



**UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21**  
4<sup>th</sup> EDITION - INTERNATIONAL AWARD

# SEGOU



GOBIERNO DE LA  
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO



**UCLG**  
United Cities  
and Local Governments



**culture 21**  
UCLG Committee



## 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL AWARD

UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21



GOBIERNO DE LA  
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO



UCLG  
United Cities  
and Local Governments



culture 21  
UCLG Committee



## SEGOU CREATIVE CITY

With 133,501 inhabitants, Segou has a very diverse population essentially composed of the Bambara, Bozo, Bobo, Malinke, Sarakole, Peuhl, Somono, Minianka, Dogon, Mossi, Songhai and Samogo peoples, and also has the presence of several religions, mainly the Muslim religion, Christianity (10%) and Animism (10%).

“Segou: A Creative City” aims “(by 2030) to make Segou an attractive region based on its economic, cultural, and tourist assets, and thereby make it the economic capital” focusing in particular on “the preservation and economic valorisation of the touristic, artisan and cultural heritage.” The foundations of this project are the Festival on the Niger Foundation, with its various programmes: Ségou’Art-Festival on the Niger, the Kôre Cultural Centre, the Kôre Institute of Arts and Crafts (IKAM), the Kôre studio, and SMART.

The **general objective of “Segou: A Creative City” is to make art and culture the pillars**

**of sustainable human development through the implementation of the SCDP** (Sustainable Cultural Development Programme). In this way, the project aims to promote and enhance the value the cultural identities and artistic and cultural creation of Segou by putting art and culture at the centre of local development; ensure the vitality of the cultural industries by implementing development strategies and encouraging citizen participation in artistic and cultural life; support the cultural professions through the city’s creators, artists and cultural actors, and improve their working conditions; strengthen education, training and awareness-raising on arts and culture; and promote local cultural tourism in a sustainable way through schools and universities.

The “Segou: A Creative City” project was launched in 2015, on the sidelines of the 11th edition of the Festival on the Niger, providing the city with a cultural policy accompanied by the SCDP. Following



## 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL AWARD

UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21



GOBIERNO DE LA  
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO



UCLG  
United Cities  
and Local Governments



culture 21  
UCLG Committee

a broad consultation, local authorities, civil society and cultural actors chose five key disciplines during the workshop to characterise the city's cultural identities: music, design and fashion, the visual arts, heritage and gastronomy. Also, the project is focused on the following four components: the city's territorial marketing and information system, the professionalisation of the cultural sector, the recognition and enhancement of the city's cultural identities, and access to culture for all.

Stemming from these consultations, the project coordination, the local actors and authorities proposed 7 pilot projects to be implemented within the framework of the SCDP for a 5-year period:

1. The Segou Marketing and Information System Support Programme (PASIMS).
2. The project for the continuous training and capacity building of artists and cultural actors.
3. Enhance the value of Mali's woven loincloth and cotton.
4. The project to enhance the value of built heritage
5. The project to enhance the value of local gastronomy.
6. The project to promote contemporary art (Ségou'Art-Festival on the Niger).
7. The project Art and Education (Maaya Culture & Citizenship).

Several seminars, workshops and sessions were organised to launch the project, identify the cultural identities, actors and cultural components of the city and mobilise all relevant actors. Capacity building programmes for artists and cultural actors were also set up with the support and partnership of IKAM.

Numerous projects and programmes have been promoted and implemented within this framework: 'Ségou' Art-Festival on the Niger' (contemporary art fair), enhancement and promotion of woven loincloth and cotton from Mali through the "pagne tissé" (woven loincloth) project, the art and education project (maaya culture and citizenship), the enhancement of local gastronomy, and exchanges of artists between Segou, Nouakchott (Mauritania) and Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazza).

During its development, the project has faced several challenges, mostly related to the lack of understanding of the potential of the cultural sector by some elected officials and civil society; the lack of adequate documentation related to the project; the need to mobilise funds for the project; the limited capacities of cultural actors and local elected officials; the difficult context in Mali in terms of security, health and economy.

However, "Segou: A Creative City" has had a positive impact in the consideration of culture in the Programme for Economic, Social and Cultural Development (PDESC),



# 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL AWARD

UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21



GOBIERNO DE LA  
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO



UCLG  
United Cities  
and Local Governments



culture 21  
UCLG Committee

the structuring and consistency of actions of cultural development, the provision of a Programme of Sustainable Cultural Development (SCDP), the capacity building of local elected officials, and finally, a change in the mentality of local elected officials with relation to their perception of culture. Similarly, the project has enhanced the improvement in the quality of cultural expressions, the creation of synergies among cultural actors around the cultural programme and creative collaborations among artists, and the capacity building of the city's artists and cultural actors. Moreover, the project has had a great impact on the territory and its population, especially regarding an improved self-esteem, the recognition and promotion of cultural identities in the city, a strengthened and promoted local economy with decent jobs, a better educated youth through art and culture, the strengthening of the city's image and branding, and the development of cultural and economic infrastructures in the city.

---