

čB28 České Budějovice European Capital of Culture 2028

2025 Monitoring report

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Introduction

This report presents the results of the 2025 monitoring of the České Budějovice 2028 European Capital of Culture programme. It is the second annual monitoring report, following the first cycle conducted for 2024. The aim remains the same: to assess whether the preparation process for the title year (2028) is progressing in the right direction, and to identify problems and areas requiring greater attention or a change of approach.

2025 was the programme's second full year of implementation. The team grew from 11 to 27 employees, the number of monitored projects increased from 18 to 22, and total activities rose from 234 to 350. Where 2024 was the year of translating the bid book into practice under severely constrained conditions, 2025 was the year of transition from preparation to public delivery — the share of activities open to the public rose from 79% to 91%, and artistic outputs (artworks, installations, performative works) replaced planning-phase documentation as the dominant product of the programme. At the same time, the operating budget stands at 68% of the bid book plan, and the team operates at roughly 24 full-time equivalents despite a headcount of 27.

The report consists of three parts.

The Executive Summary presents the main findings and recommendations in a condensed form.

Part 1: Monitoring of the Artistic Programme analyses the programme based on a structured monitoring database covering 350 activities across 22 projects. It examines the programme's scale and outputs (1.2), funding sources (1.2b), budget and staffing relative to the bid book (1.2c), the diversity of activity forms and genres (1.3), target audiences (1.4), geographic distribution and venues (1.5), creative engagement, volunteers, and residencies (1.6), the European dimension (1.7), community work (1.8), accessibility (1.9), partnerships and sector development (1.10), environmental sustainability (1.11), and capacity building (1.12).

Part 2: Team, Governance & Working Environment examines team governance, working conditions, and organisational challenges. It draws on an anonymous team survey (N=28, 76% response rate), an anonymous curator survey (N=11, 52% response rate), and qualitative self-reflections from 16 project evaluation forms. Part 2 covers the ECoC team's working conditions and satisfaction (2.2), curators' working conditions and satisfaction (2.3), and a thematic synthesis of organisational problems reported by projects (2.4).



Methodological improvements from 2024

The monitoring system was substantially redesigned between the two cycles. In 2024, programme data was compiled from heterogeneous sources — event programmes, Ministry of Culture reports, and internal documents — with considerable interpretation by the monitoring team. In 2025, a comprehensive standardised evaluation form was introduced and distributed to all 22 projects. Project managers and curators reported structured, activity-level data on forms, genres, audiences, accessibility, partnerships, community dimensions, themes, and sustainability. The completed forms were coded into a 213-column activity-level database following a documented methodology, and all quantitative figures in Part 1 come from verified year-on-year comparison tables derived from this database.

Additionally, three post-event audience surveys (N=469 total) were conducted for the first time in 2025, providing direct empirical evidence of who actually attends ECoC activities — data that was not available in 2024. Three capacity building evaluation reports cover the full capacity building offer delivered in the year.

Key Performance Indicators

A significant development in 2025 is the finalisation of the programme's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework. This report is the first to systematically report against these KPIs. Each thematic section in Part 1 and Part 2 now includes a KPI table showing the indicator, its current status based on available data, and any data gaps that remain. This structure is designed to make the connection between the programme's daily work and its strategic commitments visible and trackable year on year. It also makes transparent where the monitoring system does not yet produce the data needed to assess a given indicator.



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Executive Summary

This executive summary presents the main findings and recommendations from the 2025 monitoring of the Budweis2028 European Capital of Culture programme. Part 1 analyses the artistic programme based on a structured database of 350 activities across 22 projects. Part 2 examines team governance, working conditions, and organisational challenges based on team and curator surveys and project evaluation forms.

The programme is in its second full year of implementation, with the title year in 2028. The current phase is critical: the choices made in 2025–2026 about audience development, genre diversification, organisational capacity, and international visibility will determine what is possible in 2028.

The Programme at a Glance

The programme is visibly transformed from a preparation phase into public delivery. The growth in activities coincided with a shift from internal meetings to public programming, and the output profile moved from planning-phase documentation toward tangible artistic production — artworks, installations, and performative works.

This growth is taking place under considerable resource constraints. The operating budget is at 68% of the bid book plan, with the gap widening toward 2028. EU and private funding stands at less than half of what was planned. The team operates at roughly 24 full-time equivalents — closer to what the bid book projected for 2024 than for 2025.

Key Findings

Table 1. Key findings by area

Dimension	Finding
Programme scale	350 activities across 22 projects (up from 234 / 18). Public activities nearly doubled: 184 → 319.
Budget reality	2025 operating budget 54 mil CZK — 67% of bid book plan (81 mil). EU + private funding at less than half of plan overall.
Staffing	27 headcount but ~18–19 full-time equivalents. Team unanimously perceived as understaffed (0% say adequate).



Artistic diversity	15 distinct activity forms; strong in workshops, immersive theatre. Visual arts, heritage, architecture, contemporary music below 3%.
Audience development	75% of activities target people already interested, 12.8% target a general audience. Youngsters in 24.9% (up from 16.2%); roughly a third of the programme addresses people under 25.
Geography	81.1% in České Budějovice. Shift to the districts (40.3%, up from 21.5%). Regional share fell (26.1% → 14.6%).
European dimension	11/22 projects with at least some European aspect (up from 7/18). 9/22 with international partnerships (up from 5/18). No activities delivered abroad in either year.
Accessibility	81.8% of projects with measures (up from 55.6%). Real tools in place: Aliance pro přístupnost, accessibility checklist, venue templates. Priority: embed in daily sector practice.
Sustainability	86.4% of projects report measures (up from 27.8%). Cirkulární dům launched. Priority: adoption as standard practice beyond ECoC prompting.
Partnerships	101 organisations engaged (up from 84). Local cultural partners doubled (27 → 55). International organisations declined (24 → 13).
Capacity building	Three programmes delivered. High satisfaction across all. Permaculture Forum doubled in reach (159 participants, 88 organisations). Priority: structured follow-up from learning to practice.
Team wellbeing	86% happy, 82% want to stay. But: 43% high stress, 46% frequent overtime, 39% post-work fatigue unchanged from 2024.
Communication	Reported as a problem by 14/16 projects, weakest curator score (4/11), and most common team frustration. Persistent from 2024.
Process clarity	Two rounds of organisational restructuring in 2025. 29% understand procedures; 43% understand own responsibilities. Process instability is the most prominent frustration in the team survey.





What Is Working

Programme growth and public delivery. The transition from planning to public events is the defining achievement of 2025. The absolute number of public activities nearly doubled, while internal meetings fell to a fraction of the programme.

Performing arts core. Non-traditional theatre and immersive work maintained its output despite the specific projects changing entirely (South Specific → Každodennosti, Sklizeň). The performing arts strand is the programme's most distinctive artistic identity and one of its clearest strengths going into 2028.

Shift to city periphery and public space. The programme moved significantly into districts outside city centres. Public outdoor spaces became virtually equal with cultural organisations as the primary venue type.

Dedicated support structures produce results. Where the ECoC invests in a dedicated programme or structure, measurable results follow within the first year. Volunteering grew from 14 to 43 people after a dedicated volunteering programme was launched. Residencies went from zero to 21 artists across 7 projects after Art Farm was created. The same pattern holds for accessibility and sustainability (see below). This is one of the most important findings of the monitoring: the ECoC's approach of building dedicated structures works — but it also means that dimensions without such a structure are unlikely to develop on their own.

Accessibility infrastructure. The ECoC started building accessibility infrastructure: the Aliance pro přístupnost was established as a consultative platform connecting people with disabilities, cultural institutions, and experts; the Project Amplifier accessibility module was delivered and rated highest of all modules by participants; practical tools were produced — an accessibility checklist, web accessibility guidelines, a venue description template; Open Season is developing programming specifically for audiences with disabilities; and an accessibility mapping of cultural institutions is in progress.

Environmental sustainability infrastructure. Cirkulární dům was launched in 2025, offering a rental centre, warehouse, and repair shop that give projects practical alternatives to buying and discarding. Nearly three quarters of projects with sustainability measures use local or seasonal food, offer vegetarian or vegan options, and reuse materials.

First empirical audience data. Three post-event surveys (N=469 total) produced the first direct evidence of who actually attends ECoC activities. The results revealed that there is no single “ECoC audience”: Skateholders attracted a young,



mobile, subcultural crowd (77.3% under 40, 9.4% from abroad); Soutok chutí drew a local, family-oriented, middle-aged audience (59.8% from České Budějovice); Zpevohra Delirium reached an older, culturally established public (dominant group 50–59). This differentiation is a strength — the programme reaches very different people through different types of events.

Capacity building reach. The Permaculture Forum attracted 159 registered participants from 88 organisations — more than double the 2024 edition — and works as a entry point: 31.3% of participants were not yet engaged in any ECoC activities. Relationship-building was participants' primary motivation (66.7%), and the Forum delivered on it: 83.3% met at least three new people, and 61.9% arranged follow-up meetings. Young Creators Akademie scored 9.0/10 overall satisfaction, with participants reporting self-confidence, creative empowerment, and a deepened perception of culture.

Team commitment and recognition. The team survey shows strong commitment: 86% are happy to be part of the team, and 82% want to continue working in 2026 and beyond — up from 62% in 2024, when nearly a third were uncertain and one person said no. Recognition of people's work saw the biggest improvement of any item in the survey, rising from 15% to 75%. Team support and learning opportunities are both strong, and the sense of contributing to ECoC goals is the highest-scoring result overall. In the open-ended responses, people describe colleagues as inspiring, collaborative, and mutually supportive — a team culture that is a real asset for the years ahead.

Open call as genre correction. The first (Perma)kulturní Open Call is an instrument for complementing the core programme in areas where it is weakest. The 11 selected projects cover visual arts, audiovisual, contemporary music, architecture, heritage, and community work in smaller towns — precisely the gaps identified by the monitoring. Several are based outside České Budějovice, which also helps address geographic concentration. Two further calls are planned for 2026 and 2027.

What Needs Attention

Audience development is the programme's most critical gap. The programme is targeting mainly people who are already interested in culture. Open, low-threshold formats — free, open-air, no registration, come-and-go — are scarce, and marginalised groups are nearly absent from declared targeting. If cultural tourism is part of the 2028 ambition, dedicated efforts (multilingual communication, coordination with tourism infrastructure, targeted promotion) should begin well



before the title year. Reaching marginalised groups requires deliberate programming decisions.

More focus on the international dimension. Intercultural encounter is concentrated in a few projects, with Každodennosti alone accounting for more than half. Delivering activities abroad is an expected part of a European Capital of Culture and should start in 2026. The national/international open call is an opportunity; so is deliberate encouragement of existing projects to develop international dimensions. If international collaboration is a programme priority, it needs active investment beyond what individual projects bring on their own.

Community work remains shallow. Community work is inherently long-term: it requires building trust, sustaining relationships across years, and giving residents genuine influence over project design. If this is to become a distinctive feature by 2028, more projects where deep, reciprocal work with communities is the primary purpose need to be invested in now.

Communication and coordination remain the top organisational problem. The same issue was the leading frustration in 2024 and reappears across all three data sources — projects, curators, and the team itself. The new cluster structure introduced at the end of 2025 should be given time to settle rather than being replaced by another reorganisation. Stabilising processes, clarifying roles and accountability, and documenting how the organisation works are the team's own most-requested changes.

Burnout risk is real and structural. Post-work fatigue is unchanged from 2024 despite the team doubling. Hiring is the most common request, but hiring alone will not resolve the underlying issues if new joiners arrive into unclear structures. The programme needs both more people and clearer systems; one without the other will not change the experience.

Curators and partners need operational infrastructure, not just coordination. Multiple curators and partners independently ask for the same things: ready-made partner lists, shared marketing and promotion tools, a shared ticketing system, a cultural calendar, advertising space. The ECoC team is still setting up its own systems while curators are already in the delivery phase. Closing this mismatch would directly improve project management, marketing reach, and audience development across the programme, while reducing the workload and frustration that both curators and the team report.

Capacity building: the next step is translate knowledge into action. All three programmes score high on satisfaction and cognitive effects. The common thread is



that participants leave inspired but need clearer pathways to apply what they learned.

Accessibility: from tools to real application. The infrastructure described above gives the programme a good foundation. The next step is making sure it translates into what audiences actually experience. By 2027, all flagship ECoC projects are expected to meet minimal accessibility standards. Equally important is that the tools and standards are adopted by partner organisations.

Environmental sustainability: infrastructure is emerging, but needs more concrete tools. Cirkulární dům and the Project Amplifier sustainability module are a start, and food and material reuse practices across projects are substantive. But unlike accessibility, where a set of tools and standards already exists, sustainability still lacks governance-level criteria, practical guidelines for projects, and structured capacity building beyond a single module. Finalising and publishing the sustainability criteria under development in 2026 is the most urgent step. From there, the goal is the same: that it becomes widespread across the sector.



PART 1: ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

1.1 Methodology and sources of data

This section presents the results of the 2025 monitoring of the artistic programme. The monitoring covered a total of 22 projects, up from 18 in 2024. Two projects from the 2024 cycle are not present in 2025: Centrum Trojmezi and South Specific (both were not planned for public outputs in 2025). One project was renamed: Audience Amplifier became Project Amplifier, reflecting a shift from audience-focused to broader capacity building. The remaining 16 projects continue from 2024, and six new projects enter the monitoring for the first time, bringing the total to 22.

The 22 projects monitored in 2025 are: (Perma)kulturní Fórum, 28 Domů, Art Farm, Ars Biologica, Cirkulární dům, Deník města, Inspire, Knihy v pohybu (Bibliocity), Kul.turista, Každodennosti (Krajina příběhů), Kreativní mysli, Mosty, No Cap!/Upřímně!, Otevřená sezóna, Pilgerland – Poutní krajina, Project Amplifier, Soutok, Skateholders, Sklizeň, Womenpedia, Young Creators, and Za hranice hudby.

Data sources. The primary data source for Part 1 of this report is a structured monitoring database, built from standardised project evaluation forms. In 2024, data was compiled from event programmes, Ministry of Culture reports, and internal documents. In 2025, the system was redesigned: a comprehensive evaluation form was introduced and distributed to all projects, requesting detailed activity-level data on forms, genres, audiences, accessibility, partnerships, community dimensions, themes, and sustainability. The forms were completed by project managers and curators, and typically involved a project team meeting to discuss and fill in the open-ended questions about experiences, problems, and lessons learned. The completed forms were coded into a 213-column activity-level database following a documented methodology. All quantitative programme figures in this report come from the verified year-on-year comparison tables derived from this database.

As with any self-completion instrument, there is a risk of inconsistent interpretation across teams. The vast majority of categories used in the 2025 form are carried over from 2024, and thus already familiar to several members of each project team; where categories were potentially ambiguous, more extensive formulations were provided to make the intended meaning clear. In one case — 'interventions in public space,' which was meant as a material intervention (an installation, a renovation) but was understood by some teams as simply having an event in a public space — this



was identified during data processing and recoded by the researcher. A more substantive risk is wrong judgment rather than inconsistent interpretation: a team may report that a venue is barrier-free or that accessibility measures are in place, when in reality these are nominal or aspirational rather than verified. The accessibility figures in particular should be read with this in mind.

Units of analysis. The report analyses the programme at two levels: projects (the broadest organisational unit, e.g. Skateholders, Soutok) and activities (the smallest concrete elements identifiable to both organisers and audiences — concerts, lectures, workshops, guided tours, and similar). Neither solution is perfect, but both allow reliable comparisons across years and are well-identifiable for organisers and audiences alike.

The middle layer that organisers call "events" is deliberately not used as an analytical unit. Events are very hard to define consistently: a three-day festival spanning multiple locations and audiences would count as one event — and so would a single two-hour concert. These are not comparable units. By counting activities instead, the festival registers as, say, 15 workshops, 3 concerts, and 2 debates (20 activities), while the concert registers as 1. This gives a far more accurate picture of the programme's actual scale and composition. The convention was established in the 2024 report and is maintained for continuity.

Importantly, one activity can represent more than one form and more than one genre. Activities delivered as repeated identical sessions (e.g. the same workshop run five times) are counted as five activities. In addition to activities, the database records outputs: artworks, publications, audio/video recordings, educational materials, and performative works.

Limitations of activity-based counting. Every activity carries equal weight in the statistics, regardless of its scale, ambition, or audience size. A two-hour workshop for 8 people counts the same as a full-day public spectacle for 500 — and an activity with no audience at all still counts the same as both. This has two important consequences readers should keep in mind:

First, a single project that produces many small or repeated activities can disproportionately shape aggregate percentages. For example, a series of 52 one-spectator performances in Každodennosti will dominate the statistics for forms, genres, and target groups — not because it is more important than other projects, but simply because it generates more rows in the database.



Second, adding a European dimension or a specific target-group tag to a large number of small activities can make a project appear to have a significant European or audience profile in percentage terms, even if each individual activity reached very few people. The percentages in this report describe the composition of activities, not the composition of the programme's artistic weight, public reach, or impact.

Why activity-based counting nonetheless. Despite these limitations, counting at the activity level has clear advantages. It is transparent: every unit in the database corresponds to something concrete that actually happened — a workshop, a concert, a guided tour — rather than an abstract grouping. It is reproducible: any evaluator with access to the same project evaluation forms would arrive at the same figures. It is granular: it captures the actual internal composition of projects, revealing what forms, genres, target groups, and geographic reaches the programme truly consists of, which project-level counting would flatten entirely. And it is comparable: because the same convention was used in 2024, changes in the programme's profile can be tracked over time.

This last point is central. The primary purpose of monitoring is to track the programme's development across years, not to produce a one-off snapshot. For this reason, the report presents analysis both for 2025 alone and for 2024 and 2025 combined. The combined view is in many ways more insightful: extreme distributions produced by a single project in a single year — such as one project contributing a disproportionate share of all activities — are naturally balanced out when the dataset grows. The larger the cumulative dataset becomes over the programme's lifetime, the more stable and representative the aggregate picture will be.

Future monitoring cycles may introduce weighting by audience size or other scope indicators to complement the activity-based approach. For now, the current method provides a consistent, transparent, and reproducible baseline — and the cumulative multi-year analysis increasingly mitigates the distortions that any single year can produce.

Changes from 2024. The introduction of the standardised evaluation form is the most significant methodological change. In 2024, data was compiled from heterogeneous sources (event programmes, reports, internal documents) with substantial interpretation by the monitoring team. In 2025, project managers and



curators report structured data directly, reducing the need for inference — though interpretation is still required in some areas (venue classification, geographic coding, audience group assignment from free text).

The 2025 evaluation form also introduces data fields not tracked in 2024: funding sources at project level, accessibility measures per activity (previously tracked only at project level), ticketing and registration details. Year-on-year comparisons are possible for all dimensions that existed in 2024; new dimensions are reported for 2025 only with 2024 marked as “—”.

Additional data sources. Three post-event audience surveys were conducted in 2025 at selected events (Skateholders Forum, N=233; Soutok chutí, N=189; Soutok Delirium, N=47). These provide the first direct data on who actually attends ECoC activities. An important methodological choice is that the programme-level audience data throughout this report refers to intended target audiences, not actual audiences: reliable information about who actually attends can only come from audience research (surveys, observation), not from project teams’ impressions. The three audience surveys are reported separately where relevant. Three capacity building evaluation reports (Project Amplifier, Permaculture Forum, Young Creators Akademie 1st semester) cover the full capacity building offer delivered in 2025. Team and curator surveys, conducted in January 2026, provide data for Part 2 of this report.

1.2 Programme overview

The programme grew substantially between 2024 and 2025. The number of monitored projects increased from 18 to 22, while total activities rose from 234 to 350 — a 50% increase. The share of activities open to the public jumped from 78.6% to 91.1%, reflecting a decisive shift from internal planning and preparation toward public delivery. In 2024, over a fifth of all activities were internal meetings or closed sessions; in 2025, this proportion fell below 9%.

The output profile also shifted. Artworks and installations grew from 3 in 2024 to 32 in 2025, and 11 performative works were recorded for the first time. Publications (books) grew from 2 to 5. Other text outputs declined from 78 to 67, and audio/video recordings from 30 to 28 — reflecting the move away from planning-phase documentation toward tangible artistic production.

Table 2. Programme overview indicators, 2024 vs. 2025



Indicator	2024	2025
Total projects monitored	18	22
Total activities (incl. repeated sessions)	234	350
Public activities	184 (78.6%)	319 (91.1%)
Artworks / installations	3	32
Performative works	—	11
Publications / books	2	5
Other text outputs	78	67
Audio / video recordings	30	28
Educational materials	—	6

2024 base: N=234 activities, 18 projects | 2025 base: N=350 activities, 22 projects

Comparison 2024 → 2025: The programme is visibly transformed from preparation phase into public delivery. The 50% growth in activities (234 → 350) coincided with an increase in public access (78.6% → 91.1%), meaning the absolute number of public activities nearly doubled (184 → 319).

1.2a Funding sources

In 2025 nearly all projects (21 of 22, 95.5%) receive Ministry of Culture (MKČR) funding, making this the programme's financial backbone. Municipal co-funding is present in 18 projects (81.8%), and regional funding in 10 (45.5%). International sources reach 8 projects (36.4%) and ticket revenue 6 (27.3%).

Most projects draw on multiple funding streams: 17 out of 22 (77.3%) report three or more sources. Only two projects — Bibliocity and Mosty — rely on a single source (MKČR alone). No project reported sponsor income in 2025.

Table 3. Budget sources (2025, N=22 projects)

Budget source	N projects	% of 22
Ministry of Culture (MKČR)	21	95.5%
Municipality	18	81.8%
Region	10	45.5%
International sources	8	36.4%



Tickets	6	27.3%
Other (foundations, merch, etc.)	4	18.2%
Sponsors	0	0.0%

Base: N=22 projects in 2025. Budget source breakdown not tracked in 2024.



1.2b Programme and budget: bid book vs. reality

The programme operates under conditions that are considerably more constrained than what the bid book envisioned. The operating budget is roughly two thirds of the plan. The team, while growing, has an effective working capacity closer to what the bid book projected for 2024 than for 2025. Both the team survey and the curator survey (Part 2) report high workload, calls for more operational support, and concern about whether conditions will improve as the programme scales up. The pressure and exhaustion that come through in the survey data are a predictable consequence of these conditions — when fewer people work with less money on a programme that was designed for more of both, it is very hard to avoid this. The following sections present the budget, staffing, and programme data in detail.

The bid book made a clear financial commitment: an operating budget of €31.9 million (approximately 790 mil CZK) across 2024–2029, covering 46 projects in three programme strands. What has materialised is substantially less. The ECoC's internal budget data (as of January 2026, reflecting figures from an approved planning document) shows a total of 540 mil CZK — a shortfall of 250 mil CZK (32%) against the bid book promise. The gap exists in every year, but widens in absolute terms toward the title year: in 2028, the programme will operate on 205 mil CZK rather than the planned 305 mil.

For transparency, it is important to note what these figures do and do not capture. They reflect the budget of the organising institution and do not include co-financing that the City or Region directs to projects where a different organisation acts as the leading partner. For example, in 2026 the City provides funding directly to Jižní Svěráz rather than routing it through ECoC's budget — a mechanism that partially explains the smaller internal budget in that year. The actual financial scope of the ECoC programme is therefore somewhat broader than the figures above suggest. However, because the share of City and Region co-financing flowing to externally led projects cannot be precisely estimated from available data, those amounts are not included here. The comparison is deliberately focused on the organising institution's own operating budget measured against the commitments set out in the bid book — that gap, and what it means for the programme's conditions, is what this section documents.

Table 4. Programme budget plan vs. reality (CZK)

Year	Bid book plan (CZK)	Actual / ECoC projection (CZK)	Difference
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2024 (actual)	44 mil	37 mil	-7 mil (84%)
2025 (actual)	81 mil	54 mil	-27 mil (67%)
2026 (projection)	129 mil	89 mil	-40 mil (69%)
2027 (projection)	158 mil	116 mil	-42 mil (73%)
2028 (projection)	305 mil	205 mil	-100 mil (67%)
2029 (projection)	73 mil	39 mil	-34 mil (53%)
TOTAL	790 mil	540 mil	-250 mil (68%)

Source: Bid book Q23 (operating expenditure timetable); internal data from ECoC (January 2026). Bid book EUR figures converted at the rate implied by the budget data (€1 ≈ 24.8 CZK).



The Ministry of Culture contribution (192 mil CZK, 96% of bid book plan) has held closest to the original promise. The city and region combined are at 222 mil CZK against a bid book plan of 327 mil CZK (68%), with 105 mil CZK in savings. The largest shortfall is in EU and private sector funding, which the bid book projected at roughly 264 mil CZK combined (EU €7.2M + private €3.35M) but which the current budget data estimates at 126 mil CZK — less than half. The private sector fundraising strategy described in the bid book — sponsorship tiers, legacy fund, corporate volunteering, crowdfunding, silent auctions — has not materialised: no project reported sponsor income in 2025.

Table 5. Funding sources — bid book plan vs. actual

Funding source	Bid book plan	Actual / planned	Realisation
MKČR	~200 mil CZK (€8.0M)	192 mil CZK	96%
City + Region	~333 mil CZK (€13.3M)	222 mil CZK	67%
EU + Private	~264 mil CZK (€10.6M)	126 mil CZK	48%
Total	~797 mil CZK (€31.9M)	540 mil CZK	68%

The bid book projected 18 staff in 2024 and 25 by 2025, rising to 35 by 2026. In December 2024, the team had 11 employees — all full-time, but well below the planned 18. By December 2025, the headcount reached 27, which only seemingly exceeds the bid book target of 25.

Of the 27 employees, 14 work full-time, 9 part-time, and 4 are on maternity leave. The effective working capacity of the team is therefore considerably lower than the headcount suggests. A rough estimate puts it at around 18–19 full-time equivalents — closer to what the bid book planned for 2024 than for 2025. Part-time arrangements also carry a coordination cost that does not show up in the numbers: scheduling around variable availability, aligning handovers, and managing communication across people who are not always present takes time and management attention that a fully full-time team of the same size would not require.

The bid book’s projection of 35 staff by 2026 implies a further jump that the current trajectory makes unlikely unless additional full-time positions are created. Both the team survey and the curator survey (reported in Part 2) identify team size and capacity as a concern: curators call for more operational support, and team members report high workload. The staffing gap is not as visible as the budget gap,



but its effects on the programme — delays, limited operational support for curators, stretched management capacity — are real.

Table 6. Municipal budget evolution

	Bid book plan	December 2024	December 2025
Headcount	18 (2024) / 25 (2025)	11	27
Full-time	18 (2024) / 25 (2025)	11	14
Part-time	—	0	9
Maternity leave	—	0	4
Est. full-time equivalents	18 (2024) / 25 (2025)	11	~18–19

Programme scope. The bid book described 46 projects spanning capacity building, public events, residencies, open calls, and conferences. As of the end of 2025, 22 projects are being monitored. The gap between these numbers is less alarming than it appears, because the picture differs sharply depending on the type of project.

The vast majority of bid book projects aimed at audiences are being delivered or are in a planning or reorganisation phase rather than abandoned. In several cases, projects from the bid book are being integrated into larger wholes. In others, the ECoC is looking for organisations that would serve as “leaders” — following the principle that every project, beyond having a manager and a curator (often an individual artist), should be anchored in an organisation that will remain in place after 2029. This is a sound approach to legacy, even if it slows the start.

The real gap is in capacity building. The bid book described 13 Permaskilling modules covering culture management, audience development, accessibility, sustainability, philanthropy, culture and health, environmental impact, community leaders, and support for youngsters / emerging careers. In 2025, three capacity building programmes are operational: Project Amplifier (which consolidates several of the planned modules), the Permaculture Forum, and Young Creators Akademie. The coverage is considerably smaller and less diverse than what the bid book envisioned. This is understandable, and not only because audience-oriented programming naturally takes priority when resources are limited. Capacity building



formats are genuinely difficult to implement effectively. Even with strong facilitators, translating workshops and training into lasting changes in practice depends on long-term commitment, institutional follow-up, and a degree of continuity that a time-limited programme like an ECoC can struggle to provide. This does not mean capacity building should be abandoned — it means that its results are harder to secure and slower to materialise than those of audience-facing programming, which partly explains why it is the first area to shrink under pressure.

The loss is nonetheless substantial, because the bid book's capacity building ambitions were one of its distinctive features: the idea that the ECoC would not only produce events but systematically strengthen the skills, networks, and working conditions of the cultural sector.



1.3 Diversity in ECoC Programme: Forms and Genres of Activities

Diversity in this context is understood in two ways: as a variety of forms (concerts, spectacles, exhibitions, meetings, etc.) and as a variety of genres (traditional and non-traditional theatre, classical music, painting, etc.). The categories used in our database combine existing classifications (e.g., for visual or performing arts) with information emerging from the artistic programme itself. Our goal is to provide as comprehensive and rich a picture as possible. Consequently, our analyses may appear detailed at first glance — but this reflects our understanding of “diversity” in the programme: an abundance of forms and genres with the potential to appeal to a wide range of people.

Key results

The 2025 programme’s three most common activity forms are workshops (39.7%), happenings and performances (23.1%), and spectacles (20.6%). The most frequently assigned genre categories are professional development (48.0%), cultural education (36.9%), and artistic education (34.0%), followed by the performing arts core: non-traditional theatre/immersive work (25.7%) and performance/happening (20.9%). Nature and landscape themes (18.9%) are present in the programme at a level not seen in 2024 (2.6%).

Across 584 activities delivered in 2024 and 2025, the programme is rich in participatory formats (workshops at 34.6%, happenings at 14.7%) and in performative ones (spectacles at 28.1%, non-traditional/site-specific theatre at 30.8%). It is weaker in formats and genres that typically serve as entry points for general audiences: concerts account for 10.3%, movie screenings for 3.1%, exhibitions for 3.3%. Several genres remain at or below 3% across both years — painting/drawing, sculpture, architecture, material heritage, photography, and design. According to the baseline study of cultural behaviours among residents of the region, visiting monuments and going to the cinema are among the most widespread and socially diverse forms of cultural participation — cutting across age, education, and economic situation. The genres and formats closest to these activities are precisely the ones that remain marginal in the ECoC programme. These gaps are, to some extent, being addressed through the open call process described below.

Indicator tracking for section 1.3

Indicator	Status in 2025
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ECoC projects represent diversity of forms and genres	Wide range of forms delivered (15 distinct types). Genre range broadened vs. 2024, but visual arts, photography, architecture, design, contemporary music below 3% combined.
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Recommendations

Continue the (Perma)kulturní Open Call process. The first call has already selected 11 projects that fill identified genre gaps (visual arts, audiovisual, contemporary music, architecture, film). The second call (2026, national and international) and third call (2027, regional) should maintain the same approach of explicitly prioritising underrepresented genres.

Pay attention to the balance between participatory and presentational formats. Workshops (34.6% combined) and happenings (14.7%) engage participants deeply, but formats that serve as entry points for people who do not yet participate in cultural life — open-air events with free access, no registration, and the possibility to come and go — remain scarce. In typical cultural programming, these are most often concerts and movie screenings in public spaces. As the programme grows toward 2028, ensuring that such low-threshold formats are adequately represented will matter for building a broader audience.

Expand the presence of material and cultural heritage in the programme. Heritage-related genres remain at or below 3% across both years, yet evidence from the resident survey shows that heritage is among the topics that engage the widest share of the population. A genre that resonates with nearly all residents should be far more present in a programme that aims to reach beyond the existing cultural audience.

1.3a Forms of activities – detailed

Each activity can represent more than one form. The 2025 programme's formal profile is shaped by several factors. Two site-specific theatre festivals — Každodennosti, Divadlo Continuo's three-week project in the park by Velký jez (part of Krajina příběhů), and Sklizeň, Rezi.Dance's six-weekends landscape performance programme in the South Bohemian countryside — contributed a large share of spectacles, happenings, and immersive performances. Soutok, the citywide celebration, added further outdoor events and performances. At the same time, the high workshop count does not come from any single project or deliberate shift; rather, workshops are simply a common format across many different projects: Skateholders includes skating workshops, Ars Biologica runs interdisciplinary labs, Kul.turista delivers community workshops, Young Creators and Project Amplifier are structured as workshop series, Knihy v Pohybu involves literary workshops, and so on. When many projects each deliver multiple workshops, the aggregate number is high.



Table 7. Forms of activities, 2024 vs. 2025

Form of activity	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Workshop	63	26.9%	139	39.7%	202	34.6%
Spectacle	92	39.3%	72	20.6%	164	28.1%
Happening / performance	5	2.1%	81	23.1%	86	14.7%
Meeting / closed session	65	27.8%	17	4.9%	82	14.0%
Lecture	42	17.9%	24	6.9%	66	11.3%
Concert	34	14.5%	26	7.4%	60	10.3%
Debate / discussion	22	9.4%	21	6.0%	43	7.4%
Guided tour	4	1.7%	15	4.3%	19	3.3%
Other form	16	6.8%	8	2.3%	24	4.1%
Movie screening	7	3.0%	11	3.1%	18	3.1%
Exhibition	9	3.8%	10	2.9%	19	3.3%
Public reading / slam	0	0.0%	8	2.3%	8	1.4%
Physical exercise / sport	8	3.4%	5	1.4%	13	2.2%
Contest	5	2.1%	4	1.1%	9	1.5%
In-site / site-specific installation	3	1.3%	6	1.7%	9	1.5%
N activities (base)	234		350		584	

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Workshops grew from 26.9% to 39.7% of activities, but this mostly reflects the larger number of projects in 2025 (22 vs. 18) and the fact that workshops are a standard component of many different types of project. The happening/performance form, near-absent in 2024 (2.1%), surged to 23.1%, largely generated by Každodennosti and Sklizeň. Spectacles dropped from 39.3% to 20.6%; in 2024, South Specific's large touring programme inflated their share considerably. Internal meetings fell from 27.8% to 4.9%, which is expected: 2024 was a start-up year with heavy planning and coordination activity, and by 2025 the



programme had moved into delivery. Lectures declined from 17.9% to 6.9%, while concerts fell from 14.5% to 7.4%; in both cases the absolute numbers dropped more moderately than the percentages suggest, because the programme as a whole grew from 234 to 350 activities.

1.3b Genres of activities – detailed

The prominence of education-related genres in the 2025 data reflects the large number of workshops across the programme. One activity can carry multiple genre tags: when Young Creators runs a session, it gets tagged as both professional development and cultural education; when Ars Biologica runs a field workshop on landscape art, it picks up artistic education, professional development, and nature/landscape. The education genres are therefore not a separate layer of the programme – they overlap heavily with the workshop-based activities documented in the forms table above.

Table 8. Genres of activities (1/2), 2024 vs. 2025

Genre of activity	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Professional development	26	11.1%	168	48.0%	194	33.2%
Cultural education	17	7.3%	129	36.9%	146	25.0%
Artistic education	1	0.4%	119	34.0%	120	20.5%
Non-traditional theatre / immersive	90	38.5%	90	25.7%	180	30.8%
Nature / landscape	6	2.6%	66	18.9%	72	12.3%
Self-growth	9	3.8%	52	14.9%	61	10.4%
Urbanism / city	18	7.7%	44	12.6%	62	10.6%
Local / micro / everyday history	17	7.3%	26	7.4%	43	7.4%
Science / knowledge	12	5.1%	25	7.1%	37	6.3%
Sports	13	5.6%	24	6.9%	37	6.3%
Socialising / fun activity	24	10.3%	5	1.4%	29	5.0%
Opera	24	10.3%	0	0.0%	24	4.1%



N activities (base)	234		350		584	
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**Table 9. Genres of activities (2/2), 2024 vs. 2025**

Genre of activity	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Other music genre	5	2.1%	21	6.0%	26	4.5%
Dance	21	9.0%	18	5.1%	39	6.7%
New circus	—	—	17	4.9%	17	2.9%
Health	2	0.9%	17	4.9%	19	3.3%
Film	6	2.6%	16	4.6%	22	3.8%
Poetry	—	—	16	4.6%	16	2.7%
Literature	16	6.8%	14	4.0%	30	5.1%
Painting / drawing	0	0.0%	15	4.3%	15	2.6%
Immaterial heritage / traditions	2	0.9%	15	4.3%	17	2.9%
Sculpture / installations	1	0.4%	14	4.0%	15	2.6%
Photography	8	3.4%	10	2.9%	18	3.1%
Classical music	23	9.8%	8	2.3%	31	5.3%
Architecture	7	3.0%	8	2.3%	15	2.6%
Material heritage	9	3.8%	6	1.7%	15	2.6%
N activities (base)	234		350		584	

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Non-traditional theatre/immersive work was present in 25.7% of 2025 activities (down from 38.5% in 2024 in share, but the same count: 90 activities in both years). In 2024 this genre was almost entirely produced by South Specific; in 2025 it is carried by Každodennosti and Sklizeň. This continuity in the performing arts core is worth noting: even though the specific projects changed, the programme maintained its immersive theatre output.

Nature and landscape themes grew from 2.6% to 18.9%. This is largely attributable to projects that work with the South Bohemian landscape: Sklizeň takes place entirely in rural settings, Pilgerland engages with the historical landscape, and Ars Biologica uses nature as both subject and setting. Self-growth expanded from 3.8%



to 14.9%, and urbanism/city from 7.7% to 12.6%. New genres tracked for the first time in 2025 include new circus (4.9%) and poetry (4.6%). Visual arts genres that were completely absent in 2024 — painting/drawing, sculpture/installations — appeared in 2025, but remain at low levels (4.0%–4.3%). Heritage categories are similarly marginal: immaterial heritage at 4.3%, material heritage at 1.7%.

Photography (2.9%), architecture (2.3%), and design (3.1%) remain underrepresented. Contemporary and conceptual visual arts, audiovisual and digital art, fashion, and contemporary music are absent or barely present in both years.

Opera, which accounted for 10.3% of 2024 activities, disappeared entirely in 2025. Classical music fell from 9.8% to 2.3%. Both were products of specific 2024 projects that did not operate in the same way in 2025.

1.3c Addressing genre gaps: the (Perma)kulturní Open Call

As documented above, several genres remain underrepresented or absent in the ECoC programme as delivered in 2024 and 2025: contemporary and conceptual visual arts, audiovisual and digital art, architecture, contemporary design and fashion, contemporary music (beyond classical and electronic), photography, and film. The (Perma)kulturní Open Call is a competitive grant programme through which organisations outside the core ECoC programme can propose projects for 2028. It was intentionally structured so that the selected projects complement the existing programme in areas where it is weakest.

The first open call, restricted to organisations based in the South Bohemian Region, was launched in June 2025 and concluded in November 2025. It received 29 applications (total requested funding: 56.4 million CZK), of which 27 passed the formal check. An evaluation committee of seven independent experts assessed the projects against five criteria: artistic quality and innovation (max. 25 points), alignment with ECoC goals and cross-cutting themes including accessibility, sustainability, and attractiveness (max. 30 points), international cooperation (max. 20 points), budget appropriateness and realistic financing (max. 15 points), and applicant competence (max. 10 points). Eleven projects scored at or above the threshold of 60 points and were recommended for support by the committee.

The 11 recommended projects cover a range of genres that are currently weak or absent in the programme: visual arts and site-specific installations, audiovisual and film (including a film festival and science-art projects), contemporary and jazz music, cultural heritage and local history, literature and publishing, participatory exhibition design, community and rural development (including a Roma culture project), and science-art crossover. Several projects are based in smaller South Bohemian towns



(Písek, Blatná, Český Krumlov, Jemnice, Slavonice, Vimperk, Jindřichův Hradec, Maříž, Hluboká nad Vltavou), which also helps address the geographic concentration documented in section 1.5.

The projects from the first open call will deliver their main public outputs in 2028 and are therefore not included in the 2024–2025 monitoring data. They will be integrated into the monitoring framework as they enter their preparation and delivery phases.

Two further open calls are planned: a second call in 2026, open to organisations from across the Czech Republic and internationally, and a third, smaller call in 2027, again restricted to the South Bohemian Region. The 2026 call explicitly lists the underrepresented genres as preferred categories: contemporary and conceptual visual arts, audiovisual and multimedia art (including immersive content, VR/AR/XR, video games, and film), architecture, contemporary design and fashion, contemporary music, and photography.

1.4 Capacity building opportunities

Key results

The ECoC delivered three capacity building programmes in 2025, each targeting a different audience and serving a different function: Project Amplifier (professional development for ECoC curators and collaborators), the Permaculture Forum (networking and inspiration for the broader cultural community), and Young Creators Akademie (youth engagement and empowerment for 15–22-year-olds). The Permaculture Forum alone attracted 159 registered participants from 88 organisations; Project Amplifier had around 15 participants; YCA had 15 participants in its first semester.

All three programmes scored high on satisfaction and reported meaningful cognitive effects. Project Amplifier participants rated knowledge gained as practical (9/10) and exclusive (8/10). The Permaculture Forum achieved 89.6% reporting work-relevant learning. Young Creators Akademie scored 9.0/10 overall satisfaction, with Most Significant Change stories documenting self-confidence, creative empowerment, and a deepened perception of culture.

The weakest point across all three programmes is translation into practice. In the Permaculture Forum, only 45.8% expressed intention to implement what they learned (down from 73.8% in 2024). In Project Amplifier, participants consistently asked for more concrete, project-specific applications. The planned wrap-up session was postponed and had not been delivered by early 2026.



Indicator tracking for section 1.4

KPI	Status in 2025
ECoC offers variety of programmes with high evaluations (satisfaction, cognitive effects, dispositions)	Three programmes. Satisfaction high across all. Cognitive effects: 9/10 practical knowledge (PA), 89.6% work-relevant learning (PF), 9.0/10 overall (YCA). Dispositions: 8–10/10 plan to continue learning and share (PA); 64.6% plan to develop knowledge (PF). Translation to practice weak: only 45.8% intend to implement (PF, down from 73.8%).



Recommendations

The common thread across all three programmes is a gap between inspiration and implementation. Satisfaction and cognitive effects are high; translation into changed practice is weak. The priority for 2026 is to build concrete follow-up into the design of each programme – not as an afterthought, but as a core element: structured pathways from what participants learn to what they do differently in their own projects and organisations.

1.5 Diversity in ECoC Programme: Target Audiences

Key results

People interested in the specific topic or genre remain the primary intended audience in 2025 (74.9% of activities), almost identical to 2024 (75.2%) and to the combined figure (75.0%). Beyond this core, the 2025 programme declares broader targeting than 2024: youngsters appear in 24.9% of activities, communities in 13.4%, and general audiences in 15.4%.

The combined two-year picture (N=584) shows that 75.0% of all activities address people already interested in the topic or genre. The culture sector is addressed by 31.2%, youngsters by 21.4%, and communities by 10.4%. Foreigners appear in 12.3% of all activities. Tourists (0.3%), refugees/minorities (0.9%), people with disabilities (1.0%), and other marginalised groups (0.3%) remain at the margins of the programme's declared targeting.

Only 12.8% of activities across both years explicitly address a general, broad audience – and even fewer are of the kind that allows free, uncommitted participation: open-air events with no fixed schedule, no registration, no entrance fee, where people can come and go as they wish, in public spaces rather than inside cultural institutions. This type of programming has been scarce in the ECoC programme so far. If the ambition is to build a broad cultural audience for 2028, steps to develop this type of programming need to be taken now.

Indicator tracking for section 1.5

Indicator	Status in 2025
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Significant proportion of projects intend to attract tourists, incl. foreigners	Foreigners targeted in 12.3% of activities (stable). Tourists as declared target: 0.0% in 2025. Audience surveys show 5.3–9.4% international visitors at three events.
ECoC provides incentives for young people to become cultural audience and creators	Youth engagement concentrated in specific projects, not programme-wide. Youngsters targeted in 24.9% of activities (up from 16.2%). Young Creators Academy reached 15–22 year-olds, satisfaction 9.0/10. Skateholders audience 77.3% under 40, 14.6% under 20.
ECoC audiences are diverse in terms of age, education, economic situation, ethnicity	Age and geography captured at 3 events (N=469). Very different profiles per event type. *Education, economic situation, ethnicity will be tracked in a baseline resident survey in 2029.

Recommendations

Start developing programming that explicitly targets a broad, general audience with low-threshold formats: free, open-air, no registration, with the possibility to come and go. Only 12.8% of activities across both years address a general audience, and the share of truly open formats is even smaller. Concerts and festivals in public spaces are the most common way European Capitals of Culture build new audiences. This type of programming takes time to develop and cannot be introduced only in 2028 — audiences need prior familiarity and trust with the programme.

Pay attention to the near-complete absence of tourists as a declared target group (0.0% in 2025). The audience surveys show that 5–9% of attendees at individual events come from abroad, which is a reasonable baseline for the current stage, but no project is actively working to attract visitors. If cultural tourism is part of the 2028 ambition, dedicated efforts — multilingual communication, coordination with tourism infrastructure, targeted promotion — should begin well before the title year.

Pay attention to the representation of marginalised groups. Refugees, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups together account for 1.0% of the programme’s declared targeting across both years. Reaching these groups requires deliberate programming decisions and partnerships with organisations that already work with these communities.





1.5a Intended target groups – detailed

Target groups are coded from project evaluation forms; one activity can address multiple audiences. These are declared intentions, not verified attendance.

Table 10. Target groups of activities, 2024 vs. 2025

Target group	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
People interested in topic/genre	176	75.2%	262	74.9%	438	75.0%
General & large audience	21	9.0%	54	15.4%	75	12.8%
Culture sector	64	27.4%	91	26.0%	155	26.5%
Youngsters	38	16.2%	87	24.9%	125	21.4%
Communities	14	6.0%	47	13.4%	61	10.4%
Foreigners	29	12.4%	43	12.3%	72	12.3%
Parents / grandparents	6	2.6%	32	9.1%	38	6.5%
Teachers	20	8.5%	31	8.9%	51	8.7%
Children	20	8.5%	27	7.7%	47	8.0%
Pupils	15	6.4%	18	5.1%	33	5.7%
Seniors	4	1.7%	16	4.6%	20	3.4%
Refugees / minorities	1	0.4%	4	1.1%	5	0.9%
People with disabilities	2	0.9%	4	1.1%	6	1.0%
Other marginalised groups	0	0.0%	2	0.6%	2	0.3%
Tourists	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
N activities (base)	234		350		584	

Comparison 2024 → 2025: In 2025, 24.9% of activities target youngsters (up from 16.2%), carried by projects like Young Creators, Skateholders, and the youth components of community and arts projects. When combined with children (7.7%)



and pupils (5.1%), roughly a third of the programme addresses people under about 25. Communities more than doubled as a target group (6.0% → 13.4%), and general audiences grew from 9.0% to 15.4%. Parents/grandparents rose from 2.6% to 9.1% and seniors from 1.7% to 4.6%. Foreigners held at around 12% in both years. The three marginalised-group categories together account for 1.1%, 1.1%, and 0.6% of 2025 activities — a total of 10 activities across the entire programme.

1.5b Actual audiences: evidence from post-event surveys

In 2025, audience research was conducted at three public events using a tear-off paper survey (no pen required). The three events represent different segments of the programme, and together they provide the first empirical picture of who actually comes to ECoC activities.

"**Skateholders Forum** (N=233, response rate 84.4%) attracted a distinctly young audience: 77.3% under 40, including 14.6% under 20. Geographically, it had the strongest supra-regional reach of the three events: only 39.9% of attendees lived in České Budějovice, while 33.9% came from other Czech regions and 9.4% from abroad. Almost a third of the audience (30.0%) were repeat visitors despite this being only the second edition.

Soutok chutí (N=189, response rate 72.4%) drew a more local and mature audience: 59.8% from České Budějovice, 81.5% from the South Bohemian region, with 30–39 as the dominant age group (37.0%). Only 5.3% came from abroad. The event was heavily built on an existing audience: 74.1% of attendees had visited Summer Cinema Háječek before.

Soutok: Zpěvohra Delirium (N=47, response rate 66.2%) reached the oldest and most culturally established audience: the dominant group was 50–59 (27.7%), and only 12.8% were under 30. It was entirely an intentional audience — 0% accidental passers-by, as the performances were moved indoors to the Philharmonic building due to heavy rain. International visitors constituted 8.5% — the highest share of the three events.

The three surveys reveal that the ECoC already reaches very different people depending on the type of event. There is no single 'ECoC audience': there is a young, mobile, subcultural crowd at Skateholders; a local, family-oriented, middle-aged audience at the food festival; and an older, culturally established audience at the Philharmonic. This also means that aggregate audience figures across the programme would obscure more than they reveal. The question for future monitoring is whether each type of event reaches the people it ought to reach — and whether there are groups that none of the events reaches.



For 2026, the monitoring programme has already established a plan and structure for integrating audience research into a larger number of projects, which should result in more consistent and systematic data on who actually attends ECoC activities.

1.6 Geography and Venues

Key results

In 2025, 81.1% of activities took place in České Budějovice (up from 61.5% in 2024). Within the city, the most important development is a shift away from the centre: 40.3% of activities took place in districts outside the centre, up from 21.5%. Public spaces became virtually equal with cultural organisations as the most common venue type (36.6% vs. 36.9%). Across both years combined, 71.2% of all activities took place in České Budějovice, 18.6% in other towns, and 6.8% in rural areas. The combined centre/periphery split is 65.3% central vs. 34.7% outside the centre.

Indicator tracking for section 1.6

Indicator	Status in 2025
Significant share of projects delivered outside traditional cultural facilities	36.6% of activities in public outdoor spaces (up from 12.8%). Schools 3.4%, universities 3.1%. Combined: approx. 43% outside traditional cultural facilities.
Some part of projects involve interventions in public spaces or neglected spaces	40.3% of activities outside city centres (up from 21.5%). Revitalisation of public places tagged in 27.1% of activities.

Recommendations

Strengthen programming outside České Budějovice. The regional programme shrank in share from 26.1% to 14.6% for other towns. As the resident survey shows, people living outside České Budějovice participate in cultural life less frequently — which makes regional delivery all the more important for broadening the programme's reach. In 2024, South Specific's touring programme carried much of this dimension; going forward, it would be valuable if more projects included regional activities as part of their regular programming.



Continue programming in districts outside the city centre. The shift from 21.5% to 40.3% of activities in peripheral areas is one of the most positive developments in the 2025 programme. It is largely driven by Každodennosti and should be maintained as other projects develop their own neighbourhood-based activities.

Pay attention to the absence of activities delivered abroad. The category is tracked in the evaluation form, but no activities have been delivered outside the Czech Republic in either 2024 or 2025. For a European Capital of Culture, presenting the programme in other countries is an important part of international visibility.

1.6a Geographic distribution

The geographic profile of 2025 is shaped by Soutok, Každodennosti, Skateholders, and other projects concentrated in České Budějovice. Sklizeň, by contrast, is based entirely in a rural area south of the city and contributes to the growth in rural activities.

Table 11. Geographic location of activities, 2024 vs. 2025

Geographic location	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
České Budějovice	144	61.5%	284	81.1%	428	71.2%
Other towns in region	61	26.1%	51	14.6%	112	18.6%
Rural areas	13	5.6%	28	8.0%	41	6.8%
Online / other	16	6.8%	4	1.1%	20	3.3%
Total	234	100%	367	100%	601	100%

Comparison 2024 → 2025: The 2025 programme grew substantially within České Budějovice (from 61.5% to 81.1% of activities), while the regional programme shrank in share (26.1% → 14.6% for other towns). In 2024, activities outside the city reached Český Krumlov, Třeboň, Tábor, Jindřichův Hradec, Slavonice, Prachatice, and several smaller towns; in 2025, they took place in Tábor, Týn nad Vltavou, Hluboká nad Vltavou, Slavonice, Vimperk, and Velešín. Rural activities were concentrated in Komařice, the Novohradské hory area, and several smaller villages. The share of projects with at least some activity outside the city remained similar: 8 out of 22 in 2025 vs. 7 out of 18 in 2024 (36.4% vs. 38.9%). No activities were delivered abroad.

1.6b Centre vs. periphery



Within the city and other towns, the 2025 programme moved significantly into districts outside the centre:

Table 12. Activities by centre vs. periphery

Position	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Central areas	146	74.6%	182	59.7%	328	65.3%
Districts outside the centre	51	21.5%	123	40.3%	174	34.7%
Total (excl. online)	197		305		502	

Comparison 2024 → 2025: In 2025, 40.3% of activities took place outside city centres (up from 21.5%). This is driven by a few specific projects: Každodennosti accounts for the largest share of activities outside the centre, followed by Ars Biologica, Permakulturní Fórum, and Cirkulární dům. This shift means that the programme is physically present in more parts of the city than before.

1.6c Types of venues

Table 13. Activities by type of venue, 2024 vs. 2025

Type of venue	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Cultural organisation	72	33.0%	129	36.9%	201	35.2%
Public outdoor space	28	12.8%	128	36.6%	156	27.3%
Other social / cultural spaces	29	13.3%	55	15.7%	84	14.7%
Bar, pub, restaurant	25	11.5%	8	2.3%	33	5.8%
Heritage site	27	11.5%	0	0.0%	27	4.7%
School	10	4.6%	12	3.4%	22	3.9%
University / scientific institution	7	3.2%	11	3.1%	18	3.2%
Other	28	12.0%	0	0.0%	28	4.9%
Public indoor space	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%
Total	228		343		571	



Comparison 2024 → 2025: In 2025, public outdoor spaces grew from 12.8% to 36.6%, pulling nearly equal with cultural organisations (36.9%) as the primary venue type. This is largely driven by one project: Každodennosti alone accounts for 84 of the 128 public outdoor space activities. Mosty (16), Ars Biologica (9), and Skateholders (7) contribute the rest. Cultural organisations also grew in share (33.0% → 36.9%), so the outdoor expansion did not come at the expense of established cultural venues. Bars and restaurants dropped from 11.5% to 2.3%. Heritage sites, which accounted for 11.5% in 2024, recorded 0.0% in 2025. Schools and universities remained stable at 3–4%.



1.7 Creative Engagement, Volunteers, and Residencies

Key results

In 2025, 37.7% of activities offered some form of creative or expressive opportunity for participants — mainly through workshops and interactive events (up from 20.1% in 2024). Co-creation between professional artists and non-professional participants appeared in 11.4% of activities (up from 6.4%). Nine out of 22 projects engaged a total of 43 volunteers (up from 2 projects and 14 volunteers). Artistic residencies, entirely absent in 2024, were introduced across 7 projects involving 21 artists. Across both years combined (N=584), 30.7% of activities offered creative or expressive opportunities, 9.4% involved co-creation with artists, and 18.3% involved local communities.

Indicator tracking for section 1.7

Indicator	Status in 2025
Significant part of projects offer deepened engagement / co-creation	37.7% of activities offer creative/expressive opportunity (up from 20.1%). Co-creation with artists: 11.4% (up from 6.4%).
Significant proportion of projects executed with volunteers	9/22 projects (40.9%) engaged volunteers, 43 total. Dedicated volunteering programme launched.
Part of programme delivered through artistic residencies	7/22 projects hosted 21 artists. Art Farm launched to build residency infrastructure.

Recommendations

The 2025 data shows a clear pattern: where the ECoC has introduced a dedicated programme or structure — the volunteering programme, Art Farm for residencies — results follow within the first year. Volunteering grew from 14 to 43 people, residencies went from zero to 21 artists across 7 projects. This confirms that the ECoC's approach of building dedicated support structures works. It also means that dimensions where no such structure exists are unlikely to develop on their own — and that when the team decides to act on a gap, the track record so far suggests it will deliver.



Continue expanding the volunteering programme. The infrastructure is in place; in 2026, the focus should shift from building the structure to growing the number of volunteers and deepening their involvement.

Continue developing the residency dimension through Art Farm and the projects already hosting artists. Going forward, it would be useful to document residency outcomes more systematically: what artworks were produced, what collaborations were initiated, and how the artists experienced the city and the programme.

Pay attention to the gap between creative/expressive opportunities (37.7%) and actual co-creation with artists (11.4%). If deepened participation and co-creation are priorities for 2028, they will likely need the same kind of dedicated support that made volunteering and residencies happen — explicit encouragement in project agreements, targeted capacity building, or a dedicated programme.

1.7a Creative and expressive opportunities

The indicators below track whether activities offer people something beyond being an audience: an opportunity to create, express, or actively contribute. The growth in 2025 is in part a natural consequence of the high number of workshops across the programme: most workshops involve some form of active participation by definition. The co-creation indicator is more specific — it captures activities where professional artists and non-professional participants work together in a shared creative process, as distinct from workshops where participants follow a structured curriculum.

Table 14. Creative engagement indicators, 2024 vs. 2025

Indicator	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Creative / expressive opportunity	47	20.1%	132	37.7%	179	30.7%
Regular people create with artists	15	6.4%	40	11.4%	55	9.4%
Involved local communities	35	15.0%	72	20.6%	107	18.3%
N activities (base)	234		350		584	



Comparison 2024 → 2025: The share of activities with creative or expressive opportunities grew from 20.1% to 37.7%. Co-creation with artists doubled from 6.4% to 11.4%, though it remains a smaller portion: the majority of participatory activities are structured workshops rather than open-ended artistic collaboration. Community involvement grew from 15.0% to 20.6%, with the largest contributions from Každodennosti, Soutok, Young Creators, and Pilgerland.

1.7b Volunteers and residencies

Table 15. Volunteers and artistic residencies, 2024 vs. 2025

Indicator	2024	2025
Projects engaging volunteers	2/18 (11.1%)	9/22 (40.9%)
Total volunteers	14	43
Projects with artistic residencies	0	7/22 (31.8%)
Artists in residencies	0	21

Across 2024 and 2025 combined: 11 projects have engaged 57 volunteers in total, and 7 projects have hosted 21 artists in residencies (all in 2025).

Comparison 2024 → 2025: In 2024, volunteering was marginal: 11.1% of projects, 14 volunteers. In 2025, 40.9% of projects engaged volunteers, with 43 people contributing. Part of this growth is attributable to the launch of a dedicated ECoC volunteering programme in 2025 — the first systematic effort to recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers across the programme. In 2025 the initiative was still in its early stages and the numbers remained Modest, but the infrastructure is now in place and is planned to expand substantially in 2026.

Artistic residencies were absent from the programme in 2024. In 2025, seven projects hosted 21 artists in residence — with Sklizeň (Rezi.Dance) accounting for the largest number, as an artist residency house is its core infrastructure. In addition, 2025 saw the launch of Art Farm, a project specifically dedicated to developing České Budějovice and the South Bohemian region as a destination for artistic residencies and to supporting more local organisations in hosting them. The residency dimension of the programme is therefore not only growing in numbers but building the infrastructure for further expansion in 2026 and beyond.



1.8 Connecting Cultures and European Dimension

The European dimension in an ECoC programme is often understood narrowly — as the presence of international partners, foreign artists, or activities explicitly labelled as 'European.' In our monitoring, we take a broader view. Questions of identity, heritage, and belonging do not divide neatly into local, national, and European: they exist on a continuum. A project that works with the history of a South Bohemian region is also working with European history; a community that reflects on its relationship to a place is engaging with questions of belonging that are European by nature. The thematic tags in our database reflect this understanding: they track local and regional identity alongside European topics, heritage alongside civic engagement, neighbourhood-level work alongside minority voices. The categories overlap, and they are meant to. What we are interested in is whether the programme, taken as a whole, engages with identity and culture at multiple scales — from the immediate neighbourhood to the European level — rather than treating the European dimension as a separate, add-on requirement.

Key results

European topics (diversity, climate, migration) are present in 18.0% of activities. Local and regional identity themes appear in 21.1%. No activities were delivered abroad. Half of all projects (11/22) have at least some European aspect.

Across both years combined (N=584), the most common thematic tags are meeting of various cultures (27.9%, entirely from 2025), local/regional identity (18.0%), European values (12.7%), European topics (12.7%), and environmental sustainability (11.0%).

Indicator tracking for section 1.8

Indicator	Status in 2025
Significant proportion of projects take up European history, heritage, identity, topics	European topics in 18.0% of activities (up from 4.7%). European values in 10.6%. Local/regional identity in 21.1%. 11/22 projects with some European aspect (up from 7/18).
Some part of ECoC productions effectuated abroad	None in 2025 or 2024.



ECoC projects provide opportunities for people from various countries to meet	“Meeting of various cultures” tagged in 46.6% of activities, but 53% from one project Každodennosti.
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Recommendations

The European dimension is one of the core requirements of a European Capital of Culture and will be a central focus of the European panel’s monitoring visits.

Spread intercultural encounter across more projects. In 2025, opportunities for people from various countries to meet are concentrated in a few projects – Každodennosti alone accounts for more than half. The open call, which requires international partnerships from all applicants, will bring new projects with a European dimension from 2028. But between now and then, the existing projects that do not yet involve international collaboration could be encouraged to explore it.

Develop the local-to-European continuum as a conscious programming principle. The programme already engages with local and regional identity (21.1%), European topics (18.0%), and environmental sustainability (14.3%) – themes that connect the South Bohemian context to broader European questions. Making this connection explicit in how projects are presented and communicated would strengthen the European dimension without requiring new activities.

Start delivering activities abroad. This has not happened in either 2024 or 2025. It is an expected part of a European Capital of Culture programme.

1.8a Thematic focus

Table 16. Thematic tags – connecting cultures, 2024 vs. 2025

Theme	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Meeting of various cultures	0	0.0%	163	46.6%	163	27.9%
Local/regional identity / history / heritage	31	12.8%	74	21.1%	105	18.0%



Theme	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
European topics (diversity, climate...)	11	4.7%	63	18.0%	74	12.7%
Environmental sustainability as topic	14	6.0%	50	14.3%	64	11.0%
Voices of minorities	13	5.6%	44	12.6%	57	9.8%
European values	37	15.2%	37	10.6%	74	12.7%
Civic / political engagement	19	8.1%	34	9.7%	53	9.1%
Neighbourhood / city as topic	41	17.5%	5	1.4%	46	7.9%
National identity / history / heritage	15	6.4%	9	2.6%	24	4.1%
European identity / history / heritage	29	12.4%	10	2.9%	39	6.7%
N activities (base)	234		350		584	

Comparison 2024 → 2025: “Meeting of various cultures” appeared in 46.6% of 2025 activities, up from 0.0% in 2024. It is important to understand what is behind the number: Každodennosti and its international artist residencies alone account for 87 of the 163 activities carrying this tag — more than half. The project hosted over 20 international artists who created site-specific work in České Budějovice, and each of their activities was coded as involving a meeting of cultures. Ars Biologica (22), Skateholders (15), and Permakulturní fórum (13) account for most of the rest. The tag therefore captures something real — these projects do involve international artists working alongside local communities — but its high prevalence should not be read as meaning that nearly half the programme is intercultural in a deep sense.

Local and regional identity grew from 12.8% to 21.1% (18.0% combined), environmental sustainability from 6.0% to 14.3% (11.0% combined), and European topics from 4.7% to 18.0% (12.7% combined). Voices of minorities grew from 5.6% to 12.6% (9.8% combined). European values held at the same absolute count in both years but dropped in share from 15.2% to 10.6% (12.7% combined) as the programme expanded.



Two categories from 2024 fell sharply: “neighbourhood/city as topic” from 17.5% to 1.4%, and “European identity/history/heritage” from 12.4% to 2.9%.

No activities were delivered abroad in 2025. For a European Capital of Culture, international visibility depends not only on hosting foreign guests but also on presenting the programme in other European countries.



1.9 Stories of local communities in the programme

Key results

Community engagement remains one of the less developed dimensions of the programme. In 2025, 20.6% of activities are tagged as involving local communities, but for most projects this is a secondary feature rather than a core focus. Only three projects — Pilgerland, Kul.turista, and Každodennosti — are genuinely built around sustained work with specific communities, where the relationship between artists and residents is the project’s central logic. The bid book places considerable weight on communities — gathering micro-histories, co-design with residents, reaching hard-to-reach groups — but the current programme has not yet developed this into a broad, visible strand.

Indicator tracking for section 1.9

KPI	Status in 2025
ECoC offers several ways of supporting local communities: workshops, capacity building, financial schemes, projects dedicated to collaboration and mutual growth	20.6% of activities tagged, but community work is a core focus in only three projects. For most projects, community dimension is secondary.

Recommendations

Community work is inherently long-term: it requires building trust, sustaining relationships across years, and giving residents genuine influence over project design. If community engagement is to become a distinctive feature of the ECoC by 2028, the programme needs more projects where this kind of deep, reciprocal work is the primary purpose — not an add-on to a project designed around something else. This means investing in community-centred projects early enough for relationships to mature before the title year. A secondary step is to introduce a short audience survey at selected community events to verify who actually attends.

Table 17. Community engagement, 2024 vs. 2025

Indicator	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Activities involving local communities	35	15.0%	72	20.6%	107	18.3%



Comparison 2024 → 2025: The share of activities tagged as involving local communities grew from 15.0% to 20.6% (18.3% combined). In 2024, community work was carried by two dedicated projects (Kul.turista, Inspire). In 2025, more projects contribute community-tagged activities, but for most this is incidental rather than a defining feature. The programme’s community dimension depends on a small number of projects and has not yet developed into a broader, systematic strand.

1.10 Accessibility

Key results

In 2025, 81.8% of projects (18/22) implement some accessibility measures, up from 55.6% (10/18) in 2024.

The 2025 monitoring system tracks accessibility per activity for the first time, revealing that 87.1% of activities have at least one measure in place. The most common are barrier-free physical access (70.9%) and provision of a venue description (71.1%). Less common but present are barrier-free toilets (43.4%), a skilled person on the spot (36.0%), and interpretation into another language (18.0%).

At the same time, the barrier-free access figure (70.9%) is likely inflated: curators self-report accessibility of venues, and without independent verification there is a risk that “barrier-free” is interpreted loosely or optimistically. This figure should be treated as an upper bound rather than a reliable measure of actual physical accessibility.

The programme remains overwhelmingly accessible in financial terms: 83.4% of activities are free of charge (up from 78.6%), while 14.0% require a ticket and 50.3% require registration.

Indicator tracking for section 1.10

KPI	Status in 2025
In 2027 all ECoC projects meet minimal standards of accessibility: venue description, registration asking about needs, skilled person on spot	18/22 projects (81.8%) with some measures. Per-activity: 71.1% venue description, 36.0% skilled person. Registration accessibility needs not separately tracked.



ECoC offers various tools/bodies for culture operators to implement accessibility (Manuál přístupnosti, Accessibility Amplifier, Open Season, Aliance pro přístupnost, rental hub)	Aliance pro přístupnost established in 2025 — consultative platform connecting people with disabilities, cultural institutions, and experts. Available accessibility checklist, web accessibility guidelines, venue description template. Project Amplifier accessibility module rated highest of all modules (10/13 inspired and motivated). Accessibility mapping of cultural institutions in progress.
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Recommendations

The accessibility trajectory in 2025 follows the same pattern as volunteering and artistic residencies described elsewhere in this report: dedicated support structures — the Aliance pro přístupnost, the Project Amplifier accessibility module, Open Season, practical tools like the accessibility checklist and venue description template — produce results when they are in place. The priority is to sustain and deepen this effort.

Critically, the tools need to be real and reliable. When a project reports that a venue is barrier-free, audiences should be able to trust what that means — at this point, the data reflects wishes and imagination as much as reality. Venue descriptions and accessibility assessments need to be verified, kept up to date, and made concrete enough that someone with a mobility or sensory impairment can make an informed decision about attending. The Alliance’s planned mapping of cultural institutions is exactly the right step here.

Equally important is that accessibility tools and standards are shared with and adopted by partner organisations, not held only within the ECoC team. The goal is for accessibility to become part of daily practice across the cultural sector in České Budějovice — embedded in how organisations plan events, describe venues, and communicate with audiences — rather than remaining an add-on that exists only because the ECoC asks for it. Re-establishing sign language and childcare, which both dropped between 2024 and 2025, should be part of this broader effort.

1.10a Accessibility measures – detailed

Year-on-year comparison of accessibility measures is not possible. In 2024, accessibility was tracked at project level only (N=18 projects, binary yes/no per measure). In 2025, it is tracked per activity (N=350) and per project (N=22), with a detailed breakdown of specific measures per activity. The two datasets use different units of analysis and different levels of granularity.



Table 18. Accessibility at activity level (2025, N=350)

Accessibility: activity level (2025, N=350)	N	%
Activities with any measures	305	87.1%
Activities with barrier-free access	248	70.9%
Activities with venue description	249	71.1%
Activities with barrier-free toilets	152	43.4%
Activities with skilled person on spot	126	36.0%
Activities with interpretation	63	18.0%

Table 19. Access type

Access type	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Free of charge	184	78.6%	292	83.4%	476	81.5%



1.11 Partnerships, sector development & networking

Key results

The ECoC programme engaged 101 organisations in 2025, up from 84 in 2024. The growth is concentrated in local cultural partners, which more than doubled (27 → 55). National cultural organisations grew modestly (12 → 16), while international cultural partners declined (19 → 12) and international non-cultural partners nearly disappeared (5 → 1). The partnership landscape is becoming more locally rooted and less internationally connected.

Two activity-level indicators show large year-on-year shifts: 55.1% of 2025 activities involve young or emerging artists (up from 2.1%), and 63.1% involve the independent cultural scene (up from 7.3%).

Networking infrastructure is under development: 28 Domů was in a preparation phase throughout 2025, while Culture Island met regularly and planned joint actions including a large public event, with Soutok partly functioning as a Culture Island activity. 19.4% of activities in 2025 included professional networking.

Two capacity building programmes made a direct contribution to networking in 2025. The Permaculture Forum attracted 159 participants from 88 organisations — more than double the 2024 edition (111 participants, 25 organisations).

Relationship-building was participants' primary motivation for attending (66.7%), ahead of seeking inspiration (45.8%) or learning (16.7%). The Forum delivered on this: 83.3% met at least three new people, 45.8% exchanged contact details, and 61.9% arranged follow-up meetings. Importantly, 31.3% of participants were not yet engaged in any ECoC activities, confirming the Forum works as an entry point for newcomers. At the same time, the translation from networking to concrete action weakened compared to 2024: only 45.8% expressed intention to implement what they discussed (down from 73.8%), and 31.3% were uncertain. Participants may need more structured follow-up or clearer pathways from conversation to collaboration.

Project Amplifier's contribution to networking was more modest as the programme brought together only people engaged with ECoC: 5 out of 10 respondents in the end-of-programme survey reported gaining new professional contacts. A recurring piece of feedback from participants working outside the B2028 team was that the programme focused almost exclusively on B2028-organised projects rather than their own work — making it harder for external practitioners to translate the content into their professional networks and practice.



Indicator tracking for section 1.11

KPI	Status in 2025
Nearly all ECoC projects involve collaborations (city/region/country/abroad; cultural/cross-sectoral).	101 organisations engaged. 14/22 projects with local cultural partners, 9/22 national, 9/22 international. Cross-sector: 9/22 local, 3/22 national.
Diverse organisations engaged in capacity building	Project Amplifier drew participants from ECoC team and collaborating organisations. Permaculture Forum attracted 88 organisations (NGOs, public institutions, businesses, public admin).
ECoC offers variety of networking opportunities (28 Houses, Culture Island, CB programmes, Permaculture Forum, cross-sectoral projects)	28 Houses in preparation. Culture Island active, planning joint public event. Permaculture Forum: 83.3% met 3+ new people, 45.8% exchanged contacts. 19.4% of activities include professional networking.

Recommendations

Support for young and emerging artists and the independent scene is present in the programme, concentrated in a few projects that are genuinely focused on this — Young Creators, Rezi.dance, Každodennosti, Sklizeň Komařice. The high activity-level percentages (55.1% emerging artists, 63.1% independent scene) reflect these projects’ large output rather than a broad, structural commitment across the programme. Sustaining and expanding this beyond a handful of projects would strengthen the programme’s claim to supporting the next generation of cultural practitioners.

The networking infrastructure — 28 Domů, Culture Island, the Permaculture Forum — needs to move beyond meetings and preparation toward tangible joint outputs. 28 Domů spent 2025 in a preparation phase; in 2026 it should produce concrete results: joint programming, shared resources, or collaborative projects between member institutions. Culture Island’s planned public event is a step in the right direction.

The Permaculture Forum is effective at bringing people together — 83.3% met new people, 61.9% arranged follow-up meetings — but the drop in implementation intentions (73.8% → 45.8%) and the high uncertainty (31.3% “don’t know”) suggest that participants leave inspired but without a clear pathway from conversation to collaboration. Future editions should build in more structured follow-up.



The decline in international partners (19 → 12 cultural, 5 → 1 non-cultural) means the programme's international reach currently rests on a small number of projects. If international collaboration is a programme priority, it needs active investment beyond what individual projects bring on their own.

**Table 19. Organisations by type and geography**

Organisations by type and geography	2024	2025
Total organisations	84	101
– local cultural	27	55
– national cultural	12	16
– international cultural	19	12
– local non-cultural	16	16
– national non-cultural	4	5
– international non-cultural	5	1

Table 20. Partnerships: project level

Partnerships: project level	2024	2025
Projects: local cultural partners	7/18	14/22
Projects: national partners	4/18	9/22
Projects: international dimension	5/18	9/22
Cross-sector local collaborations	9/18	9/22
Cross-sector national collaborations	3/18	3/22

Table 21. Sector and scene indicators

Sector & scene indicators	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Activities for culture sector	64	27.4%	91	26.0%	155	26.5 %
Activities: young/emerging artists	5	2.1%	193	55.1%	198	33.9 %
Activities: independent scene	17	7.3%	221	63.1%	238	40.8 %
Activities: fostering collaborations	39	16.7%	41	11.7%	80	13.7 %





1.12 Environmental sustainability

Key results

In 2024, 27.8% of projects (5/18) implemented practical sustainability measures and the topic appeared in internal discussions rather than public programming. In 2025, 86.4% of projects (19/22) report sustainability measures, and 14.3% of activities address environmental sustainability as a topic (up from 6.0%). As with accessibility, these figures are self-reported by curators, and the jump is likely inflated by a change in expectations — curators now understand they are asked about sustainability and are more inclined to report measures they may have taken for granted before.

The most widely reported category is transport-related: 94.7% of the 19 projects with sustainability measures report encouraging public transport, cycling, or car sharing. This figure should be interpreted with caution — it likely reflects the availability of public transport in České Budějovice rather than projects actively creating sustainable transport options for their participants. Food-related measures are more substantive: 73.7% use local, seasonal, or ecological food, and the same share offers vegetarian or vegan options. Material reuse (73.7%) and elimination of single-use packaging (57.9%) are also widespread. Waste sorting and minimisation is reported by 36.8%.

Indicator tracking for section 1.12

KPI	Status in 2025
ECoC delivers tools for environmental sustainability through Circular House (CB programme, rental centre, warehouse, repair shop)	Cirkulární dům partly operational. Project Amplifier sustainability module delivered (Oct 2025). 19/22 projects report measures.
ECoC implements tools and policies for environmental sustainability in artistic projects and governance	Project-level: 86.4% of projects with measures. Governance-level: internal sustainability criteria under development as of early 2025.

Recommendations

As with accessibility, the priority is to close the gap between reporting and reality. Cirkulární dům CB's infrastructure and the Project Amplifier sustainability module provide real tools — but their value depends on whether projects move from ticking a box in the evaluation form to changing how they work. When a project reports



“local/seasonal food” or “recycled materials,” this should reflect a deliberate choice, not an afterthought or a generous interpretation of what was already happening.

The tools and standards developed within the ECoC need to be shared with partner organisations, kept up to date, and made practical enough to use without the ECoC team prompting it. The goal is for environmental sustainability to become part of how cultural organisations in the region plan and deliver events — embedded in daily practice, not an add-on. Finalising and publishing the governance-level sustainability criteria that were under development in 2025 would signal that the ECoC holds itself to the same standard it expects from its projects.

Table 22. Sustainability: project level

Sustainability: project level	2024	2025
Projects with sustainability measures	5/18 (27.8%)	19/22 (86.4%)
Projects: env. sustainability as topic	3/18	4/22

Table 23. Sustainability: activity level

Sustainability: activity level	2024 N	2024 %	2025 N	2025 %	Σ N	Σ %
Activities: env. sustainability as topic	14	6.0%	50	14.3%	64	11.0%

Table 24. Categories of sustainability measures (2025, N=19 projects)

Categories of sustainability measures (2025, N=19 projects)	N projects	% of 19
Public transport, cycling, car sharing	18	94.7%
Local / seasonal / ecological food	14	73.7%
Vegetarian / vegan food	14	73.7%
Recycled / reused materials	14	73.7%
No single-use packaging; reusable dishes	11	57.9%
Waste sorting & minimisation	7	36.8%
Other (limited printing, renting)	1	5.3%





PART 2: TEAM, GOVERNANCE & WORKING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Methodology

This part of the report draws on four sources: 21 Project Evaluation Forms submitted by project teams (of which 16 contained qualitative self-reflections used in section 2.4); an anonymous online survey of the ECoC team (28 of 37 respondents, 76% response rate); an anonymous online survey of external curators (11 of 21 respondents, 52% response rate); and staffing, budget, and wage data provided by ECoC management and publicly available statistics (section 2.5). Both surveys were also conducted in 2024 (team N=13, curators N=9), allowing year-on-year comparison on selected items.

Several methodological limitations apply. The team survey sample changed between years: the team roughly doubled in size, and the 2025 sample includes both original members and new joiners. The curator survey covers just over half of active curators. The curator population has partially changed — some 2024 curators are no longer involved, and some 2025 respondents are new. Given the small absolute number (N=11) and the 52% response rate, curator results are presented as counts (N) rather than percentages, and all findings should be read as indicative patterns rather than statistically reliable measures.

Question wording and response scales changed between years for several items. Where scales differ, this is flagged and direct numerical comparison is not appropriate. For the curator survey specifically, semi-formal conversations conducted alongside the 2024 survey revealed substantially more serious concerns than the formal survey responses suggested. The 2024 formal results therefore likely understate the issues curators experienced.

The qualitative synthesis of problems reported by projects (section 2.4) is based on self-reported data from Project Evaluation Forms.



2.2 ECoC Team: Working Conditions & Satisfaction

2.2a Commitment, purpose, and team culture

The team survey (28 of 37 respondents, 76% response rate) shows strong commitment: 86% are happy to be part of the team (no one said "no"), and 82% want to continue working in 2026 and beyond. The sense of contributing to ECoC goals is the strongest result in the survey: 86% clearly understand how their work contributes, and not a single person answered "no." Team support matches this: 82% always or often get support from colleagues, and 82% always or often feel they are doing meaningful things.

Behind these numbers is a team culture that people describe in personal terms. In the open-ended questions on general feelings (Q1, 28 responses) and enjoyments (Q2, 27 responses), the most frequently mentioned positive is the team itself — colleagues described as inspiring, collaborative, and mutually supportive. Common themes in Q1 include learning and growing, a good team atmosphere where people help each other, and a sense that the organisation is stabilising (alongside a parallel thread of not keeping up with the pace). When asked what they enjoyed most (Q2, 27 responses), roughly a third name colleagues and relationships: the collaboration within their department, shared events, working with motivated curators and partners. Other recurring themes include the variety and meaningfulness of the work itself, learning new things, and the freedom and trust given in their role.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Recognition saw the biggest improvement of any item: from 15% positive in 2024 to 75% in 2025 (+60pp). Team support strengthened from 62% to 82% (+20pp). The share of team members wanting to continue working in the team jumped from 62% to 82% — in 2024 nearly a third were uncertain and one said "no"; in 2025 nobody said "no." Meaningfulness dipped slightly (92% → 82%) but remains very high; the drop may reflect the larger, more operationally diverse team rather than a change in how people experience their work.

2.2b Process instability and role clarity

The year 2025 brought two rounds of organisational change. The first, in early 2025, was partly a response to findings from the 2024 experiences and the monitoring report. Above all, dedicated project managers were introduced for curator collaborations and people's roles were restructured. The second, toward the end of 2025, reorganised the team internally into clusters — the project managers stayed, but the internal structure was redesigned to make coordination more manageable.



Not surprisingly, process instability is the most prominent frustration in the team survey's open-ended responses (28 responses on Q3). Multiple respondents describe learning new systems only to see them replaced, and feeling that processes never settle. One describes waiting rather than learning new procedures because "in 14 days it will be different anyway." Another names the frustration of deciphering the current state of affairs and finding their place in it, rather than being able to focus on developing project content. In the concerns for 2026 (28 responses), a significant worry is whether processes will finally stabilise or whether the team will start from scratch again.

At the same time, the constant organisational changes are not only a source of frustration. Several respondents acknowledge that the team is actively trying to improve its structures and is willing to reorganise itself. The process instability is a burden, but the willingness to change is also recognised as something positive.

The quantitative data on role and process clarity reveal more areas for potential improvement. Only 8 out of 28 (29%) clearly understand the procedures they are supposed to follow, while 17 (61%) answer only "to some extent" and 3 say "no." Only 12 out of 28 (43%) clearly understand their own responsibilities. Visibility of what colleagues do is low: only 7 out of 28 (25%) say they know what others do, while 4 (14%) say they do not.

14 out of 16 projects independently report communication and coordination with the ECoC team as a problem — unclear division of responsibilities, not knowing what support to expect, and difficulty getting clear answers (see section 2.4 for detail). The low levels of process and role clarity within the team (29% and 43% respectively) are consistent with what projects and curators report from the outside.

When asked to name one thing to change immediately (26 responses), "clarify roles, competences, and accountability — with consequences for missed deadlines" is one of the most common responses, alongside "hire more people" and "stabilise processes and tools." Deadline and delivery failures emerge as a distinct frustration: multiple respondents describe situations where internal commitments were not met and deliverables arrived late, delaying other people's work in turn.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Communication and unclear processes were the most common frustration in both years. In 2024, curators described it as unclear information and irregular communication. In 2025, respondents use words like "chaos" and "decisions made without me." The persistent pattern of "everything is waited on, then done at the last minute" — identified in 2024 — reappears in 2025. Visibility of colleagues' work appears to have decreased as the team grew (38% "often" in 2024 → 25% "yes" in 2025, scale changed).



2.2c Capacity, workload, and the risk of burnout

Nobody said the team has the right number of people: 0% "yes," 57% explicitly "no." When asked for the one thing to change immediately, "hire more people / increase capacity" is the most common response. Curators raise the same concern: several worry about key ECoC team members being stretched across too many projects.

The stress and workload data is consistent with this. 43% report high or very high stress. 46% work overtime always or often; another 32% sometimes — meaning 79% of the team works overtime at least sometimes. 39% are always or often too tired after work for personal activities. Working hours conflict with personal needs for roughly one in five team members (21% rarely or never aligned).

The organisation is perceived as supportive of work-life balance (61% strong support, only 1 respondent says no support), yet nearly half the team works overtime regularly and 43% report high or very high stress. The support scores are high; the workload relative to staffing levels is the more likely explanation for the stress and overtime data.

In the concerns for 2026 (28 responses), workload is the dominant theme. Multiple respondents describe overload and exhaustion, and one names burnout explicitly. Those on part-time contracts worry the workload does not fit their allocated hours. Personal anxiety about handling growing responsibilities appears in several responses. The same concern surfaces at the project level: 6 out of 16 projects report that the actual workload significantly exceeded what had been planned, that production teams were too small for the scope of work, and that goals had been overly ambitious relative to available resources.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Post-work fatigue is virtually unchanged: 38% in 2024 → 39% in 2025. About 4 in 10 regularly feel too tired after work in both years — a persistent structural feature that has not improved despite the team doubling. Understaffing is unanimous in both years (100% disagreed in 2024, 0% said yes in 2025).

2.2d Contracts, compensation, and job security

The ECoC gross hourly rate in 2025 is 257 CZK/hour. Assuming a standard full-time equivalent of 160 hours per month, this translates to approximately 41,120 CZK/month gross.

The ECoC's estimated monthly gross wage of 41,120 CZK can be compared to two external benchmarks. The national average gross monthly wage in the Czech Republic was 48,171 CZK for Q1–Q3 2025 (ČSÚ). The average gross monthly wage



in the culture sector was 39,208 CZK in 2023, the most recent year for which data is available (NIPOS/ČSÚ Satelitní účet kultury). At 41,120 CZK, the ECoC wage is above the culture sector average but approximately 15% below the national average.

However, it is crucial to notice that the culture sector figure is from 2023 and wages have grown since — the culture sector saw 9.8% nominal growth in Q3 2025 according to ČSÚ, which would bring the sector average closer to the ECoC level. Second, the ECoC figure of 257 CZK/hour is a gross rate that may not fully capture the actual compensation structure (OSVČ contracts, variable hours).

The results of the survey show that just over half of team members (54%) had a contract matching their expectations; a quarter had one that fell short, and 2 were still waiting for a suitable contract. On compensation, 64% consider their pay fair, but 32% do not. Job security is mostly positive (79% combined), with roughly one in five feeling insecure.

In the contract elaboration (14 responses), descriptions range from satisfactory resolutions to some that respondents found barely acceptable. OSVČ contracts that do not reflect the reality of the work, prolonged waits for proper employment agreements, and hourly rates not keeping pace with reality.

"Increase pay" is one of the most common responses in the one-thing-to-change question, given the workload and responsibility levels involved.

2.2e Working experience, learning, and autonomy

82% always or often feel they are using their skills and knowledge. 68% always or often learn new things. 57% report full organisational support for professional development, with another 25% partial.

For a cultural programme that aims to open new topics, pilot experimental formats, and bring together communities that have not worked together before, the freedom to try new approaches and take creative risks matters. The survey measures this in two ways. First, whether team members feel pressure to stick to safe, known approaches: only 11% report feeling this often, and 54% say rarely or never. This suggests the team does not operate in a risk-averse environment. Second, whether they feel they can try new things even if the result is uncertain: 57% say they can always or often, but 14% say they cannot. The gap between the two measures — low pressure to conform but only moderate freedom to experiment — may reflect practical constraints (time, capacity, unclear mandates) rather than cultural ones.

A related question asks how often team members could make decisions freely in their daily work without having to consult a superior first. 64% say always or often,



25% sometimes, and 11% rarely or never. For a team where 43% do not clearly understand their own responsibilities and 71% do not clearly understand procedures, the ability to decide freely depends on knowing what falls within one's mandate — and that is not yet settled for a significant part of the team.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: The share of team members who always or often learn new things at work rose from 46% in 2024 to 68% in 2025 (+22 percentage points). Skills utilisation appears to have increased (from 61% agreement in 2024 to 82% always or often in 2025, though the scale changed from agreement to frequency). Pressure to play it safe is stable across both years. Autonomy in decision-making is also stable at approximately 65%.

Onboarding

12 of the current 28 team members (43%) joined during 2025. Only 5 out of 12 went through a structured onboarding process; the remaining 7 (58%) experienced only partial, unsystematic onboarding. When asked whether it helped them orient: only 3 out of 12 say "yes" or "rather yes"; 8 (67%) say only "partially"; and 1 says "rather no."

In the 9 open-ended responses on onboarding, positive notes include a warm welcome and personal support. The criticisms are concrete: missing process documentation, unclear descriptions of organisational sections and their functions, and insufficient role-specific orientation. Suggestions from new joiners: structured introductions from each department, clear process guides, and proper documentation of tools and workflows.

2.2f Recommendations

Hiring for people is the most common request from the team: in both 2024 and 2025 survey, not a single respondent described current staffing levels as adequate. At the same time, the data on process clarity (29%) and role clarity (43%), together with the onboarding feedback (67% only partially helpful), suggest that hiring alone will not resolve the underlying issues if new joiners arrive into unclear structures. Process stabilisation — the second most common request — points in the same direction. The team needs both more people and clearer systems; one without the other will not change the experience.

The gap between organisational support for work-life balance (61% strong) and the actual experience of overtime (46% frequent) and stress (43% high) confirms that the challenge is workload relative to capacity, not cultural. With 43% of the team reporting high or very high stress, multiple respondents describing overload and exhaustion in their 2026 concerns, and the same level of post-work fatigue



persisting from 2024 despite the team doubling, the risk of burnout is a practical concern for the coming years. The 32% who consider their compensation unfair, and the open-ended descriptions of contract situations, should be tracked as the team grows toward 2028.

Communication and coordination is reported as a problem across all three data sources: 14 of 16 projects, weakest quantitative score in the curator survey, and most prominent team frustration. The same problem was the top frustration in 2024. The team grew by 43% in 2025; nearly half the current members joined during the year. Processes are being redesigned while simultaneously being used — only 29% of team members clearly understand procedures. The team’s own most-requested changes point in the same direction: stabilise processes, clarify roles and accountability, and document how the organisation works. The new organisational structure based on clusters, introduced at the end of 2025, is intended to remain in place for the duration of the programme. If it does, it should at least partially address the instability that both the team and curators identify as the central problem — provided the structure is given time to settle and is not replaced by another reorganisation.

Indicator tracking for section 2.2

KPI	Status in 2025	Data gaps
#80: Individuals in ECoC team are more satisfied with working environment quality: professional well-being, life-work balance, flexibility, training, autonomy, social support, rewards	Commitment very high (86% happy, 82% want to stay). Meaningfulness strong (82%). Support strong (82%). Recognition 75%. Work-life balance culture positive (61% strong support). But: stress 43% high, overtime 46% frequent, fatigue 39% persistent, staffing 0% adequate. Process clarity only 29%.	-
#55: Individuals in ECoC team treat continued learning as natural element of work in culture	57% full organisational support for professional development. 68% always/often learn new things. 82% always/often use their skills. 57% can try new things even if they might fail.	-
#81 [impact]: Average wage of people employed in ECoC rises between	ECoC gross hourly rate: 257 CZK/hour (2025) ≈ 41,120 CZK/month. Above culture sector average (39,208 CZK, 2023). Below	Culture sector benchmark



2024 and 2029; the rise is present also against inflation	national average (48,171 CZK, Q1–Q3 2025). Team perception: 64% consider compensation fair, 32% do not.	k is 2023 data.
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Table 25. Year-on-year comparison – team survey

Dimension	2024 (N=13)	2025 (N=28)	Direction
Happy to be part of team	92% yes	86% yes	Stable (high)
Want to continue	62% yes	82% yes	▲ Improved
Meaningful things (Always + Often)	92%	82%	Slight ↓ (still very high)
Team support (Always + Often)	62%	82%	▲ Improved
Work recognised (A+O)	15%	75%	▲▲ Improved
Learning new things (A+O)	46%	68%	▲ Improved
Autonomy (A+O)	69%	64%	Stable
Post-work fatigue (A+O)	38%	39%	Stable (persistent)
Right number of people	100% disagree	0% yes, 57% no	Persistent: understaffed

Table 25. Commitment

Response	N	%
Happy to be part of team: Yes	24	86%
Happy to be part of team: Don't know	1	4%
Happy to be part of team: Prefer not to answer	3	11%
Want to continue in 2026+: Yes	23	82%
Want to continue in 2026+: Don't know	3	11%
Want to continue in 2026+: Prefer not to answer	2	7%

Table 27. Contracts & compensation

Item	N	%
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Contract matching expectations	15	54%
Contract, but not fully matching	7	25%
Compensation: combined positive	18	64%
Compensation: combined negative	9	32%
Job security: combined positive	22	79%
Job security: combined negative	6	21%

Table 28. Clarity of roles and processes (N=28)

Statement	Yes	To some extent	No
Clearly understood my responsibilities	12 (43%)	15 (54%)	1 (4%)
Understood the procedures	8 (29%)	17 (61%)	3 (11%)
Understood contribution to ECoC goals	24 (86%)	4 (14%)	0 (0%)
Knew who to ask for help	15 (54%)	10 (36%)	1 (4%)
Knew what others do	7 (25%)	16 (57%)	4 (14%)
Right number of people	0 (0%)	7 (25%)	16 (57%)



**Table 29. Work-life balance & stress**

Indicator	Combined positive (always + often)	Combined negative (rarely + never)
Working hours aligned with personal needs	16 (57%)	6 (21%)
Too tired after work	11 (39%)	6 (21%)
Org supports work-life balance (strong / no)	17 (61%)	1 (4%)
Overtime frequency	13 (46%)	6 (21%)
Stress level (high+very high / low+very low)	12 (43%)	6 (21%)

Table 30. Teamwork, autonomy & recognition

Statement	Positive (always + often)	Negative (rarely + never)
Support from colleagues when needed	23 (82%)	1 (4%)
Could make decisions freely	18 (64%)	3 (11%)
Work was recognised	21 (75%)	3 (11%)
Doing meaningful things	23 (82%)	0 (0%)

Table 32. Professional development & learning

Item	Positive	Negative
Org supports professional development	16 (57%)	2 (7%)
Learning new things	19 (68%)	2 (7%)
Using skills and knowledge	23 (82%)	0 (0%)
Could try new things, risk OK	16 (57%)	4 (14%)
Pressure to stick to safe/known*	3 (11%)	15 (54%)

*Reverse-coded — low frequency is positive.

**Table 33. Onboarding (2025 joiners, N=12)**

Indicator	N	% of joiners
Structured onboarding	5	42%
Partial / not systematic	7	58%
Onboarding: very helpful / rather yes	3	25%
Onboarding: partially helpful	8	67%
Onboarding: rather not helpful	1	8%

Table 34. Wage benchmarking

Benchmark	Gross monthly wage (CZK)	Source
ECoC (estimated, 2025)	~41,120	257 CZK/hr × 160 hrs
Culture sector average (2023)	39,208	NIPOS/ČSÚ Satelitní účet kultury
National average, Q1–Q3 2025	48,171	ČSÚ



2.3 Curators: Working Conditions & Satisfaction

2.3a Commitment, satisfaction, and the range of experience

The curator survey (11 of 21 respondents, 52% response rate) shows that 9 of 11 want to continue collaborating with the ECoC team in 2026 and beyond. Current satisfaction is more mixed: 7 are happy in their role, 3 are uncertain, and 1 is explicitly unhappy. 8 of 11 curators report meeting their project goals; one project was cancelled entirely.

Open-ended responses on general feelings (Q1, 10 responses) show different experiences. On one end: improving mutual understanding, a strong sense that "we really understand each other on a human level," and explicit acknowledgement that collaboration was better than the previous year. In the middle: a sense of searching and ambiguity — one curator describes the work as "everything is either improvisation or a process subordinated to the logic of a birth certificate" — the "birth certificate" (rodný list) being the project management document that defines a project's basic parameters and goals. On the other end: confusion, feeling that their project was secondary within the programme, and one case where a curator reports being ignored and excluded from communication about their own project.

What curators say they enjoy most (Q2, 9 responses): meeting new people and discovering concepts, the human relationships with the ECoC team, developing new projects and receiving positive feedback from participants, shared learning through Project Amplifier, and fast communication with a dedicated contact person. The pattern is consistent with what the team itself reports: relationships and meaningful work are the most frequently named positives in both surveys.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: In 2024 (N=9), all 9 curators said "yes" to being happy and all 9 wanted to continue — unanimously positive formal results. Semi-formal conversations conducted alongside the 2024 survey revealed substantially more serious concerns than the formal responses captured. The 2025 survey, with its more detailed and operationally focused design, likely elicited more candid responses. Some of the apparent decline may reflect better measurement rather than worsening conditions. That said, the concerns are real: one curator is explicitly unhappy, three are uncertain, and one indicates they may leave if conditions do not change. The overall tone has shifted from uniformly warm and patient in 2024 to more polarised in 2025, with both more positive and more negative extremes.



2.3b Communication

Communication is the weakest quantitative result in the curator survey and the most common qualitative theme, consistent with the team survey and project evaluation forms. Only 4 of 11 curators say communication with the ECoC team was always or often clear and timely. 6 say only "sometimes." 1 says "never."

In the frustrations (Q3, 10 responses), constantly changing information and unclear processes are the most common theme. Curators describe chaos, difficulty navigating information that keeps shifting, and decisions made without them feeling really involved. Financial uncertainty about when funding would arrive, and ad-hoc tasks requiring quick turnaround that competed with creative work, add a second layer of friction.

This picture is consistent with what 14 out of 16 projects independently report in their evaluation forms: delays in information flow, lack of clear guidance on what was expected, and long pauses in communication, particularly in earlier collaboration phases. Several projects describe preparing or delivering their main outputs while still lacking a clear timeline of obligations towards the ECoC. Communication difficulties appear in all three data sources — team, curators, and projects — and were the top frustration in 2024 as well.

Navigating the organisation: who to contact, who does what

Knowing who to contact in the ECoC team is the lowest-scoring item in the curator survey: only 3 of 11 clearly knew, while 7 say only partially and 1 says no. The picture is similar internally: only 15 out of 28 team members (54%) clearly know who to ask for help.

Clarity of curator responsibilities is mixed: 5 of 11 say a clear "yes," 4 say "to some extent," and 2 say "no." When curators were asked whether the ECoC team had people with the skills needed for their project, only 3 say yes, 5 say "to some extent," and 2 say no. Several curators in open-ended responses describe this as concrete friction — difficulty getting answers, unclear boundaries between their role and the ECoC team's, and projects finding themselves doing work they assumed the ECoC would handle, or not doing work they did not know was expected.

Several curators note that the expanded team, clearer role distribution, and dedicated contact persons are tangible improvements over the previous year. Where a dedicated contact person exists, curators describe faster communication and better coordination. But these improvements are not yet consistent across all curator collaborations — the experience depends on the specific pairing between curator and team member.



Curator isolation and support

Some curators describe working largely in isolation without adequate team support. In the frustrations , four people (out of 10 who gave answer to the question) expressed a feeling that their project did not receive sufficient focused attention, or that they were "secondary" within the programme. One describes developing a new project "but working on it mainly alone, without a team." The implementation elaboration (5 responses) adds a practical dimension: projects depending on very few people become vulnerable when someone is unavailable. Later-than-ideal starts required catch-up work that added to the workload.

When curators name the one thing they would change, communication is the most frequent answer, but several go further: they want more hands-on production support. The specific requests are concrete — ready-made lists of partners, fundraising strategies, shared ticketing systems and cultural calendars, advertising space. These are not complaints about the programme's direction; they are requests for infrastructure that would make curators' delivery work easier and faster. Projects reports cover similar perceptions in section 2.4.

2.3c Contracts and compensation

7 of 11 curators had a formal written agreement; 3 worked without one. Among those with contracts, 6 say the scope roughly corresponded to what was agreed; 1 reports the scope was larger. On compensation, 8 of 11 (excluding "does not apply") consider their pay fair. These are relatively positive results.

2.3d Stress, autonomy, and the working experience

No curator reports low or very low stress: 4 of 11 rate their stress as high or very high, and the remaining 6 as medium. Meaningfulness is one of the stronger results — 7 of 11 always or often feel they are doing things that make sense.

Administration, often a source of complaint in cultural programmes, is manageable for 8 of 11 curators, making it the second-strongest quantitative result. Support from the ECoC team is positive for 7 of 11, though one curator reports never receiving support when needed.

Recognition is more mixed: 6 positive, 2 negative. In the team survey, recognition improved from 15% to 75% positive. The direction is opposite: team members feel more recognised than before; some curators feel less so.

Freedom to experiment is uneven: 4 of 11 say yes, 3 say "to some extent," 2 say no. Combined with the finding that only 5 of 11 say they clearly understand their



responsibilities, the data suggests that both the scope of the curator role and the freedom within it are not consistently defined.

Comparison 2024 → 2025: Meaningfulness and support show the same absolute count in both years (7 positive in both 2024 and 2025), but the sample grew from 9 to 11, meaning the proportion decreased. Recognition declined from 7 positive with no negatives to 6 positive with 2 negatives. Curator freedom to experiment appears lower (6 of 9 agreed in 2024, nobody disagreed; 4 of 11 say yes in 2025 and 2 say no, scale changed). Core frustrations around unclear information, changing processes, and the pattern of waiting followed by rushing were identified in 2024 and reappear in 2025. At the same time, several 2025 respondents explicitly acknowledge improvement: the expanded team, dedicated contact persons, and more professional processes represent visible progress. The improvements are real but not yet consistent across all collaborations.

2.3e Concerns for 2026

Curators' concerns for 2026 centre on capacity and overload — both their own and within the ECoC team — and processes still settling while projects are already in delivery. Public awareness of the programme in České Budějovice is a recurring worry: the general public does not yet understand what ECoC is, and current events may reach only a narrow audience. Financial uncertainty and misaligned timelines (budget submissions coinciding with peak delivery), institutional partnerships that need to solidify, and the question of where and with whom projects will be realised are practical concerns. One respondent explicitly indicates they may leave if conditions do not change. Another hopes 2026 will be better, and names the arrival of a less overloaded project manager as a positive sign.

2.3f Recommendations

Communication is the weakest quantitative result (4 of 11 positive) and the most frequently mentioned qualitative theme, consistent with the team survey and project evaluation forms. The related finding — only 3 of 11 clearly knowing who to contact — points to a concrete gap. Dedicated project managers for curator collaborations are already a standard within the ECoC team, but not yet assigned to every single project. Several curators note that where a dedicated contact person is in place, communication is faster and coordination works better. Extending this to all curator collaborations is a practical next step.

Curators' requests for concrete operational support — partner lists, shared marketing tools, ticketing infrastructure — are consistent across multiple respondents and represent a shift from 2024. As the programme moves toward



2028, the nature of support curators need is changing from coordination toward concrete tools enumerated above.

The range of curator experiences has widened compared to 2024. Some describe genuine improvement; one reports being excluded from their own project. With a 52% response rate and N=11, the survey does not capture the full picture — but the variation in responses suggests that individual curator-team relationships differ enough that periodic check-ins on each collaboration, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, could help identify where support is working and where it is not.



Indicator tracking for section 2.3

KPI	Status in 2025	Data gaps
#80: Individuals who collaborate with ECoC are satisfied with working environment quality	Commitment high: 9/11 want to continue. Compensation broadly fair (8/11 positive). But: satisfaction mixed (7 happy, 3 uncertain, 1 no). Communication weakest area (4/11 positive). Stress moderate-to-high (4/11 high+very high, 0 low). Recognition mixed (6 positive, 2 negative).	-

Table 35. Year-on-year comparison – curator survey

Dimension	2024 (N=9)	2025 (N=11)	Direction
Happy to be curator	9 yes	7 yes, 3 DK, 1 no	↓ Declined
Want to continue	9 yes	9 yes, 2 DK	Slight ↓
Meaningful things (A+O)	7	7	Stable in N, lower share
Support from team (A+O)	7	7	Stable in N, lower share
Recognition (A+O)	7	6	↓ Declined
Recognition (R+N)	0	2	Negative tail emerged
Can try new things	6 agree	4 yes	Likely ↓ (scale changed)

Table 36. Commitment (N=11)

Response	Happy to be curator	Want to continue
Yes	7	9
Don't know	3	2



No	1	0
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**Table 37. Contracts & compensation (N=11)**

Item	N
Clear written contract	7
No formal contract	3
Scope roughly corresponded to agreement	6
Compensation: combined positive (yes + rather yes)	8
Compensation: negative	1

Table 38. Clarity of roles and team capacity (N=11)

Statement	Yes	To some extent	No
Clearly understood curator responsibilities	5	4	2
Knew who to contact in EHMK team	3	7	1
EHMK team had people with needed skills	3	5	2
Could try new things even if they might fail	4	3	2

Table 39. Stress (N=11)

Level	N
Very high	1
High	3
Medium	6
Don't know	1
Combined high (very high + high)	4

Table 40. Work experience – frequency statements (N=11)

Statement	Positive (A+O)	Negative (R+N)
Doing meaningful things	7	0
Administration was manageable	8	1



Work recognised by EHMK team	6	2
Got support when needed	7	1
Communication was clear and timely	4	1

2.4 Organisational Challenges: What Projects Report

This section presents a thematic synthesis of problems reported in 16 Project Evaluation Forms submitted for the 2025 programme year. The forms were completed by ECoC project managers and curators responsible for individual projects. Some of the issues overlap with what the team and curator surveys report in sections 2.2 and 2.3 — the themes are consistent across sources — but here the perspective is project-specific: what went wrong in the delivery of a particular project, not a general reflection on the working year. The material is organised into recurring themes. Under each theme, the number of affected projects is stated.

2.4a Communication and coordination with ECoC (14 of 16 projects)

Communication between the ECoC team and project implementers was the most frequently raised topic. Projects reported delays and gaps in information flow — not receiving sufficiently clear or timely guidance on what was expected, by when, and in what form. Several described long pauses in communication, particularly in earlier phases of collaboration. An unclear division of responsibilities between the ECoC and project teams was reported by multiple projects: difficulty understanding what the ECoC expected, or what support to rely on from the ECoC side. Some projects also reported internal role confusion within their own teams — gaps in curatorial leadership, individuals in misaligned roles, and insufficient separation between curatorial, production, and content responsibilities. A few projects experienced disruptions when team members changed roles or left mid-process.

2.4b Team capacity and workload (6 of 16 projects)

Several projects reported that the actual workload significantly exceeded what had been planned and that their teams operated at or beyond capacity. Production teams were described as too small for the scope of work. A number of projects acknowledged that their goals had been overly ambitious relative to the time, staffing, and budget available. At least two projects reported the burden of running current activities while simultaneously planning for future programme years. Several described situations where artistic or conceptual content was still evolving when production needed to begin.

2.4c Infrastructure, venues, and physical spaces (8 of 16 projects)



More than one project reported that its originally planned venue became unavailable, requiring a redesign at a late stage. Some projects operate with short-term or insecure arrangements for their physical premises. One project working specifically with audiences with disabilities identified the lack of fully accessible venues as a significant constraint. Several projects experienced practical limitations related to outdoor spaces — weather vulnerability, dependence on specific public locations, and the absence of covered alternatives.

2.4d Marketing, visibility, and audience reach (10 of 16 projects)

Multiple projects reported that marketing and promotion did not reach their intended audiences, particularly for events targeting specific groups. Some expressed frustration that the ECoC's central communication channels were insufficient for promoting individual projects. Others noted that visual identity and branding were not ready early enough to allow a full communication window. Lack of systematic audience data (who attends, why, what brings them back) was raised as a gap.

2.4e Financial issues and budget clarity (6 of 16 projects)

Some projects lacked financial certainty during planning and early implementation. One reflected that it had been too accommodating to partners in financial terms, resulting in avoidable expenditure. Bureaucratic barriers in financial settlements between institutions, and time-consuming invoicing processes prone to errors, were mentioned.

2.4f Partner coordination and trust-building (5 of 16 projects)

Projects with multiple external partners reported challenges in establishing working relationships and coordinating across organisations. One described considerable effort needed to motivate representatives of cultural institutions and overcome distrust, finding that direct personal contact was more effective than working through municipal channels. Coordination across many partners raised logistical and communication challenges. Fair and consistent treatment of partners — particularly regarding compensation — was noted as difficult when adjustments had to be made mid-process.