

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REVIEW OF NOVA GORICA'S **CULTURE 21: ACTIONS** SELF-ASSESSMENT

NOVEMBER 2018



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UCLG Committee



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As a new participant in the Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Cities Europe programme, the City of Nova Gorica in October 2018 undertook a day of self-assessment of local policies and practices connecting culture as a pillar of sustainable development. The vehicle for this was a workshop of local stakeholders. The framework for this programme of work – known as 'Activity 1', is based on the '[Culture 21 Actions](#)' toolkit. These actions are published and described in fuller detail in a document adopted in March 2015 by the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). As such, they provide a template that cities and local territories across the world can employ, to support themselves in examining their strengths and weaknesses in this area. The framework also provides a standardising European and global measure by which cities may compare and contrast their own assessments with average ratings published in mid-2015 by a global panel of experts. (SEE BELOW Radar 1).

The workshop represented then a central plank in Nova Gorica of Activity 1 of the [Pilot Cities programme](#). As such, it can be seen of a kind of transversal diagnostic analysis for the city. Furthermore, its secondary purpose will be to inform the design of a work programme of Pilot Measures that should, over the coming 12-18 months, enable the city to engage with a broader picture, while identifying elements that can both build on its perceived strengths and address some identified gaps or weaknesses.

The structure of the one-day workshop was informed by the published Terms of Reference of the Pilot Cities Europe programme. Accordingly, it brought together a diverse group of locally based or connected people, representing: the Municipality (across several departments and disciplines), civil society, education and independents. A full list of participants has been included as Annex 1 of this report.

This group considered, discussed and analysed where Nova Gorica stands today, in relation to nine broad themes ('Commitments', in the terms of Culture 21 Actions), broken down into 100 discreet 'Actions'. In almost all cases the groups were able to accord to these Actions a specific score that reflected a consensus about the relative state of development of the city, ranging from 'Emerging' (1/2/3), through 'Developing' (4/5/6) to 'Advanced' (7/8/9).

The workshop was initiated by the Municipality of Nova Gorica, under the direct leadership of Vice-Mayor Ana Zavrtanik-Ugrin, and coordinated by Mateja Zoratti. It was facilitated by Ivor Davies, Lead Expert of Agenda 21 for Culture, on behalf of Culture Action Europe, and Catherine Cullen, experts from the UCLG Culture Committee.

The workshop session was preceded by a preliminary visit in June 2018 and a preparation day prior to the day, that allowed time for a number of visits and discussions. Here the experts were able to gain experience and knowledge of a number of venues, sites and ongoing programmes and projects, as well as plans and ambitions for the City that highlight connections with the principles of Agenda 21 for Culture.

This report has been written by Ivor Davies, the lead expert appointed by the UCLG Committee on culture and Culture Action Europe to work with Nova Gorica on the Pilot Cities Europe programme. A [full version](#) is available in English on the Agenda 21 for culture website.

WIDER STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS FOR THE CITY

Over and above this, it is significant that the involvement of Nova Gorica Municipality in the Pilot Cities programme coincides with the expression of other, connected ambitions by and for the City, in particular, the development of a Local Programme on Culture (Culture Strategy), and the City's aim to be a successful candidate city for European Capital of Culture 2025. Potential strands of interconnectivity between these three programmes of work were explored from the earliest meetings in June. Meanwhile representatives of the work steering the other two programmes were also present and active in the Workshop. It is assumed that these connections will be further explored and developed in the future Activity phases of the Pilot Cities Programme, and that a mutual influence will be felt, in every direction, between all three.

The workshop in Nova Gorica felt like a good example of how, when a committed group of local people come together, in order to share in discussions from an equal and open starting perspective, then this can lead not only to broader perspectives and knowledge from all sides, but also offer a space where often challenging or even contradictory views and ideas can be aired and shared. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but one contributory benefit from this methodology in practice seems to be that it can establish a shared, open space: where each participant has an equal opportunity to contribute, where expertise is valued, but also where it can be defined from a variety of perspectives: professional, representational, experiential and so on. This aspect of the Pilot Cities method seems to provide an important contribution of added value through this work. Certainly, it was evident through the course of the workshop day.

RADAR 1

This report, known as 'Radar 1', has been prepared by Ivor Davies, Key Expert appointed by the UCLG Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe to accompany Nova Gorica through the Pilot Cities Europe programme. It is based on the outcomes of detailed and engaged discussions within the three groups that participated in the workshops and, in particular, draws on notes taken by workshop rapporteurs from each group. These were subsequently collated and forwarded as material for the report by Mateja Zoratti, Project Officer for the Municipality of Nova Gorica and key contact for the Pilot Cities project. Subsequently, these notes were analysed in further detail by Ivor Davies and synthesized into the form of report seen here.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Figure 1 (below), represents, via one composite image, the self-assessment results from the workshop in Nova Gorica.

A notable result revealed from Radar 1 is that, with just one exception (Culture and Economy, where the outcome is broadly level), the outcomes for Nova Gorica stand above those of the Global Panel. In fact, Nova Gorica outcomes sit above 50% in every case. That the outcome is above that of the Global Panel is not an exceptional outcome; however to have achieved this number above 50% is quite unusual.

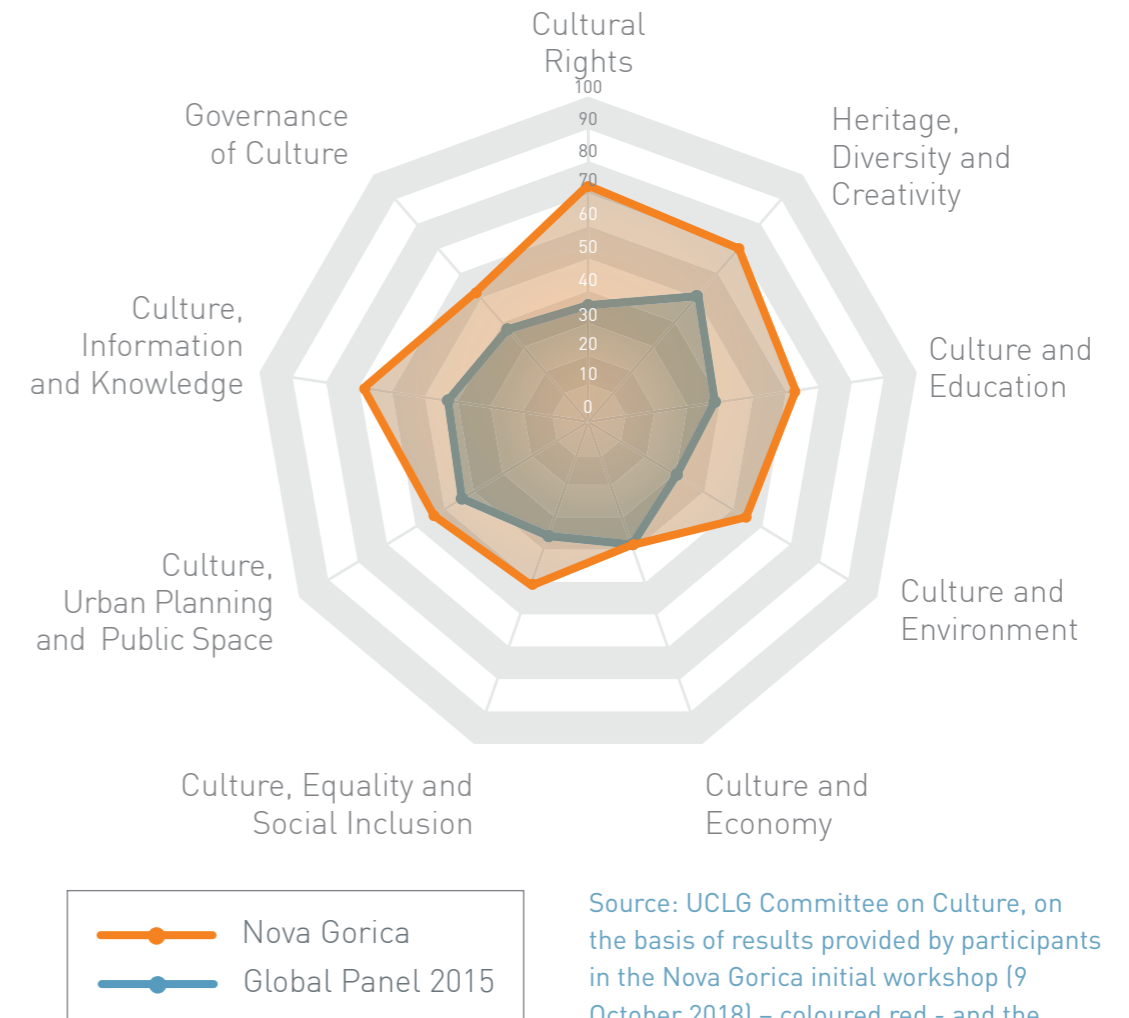
Indeed, comparisons drawn with cities globally that have so far been evaluated (over 25 in total) place-Nova Gorica in the top five or ten, with regard to most individual commitments. This does not imply any cause for concern about the quality of the process outcome. It may nevertheless be something that peer activities will enlighten further, in the course of the later Activity stages of the programme.

The highest scores in Nova Gorica were attributed to: *'Cultural Rights'*, *'Heritage, Diversity and Creativity'*, *'Culture and Education'* and *'Culture, Information and Knowledge'*. Also scoring reasonably highly in real terms, but occupying a relative mid-range of scores, were: *'Culture and Environment'*, *'Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion'*, *'Culture, Urban Planning and Public Space'* and *'Governance of Culture'*. Finally, a relatively more modest score level was afforded to *'Culture and Economy'*.

The nine Commitments

This section of the report sets out and analyses the information provided by the self-assessment workshop, summarized in terms of each of the nine Commitments (each comprising a number of Actions, amounting to a total of 100).

Figure 1 : Nova Gorica's Self Assessment and data from the Global Panel 2015



Source: UCLG Committee on Culture, on the basis of results provided by participants in the Nova Gorica initial workshop (9 October 2018) – coloured red - and the average obtained from a global panel of 34 experts in 2015 – coloured blue.

CONCLUSIONS

Returning then to the outcomes of the Pilot Cities Workshop week, a number of strengths have emerged:

» The city has shown that it can bring together and galvanise a diverse and engaged group of local actors from diverse backgrounds, as stakeholders in what are early steps in a collaborative process of planning and change. This bodes well, not only for Pilot Cities but, in parallel, the work that is underway towards both the Local Programme on Culture and the candidacy for European Capital of Culture 2025. It is our strongest recommendation from the workshop process that Nova Gorica builds on this (extending and broadening), and embeds it as a key structural element of the work. This principle could be usefully applied not only to all three of the above programmes of work but also, indeed, in other areas of strategic policy development within the Municipality.

Alongside these strengths, a number of weaknesses (or at least areas that seem to require early resolution or development) have also emerged through this process, for example:

Among other areas for development, identified by the three groups, the following additional recommendations stand out:

- » Mechanisms for increased support for NGOs, together with a more open dialogue between NGOs, the public and public institutions.
- » Addressing directly long-standing attitudinal barriers, related to individual or public payment for ('investment in') aspects of cultural activity – more specifically in relation to developing more sustainable economic models of production and distribution of culture and the cultural offer.
- » Encouraging more shared involvement via cooperation platforms and networks (across several fields of development), as a mechanism to build transparency, openness and broadening participation.
- » A public strategy to integrate public and private transport planning and the cultural offer, not only within the city centre but, crucially, in the suburbs and rural areas of the district.
- » An Office for Economy (or similar specialist function), to be included in the Department for Social Activities, dealing with creative and cultural economy questions, and developing programmes of local support.
- » A cultural research platform, possibly in partnership between the Municipality, university sector, national resources, local civil society and cultural businesses, to

CONCLUSIONS

research and deliver data in support of strategic developments – making the case.

- » A particular focus on cross-border projects (with Gorizia, in particular) to build cooperation, confidence and shared working methodologies.
- » A strategy and fund to encourage more international exchanges and cooperations – building the European dimension of culture in Nova Gorica.

This is simply a 'top line' list of strategic recommendations that have emerged from reviewing materials and compiling this report. It is important, however, to underline that the report offers a wealth of further analysis, much of which could be taken further forward, whether through Pilot Cities, the Local Programme on Culture, the bid for ECOC or other local initiatives.

We offer this Activity 1 report to the City of Nova Gorica for further consideration, in line with its participation in the Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Cities Programme, and look forward with anticipation to undertaking together the next and subsequent stages of this work programme.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

WORKSHOP GROUPS AND PARTICIPANTS

NAME - SURNAME	POSITION
Group A. Culture and Education / Culture and Environment / Culture, Urban Planning and Public Space / Culture, Information and Knowledge	
Ivor Davies (animator)	Lead Expert of the Pilot Cities programme in Nova Gorica
Marjan Kogoj	Principal of the Solkan Primary School
Martina Trampuž	Public Fund for Cultural Activities
Majda Petejan	Senior Advisor for Social Activities in the Municipality of Nova Gorica
Majda Stepančič	Senior Advisor for Social Activities in the Municipality of Nova Gorica
David Kožuh	Curator at the Regional Museum "Goriški muzej"
Gorazd Božič	Member of the Association Glasbeno društvo NOVA
Lea Kosmač	Centre of the Youth
Irena Škvarč	Director of the Nova Gorica Public Library
Peter Tomaž Dobrila	Head of the Local Programme on Culture preparation team (rapporteur)
Group B. Heritage, Diversity and Creativity / Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion / Governance of Culture	
Ana Zavrtnik-Ugrin (animator)	Vice-Mayor, Nova Gorica Municipality
Mateja Zoratti (animator)	Project Officer, Nova Gorica Municipality
Neda Rusjan Bric	Head of the ECC preparation team, Director, Actress, Writer
Teja Gerbec	Custos at the Regional museum "Goriški muzej"
Barbara Kocjančič	Technical Advisor, Municipality of Nova Gorica
Tamara Simčič	Senior Advisor for social activities, Municipality of Nova Gorica
Robert Cenčič	Senior Advisor for social activities, Municipality of Nova Gorica
Sabina Volk Simčič	Head of the Regional Unit of the Public Fund for Cultural Activities
Jernej Skrt	Artist
Tereza Gregorič	Dramaturg

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Miha Kosovel	Member of the Local Programme on Culture preparation team, NGO representative
Peter Purg	University of Nova Gorica (rapporteur)
Group C. Cultural Rights / Heritage, Diversity and Creativity / Culture and Economy	
Catherine Cullen	Policy Expert on behalf of UCLG
Tina Mihelj	Tourist Information Centre (TIC)
Ines Beguš	Custos at the Regional museum "Goriški muzej"
Borut Koloini	Custos at the Regional museum "Goriški muzej"
Mateja Zorn	Project Manager at the Kinoateljje Institute (rapporteur)
Nika Simoniti Jenko	Public relations coordinator, Municipality of Nova Gorica
Nataša Kolenc	Technical advisor, Municipality of Nova Gorica
Sendi Mango	Artist
Edvin Pozderović	Director of Mostovna Cultural Centre

CONTACTS

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