



Galway European Capital of Culture 2020

Third Monitoring Meeting
Report by the ECOC Expert Panels

Galway
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Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
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Introduction

This report follows the meeting in Galway on 15 October 2019 between the panel and the team of Galway, one of the two European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) in 2020¹. Galway was nominated as the European Capital of Culture 2020 by the relevant Irish authorities on 14 September 2016 based on the recommendation included in the panel's Selection Report²; its bid-book is available on the Galway 2020 website³. The first monitoring meeting was held in Brussels on 8 March 2017⁴ and the second monitoring meeting was held in Rijeka on 28-29 June 2018⁵. This third monitoring report is addressed to the Galway 2020 team and will be published on the European Commission's website⁶.

Attendance

The panel members:

Sylvia Amann, Cristina Farinha and Agnieszka Wlazel, appointed by the European Parliament 2018-2020;

Paulina Florjanowicz, Dessislava Gavrilova (Rapporteur) and Pierre Sauvageot, appointed by the Council of the EU 2019-2021;

Beatriz Garcia (Chair), Jiří Suchánek and Suzana Žilič Fišer, appointed by the European Commission 2017-2019;

Alin Adrian Nica, nominated by the European Committee of the Regions 2019-2021.

For Galway 2020:

Patricia Philbin, CEO, Galway 2020;

Helen Marriage, Creative Director, Galway 2020;

Marilyn Gaughan Reddan, Head of Programme, Galway 2020;

Fintan Maher, Director of Communications, Galway 2020;

Alan Grady, Director of Operations, Galway 2020;

Denise McDonagh, Digital Programme Manager, Galway 2020;

¹ The European Capitals of Culture action is governed by Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and the Council for the titles 2020 to 2033, which provides for three formal monitoring meetings between designated cities and the panel under the auspices of the European Commission.

See at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.132.01.0001.01.ENG.

² See selection report at:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/library/ecoc-ireland-2016-final-selection-report_en.pdf

³ See at:

<https://galway2020.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/G2020-Bid-web.pdf>

⁴ See first monitoring report at:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/library/ecoc-2020-galway-first-monitoring_en.pdf.

⁵ See second monitoring report at:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/library/ecoc-2020-galway-second-monitoring_en.pdf.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.

Nollaig McGuinness, Community Engagement Manager, Galway 2020;

Anna Vinegrad, Strategic Consultant Marketing & Communications, Galway 2020;

Arthur Lappin, Chair of the Board, Galway 2020;

Kevin Kelly, CE, Galway County Council;

Brendan McGrath, CE, Galway City Council.

Also in attendance were staff members from the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture) as well as from the Irish Ministry of Culture and Matti Allam, International Relations Manager, Galway 2020, as an observer.

Report from Galway 2020

Prior to the meeting, the team of Galway 2020 (further referred to as G2020) submitted a detailed and comprehensive written report. The report outlined its activities since June 2018, when the second monitoring meeting took place.

At the meeting, the team made a presentation that included the following points:

Programme

The team reported that the programme was successfully launched on 18 September 2019. The programme's core is about giving voice to artists: 70% of it is delivered by local artists and organisations. The programme themes of landscape, language and migration are essentially tackling identity. The culture of migration is a core programme theme. Up to 2,020 volunteers/cast members will be involved in the opening ceremony. The programme envisages local artists embracing artists from elsewhere - a once in a lifetime opportunity for the artistic communities of Galway. The ambition is that artists empower the public.

The programme is built around 4 seasons, following the Celtic calendar; 154 projects will be delivered, over 1,900 events (city/rural/both), 50% of them are taking place in the county. The three themes are embedded in each project. There are six types of project delivery: 1) projects by cultural partners, 2) co-productions, 3) regional projects delivered by local authorities, 4) opening/closing ceremonies outsourced to a company, 5) projects delivered by communities, but facilitated by G2020 and 6) produced by G2020. CAPACITY BUILDING

The team puts efforts in training delivery to local communities. The strategic approach envisages attempts to embed capacity building in the individual projects.

European dimension

The team stated that concerns of the panel from the previous monitoring meeting were taken into account. Conceptually, the programme is more about "going out" and not so much about "bringing in". ECoC networking has been strong, evolving around common issues like climate change, etc. 157 partners from 33 countries collaborate in various projects. Connections with the UNESCO Network of Creative Cities (Film) were established.

The team presented the developments of their *Digital programme*, whose thrust is both about producing digital art and developing a digital strategy for the city. The digital programme has a strong legacy dimension, embedded in the artistic projects.

The European dimension is put forward also through the schools' involvement, an example being the Baboro festival. Finally, there are over 400 volunteers representing 33 nationalities who are engaged in the G2020 projects, thus adding another aspect to the European dimension.

Communication

The team reported that a strategy on how to attract local – national – international audiences has been developed and is being delivered, using both digital and traditional approaches. The team realised that there was a need to educate the audience about what ECoC is (i.e. explain for example that it is not a festival), and that they acted upon that need.

In addition to a broad social and online digital communications strategy, Galway 2020 will also deliver live-streaming of events as well as a digital information centre for visitors to Galway. Currently, Galway 2020 has in excess of 98 000 followers across all social platforms.

Media partnerships are in place with both local and national print, broadcast and online media. In addition to this, PR strategies are in place and delivering widespread earned media coverage. An international PR agency has been engaged to support international media engagement. To date, they have supported international media engagement for the programme launch in London and Brussels; and launches in Rome and NY are planned. As the diaspora is a key target group for G2020, the programme was already showcased at the Milwaukee Irish Fest, the largest Irish American festival in the world. The programme launch (Sept 18th) had a potential reach of up to 40 million people through national and international media coverage secured.

In terms of branding, the G2020 logo (the heart) is a key element - Galway's streets and buildings have been branded, a sculpture with the shape and colours of the heart logo has been designed for Instagram moments, etc. Further dressing of the streets in the colours of the logo and merchandising are planned.

Volunteers contributing to G2020 are seen by the team as "the voice of G2020", and as contributing to communicating the project.

Delivery

The G2020 team reported that operational talk-through has been planned. The team has put in place clear division of tasks. Operating income from the national Government, the private sector, merchandising and ticket sales is on track, and G2020 recently received charitable status. Local authorities across the country support local celebrations of Galway 2020 through their own programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

The audience agency has been contracted and will work with Galway 2020 and NUI Galway, and the data collected in the monitoring process will be made available for further research.

Legacy

For the team, the legacy of G2020 is as important as the year itself. In 2018, a first legacy conference was held. The experience of other ECoCs was studied. Programmes have been conceived to deliver legacy (e.g. “Small towns – Big ideas”). G2020 will cease to exist in 2021, but a special sub-committee of the Board has been established with the aim of identifying the range of legacies that can result from the programmes, and to explore future legacy policies that rely on the views and needs voiced by the people.

Discussion

During the subsequent discussion, the panel sought clarification on a number of issues and offered experience and advice. Topics discussed included the following:

- **The panel asked for information about the current state of contracting.**

The G2020 team offered an update. The contracting process is in hand, the process is in line with the timing of each season. Every project in the programme has a letter of intent. Priorities are the first season projects, and the team is contracting those.

- **The panel asked about the team’s vision about the legacy of G2020.**

The G2020 team offered a thorough response, mentioning examples such as capacity building and a volunteer centre, which works on the future of the volunteers. A rural regional development fund was also put in place by the government, which will create conditions for infrastructure plans to be realised – there is a potential to replicate it in other towns. Furthermore, this financial instrument (the Rural Regional Development Fund) will improve and enable further investment in 2021. Finally, the ECoC team and expertise it developed should be preserved to ensure yet another dimension of legacy.

In terms of infrastructure driven by Galway City Council’s cultural strategy:

- an art house cinema was opened;
- 10 million were secured for the planned expansion of the City Museum;
- a new performance and new visual arts space is in planning;
- G2020 is working with Galway International Arts Festival and the wider sector to secure a permanent Arts Space;
- Galway City Council has received a building (valued at 3m + 0.75m cash investment) to turn it into a children and young adults arts and culture centre;
- the city of Galway granted planning permissions for two private building projects under the condition that cultural spaces are created as part of them.

The infrastructure that will be put in place as a result of G2020 is a key part of the legacy. The bigger portion of the infrastructural projects, however, will be in place after the ECoC year is over.

Galway County Council confirmed that it was hoping to use the RRDF funding programme to bring vacant / under-utilised properties into use as Cultural /Community /Enterprise spaces as appropriate as part of the cultural legacy. The first of these is an application for

Loughrea Town Hall on which a funding application has already been submitted and which will deliver cultural and enterprise space if successful.

Finally, G2020 noted that they focused on communicating the potential and lasting contribution of G2020 to the local community as a legacy, balanced with the importance of the national and international impact.

- **The panel wanted to hear about what the G2020 team sees as the core of the European legacy of the project.**

The team believes that the G2020 approach to the urban/rural cultural dimension is a lesson that could be brought to a European level. An example of this is a town of 920 inhabitants that is already engaged in a European project, which in itself entails a long-term legacy for the local community. Galway City has the opportunity to develop the European legacy with Galway County equally having the capacity to develop a stronger European legacy, because G2020 is changing the thinking of the community about how important culture is. G2020 is partnering with the local Arts Officer in County and City Councils, looking for ways to transmit the legacy and lessons across the country.

- **The panel wanted to learn about the team's vision about the soft legacy of G2020.**

The team sees the potential of the ECoC artistic projects to affect children's perceptions about humanity, and believes that *the legacy of memory* is powerful on the children. All organisations working with children and education are to discuss a common strategy to affect the youngest audiences. More than 300 schools will be engaged in an active way and as audiences.

- **In terms of communication, the panel wanted to know how the team would articulate to the wider audiences the European dimension of the programmes.**

The team learned that they need to put forward the "European Capital of Culture" part of the title, because not everyone knows it. Irish society is very pro-European, which is topical in the context of Brexit. The data that will be collected will assess whether G2020 makes people feel even more European.

- **The panel noted that - given that the opening is planned for 1 February to 8 February 2020 - would need to have events planned already in January, in order to satisfy the media interest and expectations.**

The team stated that they are aware of this. There are a number of plans in place in response to this. As an example, talks are underway, so that on Christmas Eve there will be a mass broadcast from the Galway cathedral across Europe in which Galway will be promoted as European Capital of Culture for 2020. In January, events in the countryside will be organised. There is a "soft launch" planned throughout January e.g. "Symphonic Waves" have concerts planned for January, etc...

- **The panel wanted to hear about any budgetary uncertainties that might affect the project implementation.**

The team reported that the total working budget is 39 million. Funding is coming from central Government, Galway City Council, Galway County Council, private sponsorship. Overall, funding is on track, including in-kind contributions.

- **The panel asked for an update on how many of the infrastructure projects planned in relation to G2020 were put in place.**

The CE of Galway City Council informed that as part of the city's cultural strategy of all the infrastructure projects planned in order to support the G2020 delivery, only the cinema is completed so far. The rest of the infrastructural developments are in the planning phase, but will be completed, as planned, after the ECoC year is over. Risk assessment of the projects is being made and solutions are found for problems. The CE of the City assured the panel that in terms of delivering on the infrastructure development, they are solution driven.

- **The panel wanted to know if European Commission officials are expected to be invited for the opening ceremony – who is invited and what protocol is envisaged?**

The team is looking forward to advice from the panel on this issue and suggested that the Commission might have a standard protocol for Commission involvement in the opening.

- **The panel asked the team to elaborate on the storyline to attract the audience from the beginning until the end of ECoC, and asked why there is no slogan as part of the title.**

The team responded that each season has its own specific identity and its narrative; the new structure of the programme (4 seasons) made themes less visible, but continuous communication will further articulate the narrative.

- **The panel asked what is the strategy to attract - and facilities to accommodate - visitors to G2020.**

The team is putting considerable efforts in this direction. They attend tourism fairs to present the programme. Two partners in promoting G2020 are brought together. G2020 focuses on UK-USA-Northern European markets/audiences. International journalists are targeted.

In terms of accommodating guests, county accommodation is also available and in the surrounding region. As the majority of the programme is outside of high season, ECoC is not competing with general tourism for accommodation facilities. Tourists' visits in 2018 were 2.5 million (1 million local, 1.5 million international), and for G2020, based on the experience of other ECoCs, the expectation would be growth of 10-30%.

- **Further on, the panel wanted to know what is the role of the University in building and nurturing the capacities of the partners involved in the programme.**

The team stated that the University takes part in some capacity building and three workshops about monitoring, evaluations and audience development are envisaged for the cultural organisations. A Steering group on monitoring and evaluation has been established and academics will be involved in parts of the evaluation activities. The data collected will be open and available for future research; guidelines will be developed for future evaluations.

Panel's deliberations

The panel acknowledges the work carried out by Galway 2020 since its nomination and appreciates the progress being made, the plans for the implementation of the ECoC programme, and the efforts put in place to ensure legacy. Bearing the report submitted by G2000, the presentation and discussion in mind, the panel made the following recommendations:

The panel would like to stress the importance of the European legacy and encourages the G2020 team to develop plans on taking care of the ECoC brand after the end of G2020. The panel encourages the team to work further on ways of communicating the European dimension and the legacy of G2020. It is suggested that in the communication clear links are made between the cultural strategies of the city and county and G2020, so that the cultural partners see the long-term effect of G2020 on the conditions for their work. Finally, the panel welcomes the volunteer programme put in place by G2020, and hopes that the team manages to capitalise on the accumulated energy in the longer term.

The panel feels that the message G2020 wants to convey in communicating the programme is not very clear and recommends ensuring that each individual project is linked to a priority/aim and is also communicated in this way. The panel suggests that the "Making Waves" slogan is appropriate and does not necessarily need to be replaced by a new one. The panel also suggests that G2020 has to make sure that they reinforce the European story in their communication narrative, and work on communicating it on all levels.

In relation to the capacity to deliver, the panel sees a potentially problematic point in that the company carrying through one of the main projects seems to be stretching itself beyond the usual size and complexity of the projects they have so far developed. The panel suggests that the G2020 team considers whether the local companies carrying out significant programmes need operational, financial management or other production support in order to make sure that the projects are carried through smoothly. Related support options should be openly discussed between the ECoC projects' producers and the G2020 team.

Despite the affirming answer of the team of G2020 regarding the state and timing of the contract signing, the panel would like to encourage the team to speed up the contracting process.

Bearing in mind that Brexit (which is now supposed to happen in the course of 2020) will have a considerable impact on Ireland and more concretely, on the G2020 operations (also because part of the G2020 staff have UK citizenship and company base), the team shall be Brexit ready, and develop a worst-case and best-case scenario.

The panel welcomes the plans developed and work started on executing infrastructural investment and looks forward to seeing them put in place.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Ireland is advised to put all efforts in order to make sure that the highest representative of the European Commission takes an active

part in the ECoC opening ceremony. This is of particular importance in the context of Brexit. Moreover, it is an opportunity for the EU to feature the transatlantic relations that are a significant aspect of the G2020 programme.

The panel appreciates the balance struck in the programme between rural and city programming, and would recommend building on this experience to create a future coordination governance model for the city and county council's cultural strategy development and decision-making, which would be an important legacy of Galway ECOC 2020.

Based on the report submitted by Galway 2020 as well as the hearing with the team, the panel considers that the conditions regarding the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize, as specified in Article 14 of Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, are met. Consequently, the panel is pleased to propose to the European Commission that Galway 2020 (Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company Limited by Guarantee) receives the Melina Mercouri prize.

The panel would like to remind Galway 2020 that, in line with Article 14, its marketing and communication strategy and its communication material have to clearly reflect the fact that the European Capital of Culture is a Union action, as well as that, in line with Article 16 of the same Decision, it will have to draw up its own evaluation report of the results of its ECoC year and transmit it to the European Commission by 31 December 2021.

The panel would like to thank Galway 2020 for a very informative and interesting meeting and looks forward to a successful realisation of Galway European Capital of Culture project in 2020.

All panel members (signed)

