Communication and Marketing Projects

Local level

Local Entrepreneurs. From the hospitality industry, including restaurants, cafes, hotels, and apartment owners, to hairdressers, sports centres, garages, and retail shops, local businesses are integral to welcoming thousands of visitors every year. We will engage these entrepreneurs to connect with their customers and foster lively conversations about culture. In addition, we will encourage large companies and organizations with extensive workforces to participate in cultural events, such as the "Neighbourliness" and "Skills Exchange" projects.

NGO's and Local Storytellers. Organisations, leaders of neighbourhoods, interest groups, and local storytellers will serve as the primary communication channels in many communities. Projects like "Neighbourliness", "Face to Face with the Natural", "At the Happy Table", and others will reach even the most remote areas, creating a ripple effect that inspires new leaders and volunteers to join the movement. Through open calls and project competitions, we will invite the community to submit ideas, organize joint events, engage peers, and amplify the message of (un)rest.

Liepāja 2027 Ambassadors. The most impactful ambassadors of the city are its residents – those from Liepāja, Kuldīga, and South Kurzeme – who are intimately connected to the region. In special campaigns, we will invite locals, regional experts, public figures, and influential personalities to become official ambassadors of Liepāja 2027. Each ambassador will contribute to various areas – ones that they feel most comfortable with. For some, it's a climate change, for others perhaps – promoting new educational models, advocating for international visibility, and highlighting European diversity in Liepāja. The Ambassadors will be carefully selected for both their expertise and reputation, not only within their professional circles but also at the national and international levels. The title of Ambassador is one of distinction, but also one of competence. We will also invite notable Latvian talents and contemporary European intellectuals to join as Liepāja Ambassadors. Additionally, the Ambassadors will play an active role in evaluating the projects. The first phase of the programme will be implemented in 2024, with subsequent phases to follow in the coming years.

2027 will be a year of pilot projects for several innovative solutions. It will be a year when most events in Liepāja will be provided with machine translation and sign language interpretation, not only for the audience, but also for event organisers and participants. The events will comply with the principles of eco-design and accessibility, and Braille, recyclable materials, etc. will also be used in printed materials and at event venues.

Regional level

In partnership with the municipalities of the Kurzeme Region, we will launch a special loyalty programme for the region's residents, offering exclusive deals such as discounted annual subscriptions. Each municipality in the region will have its own Liepāja 2027 ambassadors who will inform residents about ongoing events and opportunities for involvement.

National level

We also plan to involve as many residents of other Latvian cities as possible, inviting them to come to Liepāja and enjoy it digitally. We will also visit the largest cities in Latvia – Rīga, Jūrmala, Bauska, Cēsis, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Ventspils, etc., to introduce residents to part of our artistic programme, organise discussions, and involve them in the creation of programme events. We will also participate in national cultural festivals and events. We will share our professional experience with other experts in the field and members of the public, talking about the best examples, the most successful stories and practices, thereby strengthening both the capacity of society and the accumulation of knowledge and skills in general.

6.11. International Communication Strategy

To ensure the international recognition of Liepāja and Latvia, attract the attention of foreign media, promote a positive and engaging image to an international audience, and encourage an influx of tourists and culture lovers to Liepāja, South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Regions, Latvia in general, using the title of European Capital of Culture, the "Liepāja 2027" international communication strategy has been set up in place.

1. Target audiences:

- Influencers and digital media: cultural, tourism and lifestyle influencers in Europe who work with a wide audience (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.);

- Tourism operators and bloggers: major tourism operators, foreign bloggers specialising in culture and tourism topics, such as Nomadic Matt, Rick Steves, etc.;
- European community: visitors to cultural events, people interested in music, art, gastronomy, families with children, active leisure enthusiasts;
- International media: BBC, The Guardian, Financial Times, Le Monde, Der Spiegel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, La Repubblica, Politico Europe, Euronews;
- Latvians abroad: the Latvian diaspora in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and other countries.

2. Channels:

- Traditional media: leading European newspapers, news portals, broadcasters (BBC, The Guardian, Le Monde, Financial Times, etc.);
- Digital platforms: social networks (*Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok*), digital media and news portals, tourism blogs;
- Live broadcasts and virtual events: digital discussion platforms, online events, virtual tours and presentations;
- promotional events: Liepāja cultural and gastronomic performances in major European cities in cooperation with the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA);
- international tourism exhibitions: ITB in Berlin, Matka in Finland, conferences in Oslo, Tallinn, etc.;
- influencer cooperation: popular bloggers, vloggers and social media influencers with a large audience in the fields of culture and tourism;
- embassies: contacts, opportunities, etc.

3. Tactics and action plan

2024/2025. Introduction and awareness raising

1. Campaign development: Collaborate with leading advertising and public relations agencies to design a compelling campaign that accentuates the paradoxes of Liepāja and Latvia, showcasing the city's distinctive cultural potential. This will be executed through joint procurement with LIAA.

2. Media cooperation:

- Media relations: Establish targeted partnerships with prominent European media outlets and initiate collaborations with leading cultural and tourism publications in countries represented by artists participating in the programme (e.g. Finland, Portugal, France)
- Baltic media cooperation: Launch active engagement with Estonian and Lithuanian media platforms, including Postimees, Lietuvos Rytas, and the Delfi group.

3. Influencer marketing:

- Forge strategic alliances with European and global cultural and tourism influencer networks across digital platforms to disseminate original content and narratives about Liepāja, its cultural landscape, and its paradoxical identity;
- Offer curated influencer visits to Liepāja, featuring bespoke itineraries and exclusive insights into lesser-known facets of the city.

4. Ambassador programme: Mobilise Latvian public figures and cultural ambassadors, and identify potential representatives within the European Parliament to advocate for Liepāja 2027.

2026. Communication of Liepāja's cultural programme

1. Major events and key messages:

- Commence 2026 with high-profile international press conferences in Paris, Berlin, and London to unveil the flagship events of Liepāja 2027, attracting foreign journalists, broadcasters, and influencers;
- In collaboration with LIAA and Latvian embassies, organise cultural and gastronomic showcases in major European cities to promote Liepāja's creative identity.

2. Visits by journalists and bloggers: coordinate with tourism industry stakeholders and LIAA to host immersive familiarisation trips for foreign media representatives, enabling them to experience the city and region first-hand.

3. Digital platforms: facilitate pan-European digital broadcasts and interactive activities focused on themes of culture and identity, engaging digital media professionals and the wider public.

2027. Liepāja – the culmination of events and activities

1. Attracting the attention of international media:

- Ensure consistent and strategic dissemination of information to European media, spotlighting the originality and impact of Liepāja 2027 projects and events;
- Publish targeted content for the top ten European and global media outlets (BBC, The Guardian, Der Spiegel, etc.), leveraging ECOC networks and established partnerships.

2. Events in European capitals: deliver a series of promotional presentations in key European capitals, in cooperation with Latvian embassies, LIAA, and tourism operators, highlighting Liepāja's cultural diversity and tourism appeal.

3. Involving residents and fostering a sense of pride:

- Enable Liepāja residents and international visitors to share personal stories and reflections on life and culture in the city through digital platforms;
- Engage the Latvian diaspora by organising performances by guest artists and inviting participation in Liepāja 2027 activities.

Ongoing cooperation with partners:

- Establish partnerships with airlines (airBaltic, Lufthansa, Finnair) to develop promotional campaigns in in-flight magazines and digital channels;
- Participate in international tourism exhibitions and conferences across Europe and globally to enhance visibility and position Liepāja as a compelling cultural destination;
- Expand collaboration with LUX Express to support regional mobility and tourism.

4. Criteria for successful implementation:

- Media coverage: Presence in international media, including features in leading European publications;
- Increase in the number of foreign tourists: Measurable growth in international visitor numbers to Liepāja and the Region;
- Brand recognition: Enhanced perception of Liepāja and the Region as a cultural and tourism hub, evidenced by media coverage and visitor feedback;
- Cooperation with embassies: Active involvement and support from Latvian embassies in facilitating media relations, tourism promotion, and cultural partnerships.

6.12. Timeline

2023:

- Ensuring daily communication;
- Development of graphic identity;
- Creation of a marketing communication strategy.

2024:

- Ensuring daily communication at regional, national and international levels;
- Regional, national and international campaigns – integrated campaigns;
- Communication of programme content;
- Development of image campaigns;
- Implementation of media projects;
- Representation at major events;
- Creation of various marketing materials;

- Creation of a line of presentation materials;
- Creation of a new website;
- Creation of the "Liepāja 2027" ambassador programme;
- Digital marketing and website;
- Creation of a sponsor attraction strategy and commencement of its implementation.

2025:

- Ensuring daily communication at regional, national and international levels;
- Regional, national and international campaigns – integrated campaigns;
- Communication of programme content;
- Media relations;
- Ensuring media cooperation projects;
- Representation at public events;
- Creation of various marketing materials;
- Implementation of the Liepāja 2027 ambassador programme;
- Sale of presentation materials;
- Attracting sponsors;
- Provision of digital communications;
- Development of communication content projects.

2026:

- Daily communications at regional, national and international level;
- Communication of programme content;
- Regional, national and international campaigns – integrated campaigns;
- Implementation of media projects;
- Media relations;
- Representation at public events;
- Creation of various marketing materials;
- Implementation of the Liepāja 2027 ambassador programme;
- Digital communications;
- Attracting sponsors, ensuring partner relations;
- Launching ticket sales;
- Sale of presentation materials;
- Development of communication cooperation projects;
- Delivering international relations cooperation projects.

2027:

- Daily communication at regional, national and international levels;
- Communication of programme content;
- Ticket sales campaigns;
- Digital communication;
- Regional, national and international campaigns – integrated campaigns;
- Implementation of media projects;

- Representation at public events;
- Creation of various marketing materials;
- Sale of presentation materials;
- Implementation of the Liepāja 2027 ambassador programme;
- Securing sponsors and partners for projects;
- Delivering international relations cooperation projects.

2028:

- Daily communication;
- Communication of monitoring data;
- Preparation of various reports.

7. Public Engagement

One of the central challenges of the Liepāja 2027 programme is to transform passive spectators into active participants. Public engagement is not a peripheral ambition – it is a strategic priority. The Foundation is committed to fostering meaningful involvement across diverse social groups, ensuring that the European Capital of Culture year is not only observed but co-created by the people of Liepāja, South Kurzeme and Kuldīga Region.

Insights from academic research and public sector analysis have revealed several persistent barriers to civic participation:

- Physical access – traditional consultation formats, such as “Town Hall” meetings, often require physical presence at a fixed time and place, excluding residents from remote areas or those with mobility constraints. For example, if a meeting should take place in the city centre, it might create a barrier for those who live outside the centre limits.
- Distrust in institutions – a widespread belief that individual voices cannot influence decision-making.
- Social inertia – a lack of cultural stimuli that inspire residents to engage with issues that matter to them.
- Information gaps – certain groups remain under-informed about current developments, while misinformation and disinformation further erode trust and willingness to participate.

These challenges are compounded by structural issues:

1. Only 14% of Latvia's population is considered socially and civically active.
2. Fragmentation among NGOs, with limited collaboration and poor information exchange. In Liepāja, NGOs often lack proper cooperation.
3. A lack of public understanding about the role and potential of NGOs, leading to misplaced expectations of local government, for example people are coming to the city council with issues that could have been easily resolved by Liepāja NGOs.
4. Low awareness among hard-to-reach communities regarding city developments and governance, fuelling dissatisfaction and disengagement.

To address these issues, Liepāja 2027 has developed a multi-layered public engagement strategy that promotes:

- A stronger sense of European belonging among residents;
- International cooperation and the adoption of best practices in civic involvement;
- Environmental awareness, encompassing both ecological responsibility and accessibility;
- The use of digital tools to broaden participation and remove physical barriers;
- Local identity and pride, reinforcing emotional ties to place;
- Active involvement in Liepāja 2027 events, both as contributors and audiences.

At the heart of this strategy is the Mission (Un)rest programme – a broad framework of participatory events and initiatives designed to activate communities. It brings together professionals from the creative industries, education, business, civil society, and local government, alongside residents from all backgrounds. Through a sequence of collaborative activities, new traditions will be forged, civic pride will be strengthened, and community engagement will be elevated. The programme draws inspiration from successful models across Europe, adapting proven methods to the local context. Whether through co-creation workshops, neighbourhood festivals, or digital storytelling platforms, Liepāja 2027 aims to build a culture of participation that endures beyond the title year.

The Mission (Un)rest programme is underpinned by three strategic mechanisms for public involvement:

1. Audience growth

- Solution: Employ targeted monitoring and audience research to identify existing and potential cultural audiences and expand their engagement through a diverse range of events and formats.
- Solution: Prioritise one of the most complex and underrepresented groups—young people—through the dedicated project cluster “Youth Forum”, which offers tailored activities, peer-led initiatives, and opportunities for creative expression.
- Solution: Promote intergenerational participation via a structured volunteer programme, enabling residents of all ages to contribute meaningfully to Liepāja 2027 while strengthening community ties.

2. Capacity building “Cultural Renovation”

- Solution: Launch the project cluster “Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!”, focused on enhancing skills and knowledge within the cultural sector, creative industries, and civil society. Activities include:
- Capacity-building seminars tailored to the needs of cultural professionals and NGOs;
- An annual conference titled “Cultural Renovation”, addressing key themes each year: 2024 – “Content and Resources” 2025 – “Accessibility” 2026 – “Content Creation” 2027 – “New Generation and Succession” 2028 – “Evaluation of Liepāja 2027” This programme fosters resilience, innovation, and strategic thinking across the cultural ecosystem.

3. Attitude change “We all are in the same boat”

- Solution: Implement a community engagement programme under the banner “Neighbourliness”, designed to initiate dialogue in neighbourhoods, parish centres, and micro-districts. The aim is to cultivate a sense of belonging, encourage civic participation, and empower residents to take part in local decision-making processes.

These mechanisms are operationalised through three core public engagement programmes, each embedded within the broader Liepāja 2027 framework:

- The community programme, delivered through the project “Neighbourliness”;
- The volunteer programme, partially integrated into “Neighbourliness”, supports the overall production and delivery of the Liepāja 2027 programme;
- The youth programme, developed within the “Future Institute” project;
- The capacity-building programme “Cultural Renovation”, implemented through “Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!”.

7.1. Community Programme

The Community Programme is a cornerstone of Liepāja 2027’s public engagement strategy, designed to empower residents as cultural co-creators and strengthen the social fabric of the (un)rest Land. It focuses on activating local communities through cultural expression, fostering leadership, and building sustainable civic networks. Targeted work will be undertaken to identify and support individuals who are already active within their communities or who aspire to become community leaders – particularly within neighbourhoods, parishes, and villages. These individuals will receive training and mentorship in areas such as community building, artistic facilitation, and the use of digital tools for organising activities. The aim is to equip them with the skills and confidence needed to mobilise their communities around shared cultural experiences.

The programme forms part of the thematic line “Neighbourliness”, which promotes grassroots involvement in environmental improvement and encourages cooperation among local residents. It is scheduled to launch in 2024 with the selection of the first cohort of community leaders. Their initial tasks will include mapping local needs and resources, convene resident meetings, and initiating small-scale, self-organised events.

Over the following years, this collaboration will be deepened through continued support and the opportunity to participate in the open project competition “Neighbourliness”. By 2027, communities will be independently implementing cultural events within their localities – events that will be integrated into the official European Capital of Culture programme.

To ensure quality and relevance, the programme will draw on best practices from other ECoC cities, including collaboration with initiatives such as “Bendruomenių laboratorijos” in Kaunas, which has successfully implemented similar community activation models.

Results:

- Local communities across the region have been activated, fostering mutual cooperation and civic participation;
- Community-led cultural events are delivered in collaboration with professional artists and facilitators;
- A stronger sense of European belonging is cultivated, with the European dimension embedded as a prerequisite for funding;
- Residents demonstrate increased concern and care for their immediate environment, with events tailored to local needs;
- A heightened sense of local identity and community pride is observed;
- Digital tools are effectively utilised to organise and sustain community activities.

Long-term benefits include the emergence of resilient, self-organising communities capable of contributing to neighbourhood development, nurturing a sense of place, and fostering collective confidence in the power of shared cultural action.

Timeframe:

2023:

- Work on the Liepāja 2027 programme to clarify aspects of public involvement throughout the programme;
- Identification of partners, communication with representatives of other European Capital of Culture teams;
- Attracting external funding for community projects.

2024:

- Expeditions to Liepāja’s residential districts, towns and rural municipalities to map active resident groups and identify the situation regarding public involvement;
- Celebration of Europe Day on 9 May together with communities, sail-raising campaign to promote community belonging;
- A series of classes for potential community leaders – introduction, masterclass with international lecturers, development of practical activities.

2025:

- Involvement of the community programme manager in communication with a wide network of community representatives;
- Cooperation programme for community leaders, regular communication, monthly meetings;
- Small-scale community activities, including events for “Liepāja 400”;
- Celebration of Europe Day on 9 May together with the communities;
- A series of classes for potential community leaders – introduction, master class with international lecturers, practical event planning;
- Preparation of an open competition, work with local residents.

2026:

- Community leaders’ cooperation programme, regular communication, monthly meetings;
- Small-scale community activities, including celebrating Europe Day on 9 May together with communities;

- Open competition for the project series “Neighbourliness”, where community leaders can submit their ideas and projects;
- Continuation of a series of classes for potential community leaders – introduction, masterclass with international lecturers, practical event planning.

2027:

- Delivery of the community project series “Neighbourliness”;
- Cooperation programme for community leaders, regular communication, monthly meetings.
- Celebration of Europe Day on 9 May together with communities.

7.2. Volunteer Programme

The Volunteer Programme is a vital component of Liepāja 2027’s public engagement strategy, designed not only to support the delivery of European Capital of Culture events, but to cultivate a long-term culture of civic participation and shared responsibility. It aims to establish a sustainable volunteer movement that strengthens community ties and enhances organisational capacity across the cultural and civic sectors.

The programme will be implemented in two phases. In 2024 and 2025, it will operate as a pilot initiative, engaging volunteers in the organisation and delivery of events marking the 400th anniversary of Liepāja. This phase will serve as a testing ground for recruitment, training, and coordination models. From 2026 onwards, the programme will be expanded to support Liepāja 2027 activities, integrating volunteers into all aspects of programme production and public engagement.

To ensure quality and sustainability, the programme will draw on proven methodologies from other European Capitals of Culture, including the Tartu 2024 team, whose volunteer strategies offer valuable insights into training, digital coordination, and international cooperation.

Results:

- A sustainable and replicable framework for volunteer coordination has been established;
- A growing number of individuals are actively engaged in volunteer work, demonstrating increased environmental awareness, emotional connection to place, and participation in ECoC activities;
- Optimal digital tools for volunteer management have been identified and implemented; • International partnerships have been formed with organisations experienced in volunteer coordination, enabling knowledge exchange and cross-border collaboration.

Long-term benefits include the normalisation and increased popularity of volunteering across the region. Following the conclusion of Liepāja 2027, the established system for volunteer organisation will be available for adoption by local governments, ensuring continuity and legacy beyond the title year.

Timeframe:

2023:

- Work on the Liepāja 2027 programme, specifying aspects of public involvement throughout the programme.

2024:

- Recruitment of a volunteer coordinator;
- Development of volunteer work guidelines.

2025:

- Initial evaluation and improvement of the volunteer programme;
- Training for organisations wishing to use volunteer work;
- Volunteer training;
- Coordination of volunteer work;
- Activities to motivate volunteers (joint team-building events, appreciation events, etc.).

2026:

- Call for volunteers, campaign to attract volunteers;
- Volunteer training;
- Coordination of volunteer work;
- Activities to motivate volunteers (joint team-building events, appreciation events, etc.).

2027:

- Volunteer training before major events;
- Coordination of volunteer work;
- Activities to motivate volunteers (joint team-building events, appreciation events, etc.).

7.3. Youth Programme

The Youth Programme is founded on the principle that young people should be empowered to shape cultural experiences for their own peers. Rather than being passive recipients, they are invited to become active organisers, curators, and creators within the Liepāja 2027 framework.

Beginning in 2024, applications will be launched at the start of each academic year. Each cycle will engage 30 young participants in a year-long programme, combining monthly training sessions with collaborative project development. These sessions will equip participants with practical skills in event planning, creative production, and team coordination, while fostering critical thinking and cultural literacy. Working in teams, participants will design events tailored to youth audiences, culminating in a competition for the most compelling concept – awarded with modest funding for implementation.

Recognising that 2027 may feel distant to younger participants, the programme includes annual youth-led events to maintain momentum and visibility. These smaller-scale initiatives serve as stepping stones toward a major, co-created youth event in 2027, developed collectively over three academic cycles.

To sustain engagement beyond the initial training phase, the Liepāja 2027 Youth Club will be launched in autumn 2025. This platform will primarily serve programme alumni, while remaining open to other young people seeking connection and involvement. At this stage, participants are expected to take greater initiative in organising activities, supported by programme coordinators who will facilitate team building, onboarding, and continuity in planning the flagship youth event.

The programme draws on successful models from other European Capitals of Culture, including Kaunas (LT), Tartu (EE), and Bodø (NO), integrating best practices in youth empowerment, peer learning, and international exchange.

To further inspire participants and expand their horizons, additional funding will be sought to enable selected youth to attend European Capital of Culture events abroad, fostering cross-border dialogue and cultural mobility.

Results of the youth programme:

- Young people's sense of belonging – to their local environment and to Europe – has been meaningfully strengthened;
- Youth have been given tangible opportunities to engage with and contribute to the Liepāja 2027 programme, with at least three youth-led events delivered;
- Collaboration among young people has been enhanced at both local and European levels;
- The programme has served as a platform for identifying emerging talent, with promising individuals invited to contribute to other Liepāja 2027 initiatives.

Timeframe:

2023:

- Discussions with international partners in other European Capitals of Culture;
- Work on the Liepāja 2027 programme to clarify aspects of the youth audience throughout the programme.

2024:

- Detailed development of the Youth programme;
- Procurement for the implementation of the Youth programme;
- First call for applications for young people in Liepāja and the Region in autumn;
- First training semester of the first call.

2025:

- Second training semester for the first call;
- First youth activities;
- Second call in autumn;
- First semester of the second call;
- Start of the Alumni club's activities;
- Development of the structure for the major event "Youth Forum" in 2027.

2026:

- Second semester of the second call;
- Youth activities for the second call;
- Third call in autumn;
- First semester of the third call;
- Alumni club activities;
- Planning and content development for the 2027 major event "Youth Forum", cooperation with partners.

2027:

- Second semester of the third call;
- Activities for young people in the third call;
- Activities of the Alumni club;
- Technical preparation and implementation of the "Youth Forum" event.

7.4. Capacity Building Programme

In light of the ambitious objectives set forth by Liepāja 2027, strategic attention must be directed toward strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector. The diversity of partners and operators involved in Liepāja 2027 necessitates a nuanced approach. Differences in professional experience, skill levels, motivation, generational perspectives, time availability, and geographic location (urban vs. rural) all influence the ability to participate. For instance, those employed in public or municipal institutions may find it easier to engage during working hours, while freelance creatives or volunteers may require more flexible formats.

Capacity building target groups:

- Institutions: core partner organisations, potential collaborators, local governments and their departments, tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs, creative industry representatives, businesses, and other indirectly involved entities;
- Society: NGOs – particularly those active in civil society – youth, volunteers, neighbourhood groups, and the general public;
- Individuals: artists, curators, cultural guides, professionals from various sectors, librarians, and other cultural actors.

Set of capacity-building tools to be deployed:

- Courses and training cycles tailored to specific audiences, focusing on practical skills and strategic development;
- Public conferences designed to foster dialogue, share knowledge, and inspire cross-sector collaboration;
- Individual consultations offering bespoke guidance and support;
- Specialised seminars addressing targeted issues or serving particular groups;
- Problem-solving workshops aimed at overcoming specific operational or strategic challenges;
- Mobility schemes enabling peer learning and exchange within and beyond Latvia;
- Public information campaigns to raise awareness and promote engagement;
- Provision of technical tools and instruments to support implementation and innovation.

Timeframe

2023:

- Analysis, meetings with partners;
- Strategy development;
- Participation in programme development.

2024:

- Series of capacity-building seminars;
- International conference "Cultural Renovation" on capacity building topics;
- Series of individual masterclasses and workshops for specialists in various fields;
- Creative trips for representatives of cultural organisations;
- Agreements with various educational institutions on adapting existing study programmes to capacity building needs;
- Open competition for masterclasses for organisations.

2025:

- Capacity building seminars;
- International conference "Cultural Renovation" on accessibility topics;
- Continued cooperation with academics in conducting practical seminars;
- Creative trips for representatives of cultural organisations;
- Series of individual masterclasses and workshops for specialists in various fields.

2026:

- Capacity building seminars;
- International conference "Cultural Renovation" on content creation;
- Continued cooperation with academics in conducting practical seminars;
- Creative trips for representatives of cultural organisations;
- Hosting various guests for the exchange of experience in the cultural sector;
- Series of individual masterclasses and workshops for specialists in various fields.

2027:

- International conference "Cultural Renovation" on young audiences and succession;
- Exchange of experiences in the cultural sector between various guests;
- Creative trips for representatives of cultural organisations;
- Individual masterclasses and workshop cycles for specialists in various fields.

8. Technical Framework and Financing

The total budget for implementing the Liepāja 2027 programme is set at EUR 21,004,068 (previously EUR 22,465,847). This amount includes contributions from the city of Liepāja, the South Kurzeme and Kuldīga regions, as well as existing and potential grant funding.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total	
Liepāja	34,431	226,327	367,143	853,000	2,373,237	2,724,391	6,578,529	Decreased by EUR 925,434 in accordance with budget possibilities as of January 2025.
Regions	0	7,500	57,500	188,000	348,350	39,890	1,000,000	No change, except for distribution by year in accordance with the allocated
State	0	0	490,000	1,829,050	3,498,817	4,672,133	10,490,000	No change
Revenue from economic activities	0	0	0	4,000	0	1,033,500	1,037,500	Decreased by EUR 728,000
External financial sources (attracted and planned)	0	284,500	225,207	246,210	585,912	481,210	1,823,039	Increased by €542,423
Partners and sponsors	0	0	0	0	0	275,000	275,000	No change
TOTAL	34,431	518,327	1,139,600	3,120,260	6,806,316	9,585,134	21,204,068	Decreased by EUR 1,246,859

Annex No. 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the entire programme with the following information:

- Financial breakdown by 28 programme groups;
- Breakdown by financial sources, including state, local government, potential private sector sponsorship, ticket revenues, etc.;
- breakdown by year for each project set and resource source;
- the necessary amount of funding allocated to project clusters from the state budget, broken down by codes – remuneration, services, capital investments;
- time allocation by year, planned project implementation.

8.1. Strategy for Attracting International Public Funding

To ensure the successful implementation and long-term impact of the Liepāja 2027 programme, the Foundation has appointed an external funding attraction specialist whose primary responsibility is to identify and secure international funding opportunities.

Researching project needs and funding sources involves the following steps:

- Defining the objectives, tasks, and thematic keywords of Liepāja 2027 programme projects;
- Identifying potential international cooperation partners for specific projects and activities;

- Mapping relevant international organisations, funds, and institutions that offer public funding for initiatives aligned with culture, community engagement, sustainability, European values, mobility, and transnational cooperation;
- Assessing eligibility criteria, funding priorities, thematic keywords, and application procedures of each funding programme.

By aligning the thematic focus and strategic objectives of Liepāja 2027 with the priorities of external funding bodies, the Foundation is able to identify suitable funding sources and tailor applications accordingly. This includes the ability to extract and reframe specific activities from across the programme portfolio to match the requirements of targeted funding calls – emphasising aspects that resonate with the values and goals of each funder.

Priority themes for attracting international funding include:

- Capacity building for cultural organisations, creative professionals, and artists;
- Mobility and international exchange for cultural workers and artists, fostering cross-border collaboration and learning;
- Public engagement and civic participation, with a focus on community activation and democratic involvement;
- Audience development and cultural decentralisation, ensuring access beyond urban centres;
- Cultural accessibility and the creation of inclusive environments for diverse audiences;
- Artistic creation, including the development and implementation of original cultural content.

This list is not exhaustive. The Foundation remains agile and responsive, working in close cooperation with programme partners to participate in projects that reflect the full thematic breadth of Liepāja 2027. Each funding application is crafted to contribute directly to the programme's overarching goals, while reinforcing its alignment with European cultural policy frameworks and values.

Funding attraction timeframe

2023	2024	2025
External funding attraction plan established. Fundraising projects initiated: - for public engagement and capacity-building activities; - for creative initiatives, artistic content development, and artist support; - for mobility and experience exchange of cultural workers from the Liepāja 2027 team and partner organisations.	Continuation and expansion of previously launched and supported external funding projects. Mentoring initiated to support funding attraction through cooperation partners. New fundraising projects launched: - for inclusive and accessibility-focused activities; - for NGO support initiatives; - for literature and media literacy promotion; - for sustainability and environmental awareness in cultural and artistic events; - for youth mobility in collaboration with artistic and educational project partners. The Foundation initiates and participates in projects with a duration of up to 36 months (three years).	Ongoing development of supported external funding projects. Mentoring for funding attraction through cooperation partners continues. Additional fundraising projects launched: - for artist mobility within the programme; - for the operation and content development of residencies in partnership with cultural organisations. The Foundation initiates and participates in projects with a duration of up to 24 months (two years).

2026	2027
Continuation and development of previously initiated and supported external funding projects.	Ongoing development of previously launched and supported external funding projects.
Mentoring support for funding attraction through cooperation partners continues.	Mentoring of cooperation partners in funding attraction continues.
The Foundation initiates and participates in projects lasting up to 12 months (one year).	The Foundation ceases to initiate or participate in new projects.

Application development

1. The funding specialist regularly informs the Foundation's board, department heads, public engagement specialists, regional coordinator, project managers, and other staff about relevant public funding sources and associated activities.
2. All invitations received from external organisations to participate in collaborative projects are analysed by the funding specialist, who assesses their compatibility with the Liepāja 2027 programme objectives and budgetary framework.
3. The funding specialist oversees the preparation of project applications, ensuring quality and compliance at every stage:
 - In collaboration with project managers, defines project activities, measurable key performance indicators (aligned with the Foundation's monitoring plan and funding guidelines), implementation schedule, budget, and supporting documentation;
 - In cooperation with the international partner coordinator and relevant managers, identifies and liaises with potential partners in Latvia and abroad;
 - Prepares and presents documentation to the municipal project working group, initiates inclusion in the municipal action and investment plan, and secures approval from relevant committees and council meetings;
 - Technically prepares and submits project applications;
 - Upon confirmation of funding, coordinates with the funding body and project partners, and ensures all necessary follow-up actions;
 - Monitors project implementation, resource utilisation, and result achievement, and prepares and submits required reports.
4. Where needed, the funding specialist advises organisations involved in programme delivery on funding opportunities and supports them in preparing project applications.

8.2. Sponsorship Strategy

The Liepāja 2027 strategy for engaging the private sector is founded on mutual respect and a shared commitment to societal transformation. Partnerships are conceived not as symbolic gestures, but as meaningful contributions that generate added value for cultural events and the communities they serve.

The official regional partners of Liepāja 2027 are Kuldīga Municipality and South Kurzeme Municipality.

The sponsorship strategy is structured across three tiers:

- Main sponsors (1–3 companies), each contributing a minimum of EUR 100,000–150,000 or more;
- Second-level sponsors (2–5 companies), each contributing between EUR 50,000–99,000;
- Third-level sponsors, offering flexible contributions to support individual projects.

Beyond financial support, companies are invited to participate in tailored partner programmes, offering practical assistance in various forms. This may include material support for flagship events such as "Europe Sings in Liepāja", "Parties in Karosta", and "Face to Face with the Natural"; expert contributions to educational initiatives like "D10 United" and "Ukstiņš. Lifelong Learning!"; or content development for thematic events – for example, telecommunications company LMT's commitment to the "Agora of Values" conference.

Festival teams such as the Rīga International Film Festival, Summer Sound, and Laba daba will engage sponsors directly and independently, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to artistic needs. Private funds may also assist in securing world-class artists for the cultural programme, contributing to its international calibre.

To diversify funding streams, the Foundation will organise fundraising events including charity balls and art auctions, with proceeds directed toward creative initiatives. Special attention will be paid to private foundations that regularly announce funding competitions, and efforts will be made to mobilise the Latvian diaspora abroad to support specific cultural programmes.

Individuals who contribute financially may become patrons of Liepāja 2027, receiving recognition and privileges commensurate with their level of support.

Shared responsibility is a guiding principle. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is embedded in the sponsorship strategy, with Liepāja 2027 offering a platform for dialogue, learning, and collaboration between public and private sectors. Educational seminars will explore models of CSR and public-private cooperation, and organisations will be invited to participate in socially responsible projects within the artistic programme. These initiatives will foster diverse experience exchange and strengthen the role of business in cultural development.

9. Anticipated Impact

The Liepāja 2027 programme is designed to generate wide-reaching impact in several dimensions.

European Commission objectives:

- Deliver a cultural programme with a clear European dimension, engaging residents at city, regional and national levels;
- Ensure long-term cultural and social development beyond 2027;
- Embed European themes in both content and implementation;
- Foster collaboration between cultural professionals across EU member states;
- Conduct research and produce evidence-based conclusions on programme impact.

Cultural objectives:

- Strengthened professional capacities across the cultural sector;
- Attraction of additional resources to support cultural development;
- Establishment of new international partnerships;
- Enhanced cross-sector collaboration;
- Provision of unique learning and creative experiences;
- Strengthened sense of belonging among residents;
- Development of cultural infrastructure.

Socio-economic objectives:

- Each euro invested expected to generate a return of 3–5 euros;
- Minimum 15% increase in overnight stays in comparison to every previous year (20% including short-term rentals);
- Improved transport links with Rīga, and nearest Lithuanian cities of Klaipėda and Palanga;
- Expansion of accommodation capacity in all “Liepāja 2027” tourism sector from 3,827 to at least 5,000 beds post-2027;
- Implementation of five major advertising campaigns at national and international levels;
- Estimated 15% growth in regional tourism;
- Reach of at least 1.3 million people in Latvia;
- Reach at least 30 million internationally;
- Approx. 20% increase in cultural event attendance across the Region;
- Approx. 15% increase in public participation in regional events.

All projected outcomes are aligned with the programme’s monitoring matrix (see Section 3.1). The groups of planned results for each challenge are described below.

Final indicators will be defined following the baseline study in 2024, which will establish the initial data set for impact measurement.

9.1. Challenge: Learning to Collaborate – From the Periphery to Europe

Achieved goal: Diversified and strengthened international and cross-sector cooperation.

- An international network of contacts has been established, with active participation in European cultural developments. *
- New tourism products have been created, hospitality services expanded, and transport connections improved.
- The offer of services and projects for international audiences has grown, incl. cross-border outreach. *
- Intellectual capacity has been attracted – professionals and educators contribute to events and content development. *
- Cooperation skills across sectors have improved. *
- Underrepresented genres such as dance and film have gained visibility and support in Liepāja.

Culture:

- Number and scope of international cooperation projects involving cultural organisations and creative industries;
- Projects supported by foreign funding sources;
- Active participation in European associations, networks and professional societies;
- Cultural events made accessible to foreign audiences through multilingual formats (number of languages).

Economy:

- Increase in tourism volume and reduction of seasonal fluctuations;
- Visitors travel to Liepāja specifically for cultural events;
- Events attract a significant share of foreign tourists;
- Creative industries collaborate with international partners.

Education:

- Cultural education programmes are accessible to diverse audiences, including international participants;
- Educators engage in international exchanges and collaborative projects;
- Institutions host guest lecturers and foreign experts in cultural education.

Public involvement:

- Events explore European themes and values, with growing public attendance;
- European-themed initiatives are initiated by NGOs and community groups;
- Joint projects and partnerships with local actors promote civic dialogue and cooperation.

9.2. Challenge: Co-Creating the Living Environment

Achieved goal: Increased public participation in shaping the environment through cultural and civic collaboration.

- Accessibility of participating organisations has been reviewed and improved. *
- Eco-design principles have been developed and applied to event planning and service delivery. *
- Local residents have been actively involved in addressing environmental challenges.
- The urban environment has been enhanced with new environmental objects and greenery.

Culture:

- Cultural infrastructure is accessible to the public – economically and physically;
- Eco-design principles are integrated into cultural event organisation;
- New European Bauhaus principles are applied in urban planning and project implementation (e.g. number of restored buildings);
- Visitor data reflects inclusive access to culture events or culture venues – families with children and people with functional disabilities attend cultural events and venues.

Economy:

- Tourism infrastructure is physically and economically accessible;
- Tourism services are environmentally responsible and inclusive;
- Creative industries adopt environmentally friendly and accessible practices.

Education:

- Cultural education events on ecological themes are delivered to diverse audiences.

Public engagement:

- Residents (number) actively contribute suggestions for environmental improvements;
- Suggestions are recorded and implemented;
- Neighbourhood and regional communities participate in shaping their local environment.

9.3. Challenge: Shaping a Smart Future – From Human to Digital and Back

Achieved goal: Improved quality of life for residents through enhanced digital services across culture, tourism, education, and creative industries. *

Culture:

- Liepāja's digital cultural infrastructure and digital tools used by cultural organizations are actively used and accessible;
- Original digital content is produced and shared by cultural organisations;
- Digital content is accessible to people with functional impairments.

Economy:

- Digital infrastructure supports tourism services;
- Volume and diversity of digital services in the creative industries have increased.

Education:

- Cultural education programmes related to digitisation are implemented, including lifelong learning, number or participants in those;
- Programmes are available in digital formats.

Public engagement:

- Residents have access to meaningful opportunities for digital participation.

9.4. Challenge: Preserving Identity – With Love from Latvia and the Land of (un)rest

Achieved goal: Elements of the identity of the land of (un)peace have been identified, strengthened, and meaningfully developed.

- A comprehensive compilation of the cultural heritage and values of the Land of (un)rest has been created.
- A catalogue of commercial products and services affirming local identity has been developed.
- The shared identity of Liepāja, South Kurzeme, and Kuldīga has been reinforced across cultural and civic platforms.

Culture:

- Self-identifying narratives have emerged among individuals and organisations;
- Cultural phenomena have been identified;
- Cultural heritage is consciously recognised and celebrated.

Economy:

- Local cultural and identity-based values are commercialised for both domestic and international tourism.

Education:

- Research (2021–2024) on heritage and identity has been conducted in the education sector across Liepāja and the Land of (un)rest, involving students and educators.

Public engagement:

- The Land of (un)rest is widely recognisable as a cultural and geographic entity;
- Key indicators of Liepāja's identity have been defined;
- Liepāja's identity is acknowledged nationally;
- Elements of identity have been evaluated – some retained, some reimagined, some newly learned;
- Residents' knowledge of local identity has been assessed, with gaps identified for future learning.

9.5. Challenge: Transforming Mindsets – From Inertia to Purposeful Action

Achieved goal: Improved public understanding of civic engagement and participation in social processes.

- Active audiences have been identified, expanded, and diversified. *
- Civil society activity has increased across sectors.
- Cross-sectoral cooperation has improved, resulting in more projects, events, products, and services. *
- A volunteer programme has been established. *
- A mechanism for strengthening NGOs has been developed and implemented. *

Culture:

- Cultural events are initiated and delivered by NGOs and citizen-led groups;
- Cultural audiences are broader and more diverse;
- Forms of cross-sectoral cooperation in the cultural field;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration in cultural projects.

Economy:

- Tourism products with public engagement as part of it;
- Cross-sectoral cooperation is present in creative entrepreneurship and tourism;
- Interdisciplinary projects take place in creative industries and tourism;
- Employment in the creative industries has increased.

Education:

- Educational events on civic participation are offered to various audience groups.

Public involvement:

- NGO activity has grown – more organisations, members, and projects;
- Residents actively contribute to the development of the Liepāja 2027 programme, including through volunteering;
- Youth initiative programmes are active and well-attended.

**Applies to organisations involved in the Liepāja 2027 programme.*